

October 29, 2023

The View

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

Welcome Visitors

Our goal at the Folsom church of Christ is to do everything according to God’s word, including respecting its silence. We are not a denomination, not part of anything larger than this local church; we have no earthly “headquarters.” The six elders oversee this church and, ultimately, we answer only to Christ. The comments you hear today are primarily for the benefit of 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 the preacher or 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 when it is passed.
We do not solicit donations from visitors. See page 4 for more information.**

Schedule

The Lord’s Day

9:30 AM Bible classes

Auditorium: A Study of the Parables

Young Adult Class (room 12): “Mind Your King” (Authority)

Room 15/16: The Sermon on the Mount: Relationships

10:30 AM Assembly

Preaching Today

Jay Simmons - Hebrew Series: Our Loving Savior

(Heb 4:14 - 16)

Livestream at 9:30 & 10:30 AM at <https://tinyurl.com/5f2cbm3y>

Bible Class: 5PM @ the Building

“Praying the Psalms” (Auditorium)

HS/College Class, 5 PM Every Sunday @ David & Christie Posey’s home.

*Young people monthly meeting (middle school): contact David Sanderson (david.r.sanderson@intel.com)
or Seth Reagan (sethreagan@gmail.com)*

There are several on-going Bible classes in the homes of members. Check with David Posey or one of the other elders if you would like to join one of those classes.

Wednesday 7PM @ Building

Classes: same as Sunday 9:30 AM

2nd Saturday Men’s Bible Study: 7 to 8 AM

Bel Air Market on Bidwell in Folsom.

“Iron sharpens iron” (Proverbs 27:17). Mentoring (Titus 2:1-6).

Articles published in the View reflect only the thoughts and opinions of the author alone, not necessarily the editor, the elders or any member of the church at Folsom.

Let Me Not Wander From Your Commandments

Bryan Gibson

“With my whole heart I have sought You; Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments” (Psalms 119:10). Impressive, yes, but even more impressive when you consider all that David had to go through, all the things that could have easily made him wander. So take a few minutes to compare your attitude to the one expressed here by David. Would any of the following cause you to wander from God’s commandments?

When brethren rebuke you. David’s afflictions took many forms, including the rebuke he received from the prophet Nathan (2 Samuel 12). Afflictions didn’t drive him away; they made him cling more closely to God’s commandments. “Before I was afflicted, I went astray, but now I keep Your word...It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I may learn Your statutes” (Psalms 119:67, 71).

When worldly people make fun of you. And make fun of you they will, if you consistently do the right thing (1 Peter 4:4). David faced that, too, and here’s what he said about it: “The proud have me in great derision, yet I do not turn aside from Your law” (Psalms 119:51).

When persecution gets even worse—when enemies lie about you, seek to destroy your name, or maybe even try to kill you. Would any of these cause you to wander from keeping God’s commandments? David experienced all these things (Psalms 119:61, 78, 85-88, 95, 109-110, 157, 161), and yet it did not diminish his resolve. “But I have not forgotten your law...but I will meditate on your precepts...but I did not forsake your precepts...but my heart stands in awe of Your word...yet I have not strayed from your precepts”—David made all these statements in the midst of heavy persecution.

When filled with sorrow and grief—due to sickness, the death of a loved one, the unfaithfulness of a loved one, etc. Again, listen to David who experienced many occasions of sorrow. “My soul melts from heaviness, strengthen me according to Your word...trouble and anguish have overtaken me, yet Your commandments are my delights” (Psalms 119:28, 143).

When God seems so far away, when you get to the point that you ask, “When will you comfort me”? (Psalms 119:82). David certainly knew that feeling, because he was the very one who asked that question. But look at the very next verse: “For I have become like a wineskin in smoke, yet I do not forget Your statutes” (Psalms 119:83).

When the world seems so attractive, when it appears to offer more than Christ does. David was no stranger to the pull of the world, which explains why he made this plea to God: “Make me walk in the path of Your commandments, for I delight in it. Incline my heart to Your testimonies, and not to covetousness. Turn away my eyes from looking at worthless things, and revive me in Your way” (Psalms 119:35-37).

When “smart people” seem to have better answers, when their explanations seem to make more sense than the explanations found in God’s word. As for David, well, let’s just say that he was less than impressed. “You, through Your commandments, make me wiser than my enemies...I have more understanding than all my teachers, for your testimonies are my medi-

ation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep your precepts” (Psalms 119:98-100). David was wiser than any of these men, because he knew God’s wisdom.

Bottom line; don’t let anything diminish your resolve to keep the commandments of God. Don’t let anything shake your confidence in God or in His word. “Forever, O LORD, Your word is settled in heaven...The entirety of Your word is truth, and every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever” (Psalms 119:89, 160).

No Progress Without Practice

Gary Henry

It is foolish to think that we can make progress in the habits of godliness by doing nothing more than listening and learning. While these are essential, they are not enough. It takes practice to make progress, and we should not expect that to be any less true in spiritual matters than in those of a worldly nature.

When we meet individuals who have become adept at the disciplines of the godly life, we often suppose that they’re just more devout than we are. Or perhaps we think that they’re more intelligent or insightful. Or we wish that we could have read the books and heard the sermons that they’ve read and heard. But when we think this way, we betray an ignorance of the real thing that produces spiritual progress: practice. The trait that distinguishes the adept from the inept is that the adept have done certain things . . . over and over and over, every day, for many years.

