

Rom. 14:19 So then let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another.



THE LENEXA EDIFIER



John 8:32

"And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free"

MARCH 22, 2015

WHO DO YOU FEAR?

Jim Stauffer

The wise man tells us in **Eccl. 12:13***Fear God and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.* We consider ourselves believers in God and Christ. We have planned our lives to conform to His will by the transforming message of the gospel. (**Rom. 12:1,2**) Yet we regularly fight the battle over whom we fear and respect.

In rearing our children our goal is to teach such reverence for God and trust in Him to ensure they make proper choices when faced with temptations brought on by peer pressure. We want them to, *Remember also thy Creator in the days of thy youth.....*(**Eccl. 12:1**)

The elders and other strong members of the local church stress such reliance on the word of God for decision making so weaker members can grow stronger by, as Joshua of old did, choosing to serve the Lord rather than pleasing those in the world. (**Josh. 24:15**) Consider the choice the Hebrew midwives made in fearing God and preserving the life of Moses. (**Ex. 1:17**)

But it all comes down to whom we fear. Jesus said it this way. **Matt. 10:28** *And be not afraid of them that kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.* Can you see the clear choice called for by the Lord? He is telling us to decide which life we desire most by deciding which power we fear more. Is earthly mortal life, which is temporal, of greater value to us than the eternal life of the soul?

Are you able in your everyday decisions to opt for the wiser long term choice opposed to satisfying the immediate urge at the expense of your future? This is the kind of choice we are called to make. God and Christ have offered us reconciliation from the separation from them caused by our sin. (**Isa. 59:1,2; 2 Cor. 5:17-19**)

Who has the greater power? Is it your friends who can withhold their friendship and social relationship or God who can deny your soul entrance into heaven?

The answer is found in the value of each offer. Is a harmonious social life for 70-80 years on earth equal in value to an eternity in bliss where there will be no sorrow, tears, death, mourning or pain? God offers a far greater reward for the reverence He demands and thus

the loss is far greater if we choose someone or something over Him.

Paul cites a very typical example of the failure to fear or respect the right authority in his letter to the Galatians. **Gal. 6:12** *As many as desire to make a fair show in the flesh, they compel you to be circumcised; only that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ.* Yet, before this verse Paul gives some wise instruction on the subject of endurance. After all, sustaining our loyalty to God and Christ is a challenge to our endurance. He says in **verse 9**, *And let us not be weary in well-doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.* We tend to become weary in the face of resistance. The persecution Paul says will come to all faithful Christians should be embraced rather than feared. **2 Tim. 3:12** *Yea, and all that would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.* (cf. **Phil. 1:27-30**) Discouragement is another thing that challenges the child of God, yet is overcome when one trusts in and reveres the One who has the power to save and sustain. **1 Pet. 5:6** *Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time; 7 casting all your anxiety upon him, because he careth for you. 8 Be sober, be watchful: your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour, 9 whom withstand stedfast in your faith, knowing that the same sufferings are accomplished in your brethren who are in the world.*

In the face of these things Paul cites these Jewish brethren who are struggling with the persecution brought on by their friends and relatives who still cling to the Law of Moses. They are looking to compromise the message of the gospel by demanding circumcision, a sign of the covenant with Abraham and Moses, become a part of the salvific message of Christ. They desire to lessen the tensions with their national brethren. You see they are choosing to submit to those who have the power over a social relationship between mortals rather than to the One who can offer an eternal relationship for the soul.

Which is the wiser choice? Which offers the greater reward? They really are not close in value. Who do you fear? Man or God?

Why Prayer Doesn't Work

by Chris Simmons

James describes prayer as a spiritual tool that can *"accomplish much"* (**James 5:16**). The word for *"accomplish"* (*"availeth"*, ASV & KJV) in that verse comes from the Greek word *"ischuo"* which W. E. Vine defines as "to be of force, to be effective, capable of producing results." Yet as powerful as prayer can be, there are perhaps times in our lives when prayer doesn't produce the results we seek nor is it effective in accomplishing what we desire. Why is that? We can be assured, if prayer isn't working, we should not look to blame God, but rather we need to look in God's word which explains why prayer sometimes will not produce the results we seek and then look in the mirror and examine ourselves. When we turn to God's word, we will see that prayer is not effective when...

Our prayers to God are infrequent and sporadic.

Effectual prayers are those which are offered unceasingly. Paul stated succinctly in **I Thessalonians 5:17**, *"pray without ceasing."* Prayer is to be something that we are *"devoted"* to (**Colossians 4:2; Romans 12:12**). Strong's Expanded Greek-Hebrew Dictionary defines "devoted" as "to be earnest towards... to persevere, be constantly diligent... to attend assiduously all the exercises... to adhere closely to." All too often, prayer is treated like a set of jumper cables which we only turn to when all else fails to get our life going. Prayer doesn't work when it's not exercised continually throughout our lives, in good times and in bad.

