

CHRISTIANITY IS SUPPOSED TO PRODUCE GOD-LIKENESS

James 2:14-20

(Not entirely original with me)

Introduction: The Bible quotes God as saying, "...*Let us make man in our image, after our likeness...*" but we all know that somewhere along the way, Adam and Eve fell away from the image and likeness of God and ever since that day, all of humanity has been unlike God's image or likeness. Through His Son, Jesus, God sought to bring back mankind to the kind of relationship that would enable fellowship and a oneness again. Christianity is intended to change people to be like God in order that they may act like God.

1. The only "true" Christian is the "practicing" Christian.

- As Jesus Christ is the image of God, so is the Christian to be the image of Jesus Christ.
- The Christian can never attain the kind of perfection that Jesus had or the fullness of God that Jesus had.
- The Christian can have the same kind of nature that Jesus had.

2. God never changes and is the same wherever He may be or whatever He may be doing.

- God became flesh and lived down here but never ceased to act as He always did when in Heaven.
- God did "hide" and not use some of His deity but never did away with it when He was here.
- God had to "weaken" His appearance to spare the eyes of those who would see Him.
- God restrained His powers but did not violate His holiness.
- Whatever God did, He was still holy, separate from sinful man yet higher than heaven itself.

3. Within the Christian is the very presence of the same God who created all things and came to dwell among mankind, called the Holy Spirit, therefore making the believer holy.

- Not rituals, not what one wears, not one's "religion" or Church choice makes one "holy," but the way God chose and that was to live within every believer in Jesus Christ.
- For a human being to be holy, he/she must believe in Jesus Christ sincerely and upon that faith/belief, the Holy Spirit indwells permanently that believer.

4. The Christian is to live by faith with works accompanying his/her faith.

- Sadly there are some who teach that it is either faith that saves or works that save, it is one or the other however that is a false teaching/doctrine.
- Personal holiness of the believer/Christian is attained by both faith and "works."

5. The Scriptures clearly teach that faith is not a substitute for good works, but is the means of attaining the God-like life.

- Someone once said that a tree does not take the place of its fruit, but it is the means by which fruit comes.
 - A Christ-like life is the purpose of the Christian faith, thus the "fruit" of one's faith.
- To switch faith and works is to say that fruit produces the tree and we all know how wrong that is but sadly, that is exactly what many have been taught and believe - works first and then comes faith.

6. Consider how buildings are built.

- Any error in laying the foundation will cause the entire building to be unstable and even out of line.
- Faith is the foundation of Christianity, not works and because some have things reversed, their "Christianity" is false and produces nothing God-like.
- Those who teach and believe such will give an account to the Lord for He knows their hearts.

7. Some "Christians" say they will "pray over" this or that but in reality is substituting "prayer" for action, service.

- For some, it is so much easier to pray for someone's need than it is to actually supply what they might need.

- *James 2:15-16*

- *1 John 3:17-19*

CONCLUSION:

1. Christians are supposed to be "God-like" in all their ways, that is God's purpose for His Church and Christianity.
2. It is not either faith or works, one or the other but it is both with Faith first and then Godly works to follow.
3. When Christians get the right understanding, then they will have faith and more Godly works, praying along with action and serving, a stronger and more courageous outlook and a faith-filled life.
4. So, Christian, how is your faith? Where are your works? They both go hand in hand. You can't have a God-likeness without both.