Prayer Not all of our prayers are of equal quality. Keeping in mind a Scriptural definition of “good” praying, it must be said that we do not pray as well at some times as at others. Paul mentioned that “we do not know what we should pray for as we ought” (Rom. 8:21), and the disciples asked Jesus, “Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples” (Lk. 11:1).

But how do you make progress in your prayer life? Well, we certainly need to learn all that we can about the principles of prayer, but the time comes when we have to start practicing the art of prayer. It can’t be learned any other way than by praying . . . over and over and over, every day, for many years.

Understanding It would be hard to overestimate the importance of Bible study, but frankly, some people do a better job than others of correctly understanding what the Bible teaches. The Ethiopian eunuch, for example, was reading the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, but he was having trouble understanding what the passage meant (Ac. 8:30-34). So we need to work not only on the quantity but also the quality of our Bible study.

But how do you make progress in your understanding of the Scriptures? It can’t be done by the simple investigation of hermeneutics; it requires patient repetition of the act of Bible study. You’re not likely to find a mature, responsible student of God’s word who arrived at that point any other way than by doing Bible study . . . over and over and over, every day, for many years.

Discretion Isn’t it refreshing when we encounter some older Christian who has grown very wise in matters of discretion and discernment? In a good sense, don’t we “envy” those who have

learned how to size up a difficult situation and see which course of action is best to take? Surely we do, and of all the abilities we need in this life, none is more vital than the ability to take God's general principles, apply them to a specific situation, and discern what God would want done. Paul wrote, "Do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is" (Eph. 5:17).

But how do you learn to be a better decision maker? There is only one way, and the Hebrew writer put his finger on it when he spoke of those "who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Heb. 5:14).

In matters of godliness, then, there aren't any effective shortcuts. Being a beginner is just hard; that's all there is to it. Some time will have to pass before we can be more skilled. But the passage of time will not, by itself, guarantee improvement (Heb. 5:12); we have to actually do the things that need improving — and do them repeatedly. So let's look for every opportunity to practice the things we want to improve. God deserves nothing less than our very best, and the best that we can do won't be done unless we pray and study our Bibles and use our discretion . . . over and over and over, every day, for many years.

Just Being There Won't Get It!

Dee Bowman

I am disquieted sometimes by the fact that so many seemingly mature Christians are basing their faithfulness to God on the fact that they attend services regularly. Maybe the fault for such thinking lies with we gospel preachers who repeatedly emphasize that attendance is a sure sign of faithfulness. But it should be clear that while attendance is certainly a sign of faithfulness, it not the only sign. Far too many Christians have put their trust in the fact that they don't miss much.

Now, I certainly wouldn't want to de-emphasize the value of faithful attendance (Hebrews 10:23-25); and it is certainly one of the most visible signs of a person's devotion to God. However, we need to remember that there is more to living the Christian life than merely assembling for worship and mutual edification. Actually, what regular attendance does is get God's people ready to go out into the world and live the Christian life. While there are some who have not yet learned that faithful saints will want to attend regularly, we need to remember that there's more to being a Christian than being present.

The Christian life is just that—a life. It can't be turned on and off like a faucet, but it is a continual daily routine—a life lived. As long as we are alive and functional, we're responsible for living a life of service to God. For instance when Paul told the Thessalonians (I Thess. 5:17) to "pray without ceasing," he is not suggesting that life is to be one long, never-ending prayer. He is saying that Christians should pray consistently—every day. When he says, in Romans 12:2, "present your bodies a living sacrifice," he means there must be a continuing process of personal presentation, a life that is daily committed to Christ. And when, in Colossians 3:2, he tells us to "set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth," he does not intend that his assignment is a one time commitment, but rather a constant, steady life of service.

For instance:

Attitudes must be developed and maintained—every day. It's not enough to be spiritually inclined on Sunday; good spiritual inclination has to be a part of one's everyday life. Even though our worship services—singing, praying, observing the Lord's Supper—all require a good attitude in order to be acceptable, there are still attitudinal things necessary in our day-to-day activities—like being a good parent, a good citizen, a good, strong proponent and proclaimer of the gospel of Jesus Christ (Romans 1:16-17). Our day-to-day activities call for good dispositions, good inclinations, good mental directions. These attitudes need to grow and prosper—all the time. "If these things (faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love) be in you and abound they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our lord Jesus Christ" (II Pet. 1:5-8). And how is all this to be done? "Giving all diligence" (verse 5, verse 10). "All" is "every day," right?

Then, there is strength of character, moral stance that has to be regularly maintained. Virtue—moral courage—is found only in a faith that is strong enough to stand in the face of constant dangers and abuse. While we do not fear physical abuse in our age (and we should be grateful for that), we nonetheless have pressures applied in various, subtle ways every day. These temptations and pressures usually come at times when other saints are not present to hold up our hands. These are times when we must stand on our own, even when it's difficult. But stand, we must (Ephesians 6:11-f). Virtue has to be cultivated, worked at. Every day.

We all have to grow. Personally. And spiritual growth is not a one-day-a-week process, either. We have to stand firmly on a fixed faith, one which is constantly being renewed by a regular and intimate association with the word of God (II Timothy 2:15). And we would do well to remember that Christianity is an individual matter, that eventually, "every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess" (Romans 14:11).

Certainly, regular attendance at the services of the church is of considerable value in helping us to develop and maintain of our moral character; and I worry about some who don't attend as they should. But faithfulness doesn't end with the last "Amen."



Read your Bible