

ACT LIKE IT!

Ephesians 2:19 (KJV) Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;

Ephesians 2:19 (MES) You're no longer wandering exiles. This kingdom of faith is now your home country. You're no longer strangers or outsiders. You belong here, with as much right to the name Christian as anyone.

- Have you ever met anyone who had money but just wouldn't spend it? We call such a person a MISER, one who has wealth, but who lives MISERABLY for the sake of saving and increasing his hoard.
- One old miser, because of his exceptional greed, had no friends. Just before he died he called his doctor, his lawyer, and a Pentecostal preacher together around his bedside. "I have always heard you can't take it with you, but I am going to prove you can," he said. "I have \$90,000 in cash under my mattress. It's in three envelopes of \$30,000 each. I want each of you to take one envelope now and just before they throw the dirt on me you throw the envelopes in." The three attended the funeral and each threw his envelope into the grave. On the way back from the cemetery, the doctor said, "I don't feel exactly right. I'm going to confess, I needed \$10,000 badly for some new hospital equipment, so I took out \$10,000 and threw only \$20,000 in the grave." The lawyer said, "I, too, must confess. I needed some money to pay off some gambling debts, so I took \$20,000 and threw in only \$10,000." The Pentecostal preacher said, "Gentlemen, I'm surprised, shocked, and ashamed of you. I don't see how you could hold out that money. I threw in my personal check for the full \$30,000."
- There are some famous real life misers in the history books (it's kind of pathetic to be famous for your greed!) ...
- Probably the world's most famous miser was **Hetty Green**. She remains in the Guinness Book of World Records as the most miserly woman in the world, and was coined "America's most detested woman" by her own biographer. Henrietta Howland Robinson Green, the legendary "Witch of Wall Street," took a New Bedford whaling inheritance and turned it into an estate worth \$100 million by the time of her death in 1916. She was the wealthiest woman of her time and the 34th wealthiest person ever, according to a recent study by the Wall Street Journal. She loved money above all else.

Although she was incredibly wealthy, Hetty never got to enjoy any of her vast fortune, simply because she was too stingy. She lived in a cold flat in Hoboken, wore the same shapeless black dress for days on end (layered with newspapers in cold weather), seldom bathed, reused envelopes, and ate mostly oatmeal heated on a radiator – all to save money! They say she existed on \$5.00 a week, all the while her bank account was increasing exponentially. When her 14-year-old son Ned hurt his leg severely while sledding, she would not take him to a doctor, and he ended up eventually having it amputated.

She apparently died of a stroke she had after a screaming match with a cook who worked for a friend. The cook was apparently being a little too liberal in the preparation of meals. After her death, Hetty's son Ned spent his inheritance freely on yachts, luxurious homes and female companions. When he died, he still had 125 million dollars, which went to his sister, Sylvia. And when she died she left her fortune to distant relatives, friends and charities. Hetty Green must have whirled in her grave.

- **William Randolph Hearst** was also a very rich and powerful man, owner of some of the world's most influential newspapers. He was also an art collector, and loved beautiful paintings. One day, Mr. Hearst saw a picture of two particularly exquisite works of art and decided that he just had to have them for his personal collection. He summoned one of his staff members and told him to mount a search to find out where those paintings were located and to purchase them, regardless of the cost. His staff spent weeks traveling, writing letters, and making phone calls to locate the two paintings. Finally they were found – in a warehouse on the other side of town in the very city in which Hearst operated his newspaper. Hearst was filled with anticipation as his staff led him to the warehouse where the paintings were located. When they arrived at the warehouse, Hearst was suddenly confused. "This is where the paintings are located?" he asked incredulously. "Yes," responded his staff member. "Is something wrong?" "Well, I already own this warehouse and everything in it!" he said. "Those paintings have been mine all along!"

Hearst already owned the riches he thought he had to search for! He had collected all kinds of property, but never used much of it for so long that he forgot it was his!

- Many Christians are like these two misers. We store up a vast quantity of sermons and services, songs and Bible verses. We are the ultimate collectors, BUT WE SELDOM PUT TO USE MUCH OF WHAT WE OWN!

