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## Heart and Soul ... A Weekly Meditation

September 13, 2015

Isn't It Enough To Be Decent?

*“God’s goal is for us to become mature adults – to be fully grown,  
measured by the standard of the fullness of Christ.”*

Ephesians 4:13b (Common English Bible)

My daughter, Rachael has recently received a promotion from Holland America Cruise Lines. After eight weeks as a ship photographer, Rachael was selected to receive special training by world-renown portrait photographer, Joe Craig, for Black Label Studio work. No longer will Rachael walk the common spaces of the ship, photographing the guests of the cruise line. She will now occupy a studio aboard the ship and accept appointments. More importantly, the standard of excellence for her photography has been significantly raised. Her work will be measured by the standard of Joe Craig who has spent a career building his product image.

The cost of her work has also risen – as much as four times the cost of the product she originally created for Holland America guests. A quick glance at passengers’ reviews online, shows wide dissatisfaction with the increased price structure. Yet, for every critical review – every single one at my review of posted comments – surprise and delight is expressed at the unusually high quality of the product. “Outstanding,” “We were smitten” and “Far and away better than anything I have seen before” are customary comments.

In matters of faith, many today are asking the question, “Isn’t it enough to be decent?” Increasingly, people have little interest in the Bible, the church or worship. They declare that “right” behavior is what really matters. One difficulty with this argument is that the standard for this “right” behavior isn’t identified. More, few are prepared to acknowledge that their vague sense of what is “right” draws heavily upon inherited spiritual capital. They never wrestle with the question, “How long will decency last if the Christian faith continues to decline?”

The larger question is, “What pulls us forward in this life?” Do we settle for the common photograph available for a modest price or will our standard be higher? We all strive for something. Here, in Ephesians, we learn that God’s desire is that our standard for moral behavior and values be nothing less than the standard of Christ. In photography parlance, God invites us to nothing less than a Black Label Studio portrait for our life. Isn’t it enough to be decent? No, it is not enough. And the practice of our faith is what will take us into God’s studio. The result will be a life “far and away better than anyone could have imagined.”

Doug Hood