

Lesson Two

THE DAILY PURSUIT OF THE CHRIST-LIKE LIFE

Church assemblies are so beneficial and crucial to the life of the Christian, but the real trials of one's faith and commitment are outside the walls of the church building. Worship services may inspire faithfulness, zeal and love, but the real challenge is to take those qualities out into the world with us daily. Very little of our time is spent in the corporate worship and activity of the church. Much more time is spent in day to day events and experiences. This is where our pursuit of the Christ-like life is challenged. This is where the devil is confronted. This is where the way of the Lord is lived. This is where we must fight valiantly and overcome.

No Vacations

The special thing about being a Christian is that it is daily. Holidays, vacations and weekends provide a break from most secular jobs, but one cannot afford a day off as a Christian. Living as a disciple of the Lord involves every minute one is awake. While much different than a secular job, and much better, being a Christian is a full-time job, "...we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:5). The purpose of worship assemblies and Bible classes is to aid you to do this very thing.

A New Mind - A New Purpose

Following Jesus begins with a "renewing of the mind" (Rom. 12:2). Our goal each day is living in His will - not mere respect for religion, or acknowledging our belief in Jesus as the Savior, or attending worship services, or offering an occasional prayer, or periodic reading of Scripture, but allowing our faith to shape who and what we are in all our daily activities.

Living without thinking, without guidelines and purpose, is spiritual suicide. It is the world that lives aimlessly. "Surely every man walks about as a phantom; Surely they make an uproar for nothing; He amasses riches, and does not know who will gather them" (Ps. 39:6). The child of God lives purposefully. We must avoid approaching each new day routinely. Each day is an opportunity and a challenge to really live for Christ and not for ourselves, to serve God and others above ourselves.

Daily Opportunities - Daily Obstacles

We will be confronted every day by forces intended to derail us from our purpose. We are in a war for our spiritual lives. Satan's attacks will be both fierce, subtle, and continuous. The surest way to be a victim of the devil's ploys is to be oblivious to the battle. We have to take up our cross *daily* and follow the Lord (Lk. 9:23). The weapons of the war are not carnal (worldly and weak) but spiritual (eternal and powerful), 2 Cor. 10:3,4. They are enumerated by Paul in Ephesians 6:13-18 and one is especially noted by John: "And this is the victory that has overcome the world - our faith" (1 Jn. 5:4).

We have no cause to despair in our efforts to live a Christ-like life, because the God "who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think" (Eph. 3:20) is on our side, and for that reason no one and no thing can possibly stand successfully against us (Rom. 8:31-39).

Questions:

1. *In specific terms what is the Christian consciously trying to do every day that he lives? Are any vacations from this effort allowed?*

2. *How are we to keep from being pressed into the mold of this world? Rom. 12:1,2 In what specific ways does the "renewing of our minds" transform us? Rom. 12; Eph. 4; Col. 3*

3. (a) *What weapons have we been given to "take captive every thought to the obedience of Christ"?*
(b) *List practical ways we can go about putting our every thought in submission to Christ.*
(c) *If we fail, what is the likely reason?*

4. *List as many different situations as you can where your faith might be practically challenged on any given day.*

5. *What does it mean for one "to take up his cross daily" and follow Jesus?*

6. *What gives us great encouragement in our efforts to live a Christ-like life?*

- based on material presented in a study guide by Tony Mauck