

Joshua Daily Devotionals



Week Seven: True Spirituality Is Moment-to-Moment Awareness of God's Work

Monday, 6/8

As Joshua's life of devotion to God draws to an end in Joshua chapter 24, he takes the opportunity to remind the Israelites where God has brought them. From the old life that Abraham was called out of, to the lives of Moses and Aaron, up out of Egypt, through the Red Sea, across the river Jordan, through the wandering in the wilderness, and through the taking of Canaan, God has been with the Israelites. Fighting their battles and establishing them in their new home.

In light of this reality, Joshua urges the people of God to honor and serve God, and in verse 15 offers a memorable challenge, "...choose this day whom you will serve..."

The challenge to the Israelites then is just as strong as it is to us today: Let today be the day when you choose to honor God, let this moment be the moment when you remember what God has done for you, let this second be the second when you honor God for all the myriad ways that he has fought the battles you could never win on your own.

This week we'll be considering what it means to be truly know what God has already done for us, and what it means to live in moment-to-moment awareness of that reality.

What do you think it means for you to choose to follow God on this day, in this moment, and at this very second?

Please Read: Mark 8:34-37

Tuesday, 6/9

It's one thing to be set free, and to be told that you're free, and it's another thing altogether to live like it's true.

Elephants in captivity are trained to stay in place by attaching a thin rope to a stake in the ground and tying it to their ankles. The rope is sufficiently strong to a baby elephant firmly in place, and after trying to break free under their own power and failing, the elephant eventually learns not to try to escape at all.

This training serves to keep the elephant in place, with only a thin rope, for the rest of their lives.

Part of what we believe as Christians is that we were bound to sin, by a rope that we couldn't ever break on our own, and we needed to be set free. The freedom we're given is only accomplished through the work of Jesus on our behalf, and we call that justification.

If you have been justified by Christ, you have been set free. The challenge we have is to act like that's true. Like an elephant that's used to being tied to a stake, we often become used to being trapped in sin.

Schaeffer writes, "If we are Christians, we have understood and acted upon the finished work of Christ once for all at our justification, and our guilt is gone for ever. Now let us understand and act upon the practice of that same work moment by moment in our present lives."

Remember today that you are no longer bound by the sin that once held you, you are no longer named by your past, you have been justified by Christ. The old has past away, and you are a new creation.

Don't waste time living like you're still tied down by sin.

What is one way that you have felt defined, or trapped, or even influenced by the past? How can you live in this moment, in light of the reality that you have been set free?

Please Read: John 8:34-36

Wednesday, 6/10

Since we've been set free from sin and death, and we've been made new creations through the work of Jesus, why is it that life sometimes doesn't seem much different? Why is it that sometimes we don't bear fruit?

In the book we've been reading out of *True Spirituality* Schaeffer's tells that sometimes it's because we just aren't aware of what we have in Jesus.

He highlights five possible "ignorances." (Which is ironic because "ignorances" isn't a word, but we get the point.)

First, we might understand that we're saved, but not what that means in this moment.

Second, we might have been taught to think we have to follow Jesus under our own power.

Third, we might have been taught that it doesn't matter what we do.

Fourth, we might be waiting on some "second blessing" that would make us good people.

Fifth, we might never have been taught "...that there is a reality of faith to be acted on consciously after justification."

Any one of these are worth reflecting on, but the fifth one seems especially important to Schaeffer.

If we don't know that there's more to our walk than just being saved, we'll drift through life sort of half-asleep. Safe, through the justification that Jesus freely gives us, but never really acting on the reality of the new life we now live.

It's like we've traded in a tricycle for a sports car, but we never see what our new life is really about. If we really are new creations, there's a whole lot more horsepower available to us than there used to be. The question is whether or not we act on it.

Which of Schaeffer's five "ignorances" seems most common to you? Any that you've struggled with?

Please Read: Ephesians 3:20-21

Thursday, 6/11

We read yesterday that one of the reasons that Christians don't bear fruit in their lives is because we just don't know any better, what Francis Schaeffer called our "ignorances."

But sometimes we do know what's available to us, and we just choose not to pick up what God has provided us with. Schaeffer suggests that sometimes we fail to bear fruit, simply because we don't take hold of what God has already given us.

He writes,

"We may know the truth, we may have the knowledge, but it has not been appropriated, and so it will not mean anything to us in practice, and the fruit will not be born."

Throughout scripture God makes it clear that he fights on our behalf, that he provides all that is necessary for righteousness, and that all we have to is receive the free gift that he extends to us.

Unfortunately, sometimes we're unwilling to do even that much. If we are unwilling to act on what God has already given to us, we will stagnate, and we will not see the life and growth that is offered to us.

It's important to remember that God has not sent us out into the world unprepared, or unequipped. In addition to the invitation to grow into new life, Christians face a real adversary, we battle against real powers and principalities that will oppose us as we follow after God. In his wisdom, God has chosen to lay out the tools, the gifts, and resources that we need, if only we'll pick them up and use them.

What are some of the things God has given all Christians to use that we sometimes fail to pick up? What are some of the gifts or talents that you personally have that you sometimes find hard to use?

Please Read: Ephesians 6:10-18

Friday, 6/12

As Christians, we believe that an aspect of our faith is the walking out of things we believe, we are and have always been a community of active participation.

Jesus says, "Follow me" and we *follow* a living God. Jesus says, "Love your neighbor as yourself" and (as best as we can manage) we actively *love* our neighbor.

Scottish theologian George Macleod wrote,
"For Christ is a person to be trusted, not a principal to be tested. The Church is a movement, not a meeting house. The faith is an experience, not an exposition. Christians are explorers, not mapmakers."

The walking out of our faith is the place where we are confronted with our own weakness, and where we experience the power of God. And that's terrifying! How much safer to just stay at home and never put into practice the things we know to be true. How much easier to never be confronted with the truth of our deep inability, of our shortcomings, of our needs.

How much cleaner and tidier little lives we can lead, when we act under our own strength.

But it's only in walking out our faith, in following after God, in putting into practice the things that we intellectually assent to, that we will have an opportunity to experience the power of the Holy Spirit.

All we have to do is to walk out what we say we believe. Walk out into the wild where the Holy Spirit is our only hope. Walk out into the unknown, safe in the power of God with us.

When have you been called to step outside of your own strength, and to trust that the Holy Spirit will provide?

Please Read: Zephaniah 3:17

Saturday, 6/13

In Joshua 24:14, Joshua says, “Put away the gods that your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt and serve the LORD.”

This command is especially convicting as it comes after the conquest of Canaan.

This means that despite every miraculous supernatural demonstration of God’s supremacy over Pharaoh, despite every instance of God’s mercy to his people, and despite seeing God welcome in the outsider, the foreigner, the prostitute, and the unworthy, through it all, some folks still held on to the false gods of their fathers.

The Israelites might have struggled with the Egyptian gods, but our fathers worshipped things like money, power, and pleasure.

Even when we’ve seen God’s power, mercy, and love firsthand, we struggle with the worship of these false gods and their empty lies.

It turns out humans have very short attention spans, and we forget that God is God. We need to be reminded often.

The greatest weapon we have against falling into idolatry is time spent in the presence of the living God, it’s much easier to resist the lies of an idol when you’ve spent the day in the presence of God.

As we conclude our series in Joshua and remember the admonition to “Choose this day who you will serve” let’s also be watchful of the old patterns that tempt us away.

What false gods were worshiped in your family? Where did people pour out their time treasure and talent?

Please Read: Joshua 24:14-15