

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.

January

3

2016

I AM RESOLVED TO BE MORE ENERGETIC SPIRITUALLY

Jim Stauffer

I can only speak for myself when I say one of the greatest feelings is when I am filled with energy. Too often though I neglect the demand of my body for proper exercise that fuels that energy. Eating appropriately combined with consistent and moderate exercise fills me with energy and what a great feeling it is!

It is amazing how similar spiritual life is to physical in that regard. Paul makes this comparison between the athlete and the Christian. **1 Cor. 9:24** *Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. 25 And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. 26 I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: 27 But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.* He tells Timothy to *....refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness. 8 For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come (1 Tim. 4:7,8).* The warning here is two-fold, avoid that which is bad for you (physically bad as in too much food - spiritually bad as in profane fables) and busy yourself with godly exercise which has an even greater value than physical. So, while we need to give heed to our mortal bodies, it is even a greater need and reward to care for our spiritual bodies.

The purpose of spiritual exercise is to avoid offense to God or man. If we do what pleases God, no man has a right to offense and we can have a *conscience void of offense*, as Paul says (**Acts 24:16**).

Spiritual energy is derived from proper feeding as well as exercise. In both diet and exercise we must be careful to select those things that are healthy. Paul told Timothy to *hold the pattern of sound (healthful) words which thou hast heard from me in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus (2 Tim. 1:13).* The Hebrew writer then explains the need for growth and maturity spiritually by using the analogy of the advanced diet of an adult compared to a babe (**Heb. 5:12-14**).

So, while it is necessary to eat properly physically, it

is as well spiritually. Therefore, Paul tells the elders at the church in Ephesus to do just that for its membership. **Acts 20:28** *Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.*

Much like exercise then we must see that the spiritual food we ingest is healthy. Those sound words Paul recommended to Timothy are to be held closely and not the poisonous message of the world. **1 Tim. 6:20** *Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called:* It is possible in our search for knowledge to actually leave knowledge for empty instruction. **Prov. 19:27** *Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge.* So, just like those M&M Peanuts can keep me anchored to my chair rather than being active in exercise, the message of the world can be palatable and distract me from the *sound words* of Scripture.

We all re-evaluate the habits we have either developed or fallen into as a new year begins. Our relationship to God and our hope of eternal glory, both of which carry far greater importance and value can be enhanced by some simple resolutions.

Let me resolve to: 1) Give more time to Bible reading than to various forms of entertainment offered by the world. 2) Share my time with the brethren more frequently that we may have a greater influence on each other than the world offers. 3) Be more sensitive and responsive to the needs of others, thinking of them first. 4) Make the worship of God take priority over all other things in my life, whether family or community. These commitments will significantly alter our schedules for the coming year.

Even greater is the impact they will have on the quality of our lives and the effort we can have on the lives of those around us.

So, with these thoughts, let me say to you all, Happy New Year! May your lives in service to Him be all He would ask of you as you, *....seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. (Mat. 6:33)*

Are We Secularizing Our Children?

By Sewell Hall

Several years ago, a Christian who was the president of a large state university stated his belief that students do not lose their faith because of evolution in the science department or humanism in the philosophy, psychology, or sociology departments. Rather, he felt that they become so absorbed with secular studies and secular activities that they do not take time for spiritual things. They neglect attendance at services, neglect Bible study and make their friends among worldly people. They die spiritually, not from poison but from spiritual malnutrition. Today, this is happening to children long before they get to college. And some of the finest, best intentioned and most sacrificial and loving parents are contributing to it.

Please pardon a personal reference. My parents were very concerned about keeping control of their children. My father complained 50 years ago that the schools were trying to take over the rearing of children and he was determined not to let that happen to his family. Anything the school planned that conflicted with church activities was considered an encroachment by the school. We did not participate in organized sports, either in school or in summer programs. We did not play in the band or join the scouts. As a rule, when school was out we came home.

You may think my parents extreme. Perhaps they were. But one thing was certain: We had time for whatever Christians were doing anywhere in the areas where we lived. We not only attended every regular service and every service of gospel meetings in our home congregation, but we attended most services of any meeting anywhere in driving distance even when meetings lasted the greater part of two weeks. Preachers who came preaching in the area learned to expect the Hall family near the front of the building night after night. I never remember going out of town for a ball game, but I remember many trips out of town to gospel meetings and lectureships. Those gospel preachers became our heroes and the members of those congregations became the friends whose respect and confidence we most desired.

