

“Alvin, You’ve Got the Using Kind of Religion”

The Power of Practical Christianity

I John 1:7

Converted in 1914 at a Gospel Meeting conducted by H. H. Russell, a minister in churches of Christ, Alvin York, commonly referred to in historical accounts as a “hell raiser,” turned his life around. He became a very devoted Christian and was strictly against war and killing. However, because the churches of Christ have no creed forbidding warfare, the draft board would not accept his application to be a conscientious objector. On his draft card he wrote “Don’t want to fight.” However, after many weeks in the army filled with Bible study and prayer, Alvin decided there were times war was moral and approved by God.

In Europe, with only nine men, York captured a machinegun nest and 132 Germans, killing nine Germans himself. After the war, Alvin concluded war was never acceptable. Though a hero, he refused many opportunities for financial gain, thinking it wasn’t appropriate to profit from what he had done. He returned home to promote the education of poor and illiterate children in rural Tennessee. The Rotary Club attempted to raise money to buy him a farm, but their efforts fell short and he was saddled with a large mortgage he was never able to pay off.

In the movie about his exploits, the words of this sermon title were spoken by his friend, Rosier Pile, a man he converted, and who later became Alvin’s preacher. Alvin wondered why more people who claimed to be Christians did not let the Scriptures guide their lives in difficult decisions. The words of preacher Pile answered the question. We all need this **using** kind of religion.

The Using Kind of Religion

- Focus is required (Jn. 4:34)
- Space needs to be freed up (Eph. 4:17-22)
- The empty space must be filled by God (Eph. 4:23-32; cf. Lk. 11:24-26)
- Christ in us, is our only hope of glory (Col. 1:24-29)

The Place of the Congregation

- A gathering kind of people (I Cor. 11:17-20)
- A closely knit people, working together (Eph. 4:16; I Cor. 12:12-27)
- Where small things take on great significance (cf. Mk. 12:41-44; Lk. 16:10)
- We are about the Masters business!

The Squeeze

- When Satan puts on the squeeze, if we give him no place in our heart, his deeds cannot come out (Mk. 7:17-23).
- Filled with Jesus, Satan’s squeeze can only bring out the things of Jesus (Lk. 6:45)

The **using** kind of religion cannot be hidden. It is practical and shows itself to be focused consistently through out life. Both small and great things are a part of a daily walk with the Christ.