

Improve Your Life

Turn off the TV and read your Bible. The Psalmist said of the blessed man, "His delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night" (Ps. 1:2).

Put down the phone and pray. I never cease to be amazed at how much time some people spend on their cell phones. Is all that talking necessary or profitable? "Pray without ceasing" (1 Th. 5:17). "The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much" (Jas. 5:16).

Get up out of bed an hour earlier on Sunday and come to Bible study. "As the door turns on its hinges, so does the sluggard on his bed" (Prov. 26:14).

Cut down your credit card purchases and give. Give to the poor. Increase your contribution at church. "One who is gracious to a poor man lends to the Lord, and He will repay him for his good deed" (Prov. 19:17). "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).

Change the conversation from sports, weather, and politics to spiritual things. Do that at home. "These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up" (Deut. 6:6-7). Do that at work, too. "He who wins souls is wise" (Prov. 11:30).

- via ***Manslick Road Speaker***

Toward Better Communication

"This you know, my beloved brethren. But let everyone be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger, for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God." (James 1:19-20)

Can you imagine better advice for getting along with others? How often we hear it said that the problem in a family, a plant, an office, a school, or even a church is a breakdown of communication. Obedience to this verse would change all of that.

"Be quick to hear." Listen! Try to understand where the one who is talking "is coming from" and what he or she really means. See if you can repeat what was said so accurately that the one who said it will agree that you have stated the position accurately.

Now, make sure a reply is needed. We do not have to correct every mistake we hear. Some are not serious enough to require attention. Others, though serious, may have to wait for a more suitable time to be corrected.

Even if a reply is needed, take your time. "Be slow to speak." Think of what you are saying. Think how it will sound to the one hearing it and how it will sound if it is repeated to someone else. Ask yourself if what you are about to say will do good or do harm. Ask God to help you to say only what needs to be said. Nehemiah was asked a question by the king and managed a prayer before he answered (Neh. 2:4-5). Remember that once you have spoken, you cannot recall your words.

Above all, "be slow to anger." Anger almost always breaks down communication; shouting matches seldom end in a better understanding of each other. And, besides jeopardizing human relationships, they endanger our relation with God. We may fancy that our anger is "righteous indignation," but the Holy Spirit says: "The anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God."

Are you thinking, "That's not much of a way to win an argument"? RIGHT! But it is a pretty good way to stop one. How would you like to by to argue with someone who is "quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger"?

- by ***Sewell Hall***

Exalting Christ

How do we exalt Christ? We exalt Christ when we preach His word, when we follow His teaching, when we do only that which He authorizes, when we wear only His name, when we make Him the center of our affection and adoration, when we recognize Him as our only Head,

Lord, and King. To do otherwise is to fail to exalt Him.

- by **Bill Hall**

Overrating Your Own Knowledge

In correspondence with a young man about a particular sin – a sin that was directly affecting his life – he wrote: *“From extensive study that I’ve conducted over the course of several years, I do not believe _____ is a sin but rather a matter of judgment . . .”* To which the following response (in part) was sent: *“You state that you have studied this subject over ‘several years’. So have I. So have many others - for many centuries. This is not a new topic awaiting your discovery.”* As you might guess, little progress was made in changing the young man’s mind.

Please consider some of the implications of his claim:

1) He asserts that he has studied this ‘extensively’ and leaves the impression that others – especially those who disagree with him – have not studied the subject as thoroughly as he has. This young man has no way of knowing how much or how often others have researched any given topic. This is pretentious pride, and that’s a sin, too! (2 Timothy 3:2). The apostle Paul says that a person can be “proud” while “knowing nothing” (1 Timothy 6:4).

2) He seems to suggest that others – including all those who have devoted their whole lives to the study of the Scriptures – have apparently not uncovered the truth that he now possesses. Maybe, but not likely! Lots of true scholars have dug deeply into the Word. Many faithful brethren have diligently searched out the truths of God’s revelation. Any notion that we have come across something previously unknown is arrogant and unrealistic.

3) It is quite clear that he has become fully convinced – at least in his own mind – that he has the truth on this subject and that his actions are acceptable to God. But we are warned about the hazards of “deceiving and being deceived” (2 Timothy 3:13). Rationalizing to justify our own conduct is a danger to us all. Be careful!

We hope this young man will rethink this matter. But a basic change of heart is going to have to happen first.

- by **Greg Gwin**