

## ***Can You Do Better?***

Can you do better in the areas pertaining to your responsibilities towards God, this local congregation, your family, as well as yourself? Consider, if you would, the following suggestions for improving yourself, as well as your family.

1. Make time to study your Bible every day. You make time for everything else you want to do. Make time to study your Bible.

2. Make time to pray every day. Sure, you have heard this time and time before, but do you practice it? Do you offer prayers of thanksgiving before you eat? Do you pray for your children and/or your grandchildren? Do you pray for your spouse? Do you pray for yourself? Do you pray for the church? There are so many areas of concern for which you should be praying, as well as blessings for which to thank God, you cannot afford to miss a day.

3. Teach your children God is more important than anything else in their life. You may say this often to your children, but how many times do you contradict it with actions? Things we allow our children to do, outfits we allow our children to wear, activities and priorities which trump worship services and Bible classes all tell our children God is not most important in their lives. Show your children God is most important in your life by making righteous decisions.

4. Teach your family the work of the local church is important and warrants your family's full attention. For many people, going to Sunday morning worship services is all that really matters to God. As such, these families will not attend Sunday morning Bible classes, but will show up for worship services, even though they have children who need to be in Bible classes. For these families, attending Sunday evening services is a rare event because everything else is more important. Likewise, these families give little or no consideration to Wednesday night services and Bible classes. Teach your family to place great importance on the work of the local church, including all the assemblies and Bible classes.

5. Make time each week to contact the sick, the shut-ins, as well as those who miss without reason. I strongly suspect this is an area in which all of us must make improvements. Call, send cards, or even send an e-mail to those who are in need. See what you can do to help them. Such signs of compassion and care mean a great deal, especially when one is too sick to assemble with the saints. If someone is suffering, but they are able to assemble with the saints, they are still in need of your care and concern. Remember these brethren as well.

6. Make sure your family is ready for Bible class. In one of our Sunday morning Bible classes, typically speaking, only two out of five or six students have their Bible lessons completed. Parents, this is your responsibility to see that your child prepares for Bible class. Don't do the lesson for them! But sit down and work the lesson with them. Give up some of your "precious" time to help your child prepare. Far too often, parents who are negligent in helping their children do their Bible lessons will likewise be negligent in doing their own Bible lessons.

7. Make the decision to be on time. Being on time for Bible classes and worship services is very important. When we come together to worship God, we should take the time to prepare. Rushing around in a wild frantic display does not prepare one for properly studying God's word. Too many times I have seen parents rushing into the adult Bible class, sitting down and relaxing as one would after running a marathon. Teach your family respect for Bible classes and worship services by going to bed on time the night before, waking up on time and leaving in time so as not to be late for the start of studying God's wonderful word.

8. Be an example for other Christians. If every member of this congregation lived as you lived, how strong would this church be? Consider the example you are setting for other members, as well as the children. What if everyone slept late on Sunday morning and did not go to Bible class? What if everyone skipped Sunday evening services because something else was more important? What if everyone skipped Wednesday evening classes and worship service? If every member of this church were just like you, what type of congregation would we have?

9. Don't Be a Wimp! Sure, there are a great many problems which we all face. Some of these problems become the reason why brethren will frequently miss services and Bible classes. However, these very same problems will not prevent these same brethren from going to Wal-Mart, to the Mall, to the Movies, to a restaurant, etc. I have been amazed by the strength of some brethren who push on no matter how much pain they are in. I have also been amazed by the weakness of some brethren who will miss every time they just don't feel well. Worship services

and Bible classes are far too important to sleep through or to miss because we don't feel like going, even the Sunday evening and Wednesday night services.

10. Do Not Show Partiality. Expect the same from your own family that you would expect from others. Be just as critical of your own family as you are critical of others. I have seen brethren who criticize others, but when it is their own family members, well, you know, it is just different. Do not show partiality!

These ten suggestions are a starting point. Will you make the commitment for you and your family?

*- by John Duvall*

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### ***Why Not Me? Why Not Us?***

Super Bowl winning quarterback Russell Wilson related that his father was a big encouragement to him in his early athletic endeavors. He would say: "Why not you, Russ? Why not you?" Wilson used those same words to motivate his teammates to an impressive victory in the biggest game of the year. He challenged them by saying: "Why not us?"

Many of us could use that same concept to inspire us to greater service in the Lord's Kingdom. Think about it:

- There is Bible class that needs to be taught. Why not me?
- There is a sick member or one who needs special help. Why not me?
- There are some rather menial 'chores' that need to be done around the church building. Why not me?
- There is a weak brother or sister who needs some real encouragement. Why not me?

Or, on a collective congregational level:

- The lost in our community need to be taught the precious saving gospel of our Lord. Why not us?
- Many churches are waffling on important doctrinal issues, and the truth needs to be defended. Why not us?
- Preachers need support to take the gospel to areas both home and abroad. Why not us?

Hopefully we get the idea. There is much to do, and we should not wait for others to step up to the challenges. Why don't we 'pick up the ball' and 'run with it'? Jesus urged His disciples to "lift up your eyes and look" (John 4:35). We need to do the same. We can accomplish great things for God's glory when we step out with the same confidence that Paul expressed: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Philippines 4:13).

So, why not me? Why not us? Think!

*- by Greg Gwin*