

You Can't Fight Sin With Sin

Some time ago I heard a prayer uttered by a servant of God who was deeply grieved over the lack of spirituality in the church of which he was the pastor. His prayer was, "O Lord, let me not become vexed with the ways of my people."

Always it is more important that we retain a right spirit toward others than that we bring them to our way of thinking, even if our way is right.

Satan has achieved a real victory when he succeeds in getting us to react in an unspiritual way toward sins and failures in our brethren. We cannot fight sin with sin or draw men to God by frowning at them in fleshly anger. "For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God."

Often acts done in a spirit of religious irritation have consequences far beyond anything we could have guessed. Moses allowed himself to become vexed with Israel and in a fit of pique smote the rock. With the same stroke he closed the land of promise against him for the rest of his life.

I heard of a certain man of God who had been greatly used in praying for the sick with the natural result that he was often called out at very inopportune times and under circumstances that were anything but pleasant. Once when sent for in the middle of the night he threw himself across the bed and complained to God for the lack of consideration the call evinced. That was the end for him. Thereafter no one was ever delivered in answer to his prayer, even though he sought with many tears to capture again the gift he had lost.

It is quite natural and even spiritual, to feel sorrow and heaviness when we see the professed followers of Christ walking in the ways of the world. And our first impulse may easily be to go straight to them and upbraid them indignantly. But such methods are seldom successful. The heat in our spirit may not be from the Holy Ghost and if it is not then it can very well do more harm than good.

In this as in everything else Christ is our perfect example. A prayerful, face-down meditation on the life of Christ will show us how to oppose with kindness and reprove with charity. And the power of the Holy Spirit within us will enable us to follow His blessed example.

from *Keys to The Deeper Life* by A.W. Tozer