

## Personal Devotions

Psalm 119:9-16, Ephesians 4:1-16

What is the mission of the local church? What are we doing here? We need the “why” behind our activity as a church. There are times when God rejects the worship of His people (Amos 5:21-24; Isaiah 58:1-5; 1 Corinthians 11:17-30; Revelation 2:5, 3:15-16). Let's not miss our main calling.

E<sup>2</sup> = Edification & Evangelism

We “build-up” each other to fuller maturity in Christ and we bear witness to the Good news to the non-believing world (Ephesians 4; Colossians 1:27-29; Matthew 28:18-20).

We need to behavioralize our mission. The local church ought to be united in the mission and understand why we do what we do.

### **God wants us to grow up into mature Christians.**

There is a movement in the life of the Christ-follower from immaturity to maturity (4:13-15; Cf. 2 Peter 3:17-18; Hebrews 5:12-14).

How are we going to “attain the knowledge of the Son of God”? How do we grow out of childhood in our faith? We know that we cannot excel in anything if we do not give it time and energy.

“Our relationship to our heavenly Father, though secure, is not static. He ardently desires that His children shall grow up to know Him more and more intimately. Generations of Christians have discovered that the only way to do so is to make time to wait upon Him every day. What many people call daily ‘quiet times’, first thing in the morning and last thing at night, are an indispensable necessity for the Christian who wants to make progress” – John. R.W. Stott, Basic Christianity

### **Scripture and Prayer are two means of Grace.**

God provides ways to build-up our faith. He tells us how to relate to Him. It is interesting that at the end of Ephesians, the famous passage on the armor of God features two offensive weapons – The Word of God and prayer (6:17-18).

God reveals Himself to us by these (and other) means. We should use devotional time to think about who God is.

“In quietness and confidence shall be your strength” (Isa. 30:15).

### **Time with God provides nourishment for the soul.**

Jeremiah says “your words were found, and I ate them, and your words became to me a joy and the delight of my heart” (15:16).

Jesus cites Deuteronomy 8:3 “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4).

“To be a Christian without prayer is no more possible than to be alive without breathing.” – Martin Luther

**Key Point:** God grants us strength, wisdom, and direction when we commune with Him.

Recommendations:

Read with a God-centered hermeneutic.

Don't try to do too much. Start with 15 minutes a day.

Use a guide or Bible reading plan (Charles Spurgeon, *Morning and Evening*; Alan Stibbs, *Search the Scriptures*; *ESV Daily Devotional: New Testament* – Crossway)

### **Application Questions:**

Why do you think Jesus so often spent time alone in prayer (Cf. Mark 1:35; Luke 5:16)?

What role do personal devotions play in a.) maintaining church unity  
b.) protecting sound doctrine?

Read Psalm 119:9-16. Why does the author “delight” in God’s Word?

What steps do you need to take to practice personal devotions?