

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

What Time Is It With You?

Time is a valuable thing. We use clocks to tell us what *time* it is, because everything in this life is “*timed*.” The whole of our lives as Christians is centered on *time*. Solomon expressed the value of “*time*” when he wrote, “*To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted; A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away; A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace*” (Eccl. 3:1-8). With these truths stated by Solomon regarding *time*, how would you answer the following questions?

- Do you focus your *time* on spiritual or fleshly matters? (Eph. 5:15-17; Col. 4:5)
- Do you take *time* DAILY to read, study and meditate on God’s word? (Psa. 1:1-2; Acts 17:11)
- Do you take *time* to worship God in a pleasing manner? (Jn. 4:20-24; Heb. 10:21-26)
- Do you take *time* to pray in thankfulness to God DAILY and in *time* of need? (1 Thess. 5:17-18; Jude 20; Phil. 4:6-7; Heb. 4:13-16)
- Are you taking *time* to encourage and edify your brethren? (1 Thess. 5:11; 4:18)
- Do you take *time* to consider what you were before you obeyed the gospel and what God expects you to be as His child? (1 Pet. 4:1-6; 1:13-15; Titus 3:3-8)
- Do you spend *time* murmuring and complaining or counting your blessings? (Jn. 6:41-45; 1 Corinthians 10:6-10; Eph. 1:3-8)
- Are you taking *time* to be Holy? (1 Pet. 2:1:10; 2 Pet. 3:11-18)
- Are you taking *time* to bring your thoughts and actions in obedience to Christ? (Col. 3:17; 2 Cor. 5:4-6)
- Or, have you come to the *time* in your life that you will no longer endure sound doctrine based on truth but desire to hear “sermons” that lack scriptural content and fables of men? (2 Tim. 4:1-4)

I thank you for taking *time* to read this article! But more importantly, I hope and urge you to take *time* to read, study and mediate on the passages cited and take *time* to examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith (2 Cor. 13:5). “*Think in these things*” (Phil. 4:8), my beloved brethren, for your *time* will be well spent if you do. What *time* is it with you? – *tgmc* ■

“NOT LAGGING IN DILIGENCE”

By R.J. Evans

The matter of being *diligent* as we live our lives as Christians is vital and necessary. To be *diligent* is to give careful attention to what is expected and required. It can be summed up as making constant application to whatever might lie before us. Thus, to persevere with *diligence* is the very opposite of laziness. The Apostle Paul said to the Romans – “*not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord*” (Rom. 12:11).

Diligence involves discipline. And because of this, laziness is offensive to God. In fact, from the Book of Proverbs, we learn of God’s attitude toward being slothful. Please observe the following verses: “*The hand of the diligent will rule, But the slothful will be put to forced labor.... The plans of the diligent lead surely to plenty, But those of everyone who is hasty, surely to poverty*” (Prov. 12:24; 21:5). Therefore, when we refuse to be *diligent* in taking on our responsibilities, choosing personal pleasure and desire over obeying and honoring God, we should not be surprised when other areas of our lives suffer. When we are too lazy to care, then we begin to procrastinate, be-

come restless, helpless, careless, and chaotic. We don't decide to be lazy out of nowhere. We consciously decide to set aside duties and responsibilities and indulge more and more in our own desires and wishes. When this becomes a habit and way of life, we become like the sluggard – refusing to take on new ventures and challenges, unable to finish what we started – becoming completely useless. Please observe the folly of indolence: ***“Go to the ant, you sluggard! Consider her ways and be wise, Which, having no captain, Overseer or ruler, Provides her supplies in the summer, And gathers her food in the harvest. How long will you slumber, O sluggard? When will you rise from your sleep? A little sleep, a little slumber, A little folding of the hands to sleep—So shall your poverty come on you like a robber, And your need like an armed man”*** (Prov. 6:6-11).

The need to be a *diligent* worker existed even before sin entered the world. God told Adam in the garden of Eden ***“to tend and keep it”*** (Gen. 2:15). After Adam and Eve sinned, the labor increased exponentially. Adam would labor hard to bring forth a harvest from his work (Gen. 3:17-19); Eve would labor hard to bring forth life from her womb (Gen. 3:16). Thus, we are expected to work. The Apostle Paul told the Ephesians – ***“Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need”*** (Eph. 4:28). He told the Thessalonians – ***“If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat”*** (2 Thess. 3:10). He told Timothy that ***“if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever”*** (1 Tim. 5:8).

Just how *diligent* are we? We should not be trying to live as lazy, restless, helpless, useless followers of Christ. We have to “get up and get at it” and stop waiting to “feel” motivated to do what needs to be done now. If we constantly wait for “the mood to strike us,” we won't ever get anything done on a consistent basis. We also need to remember this important fact: Don't confuse rest with laziness. They are not the same. Rest rejuvenates us to continue in the responsibilities that lie ahead, while laziness is the avoidance of life's demands. While on earth, Jesus realized the need for rest. In Mark 6:31, He told His disciples: ***“Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while.”***

Let us all focus on our goals much like those in the days of Nehemiah who ***“had a mind to work”*** (Neh. 4:6). Do we have that same attitude? We close with the words of the Apostle Peter: ***“Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your calling and election sure”*** (2 Pet. 1:10). ■

“THE KINDNESS OF GOD”

By Larry Ray Hafley

Jonathan, son of Saul, showed great affection for David and saved him from his father's wrath. Though his unselfish, sacrificial efforts endangered himself, he never wavered in his devotion to David (1 Sam. 18:1ff.). After Jonathan's death, David sought to repay his debt of love to Saul and Jonathan's family (2 Sam. 9).

Despite all Saul had done against him, David sought for ways to show ***“the kindness of God”*** toward ***“any of the house of Saul.”*** Jonathan had a crippled son, Mephibosheth, ***“And David said unto him, Fear not: for I will surely show thee kindness for Jonathan thy Father's sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father; and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually”*** (2 Sam. 9:7). But Mephibosheth is lame! What good is land going to do for a man who is unable to tend it? Hear the rest of this tender, touching story of David as he showed ***“the kindness of God.”***

David called Ziba, a former servant of Saul, and told him to tend Mephibosheth's land. Ziba had ***“fifteen sons and twenty servants,”*** so he was fully capable of being a tenant farmer, and willingly agreed to the task. ***“As for Mephibosheth, said the king, he shall eat at my table, as one of the king's sons....And all that dwelt in the house of Ziba were servants unto Mephibosheth. So Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem: for he did eat continually at the king's table; and was lame in both his feet”*** (2 Sam. 9:11-13).

Dear brethren, is it quite possible that if we will show ***“the kindness of God”*** toward others that one day we, too, will be allowed to ***“eat continually at the King's table”***? ■

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

Tommy Glendol McClure, Editor and Evangelist - 925-759-4357

Web Site: www.lodiCAchurchofchrist.com - Email: lodicachurchofchrist@gmail.com - Phone: 209-365-9250