

Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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The Excellent Saint

(Jerry Fite)

David, in his glorification of God, exalts the saints on earth. “*As for the saints that are in the earth, they are excellent in whom is all my delight*” (Psalm 16:3). How can they be looked upon as majestic and noble, when they might be among the poorest and most destitute? It is because of their godly character. They are completely devoted to God, and not like those who “*give gifts to another god*”. David will not be like those who “*offer drink offerings*” to false gods or “*take their names upon his lips*” (Psalm 16:4).

Being a saint manifests excellence in the earth in many ways. One of the ways is being a guide to one’s neighbor. “*The righteous is a guide to his neighbor; but the way of the wicked causeth them to err*” (Proverbs 12:26). Guiding a neighbor in the way of righteousness, one is providing the way of life. “*The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life...*” (Proverbs 11:30).

The neighbor’s first conscious introduction to God is often through the good manifested in the life of the saint. As Jesus directs, “*...let your light shine before men; that they may see*

your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven” (Matthew 5:16). The excellence of the saint is the good work of sharing one’s things with one who is in need (Ephesians 4:28, Hebrews 13:16). The excellence of the saint is the willingness to go “*the second mile*” (Matthew 5:41) when many are insisting on their rights and getting even. The excellence of the saint is fulfilling his promises, not because there is a signed contract, but because his “*yea is yea, and his nay is nay*” (Matthew 5:37). Living up to one’s word, serving others as a humble servant and sharing with others out of love for God and love for one’s neighbor all speak to the excellence of the saint.

Living the sanctified life makes one an excellent husband or wife. As one lives with a saint, the lifestyle is one of abstaining from evil, instead of indulging in the works of the flesh which manifest itself in “*revelling and drunkenness...strife and jealousy*”. Living according to fleshly lusts easily creates the environment for a miserable marriage (Romans 13:13, Galatians 5:20-21). Filthy speech or off-colored jokes will not feel the ears of your children, for such speech is not “*befitting*” for the saint (Ephesians 5:4).

Such excellence of the saint creates an atmosphere of sanctification in a family. Paul is emphasizing this when he writes, “*For the unbelieving husband is sanctified in the wife, -and the unbelieving wife is sanctified in the brother...*” (I Corinthians 7:14). Nothing but coming in contact with the blood of Christ in baptism can sanctify one personally (Romans 6:3-4; I Corinthians 6:11). But the excellence of the saint creates a godly atmosphere in the home, even when a husband or wife is an unbeliever.

But the excellence of the saint can even bring an unbelieving spouse to Christ. When an unbelieving husband is blessed with the godly wife, her purity and meek and quite spirit can lead him to Christ. She is not wordy in constantly hounding him, but her character of purity daily draws him closer to the source of her excellence: Christ. He is gained by the excellent behavior of the saintly wife (I Peter 3:1-4).

In a time when the Christian is looked down upon in the media, the saint needs to be reminded that his or her life in Christ is one described by God as excellence. Keep up the good influence!