

Learning

Joe Slater

If classes at your school haven't started already, they soon will. We wish all of our students, teachers, and staff a safe and productive year!

I wish I had paid better attention and tried harder in school! I did well in subjects I liked (math, science, music). But poor grades in history, geography, and art evidenced my childish and foolish immaturity. Art still holds little appeal to me, but since becoming interested in the Bible I have regretted my extremely limited grasp of history and geography! It turns out that what "a bunch of dead guys" did and said actually makes a difference to us!

That's even more obvious when it comes to Bible characters. They were real people who lived in real places at real times in history. What they did and what God did through them and for them affects us! Knowing that Joseph's cup was in Benjamin's sack teaches us important lessons, and it's not just so we can give the right answers playing "Bible Trivia"! (There is nothing trivial about the Bible!)

As we finished our study of Judges and launched into the life of Paul, someone pointed out that if the tribe of Benjamin had been completely wiped out (as it nearly was in Judges 20-21), there would have been no apostle Paul. What an astute observation! What happened back then is important!

Let's redouble our determination to take Bible study seriously. Let us learn not merely to regurgitate facts, but to understand who God is, who we are as His people, and how we can glorify Him in worship and by serving others in His name!

Not A Joking Matter

There was once a farmer who was going broke farming, so he quit and started selling hammers. He would buy hammers for \$3 apiece and sell them for \$2 each. He was selling a lot of hammers and seemed happier than before. A friend soon reminded him that for every hammer he sold he was losing \$1. To which he smiled and replied, "Yeah, but it's still more profitable than farming."

That joke is similar to what people sometimes do with their lives. Activities like drunkenness, sexual immorality, extreme selfishness, obsession with material possessions, deceit, etc., can cause folks to view their lives as being morally and spiritually bankrupt. So, they decide to go to church services, pray, or read the Bible every once in a while, without actually correcting the behaviors that got them into such a big mess to begin with.

Going to church services, praying, and reading the Bible are good things to do, but until one takes some corrective action and makes a full commitment to Jesus Christ and His teachings, they are still "going broke." It's like buying hammers for \$3 and selling them for \$2 – or like taking two steps forward and three steps backward.

It's past time for some people to get serious about their Christianity, truly change their lives, and totally live for Jesus. He needs to be at the center of every thought, every intent, and every action in life. The old ways are to be completely left behind, and the things that make for righteousness are to be constantly pursued (1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Philippians 3:13-14; Colossians 3:1-17; James 1:21-25).

You see, a professed life in Christ does not work unless we truly and totally live for and with Christ! Don't make a joke out of your life. Live the way He wants you to.

"Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God" (Romans 6:12-13).

--Edd Sterchi (Campbellsville, KY)

Storms Of Life

*I've never been afraid of storms,
For in the lightning's flare
I see the glory of His face
And know that God is there.*

*When thunders roll and lightnings flash
And strong winds rise and swell,
I know He keeps me by His grace,
And with me all is well.*

--Judy Miller

Un-Random Acts Of Kindness

Jesus did many kindnesses, but none were random. Each became a moment to forgive sin or to reveal something about Himself or about the heart and love of His Father.

For Christians, no act of kindness is ever random. Doing something kind for kindness' sake may be random, but doing a kindness in the name of Jesus is intentional.

As believers, we are on this earth to "*do good to all men*" and to let the good that is done point people to Jesus, who can forgive sins. If asked, after doing some kind deed for someone, "Why did you do this?" don't answer, "Oh, I just wanted to do something nice for you." Instead, say, "I wanted you to know something of the kindness of Jesus. I did this for you because of Him.

Now, go out and do some un-random act of kindness today!

--Ben Mereness (via Power For Today)