

Attendance

Attending worship services faithfully is really important. Many strong Christians have become weak, and many weak Christians have totally fallen away, because at some point they began to miss worship services and Bible study on a regular basis. A Christian's attendance at services has been rightfully declared by many as a thermometer indicating one's fervor for the Lord. One cannot truthfully say he is a faithful child of God if he does not attend worship services regularly. Consider now the following reasons why we must attend worship services faithfully.

The Hebrew writer penned the following passage giving us several reasons for not forsaking the assembly of the saints. "Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works; not forsaking our own assembling together, as the custom of some is, but exhorting one another; and so much the more, as ye see the day drawing nigh" (Hebrews 10:24-25). Our assembling together for worship services stimulates the brethren to love and good works, and exhorts and encourages us to greater Christian enthusiasm. It is important because of the trials, temptation and heartaches we face each week as Christians, to assemble together at each opportunity so that we might be stimulated and encouraged, and to do the same for others. It is reassuring to be around those of "like precious faith" (2 Pet. 1:1). We all need encouragement, but we must attend worship services and Bible study to receive this precious privilege.

Another reason we should attend worship services and Bible study faithfully is seen in Hebrews 10:25 - it is a command of God. Jesus said, "If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments" (John 14:15). Furthermore, we also need to remember, "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous" (1 John 5:3). The Lord informs us that we must assemble at every opportunity with the saints. If this were the only reason for attending worship regularly - it would be enough. If you really love the Lord you will keep His commandments.

Still another reason we should attend worship services regularly is that we must be a good example to others. Peter declared, "For hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that ye should follow his steps" (1 Pet. 2:21). Jesus left us wonderful examples of how we should live. One of these examples is that He kept the Law of Moses perfectly, which included attending all of the different feasts and special days of the Jewish religion. We, too, learning from the example of Jesus, should regularly attend all of the worshipservices as well as all other gatherings for the purpose of study and edification. We should do this to please God, but also to set good examples for others. Paul said that we are to be "an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (1 Tim. 4:12). What kind of example do you think we set for the non-believer or for the weak Christian by our apathetic attendance? Not a good one I assure you.

Would one consider a car faithful if it only starts every other time? Would you consider your spouse faithful if she cheated on your marriage once a month? Of course not! Then what makes us think that we can be faithful Christians if we are not attending worship services regularly? It is vital that we are faithful in attendance - our eternal destiny is hanging in the balances. We are not condemning those who are ill at home, or having to care for a sick loved one - we speak to those who have no reason for not coming other than being deficient in concern for spiritual matters.

We love you and hope to see you at our next scheduled meeting time.

- by Tom Moore

False Standards

I often hear people trying to establish right and wrong based on the wrong standard. Here are some examples:

Our Parents (Mt. 10:21, 34-37). As much as we should love and respect our parents, we cannot establish right and wrong on the basis of our parents alone.

Our Conscience (Ac. 23:1; 26:9-11; 1 Tim. 1:12-13). Even though our conscience can be useful, we may still be wrong even though our conscience doesn't bother us. Paul had followed his conscience even when he was a persecutor.

Emotions & Feelings (Pr. 14:12; 28:26; Jer. 10:23). Just because something "feels" right to you, that doesn't necessarily make it right. Sin can even "feel" right.

The Majority (Mt. 7:13-14). Don't ever think that something is right simply because most believe it. The majority is headed to destruction.

Preachers & Religious Leaders (2 Cor. 11:13-15; 2 Pet. 2:1-3). Your preacher may be a great guy, but that doesn't mean he is right.

Tradition (Mt. 15:1-9; Col. 2:8). Truth is not established by how long something has been around. Sin has been around a long time, too.

The Good End (Rom. 3:8). The end doesn't always justify the means. Something is not right just because we may think it is causing "good".

What is the "RIGHT" way to tell right from wrong? God's WORD, and HIS word ALONE (Jn. 12:48).

- by Andrew Mitchell

"It's OK -- It's Just The Violence"

It is time for us to re-evaluate a position that many have advocated throughout the years. Concerning the content of television shows and movies, the comment has been made again and again, "it's not bad, it just has a lot of violence in it."

Years ago it may have been true that so-called "violent" content was not a big problem. In the old westerns, for instance, there was a lot of shooting, but the bullets seldom found their mark. When they did, there was remarkably little in the way of blood and gore. Fistfights were common, but the participants usually walked away with little more than a bloody nose or lip. The times have certainly changed. The realism of modern cinema is stunning. Now, when violence is depicted, we see it all. Little is left to the imagination, as we see bullets piercing through bodies, bombs exploding, cars disintegrating, and people dying everywhere.

And, what is the result of all this graphically detailed violence in the modern media? Statistics bear out that we have become an increasingly violent society. We hear about the extreme cases of mass murders, school shootings and the like. But more commonly we see the aggression in the everyday conduct of average people. We've come to expect angry people issuing forth a barrage of curse words and threats.

As Christians, we are only kidding ourselves if we think we are immune to this violent conditioning. We, too, can be conditioned toward more aggressive behavior because of what we see and hear. When we dismiss this danger and allow ourselves to be bombarded with these evil images, we are directly disobeying the command to think on things that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report, virtuous, and praiseworthy (Phil. 4:8). As a consequence, we become less motivated to "live peaceably with all men" (Rom. 12:18).

We are disciples of the One who "when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not" (1 Pet. 2:23). As such, we need to exercise greater discretion about what we watch in this modern media world. Think!

- by Greg Gwin