Substitutes for Sanctification

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Warning!

• This talk is ironic n even cynical!
• But it has some good purposes:
  – To help people tell the difference between real holiness and cheap substitutes.
  – To keep us from thinking we’re OK when the Last Judgment will reveal that we aren’t.
  – To help us make to course corrections while we still can.
How to Make Yourself Holy Without the Holy Spirit
In General

• Rather than actually becoming more conformed to the image of Christ…
• Or doing a better job of keeping God’s laws…
• Put all the harder laws in another dispensation, for example:
  – Before the Church Age
  – During the Millennium
In General

• Realize that this is the Age of Grace, not of Law:
  – So you don’t need to keep all those laws…
  – And it is Legalism to try…

• Define away certain sins…
  – They are merely mistakes, imperfections…
In General

• Concentrate on certain externals…
  – Or on certain specific areas of behavior.

• Notice how bad everyone else is.
  – (This will vary from group to group.)
  – They drink (or smoke).
  – They don’t keep the Sabbath.
  – They consort with sinners.
  – They dress the wrong way.
  – (No doubt you can supply additional items.)
Substitutes for the Fruit of the Spirit
The Fruit of the Spirit

Galatians 5:22 (NIV) But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.
Love

• Instead, just have a pleasant outward appearance & smile a lot…
  – So long as no one crosses you.

• Condescend to those you consider beneath you.

• Flatter those you think may be superior to you.
Joy

• The suggestions for “Love” (above) will probably do the trick here.
• You do need to be careful to try & stick to:
  – Pleasant surroundings
  – Pleasant people
  – Comfortable circumstances
• It’s too tough to be joyful in difficult situations.
Peace

• Both the suggestions under “Love” and “Joy” should prove helpful here.
• Try to avoid controversy…
  – Or if that doesn’t work, ignore it.
• Don’t think of people in the categories “saved” and “unsaved.”
• Or if you do, stay away from the latter.
• Don’t think about the troubles other Christians are facing.
Patience

• This is hard to fake, so stay away from circumstances where this is needed.

• You aren’t required to be patient…
  – When dealing with nasty people
  – Where matters of principle are involved.

• Make sure the offender knows that you are “long-suffering.”
Kindness

• Like “Love,” you may use the practice of kindness as an excuse for not rebuking sin...
  – At least in certain areas.
  – Remember “judge not,” unless someone really deserves it.
Goodness

• This means being more holy according to the general principles sketched in those panels above labelled “In General.”

• We shouldn’t tell others how good we are, but we can show them by:
  – Being an obvious example
  – Pointing out the faults of others
  – Giving free advice
Faith, Faithfulness

• Sometimes translated “faith”
  – What others should have in what you say
  – A device to avoid:
    • Planning (I did it by faith)
    • Obedience (The Spirit led me…)

• If translated “faithfulness”
  – Loyalty to leadership whatever they are doing
  – My group, right or wrong
  – Not needed if they disagree with you
Gentleness

• Traditionally “meekness”
  – Not to be applied to your understanding of Scripture, since you are illuminated by the Holy Spirit, and thus “spiritual”
  – Taking a backseat to obvious superiors, unless they are trying to muscle in
  – Giving in if the other person is too strong
Gentleness

• Allows bragging about:
  – Growing up in poverty
  – Your earlier life of sin
  – Lack of education
  – How you interpret Scripture w/o human aid
  – Your parents who were…
    • Christians
    • Missionaries
    • Pastors
Self-Control

• Traditionally translated “temperance.”
  – Total abstinence from alcohol is a good substitute in some circles.
  – Drinking in moderation with do in others.
  – Also includes not speaking the truth if your audience will consider the truth intemperate.

• Self-control is demonstrated by putting up with those who are moderately aggravating…
  – Not necessary if they are really aggravating.

• Doesn’t apply to eating habits
Summary

• Moving out of the ironic, cynical mode…

• I found a good deal of this rather convicting, as I find myself practicing such techniques all too often.

• May God help us to recognize fake spirituality, in ourselves & in others.

• May the Lord change us, so that we may indeed grow in true holiness.
The End