

Cape Coral
Church of Christ
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Schedule of Services

Sunday: Bible Study: 9:30 A.M.

Worship: 10:30 A.M. and 5:00 P.M.

Wednesday: Bible Study: 6:00 P.M.

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Does Thanksgiving Change Your Attitude or Only Your Waistline?

The Psalmist said, "It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord. . ." (Psa. 92:1). It is good to give thanks because of what thanksgiving can do for the one who gives thanks as well as the One who receives thanks. I read of a prominent doctor who prescribed a simple "Thank You" for every act or word of kindness received by an emotionally disturbed patient. After sixty days, the patient was vastly improved.

Thoughtful reflection on one's blessings can change the attitude and help the focus of one's life to be sharpened. From the unlikely location of a prison, where he was undeservedly confined, he wrote,

> "Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice. . . . Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Phil. 4:4, 11-13).

I am convinced that one of the keys that helped Paul develop this unusual, marvelous attitude is found in the midst of the preceding

citation. He said, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:6-7). Paul, just like the Lord (cf. Luke 22:41-44; Heb. 5:7), knew what it was like to agonize in prayer concerning some great need (cf. Rom. 15:30-33; 2 Cor. 1:9-11; 12:7-9). However, his prayers and supplications were permeated with thanksgiving. His agony in need never "out-balanced" his deep gratitude to God. He always believed that God had blessed him far beyond what he deserved even in light of the difficulties and hardships so obviously evident in his life (2 Cor. 11:23-33). Such caused Paul to exclaim, "But by the grace of God I am what I am . . ." (1 Cor. 15:10).

Perhaps there is a tendency in many of us to think in terms of what others have, what we don't have, or what we want. When we look at what we want, and then compare it with what we have, we very well might be unhappy. However, when we truly think of what we deserve, then think of what we have, we will thank God. Someone has said, "If you feel God has not given you what you deserve - be thankful." Again, Paul says it best, "And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord . . . I obtained mercy . . . And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant . . . Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief" (1 Tim. 1:12, 14-15). True thanksgiving will change more than your waistline. It will change your attitude.

Time Changes Everything except ...

Time changes everything in our lives. As time goes on, our bodies change, our activities change, our families change, our finances change, etc., etc. In life, everything is in a constant flux of change.

But through all of this, let us remember that God never changes. Malachi 3:6 reminds us, "For I am the LORD, I do not change." Isn't it wonderful that through all of life's uncertainties and changes, we can rely upon God. His immense love, His sure promises, His unlimited power are all abundant, constant, consistent, and unchanging!

So, through the shifting sands of time and life, trust fully in the One who "is the same yesterday, today, and forever" (Hebrews 13:8). He will see you through all of the changes of life.

Disappointment

"*Sometimes when you get disappointment, it makes you stronger.*" -- David Rudisha

Disappointments come to all of us at one time or another. It is usually referred to as the "non-fulfillment of certain expectations." How we deal with them says a lot about the kind of people we are.

Many a parent has had heartache and disappointment seeing their children leave the church. They scratch their heads and wonder where they went wrong? Being a free moral agent, sometimes children make poor choices. We can only hope that the Proverb comes to pass: "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Prov. 22:6).

There is also the danger of shielding our children from disappointment. It can really make life difficult as they get older, not knowing how to process such emotions. It can indeed make them anxious and feel like they are overwhelmed.

Disappointment certainly is not isolated to family. We may feel it more acutely when it is close to home, but we experience it quite often with our church family. For instance, we become frustrated and disappointed when we see long-time church members exhibiting a lack of spiritual growth. Such reminds us of the Hebrew writer, "For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food" (Heb. 5:12). It is certainly not because we do not care that we find disappointment, but because we do!

Prayer and patience are a good combination when we are faced with disappointment. But in honesty, we are not very good with patience in such matters. Like the old adage: "Lord give me patience, and give it to me right now!"

Live for Today

One of Dale Carnegie's principles about enjoying life was to live in "daylight compartments." His point was that we should not worry about what happened yesterday or last week, or to be overly concerned about what tomorrow might bring. The emphasis should be instead, on making the most of today.

Written in Sanskrit centuries ago is a similar notion:

> Look we to this one day, for it and it alone is life. In the brief course of this one day lie all the verities and realities of your existence; the

pride of growth, the glory of action, the splendor of beauty. Yesterday is only a dream, and tomorrow is but a vision. Yet each day, well lived, makes every yesterday a dream of happiness and each tomorrow a vision of hope. Look well, therefore, to this one day, for it and it alone is life.

Actually this is the point of the Psalmist, "This is the day which the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it" (Psalm 118:24). Jesus said, "Therefore do not be anxious for tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own" (Matthew 6:34). The apostle Paul said, "Look therefore carefully how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, redeeming the time because the days are evil" (Ephesians 5:15-16). To redeem the time simply means to make use of the opportunities we have today.

Today is a marvelous day! It is the only day we have. "Look well, therefore, to this one day, for it and it alone is life."

The Christian's Aim

The aim of Christianity may be described in various ways. It is to obey the will of Christ. It is to become Christ-like in every way. The purpose of the Christian life to glorify God before men. But perhaps none of these describes the Christian's goal in life any better than these words from the pen of the apostle, "Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him" (2 Cor. 5:9 NKJV).

Aiming to please God - what a beautiful way to express it! And that's exactly what the Christian tries to do in everything. He does, that is, if he is a faithful Christian!

This ambition to please God will manifest itself in two ways. First, he will **SHUN** anything and everything that is wrong! He will flee from temptation. He will resist every evil work. He will be careful to guard every thought and word and deed. If the Lord has forbidden it, that settles it!

Second, the desire to please the Lord will cause the child of God to **DO** that which He has commanded and to use every opportunity available to show his love and gratitude to the Lord for all He has done for him! Service will never be "duty only!" It will always be considered a "privilege" as well!

One way the Christian can measure his spiritual vitality is by examining his primary aim in life. What would such a test reveal about me?