

Something to Pray About

July 2013 – Cindy Sears

So, God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. —Genesis 1:27 NKJV

In the Image of God

I think we forget that God does not care so much about our “happiness” or making our circumstances so nice that we always *feel* “happy.” What He cares most about is changing us back into the God-filled and God-manifesting creatures we were meant to be. We see in the Genesis story that man, created in the image of God, sinned unto death. In the New Testament Gospels, we see that God, in the image of man, redeemed unto life. So now God works to sanctify us—change us into the image of Christ, who is both God and man. He begins that work after we have let Him justify us through and in Christ Jesus.

The ritual of baptism reveals this truth to us. Baptism by emersion is especially revealing. When we accept Jesus as Lord and Savior, we die with Christ and are buried. So now we are dead to sin. We rise with Christ, so that now we are living in Christ and like Him, we live for the glory of God. Therefore, we are no longer obligated to sin—no longer slaves to sin. Now we are slaves to righteousness (Romans 6:3-11).

“But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.” (Romans 6:17-18 NKJV)

We can live triumphantly in Christ if we remember that we are no longer obligated to sin. We cannot and should not claim that the “devil made us do it” when we fail to be obedient to God. As Christians, the Devil has no power to make us do anything!

Are we still able to sin? Yes. Do we have to sin? No. Will we still sin? Yes. The lure of sin remains, and we retain our fallen bodies and minds. But we also have the power living within us to resist sin—the Holy Spirit’s power. Therefore, we can enter the conflict to win. Do not go into battle with an already defeated attitude!

“For God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline.” (2 Timothy 1:7)

How does this attitude play out in the world? We become the salt, not just the light to our culture. We don’t just point out sin as sin, but we live righteously and our righteousness leavens the whole culture (see Luke 13:20-21).

Many Christians have failed to be the salt in our culture and, therefore, the meat has become putrid and the vegetables have lost their sweet savor (see Matthew 5:13). For instance, we left Hollywood to its own devices, letting evil minded men and women control it, instead of jumping in with both feet and using the film medium to encourage personal responsibility, self-discipline, and moral rectitude. The same goes for the other arts, business, newspapers, newscasts, courts, public education, and government. According to a 2012 Gallup poll 77% of the people in the U. S. call themselves Christians,

so why is our culture rotting away and under moral decline? If we who are called by His name cannot live righteously, how can we ask other people to live righteously?

“Therefore, do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.” Romans 6:12-13