

As Greg Nichols points out, a prayerless person is ungrateful because he does not thank God, self-righteous because he does not confess his sins to God, self-centered because he does not ask God to bless other people, presumptuous because he does not pray even for his daily needs, irreverent because he does not praise God nor pray for His kingdom to come, and unfriendly to God because his prayerlessness evidences that he does not enjoy being with God. Quoted by Joel Beeke in *How to Cultivate Private Prayer*

GADSBY'S CATECHISM

by William Gadsby (about 1800)

(Presented here as originally published – this does not constitute a full endorsement of the Riverside Baptist Church)

Question LXXVIII. Can you give a proof of the precepts of the gospel as a rule to a believer in the world?

Answer. Yes; for it is written, "I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;" "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world." "Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." "Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God." "Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal."

Matt. 5.43-48; Rom. 12.17-18; Eph. 6.5-9; Col. 3.22-25 & 4.1; 1 Jn. 2.15.

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Sunday Morning 11:00 AM

Sunday Evening 6:00 PM

Prayer and Bible Study Wednesday Evening 6:30 PM

WCWV 92.9 FM – 8:00 AM Sunday Morning

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST REPORT

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

“The Pillar and ground of the Truth” -- 1 Timothy 3:15

Volume 9, No. 31

July 31, 2016

STEADFAST IN TRUTH

Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. 2 Thessalonians 2:1-2

There is a tendency in men in general and even among true believers to become somewhat derailed in the midst of troublous times. There is no doubt that a national departure from the things of God is proceeding hastily in the direction determined centuries ago. *The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God. Psalms 9:17.* Many of us who have lived through several decades of recent history are astounded at the speed with which change is occurring and that for the worse. The Lord expressed the problem in its essence through Isaiah when He said: *Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Isaiah 5:20.* The decline in our land is real and so is the judgment of God that shall indeed come as a result of it. The fact that the scriptures of old describe the current conditions should cause us to be reminded that *The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun. Ecclesiastes 1:9.*

The scriptures record that the church at Thessalonica experienced terrible persecution on account of the Gospel. It was so much so that it was difficult for them to maintain the necessary focus on the things of the Lord. It was not that they suddenly became unbelieving; it was that they looked for logical explanations as to why this should befall them. This is indicative

of the tendency in men to either search for or demand explanations when tragedy comes. The course of the epistle reveals that such explanations were being offered and were disturbing to say the least. The suggestion is that some may have pretended to have a word or another epistle from Paul refuting what had been said earlier. Looking then to reason based on undependable sources they resorted (as we all tend to do) to mental calculations that shook their foundations and redirected their focus. They had left that view of Christ which assured and spoke peace to their hearts: *Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: Hebrews 12:28.*

Much had been written in Paul's earlier epistle that should have had a calming effect. It began with an assuring description of the manner in which they had received the Gospel with powerful evidence of the Spirit's work in them. It continued with the accrediting of Paul's message and the confirmation that they had been entrusted with the Gospel. In that some had died their estate was of concern to them. So, Paul assured them that those who were "asleep in Jesus" would return with Him in a sharing of His victorious appearing. In the meantime they were to be about the business of the life of God in this present world and so He exhorted them as to the nature of that

continuing. Consider then: *Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil. And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it. 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24.*

We have had a great number of prophets, so called, who have spent their time and ministry in sensationalizing the details of the second coming of Christ our Lord. Certainly, the fact of His coming again is one of the most comforting of all the revelations of Himself and His truth. But, the excitement to the true believer is not to be found in events; it is rather in the Person of Him who is coming. Sadly, I have talked with many over the years whose fascination with orchestrating the future is such that they have little if any interest in the Gospel itself. I have known men to break fellowship over these things while becoming incapable of fellowship in Christ alone. It is to this that Paul addresses the consternation of the Thessalonian Saints. Nothing should compromise one's attention to the Gospel and the Christ of the Gospel. The

Word through the Prophet has resounding application throughout the course of His revelation to us: *Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else. Isaiah 45:22.*

