



We are a congregation of the Lord's people looking for you. We desire to love our community and neighbors as our Lord has taught us to do. Please allow us to be an encouragement to you as you are an encouragement to us by visiting with us today.

If you have any questions about anything you see or hear today, please stop someone and ask questions. We are seeking to be New Testament Christians, and as such we desire to share what we have been given. We want to be ready to give you an answer for what we do and say (1 Peter 3:15)

But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:

Thank you for being our Guest today!

Is There a Minimum? Ron Boatwright

Many people want to know what the bare minimum is with which they can get by in their lives. Also, some Christians want to do the minimum in their spiritual lives. However, does God allow a bare minimum? Jesus said, ***“And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength”*** (Mark 12:30). If we really love God, we will want to do **all** we can.

Some may ask, “How many times a week do I have to go to church?” or “How much do I have to give?” or “How much do I have to do?” **This is the wrong attitude.** Jesus declared, ***“So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, ‘We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do’”*** (Luke 17:10). If we try to get by with the bare minimum in our spiritual lives, we will most likely be horribly surprised on Judgment Day, when we hear the Lord say, ***“Depart from Me,”*** because we have not faithfully done the will of the ***“Father in heaven”*** (Matthew 7:21-23). It will be too late, then. It will be final. Can we do too much for the Lord? No!

We must do the most we can for the Lord. We must, ***“be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord”*** (1 Corinthians 15:58). **Our number one priority in this life must be to go to Heaven when this life is over.** God ***“is a rewarder of those, who diligently seek Him”*** (Hebrews 11:6). The Bible says, ***“Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your calling and election sure”*** (2 Peter 1:10). We must be ***“looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God”*** (Hebrews 12:15). We can definitely fall from the grace of God, even though Satan says we can't.

What about those who are lukewarm? Jesus said, ***“So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth”*** (Revelation 3:16). Those who are lukewarm make Jesus sick at His stomach. However, Jesus promised, ***“Be faithful until death and I will give you the crown of life”*** (Revelation 2:10). **Let's make sure we go to Heaven. Nothing is as important.**

HAVE YOU FOUND HAPPINESS

Cleon Lyles

We are all seeking happiness. Which way we turn to find it will be determined by a number of things. Sometimes we think we have found it only to learn later that it was just another dream. Happiness is such a tender flower that those who go forth to seek it usually crush it.

When Jesus entered upon His ministry, He found a very unhappy people. Some were trying to find happiness in condemning others. He found this attitude among the Pharisees. They had built up within themselves a feeling that they were the only righteous people on the earth. They thought happiness was found in ceremony and had neglected the heart. Although this had been going on for many years, they still had not found the satisfaction they sought. They had only succeeded in turning all other people against them and getting so far away from God that He did not recognize them. Their idea of religious service had not paid off and they were rather desperate about the matter when the Lord came. He used some very strong language in trying to shock them in to seeing where they were, but in most cases, they had completely crushed their opportunity to be happy. They found that instead of condemning others they were most condemned.

Then there were those who had sought happiness in service to idols. God seemed too far away from them. They wanted something they could reach out and feel with their hands. Hence, they bowed down to gods made of gold and silver and wood. When they were blessed, the idols always received the glory. When trouble came, they had none with understanding to whom they could turn. A god of wood or gold could not understand their troubles. They had built up within their hearts a false belief and had drifted farther from God and real happiness.

There were also those who had looked for happiness in satisfying every desire of the flesh. They found that the satisfying of one desire only led to a stronger craving for that which was evil. In following this course, they had become worse than the beasts of the wilderness. Paul described them in the first chapter of his letter to the Romans.

No doubt many other methods were adopted, but these three were outstanding when Jesus came.

Our Lord tried to teach these people that true happiness is not found in satisfying the flesh, or in condemning others. He tried to show them that in their own lives they were allowing the things they condemned. He told them that in their judging they were practicing the same thing they were condemning in others. And He tried to show them that happiness comes from the inside out, and not from the outside in. After all, one must live with himself and with his God. If one is unable to live peacefully with himself, he can never be happy. He cannot thus live without knowing in his heart that he has been fair with his own life as well as the lives of others. Knowing our obligations to God in this world, a man with a conscience cannot be really happy while doing God wrong. So, Jesus established the fact that happiness is found in complete obedience to God, which makes us deal fairly with men.

