

Go to Church

The Bible says we should "not forsake the assembling of the saints". In English that means, "Go to Church". (See, your mother did know her Bible). The Bible says there is only one reason to assemble together. We can worship in our cars, we can pray in our closets, but we can only encourage one another when we come together.

If you are not attending a church regularly, you are missing out on something big...encouragement. The Bible doesn't suggest we do it, the Bible TELLS us to do it. It is good for you and you are good for others.

If that doesn't inspire you, consider I John 1:7, "If we are living in the light of God's presence, just as Christ is, then we have fellowship with each other." In other words, if you say you are a believer, you like to have fellowship with one another. If you don't like going to church because you have a hard time being around "those Christians", they don't have a problem, YOU have a problem.

According to I John 1:7, a real Christian enjoys fellowship with other Christians. More than that, I John 3:14 say, "If we love our Christian brothers and sisters, it proves that we have passed from death to eternal life." If you are truly a believer, you LOVE other Christians.

Let's not mess around here, those verses are serious. If you prefer to not be around other Christians, YOU have a spiritual problem. It is not they who have an attitude that needs to change, you do.

Get to church. Let the Holy Spirit help you love other Christians. Do not forsake the assembling of the saints.

Read Your Bible and Say Your Prayers

Imagine this: a man is on a business trip that takes him away from home for six months. He is living in the same hotel room the entire time. Suppose his wife called everyday and he never returned her calls. Additionally, she wrote him letters that he not only didn't read, he didn't even open them.

Now, let me ask you a question. Do you think that man loves his wife? If you said "yes", that would be the wrong answer. If that man truly loved his wife, he would want to talk to her and he would want to read what she had to say, even if he found the letters to be a challenge to go through. If he loved his wife, he would want to talk to her and he would want to know her thoughts.

His actions speak louder than his words. He might say he loves his wife, but his actions prove he doesn't. Let me ask you another question. Are you reading the letters God has sent to you? Are you opening up your Bible every day and burying His words in your heart?

No? Then why do you think you find yourself wandering away from God too often? Why do you think you are not as close to God as you want to be? The answer is simple; you are not reading your Bible enough.

John 8:31, 32 say, "If you continue in my word, then are you my disciples indeed, and you will know the truth and the truth will set you free." You have to continue in His word. George Barna recently discovered that less than 50% of Christians can name six of the Ten Commandments. What's up with that? How can you keep the commandments when you don't even know them?

Do you esteem God's word higher than food? Do you think that God's word is more valuable than a meal? Do you believe that you would be better off spending time reading His word than eating food?

Then let these two clichés haunt your conscience. NO BIBLE.NO BREAKFAST. NO READ.NO FEED. If you find yourself eating breakfast before you read His word, you would do better to put down your spoon and dig into His teachings. If you truly believe that God's truths will feed you better than an Ego, ditch the food and feed your soul.

"I don't get it," you complain. "I just don't understand what it is saying". I understand. There might be three reasons for that.

1. Proverbs says that God gives wisdom and understanding to those who fear him. "Cry out for insight and understanding. Search for them like you would for lost money or hidden treasure. Then you will understand what it means to fear the Lord, and you will gain knowledge of God." (Proverbs 2:3-5) God gives wisdom to those who seek and fear Him. Is that your problem?

1.. 2. Brace yourself for this one. I Cor. 2:14 says, "people who aren't Christians can't understand these truths from God's Spirit." God says that the veil of not understanding can be removed only by believing in Christ. You cannot understand the depths of God's word until you are a believer, period. Sorry to ask, but, are you sure you are a believer?

2... 3... You haven't dusted off your Bible because the last time you did, you couldn't get passed the "thus." Have I got good news for you? If you struggle to read the Bible because you spend half of your time saying, "What does that mean"? Then you have to go to your favorite Bible book store (I'm sure that is Northwestern Book Store. right?) and get a New Living Translation Study Bible. You WILL understand everything you read. The translation is accurate and extremely readable.

Hear is a comparison between the King James Version and the New Living Translation.

KING JAMES VERSION Ephesians 2:8-9. By grace are you saved through faith, and that not of yourselves? It is the gift of God, not of works lest any man should boast.

NEW LIVING TRANSLATION Ephesians 2:8-9. God saved you by his special favor when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it.

Furthermore, if you read a verse whose meaning you don't understand, there are explanations on every page to all those tricky little passages.

Before you start to read your Bible, ask God to teach you something. Ask Him to have His Holy Spirit reveal what He would have you learn. Then, when you read your Bible, do not be tempted to see how fast you can plow through it. Instead, linger as long as you can on each verse asking these four questions:

1... What does it say?

2... What does it mean?

3... What does it say to me?

4... What does it say about Jesus?

Do not wait, go now and get a New Living Translation and dig in. Start reading it today. It is the word of life.

Prayer

Let's get back to our little story. Remember the guy who never called his wife? When was the last time you called God? When you love

someone, you want to talk to that person. If you don't desire talking to God, you obviously don't love Him. Ouch, huh?

Do you think there is more value in praying or watching "Friends"? Do you think God is more pleased if you pray or tune into "60 Minutes"? Is it better for you to talk to God or watch "David Letterman"?

Prove you love God. Talk to Him, turn off that stupid TV and get on your knees. Put your faith where your mouth is.

The End