

Look Unto Realms Above

A principle that is important to the teaching process is stated clearly by John Milton Gregory in his book, *The Seven Laws of Teaching*. Gregory says: "Since attention follows interest, it is folly to attempt to gain attention without first stimulating interest."

Remembering my high school days in study hall, I must agree with Gregory. I can recall 'reading' page after page in a book and being unable to remember a single idea from the book because my mind was on a basketball game to be played that night. The book didn't occupy my attention because I, at the time, wasn't interested in it.

This gets to the heart of the problem of brethren who don't study the word of God publicly or privately. They simply aren't interested. They are more interested in reading "Good Housekeeping," "Newsweek," "Reader's Digest," or "True Story" than in reading the Bible. They are more interested in seeing what's on TV than seeing what God has said. They are more interested in spending time with a hobby than in spending time with God.

The apostle Paul commended the Bereans for their nobility in studying the Scriptures daily (Acts 17:11). He told the Ephesians that they could understand the scriptures if they would read. He then exhorted them to be not foolish but understand God's will (Eph. 3:4; 5:17).

It's not likely, though, that we'll stimulate brethren to study God's word until we interest them in going to heaven. It may be that brethren in this country have it so good on earth that they don't think any more about going to heaven than I did about the book I was supposedly reading in study hall. That being true, it's no wonder the Bible doesn't occupy their attention. Brethren, we've simply got to wake to the fact that — 70 years and it's all over here. Then what? Until we set our hope on Christ and our affection on things above (1 John 3:3; Col. 3:1-4), the BOOK describing those things cannot possibly hold our attention.

- by L.A. Stauffer

Wednesday Night Services

- At Wednesday night services, the Bible is taught, the word of God Almighty.
- Wednesday night services increase our faith as we better understand and appreciate the unsearchable riches of God.
- Wednesday night services are a midweek respite from life in a sinful world, a recharge of our spiritual batteries.
- Wednesday night services help prepare us to meet life's challenges.
- Wednesday night services help build stronger character.
- Wednesday night services provide an opportunity to associate with brethren and encourage each other.
- Wednesday night services provide an opportunity to bring others with you to hear the gospel of Christ.
- Wednesday night services enable us to join our hearts in prayer and praising God in song.
- Wednesday night services may be the time when you hear some truth that will change your life forever.

If you don't attend Wednesday night services...

- What do you do with that time?
- How does that activity compare to these blessings?
- Which activity will better help you go to heaven?
- Which is a better use of your time?

- by Whit Sasser

If Only...

- If only my boss wouldn't be so rude and domineering, I would try harder and be more cooperative at work. "*Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable.*" (1 Peter 2:18)
- If only my husband weren't so lazy and self-centered, and would treat me like I deserve, I would go back and live with him. "... *wives, be submissive to your husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior.*" (1 Peter 3:1-2)
- If only people would quit taking advantage of me, I would maintain a better disposition. "*To sum up, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit; not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead.*" (1 Peter 3:8-9)
- If only the brethren were friendlier and that preacher not so dry, I would go to church more often. "... *let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another ...*" (Hebrews 10:24-25)
- If only I had more income and fewer bills, I would give a lot more. "... *in the churches of Macedonia ... in a great ordeal of affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of their liberality.*" (2 Corinthians 8:1-2)
- If only my family would be more supportive, I would become a Christian. "*He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me ...*" (Matthew 10:37)

Do you notice that what God expects of us, He expects regardless of our particular circumstances? Instead of excusing ourselves due to adverse conditions, let us commit ourselves to our Creator and Benefactor.

If only we would be like Jesus, who said, "... I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me" (John 5:30). He not only said it, He lived it — even to the point of death.

- **by Frank Himmel**

Overrating Your Own Knowledge

In discussions with a young man about a particular sin – a sin that was directly affecting his life – he wrote: "*From extensive study that I've conducted over the course of several years, I do not believe _____ is a sin but rather a matter of judgment . . .*" To which the following response (in part) was sent: "*You state that you have studied this subject over 'several years'. So have I. So have many others - for many centuries. This is not a new topic awaiting our discovery.*" As you might guess, little progress was made in changing the young man's mind.

Please consider some of the implications of his claim:

1) He asserts that he has studied this 'extensively' and leaves the impression that others – especially those who disagree with him – have not studied the subject as thoroughly as he has. This young man has no way of knowing how much or how often others have researched any given topic. This is pretentious pride, and that's a sin, too! (2 Timothy 3:2). The apostle Paul says that a person can be "proud" while "knowing nothing" (1 Timothy 6:4).

2) He seems to suggest that others – including all those who have devoted their whole lives to the study of the Scriptures – have apparently not uncovered the truth that he now possesses. Maybe, but not likely! Lots of true scholars have dug deeply into the Word. Many faithful brethren have diligently searched out the truths of God's revelation. Any notion that we have come across something previously unknown is arrogant and unrealistic.

3) It is quite clear that he has become fully convinced – at least in his own mind – that he has the truth on this subject and that his actions are acceptable to God. But we are warned about the hazards of "deceiving and being deceived" (2 Timothy 3:13). Rationalizing to justify our own conduct is a danger to us all. Be careful!

We hope this young man will rethink this matter. But a basic change of heart is going to have to happen first.

- **by Greg Gwin**