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What Does Healthy Christianity Look Like?

This question sounds like a fairly simple one to answer, but there is likely much more to it than you think. So many times, we reduce the Christian life to a list of activities or duties all the while neglecting the heart issues that are the source of true, God-glorifying behavior. Thus, I want to address this issue from the perspective of the affections of the Christian's heart.

First, a healthy Christian has a heart that preeminently loves God. We must be careful at this point, because the first thought we all have in response to this statement is, "Of course I love God." Let's evaluate ourselves a little more carefully. Are thoughts of God and desires to grow closer to Him the dominant occupations of your mind? Is the hunger to encounter Him in His Word and in prayer the primary daily appetite of your soul? Does the thought of knowing Him and being with Him evoke delight and joy? Is growth into His likeness honestly the chief ambition of your life. These ideals are what Jesus pointed to when He said in Mark 12, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength." Furthermore, a true love for God will effect how we manage every other dynamic of our lives, whether it be our resources or our pursuits.

Second, a healthy Christian has a heart that will love people as God loves them. This goes directly back to the second part of what Jesus said in Mark 12: "Love your neighbor as yourself." This call to love that God places upon the Christian is not limited to a select group; it is a love for every person because every person is made in the image of God. First, we are to have a special love for the brethren. Our brothers and sisters in Christ share with us in the infinite inheritance of our Father. We share the same Holy Spirit; we share the same hope; we share the same priorities; we even share the same struggles as we seek to live in the world and not be of the world. Though we are different, we are all God's children, and we are called to love each other more than we love ourselves. The other part of this is a love for lost people. Even the worst sinner should experience the love of Christ through us. We should be a people who, like Christ, are broken over their lostness. We should be a people who love them enough to get involved in their lives and point them to the Savior. To be or do any less is to dishonor God.

Third, a healthy Christian loves the bride of Christ. Who is the bride of Christ? That's right – the Church. For one to bear the name of Christ and not love the bride of Christ is an oxymoron. Gathering together with fellow members for worship, Bible study, prayer, service, and fellowship should be something that excites us. Such activities should never be reduced to mere duties. Consider the excitement you felt the first time you went on a date, or the night you were engaged, or the day you got married. Did you want to be there? Were you excited about the relationship? Of course you were! A true, healthy believer will love the church, because it is there that he or she is nourished by the body and active in community and faithfully employed in service to God's kingdom. The local gathering of believers is also our source of loving accountability as we seek to live for the glory of God. A healthy Christian will love the church as Christ loves the church – He loved it so much that He sacrificed Himself for her (Ephesians 5).

This list is by no means comprehensive, but checking our affections in these 3 simple areas will take us far along the path of obedience. How are your affections? How might you need to rekindle the loves of your heart? What does God desire of you?