

## **“Like” if you Love Jesus**

11-4-12

Recently I received the notice on Facebook that I could “like” Jesus if I love Him. We all get the forwarded messages that suggest my love for God is related to my willingness to forward the message. I would suggest this is not a new phenomenon; people have sought for rather overt and physical ways to demonstrate their affection for God for centuries. Before the internet it was t-shirts with religious slogans; before that it was religious jewelry or art. Does this actually glorify God?

The Apostle Peter gave us the following commendation: “Do not let your adornment be merely outward--arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel— rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God” (1 Peter 3:3-4). This idea, of the gentle and quiet spirit be the spiritual adornment as opposed to the outward signs of religion perhaps gives us a contrast with modern descriptions of religion.

Truthfully, outward religion is easy. That does not mean it is valuable. Paul made the point that even great outward actions have little value if they lack inward grace. (1 Corinthians 13:3). Inward religion is real. Paul commanded us to live quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and reverence (1 Timothy 2:1-2). Perfecting inward religion means perfecting meekness. Consider the nature of wisdom in James 3:13-18 or 2 Corinthians 10:1. The Psalmist pointed this out in Psalm 37:11 (But the meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.)

In the same way, perfecting inward religion means avoiding meaningless religion. Paul spoke about meaningless religion in Colossians 2:23. There he spoke about things that have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, false humility, and neglect of the body, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh. Is wearing a cross a spiritual blessing, or something we created to feel religious? Wearing sloganized clothing too is a self-imposed idea of religion, not a truth from God. Too often, people wear crosses because their conduct does not reveal Christian character.

The world seeks to mis-direct faith. It wants a physical form of faith that can be manifested on the outward man. But it is the meekness of the inner man that reflects Christian character. Faith is more than outward appearances.