

Value & Conduct

When we pay a lot for something, we have high expectations, whether it is a car, computer, house, tool, animal, etc. If it fails to perform the job we desire, we become upset, even angry at times.

Christians have been purchased at a high price, the blood of Christ (1 Cor. 7:23; Acts 20:28). As such, they are valuable and a certain level of "performance," or conduct, is expected of them (1 Cor. 6:19-20). Not all are required to produce a "hundredfold," but all are expected to live up to their potential (Matt. 13:23; 25:14-30).

Christian, are you conducting yourself in a way that reflects the price paid for you? Do you resist temptation (James 4:7)? When you sin, are you remorseful and repentant (2 Cor. 7:10)? Are you searching the scriptures and growing in faith (Acts 17:11; 2 Peter 3:18)? Have you tried to reach the lost (Luke 19:10)?

- by **Steven F. Deaton**

What's Wrong With Today's Youth?

All along we hear questions raised as to what has gone wrong with today's youth. Recently, a brother expressed his concern along this line and then asked, "What advice would you give young parents to help them avoid mistakes that we have made in our generation?"

The first thing we would say is: All is not bad with today's youth. We see young people in the church voluntarily attending special classes conducted for their benefit and studying diligently in preparation for these classes. We see them singing in the worship periods, listening to sermons, following in their Bible, obeying the gospel as they reach accountability, and living conscientiously before God.

But all is not good. We are aware of drug abuse, sexual promiscuity, drinking, gambling, and crimes of all sorts among the youth of our day. We are appalled at the lack of self control exhibited by athletes in both college and pro ranks. What has gone wrong?

A recent newspaper article helps to explain what has gone wrong. The opening paragraph says: "A high school football player who was arrested and charged with hitting a 15-year-old in the face with a crowbar has his coach concerned and his mother worried about his football future."

Worried about what? When parents are more concerned for their children's football future than they are for their character; when they are more concerned for their children's financial well-being than for their eternal well-being; or when they are just not concerned, period, we can expect problems among our youth. Priorities are all wrong. Too many parents, in order to feed their own egos, push their children into positions that will bring honor and popularity, but give little thought to what will build character and integrity and responsibility within them.

"And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4).

What advice would we give to young parents? Bring your children to every service of the church; encourage them to form close friendships with other children who attend regularly; do not try to shield them from hurts and disappointments, but allow them to work through their disappointments; hold them responsible for the consequences of wrong-doings; make sure that your greatest desire for them is that they go to heaven and that they are aware that this is your greatest desire; pray with them and teach them how to pray; and love them, love them, and love them some more. That's a good start anyway!

- by **Bill Hall**

Meditation

Like he has done to various other good words, man has managed to pollute the concept of meditation. Mystics, eastern religions, and New Age devotees have given it a humanistic, pagan twist, which has detracted from its prominent place among ancient saints. Believers in Bible times meditated. And when they did, what did they do? Webster defines meditate like this: "to think

about, contemplate, to plan, intend, purpose; to think deeply and continuously, reflect, ponder, muse.” And as part of his definition of meditation, he says it means “solemn reflection on sacred matters as a devotional act.”

This article is too brief to consider all the usages of this word in Scripture (Ps. 119 for example, is full of it); but a quick concordance check reveals that the predominate objects of Biblical meditation are God and His law. This “solemn reflection” is a consuming preoccupation. It takes up our days (“*Oh, how / love your law! I meditate on it all day long*”, Ps.119:97), and has priority over our nights (“*My eyes stay open through the watches of the night, that / may meditate on your promises*” Ps.119:148). Indeed, the blessed man of Ps.1:2 is the one who delights “*in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night*”

If your experience is anything like mine, we are not devoting nearly enough time to deeply pondering God and His word. Could it be that our lack of knowledge, wisdom, insight, peace, and joy is a direct result of this neglect? Take God’s command to Joshua personally: “*Do not let this book of the law depart from your mouth, meditate on it day and night*” (Joshua 1:8).

- by Jim King

Why Study God’s Word?

We place a lot of emphasis on studying God’s Word. But, why? What’s so urgent about such study? We believe the answer is found in what the Bible does for us:

1. Tells us the mind of God (1 Cor. 2:9ff).
2. Provides us with the only true information about how to be saved (Prov. 16:25, Jer. 10:23, Jn. 8:32).
3. Informs about how to have the best life ‘here and now’ (1 Tim. 4:8).

With all these benefits, it only makes sense for us to imitate the noble Bereans and study His word.

Acts 17:11 *“These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.”*

All Christians need to faithfully study the Bible:

- This will prepare us to be able to answer others who question us about our faith (1 Peter 3:15).
- It will equip us for doing every good work that God wants us to be doing (1 Tim. 3:16,17).
- We will receive peace, comfort, and assurance from its message (Rom. 15:4, 1 Jn. 5:13).

We are commanded to “*understand what the will of the Lord is*” (Eph. 5:17). We can only do this by diligently studying His word . . . **and we must!**

- by Greg Gwin