

Biblical Bees

Bee Diligent in Preparation

“If the ax is dull, and one does not sharpen the edge, then he must use more strength; but wisdom brings success” (Ecc. 10:10).

In accord with the above verse there is a old illustration regarding Bible study which says, “The woodsmen who sharpens his ax is not wasting his time, nor is the one who sharpens his senses on the Word of God before he attempts to teach.” Let us be diligent in our efforts in studying and teaching the Word of God.

Bee Unselfish in Prayer

“Now, O LORD my God, You have made Your servant king instead of my father David, but I am a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in. And Your servant is in the midst of Your people whom You have chosen, a great people, too numerous to be numbered or counted. Therefore give to Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people, that I may discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?” (1Kings 3:7-9).

Solomon made an humble, unselfish request, and God richly blessed him. In the late 1950's, 23-year-old Armando Valladares was thrown into a Cuban prison, where he remained for 22 years. Executions were staged each night during his first year in prison. Later, he endured some of the most vile and sadistic tortures imaginable. In his memoirs, *Against All Hope*, Valladares wrote, “I sought God....I never asked Him to get me out of there. I didn't think that God should be used for that kind of request. I only asked that He allow me to resist, that He give me the faith and spiritual strength to bear up under those conditions...I only prayed for Him to accompany me.” Let us be unselfish in our prayers.

Bee Humbly Grateful

“Then his brothers also went and fell down before his face, and they said, 'Behold, we are your servants.' Joseph said to them, 'Do not be afraid, for am I in the place of God? But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive. Now therefore, do not be afraid; I will provide for you and your little ones.' And he comforted them and spoke kindly to them” (Gen. 50:18-21).

Several years ago, I heard a preacher in his sermon ask, “Are you humbly grateful or grumbly hateful?” Truly, in every situation we can look at what we've lost and be grumbly hateful, or we can consider our blessings and be humbly grateful. Joseph is a grand example of choosing to be grateful instead of hateful in the face of betrayal. Though his brothers had sold him into slavery, and though he now had the power and opportunity to crush them, he chose to be humbly grateful for the present blessings of God. Colossians 3:15 says, “And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.”

Bee Honest in Business

“You shall do no injustice in judgment, in measurement of length, weight, or volume. You shall have honest scales, honest weights, an honest ephah, and an honest hin...” (Lev. 19:35-36).

Once I was in a store when a farmer came in to get some plow-points. He had just moved into the settlement, and it was the first or second time he had been to town. He came

into the store and asked the proprietor, "Are these plow-points tempered enough?" "No," said he, "I think no; I tried some of them and they are soft."

When the farmer had gone out I said to the proprietor, "Why didn't you tell that man that the plow-points were well-tempered and hard, and would do the work he required of them? Why, you told him the naked truth and missed a sale; you're a strange man." But as long as I stayed in that community, that man had a customer who would spend his last dollar with him. (From Famous Stories of Sam Jones, by George R. Stewart, p. 101)

Bee Content with Your Blessings

"And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, because you obey the voice of the LORD your God..." (Deut. 28:2)

A small businessman from the old country kept his accounts payable in a cigar box, his accounts receivable on a spindle, and his cash in the cash register. His son said, "I don't see how you can run your business this way. How do you know what your profits are?" The businessman replied, "Son, when I got off the boat, I had only the pants I was wearing. Today your sister is an art teacher, your brother is a doctor, and you're an accountant. I have a car, a home, and a good business. Everything is paid for. So you add it all up, subtract the pants, and there's your profit" (From Illustrations Unlimited, by James S. Hewett, p. 467). Count your blessings; name them one by one; and it will surprise you what the Lord has done.

Bee Encouraging

During a recent study, 200,000 employees were interviewed to discover the missing ingredient in their productivity. The study concluded that appreciation and affirmation topped the list of what they wanted most from their superiors. This research implies that receiving affirmation is a basic human need.

The apostle Paul was inspired to address this basic need in the Corinthian believers, so before he peppered them with firm words of discipline, he showered them with affirmation. As their spiritual teacher, Paul began his letter with thanksgiving to God for the grace in their lives.

Once far from God, these believers were now sharing in His grace through the death and resurrection of Christ. United with Jesus, they were living spiritual lives in Him, and the fruit of this union was their spiritual growth in godliness (1 Cor. 1:4-7). Paul deliberately and continually thanked God for His Will at work in the Corinthian believers' lives. I imagine they were better able to bear firm criticism from Paul because he began with tender affirmation.

When we see people who are striving to obeying God, let's take time to encourage them and to thank God for what He's doing through them. Praise loudly—correct softly.

A Moments Wisdom

--You see, in life, lots of people know what to do, but few people actually do what they know. Knowing is not enough! You must take action.

--The world is full of winners who rose from nothing and losers who were given every opportunity.

--How often we miss our life by focusing on the past or yearning for the future.

--I see the ant, not just as the antithesis of a sluggard, but also as one who never quits.

--You can either engage in the blame game, making frequent use of the statement, 'I couldn't because . . . ,' or you can take control of your life and shape it as you would like.

--You get to fill the blackboard of your life with whatever you want. If you have filled it in with baggage from the past, wipe it clean.