

Unrooting the R.A.G.S.

When a person claims to be a Christian, we expect that person to be more like Christ. Yet there are people who attend church for decades, claim to be Christians, but are still crusty and grumpy. What are some character developments we expect from a Christ-follower? Using an acronym developed by John Ortberg, we will explore what “rags” a Christian should shed off (resentment, anxiety, greed and superiority). Oswald Chamber suggests, “If you are still the same miserable crosspatch, set on your own way, then it is a lie to say that God has saved and sanctified you.”

Resentment vs. Resolve: One of those crippling emotions in life is resentment. It makes a person so self-focused that they cannot see anyone else’s perspective, especially God’s. Yet, when we remember that God ultimately will bring proper resolution to a situation, it allows us to release those feelings of resentment and bitterness, and trust God to resolve the issue.

Anxiety vs. Clear-mindedness: Different situations bring anxiety and fear out in us. In those moments, we may lose perspective and our judgement can become clouded. Through prayer, a person can seek to release those anxieties and gain a clearer perspective of a situation.

Greed vs. Generosity: Many times, we lose sight of God’s overall purpose of salvation i.e. to restore creation, including us, to its original purpose, not in us just filling “the minimal entrance requirements into heaven.” One specific way is to decrease the “gap” between the haves and have-nots through generosity.

Superiority vs. Humility: People tend to have an inclining of “I can do that better than you.” And even if it is true, it’s the attitude that tends to inflate a person’s ego instead of seeing how a person can appropriately evaluate oneself.

Leader’s note: This series contains a lot of self-reflection. Encourage your students to bring their journals or to begin journaling; you may want to provide some journal books for students (often available at the dollar store).