This is not to say that all parents should adopt the policies of my parents. I did not adhere to all of them in raising my children. But surely some limits need to be imposed on the run-away secularism now so common. Children are the busiest people in town. Schools have lengthened the school day and long bus rides often require children to leave home very early in the morning and return late in the afternoon. Then they have homework to get. Much extra time in school is spent in humanistic activities. Children are constantly exposed to vulgarity and profanity not only from fellow-students, but even from teachers. They desperately need counteracting spiritual influences.

Many conscientious parents, however, want still more secular opportunities for their children than the standard curriculum provides. They encourage

participation in extra-curricular sports organized by the school and in others that are privately organized, occupying afternoons and Saturdays and even portions of Sundays as well as the summer months. Students not inclined to sports are encouraged to join the band with long hours of after-school practice, summer band camps, compulsory Friday night football in the fall and concerts in the spring. In addition, there are often private music lessons. Scouts also provide wholesome experiences, and parents want their children to be involved. In fact, they feel that their children are deprived if they miss any of these opportunities, and so to provide them parents pack their own schedules full, taxiing the children here and there and sacrificially spending their energy and money.

What is wrong with these things? Generally nothing. The problem is that they are dominating children's lives. No wonder it has become impossible to plan a gospel meeting at a time when it does not conflict with some kind of secular activity! No wonder it is exceptional when students attend every night of such a meeting! No wonder very few parents and even fewer young people are to be seen at special services beyond their own congregation!

A negative attitude seems to be developing toward anything the church plans beyond the usual Sunday morning, Sunday night, and Wednesday night assemblies or toward any extension of evening activities beyond one hour. The church is considered insensitive when anything is planned that encroaches on children's busy secular activities.

When do we expect our children to change from this heavily weighted emphasis on this world to "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness?" If they become accustomed to a secular schedule in elementary school, high school will only increase the pressure. College allows still less time for the Lord unless there is a purposeful determination to keep the lid on secular demands. If such priorities have not been learned under the guidance of parents, it is unlikely they will be developed when students are on their own in college. By the time those school years of immersion in secularism are over, there is usually very little spiritual life left in them.

And it all begins when they are young!

WE HAVE BECOME STOIC

One of the characteristics of the ancient Stoics (**Acts 17: 18**) was ataraxia -- meaning "freedom from emotions." The word, "Stoic," means "unmoved by joy or grief." The Stoics strove to master their feelings in order not to be affected by even personal tragedies. Their personalities, therefore, were cold and lifeless.

In over-reacting to emotionalism, some of us have taken on the spirit of stoicism. This is obvious in the atmosphere of worship in many places. From beginning to end it is bland, stereotyped and formal, with the environment of a morgue. Worship should be a joyous occasion where the spirit is lifted up and the heart is satisfied. Like David, we should be able to say, "*I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go to the house of*

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the Lord" (Psa. 122:1)

Stoical Singing: -- The leader stands like a statue, head buried in the songbook, dragging along a song that has been worn out by over-exposure. The singing is atrocious! But he works his way through the first song and the second one goes about the same way. After the singing of two songs (routine for years), it is time to stand for prayer.

The third song has an "Amen" at the close, but, no, you cannot sing that as it would show emotion or is too sectarian. I do not know what we are going to do with all the "Amens" in the Bible. The song is finished and the leader retreats to the back of the auditorium where he sits until the invitation song, and then there is a fifteen-second lull between the time the preacher stops and the song begins.

Brethren, song leaders can make or break a service. How uplifting is worship when there is good singing -- songs that warm the heart and brighten our hope. But brethren will allow anyone to lead singing, frequently dressed in untidy clothes, and we wonder why people are getting turned off.

In meetings, some brethren use a different song leader each night, and some are not ready. Churches send hundreds of miles and pay a lot of money to have a good meeting only to hinder it by not having the best man available to lead the singing. Some places would be wise to bring in a song leader for the meeting and do some extra singing. What great meetings could be had if such were done.

