

"WEEKLY WISDOM"
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For The Week of 03.22.10

"ARE YOU DOING SPIRITUAL WORK?"

Phil. 2:12 Therefore, my dear ones, as you have always obeyed [my suggestions], so now, not only [with the enthusiasm you would show] in my presence but much more because I am absent, work out (cultivate, carry out to the goal, and fully complete) your own salvation with reverence *and* awe and trembling (self-distrust, with serious caution, tenderness of conscience, watchfulness against temptation, timidly shrinking from whatever might offend God and discredit the name of Christ).

Phil. 2:13 [Not in your own strength] for it is God Who is all the while effectually at work in you [energizing and creating in you the power and desire], both to will and to work for His good pleasure *and* satisfaction *and* delight. AMP

What would you think of a farmer who prepared his field for seed, then went into that field and sowed his seed, but he then goes home and does nothing expecting the harvest to show up in his barn? How about a painter who gathers up all the paints he needs along with his brushes, canvas, easel, etc., and yet he sits down just looking at a blank canvas expecting a painting to show up? This is really how many Christians live. They have come to Christ and through Him have received all they need to walk in God's will for their life here on earth, but many don't understand that getting born again was only the start.

When you come to Christ it is like starting a new career almost. You have always done things one way, but now you must learn a new way if you want to be successful as a born again child of God. Before you came to know the Lord you learned how to do things only from a natural human perspective. If you now want to walk in all that God has for your life you must now learn how to do things from a spiritual perspective. In other words you must learn to do "spiritual work". This is one of the primary reasons for example that many believers are not defeating the enemies of life that Jesus paid the price for us to overcome. You do not overcome these enemies through natural means, but spiritual means.

Our foundation text this week comes from the Amplified Bible because I believe it brings out a better understanding of what Paul is stating here. Understand there is a difference between working "for" and working "out" our salvation. We cannot work for our salvation as it is a gift from God purchased through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. When you accept Him as your Savior and Lord you have your sins forgiven and you become a new creation in Christ Jesus. But what most don't understand is you are

a new creation, meaning that you are not going to be able to experience all that Christ has paid the price for you to walk in unless you learn how this new creation works. You cannot walk by faith through natural means. You won't develop faith by natural ways alone, you must do spiritual work to develop faith. If you want natural muscles you are going to have to work out in the natural, but if you want spiritual growth you are going to have to work out spiritually.

So once we receive Christ we now need to learn to work out spiritually and apply spiritual principles in our life. We are to do this in fear and trembling. The Amplified Bible defines that as self-distrust, with serious caution, tenderness of conscience, watchfulness against temptation, timidly shrinking from whatever might offend God and discredit the name of Christ. Now before we go over these things one thing needs to be pointed out from verse 13. It is God who will do this work in us if we will do our part, because this is spiritual work so we are not going to do this in our natural strength alone. So let's take a look at how we do spiritual work based on the definition given above for fear and trembling.

Phil. 3:3 For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh,

The first definition "self-distrust" should be quite obvious. We are not to put confidence in our flesh, but in our God. As easy as this may sound many still do not seem to understand what this actually means. Simply put, when we see clearly what God's Word says about something it should be settled forever, and therefore we should immediately begin to do what the Bible says. This is one of the most important parts of spiritual work. One example that I will never stop sharing is found in Hebrews 10:25 where we are clearly told not to forsake assembling together and yet many believers continue to do so, only going to church occasionally or not at all. Doing so means you are putting confidence in your flesh not in God. When the enemies of life strike you will have to depend on yourself to overcome. This happens to many because they do not have the training to use the spiritual weapons God has given them.

It is only in a good church where the Word of God is fully taught that you are going to have the opportunity to grow spiritually. God provided this environment for our benefit to develop our faith, our walk with Him, and to learn how to use what we have been given through Jesus Christ. When someone in our society is not given understanding of all their rights we call that an injustice. It is just as much of an injustice for any pastor to not teach all that Jesus desires for your life. Many will talk about being born again, and many social issues, but far too many churches today do not talk about what Jesus emphasized to His disciples of being empowered by the Holy Spirit. How would you like to eat an apple pie that has only 2/3rds of the ingredients? Many churches talk about the Father, and Jesus the Son, but they leave out the power of the Holy Spirit and the gifts that He has given us. So it is imperative to be in

a church where you are taught the whole truth, not just part of the gospel.

John 10:10 The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it* more abundantly.

The second definition in working out our salvation is with serious caution. I don't think many believers realize we have an enemy who is out to do harm to anyone he can. I certainly don't think we should at all be afraid of our adversary, but we should not walk around unaware that he is seeking to steal, kill, and destroy. Any believer who goes through life not acknowledging this is going to be taken advantage of. We need to know how to defeat anything he brings against us.

Acts 23:1 Then Paul, looking earnestly at the council, said, "Men *and* brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day."

The third thing spoken of in Philippians 2:12 is tenderness of conscience. Our conscience will help us to walk in line with God. It is the voice of our spirit man. The more sensitive we become to our inner man the more we are going to walk in line with God, and be led by His Spirit in line with the Word of God. Paul learned this and thus stated that he had lived in all good conscience before God. He learned to listen to that inner voice.

Mark 14:38 Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed *is* willing, but the flesh *is* weak."

The fourth thing we need is watchfulness against temptation. Jesus tells us here to "watch" and pray lest we enter into temptation. Don't just wait for temptation to come, be mindful of things that bring temptation and avoid them. Temptation involves more than sin. Satan will tempt you through people and other influences around you to doubt God, such as things that come through our media today. We need to be watchful to guard against temptation.

1 Th. 5:22 Abstain from all appearance of evil.

Last but not least is timidly shrinking from whatever might offend God and discredit the name of Christ. One of the things that is a part of doing spiritual work is simply not doing anything in our life that has an appearance of evil. If we will live by this truth we will not do that which would offend God or discredit Christ which is doing things that are fleshly and leading us away from that which is spiritual. Part of doing spiritual work is being spiritual, again not doing things that would discredit Christ.

We need to remind ourselves that before coming to Christ we only knew how to do things from a natural perspective, therefore it is quite obvious

that we must now learn how to do spiritual work in our life. We are not working for our salvation, we are working out our salvation. For example the law of lift has always been in existence in the earth, but when man learned about this law and created planes to take advantage of that law man began to fly. The law was always there, but man learned how to make use of that law. What we have as a part of our redemption in Christ has been available ever since Jesus died. Working out our salvation is learning how to enter into what He has already done. Through spiritual work you can take hold of all God has for you.