

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

ARE YOU CHEATING YOURSELF?

By Harold Fite

Back in the depression era, there was a sheep rancher in West Texas by the name of Yates. His bills had piled up; he was behind on his mortgage; and feared the bank would fore-close. With little money for food and clothes, he had to live on government subsidy.

One day an oil company research crew appeared asking permission to explore for oil. Yates signed a lease and at 1,116 feet the crew struck an enormous oil reserve.

The first well began pumping 80,000 barrels a day. Other wells dotted the landscape. Thirty years later a government test revealed that it still had a potential flow of 125,000 barrels a day.

Yates owned it all. He also owned it years before. The rich oil land was his during those days when he wondered where the next meal was coming from. He was a millionaire living in poverty. He owned a fortune, but never claimed it.

The Christian has at his disposal everything he needs for spiritual vitality and growth. Peter said *“that his divine power hath granted unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness through the knowledge of him that called us by his own glory and virtue”* (2 Pet.1:3).

The Apostle Paul echoes this truth when he wrote: *“and my God shall supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus”* (Phil. 4:19).

Everything that has to do with spiritual life – all our spiritual needs, are supplied. The *“riches of his glory”* is the reservoir from which we draw in strengthening the inward man (Eph. 3:16). What a spiritual reserve from which to draw!

Why then are so many struggling at the brink of spiritual disaster? Why drudgery rather than excitement? Many, like Yates, struggle with temptations and doubts, dreaming of unreached spiritual victories, never realizing their “oil well” lies behind them at the foot of the cross, and not ahead of some elusive spiritual rainbow.

The life of the Christian is to be a bold, victorious experience: a life that is to be marked by daring – not despair; faith – not doubt. *“We are more than conquerors through him that loved us”* (Rom. 8:37).

There is no reason for spiritual poverty. Through God’s grace, He has supplied rich spiritual reserves from which to draw. Are you cheating yourself? – *Glad Tidings, Parkview church of Christ, October 20, 2019.* ■

SITTING ON THE FENCE

By Larry Ray Hafley

There was an incredibly large group of people assembled. On one side of the group stood a man, Jesus. On the other side of the group stood another man, Satan. Separating them, running through the group was a fence. The scene set, both Jesus and Satan began calling to the people in the group and, one by one, each having made up his or her mind, each went to either Jesus or Satan.

This kept going, and eventually, Jesus had gathered around him a group of people from the larger crowds, as did

Satan. But one man joined neither group. He climbed the fence that was there and just sat down on it. Then Jesus and his people left and disappeared. So too did Satan and his people. And the man on the fence sat alone. As this man sat there, Satan came back and appeared to be looking for something that he'd lost. The man said, "Have you lost something?" Satan looked straight at him and replied, "No, there you are. Come with me." "But," said the man, "I sat on the fence. I chose neither you nor Him." "That's okay," said Satan. "I own the fence."

As every farmer knows, it is easier to sit on the fence than to work in the field. The same is true in the vineyard of the Lord. However, the eternal outcome, as the story above reveals, is not to be desired (Matt. 25:14-30)!

In reality, one cannot "sit on the fence" in the kingdom of God, for Jesus said, "***He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad***" (Matt. 12:30). In other words, the Lord will not play "second fiddle." "***Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness***" (Matt. 6:33).

I am sitting on the fence when:

- I keep silence while the truth is being ridiculed or perverted.
- I know I should be at worship but choose to stay home or go elsewhere.
- There is an opportunity for me to serve, but I sit by while others do the work.
- I fail to pay a compliment or give encouragement to a struggling brother.
- My idea of a good worship service is a short one.
- I demand that others do for me what I should be doing for myself.
- Prayer and praise of God are part of my life only on Sunday morning.
- My complaints and criticisms exceed my compliments and commendations.
- Good and godly men are reviled and I make no effort to defend them.
- My concept of a great preacher is an eloquent or entertaining one.
- My hobbies and personal interests consume my time and conversation. ■

Some Suggestions for Your Daily Routine

By Greg Gwin

We all have some things that we do with great regularity. Certain activities are a part of everyday - things like bathing, dressing, brushing teeth, etc. Each person will have other unique practices that are incorporated into their normal routine. And, while it is possible to "get in a rut", some of this regularity is important and helpful in making us more efficient individuals. With that idea in mind, we'd like to suggest some things that ought to become a regular part of every Christian's daily routine. Every day we should.

Pray. Pray daily for your fellow Christians, especially remembering the sick, the bereaved, those who are spiritually weak, those laboring under heavy burdens, and others who have special needs. Don't let these prayers be totally "general" in nature. Think of specific individuals and mention them by name in your prayers.

Give Thanks. In the course of your prayers, do not neglect to thank the Heavenly Father for all the wonderful blessings that He gives us. Again, be specific. Taking the time to "count your blessings" every day will help you to gain a greater appreciation for what God has done for you. Especially spend time contemplating the great spiritual blessings we have in Christ.

Study. Find some time each day to spend in the study of God's Word. Get up a few minutes earlier each day, break away in the middle of the day, make time in the evening - but by all means, study the Word. This will help you to resist temptation (Matt. 4:1-11) and prepare you to explain your faith to others (1 Pet. 3:15).

Serve. The Christian's life is to be a life of service (Mk. 10:43, 44). Instead of waiting for others to do things for you, look for some opportunity every day to do some deed of kindness for another individuals. Your life will be happier if you concentrate less on self and more on others. – *Collegue church of Christ Bulletin*, December 8, 2019. ■

Service Times - Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM - Wednesday: 7:00 PM

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