- **Romans 8:15-17 (KJV)** For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.
- Did you know that every Christian is RICH in Christ? The Bible is my PASSPORT identifying me as a citizen of heaven, and also my BANKBOOK outlining all the promises of God that I can spend!
- **Howard Hughes** was incredibly wealthy, but he died living as a recluse, paranoid about germs. Like many misers, he never did get to enjoy his immense wealth! Many Christians are like him, living miserable lives when God has already made us joint-heirs with Christ! Guilt and fear are not proper motives for serving God!
- Rather, to compel us to live AS God's people, the Bible points out the staggering truth that because of God's mercy, we already ARE His people!
- The word THEREFORE is the language of logic, and also the language of God's Kingdom. It's like saying to the heir of a multibillion-dollar fortune, "SINCE you have all this, THEREFORE live like it! Stop being stingy, stop being fretful, stop being sullen. You're RICH – act like it!"
- There's only one thing worse than a rich man who flaunts his riches – a rich man who behaves like a pauper! That's the way it is with the children of God – it is wrong to flaunt our "status" but it is equally wrong to act like orphans!
- Holiness is not a bid to be noticed or loved or accepted by God. Instead, holiness is acting upon the truth that God has ALREADY noticed, loved and accepted us long before we did anything to warrant it! Holiness is simply living out the discovery that WE'RE ALIVE when we thought we were, and deserved to be, dead.
- When you travel through life, take your PASSPORT, the Bible! There are many benefits to being a citizen of Canada, but there are also many incredible benefits to being a citizen of Heaven.
- We just need to stop being MISERS, consider that we are children of the King of Kings, and ACT LIKE IT!

Since God is worthy of my praise ...

ACT LIKE IT! - MAKE EFFORT

- **1 Timothy 2:1** I exhort **therefore**, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men;
- **Hebrews 13:15** By him **therefore** let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.

Since it cost God so much to purchase my salvation ...

ACT LIKE IT! - YIELD TOTALLY

- **1 Corinthians 6:20** For ye are bought with a price: **therefore** glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.
- **Romans 12:1** I beseech you **therefore**, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

Since sin is beneath me as a child of God ...

ACT LIKE IT! - PROTECT PURITY

- **Romans 6:12** Let not sin **therefore** reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.
- **2 Corinthians 7:1** Having **therefore** these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

Since my sins are under the blood of Jesus Christ ...

ACT LIKE IT! - AVOID CONDEMNATION

- **2 Corinthians 5:17** **Therefore** if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.
- **Romans 8:1** There is **therefore** now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Since Jesus is returning soon ...
ACT LIKE IT! - STAY FOCUSED

- **Luke 12:40** Be ye **therefore** ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.
- **Romans 13:12** The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us **therefore** cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.

Since Jesus has forgiven me so much ...
ACT LIKE IT! - SHARE MERCY

- **Luke 6:36** Be ye **therefore** merciful, as your Father also is merciful.
- **Romans 14:13** Let us not **therefore** judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way.

Since God hears and answers prayer ...
ACT LIKE IT! - PRAY CONFIDENTLY

- **1 Timothy 2:8** I will **therefore** that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.
- **Hebrews 4:16** Let us **therefore** come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Since Jesus is taking care of all my needs ...
ACT LIKE IT! - OVERCOME WORRY

- **Matthew 6:34** Take **therefore** no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.
- **Luke 12:7** But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not **therefore**: ye are of more value than many sparrows.

Since God can bring good out of bad situations ...
ACT LIKE IT! - REJOICE ALWAYS

- **2 Timothy 2:3** Thou **therefore** endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.
- **2 Corinthians 12:9-10** And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly **therefore** will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. **Therefore** I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

Since billions still need to know about Jesus ...
ACT LIKE IT! - TAKE ACTION

- **Matthew 28:19** Go ye **therefore**, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:
- **Matthew 22:9** Go ye **therefore** into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage.