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THE CHRISTIAN WALK

MAGAZINE



SPIRITUAL INSIGHTS TO FAN THE INNER-FLAME OF LIVING FOR CHRIST

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“...be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.”

-Colossians 1:9-10



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EDITORIAL PAGE



Hello everyone,

Thank you for subscribing to *The Christian Walk Magazine*.

As opposed to receiving a couple of articles each week, you can now expect to receive a volume of articles and insights each month— that are designed to inform and motivate you to live more fervently for the gospel and the advancement of its message to others.

We live in a time where many are confused about what is right and acceptable, on all levels. As disciples of Christ, we are poised to step out into a world of moral, spiritual, and social uncertainty, armed with heavenly knowledge to provide clarity and genuine hope.

I hope that this monthly publication will aid you in your efforts to maintain a healthy fellowship with God and to be a light to those around you who desperately need Jesus.

Let us meditate deeply upon the words of Paul:

“Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.” (**Colossians** 4:5–6, ESV).

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KEY SCRIPTURE: LUKE 9:46

A CALL TO GREATNESS

WILL ALL THE REAL GREAT MEN AND WOMEN PLEASE STAND UP?

The prevailing concept of greatness is often vain. It's usually associated with (and often limited to) fame, having financial excess or excess of possessions, power, and a long list of accomplishments.



This query often dominated the conversations of Jesus' original 12 apostles. In fact, the discussions would transform into bitter arguments (Mk 9:33-34; Lk 9:46; Lk 22:24).

The apostles often argued, not so much about what greatness was, but about *who* (among themselves) would be the greatest!

Instead of scolding them for the foolishness of their arguments, Jesus took advantage of the situations and used them as teaching opportunities. One can almost hear Jesus telling His apostles: "If you guys are truly interested in being great, let me teach you what true kingdom greatness is all about."

Jesus' Teachings On Greatness

WHO IS GREAT...? **THOSE WHO PUT THEMSELVES LAST, NOT FIRST** (Mark 9:33-37). This reminds me of lunchtime in kindergarten—when there is a mad rush (pushing and shoving) to be first in line to march to the cafeteria. Even though everyone in line will receive the same food on their tray, including the same portion sizes, there is just (**Continued on page 5**)

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something about being first. Even as adults, we often view being first as being the best. Being first (or first noticed) alone, doesn't make one best. If anything, it makes one the best at *being first*.

WHO IS GREAT...? **THOSE WHO ARE LEAST AMONG OTHERS** (Luke 9:46-48). There is also the deception of thinking the more well known or famous one is among others, the greater they are. But this often leads to the shallowness of character and values. We know too many famous athletes and celebrities who are exceptional in their professions, but who are morally bankrupt.

WHO IS GREAT...? **THOSE WHO BECOME AS THE YOUNGEST & AS A SERVANT AMONG OTHERS** (Luke 22:24-27). In ancient times (and still today), the firstborn within a family often received preeminence among the younger children. It was the firstborn who was entitled to receive more of an inheritance. Jesus, even though firstborn (**Mat 1:16; Col 1:15**), did not live His life as one who acted preeminently among others, but as a servant to all (**Lk 22:27**). Let us all truly be great!



KEY SCRIPTURE: 1 CORINTHIANS 15:58

GOOD HABITS FOR EFFECTIVE DISCIPLES

An effective disciple is an active disciple and an active disciple is a healthy Christian.

Wherever you may be in your fellowships with God, you cannot deny the fact there are guiding habits that make one a strong and effective ambassador for the gospel. We should all devote ourselves to embrace and make such habits practical. Here are a few...

Read and Obey God's Word.

Maintain an active prayer life.

Set spiritual goals.

Cultivate the talents of others.

Take Responsibility for souls.

Serve others.

Pursue growth opportunities.

Remain focused on the Kingdom.

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KEY SCRIPTURE: HEBREWS 12:2

THE JOY SET BEFORE YOU

The ministry of Christ was overwhelming! Yet, each day He was driven by an unshakable heavenly joy.

Heaven is the ultimate joy that God sets before every human being. The question is, How much do you want to go to heaven? For the non-Christian, the immediate challenge is to give up whatever it is that hinders him from being saved (**Mar** 10:17-22). The challenge for the Christian lies within maintaining a strong faithful walk throughout his lifetime (**2 Cor** 5:1-9; **Rev** 2:10).

