

Use It or Lose It

This expression is often heard in regard to physical exercise, when the idea is being promoted that muscles have to be used in order to insure greater use of them in the future. To fail to do so, will tend to slowly lead to muscular atrophy, a loss of what strength you presently have. But the same principle applies to things spiritual as well.

In Mark 4:24-25, Jesus says, "Take heed what you hear. With the same measure you use, it will be measured to you; and to you who hear, more will be given. For whoever has, to him more will be given; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him." When it comes to hearing God's word, understanding it and then applying it, God warns in so many words, "use it or lose it."

We all have some ability to get to know God and His will. We all have opportunities to fulfil the desires of our heart religiously, but if we neglect to use them, we may end up losing even that which we have. Conversely, the more we put into seeking after God, the more we will get out of it and the more we will be equipped for future success.

Ecclesiastes 12 warns mankind to remember the Creator in the days of youth, before the evil days come and there is no interest. We go through changes in our lives, and some not for the better. One such change may be a degenerating interest in spiritual concerns. Don't let this happen to you. Use it, so you don't lose it.

- by Whit Sasser

Some Great Men Speak Concerning Instrumental Music in Worship

John Wesley, when asked about the use of the organ replied, "I have no opposition to the organ in our chapel provided it is neither seen nor heard." (Adam Clark's Commentary, Vol. IV, Page 868).

Adam Clark, a Methodist, and author of a very fine commentary said: "I am an old man, and an old minister; and I here declare that I never knew them to be productive of any good in the worship of God; and have had reason to believe that they were productive of much evil. Music, as a science, I esteem and admire; but instruments of music in the house of God I abominate and abhor." (Clark's Commentary, Vol. IV, Page 686).

Charles Spurgeon, a Baptist, preached for twenty years in the Metropolitan Baptist Tabernacle in London, England. Instruments of music were never used in the tabernacle. When asked why he did not use the organ in worship he gave 1 Cor. 14:15 as his answer and said, "I will pray with the spirit and I will pray with the understanding also, I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also," and remarked, "I would as soon pray to God with machinery as to sing to God with machinery."

John Calvin says: "Musical instruments in celebrating the praises of God would be no more suitable than the burning of incense, the lighting of lamps, and the restoration of the other shadows of the law. The Papists, therefore, have foolishly borrowed this, as well as many other things from the Jew. Men who are fond of outward pomp may delight in that noise: but the simplicity which God recommends to us by the apostles is far more pleasing to Him. Paul allows us to bless God in the public assembly of the saints, only in a known tongue (1 Cor. 14:16). What shall we say then of the chanting, which fills the ear with nothing by an empty sound?" (Commentary of Psalms 33).

Alexander Campbell, "But I presume to all spiritually-minded Christians, such aids would be as a cowbell in a concert." (Memoirs of A. Campbell, Page 366).

Of more importance than the testimony of these men is the inspired testimony of the scriptures:

- "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, SINGING and making melody in your HEART to the Lord." (Eph. 5:19).
- "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, SINGING with grace in your HEARTS to the Lord." (Col. 3:16).

- "What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will SING with the spirit, and I will SING with the understanding also." (1 Cor. 14:15).
- "Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him SING psalms." (Jas. 5:13).

The command within these verses is to SING, and no mention of an instrument can be found. "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book. If any man shall ADD UNTO THESE THINGS, GOD SHALL ADD UNTO HIM THE PLAGUES THAT ARE WRITTEN IN THIS BOOK". (Rev. 22:18).

- by *David J. Riggs*

If No One Invited Me to Their Home

What if no one ever invited me into their home? (I'm thinking especially of fellow Christians.) What if they never made any attempt to socialize with me? What if they never included me in their plans for fun and entertainment?

If this happened, several things would come to mind. First, I know that I would be missing out on something that is very good. There is a real source of encouragement that comes from associating closely with other Christians. Paul spoke of "brotherly love" and urged us to be "preferring one another" (Rom. 12:10). Our own experience confirms that it is a great help to have close friends who are also our brethren in Christ.

Second, if my brethren never wanted to socialize with me, I'd begin to wonder about ME! What is there about ME that makes folks not want to be around me? I remember that wise Solomon said: "A man that hath friends must show himself friendly" (Proverbs 18:24). Have I failed to show friendliness to others? Have I been neglecting MY responsibility toward them? Have I not done my part to try to develop these close personal ties? Maybe other Christians would be happy to spend time with me if I showed them that I was interested in this type of relationship. This is a "two-way" road -- I have to give if I hope to receive. Don't you see it?

Finally, there is a "bottom line" to these considerations. If no one ever invited me into their home -- yes, I'd be missing something good and, yes, I would want to take a careful look at myself -- but I could still be a faithful Christian! After all, my faith and hope is not founded upon a social relationship with other people. It IS founded upon a spiritual commitment to my Savior.

We've heard of folks who fell away -- became unfaithful. When asked why they fell away they said, "The people at that church are unfriendly." That's sad - and we should do better. But, we also know that such a statement shows that those people have never established a right relationship with their Lord. Think!

- by *Greg Gwin*