

PRACTICE TELLS

Paul very strongly says to the Corinthians, “Do not be deceived” into thinking that those who, as a lifestyle pattern, practice unrighteousness will inherit the kingdom. In 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, he emphatically shows they will not inherit the kingdom and draws a contrast, saying, “And such were some of you. But you were washed...”. In our state of being unconverted, we too used to live like this, but conversion to Christ has changed everything. “Such were some of you” indicates that while this used to define them, it does not anymore.

In Ephesians 5 Paul warns the believers that the gross sins of the flesh should “not even be named among you” (Eph. 5:3). He then went on to say...

Ephesians 5:5–6 (NKJV)

5 For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.

Once again, Paul says, “Let no one deceive you”. It is common for professing Christians to want to claim to be Christian while living in flagrant sin. This is nothing new! Because of this, Paul repeatedly warns believers not to fall for this, saying, “Let no one deceive you with empty words”. Living this way is indicative of not being saved. It is characteristic of those who are categorized as “the sons of disobedience,” upon whom the wrath of God comes.

Peter speaks of those who have come to “the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” but then fall right back into the same pattern of sin. Peter says, “it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them.” (2 Pet. 2:20-22). Such people give evidence that they have never really known the Lord. They have known ABOUT Him, but they have not had a true heart-changing conversion, and their ongoing lifestyle pattern proves it.

The Apostle John drew a stark contrast between the believer and the unbeliever.

1 John 3:6–10 (NKJV)

6 Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him.

7 Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous.

8 He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.

9 Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.

10 In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother.

John also says, “let no one deceive you”. John emphasizes that a person’s practice tells on them. The true believer will not PRACTICE sin as an unbroken pattern of life.

The devil’s existence is defined as an unbroken pattern of sin. This is the “works of the devil”. Christ came to break that pattern of unbroken sin in the lives of His people. And for the true believer who now shares in the divine nature, the unbroken pattern of sin in the life has been broken (v. 9). This makes all the difference between the believer and the unbeliever.

The unbeliever who is of the devil continues on in an unbroken pattern of sin (v. 8). The true believer “practices righteousness” in keeping with his new nature. “In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest” (1 Jn. 3:10). Righteousness and love now characterize the true believer, while an unbroken pattern of sin (just like that of the devil) defines the unbeliever. In the end, a person’s practice tells whether they are of God or whether they are of the devil. PRACTICE TELLS! Not the PERFECTION but the DIRECTION of our life tells! PRACTICE TELLS!