

The Charge Of Self-Righteousness

In the course of talking to people about Bible subjects, every Christian will eventually be charged with self-righteousness. Is this a fair charge? Can someone really be self-righteous?

There was no question that the Pharisees were self-righteous. Luke 16:14-15 says, "And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things: and they derided him. And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God." (cp. Luke 18:9-14; John 8:4-9). Proverbs 12:15 says, "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise." So it is definitely to have a self-righteous attitude, therefore a humble heart is needed (Psalm 138:6; Proverbs 3:34).

But today there seems to be a definite misconception concerning self-righteousness. People who boldly proclaim the gospel are often accused of being self-righteous. Acts 4:29, 31 says, "And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word ... And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness." Do you think the apostles were self-righteous or were they simply discharging their responsibilities given to them by the Lord (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16)? When we stand for truth and admonish others to be righteous, are we not discharging the duties we have been given by the Lord? If that is what the world considers "self-righteous," then we should accept the characterization with honor.

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