

Knowing Jesus ... Again

By Zeke Flores

I came upon a story recently of a former chairman of the U.S. Federal Reserve Board named Arthur Burns. Burns, who was Jewish, became part of a Bible study and one day surprised the attendees when he prayed, "O God, may the day come when all Jews will come to know Jesus." An even bigger surprise came when he continued his prayer for the time "when all Christians will come to know Jesus."

While that might seem silly to some, we all know Christians who have stumbled in their walk and some may even have fallen away. But what about those disciples who may still attend worship services and Bible studies but haven't grown spiritually or maybe just seem sort of "ho hum" about the whole thing? Why do some lose their excitement and zeal for the King of kings? While we can't know every detail of everyone's circumstances, we can offer some Biblical advice which can help all of us to deepen our relationship with Christ and spur us on to more enthusiastic service.

Reopen the relationship. Every relationship requires attention to it and most close relationships are maintained when those in them recognize the value of it. What drew you to Jesus? What value did you see at first that caused you to make your decision to obey Him? Restore your love by remembering the blessings to be found in Him. The psalmist prayed, "restore to me the joy of Your salvation and sustain me with a willing spirit." (Psalm 51:12) At every opportunity, let us remember often that "every spiritual blessing" (Eph. 1:3) is in being in a right relationship with Jesus and let us learn to number those blessings specifically. See Ephesians 1:3-14 for a good place to start. Realize again the value and benefit of being a follower of Jesus and reaffirm your love for Him.

Rework the relationship. As mentioned before, relationships require maintenance. That's hard work. Like the alcoholic who simply asked a Christian to pray that he be delivered from drinking and was told, "I have a better idea: Go to Alcoholics Anonymous!" we sometimes forget that Christianity is more than an intention, however intense that longing may be. It's work. Study, prayer, worship, and godliness are not imputed to the Christian, they are gotten through effort and straining. When Paul told Timothy to "pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance, and gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called..." (1Tim. 6:11-12), he was telling him to do the hard work by which those characteristics come. Just as there is no easy path to being delivered from alcoholism, there is no effort-free route to Christ-likeness.

Reflect the relationship. Everybody knows that if you want to shine the dull paint on an old car, you've got to put in some elbow grease. Then, when it's restored, it reflects the image of the one who did the work. Similarly, sin and laziness have left their mark on our personalities and on our souls. But when we've done the hard work of removing all that "road dirt" Christians have the wonderful opportunity to reflect the image of the One who has done the work in us! Sometimes this is done by the "buffing" of hardship and trial. Through the prophet Malachi, God said of the coming Christ "He is like a refiner's fire and fuller's soap. He will sit as a smelter and purifier of silver, and He will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, so that they may present to the Lord offerings in righteousness." (Mal. 3:2-3) Christians are the new "sons of Levi" and "royal priesthood" (1Peter 2:5, 9) who can persevere through trouble "so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor..." (1Peter 1:7). Just as the refiner can see His reflection in the purified gold, so Jesus will see His image in you.

Reopen, rework, and reflect. Come to know Jesus ... again. (11-18-12 Angleton bulletin)

"For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age..." (Titus 2:11-12).

An infidel who was a soap manufacturer once said to a preacher, "That Bible you preach from is a failure in the world, because look at all the sinful people." Just at that time a little boy with a dirty face crossed the sidewalk in front of them and the preacher said, "The soap that you make is a failure; look at all the dirty people in the world." The manufacturer said, "That is not the fault of the soap; the trouble is that they haven't used it." The preacher replied, "Now you have the point. There are many sinful people in the world, but it is not the fault of the Bible; they haven't used it."

Ezekiel said, "Cast away from you all the transgressions which you have committed, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit. For why should you die, O house of Israel?" (Ez. 18:31). James said, "Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls" (James 1:21).

A Moments Wisdom

- People who accomplish things that count are usually too busy to count their accomplishments.
- God loves the sound of your voice; talk to Him often.
- God is everywhere, including at your wit's end.
- Every day God gives us is a rose; and, there are some people who spend it complaining about the thorns.
- For a free facelift: smile.
- When there is a long row to hoe, remember: God is still in charge of the garden.
- When God looks for value, He assesses what's in the heart, not the bank.
- If you want to find out how rich you really are, count all of the things you have that money can't buy.
- If you can't thank God for what you have, thank Him for what you have escaped.
- You have everything when you love everything you have.
- Happiness comes when you are too busy to be miserable.
- To carry a grudge is like being stung to death by one bee.
- A man can fail many times, but he isn't a failure until he begins to blame somebody else.
- To err is human, to blame the next guy even more so.
- The easiest thing to find is fault.
- Everything that irritates us about others can lead to an understanding about ourselves.