

Scriptures and Doctrine :: add to your faith virtue.....

add to your faith virtue..... - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2004/5/10 11:48

2 Peter 1:5 - For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge;

We cannot save nor sanctify ourselves- God does that. But God will not give us good habits or character, and He will not force us to walk correctly before Him. We have to do all that ourselves. To take the initiative is to make a beginning- to instruct yourself in the way you must go.

-Oswald Chambers

I looked at the 'chambers' devotional for 'May 10' and I saw that and it really spoke to the situation I have been thinking about in the last few days. Is it our responsibility or can it be our responsibility to determine to live holy in our various walks of life. We surely cannot sanctify our hearts but can we make choices that can help God in that process? I come from a more calvinistic church where they would say at the most pray for God to control and lead you in righteousness and you are basically in the mercy of God. They would say romans ch 7 where paul struggles with sin is the 'Normal Christian Life'. I don't agree with this and I know it NOT to be true but I am still working out my thoughts on this complex subject. In a more general sense I know that if we can be zealous to sin in some regard and go out of our way determining to do so; then surely we may in the same way out of our own volition come before God and the scriptures for a whole night. This reminds me of a quote by David Ravenhill:

"If men can work 8 hours a day you can pray 8 hours a day!".

If a person is going to give themselves into their business with all their energies and hearts that is considered normal but when a Christian out of his own volition seeks God and the things spiritual in this manner they are considered legalistic. Another question I would like to ask is would this seeking after God in our own strength be considered fleshly and of no regard to God, would only the longing after God that God prompts initially by His Spirit be pleasing in His sight?

Re: add to your faith virtue..... - posted by crsschk (), on: 2004/5/10 12:38

Briefly, a quick thought. There is much here brother got to run but:

Quote:
-----They would say romans ch 7 where paul struggles with sin is the 'Normal Christian Life'. I don't agree with this and I know it NOT to be true but I am still working out my thoughts on this complex subject

Reminds me of the quote from the *other* Ravenhill:

"Don't forget there is a Romans 8!"

Quote:
-----If a person is going to give themselves into their business with all their energies and hearts that is considered normal but when a Christian out of his own volition seeks God and the things spiritual in this manner they are considered legalistic. Another question I would like to ask is would this seeking after God in our own strength be considered fleshly and of no regard to God, would only the longing after God that God prompts initially by His Spirit be pleasing in His sight?

See today's Tozer devotional on that first part.

On the later part all I could think of was this, interestingly enough:

"For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace because the carnal mind is enmity against God"

not God, for it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can it be." Rom 8:6,7

Something to muse on...

Re: add to your faith virtue..... - posted by rookie (), on: 2004/5/10 15:34

Gregg wrote:

"If a person is going to give themselves into their business with all their energies and hearts that is considered normal but when a Christian out of his own volition seeks God and the things spiritual in this manner they are considered legalistic. Another question I would like to ask is would this seeking after God in our own strength be considered fleshly and of no regard to God, would only the longing after God that God prompts initially by His Spirit be pleasing in His sight?"

Listen to Paul's heart, "But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; **but I labored** more abundantly than they all, yet not I. but the grace of God which was with me." 1 Corinthians 15:10

The real question is do we listen to our carnal mind or do we wait for His voice?

The introduction for Times Square Church's Bible College says that the school exists for those who hear His voice. Romans 7 points to the darkness of the carnal mind. Romans 8 points to His voice. Listen, He is faithful.

In Christ
Jeff

Re: add to your faith virtue..... - posted by Gideons (), on: 2004/5/10 20:25

Greg,

Great post. I have a few comments that I pray will help, with the caveat that there's much for me to learn. Nevertheless, I hope these comments help.

Quote:

-----Is it our responsibility or can it be our responsibility to determine to live holy in our various walks of life.

God never takes away our free will and so the way I see it it's always His power, His strength, and my willingness (i.e. my choice) to follow it. If living a Godly life is not a choice, then wouldn't we be like robots. I know I can do it myself but I know that I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

Quote:

-----If a person is going to give themselves into their business with all their energies and hearts that is considered normal but when a Christian out of his own volition seeks God and the things spiritual in this manner they are considered legalistic.

Surely this is our will but where did this desire to please God come from? It came from Him "...After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts..." This desire is coming from Him Greg so it doesn't equate with legalism.

Legalism says I want to please God in my own strength, in my own power, to glorify my flesh. I don't believe you're doing this at all. The root of unbelief is legalism, which says something like this: "God I know you want me to live a holy life and I want to do that (i.e. this is all good). However, I don't believe you can do that work in my heart so I'm going to do it myself. I could go on and explain how this worked in my own life but I think you can see where I'm going.

Quote:

-----I would like to ask is would this seeking after God in our own strength be considered fleshly and of no regard to God, would only the longing after God that God prompts initially by His Spirit be pleasing in His sight?

Again, I don't see how this is legalism. There's a great sermon by Brother Dave called "The Bewitching of the Saints" a

and it focuses on legalism.

