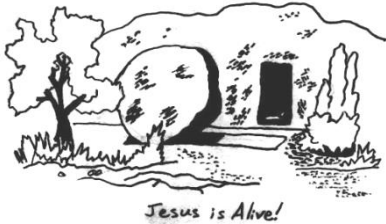


Living God Ministries

Living God Ministries PO Box 38353 Colorado Springs, CO 80937 www.livinggodministries.net

March 1, 2024



New Radio Programs

Eight new programs on the Book of Ephesians have been uploaded to the radio archive:

Ephesians 2:11-12 Jew and Gentile
Ephesians 2:12 Alien from God
Ephesians 2:13 Forgiven to Draw Near
Ephesians 2:13 Desire to be Near
Ephesians 2:14 The Middle Wall
Ephesians 2:14-16 Death to the Law
Ephesians 2:17-19 The Body of Christ
Ephesians 2:20-22 The House of God

Religious Pride

I was recently asked about the feelings of guilt when a person has a peaceful life. The person who asked me about this has everything they need, but has been making comparisons with others who struggle so much more. Some of the comments made were the following:

How do I continue living my days when I get overwhelming feeling that I am very privileged to live where I do (America) and be in the living situation I am in. I'm afraid that I'm taking

advantage of what the Lord has done for me through salvation and even given me in this mortal life. I feel like I should be going out and doing more. I haven't been told he wants me anywhere else.. It just becomes hard. It doesn't feel like enough in a world full of darkness and pain.

I know many of you can identify in your own way with what this person wrote, and some of you remember the root struggles you had when working through issues like these yourself. Statements like these can have a measure of sincerity, but most of the time, these are ways to hide a deep sense of pride that can be very difficult to detect.

The first thing you might notice is that thoughts like these do not normally originate from the person struggling with them. These are the kinds of things promoted by religious leaders in order to develop guilt and shame within their congregations. The purpose in most cases is to conduct fund raising for various giving projects of time and money. The leadership will become facilitators, travel agents, vacation organizers, and of course they get a commission from these services. What they do is promote guilt and shame because you have and someone else has not, then sell them a way to relieve themselves of guilt and shame by participating in the projects organized by the leadership. It is a form of manipulation.

Religious leaders can build up an enormous amount of religious pride through manipulating others into action. There is a sense of control, and excitement through profiting from making people feel guilty and ashamed. They might very well help people in need, and I certainly do

not want to suggest this is a bad thing. The positive results in other people's lives should be celebrated. There are more than enough examples of religious leaders participating because of their own personal advantages, and not really the advantages of the people they might be helping.

I would like you to notice how the writer said they had an easy life, but their life was hard because others had a hard life. Take a moment and think about how you would feel if you were really struggling in your life right now, and you heard me mention that I just feel so guilty and ashamed that I have no need for anything and life for me is just so hard because I feel bad for you. What do you suppose you would really be thinking about me? If I were you, I certainly would not want you to just hand over some of your stuff or money. I would want help with opportunities to work and build a better life for myself. Handing over stuff still wouldn't help the person relieve themselves of shame or guilt. If they hand it over to some religious leaders in their lives, the religious leaders certainly will feel no shame or guilt in manipulating them. This is most often a way of building religious pride by asserting that they care, which has nothing to do with the reasons why others are not doing as well as they are.

There are many reasons why others in the world are struggling in their lives. Most of the time it has to do with a lack of fortitude and determination to build a life better than what they have. In other circumstances it has more to do with the government oppression, corruption, and the lack of freedom in their lives. There are many other reasons why this is a reality for many in the world, but those reasons do not include our shame, guilt or our lack of giving. In some situations, giving can end up supporting the corruption and problems in the respective country, because of the government extortion that can take a portion of what is sent to aid the people in need. If the people receiving aid do not use it to properly, the people sending aid could be enabling dysfunctional behavior.

Giving to someone can also be a way of enabling the situation they are in through indirect ways most people never consider.

Another way of understanding how this can be an expression of religious pride, is by asserting they care about others in need. It is the attitude of caring they use to compare themselves with other people. They can feel good about themselves if they are like others who give abundantly. They can also feel good about themselves by giving and then comparing themselves with those who do not. These are not small temptations, especially when the money was not earned by the person giving it, or the time used was out of abundance available.

Attitudes like these are definitely not new to me. I have seen these often enough that I think this is worth commenting on. However, they do indicate a degree of immaturity in the faith. It could show a person is willing to be manipulated to feel accepted by others. The guilt and shame demonstrates the person has a very poor understanding of the grace and love of God. The forms of religious pride come from a poor understanding of what it means to be free from the Law. These are very interdependent issues that take time to work through. When a person reaches this stage, it usually takes no less than 5 to 7 years for them to get past it. I have seen some take longer than 20 years, and the burnout they experience is usually quite severe.

The sense of caring for others can certainly be wonderful, and I do not want to suggest that all forms of it can be an opportunity for religious pride. The work of God in a person's heart can be profound and I am a witness to how the love of God can change a person who was once uncaring and had no regard for others, to a person who devotes the majority of his life for the benefit of others. I cannot place judgment over the person who wrote me to express how they were feeling. I can only point out a few things that are very common, and everyone needs to look within themselves to see if they are

indulging in the religious pride that is very much deceptive.

Most Sincerely,
Aaron
Teaching Pastor for Living God Ministries

Radio Stations

We are presently broadcasting on the following radio stations:

Denver, CO KLTT 670 AM 5:00 – 5:30 pm
Denver, CO KRKS 990 AM 3:00 – 3:30 pm
Colorado Springs, CO 100.7 FM 7:00 – 7:30 pm
Sacramento, CA KCBC 770 AM 8:30 – 9:00 am
Los Angeles, CA KBRT 740 AM 5:30 – 6:00 pm
Los Angeles, CA KKLA 99.5 FM 11 – 11:30 pm
Portland, OR KPDQ 800 AM 3:00 – 3:30 pm
Dallas, TX KWRD 100.7 FM 3:00 – 3:30 pm
Dallas, TX KAAM 770 AM 6:00 – 6:30 pm
Milwaukee, WI WJYI 1340 AM 11:30 – 12 pm
Milwaukee, WI WJYI 98.7 FM 11:30 – 12 pm