

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

DON'T TAKE A VACATION!

By Kyle Campbell

It won't be long until Memorial Day, the unofficial start to summer. These times of the year mean vacation. A vacation is a period of recreation, especially one spent away from home or in traveling. “Vacation” comes from *vacare* which means “be unoccupied.”

A Christian has to take up their cross all of the time (Matt. 16:24); but during vacations, because they're a time of rest, it can be tempting to set aside the responsibilities of the Lord's calling (2 Thess. 1:11). As you plan your vacation, for the sake of your devotion to Jesus, don't leave behind the following three items.

Don't Leave Behind Your Morals

Paul, in Ephesians 4:1, wrote, ***“I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called.”*** ***“Walk”*** is a habitual course of action and this course defines my loyalty to Jesus. Romans 12:2 requires me to ***“not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind”*** (cp. 1 Pet. 1:14-16).

When I'm on vacation, several moral sins have to be avoided: 1) drunkenness and casual or recreational drinking (Prov. 20:1; 23:29-32; Gal. 5:19-21; 1 Pet. 4:3; cp., 1 Thess 5:6, 8); 2) dancing (Gal. 5:19-21; Matt. 5:28; cp. 1 Tim. 6:11); 3) profanity and other sins of the tongue (Eph. 4:29; 5:4; Rom. 1:29-30; 2 Cor. 12:20; 1 Tim. 5:13; 3 Jn. 10); and, 4) gambling (Lk. 12:42; 16:2; Matt. 7:12; 1 Cor. 10:24; Col.3:5-6; 1 Tim 6:10; Jn. 8:34; Gal. 5:23).

Don't Leave Behind Your Modesty

Almost all vacations are taken when it's hot. Time at the beach soaking up the sun and swimming is pretty much a given during these weeks. A Christian lives by the enduring principle that swimwear, dresses, shorts, shirts, and other types of clothing do not change with the climate.

Furthermore, age doesn't matter. There are lots of older people who have learned how to dress modestly. Younger people need to learn it too.

The Bible has important instructions that apply to men and women. Generally speaking, women have the responsibility of dressing modestly (Prov. 7:10; Isa. 47:2; 1 Tim. 2:9-10; 1 Pet. :1-5; cp. Matt. 18:6-7) and men have the responsibility of guarding their eyes from lustful looks (2 Sam. 11:2, 4; Prov. 4:23; 6:27-35; Matt. 5:28; 2 Pet. 2:14). Of course, this doesn't mean that men can't dress immodestly or women can't look at men with lust. Everyone needs to be careful.

Don't Leave Behind Your Worship

My devotion to God, in part, is shown by my desire to worship God. Every faithful believer through the course of history has been a lover of worship (Psa. 42:1-2; 84:1-2, 10). This person can hardly wait to get to the assembly of the saints (Psa. 122:1). You can think about devotion (and worship) in three ways.

First, a Christian always seeks God's kingdom first (Matt. 6:33). The ***“kingdom”*** is the church and ***“His righteousness”*** is the salvation that is now found in Christ. This means the church and salvation have to come first or have the greatest prominence in our lives (Matt. 10:37-38).

Every assembly is designed to help the church grow and advance our salvation (2 Pet. 1:5-8). If we neglect these assemblies just because it's inconvenient, we aren't seeking His kingdom first. All of us can surely admit that it's easy to let devotion slip while away on a trip.

Second, a Christian always makes the most of their time. To **“redeem the time”** in Ephesians 5:16 is to realize its value and use it to the best possible advantage. A Christian on vacation has to decide how he will spend his time. Here's time that can be spent sightseeing, relaxing, reading, traveling, visiting with friends, etc. I'm not saying there's anything wrong with these options.

But I am advocating that you don't forget to spend time with other Christians in worship to God (Psa. 119:97; Prov. 2:10-11). Brethren are so encouraged when you make time for the Lord and visit with them while on vacation (Rom. 15:32). Your sacrifice validates their sacrifice.

Third, a Christian is always **“zealous for good works”** (Titus 2:14). All Christians will admit that the periods of worship and study commanded by God is a **“good work,”** producing spiritual benefits in the heart of the worshiper (Heb. 10:23-25). Indifference toward these assemblies disregards divine teaching to be **“fruitful”** or **“ready for every good work”** (Col. 1:10; Titus 3:1).

Some, rather than looking for an opportunity to worship, use the opportunity of being on vacation to purposefully avoid it. It's strange that saints would proclaim devotion to God at one assembly and then disregard another assembly when they could attend without a lot of difficulty.

The denominational idea of “going to church” is pervasive. More accurately stated, you are faithful to the Lord (or not). You're a Christian all the time, even when you travel, not just when you “go to church” (cp. Phil. 2:15). Following the gospel is not defined as a seasonal religion. The “seasonal Christian” is good at church assemblies in the presence of saints, but he is indifferent and sinful when he goes on vacation.

Enjoy your time off, but keep your morals, modesty, and worship to your King first in your heart. The Bible constantly reminds us that God **“sees”** our heart and behavior (Josh. 22:22; Prov. 15:11; Heb. 4:13; 1 Jn. 3:20). Let Him **“see”** righteousness, respect, and reverence in your life all of the time. ■

A Dozen Ways to Murder a Church

By Mark White

If you would like to kill the work of your local congregation, then I have the perfect plan:

1. Skip services often and encourage others to skip, too.
2. When you do attend, come in late and cause a little disturbance. While there, take a good nap.
3. Always be critical and nit-picky
4. Never volunteer to help, but always complain about the way the volunteers are doing things.
5. Even though you don't want to volunteer, still act annoyed and put out when you don't get an important job.
6. If asked directly to give your opinion, act like you don't have one. Later, get on the phone and tell others how things should have been done in the first place.
7. Never do more than absolutely necessary, then accuse those who are doing the work of being a clique.
8. Withhold your contribution and tell-others why you don't think they should support the work either.
9. When you do volunteer for a job, just do a half-hearted mediocre job.
10. Never compliment or encourage any of the members.
11. Don't bother with converting anyone, but if you do, then make sure that they are as negative and disruptive as you.
12. Every time you hear some juicy gossip be sure to tell everyone you can. After all, it is your duty to proclaim the truth. Your brethren have a right to know. ■

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

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