

IMPACT

I Must **P**ersonally **A**cknowledge **C**hrist **T**oday
Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own under-
standing; *in all your ways acknowledge Him* and He shall direct your path.
Proverbs 3:5-6

Passage: “Ephesians 6:13-17 “Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the **breastplate of righteousness**....”

Quote: “His robes for mine: O wonderful exchange! Clothed in my sin, Christ suffered ‘neath God’s rage. Draped in His righteousness, I’m justified. In Christ I live, for in my place He died. I cling to Christ, and marvel at the cost: Jesus forsaken, God estranged from God. Bought by such love, *my life is not my own*. My praise-my all-shall be for Christ alone.”¹

The breastplate was a covering of tough horn pieces over leather that protected the vital organs of an advancing soldier. The breastplate for the soldier of Christ is CONSECRATION, or setting himself apart to living a holy life of practical righteousness. Righteousness “is the character or quality of being right or just.” At our conversion, God applies the very righteousness of Christ to our account once and for all, and declares us justified in His sight.² *Practical* righteousness, however, is an on-going exercise that involves “avoiding all known sin, and performing every commanded duty; it is not a single action, but a *constant course of holy actions*, that (identifies) a person as holy. A righteous man makes righteousness the business of his life; *his daily care is how to please God in all he does.*”³

Your lifestyle says much about the genuineness of your profession. “And everyone who has this hope in [Christ] *purifies himself*, just as He is pure.... Little children, *let no one deceive you*. He who *practices* righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous.... Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God. In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: *Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God*....”⁴ “John was talking about the pattern of a person’s life. He was not talking about isolated acts of sin, but about the direction of one’s journey.

The gift of new life does *not* include spiritual amnesia , or wipe away old thought patterns, emotions, and responses. All these are still there; still deeply ingrained.”⁵ Those who are truly placing their trust in Christ as their Savior know well about the war within! “The flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are *contrary to one another*, so that you do not do the things that you wish.”⁶ The Spirit prompts us to use our body as an instrument of righteousness to serve God. The flesh—the remaining influence of our sinful “human nature”—prompts us to use our body as an instrument of unrighteousness to serve self. For Christians, “the power of our fallen nature is conquered but not destroyed.”⁷ We can have victory over temptation, but we must choose to do so by the power of the Holy Spirit who always “makes the way to escape.”⁸ Practical righteousness is purposeful! We must heed Paul’s warning to “*Flee* also youthful lusts; but *pursue righteousness*, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.”⁹ We must “put off, concerning [our] former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of [our] mind.” We must “put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.”¹⁰

It is inspirational to see the supreme dedication of “The Old Guard” at the Tomb of the unknown soldier. Self-discipline, personal sacrifice and commitment to their duty caused this elite group of men to guard the tomb through hurricanes and blizzards that have shut down the city of Washington! This same *consecration to duty* must characterize soldiers of Christ! Make no mistake, careless soldiers of Christ are vulnerable to the entanglements of the world; it is foolhardy to go into battle with your heart exposed to hostile fire. Demonstrate consecration to living a life of personal holiness. Daily put on the breastplate of righteousness!

1 Chris Andersen, Church Work Media 2 II Corinthians 5:21 3 W. Burkitt ; II Corinthians 10:31 4 I John 3:2, 7,-10 5 Teachers Commentary 6 Galatians 3:16-17 7 R.C. Sproul 8 See IMPACT 8; I Corinthians 10:13; II

“The breastplate of righteousness”