

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

Why Some Christians Are Not Devoted

By Richard Thetford

I have wondered many times why it is that some Christians do not seem to be truly devoted to their Christianity. I now believe it is because they do not understand what it means to be a genuine disciple of Christ. One can never hope to be the kind of Christian God intends for one to be if one has not learned discipleship. Webster defines *disciple* as: “*A pupil or follower of any teacher or school; A follower of Jesus.*” Every Christian must learn that one must forsake every person and everything and put Christ FIRST in their life. To *forsake* is to “*give up; renounce; leave; abandon; desert.*” Those unwilling to do so will not enter into heaven and will never become the servant that Jesus expects one to be! When a Christian can truly grasp the importance of following Christ, doing ALL His commandments, then one will become an effective servant in God’s kingdom. When one does not learn this lesson first and foremost, then one will find that they are spinning their wheels and being unstable because “*No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon*” (Matt. 6:24).

Every Christian must first strive to do Christ’s will. Jesus said that only those that do His will enter into heaven and those that don’t will be cast away into an eternal Hell (Matt. 7:21-23).

We Must Take A Stand For Jesus Above All Else

In Matthew 10:32-39 we can learn a valuable lesson on what Jesus truly means by being a true disciple of His. We have got to be willing to confess Jesus each day of our lives before men. No matter where we are, or what we are doing others should see us living a life as a Christian “*proclaiming godliness.*” It is only when we take a stand FOR Christ that He will take a stand for us: “*Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven*” (Matt. 10:32-33). One of the toughest things we must do as Christians is to go against the personal beliefs of our own parents, brothers, or sisters. Jesus addresses that in this passage. We must be prepared to even put our physical family second to Jesus if we ever hope to have eternal life with Him. He said, “*He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me*” (Matt. 10:37). When we make decisions to do things with our family at the expense of doing Christ’s will then we are not worthy of being His disciple (Matt. 10:35-38).

We Must Be Willing To Deny Self And Serve Jesus

This may be the hardest lesson for a Christian to learn. Until one can put their own interests, passions, and desires, second to serving Christ, then one is not ready to be a disciple of Jesus. Jesus said “*If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it*” (Matt. 16:24-25). Many will be cast away into hell on the Day of Judgment because they would not deny their own lusts and desires and put Jesus first!

Excuses Won’t Cut It – We Must Not Look Back

In Luke 9:57-61, Jesus urged several to follow Him. But in each case they made excuse for why they had to do something else first. Jesus sums this up by saying “*No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God*” (Luke 9:62). Then later in Luke 14:16-33 He told the story of the man

that made a great supper and invited many. But those that were invited made excuses why they could not attend. Jesus invites us to join Him in teaching others and living the Christian life but many make excuses on why they can't put Jesus first in their life.

A disciple of Christ truly loves Jesus and one another (John 13:34-35; 14:15, 21, 23). A true disciple will continue in His word. Jesus said: ***“If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed”*** (John 8:31). See also Acts 14:22. A true disciple will be faithful until death (Rev. 2:10). Only a dedicated disciple is worthy to wear the name Christian (Acts 11:26).

Each and every Christian must be determined to follow Jesus. If you do, you can have peace through His word which says; ***“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin”*** (1 John 1:7). Let us be determined to walk in the light of Christ, serving Him because we have a sincere desire to and not looking back because we KNOW that our reward is ahead of us if we remain faithful to Jesus until the day of our death! May God bless each of us as we strive to put Jesus **FIRST** each day that we live! ■

Three Kinds of Christians

By Greg Gwin

There are three kinds of Christians in any local congregation. Which kind are you?

1) There are those Christians you can always count on. When there is work to be done, when a volunteer is needed, when a need must be met, you can depend on these folks to step forward. They carry their own weight, and they help others carry theirs, too (Gal. 6:2, 5). There is never a doubt about their commitment or dedication. Their obvious zeal serves as a positive source of encouragement to others. You just never are left to wonder where they stand – because they demonstrate their faith in every way. These Christians serve as the “core” of any faithful congregation. Without them, important work would never get done – crucial matters would be left unattended – the church simply would not do well. Thank God for all such brethren. May their tribe increase!

2) There are some other Christians in the church that are absolutely “out of it.” They have little if any connection to the real work of the local congregation. They never are around if there is work to be done, and they simply DO NOT volunteer to help with the on-going efforts of the group. It is even impossible to count on these folks to attend the services regularly. Almost anything can serve as an excuse for them to miss the assemblies. And, observing their spotty attendance, others are left to wonder if they are really doing any profitable work in service to the Lord.

3) There is yet another group that is in evidence in the local church. These are the ones who are “riding the fence.” They want to give the impression that they are faithful and involved, but in reality their lives are full of compromise. They vocally claim allegiance to Christ, but they can't be counted on to consistently put the kingdom first.

Our Lord described these three kinds of Christians as ***“hot,” “cold,”*** and ***“lukewarm”*** (Rev.3:15, 16). Which term describes YOU? ■

“I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth” (Rev. 3:15-16 KJV).

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

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