

"TAKE TIME TO BE HOLY"

1 Corinthians 3:1-3

(Not entirely original with me)

Introduction: Hymns in the hymn book often describe the condition of Christians as the hymns were written by Christians who were or had experienced various situations in their lives. "Take time to be holy" is a title from one of the once popular hymns and perhaps it needs to be sung more often for that is exactly what Christians need to do is to make time, find time, create time, take more time to be with the Lord and His Word. There is another hymn once sung, that had words of "let's just have a LITTLE talk with Jesus..." and that is perhaps all that many Christians are doing today, "little" talks, never spending much time with the Lord at all. Paul encountered a situation in the Corinthian church very similar to what is happening in today's churches. People who have been Christians for years yet are still no more than "new converts," babies in spiritual matters.

1. After years of being a Christian why is there so many of them not very far along in their spiritual lives?

- Go to any church membership roll and there will be found a majority of members who are not faithful, do not give, never attend Sunday School, never come on Sunday or Wednesday nights and have never served in any capacity in their Church.
- Spiritually these members are like those Paul was writing to, immature, yet should be church leaders.

2. It has been thought by some that members like these have really never been saved.

- It is easy to judge others not like ourselves and that is not wise nor does the Lord approve.
- It is thought that church members who don't attend or give and who are spiritually immature are people who stopped short of real, authentic conversion.

3. It must be remembered that one who has never been saved in the first place never knows that he/she is lacking in spiritual matters.

- The true Christian knows he/she is not doing as he/she ought pertaining to spiritual things and feel guilty about their slackness.
- Christians who are weak in spiritual things, never growing very much spiritually, know they need to make some changes in their lives but just never "get around to it."

4. There are many reasons/causes for Christians to not grow spiritually.

- Of all the many reasons there seems to be one most prevalent: not taking the time to "be holy."
 - Not giving the Lord time to get to know Him.
 - Not reading God's Word enough.
 - Not praying long enough or often enough.
 - Not participating in one's church activities enough.
 - The list goes on and on.

5. Many Christians have the wrong attitude about God.

- Many church members, Christians see God only as Judge and to whom they will one day give an account.
- They are under the impression that once they trusted Jesus, all was over, they were saved, a member of God's family and now all they have to do is to wait till called home to heaven.
- Sadly many Christians don't know that God wants to be their closest "friend," that He wants to be involved in everything they do.

6. The strength or weakness of a Christian's spiritual life depends upon how close he/she is to God.

- A "believe in Jesus and it's all done" theology, an automatic Christianity is not going to make anybody very close to God and therefore he/she will remain a spiritual babe.
- Christians who devote their lives to knowing the Lord Jesus (like Paul) (*Philippians 5:8, 10, 14*) become spiritual advisors and examples for others who want to know more about the Lord.
- The Corinthian Church, to whom Paul wrote, had this theology that they were saved and that was all there was to it and never grew any more spiritually.
- How many immature Christians do you know?

7. Growth in one's spiritual life does not happen instantly.

- Spiritual growth is a day by day, hour by hour process.
- One's entire life must be devoted to the things of the Lord and lots of time spent learning about God.
- "...just a little talk with Jesus" or "God's Minute" express the attitude many have toward giving God time - time for just a little talk or just a minute or two is all many give to their spiritual growth.
- Many Christians wonder why they haven't moved along spiritually, grown, know more about the Lord and the Bible, yet their life style is to "have little talks with the Lord" and give a minute here and a minute there to reading a few verses of scripture and quickly glancing over the Sunday School lesson.
- Christian! Your spiritual growth is a moment by moment thing.

CONCLUSION:

1. There is no short cut to having a mature, growing spiritual life.
 - Spiritual growth is not like dynamite going off, a sudden explosion and one is suddenly spiritually wiser or more mature nor is it like a torrent of rushing water down a river that suddenly overflows one's being.
 - Spiritual growth is a slow buildup, a slow process, that comes from praying, studying God's Word, obeying the Holy Spirit and waiting for the Lord.
2. Many things can take one's mind away from spiritual matters, but a wise Christian will always find ways to make room for the Lord, prayer, reading God's Word and listening.
 - Some things may have to be put off, neglected, ignored, even denied but to neglect one's communion with the Lord is to hurt one's self, stunt spiritual growth and this cannot be afforded.
3. God always responds to His Children's efforts to know Him. Notice the word: "EFFORT."
4. So Christian, which are you: mature or immature? One who can teach others or one who needs to be taught?