

Walking Honestly

“Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying” (Rom. 13:13).

It is said that rabbit owners witness many behavioral changes during their animals’ lifetime. Most of these changes involve a rabbit’s development through its normal aging cycles. According to “veterans” in the rabbit world, the bunnies have psychological needs due to the aging process. Monitoring their behavior, therefore, is encouraged so that an owner will recognize signs of illness and quickly provide for the creature’s safety.

Since I have never owned rabbits and have hardly been around them, I admit that I have never worried about their behavioral changes. (I’m sure this would be of much concern to someone who is very close to his pet rabbit.) I have noticed behavioral changes, however, in fallen human beings. Because of the unholy nature of man, believers are often admonished in the Scriptures to seek behavior patterns that are becoming to holy living.

In the text before us, the word “honestly” means “in a seemly manner, decently.” In the first Corinthian epistle, the word is translated “comely” (7:35). It is also rendered “decently” in the memorable line, “Let all things be done decently and in order” (1 Cor. 14:40). In another letter, we find this admonition, “That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing” (1 Thess. 4:12). Three truths are set forth in our present text.

To walk honestly is to evade debauchery! In the same breath in which the Holy Spirit speaks of walking honestly, He adds, “not in rioting and drunkenness,” or not in wild parties and intoxicated revelry. The Romans were known for their night festivals, which were basically drunken banquets of lewdness and debauchery in the names of their false gods. To walk honestly is to stay away from this fleshly madness.

To walk honestly is to elude defilement! Also associated with walking honestly is the warning, “not in chambering and wantonness.” A chamber was a place to lie down, a place of rest, but in this context, it apparently has to do with sexual activity, cohabitation, whether lawful or unlawful. The next word “wantonness” refers to “unbridled lusts, and shamelessness,” and further calls us to walk honestly in this day of grace.

To walk honestly is to escape dissension! The last instruction that is connected with walking honestly is, “not in strife and envying.” While the word “strife” carries with it the idea of “contention, or variance,” the word “envying” alludes to “jealousy and rivalry.” Divisions and quarrels cannot help but arise from the debauchery and defilement of sin. May the Holy Spirit enable us to walk honestly, to walk in a becoming manner, decently and in order.

