



GUIDELINES DAILY COMMENTARY ON LIVING WITH DR. HAROLD J. SALA

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MAKING PEACE WITH GOD

Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Matthew 11:28 The Message

Making peace with God is the most important thing you will ever do in life, and it isn't something that you can necessarily put off until five minutes before your encounter with the Almighty. But the sad thing is that life gets so full of things that we seldom think about the importance of making peace with God until it's too late.

I'm thinking of the time I was called to the hospital to visit a man whose hours were numbered. I wasn't very well acquainted with this man, but I knew he had been successful as a rancher and cattleman. As I stood outside his hospital room as doctors fought a losing battle for the man's life, I talked with family members. "Tell me about your dad," I asked. The response was a series of stories and anecdotes. "Can you tell me about his relationship with the Lord?" I asked. Things grew strangely quiet. "Dad never had time for that sort of thing," one of them said. Guidelines is a commentary on life and our times, and though we seldom think about it, the end is just as much part of the whole as is the beginning when God sends the spark that ignites life and a baby is conceived.

Birth, of course, is usually a much more celebrated event than a memorial service. Though someone has lived a long and full life and those of us who remain are glad that a loved one no longer suffers, and though we do inwardly rejoice that someone we loved is now in the presence of the Lord and will never face another long night of suffering, we, nonetheless, don't dance and celebrate at a funeral the way we do at the welcomed birth of a baby.

Making peace with God is not much different from reestablishing a relationship which has been broken by misunderstanding and/or wrongdoing. Isaiah said, "We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way, and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6). Without a shepherd, sheep quickly wander and go astray. That's why the shepherd is so important. Left to their own, sheep are vulnerable to predators and enemies of all kinds and descriptions. The Bible describes this wandering or going astray as a deliberate act of spiritual rebellion of the heart, a missing the mark (using the analogy of an archer whose aim falls short of the target). The Bible calls it *sin*. The middle letter "i" best characterizes what it's about: my will as opposed to God's will.

Making peace with God begins when you acknowledge that you have gone astray. This should not be too difficult. You know that, down deep in your heart. The second thing you must do is to recognize the voice of the shepherd and acclaim Him as your Lord and Savior. Jesus, using this very analogy, said, "I am the good shepherd." He also said, "I am the way and the truth and the life..." (John 14:6).

Now, a word of warning. There are a lot of false shepherds out there—individuals, philosophies, even religions that claim to lead you to God. But there is only one Shepherd who proved that He was the Son of God by dying and rising again the third day. It was this which proved that Jesus was and is the Great Shepherd, the One sent from God.

The final step in making peace with God is to claim His Son as your Shepherd and Savior and begin to follow Him. Too easy? Some think so, but I have learned that when you follow the Shepherd, you will get to know Him, and when you really know Him, you will love Him, and when you love Him, you will obey Him and keep His commandments.

It takes about as long to make peace with God as it does to swallow your pride and ask directions when you are lost. For those who are stubborn, it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle. For those who are childlike and humble, it's as easy as reaching for an outstretched hand when you have fallen.

Resource reading: Matthew 11