

November 21, 2021

# The View

*“Sir, we wish to see Jesus” - John 12:21*

## Welcome Visitors!

You are our honored guests and we are pleased that you have chosen to visit us today. Our goal is to do everything according to God's word, including respecting its silence. This is a church of Christ; we are not a denomination, not part of anything larger than this local church and we have no earthly "headquarters." The six elders oversee this work and, ultimately, we answer only to Christ. The comments you hear today are primarily aimed at our own members, as we examine Scripture and seek to be built up in our faith in Christ. If you don't understand something, please do not hesitate to ask one of the elders. We welcome and appreciate your comments and questions on any issue and especially if you see or hear anything that you feel does not correspond to God's word. We are here to serve; please help us do that.

**Please fill out a visitor's card and put it in the collection plate located near the entrance.  
We do not solicit donations from visitors. See page 4 for more information.**

## Schedule

### The Lord's Day

**9:30 AM Bible classes for all ages**

**10:30 AM Assembly**

**Preaching today: David Posey**

Livestream at 10:30AM at  
<https://tinyurl.com/5f2cbm3y>

**Bible Class @ 1:30PM in room 15/16  
Hebrews**

**Bible Class @ 5 PM—A Study of Prayer  
(Auditorium)**

**Young Peoples Class 5 PM @ David & Christie  
Posey's home**

Middle school class: monthly  
Contact Dan Stegall at (818) 209-9810

## Wednesday 7PM @ Building

**No Bible classes this Wednesday**  
*Auditorium: Singing*

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Read your Bible daily

# The First Requirement for Spiritual Growth

Daniel J. Boorstin, the former Librarian of Congress and author of *The Discoverers*, said, “The greatest obstacle to discovery is not ignorance — it is the illusion of knowledge.” The problem, for example, with the flat-earth folks was not that they were ignorant of the truth; it was that they weren’t aware of their ignorance. Comfortable with the knowledge that the earth was flat, they would never have been the ones to discover otherwise. It took somebody who saw the need to know more about geography than was presently known.

It may seem obvious, but it needs to be pointed out anyway: the first requirement for spiritual growth is recognizing our need for spiritual growth. It’s not our ignorance that holds us back; it’s the false confidence that we’re farther down the road than we really are. If we see the need for growth at all, we don’t see it as urgent. And so we don’t work on it.

Are we poor in spirit? Jesus said, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of God” (Mt. 5:3). Being poor in spirit means being humbly aware of our own personal deficiencies before God. In matters of the spirit, the word bankrupt would not be too strong a word to describe our condition. If we’re poor in spirit, we recognize how poor we are. We see not only that human beings in general are inadequate in their knowledge of God, but that we ourselves have not grown as we should have. And this contrite awareness makes us want to grow.

On the other hand, if we’re pretty much satisfied with the progress that we’ve made, and we’re comfortable that we know most of what we need to know, spiritual growth will probably not be felt as a pressing priority.

Would we be offended? Most of us would say, “I know I’m not where I need to be. I know I need to grow.” Those are easy words to say, and they have the ring of humility to them. But do we really believe them? Suppose we said those words to someone, and rather than complimenting us, they agreed with us. Suppose they said, “I’m afraid that’s right. You’re not where you need to be. You do need to grow.” Would we be offended? Or worse yet, suppose someone came to us privately and expressed concern about our need for spiritual growth. Would we be off ended? The poor-in-spirit person wouldn’t be. He’d know that the friend had merely verbalized what he himself knows: that he’s certainly not where he needs to be. And he would not only appreciate the friend’s concern; he’d do something about it. He’d make some changes in his daily spiritual discipline.

If we are among those who labor at teaching and preaching God’s word to others, we may have grown so accustomed to exhorting others that we’ve lost touch with the poverty of our own spirits. In our role, we may find ourselves talking ninety percent of the time and listening only ten percent. But talking

ninety percent of the time doesn’t mean that we are ahead of ninety percent of the population in our spiritual growth. And if one of our “students” came to us on Saturday night and exhorted us in the matter of spiritual growth, it would behoove us to do with that exhortation exactly what we want them to do when we’re exhorting them on Sunday morning. Paul said, “If anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know” (1 Cor. 8:2). The longer we’ve been in Christ and the more time we’ve had to grow, the harder it is to maintain a sense of urgency in our spiritual growth. If we’re not careful, the “illusion of knowledge” will keep us from making the new discoveries that we need to make.

The truth is, every one of us needs to be working on our spiritual growth every day. When we compare ourselves among ourselves, some may seem to be farther ahead than others, but that is the wrong comparison to make. What we’re trying to do is “grow up in all things into Him who is the head — Christ” (Eph. 4:15), and given the distance between ourselves and that goal, none of us has anything to feel complacent about just yet.

