

Being Spiritual

True spirituality is nothing more nor less than a sincere willingness to be led by the teaching of the Spirit, as He revealed them in the Bible. When I control my heart by the message of the Lord's Gospel and when I mold my character by His Will, then I am truly spiritual. Rather than some tingling, ecstatic emotional experience leaving me with a pious face and a halo on my head, spirituality is simply living each day for Jesus Christ and for Him alone.

When others see my spirituality, they will see the virtues of God in my character. The Word says, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control; against such there is no law." (Gal. 5:22-23) This is spirituality!

Learn to be kind, to be patient, to show good will toward all, to resist temptation & when I succeed in winning the battle against hatefulness, ugly speech, worry, - then, I am showing the fruit of the Spirit's teaching in my life. I am a spiritual man in tune with the mind and will of God.

- by Royce Chandler

Attending Bible Classes

There is one fact that is undeniable about the life of every Christian – he is saying something to those around him by every action of his life. Without any vocal sounds he speaks volumes by his conduct. In this way many a Godly wife has won her husband to the Lord (1 Peter 3:1-2). In this way the shining light of a good life has caused onlookers to glorify God (Matthew 5:16). And even after a righteous person has departed from this life, "he being dead yet speaketh" (Hebrews 11:4). So it is with reference to our attitudes and actions in the work and worship of the Lord in His church. When a person who loves to attend the Bible classes in the local congregation does so faithfully, that Christian is saying something loud and clear. Think about it for a moment. What is he saying?

(1) He is saying to any who observe him, "I love the word of God to the extent that I will take the time to attend classes where my knowledge of it can increase."

(2) He is saying to others, "I realize my need of stronger faith as I strive to please the Lord. I know that it cannot be strengthened without the word of God (Romans 10:17). Being present for Bible study helps me build on the right foundation."

(3) He is saying by his regular attendance, "I appreciate good and faithful Christians who spend hours studying so that they may teach me. I know that it takes much real dedication on their part to do this good work. I certainly want to be there to hold up their hands and to benefit from the study they have put into each lesson. If they devote so much effort in preparing lessons, I surely want to be present in the classes to listen to their instruction."

(4) He is saying, "I find great value and help from spending time with brothers and sisters in Christ in searching God's word together. I have all too little time as it is with my spiritual family in the local church. This extra hour or so means much to me in building stronger ties with them. I know that we all share a deep concern for our souls. And quite often I am helped by the comments of others in the class."

(5) He is saying, by his consistent presence in the classes, "I appreciate what the elders of the congregation are doing for my benefit as they plan and arrange classes for the edification of the church. I am cooperating with them to accomplish their objective – MY increased knowledge of the truth."

In nearly every place attendance at Bible study needs some improvement. That improvement will come from Christians who have opened their eyes to the grave importance of doing all they can to insure their soul's salvation in the world to come. That improvement will be accomplished by good men and women who have their hearts set on things above more than on things of the earth (Colossians 3:1-2). Let me appeal to ALL members to make a careful appraisal of your commitment to the Lord, His word and His kingdom. Let all of us make SURE that we all "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness..." (Matthew 6:33). Without doubt, when this is done carefully and prayerfully, the attendance question will be properly answered, and all other

questions as well.

- by **Barney Keith**

Second Guessing the Apostle Paul

In a sermon I once preached there was a point made about Paul's dialogue with the Roman official Felix (Acts 24:24-27). I stressed that Paul taught Felix about God's law, urged him to obey it, and warned him about the consequences if he did not. In fact, Paul's warning about "judgment to come" was so forceful that "Felix trembled". I emphasized that (despite popular opinion to the contrary) Paul saw the advantage of fear motivation in his effort to prompt Felix's obedience. Other examples of such fear motivation can be found in a host of passages in both the Old and New Testaments.

A visitor to the services that day - a Christian - wrote the following response to the lesson: *"Fear tactics would be great if they worked - but what is the bottom line? Did Felix obey the gospel? What about the world today - fear runs away - love draws. Yes, truth should be preached, but I believe more will be converted and stay with the positive love of God and all the blessings in Christ."*

It's not hard to conclude that this lady did not like the sermon. She's not the first, nor will she be the last, to find something wanting in a particular lesson. But more careful analysis reveals that she was not just faulting this sermon - she was, in fact, criticizing the inspired apostle himself! Look again - do you see it? She clearly implies that Felix would have likely obeyed if Paul had only had enough sense to put more emphasis on "the positive love of God".

The truth remains - do not forget it – "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Hebrews 10:31). Think!

- by **Greg Gwin**