

School's Out! (Or Is It?)

Joe Slater

If school isn't already out for you, it soon will be. For most who read this, formal "school" has been out for a long time! (Years? Decades?) But is school ever really out for a Christian?

The very word "disciple" means a learner/follower. As disciples of Jesus Christ, we must be learning His will constantly. Paul told Titus that the Christians in Crete should "**learn to maintain good works**" (Titus 3:14). The same apostle told Timothy (in Ephesus) that the brethren should **learn** to honor and care for their widowed parents (1 Timothy 5:4). Even those with the supernatural gift of prophecy were to use it in such a way "**that all may learn**" (1 Corinthians 14:31). Whoever said, "When you stop learning, you stop growing" was right!

At least 125 times the New Testament uses some form of the kindred words "teach" and "doctrine." Jesus taught; the apostles taught; other Christians taught. And if teaching is to accomplish anything good, someone must be learning!

Be assured that Satan and his crew are busy teaching lies and corruption. May it never be that we would surrender the field to them! To the contrary, we must be teaching and equipping others to teach. "*And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these things to faithful men who will be able to teach others also*" (2 Timothy 2:2).

"School" is in session! It always will be until the Lord returns. You have responsibilities both as a student and as a teacher. Don't be a drop-out!

Would Jesus Love Me?

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved (John 3:16-17).

Would Jesus still love me even if I were:

A mass murderer? Yes, said Saul.

A deformed outcast? Yes, said the leper.

A coward? Yes, said Peter.

Paralyzed? Yes, said the man let down through the roof by his friends.

Poor and hungry? Yes, said the five thousand fed.

Withered? Yes, said the man whose hand was healed on the Sabbath.

An adulterer? Yes, said David.

Small of stature? Yes, said David as he fought Goliath.

A Stutterer? Yes, said Moses.

Physically disabled? Yes, said the woman who touched the hem of Jesus' garment.

Demon possessed? Yes, said the man at Capernaum.

Deaf and mute? Yes, said the deaf mute Jesus healed.

Crippled? Yes, said the woman crippled for 18 years.

Swollen? Yes, said the man who was healed from Dropsy.

Married many times and now living with a man unmarried? Yes, said the woman at the well.

A sinner? Yes, said Jesus, as He opened His arms and died for me.

--Linda Gragg (Oceano, CA)

Patriotism

I am a patriot. It is a blessing to be an American. I believe America is an exceptional country. No other nation ever won a great war at such a terrible price and then generously rebuilt its enemies. If some later wars have been mistakes, they were mistakes of the head, not of the heart. America's motives have never been "colonial," seeking to acquire territory. Our intent has been good.

My heart swells when our flag waves. I am on my feet at the first strains of our National Anthem. My song and prayer are, "God bless America."

I am also aware, however, that I belong to a higher and greater kingdom. I am a citizen of heaven (Philippians 3:20). America is not "God's people." Israel is a beleaguered nation and her enemies, for the most part, are our enemies; but the modern state of Israel is not "God's people." The church of Christ, consisting of people redeemed by the blood of Christ from every tribe, race, clan, and tongue, comprises "God's people."

There are staunch Americans who are not Christians, and there are faithful Christians who are not Americans. A child of God in India, Nigeria, France or Ukraine has a greater claim on our brotherhood than an American who is not a Christian.

To Christians Scripture says, "*You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession. That you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy*" (1 Peter 2:9, 10).

I love America and I am blessed to be an American, but I belong to Christ and to His kingdom.

--Cecil May, Jr. (via Mt. Carmel, Athens, AL)