

RUSSIA SEMINAR TALKS, SEEKERS TRACK
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LECTURE 4: WHAT'S WRONG WITH MANKIND?

INTRODUCTION

In US recently, a book published with the title I'm OK, You're OK, seeking to assure readers that they could overcome their problems by raising their self-esteem. But the prevalence of human problems in our world indicates that something is seriously wrong with this evaluation.

If education and wealth are the solutions to human problems, then why were the largest, most devastating wars in history fought in this century by the wealthiest, most advanced nations on earth? Why do educated and wealthy people still have so many problems of their own? Why are there so many relatively poor people who live happy and fulfilling lives, in spite of such disadvantages?

GOD'S STANDARDS FOR REALLY LIVING:

In the Bible, God sets forth two standards by which we should live our lives (Matt 22:34-40 and pars; Dt 6:5; Lev 19:18):

- (1) Love God with everything we are and have.
- (2) Love our neighbor as ourselves.

Another way of expressing the second of these is "Do to others as you would have them do to you" (Lk 6:31; Mt 7:12). In spite of natural disasters like floods and earthquakes, this planet would almost be heaven on earth if people would only treat others as they themselves would wish to be treated.

NOT ABLE TO LIVE UP TO OWN STANDARDS:

The trouble is that we humans are not able to live up to these standards. If we examine ourselves honestly, we find all sorts of bad attitudes inside: selfishness, gluttony, laziness, pride, impatience - are the ones I especially have difficulty with.

Many of these bad attitudes and actions can be characterized as our having difficulty sacrificing short-term pleasures for long-term benefits, i.e., we will not trust God with our lives, that he knows better than we what really makes for fulfillment and happiness.

What is really going on is that we are trying to be god, but are not able to do so. We don't know enough, we aren't strong