Jesus: Our Greatest Example

In speaking about Jesus' determination in the face of great horrors, the author of Hebrews writes...

"...who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God." (Heb 12:2).

No doubt, the joy that was "set before Him," encouraged Him, provided Him with a perfect amount of courage and strength necessary, to endure the daunting trials surrounding the events of the cross. He certainly took no pleasure in them, yet He welcomed them. You see, even the most terrible thing one could experience at that time (such as the crucifixion) could not compare to the irresistible happiness and satisfaction of "the joy that was set before Him." (see **Jn** 14:28; 16:28; 17:4-5).

What We Must Do

As disciples of Jesus, let us, therefore, *"run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder, and perfecter of our faith.."* Let us, *"Consider Him who endured from sinners such hostility against Himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted."* (**Heb** 12:1-3).

KEY SCRIPTURE: **HEBREWS 12:2**

KEY THINGS TO REMEMBER WHEN THE CHURCH ASSEMBLES

The main purpose of worship is to honor and magnify God. Secondly, we benefit significantly from our worship to Him, as we are further educated and edified in our walk with Christ.

Each time the church assembles it would behoove every disciple to be prepared to make God their central focus. We assemble firstly for God's glorification and secondly for our edification (not the other way around). We glorify God best when we worship mindfully and purposefully, not on autopilot. Here are some key things to stay mindful of while assembled with the Saints

What Church Is

It is imperative that we comprehend the fact that the church isn't a secular based or driven organization. Rather, it's a body of redeemed believers, called to serve God's purpose (**Eph 3:10-11**). It's not a social club. Most Christians understand this, doctrinally speaking, yet, often look forward to the socializing and discussing of worldly affairs in the assembly with others, more so than they do about worshiping and adoring God! While we do often socialize with one another while assembled, the church is not a social club. It is the pillar and buttress of truth within the community (**1 Tim 3:14-15**).

Sometimes we forget why we are the church. Sometimes we treat church like all the other things we enjoy in our lives—we seek to receive pleasure, then move on. We predetermine our preferences, like personalized settings on our computers and (**Continued on page 9**)

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smartphones, then get what we want out of them. Some are like that with church—they come to church (to get what *they* want out of it) but don't want to be the church.

What Worship Is

Worship isn't about *us*, it's about God! (**Jn** 4:22-24). Worship is the praising, and reverencing of God, both in public and private. It is a recognition of the worthiness of God, by which honor is given to His name. This is best attained when disciples are worshiping mindfully not mechanically, carelessly (**Lev** 10:1-3), or ignorantly (**Acts** 17:16-23).

We must take caution that our worship is not vain (**Mat** 15:8-9). Our worship must be true and spiritual, in nature and practice (**Jn** 4:24). God is pleased when we seek and serve Him through faith (**Heb** 11:6, **Rom** 10:17), not mindless habit.

Preaching Isn't For Entertainment

Unfortunately, some preachers have simply become performers and entertainers. Any preacher or audience expecting an entertaining performance has strayed away from the Biblical purpose of preaching. I have visited church assemblies where the preaching hour has become nothing more than an entertainment hour... The preacher puts on his best performance to arouse and excite the crowd. Good gospel preaching can definitely liven and stir an audience, but, gospel preaching itself is not a stage performance. Many gospel preachers have lost their way because they took such an approach.

One of the best pieces of advice I received when I was starting out as a young preacher was that a preacher should NEVER GET IN THE WAY of God's Word. Each preacher has his own unique personality which directly influences the way he presents the gospel. And, in his efforts to present God's word, he should do so with (**Continued on page 10**)

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conviction, passion, etc. in a way that seeks not to draw attention to himself. Rather, he is summoning up his energy to shift focus upon God. Paul described it in this way,

*"But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us." (2 **Cor** 4:7, ESV)*

Not that we are worthless to God, but Paul is right! We are like vessels of clay holding a priceless treasure--the word of God! Consider these additional thoughts of Paul (**1 Cor** 2:1-5; **2 Cor** 2:17; 4:1-2; **1 Thes** 2:4-6).