As someone who committed this sin unknowingly as a young believer, I just don't see it in your heart. Surely God has given you a heart to seek Him and you're doing that. Praise the Lord.

In fact, I would quote this verse Psalms 119:2 which says "Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart." You're seeking Him with your whole heart and you praise Him because He's doing that in your heart. That's not legalism brother. Not by a long shot. That's the glorious work of a loving God in a willing heart.

Re: - posted by KeithLaMothe, on: 2004/5/10 21:47

"Legalism!" is a frequent objection from the Church Reluctant.

In order to respond to it I'd prefer a biblical definition of the term. You won't find the term in Scripture (not the NASB or KJV, at least, once in the NIV).

If they mean "salvation by works" or "works-based righteousness" I understand and agree with the objection: we can never earn anything (salvation, righteousness, etc) from God by our works, as if He is indebted by our obedience. Everything given us is by His grace, including those things which we might use in doing good works, thus twice cementing God's sole claim to the credit.

But is Biblical obedience to God a system of works-based righteousness? No, it is a life of love-driven service.

To anyone unwilling to keep His commandments, I would ask: do you love Him?

A friend of mine says that the only difference between Christianity and legalism is love. The better part of western Christendom would revolt at that statement, but I think there's more than a little truth to it.

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2004/5/10 21:50

I will respond to a lot of the other comments also but for right now what I am really trying to get at is 'the whole world's going to hell?' and what are we doing about it and how much are we willing to do about it? Does God restrain our desires to save the 'entire' world? isn't that His desire also?

Left to its self the church is decaying, we do need God! but are we waiting for Holiness? or are we taking affirmative steps towards holiness in our actions and wills? Surely the world will not be saved or belief that the Church is what the church is supposed to be unless we are Holy and an actual genuine product of God's regeneration! A worldly church is a joke to infidels, it's just a notion and an interesting idea but not reality. We need to be that reality, has God already given us the means and we sit on our hands waiting for Him to do more?

Re: - posted by HakkaMin (), on: 2004/5/10 23:10

Great thoughts, Greg. Important thoughts. I've sure struggled with them through the years ... and continue to struggle at times. A healthy struggle, I think. To find that balance in living the partnership that God has called us into with Himself. What a mystery that is!

The adventure of the Christian life is couched in this great mystery of how God has chosen to fulfill His purposes here on this earth. It's easy to see, but hard to understand. (Thus the mystery.) The almighty, all-knowing, limitless Creator of the universe has actually chosen to work hand-in-hand with us weak, myopic, severely limited (read "unrighteous") human beings to accomplish His eternal will.

The movie "Chariots Of Fire" shows a wonderful example of this partnership principle in action. Remember the way Eric Lydell ran? (It's apparently depicted quite accurately in the movie.) Eric would look fairly normal at the beginning of a race, but the latter stages saw his head start to tilt backwards until his nose pointed straight up to the skies. Kind of a comical sight ... except to the other runners. They all knew that when Eric's head dropped back they could pretty much kiss the gold medal goodbye. The actor who played Eric tried to copy this bizarre style of running, but literally ran into a few problems. Seems that every time he attempted the famous skyward look, he'd race right off the track. Couldn't see where he was going. Someone once asked Eric (in real life) why he ran in such an unorthodox manner. His reply describes the gist of what this hand-in-hand partnering is all about. "During the first part of the race, I run with all the strength that God has given me. But when I'm about halfway through, I realize that my own strength is not nearly enough so I thr

ow my head back to God and depend on Him to give me the victory.Â”

I believe we all need to endeavor to do the same ... to run this race with all the strength that God has given us, and then to throw our heads back in total dependence on Him to accomplish the victory.

Leonard Ravenhill nicely summed up this tension in our partnership with God when he said, "Pray as if you didn't believe in work, and work as if you didn't believe in prayer."

Though I can understand the desire to sit on our hands until we become "righteous enough" to do the work God has called us to, I'm not sure it's a very wise thing to do. My experience is that my major seasons of true heart growth occurred as I stepped out in the work God called me to do ... unprepared as I was to do it. Unrighteous as I was to do it.

The "affirmative steps" you mentioned, Greg, are simple obedience to Christ in His call on our lives. We don't need to prepare to obey ... we just need to obey. Then we'll get prepared. Then we'll get righteous.

Re: add to your faith virtue..... - posted by matthew (), on: 2004/5/11 9:35

I have read Jonathan Edwards to have said several times "God works by means." By that he is saying it is God who makes the change, but if we never spend time with Him in prayer, bible study and fasting, He will not bring that change.

Re: - posted by rookie (), on: 2004/5/11 10:57

Greg wrote:

"the whole world's going to hell?' and what are we doing about it and how much are we willing to do about it? Does God restrain our desires to save the 'entire' world? isn't that His desire also?"

I just listened to Carter Conlon's thoughts on evangelism. In his experience, it is God who gives us the unction to speak to those who He is working in. Pastor Carter has learned to follow the direction of the Holy Spirit. Art Katz also talks about his experience in evangelism. It is similar to Pastor Carter's thoughts.

What is the same for both men is this. They seek hard after God.

In Christ
Jeff