

Shedding Light On Biblical Contrasts

#5 – We Cannot be Worthy / We Are to be Worthy

Introduction

Alice sometimes is overwhelmed by the feeling that she is unworthy of God's favour. The thoughts she has at such times torture her. She remembers a brief time in her life when she was sexually immoral and wonders if God can forgive and accept her. One of her friends keeps reminding her that no one is worthy of God's Grace – that Grace by its very nature is His goodness to the undeserving. But Alice continues to have problems because she has seen Bible verses that seem to say we should be "worthy" people.

On the other hand, a man who serves as an elder in a good church believes that he must show himself "worthy" of the office he holds. Because of his position, he refuses to put pressure on a man who owes him a large amount of money.

We Cannot Be Worthy

1. Because of sin, no one deserves anything but judgement (**Romans 3:23; 6:23; Ephesians 2:1-9**).
2. No one can achieve the perfection worthy of everlasting life (**Isaiah 6:5; 64:6; Galatians 3:3**).
3. Even the best of Christians do not deserve the high calling that comes with being slaves of Jesus Christ (**Luke 3:16; 1 Corinthians 15:9**).
4. Even the most sincere Christians remain unworthy because they keep sinning & need to confess their sins every day (**1 John 1:8-10**).

We Are To Be Worthy

1. We are to behave in a manner worthy of our profession & position (**Ephesians 4:1; Colossians 1:10**).
2. We are to make ourselves worthy by giving Christ first place in our lives (**Matthew 10:37-39**).
3. We are to emulate the disciples who rejoiced that God would consider unworthy people like themselves worthy of suffering for Christ (**Acts 5:40-41**).
4. We are to be worthy of living with Christ in Heaven as the Christians in Sardis were declared to be (**Revelation 3:4**).

Explanation

If we take the English word “worthy” to mean “adequate” or “deserving” of God’s favour, not one of us qualifies. Not one of us deserves to go to Heaven, nor even to be called a servant of Christ, because “*all have sinned*” (**Romans 3:23**).

Even our best works are stained with selfishness and pride. The Roman centurion had this meaning in mind when he said to Christ, “*I am not worthy* (sufficiently good, deserving) *that You should enter under my roof*” (**Luke 7:6**). So did John the Baptist and the Apostle Paul, when they referred to themselves as “*not worthy*” (**Luke 3:16; 1 Corinthians 15:9**).

However, the word “worthy” can sometimes carry the idea of “corresponding to” or “comparable with”. For example, even though by God’s Grace we have been made “*saints*”, “*children of God*”, “*heirs with Christ*”, and “*sons of the kingdom*”, we are still challenged to make our lives correspond to who we are in Christ. And when we do, we are considered “*worthy*”.

By their fearless witness, the disciples had lived up to their calling and were “worthy” of suffering for their Saviour (**Acts 5:41**). Paul challenged us to make our daily conduct correspond to who we are in Christ when he told us to “*walk worthy*” of our calling (**Ephesians 4:1; 1 Thessalonians 2:12**). He also assured the Thessalonian believers that God was using their trials as the means by which He would make them “*worthy*” of the kingdom – not that they would be deserving of it but that their character would correspond to kingdom qualities (**2 Thessalonians 1:5**).

Resolution

While none of us can be worthy in the sense of earning or deserving God’s favour, we can be worthy in the sense of living a life that is increasingly consistent with our high calling & eternal destiny.

Application

- When we get a glimpse of our unworthiness, we move from discontentment with what we don’t have to gratitude that we have anything at all.
- When we start to understand how undeserving we are, we begin to see Christian service not merely as a responsibility but as an inexpressible privilege & honour.
- When we realize our unworthiness we will be slower to be critical of others.

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