Stoical Prayers: -- Sometimes prayers are uttered in rote -- empty sayings that are used over and over (**Matt. 6:7**). Spontaneity is lacking as phrases are used over and over. We need to ask, "**Lord, teach us to pray**" (**Lk. 11:1**). The brother leading the prayer should speak loudly enough to be heard and when he finishes, there should be some "Amens." Paul said an "Amen" is in order at the giving of thanks, provided we understand what is said (**1 Cor. 14:16**).

Stoical Observance Of The Lord's Supper:

At a given moment men come from all directions and line up at the table. A brother, without explanation, gives thanks and the bread is passed. The fruit of the vine is treated similarly. After the Supper, they grab the collection plates, also without explanation, and start down the aisles. By habit the members know what is happening but the visitors are unprepared. Brethren, the greatness of Jesus and his unspeakable love at Calvary deserves more from us than a hurry-up appearance at the table.

Stoical Preaching: -- Preaching, with not a few, has become "talks." There is not much preaching to it. The audience is asleep in five minutes from a monotone and maybe a topic that is as irrelevant as the Pony Express. Preachers need to put some "fire" and enthusiasm in their sermons instead of acting like a Harvard theologian. We are preaching to common people with common problems, hence we need to gear our preaching to common needs, and preach with all the vim and vitality we can muster.

Have you noticed how gospel preachers are

introduced anymore? It's usually, "After the next song, George will bring us a lesson." With such an exuberant introduction, dull singing, a stereotypical prayer and ritualistic communion, the audience is comatose by the time the preacher is ready to preach. What has happened to the affectionate designation of "brother?" And, has the word, "sermon" become obsolete, or the expression "preach to us," antiquated?

From the pulpit the preacher sees stone-faced zombies who sit emotionless. There is no response, no "Amens," no expression of approval when the truth is preached. We have become too austere! Hearing Christ preached should excite us with jubilation and joy.

Thank God for vibrant churches and vigorous Christians who sing with tears of happiness, who pray with fervency, who are touched with gratitude when the Supper is taken, and who appreciate gospel preaching and show it. Give us live, active, caring, Spirit-filled (**Eph. 5:18**) churches that endeavor to serve the Lord in a world of sin.

By Weldon Warnock

The Following was written by Benjamin Franklin, the Gospel Preacher of the middle 1800's in a paper he produced called the Reformer

Parties, Plays, Dancing, etc.

Paul taught that young women should be sober and discreet, keeping at home; and that young men should be sober-minded; directing Titus to show himself a pattern, in doctrine, incorruptness, gravity and sincerity. (**Titus 2**) *Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father by him* (**Col. 3:17**). **Phil. 3:18** *For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: 19 Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things. 20 For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: **Matt. 12:36** But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. **Eph. 5:4** Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks.*

Now we think a party, play or dance at which all are sober-minded, grave, mind not earthly things, have their conversation in heaven, avoid every idle word, do all in the name of the Lord, without any foolish talking or jesting would be rather a new thing under the sun.

Young gentlemen and ladies, if you would be truly happy imitate the character of our Divine Lord, imbibe the gracious sentiments which fell from his immaculate lips, and he will fill your hearts with joy unspeakable and full of glory in this world; and in the world to come, admit you to his presence where there is fullness of joy.

The Life and Times of Benjamin Franklin, Joseph Franklin

1 Cor. 11:1 *Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.*

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

OUR ADDRESS IS:

7845 Cottonwood Dr.

Lenexa, Kansas 66216

913-764-9170

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IN YOUR PRAYERS: J.R. DANIEL,
GRANT CLOTHIER, MARY CZIRR, JAN
PATRICK AND STEVE WIMP.

OUR CURRENT STUDIES ARE: SUNDAY
MORNING: THE BOOK OF ACTS -
BYRON TAYLOR AND WEDNESDAY
EVENING: THE SCHEME OF
REDEMPTION - JIM STAUFFER

REMEMBER EMALI PRICE AND BABY
MADYLIN AND HEATHER ECHOLS AND
BABY HANNAH

SUNDAY MORNING SERMON:
A LESSON ON DEACONS



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