

Spiritual Laziness

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What if everything you needed could just be handed to you as you sat in a recliner for the rest of your life, without any effort on your part? Would you choose a life of utter laziness? The Bible teaches that it is good for people to work (Genesis 2:15; Proverbs 13:11; Ephesians 4:28; 1 Thessalonians 4:11; 2 Thessalonians 3:10-13), but man often has different ideas. How many millions of dollars are spent every day on lottery tickets? In our society of fast food, fast information, and fast everything, it seems that our desire to get “something for nothing in a hurry” has permeated our spiritual lives as well.

Some may wonder, “Why should we labor in search of the truth when we can just let others do it for us? Why not let others simply hand us the results of their studies without any effort being put forth on our part?” There are several problems with this type of thinking. First, we would be in violation of the Scriptures for not studying for ourselves (Acts 17:11; 1 Tim. 4:13-16; 2 Tim. 2:15; Hebrews 5:12-14, etc.). We would also miss out on the joy, peace, comfort, and excitement that comes from studying the Scriptures for ourselves, and we can never truly be close to God without hiding His Word in our hearts (Psalm 119:11, 97, etc.).

Refusing to study for ourselves will also make us weak and vulnerable to the dangers of false teaching – the kind of teaching that will lead us to Hell instead of Heaven. The very nature of Satan’s tactics is to twist the true meaning of Scriptures, or mix truth with deadly error. We cannot recognize such subtleties if we do not know the truth, and know it well. Therefore, we have to move beyond baby Bible knowledge into the knowledge and wisdom of spiritual adults: *“For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil”* (Hebrews 5:13-14). *“That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive”* (Ephesians 4:14).

Some may think that since they have not been to some type of “seminary” or Bible college that they are not able to understand the Bible, and that they must rely on others for their Bible knowledge, but this is exactly what Satan wants people to believe! The Bible can be understood by those who are willing to do the work of studying (John 8:31-32; Ephesians 3:4; 5:17; Hebrews 5:12-14), and the more we read, the more we understand.

Dear reader, if you are the kind of person who believes something just because some famous, smooth talking preacher on TV said it, then Satan has you right where he wants you! Jesus warned of those who would look like faithful teachers of the Word, but in reality they would be spiritual killers: *“Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits...”* (Matthew 7:15-16; cf. Acts 20:28-31). They will appear as innocent as “angels of light” (2 Corinthians 11:13-15).

Many believe that as long as someone is preaching Christ, he must be OK, as if differing doctrines do not matter. If all that matters is that we believe in Christ, what happened to the Galatians? They still believed in Christ, but they had fallen from grace for following a perversion of the Gospel after their conversion (Galatians 1:6-9; 5:4). What about Hymenaeus and Philetus? They apparently still believed in Christ, but they were propagating a false doctrine about the resurrection, which caused both them to be lost, and those who heeded their false teaching (2 Timothy 2:17, 18).

Simply believing in Christ is not enough—one must obey and continue in sound doctrine to be saved, Just as Paul explained to Timothy: *“Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee”* (1 Timothy 4:16). Someone may wonder why Paul was telling Timothy how to “save himself” if

Timothy was already saved! Although his past sins had been forgiven at baptism, Timothy had to continue in faithful living and sound doctrine to be saved on the Day of Judgment (Revelation 2:10).

The only way to know if someone is a false teacher is to examine their words and compare them to God's Word. Even Paul was "double-checked" by the Bereans when he preached to them! *"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"* (Acts 17:11). The Bereans were not just going to take someone's word when it came to eternal matters of salvation—they wanted to be sure they were following what God had said in the Scriptures.

Dear reader, are you like the noble Bereans, or do you just lazily accept what someone else says when it comes to spiritual matters without studying it yourself? God tells us that if we do not want to be rejected by Him, we must be workmen who labor to personally study His Word and handle it carefully: *"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth"* (2 Timothy 2:15). Rather than merely accepting the words of preachers, family, friends, or creed books, let us study the Scriptures for ourselves; and if someone is speaking of spiritual matters, let us double-check them by the Scriptures, making sure they are speaking as God speaks: *"If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God..."* (1 Peter 4:11; cf. Colossians 3:17). *"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good"* (1 Thessalonians 5:21).

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