

Cream or Skimmed Milk?

I heard a man say the other day that "most people talk cream and live skimmed milk."

This statement is in essence what Jesus meant in Matthew 15:8: "This people draweth nigh unto me with their lips; but their heart is far from me." If we come to worship on Sunday and sing, "O How I Love Jesus!" and partake of the Lord's Supper, and appreciate being redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus, and then go out and live in sin, ugliness, and worldliness, then surely we are like the people Jesus described.

I would challenge you to be different as a Christian. If you are a young person, do not allow the gang to call you a "religious fanatic," or whatever the current word in circulation at the time is, and allow that to bother you. If you are an older person, do not allow greed, power, and pleasure to overcome you. We need people today like Daniel, who "would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat" in Daniel 1:8. Also, like Moses who "chose rather to suffer afflictions with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." (Heb. 11:25)

There is pleasure in sin, but do not be deceived into thinking that there is no pleasure and joy in living the Christian life. In fact, the happiest, most fulfilled of all people are Christians. The Psalmist said, "Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy: at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." (Psa. 16:11)

I realize all of us are confronted with questions like "should I do this?" or "should I go there?" But keep in mind in making your decision Ecclesiastes 9: "Rejoice O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes; but know thou that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment." Allow the Word to lead you!

I saw a list of questions recently that would be good to ask about the decisions we make, and will help us to determine whether we are giving lip service or a converted life to the Master:

1. Does what I am about to do violate any part of scripture? (I Jn. 2:4; Jam. 4:17)
2. Does what I am contemplating take the keenness out of my spirituality? (I Cor. 10:31; Col. 3:23)

3. Could I ask God's blessing on it? (I Thess. 5:18)
4. Will it be a stumbling block to someone else? (Rom. 14:13)
5. Is it expedient? (I Cor. 6:12)
6. Does it bring glory to the name of Jesus? (I Cor. 10:31)
7. Would I want the Lord to see me doing it? (I Jn. 2:6)
8. Would I want to be doing that thing when Jesus comes? (I John 2:6)

We can live a richer, fuller life. But we must let Jesus be the Lord of our lives and be courageously different from the world.