

Precious Thoughts
By T. Sean Sullivan

What is a Christian supposed to be like? If you ask the average person in the world, they may suggest that a Christian is any “church-goer”. Some have an opinion so loose that it includes anyone and everyone; others have determined a standard so incredibly tight that it hedges out even willing souls. We must cut through the clutter and get to a more reliable source of information. We need to put aside the guess work of men and seek God's answers.

There is a passage of scripture that answers our question. In truth the majority of the New Testament is the guide for a Christian's completion. A good place to start is with the inspired writings of Peter. In Peter's first epistle we can read "As new born babes desire the sincere milk of the word" (1Peter 2:2). This passage tells us to emulate a baby's desire for milk, with our desire for God's word—this is to all Christians not just babes in Christ. So, in essence, to be as we should be, we would need to develop a strong desire for God's word.

There are several examples of what Christians should be like in this short epistle. For now, we will focus our attention on 1Peter 1:13-15. In verse thirteen, and the two that follow, we are going to be admonished to become, "as we should be".

Our first admonition, "Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober." Just what is Peter asking us to do? We don't normally use this term "gird." When you hear "gird" I want you to think of the more common terms "gather" and "tighten." This term “gird” used to be much more common. There was a time when women, and some men, voluntarily inflicted themselves with the use of “girdles”. They were a stiff undergarment that was tightened around the mid-section to make its wearer appear thinner. To “gird up” is to gather and tighten. The readers in the first century, and Peter himself, knew exactly what “to gird up” meant since they all wore clothing that resembled very long loose night shirts. When they intended to move about during the day they would gather the looseness of those garments at their waist with a belt so as to free their feet from tripping on the material. So where is the lesson in this? The parallel would be to gather up our loose thoughts and tighten them in, so that we might think soberly. In other words gather your mind and focus. A Christian is constantly focused. It is easy to lose focus and wander away so purposely reset the focus of your mind and all your intentions today.

A Note For The Preacher
By Bob Pulliam

I found your note on the door the other day. I just imagine that you came by to see why we were not at the services last Sunday. Well, I feel that I should explain so there will be no misunderstanding. You know that one thing we will never do is miss church without some kind of a real good reason.

Last week was the birthday of the sister of my wife's sister-in-law (by her first marriage). We never miss attending any birthday in either of our families. So we just had to be out of town. We left here in time to go to worship over there, but they had early services at 10:30. Is it scriptural to have them earlier? Well, anyway, we did not

get to go that morning. We planned to return early enough to make the evening services, but the children raised such a ruckus that we stayed until 7:00 PM. The services started over there at 7:30, but we had to leave in order to keep from staying out too late with the kids.

Preacher, it would do you good to be out on the road on Sunday morning sometimes. It would give you some idea as to how careless the world is about worshiping Christ. Many of the people we passed had boats behind their cars. Now you know they could at least have gone to services first. Think of all the money they spent for motors, boats, and supplies. I wonder if they ever thought of giving some of that money to the work of the Lord?

Don't worry about us; I'm convinced that we should leave our contribution here at home. We gave the new members across the street our \$2.00 to put in for us. I hope that they see it pays to be a regular and liberal giver and attend the services regularly.

We will see you Sunday. Oops, I forgot! Deer season opens next week. But after that we will see you every Sunday. (Signed: I.M. Weak)

God Belongs in the Center

In the early chapters of Numbers, we are treated to a layout of the camp of Israel. Three tribes camped on the east side (2:1- 9), three on the south (2:10-16), three on the west (2:18-24), and three on the north (2:25-30). In the center of the camp, the Levites were to set up the tabernacle (2:17). Why is this important? It means that God was at the center of the camp, and God was to be their focus, at the heart of everything Israel did. Dads, what about your camp? Is God set up at the center? Is He the focus of all that you are trying to accomplish with your family? Do your children understand that He comes first in all that you do? (By Rusty Miller (via The Beacon, December 29, 2009)

It Just Slipped Out ... Of What?

When excusing themselves for uttering profanities or curses, the kind of words which should never escape our mouths (Eph. 4:29), many will say, "I'm sorry; it just slipped out." But what did those corrupt words slip out of, exactly? Jesus explained, "For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things" (Matt. 12:34-35). That is to say, bad words don't "slip out" of good hearts; they come from bad hearts. Therefore, "Purify your hearts!" (James 4:8). (By Bryan Matthew Dockens (via The Beacon, October 6, 2009)

A Moments Wisdom

Blessed is the man who does not speak until he knows what he is talking about.
Many physical giants are spiritual runts.
Master selfishness or it will master you.
High station in life is earned by the gallantry with which appalling experiences are survived with grace.

The attempt to silence a man is the greatest honor you can bestow on him. It means that you recognize his superiority to yourself.

Money and success don't change people; they merely amplify what is already there.

Love is what is left in a relationship after all the selfishness has been removed.