We lack persistence in our prayers. We are taught in God's word that persistence is essential in our prayers before God. Jesus taught in **Luke 11:5-8** of the man who receives his request from his friend *"because of his persistence."* The temptation can be strong to become discouraged when our prayers do not initially accomplish what we desire them to. For that reason, Jesus taught the parable of the judge and the widow who sought his protection in **Luke 18:1-8** which Luke prefaced by saying, *"now He was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart."* If what we seek in prayer is truly important to our spiritual well-being, should we not persist in our communication to God through prayer for such? Prayer doesn't work when we give up!

We pray for that which is not according to God's will.

John wrote about the confidence we can have in our prayers to God, but only those prayers that are in accordance with God's will. **I John 5:14-15**, *"And this is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him."* If we are expecting prayer to accomplish only that which is selfish in nature, we are sorely mistaken. James spoke of those who *"ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures"* (**James 4:3**). Prayer doesn't work when it is

according to our will and not God's!

We pray without faith. Prayer will never accomplish anything if we doubt God's ability, wisdom and love to provide the proper response. We read in **James 1:5-8**, *"But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways."* Jesus said in **Mark 11:24**, *"Therefore I say to you, all things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they shall be granted you."* Prayer will never work if we truly don't believe it will!

When we simply repeat phrases in our prayers without meaning. Jesus spoke in what is described as the Sermon on the Mount (**Matthew chapters 5 - 7**) of those who use *"meaningless repetition"* in their prayers before God. Jesus is not describing someone who uses nonsensical words in their prayers (i.e., babble or gibberish), but someone who uses real words in their prayers that they don't mean from their heart. It is useless to memorize words and utter them by rote as a prayer to God when they don't truly reflect our *"heart's desire"* (**Romans 10:1**). Prayer doesn't work when it doesn't come from our heart (**cf I Corinthians 14:15**).

We don't do our part. There isn't anything that we might pray for that we don't bear a responsibility in doing our part to bring about the results that we seek. Jesus said in **Matthew 7:7-8**, *"Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it shall be opened."* If we expect to *"receive," "find,"* and have doors *"opened,"* then we bear the responsibility to *"ask," "seek,"* and *"knock."* For example, if we pray for our daily bread (**cf Matthew 6:11**), then we bear the responsibility to go and seek the job that provides for the wages that we need to buy the bread. If we pray for wisdom and strength to overcome the temptations we face, then we bear the responsibility to read and diligently study God's word (**cf II Timothy 2:15**). Prayer doesn't work when we don't fulfill what is our responsibility to do!

When we turn our back on God. If we choose to live a life in rebellion to God and His word, we should never expect that prayer will accomplish anything. Consider the following passages. **Proverbs 15:8**, *"The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord, but the prayer of the upright is His delight."* **Proverbs 15:29**, *"The Lord is far from the wicked, but He hears the prayer of the righteous."* **I Peter 3:12**, *"For the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and His ears attend to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil."* **I John 3:21-22**, *"Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight."* Sin will indeed hinder our prayers (**I Peter 3:7**). All these passages (and many more) clearly teach that prayer doesn't work when you choose to turn away

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from God and walk in darkness rather than walking in the light (**1 John 1:6-8**).

If prayer isn't working, rest assured it's not because of God. Let us examine our lives in light of these biblical truths in order that prayer might accomplish all that God purposed for it.

Spiritual Experience But No Organized Religion?

Bobby L. Graham

Question: Some people today say they are seeking a deep spiritual experience apart from any ties with organized religion. Would you please address this in Truth Magazine.

Answer: Yes, this cry has been heard over several decades, stemming primarily from the "me-ism" so rampant in the 1960's and the resulting and recurring attempts to placate the conscience, while doing it on one's own terms. It has not been many months since I learned of a young person who had taken this route. To a lesser degree, many of those involved in the house-church movement (not those meeting in houses for justifiable reasons) have manifested something of the same attitude and tendency.

