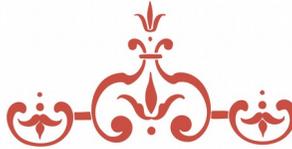


Thrift-Store Theology



The Enemy Is Us

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The Enemy Is US

Pogo's revenge

Are you going through trouble today? I'm talking about not having enough money for a soda pop or such minor annoyances. I'm talking about major troubles: divorce, bankruptcy, foreclosure, etc. These are the problems that keep us up nights with worry. But that is where we are our worst enemy.

The essence of sin is selfishness. That is one lesson I learned from my Theology professor and mentor. And when you begin to think about it, selfishness is something we all are guilty of and what is the beginning of our troubles. We marry the person that we think will make US happy and they do the same. Only on down the road both are wondering why the other isn't meeting their needs. We want more and more stuff to fill our monstrous houses and when we can't pay the bills we worry about the creditors. And then there is the multitude of little sins such as not giving God his due, i.e. that out-dated notion of tithing, or the idea that we need to think of others as better than ourselves. But the most prevalent idea we never give a mind to is summed up in this golden oldie: treat others like you want to be treated. This little saying crops up in many of the oldest civilizations in the world's history. And it is the truest saying of all.

Those who like to spout authority will undoubtedly seek to attribute this to God's judgment. And I would not argue with them for I too think this is the way God has designed the world to behave. In fact I would say that this is how God behaves. How you treat God is how you will be treated. And on the whole, how you treat others is how you will be treated. Now we both know that people aren't nearly as just as God is but even if we were only treated as we treat God, how would we be doing? Not too well I presume. Do you cheat God his due? Do you thank God for all the many blessings you

receive? Do you praise God for being glorious and merciful?

Let's put the shoe on the other foot. How would you treat someone who treated you the way you treat God? But enough of this high-sounding slapping and let's look at our treatment of others.

How often do you think of others as better than yourself? In our age of human rights, this smacks of heresy but I assure you it is the currency God uses in assessing our lives. Are we giving up our rights to judging others, to ignoring our needs to satisfy someone else's needs, or even to thank someone for doing something for us for whatever reason?

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