



## Basking In Self-righteousness

I have a horrible tendency to forget important stuff like birthdays, anniversaries and holidays. It may be because I'm getting older; but, given that I've always forgotten important stuff, it's probably just intrinsic to who I am.

However there is a forgetfulness that is common and intrinsic to every Christian. It is a part of the fall, and Christians must fight it all the time. We forget how good the good news really is. Paul was surprised when the Galatians forgot.

He wrote: "You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you?" (Galatians 3:1) "Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now made perfect by the flesh?" (Galatians 3:3, KJV). In other words: What were you thinking? Have you already forgotten?

Paul should not have been surprised. We can't help it.

There is something in us causing us to become the very thing Jesus came to prevent. Maybe we believe that we could not be that bad or that God's grace could be that good.

Maybe it's just that a religion of rules and righteousness is attractive because we want to do it ourselves and, more importantly, we want to get the credit for it. It could be that pride and self-righteousness are so much a part of us that we're attracted to that which affirms it.

And then it could be that we've been playing the game of religion for so long and are so used to it that we have come to believe it is the only game in town.

This morning after I finished my time with the Lord, I found myself adding an addendum before getting to work.

I said (and I'm blushing when I tell you this...and, if you say I said it, I'll say you lied), "I'll bet there aren't

many Christians who get up this early to be with you, Lord. I'll bet you're proud of me and will bless me for doing this. See how much I love you and how faithful I am to you."

I heard him laughing.

I think he said, "*Are you crazy? If there were any benefit in your getting up so early, you just blew it with your arrogance, your super-spirituality and the violation of everything I've ever taught you.*"

That would have ruined my day, but he never condemns.

He also said to me, "*Don't look so depressed. You're a mess, but I'm still fond of you.*"

I repented and, of course, I was forgiven.

And then he told me that, if I had not repented, he would still love me.

But I've been thinking about my attitude and trying to understand it. Frankly, given the fact that I'm a teacher of grace, I don't understand how I forget so easily.

I don't understand the reversion to works and how that constantly haunts me. I don't understand why I tell others that, if they miss their devotions, God won't be angry; but then I feel in my heart of hearts that, if I miss mine, God will be ticked and something really bad will happen during the day.

I don't understand how I can tell people that their sin may be God's greatest gift to drive them to his arms and still think that my sin makes me unwelcome in his presence.

I don't understand why one (i.e. me) who goes around the country telling Christians that God isn't angry at them could so often believe that he is angry at me.

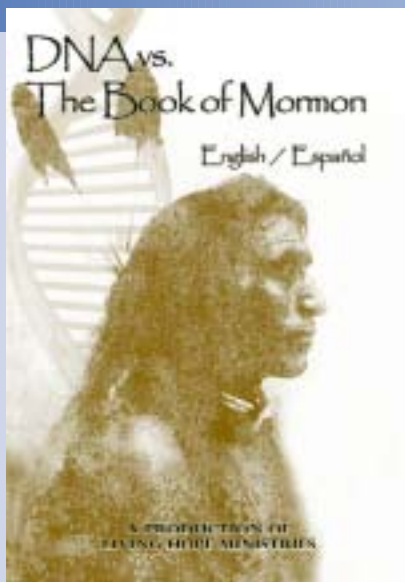
What is it with me? Of all people, I ought to know better.

Let me tell you. The same thing that's wrong with you. I just know it

We are all attracted to self-righteousness... and the temporary enjoyment of it. There is something in all of us that causes us to bask in doing it right...and in being better than most other Christians.

## DNA vs. The Book of Mormon

The *Book of Mormon* teaches that the ancient Israelites are the principal ancestors of modern-day Native Americans. For more than 170 years, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints has declared the *Book of Mormon* to be a true and accurate history. It tells the story of an Israelite family who emigrated to and populated the American continents. The book also claims that Jesus, after his death and resurrection, visited this once great Israelite civilization existing in the Americas. But new discoveries in DNA research are challenging these historical claims. In recent years, thousands of Native Americans from more than 150 tribes have been genetically tested to determine their ancestry. Are Native Americans descended from Israelites, or is the *Book of Mormon* untrue and unreliable? This video presents clear and compelling evidence from DNA researchers, including Mormon scientists. The truth is made plain to those who are willing to take an honest look.



## Called to be Free

Fifteen years ago people would have scoffed. A cult renounce its heresy and become Christian? Impossible! Yet in the mid 1990s, the Worldwide Church of God, a religious cult founded by Herbert W. Armstrong, underwent a massive upheaval, renouncing its heresy and embracing biblical theology—moving from the bondage of legalism to freedom in the grace of Jesus Christ. Prior to its transformation, the church had denied the Trinity, claimed that it was the one and only true church, taught that people can become gods, taught that the Anglo-Saxon people were the descendants of Israel, taught a rigid system of salvation-by-works and denied many of the basic tenets of biblical Christianity. In this video, you'll hear leadership and lay people of the reformed Worldwide Church of God tell the incredible, inspiring story in their own words. This amazing story will bring deep encouragement to believers, and hope and good news for those who are in bondage to cults, legalism and heretical movements.



## he asked me

and admit it, making me more spiritual than you are...uh... sorry...erase that.

But it's true about how we are all attracted to self-righteousness... and the temporary enjoyment of it. There is something in all of us that causes us to bask in doing it right, trying harder and succeeding, and in being better than most other Christians.

And that's why the most dangerous thing that can happen in your walk with Christ is your obedience...when you know it.

Why do you think Jesus was a friend of the winebibber and sinners?

Was it because he affirmed them in their sin?

Of course not!

Was it because he didn't care about their sin?

You're kidding!

It was because they knew their sin and also knew that, if anything depended on them and their goodness, they were lost. Those are the kinds of people with whom Jesus hangs out.

The kind of attitude I manifested this morning is the kind of thing that causes divisions, condemnation and destruction in the body of Christ.

It is the manifestation of having our own righteousness (i.e. our purity, correctness, knowledge or reputation) to protect—and anytime we do that we're in trouble and cause trouble everywhere we go.

This morning I obeyed the law. I got up early and spent a lot of time with the Lord. I felt self-righteous and spiritual.

But what am I going to do when I sleep in, think I don't have time to pray or don't love him very much?

He told me this morning that it is far better to sleep in and forget about praying than it is to get up, be spiritual and to bask in self-righteousness that comes from doing it.

He also told me to remind you. ☐

—Steve Brown

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