While there is no doubt that the Spirit-etched truth of the Gospel remained in their hearts, they had become quickly shaken in their minds. We are thus reminded of the words of Paul to the Philippians: *Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Philippians 2:5.* We must not be as those in that same epistle: *Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.) Philippians 3:19.* Rather let it be that we: *Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. Colossians 3:2.* The word affection is the same translated elsewhere as the "exercise of the mind." So, the race here is to be run "looking unto Jesus," and not to the circumstances around us. Let us leave the prognostications to the pundits and philosophers so-called and rather be found unmoved from our confidence who is Christ Jesus our Lord. *Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord. 1 Corinthians 15:58. bhs*

SPIRITUAL LESSONS

I have learned many lessons over my sixty-plus years of being a believer, but these are seven that stand out to me. Each one of the seven has made a significant change in the way I view the Christian life and how to live it. Some of the lessons may seem self-evident, but when I became a Christian at age eighteen, despite having grown up in church, I was essentially biblically illiterate. Here are the seven lessons:

Lesson One: The Bible is meant to be applied to specific life situations. This includes both God's commands to be obeyed and His promises to be relied upon. Here, of course, is where Scripture memorization is so valuable. The Holy Spirit can bring to our minds specific Scriptures to apply to specific situations.

Lesson Two: All who trust in Christ as Savior are united to Him in a living way just as the branches are united to the vine (see John 15:1-5). This means that as we abide in

Him—that is, depend on Him in faith—His very life will flow into and through us to enable us to be fruitful both in our own character and our ministry to others.

Lesson Three: The pursuit of holiness and godly character is neither by self-effort nor simply letting Christ “live His life through you.” Rather, it does involve our most diligent efforts but with a recognition that we are dependent on the Holy Spirit to enable us and to bless those efforts. I call this “dependent responsibility.”

Lesson Four: The sudden understanding of the doctrine of election was a watershed event for me that significantly affected my entire Christian life. For example, it was the realization of God’s sovereignty in election that led me to study further the sovereignty of God in all of life. It also produced a deep sense of gratitude and, I trust, humility, of realizing salvation was entirely of Him.

Lesson Five: The representative union of Christ and the believer means that all that Christ did in both His perfect obedience and His death for our sins is credited to us. Or to say it another way, because Christ is our representative before the Father, it was just of God to charge our sins to Christ and to credit His righteousness to us. So we as believers stand before God perfectly cleansed from both the guilt and defilement of our sin, but also clothed in the perfect righteousness of Christ.

Lesson Six: The gospel is not just for unbelievers in their coming to Christ. Rather, all of us who are believers need the gospel every day because we are still practicing sinners. The gospel, embraced every day, helps keep us from self-righteousness because it frees us to see our sin for what it really is. Also, gratitude for what God has done for us in Christ should motivate us to want to pursue godly character and to offer ourselves as living sacrifices to Him.

Lesson Seven: We are dependent on the Holy Spirit to apply the life of Christ to our lives. Someone has said (and this is a paraphrase), God the Father purposes, Christ accomplishes what the Father has purposed, and the Holy Spirit applies to our lives what Christ accomplished. To do this, the Spirit works in us directly and He also enables us to work. All the spiritual strength that we need comes to us from Christ through the Holy Spirit. –Jerry Bridges in *God Took Me By the Hand: A Story of God’s Unusual Providence*



CURRENT EVENTS AND THE WORD OF GOD

"Brothers and sisters, I would encourage you not to filter all current events through talking heads on the TV, but rather take your time to well-consider a response as you filter each event through the Word of God. Politicians on both the left and the right have a universal tendency to stir resentment and co-opt issues for their own benefit as a way of usurping power and advance agendas that actually institutionalize evil. Sadly, many people in this world (politicians and news organizations) do not want to necessarily end the world's problems, because a lack of conflict would diminish their paychecks and do away with one of their most potent tools for gaining power: fear, division, ignorance and hatred. But if we prayerfully filter every event through the Word of God, instead of being stirred up to hatred of our fellow-human beings, we are more likely to respond. Lord willing, with patience, empathy, understanding, reason, love, mercy and even justice." – John W. Hendryx