

Study 23

A DIFFERENT ATTITUDE

First Peter 4:1-3

A lot of things just seem to never stop. The earth never stops. Time never stops. People never stop. Just when we want to stop, something keeps us going. Imagine the staff in the emergency ward of a busy hospital wanting to stop immediately after losing the fight to keep an accident victim alive. In the midst of their disappointment and despair an expectant mother about to give birth may be rushed into their emergency room in the final phase of delivery. The same staff who just minutes before lost a patient, are now bringing another one into the world. Life never stops. To say that it never stops suggests that it is moving. But where is life moving? This can only be answered individually. All individuals are moving somewhere in life. The direction they take is determined by what they are seeking.

1. In verse 3, Peter mentions certain things that people were seeking from life. Compare this with Romans 2:8 and Titus 2:12. What are these people seeking that determines the direction for their lives?

2. What type of people will increase in the last days according to 2Timothy 3:4?

When people seek pleasure-only for their lives they exalt themselves to the position of being their own god. There's nothing wrong with pleasure, in itself. However, when it becomes the goal of a person's life, it becomes an idol. When we became Christians after the Holy Spirit touched our hearts, we went from being basic pleasure seekers (living for ourselves) to being infant seekers of God. It caused a radical change in attitude.

3. What did this different attitude in Christ enable Him to endure? (vs 1)

Suffering isn't pleasurable. It's down-right unpleasant. But when a person is prepared to voluntarily suffer for what they believe, it shows that they aren't necessarily living for themselves. This is what Christ did. Peter says that Christ's example of not merely living for pleasure, and enduring suffering is one that we should follow. When the world sees that Christians are prepared to endure hardship for the sake of their beliefs, perhaps they may be more persuaded about the gospel.

4. Who else does Scripture say did not live for pleasure? What pleasures were at his disposal? What did he choose instead? (Hebrews 11:24-25)

SEEK AND YOU WILL...

Peter says that believers should be living for the will of God (vs. 2). If a Christian is seeking to do God's will, they are going to have their time occupied in a way that will keep them from doing harmful things. The Bible is full of things that a believer can be doing. But there is one thing that it repeatedly urges God's people, either directly or by example, to do.

5. Note what the Bible repeatedly urges God's people to do-

a) Deuteronomy 4:29 _____

b) Psalm 27:14 _____

c) Psalm 34:10 _____

d) Psalm 42:1-2 _____

e) Psalm 105:4 _____

f) Psalm 119:2 _____

g) Isaiah 26:9 _____

h) Isaiah 55:6 _____

Clearly, doing the will of God has more to do with having a relationship with God than it does with doing things for Him.

6. How is this illustrated by the incident of Mary and Martha? (Luke 10:38-42)

a) Which one was *doing* things for the Lord? _____

b) Which one was seeking the Lord? _____

c) Which one did Jesus say was necessary? _____

7. What is God's promise to those who seek Him now? (2Chronicles 15:2; Proverbs 8:17)

A young preacher once went to the great Charles Haddon Spurgeon to ask him for advice on how to pastor successfully. Spurgeon solemnly said to the young man—seek God, get on fire for God and people will come from miles to see the flames!

FIERY ZEAL

We need a different attitude about life compared with those who live in the world. We need to move from a position of just being content with our Christianity, where we just go through the motions, to an attitude of continual hunger for God.

8. What kind of Christianity does Romans 12:11 urge us to live?

We need to be on fire for God. Just when we think we are on fire for God, God reveals to us (as we seek Him) that there is more. There is a greater measure of

God's presence that we can be continually pursuing. What a delight it would be if people commented that person has been with God! People will perceive that God is real when we ooze with His presence. When a group of God-seekers get together to do Church, the presence of God should be awesome.

God, please draw me into Your presence and pour Your Spirit and presence into my life. Ignore my reluctance and keep me going on with You. Help me to hear Your voice clearly. Show me how You want me to change, and help me to be humble enough to accept those changes from whatever sources they may come. May I burn with a zeal for You that never wanes. Please make me, break me, mould me into the person you want me to be. God, I want to go through the rest of my life with an increasing passionate love for You. Help me to seek Your forgiveness when I fail You, and to never give up because of my weaknesses. God I give myself to You. Amen.

Amen.