Gary Henry

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## Influence

There is an old adage which says, “Actions speak louder than words.” And that is the truth. We call it “influence.” The power one possesses to sway other people along certain courses of action because of his wealth, position, or ability. Influence, either for good or evil, follows in the wake of one’s actions and not of what one says he will do or not do. One of the first places I fully came to be aware of this power was in the parent-child relationship. I would see parents warning their children not to smoke. In between their admonitions that smoking caused halitosis, hacking coughs, and lung cancer would be a puff from a cigarette and this feeble rebuke, “Now, don’t do as I do but do as I tell you to do.” Given man’s propensity toward evil, I knew how far that advice went for the betterment of mankind.

What makes influence such a powerful tool is the fact that each of us possess it. There are people who watch us, who admire something about us, who imitate our actions. If put to its proper use, influence can be a great means of leading someone to obey Christ. Listen to Jesus, “For I have given you an example, that ye also should do as I have done to you” (John 13:15). Jesus spoke of actions. Paul wrote, “Be ye imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ” (1 Cor. 11:1). His apostle wrote of deeds. Peter said, “For hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that ye should follow his steps” (1 Pet. 2:21). To follow anyone’s footsteps, we must walk. The word

“example” as used by Peter literally means “an under-writing.” It refers to teaching children the alphabet. A copy of the letters of the alphabet would be distributed to each child. They would write underneath the example of the letter as it should be drawn, trying to reproduce it as closely as possible. We must pattern our lives after Jesus. We must do our best to live as he lived, “to be holy as He is holy.” Thus, “by their fruits ye shall know them.”

Influence begins with the heart. Only as we keep the seat of our intellect, emotions, and will unmixed with evil, can we expect to wield the silent power of influence for good. Solomon wrote, “Keep thy heart with all diligence; For out of it are the issues of life” (Prov. 4:23). In the ASV, “with all diligence” is footnoted “above all that thou guardest.” We must see the necessity of keeping our heart right with God. We must see the danger in letting our thoughts aimlessly wander from sin to sin, of toying with its pleasures in our mind, of calculating our pursuit of it. We must heed the Lord, who was tempted like we are tempted, yet without sin, for He said, “For from within, out of the heart of men, evil thoughts proceed, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, covetings, wickednesses, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, railing, pride, foolishness: all these evil things proceed from within and defile the man” (Mk. 7:21-23).

Influence is the result of doing good. If influence is sought for its own sake, then it is a matter of selfish pride and not an attempt to glorify God. The Pharisees were guilty of seeking their own glory above the glory of the Father. They loved to spread their influence for the sake of spreading their influence (cf. Matt. 6:1-5). Jesus said, “Ye are the salt of the earth... Ye are the light of the world... so let your light shine before men; that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven” (Matt. 5:13, 14, 16). The reason we do good works and influence others to do good works is not “to be seen of men.” Rather, that being seen, others may understand that we serve God to glorify Him. We are the light of the world. We must penetrate the evil world and show forth the excellencies of Christ as surely as the light of a burning star pierces the darkness of night. We must preserve from corruption by giving life to people who are spiritually dying as surely as salt gives protection to meat that would decay and become rancid without it (cf. Phil. 2:15, 16).

And above all things we must be steadfast, unmovable, constant in our endeavor to serve God. We cannot fellowship evil and expect our influence to be good. We must not fraternize the enemy. Our teachings and deeds must be consistent. Surely we can see this in the life of Jesus. “He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad” (Matt. 12:30 KJV).

by Charles Durham, Jr.

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## Looking Back

Jesus turned the minds of his audience back to a familiar account when He said, “Remember Lot’s wife” (Luke 17:32). Isn’t it interesting that He didn’t have to say, “Remember Lot’s wife... you know, the one who became a pillar of salt.” They knew her story. They may not have even known her name, but they knew her lot in life. Yet, they continued to turn back from God. In reflecting on this story, perhaps Jesus wanted the people to remember these lessons.

God does not ask you to do the impossible. There was nothing difficult about what He commanded Lot and his family to do. “Escape for your life! Do not look behind you,” was His message through the angel (Gen. 19:17). That was clear, simple, and straightforward, without any room for misunderstanding or misinterpretation. He didn’t require them to do something they were incapable of doing. That’s because His commandments do not create burdens, they relieve them. The burden is on us to prove otherwise.

God does not give partial credit. Lot’s wife almost got it right. She escaped for her life, she left the city, she fled to the mountains. So far, so good. But she looked back and became a pillar of salt (Gen. 19:26). With God, there is no such thing as partial obedience. To obey in part is to disobey. You can’t pick and choose parts of His law that you want to follow and discard the rest. Do it all or you have done nothing at all.

God does assess punishment on those who disobey. She became a pillar. This woman became a testimony to all generations of what happens when you don’t follow the commandments of the Lord. “It is our business to see that we do right. God will see that we come out right” (Donald Barnhouse). In due season, that is.

Remember Lot’s wife. It’s a story worth looking back at over and over again.

by Bubba Garner