

THE DISCIPLINE OF BEING CENTERED: "DRINK AND PRAY"

(Ephesians 5:17-21, Acts 4:31)

Series: "The Disciplines of a Godly Life" (Part 12)

...One does not have to be saved many days before realizing the tendency to drift. Now drifting is good if one is fishing or diving, but drifting is not good for the child of God. We sing the old song, "Stayed upon Jehovah..." but soon feel the strong downward currents of our world, currents that can lead to destruction and death.

...How do we stop the drift? Today we don't often use the term "Stayed Upon Jehovah," rather it is said, God's desire for us is to be daily "Centered Upon Him." What does this look like in our lives? How can we do it?

...Our study of the discipline of being centered: "Drink and pray," will help us in this essential matter.

TWO QUESTIONS HELPING US TO REMAIN CENTERED ON JESUS AS WE DAILY JOURNEY THROUGH LIFE.

..."God has given us everything we need for life and godliness." "Stop listening to the words of... and you will depart"

I. What Does Our Life Look Like When Centered Upon Jesus? (Ephesians 5:17-21)

...The Bible presents 4 effects of being filled with Spirit... of being under the control of the Holy Spirit.

- A. Musical Joy. You will have an overflowing sense of joy in your life and find yourself singing heartily to the Lord. (v.5:19) "Music is the language of the soul."
 1. God created music and it is a powerful medium for us to express the deepest passions and yearnings of our heart. God sings! (Zephaniah 3:17)
 2. We gather and sing of our love for the Lord and sing the great truths of the faith. We sing because we have a song in our heart. God's love in us!
 3. Be warned: when we wander into sin, we lose our desire to sing to the Lord. ...When we are "off-center" our hearts are out of tune. Like an old violin...
 4. Clearly, joy expressed in singing, is a mark of being centered on Jesus.
- B. Universal gratitude. Perpetual gratitude, gratitude for everything comes from being filled with Spirit. (v.20) Not "for" everything, but "in" everything.
 1. We are able to do this because the Holy Spirit is in control of our life and is working in us to desire and do His will. He gives us His peace and assurance that all is good.
 2. This perpetual gratitude aims at overcoming: grumbling, pouting, self-pity, bitterness, murmuring, depression, worry, discouragement, gloominess and pessimism.
 3. God looks for our gratitude... remember Jesus and the 10 Lepers, "Where are the 9?"
- C. Loving Submission. Loving submission to each other's needs. (v.21)
 1. "Submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ." This submission is the picture of Jesus as He attended to the needs of others, ultimately seen in the laying down of His life at Calvary. The Gospel is: "Jesus in my place."
 2. This is so unnatural for us, for we are born totally self-absorbed, loving self.
- D. Bold in witness. (Acts 4:31) "No one can fail to be bold and eager in witness when the Spirit is producing in him overflowing joy, perpetual gratitude and humble love.
...The Holy Spirit will use your life to touch other lives for Jesus.

II. How Can We Be Centered, Filled With The Holy Spirit? (Ephesians 5:18)

...Two Ingredients: Drink... and Pray.

- A. Be DRUNK on the things of the Spirit. Paul provides us with a parallel to instruct us in this.
 1. He told, "Do not be drunk with wine." How does this happen? By drinking lots of wine. ...When we do this, we become under the influence (control) of the alcohol.
 2. The parallel, rather than wine, drink lots and lots of "Things of the Spirit." ...This refers to the Scriptures. This tells us "To set our minds on things above..." (Colossians 3:1-2) We need to set our minds, our attention, and be devoted to the Word.
 3. If we drink this long enough, we will get "drunk" with the Spirit. We will get addicted to the Spirit. Instead of chemical dependency we will develop a wonderful spiritual dependency.
- B. Daily ask in prayer for the Holy Spirit's filling (control) of your life. Jesus taught... (Luke 11:13) ...This is what Paul prayed for in Ephesians 3:19... "Filled with all the fullness of God."

SO WHAT? WHAT DIFFERENCE SHOULD THIS MAKE IN YOUR LIFE?

1. Being centered is a discipline. God wrote through Paul commanding us "To be filled with Spirit." The way to be filled is to drink daily and deeply from your Bible. Daily open your Bible early and often... drink and drink lots of it... and you will grow in love for the Lord Jesus and your usefulness to Him. In doing this, you will discipline yourself in being centered on Him. Will you do this? Begin again if you need to...
2. Daily enjoy the Lord and your life will be filled with a song, gratitude, and loving service to others. That's the best way to live... it is living and giving. When done, your heart and soul will be full and almost bursting with the joy of Jesus. Such a life will be a bold witness of Jesus. People will notice... and ask you for a "Reason for the hope" you radiate. Then point them to Jesus.
3. Today Jesus is calling you to repent of sin and believe upon Him as your Savior and Lord. He died to purchase salvation, the forgiveness of all sins. This death can be your substitute if you bow before Him. Jesus is calling... how will you respond?