

The Real And The Ideal

Introduction. A gap has existed since the fall. We no longer live in an ideal world (Genesis 3:17-24). We are no longer an ideal people because sin has invaded the realm of men (Romans 3:10-11) and separated us from God (Ezekiel 39:23-24).

Because this gap exists, we have to adjust and adapt in order to please God and be rewarded by Him. Unfortunately, this gap generates good and bad attempts to cope with it, so we will contemplate four ways to deal with the gap between the real and ideal.

I. Some Repeal The Ideal

- A. They deny the perfect standard (James 1:25; cp. Romans 1:1-2; 15:4).
- B. They dilute the perfect standard.
 - 1. Pervert it (Galatians 1:8-9).
 - 2. Water it down (Jude 3).

II. Some Accept The Real Without Improvement

- A. No desire to correct sin (1 John 1:7-9).
- B. No desire to grow (2 Corinthians 7:1; Colossians 1:10; Hebrews 6:1).

III. Some Abandon The Struggle For The Ideal

- A. With self.
 - 1. Accept the status quo (cp. 2 Corinthians 5:9; Colossians 3:1).
 - 2. Escapism — drugs, alcohol, self-indulgence, etc. (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).
 - 3. Suicide (Deuteronomy 30:19).
- B. With relationships.
 - 1. Jump from one spouse to other looking for the ideal (Hebrews 13:4).
 - 2. Leave families (1 Timothy 5:8), jobs (Colossians 3:22-4:1), and brethren (Hebrews 10:25).

IV. Some Patiently Strive For The Ideal

- A. For self — requires patience with self.
 - 1. We work to overcome temptation (1 Corinthians 10:12-13; James 1:13-16).
 - 2. We should not sin, but if we do we have an advocate in Jesus (1 John 2:1-3).
 - 3. We press on to the high calling of God (Philippians 3:12-15).
- B. For relationships — requires patience with others.
 - 1. With family (Ephesians 6:4; 1 Peter 3:1-2).
 - 2. With brethren (Ephesians 4:1-6; 2 Timothy 2:24-26; 4:1-4).
 - a) But “longsuffering” is not “always suffering” (Galatians 5:22; Ephesians 4:2; Colossians 1:11; 3:12; cp. Revelation 2:20-21).
 - b) At some point, churches have to withdraw from the people who live in sin and refuse to repent (1 Corinthians 5:13; 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14).

Conclusion. We will not be lost for not reaching the ideal in this life; we will be lost for not reaching for the ideal in this life. Start your reach for God and His reward by working for the ideal. It may mean your obedience to Christ, or it may mean your response to unfaithfulness. Whatever it may be, come to us today.