

Real And Ideal

Romans 7:14-25

Living in an imperfect environment makes a gap between the real and the ideal - as they are and as they ought to be. - **Romans 3:23**

Note Paul's struggle - typical of conscientious person's struggle to bridge gap between real and ideal (v 19)

Many good, but no perfect people, marriages, churches, businesses, etc People attempt, good & bad, to reconcile things as are & as ought to be.

Abolish The Ideal

Simply deny there is a perfect standard to which man is held accountable

This is the idea of the modernist and the humanist

Man determines what ought to be done by his situation at the time

Bible holds self up perfect, ideal standard - **2Timothy 3:16-17; James 1:25**

We must look into, measure and correct our lives by this standard

Many don't deny outright, but pervert till meaningless as perfect standard - **Galatians 1:8-9**

Accept The Real Without Improvement

Aware of imperfections, acknowledge sin, have no desire to correct

Christians don't continue in sin - **Romans 6:1; Hebrews 10:26**

However, all do sin - Christian must correct sins and do better - **1John 1:7-10**

Often fall short of ideal, so we must continue to press on to perfection - **Hebrews 6:1; 2Peter 3:17-18; Philippians 3:12-16**

Many so-called Christians show no desire to improve spiritual skills.

Minnie Pearl - Brother is no failure, started at bottom & liked it there

Abandon The Struggle For The Ideal

Paul had not attained ideal **Philippians 3:12**, yet he pressed on

Many abandon struggle for the ideal within themselves

Realize not perfect & not going to be, they cease all efforts to improve

Accept status quo, drift along, satisfied with present level of development

Some may turn to some form of escapism

Drugs, alcohol, hedonism - avoiding pressure to improve their lives

Some even turn to suicide to avoid the struggle Some forsake

struggle for ideal in personal relationships

Families, jobs, brethren, etc not ideal just leave them **Ephesians 5:21-6:9**

One relationship to another in search of ideal marriage, job, congregation

Unless take imperfect situation & try to improve it we become so dejected we become dropouts from life.

Solution Is To Patiently Strive For The Ideal

Christian works to avoid sin, yet he sins, so he repents & tries again - **1John 2:1-3**

Works on relationships to bring them closer to the ideal

Married to unbeliever does not leave, tries to influence with godly living - **1Peter 3:1-2; 1Corinthians 7:13**

Father children far from perfect - yet he tries to patiently teach & train - **Ephesians 6:4**

Bad Job situation - **Colossians 3:22-24**

Member of a "less than ideal" congregation, but can stay & maintain faithfulness, so he patiently works to make it better hangs in there making improvement when he can - **Ephesians 4:2-3;**

2Timothy 4:1-4

Impatience tends to wreck rather than build ideal situations.

Nagging and coercing may force external changes, but teaching changes men from the inside out.

The former may produce noticeable changes faster, but the latter produces real and lasting changes for the better.

We cannot allow our desire for instant results cause us to lower our standard so it can be more easily met.

Impatience can also cause one to simply give up on others too quickly.

However, we must realize that patience and long suffering have their limits.

Always A Gap

Yes, there will always be a gap between the real and ideal that must be bridged by the grace of God.

While we will not be lost for not reaching absolute ideal in this life - we may very well be lost for not reaching for it.

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