What preaching is for

- Opening up the sacred Scriptures to us.
- Drawing us into the unfolding story of God's amazing deeds in the world.
- Reminding us that we are sinners.
- To inform us of our proper place in this life.
- To convict hearts and save lost souls.



KEY SCRIPTURE: MARK 5:19

THE CORE MESSAGE OF THE GOSPEL

The gospel is not so much about what Christians are supposed to do, rather, it is more so about what God does for the Christian.

The gospel is about entering into a relationship with God in which He equips and enables us to live in a fallen world (in which there is a lot of pressure), in a way that is honoring to God and is faithful to Him. And in the walk of that life, God is well represented by how we live. That is the core message of the gospel as we see it in the early church.

As a result of the forgiveness of sins—which the cross provides, one can gain fellowship with God, to live and walk with Him for the rest of his life, with the power and enablement that God provides (**2 Tim** 1:3-9).



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God Empowering & Enabling His People

- 1) From spiritual death to abundant life in Christ (**Ephesians** 2:1-10).
- 2) To be identified as His children (**Romans** 8:9-17, 26-27).
- 3) To battle the devil (**Ephesians** 6:10-17).
- 4) To live successfully in spite of weaknesses (**2 Corinthians** 12:9-10).
- 5) To live fruitful lives for the Kingdom (**Colossians** 1:9-11).



God Empowering & Enabling Me

- 1) I must let God's saving power work in me (**Rom** 1:16-17; **Eph** 1:16-20).
- 2) I must take personal responsibility to work out my salvation with fear and trembling (**Php** 2:12-13).
- 3) Like the apostle Paul, I must strive to develop an attitude that shows God I am ready to do and become whatever He needs (**Php** 4:12-13).

KEY SCRIPTURE: 1 THESSALONIANS 5:6

"LET US NOT SLEEP"

"For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober." (1 Thes 5:5-6, ESV)



One of the biggest problems facing God's people today is indifference towards sin. Many today show little concern for standing up or speaking out against all the unrighteousness that plagues the world around us. We must heed the words of the apostle Paul, that we "not sleep," and that we wake up to what's going on around us and engage, that we may lead courageous and productive godly lives.

We must first wake up to ourselves. It could be that our own words and behaviors have become a hindrance to gospel cultivation in the hearts and minds of others (**Php** 2:14-15). When we realize our ways are doing more harm than good, we should be willing to begin the process of making immediate changes. Unfortunately, some are either too immature or stubborn to wake up to these crucial concepts.

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Those who slept when they should not have

Sisera (Jdg 4:16-21)

Sisera was the mighty commander of the king of Canaan's army. He commanded 900 chariots of iron. Sierra led the battle against Barack and the armies of Israel. But the Scriptures teach us that the Lord routed his army and when he saw that he was defeated he fled on foot, taking shelter in the tent of Jael. Exhausted from the battle, Sisera fell asleep and Jael hammered a tent peg through his temple!



Samson (Jdg 16:4-31)

Samson was the strongest man in the Bible! The book of Judges tells us of some of the amazing feats that he was able to perform through the power of the Holy Spirit (Jdg 13-16:1-3). Samson failed to value the wonderful gifts that God had given him. He didn't appreciate how blessed he was and put himself in jeopardy by revealing the source of his power to the Delilah and the Philistines. In spite of his many failures, God was able to use him to carry out His purpose. Samson is a classic example of a wasted life that ended tragically.



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The 11 Apostles (Mat 26:36-46).

Jesus was nearing the end of His life on earth. One of His disciples, Judas, was out betraying Him. Jesus is in great agony and distress--He begins sweating so profusely that it runs down His body like great drops of blood! (**Lk 22:44**). With Him are three of His inner circle, He needs them to be with Him during this difficult time.



But they offer Him no comfort because they fall asleep. Discovering them asleep, Jesus responds, "Could you not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." But after returning from prayer, He finds them asleep again. Judas arrives, Jesus is arrested, and all His disciples flee.

Let Us Not Sleep: Warnings Against Sleeping (1 Thes 5:1-11)

- A lazy person sleeps his life away (**Prov 6:6-9**).
- We must make the most of our time! (**Eph 5:11-17**).
- We must be alert and watchful (**1 Pet 5:8**).
- Our salvation is nearer! (**Rom 13:11-13**).
- We must be ready for the Lord! (**Rev 16:15**).