If we want happiness, we will have to find it God's way. Happiness sought in the proper manner can be had and enjoyed and will never be crushed.

God's sovereign plan is more often seen in the rear-view mirror, not in the windshield.



A PRAYER FOR THE MIDDLE AGED

Like many of you, who have time to read these words and meditate, I too have a “**Junk-Box**”. It is literally crammed with things—clippings, poems—stories and in general— “**Junk**”. When I was just a lad of 20, my mother sent me a clipping from the “Elk-a-seltzer”. After reading it I thought, who could ever be interested in stuff like that. Miraculously it survived through the years. It is old and faded now and had been braced a number of times with various kinds of tape on the backside. Now that I have reached, “The old-age of springtime and the spring-time of old age”, I joyfully share it with you.

“Lord, thou knowest better than I know myself that I am growing older and will some day be old. Keep me from the fatal habit of thinking I must say something on every subject and on every occasion. Release me from craving to try to straighten out everybody’s affairs. Make me thoughtful, but not moody; helpful, but not bossy. With my vast store of wisdom, it seems a pity not to use it all—but thou knowest, Lord, that I want a few friends at the end.

Keep my mind free from the recital of endless details. . . give me wings to get to the point. Seal my lips on my aches and pains. They are increasing and the love of rehearsing them is becoming sweeter as the years go by. . . I dare not ask for grace enough to enjoy the tales of other’s pains but help me to endure them with patience.

I dare not ask for improved memory, but for a growing humility and a lessening cocksureness when my memory seems to clash with the memories of others. Teach me the glorious lesson that occasionally I may be mistaken.

Keep me reasonably sweet; I do not want to be a saint—some of them are so hard to live with—but a sour old person is one of the crowning works of the devil. Give me the ability to see good things in unexpected places and great talents in unexpected people and give me the grace to tell them so.”

To grow old is no trick. To grow sour and bitter is even less difficult.

To grow old gracefully is a thing of beauty.

--Selected

This Week’s Q&A

Q: Where do we read of a mortar and pestle in the Bible, and what is it?

A: In Proverbs 27:22. A pestle is usually a small tool in a club shape used to grind grain, herbs, or olives. The bowl-like vessel in which the product is ground is called a mortar. Burton Coffman says of this verse: “This is a picturesque and forcible way of saying that a fool’s folly is his nature.” Adam Clarke comments, “...However you may try...your labor is lost...You cannot purge the fool of his folly.”

Wisdom begins with realizing how little you know.

Kelli's Korner

As all of you know, Alex, our daughter is special needs. At one time in my life, I spent a lot of time thinking, wondering, and worrying if she realized that she was different and if that made her sad. As time passed, other than asking when she could get her driver's license to drive or why she couldn't play sports like "the boys" (which is what she calls her brothers), she has not indicated that she understands the full concept of her condition. I have been thankful for that for her sake but one thing that has always saddened me is that she is always looking for what's next. She has a hard time, at no fault of her own, with just being content in the moment. It is hard sometimes as her mother to think that her brain never allows her to just relax and be content. How many of us that do not have any health issues have that same problem by our own choice? I personally believe social media like: Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, etc.... are some of the causes of this today. We compare ourselves to what we see on those sites, not understanding that we are only seeing the "filtered" version and not everyday real life. We look for contentment from outside sources, not from within. We think we can only be content if everything is going the way we want it to go in our lives. Paul said in Philippians 4:11, ***"Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content."*** We can learn so much from the apostle Paul about contentment. He understood that true contentment is found within Christ, not in anything this world can offer. As long as he was in Christ, his worldly state did not matter. Paul also said in 1 Timothy 6:6, ***"But godliness with contentment is great gain."*** In 2 Corinthians 12:10, Paul said ***"Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong."*** Maybe we need to rethink our definition of contentment. Our definition of contentment is obscured by our earthly thinking. We need to start using our spiritual thinking on this matter. The prophet Isaiah said in Isaiah 26:3, ***"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee."*** David said in Psalm 37:16, ***"A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked."*** May we look for contentment in the right places. I find contentment that no matter what my daughter goes through in this life, she will have a home in heaven for eternity...isn't that what we all should find contentment in?

Children are good imitators, so give them something good to imitate.

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Mail me to
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