

The Kind of People You Ought To Be

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It is important to know who we really are! Are we true born again believers or believers by name only? If we are true believers, then are we living the way we should? Our conduct must correspond with our beliefs. 2 Peter 3 gives us reasons to search our own hearts and be honest with ourselves.

Peter says: *“But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness”* (2 Peter 3: 10-13).

Peter is saying here that when we believe the truth that Jesus Christ is coming again, then that truth becomes an incentive to holy living. In fact, throughout scripture, we find that the anticipation of the Lord’s return spurs His people on to do the will of God. The impetus by living godly lives has often been depicted in the context of Christ’s coming.

Colossians 3:2-5 is another scripture along this line: “Set your mind on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. Put to death, therefore whatever belongs to your earthly nature, sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desire and greed, which is idolatry.”

Furthermore, Titus 2:11-15 says, “For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say ‘No’ to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope – the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good. These, then, are things you should teach. Encourage and rebuild with all authority. Do not let anyone despise you.”

How then should we live? I would like to make a few scriptural suggestions:

1. Make apologies where they are due (Matthew 5:23, 24). In other words, be reconciled to or get right with your fellowmen. The matter of who is right wrong is not the issue. Your effort is to make peace. This itself is a testimony that you believe Jesus is coming for you and His kingdom is forever.
2. Books and objects that encourage bad habits wrong indulgence should be put away or burnt (Acts 19:19). On that occasion in Acts 19, the total value of the scrolls that were brought to be burnt came up to 50,000 drachmas. In present-day terms, the value would be about a million dollars (a drachma being equivalent to \$20 or a day’s wages).

Therefore, we must give up or turn away from some things even if it means a great loss in terms of monetary value.

If Jesus walks into your home today, are there books, magazines, records and tapes, etc. that would make you ashamed? Would you need to give up any hobby or reassess you priorities?

3. Debts should be paid (Romans 13:8). You would not like to have anything outstanding in your account.
4. You should make sure that your loved ones are won to the Lord (Genesis 19:14).
5. You should pay your tithes faithfully and regularly to the churches that nourishes you and feeds you spiritual food (Malachi 3:10). Tithes belong to the Lord. It is the Lord’s!

Living a life of obedience is a characteristic of the Christian who is looking to the Lord’s return. Another mark of such a Christian is his keen interest in the world to come – far above the interest in this world (2 Peter 3:13).

However, this does not mean that while looking forward to the world to come, we neglect the social concerns the social concerns of our present world. For this reason, this church gives support to drug rehabilitation centers, home for different needs and other similar institutions. How could we afford to do otherwise when the Bible implores us to be the salt and the light of the earth? (Matthew 5:13).

How then do we show that we do not love this world more than the world to come? Here are some suggestions:

1. Store up treasures in heaven (Matthew 6:19-1).
2. Say ‘No’ to worldly possession (Titus 2:12-13).
3. Do the will of God (1 John 2:17).
4. Live a life of continual worship (Romans 12:12).

There is another point, which Peter emphasizes in relation to our anticipation of the Lord's return. That is, we must deeply concern for those who do not believe (2 Peter 3:9 & 15).

We must be evangelistic at all times. We must not wait only for those months when we emphasize evangelism, to witness and give out tracts. We must be involved with evangelism every day.

Fourthly, Peter emphasizes that we must be steadfast in the midst of worsening conditions of the world (2 Peter 3:17).

Some say our world is getting better. But do not believe it. We know that the world will not get better before Christ comes (Matt. 24). In fact, the world is plunging deeper and deeper in sin. Our newspaper has more bad news than good.

John tells us: "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

Finally, if we really believe that Christ is coming, we will desire to grow in grace and in knowledge of Him (2 Peter 3:18).

How many of you know Jesus only as your Savior? Do you know He wants to be your Provider, Healer, Lord and much more? The way to know Him more is through personal prayer, study of His Word, and allowing the Holy Spirit to teach you and fill you day by day. This better than through second-hand means of books, tapes, conference and others.

God invites you to be His children. "Yet to all who receive Him, to those who believe His name, He gave the right to become children of God – children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or husband's will, but born of God" (John 1:12, 13).

Now as His children, we must live in the awareness of Christ's imminent return. Are you a born-again believer, ready to meet Jesus when He returns?!