

Light and Life

Failing to Grow

Concerning faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love, Peter wrote, “if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ” (II Pe. 1:5-8). To become spiritually mature and avoid falling short, we must “add” to the virtues that are already there. If we fail to grow in these things, we will become “useless” and “unfruitful” servants (vs 8).

If we fail to grow, we will shrink! “He who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins” (vs 9). Spiritual stagnation is not a thing. Either we progress, or we regress. If we stop trying to grow, we have begun the process of falling away.

The Hebrew writer wrote, “everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe; but solid food belongs to those of full age” (5:13-14). These are people who have been Christians for some time, but have failed to “by reason of use, have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil” (vs 14). They can’t even tell right from wrong anymore!

These Christians who ought to be mature, have forgotten a lot because of their lack of growth (II Pe. 1:9). They should be mature, but “need someone to teach them again the first principles of the oracles of God” and they have “come to need milk and not solid food” (He. 5:12). They are falling away.

The worst part is that this affects more than just the person falling away. The expectation was that these people “ought to be teachers” (He. 5:12). Evangelism leads to exponential growth of the kingdom – failing to grow into teachers of the gospel destroys this opportunity.

For our own salvation, and the salvation of others, **we must grow!**

- Sam Bunyard

Another Perspective

We Always Need God

Do you ever think, “I need God because I am a sinner in need of forgiveness”? This is true, but it might also betray thinking that were it not for our sins, we really wouldn’t need God all that much. We just need Him because we need forgiveness. This presents a faulty view of God, humanity, and our purpose. We need God all the time and for everything.

Before Adam and Eve sinned, they needed God. After all, they were living in God’s presence by His grace in His garden, having the breath of life because He gave it to them. So it is with all of us. He “gives to all mankind life and breath and everything” (Ac 17:25). There is no time that we don’t need God.

Yet it is more than mere existence. We are made to serve God, to seek after Him, to live eternally with Him (Ac 17:27; 2 Co 5:5). God did not make us only to receive forgiveness. He created us in His image to reign with Him (Ge 1:26-28) and to have an abundant life (Jn 10:10). Sin is the side-track, the distraction that derails and wrecks us. Forgiveness puts us back on track where we ought to have been — a bit worn but not without purpose and not without redemption. By the grace of God, we can still function — even excel — according to His eternal purposes.

I need to be grateful for forgiveness, but I also need to see my life and purpose as bigger than being forgiven. I need to glorify God at all times. I have been made to live for the Lord. That’s why Paul wrote, “Whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Co 10:31). Our lives and service extend to all that we do.

Living with God was God’s plan from the beginning. I don’t need Him only because I have sinned or just because I have a particular problem that needs solving. I just need God. And so do you.

- Doy Moyer (edited for space)

ASSEMBLY TIMES

Sunday

Bible Class 9:30
Morning Assembly 10:30
Evening Assembly 5:00

Wednesday

Evening Bible Class 6:30

RADIO PROGRAM

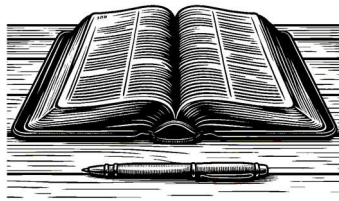
The Bible Speaks



Sunday 9:00–9:30a.m.
Thursday 11:30a.m.–noon
KURM 790AM

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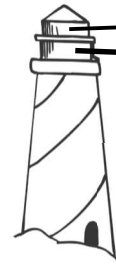
**If at first you don't
succeed, perhaps you
should have studied the
Instruction Manual first.**

ELDERS:

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Perry Johnson
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DOWNTOWN GOSPEL BEACON

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The Weather – and Sleeping Well

It is said that when a preacher starts to write about the weather, he has run out of things to write about. And while that may be partially true part of the time, it is not always the case – as the Good Book clearly shows. Sam pretty well exhausted the ‘snow’ passages in his article last week, so let’s move on from there.

The Bible provides numerous ‘rain’ passages as well. From the 40 days and nights of rain during the flood, to the warning of Jesus about the impending wind and rain event that will come upon us all, rain was used by God as a punishment for sin or sometimes as an occasion for trial (Ge 7:12, Mt 5:44-45, 7:24-27).

Of course, a lack of rain was another punishment sometimes visited upon a rebellious people. Note the Ahab/Elijah narrative (1 Kgs 17-18).

Then there was thunder, lightning, whirlwinds – provided as reminders of God’s awesome power (Ex 19:16, 1 Sa 12:18, Job 40:9, Nah 1:3).

But with all that, one promise still stands: “While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease” (Ge 8:22). And so, while I will learn from the weather, I will pay no attention to the climate alarmists. God is in control – so I will sleep well.

– *WKing*

FAMILY NEWS

PRAYER LIST –

Preachers we support: Japan, Philippines, Vietnam, Canada, Mexico, Peru, & U.S.

Sick: Fletchers, Swims, JMarshall, RStarr, MiBader, ADosier

Shut-ins: Billie Pennington, Shirley Cole, Susan Wiese, V Carter

Military: Kyler Sullins, Sean Potter

OUR SYMPATHY – Our sympathy is extended to the family of Betty Jo

Young, who recently passed away. Remember her family in your prayers.

Q&A – Tonight Sam and Warren will answer questions submitted by some of our members. Thanks to all who have contributed questions to this effort!