

God And You

Joe Slater

Your attitude and behavior in any and all circumstances ought to be governed by your relationship to God. Paul had been in a ferocious storm on the sea for nearly two weeks (Acts 27:27). His relationship to God, however, enabled him not only to endure the stress, but to comfort and encourage the others on board: *“And now I urge you to take heart, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship. For there stood by me this night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve, saying, ‘Do not be afraid, Paul; you must be brought before Caesar; and indeed, God has granted you all those who sail with you.’ Therefore take heart, men, for I believe God, that it will be just as it was told me”* (27:22-25).

Notice three aspects of Paul’s relationship to God:

Paul belonged to God (v. 23). He recognized the truthfulness of the words he had written earlier to Corinth: *“. . . you are not your own . . . (f)or you were bought at a price”* (1 Corinthians 6:19, 20). One of Paul’s own descriptions of himself is *“a (bond)servant of Jesus Christ”* (Romans 1:1). A bondservant (slave) is owned by someone else. Paul’s owner was the Lord. Liberty-loving people that we are, we cringe at the thought of being owned by anyone! However, the sooner we acknowledge that God owns us, and that this is a good thing for us, the better off we will be.

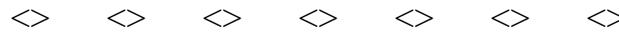
Paul served God (Acts 27:23). As a slave, Paul’s purpose was to do the will of his master, Jesus. Again, we flinch at the idea of subjecting our own will to anyone else’s! We would do well, however, to swallow our pride and follow the example of the Son of God, Who *“did not come to be served, but to serve”* (Matthew 20:28). Contrary to popular belief, true religion is not about

doing whatever makes me feel good. First and foremost, we are to serve God. If our hearts are right, such faithful service will result in abundant good feelings.

Paul believed God (Acts 27:25). For many days the storm had pounded them. They had no idea where they were, the storm was not easing, lightening the ship had done little good, and *“all hope that we would be saved was finally given up”* (v. 20). Nevertheless, when God’s messenger told Paul that he and all others aboard the ship would survive, Paul believed it. *“The things which are impossible with men are possible with God”* (Luke 18:27).

Let us trust our Lord, believing what He tells us. Human wisdom may not agree with the Bible, but the Bible is right!

You belong to God. Serve Him! Believe Him!
Doing so, you can endure even the worst of times.



What Makes a Great Church?

Not a bigger budget, but larger hearts

Not a tall steeple, but a lofty vision

Not money received, but service rendered

Not great numbers, but great love for each other

Not frantic motion, but dedicated action

Not soft seats, but courageous leadership

Not loud talking, but quiet doing

Not beautiful clothes, but beautiful lives

Not eloquent preaching, but active members

Not a gorgeous building, but good deeds

DEVOTIONS

“They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer” (Acts 2:42NASU).

Some people just seem to grow more and know more than others. Why? Usually, it is because they are consistent in their effort to grow spiritually. Consistency produces gratifying results. Inconsistency produces discouragement and very few gratifying results. If there was one thing that I could encourage Christians to do, it would be to continually devote themselves to spiritual activities. The word that is translated "continually" or "steadfastly" means "to give constant attention" to something or someone.

When Cornelius sent his servants to get Peter, he selected “a devout soldier” to go with them. “Devout” means this soldier attached himself to Cornelius as a servant continually. Isn’t that the kind of soldiers Christ wants in His spiritual army? How could a general win a war with soldiers who are inconsistent? Even if they are very devoted when present, if they are inconsistent in their presence, it causes the general to lose the battle. The same is true with Christ’s soldiers. Not only must we be devoted when present, but our Christian endeavor must be present all the time.

It is so sad to see Christians who want to be spiritual, but their inconsistency prevents it. When they are "hot" they are "hot," but often they are lukewarm or even cold. Their inconsistency keeps them from growing spiritually.

The first Christians were "continually devoting themselves" to spiritual activities (Acts 2:42). How consistent are we with regard to spiritual activities? If we are consistent we will grow. If we are inconsistent we will not grow, or will grow very slowly.

Interestingly, the Greek word for "continually" is most often used when describing New Testament Christians' prayer life (Acts 1:14; 6:4; Romans 12:12; Colossians 4:2). What about our prayer life? Are we consistently devoted to prayer?

Let's resolve today that we will continually devote ourselves to spiritual matters. It will help us individually and it will bless the church.

--Wayne Burger (Conifer, CO) adapted