

Personal/Small Group Sermon Study

Week of September 10, 2023 A.D.

God's Viewpoint

Because we are saved by faith – and not by works – it is easy to develop the attitude that God does not care about our personal plans and goals for our lives – just as long as we attend church services and call ourselves Christians. But is that really what the Bible says? Let's talk about that in this week's lesson.

(Note: For every question which appears in this study, always give the reasoning and/or the explanation for each of your answers.)

Read 2 Corinthians 4:1-6

1. Refer to verse 1. What does it mean to "lose heart"? Please describe a time when you "lost heart"? What enabled your "heart" to be restored? What advice would you give to a friend who has "lost heart"?
2. Refer to verse 3. What is the gospel? Who are the people who are "perishing"? What is going to happen to "those who are perishing" after they die? Why? When?
3. Was there a time when the gospel was ever "veiled" to (i.e. hidden from) you personally? If so, why? How was the gospel first revealed to you? Based upon the teaching at 1 Peter 3:15-16, when you meet Jesus face-to-face, will Jesus ask you if you took advantage of every opportunity to share the plan of salvation with your non-believing family and friends?
4. Refer to verses 4-6. Who is the "god of this age"? Does the "god of this age" have an agenda? If so, (a) what is that agenda and (b) why does he pursue it? Does Jesus expect every Christian to faithfully expose and oppose the ways, works, and deceptions of the "god of this age"? If so, how and why? If not, why not?

Read 2 Corinthians 4:13-15

5. Will every believer in Christ be raised from the dead and live forever in the presence of Jesus and in the presence of each other? If so, in your opinion, what is the wisest thing that a believer can do to receive the greatest eternal benefit from the use of his or her earthly: (a) time? (b) money, wealth, and possessions? and (c) personal skills and abilities?

6. Who is the Holy Spirit? Where does the Holy Spirit live? Does the Holy Spirit enjoy giving thanks and glory to God the Father? Do you enjoy giving thanks and glory to God the Father? If not, why not? If so, (a) how do you do so? (b) why? and (c) how often?
7. Please analyze, critique, and discuss this statement: "The god of this age has blinded the eyes and hardened the hearts of many American Christians as a result of which they do not enthusiastically and joyfully give thanks or glory to God when they meet for public worship."
8. Please analyze, critique, and discuss this statement: "God is pleased with me because I have accepted Jesus as my Savior. And, God has given to me His abundant life (and the presence of the Holy Spirit) so that I can enjoy the fruits of my labor and pursue everything that makes me happy."

Read 2 Corinthians 4:16-18

9. Please analyze, critique, and discuss this statement: "God expects me to share my time, talents, and treasures on a regular and weekly basis with an intimate group of fellow believers so that we may encourage one another and not lose heart."
10. Which should have the higher priority in the life of a believer in Christ: (a) developing a strong and healthy physical body? or (b) developing a mind, heart, soul, and spirit which is in fellowship with and in submission to the triune God? Please state a persuasive argument that American Christians are more committed to doing (b) than to doing (a).
11. Refer to verse 17. Please explain in your own words why every trouble that we face in life is "light and momentary" when it is seen from God's perspective. Please describe how your troubles in this life are achieving for you an eternal glory. Are your troubles a blessing or a curse?
12. In your opinion, what specific changes (if any) must be made in the lives of American Christians in order for verse 18 to become a reality for them? Are you going to make those changes in your life? If not, why not? If so, how and when?

Consider: As followers of Christ, we are spiritually obligated to know and to obey the teachings of God which are given to us in the Holy Bible. "You think about that!" Amen.