What do these people mean when they speak of a spiritual experience? They have re-defined spirituality by rejecting the scriptural ideas found in the Bible and manufacturing their own ideas. Therein lies the fundamental problem and error of this approach. To claim to be religious without the church is to make a distinction that is not founded in Biblical truth, for the New Testament demonstrates that all of God's children are in His family, the church (**Acts 2:47; Gal. 3:26-27**). How can one be acceptable to God as a religious person without being in Christ's church? He cannot! Another basic error here involved is the assumption that one can choose his own religious approach to God and God will accept it. Has that ever been the case? Of course not. From the beginning God has prescribed and regulated the faith that He desires creatures to hold and the practice which He approves for them (**Gen. 4; Heb. 11:4**). Never has God left such to human discretion! When people involve themselves in such efforts to be spiritual on their terms, they are guilty of presumption, the great sin about which the psalmist warned (**Psm. 19:13**) and come close to the high handed sin of the Old Testament for which there was no atonement. Under every dispensation (administrative plan for running the household), the Bible has warned adherents of the high-handed approach by speaking of going beyond the established way of the Lord or subtracting from what God revealed. What causes us to think that God has changed His mind about people who play "fast and loose" with His Word (**1 Cor. 4:6**)?

Why does this attitude and approach prevail in so many quarters? To begin, I must admit that the attitudes and actions observed in former religious situations have not been the best. In fact, they have caused some to become disaffected or disillusioned with what they call "organized religion" or "the church." Their continuing

mantra is that they believe in Jesus, but not the church. The sham of modern "Christianity" lacks the validation of New Testament teaching and the support of divine authority. It is far from being what first-century Christians believed and practiced. The claim to be Christians doesn't ring true to people who have studied their Bibles. Among those practicing what the New Testament pattern reveals, attitudes toward the Bible often fall short of the godward attitude that all disciples must have toward the Lord's will and of the humble, loving attitude that they should show toward one another. Succinctly, they have seen the hypocrisy and don't like it. In their immaturity they have decided to craft something better; their knee-jerk reaction is wrong. Their spirituality is little different from that of those claiming special revelations from God or powers to communicate with the dead. It is not far from subjective validation to E.S.P. All of them talk about how they feel, think, and desire to do.

Consider the spirituality of Biblical teaching in this summary of what we have said to this point:

1. Human beings were created by God in His spiritual image so they could worship and serve Him along the spiritual lines established by God in the Scriptures (**Gen. 1:26-27; Heb. 12:9; Jn. 4:24**).
2. The spiritual man (who depends upon the spiritual revelation from God) measures every part of his life in service to God by the only spiritual standard God has provided - the Bible (**1 Cor. 2:13-15**). Subjective thinking, personal preference, and feelings are no more reliable today than in the day of Cain, Jereboam, Naaman, or the old prophet.
3. One can never use his personal spiritual thermometer to measure his spiritual temperature; he must use the one supplied by God. God says that we must begin by admitting that what He has written for our learning is His commandment to us (**1 Cor. 14:37**). The ones claiming to be spiritual at Corinth were mistaken, because they had rejected what God wanted from them.
4. The spiritual service of the Lord includes the Christian's being in the universal church, as seen earlier, and a role for the local church in the encouragement and instruction of each person. One can never repudiate the church without repudiating God. Is it reasonable to think that Jesus died for a non-essential? Is it reasonable to think that we should then view the church as non-essential?

The lesson for those protesting New Testament faith and practice is that they must learn the lesson of discipleship - thinking and doing as their Master. The lesson for those failing to exemplify godly attitudes is that they must repent for their benefit and for the profit of others.

(Truth Magazine, Feb. 2015, pp. 9-10)

There'll be no flooding in heaven
The streams there will placidly flow
Past the dwellings of faithful believers
Immersed in "much water" below

By Grant Clothier

Eph. 2:19 So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, 20 being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone; 21 in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord;

1Pet. 2:9 But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

Psa. 1:1 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.

HOURS OF WORSHIP

Sunday A.M. 9:30 Bible Study

Sunday A.M. 10:20 Assembled Worship

Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship

Wednesday P.M. 7:00 Bible Study and Worship

Visitors welcome

We conduct in home Bible Studies

We offer Correspondence Courses

Evangelist and Editor Jim Stauffer

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NEWS AND NOTES:

SICK IN NEED OF PRAYERS:

J.R. DANIEL, IRENE HURD, MARY CZIRR AND JAN PATRICK. GRANT CLOTHIER HAS RETURNED HOME AND JESSIE GIBSON HAD ANOTHER SURGERY TO REMOVE INFECTION FROM THE WOUND OF HER FIRST SURGERY. SHE IS IN OLATHE MED CENTER.

OUR BIBLE CLASS ON SUNDAY IS THE STUDY OF THE GOSPEL OF JOHN - WITH RON PECK. WEDNESDAY OUR STUDY IS THE SUBJECT OF PREMILLENNIALISM.

SUNDAY MORNING SERMON:
HAVE WE SETTLED?



What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear the gospel - Romans 10:17

Believe in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

Repent of sins - Acts 17:30

Confess Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

Be Baptized for remission of sins

Acts 2:38

Be Faithful unto death - Revelation 2:10