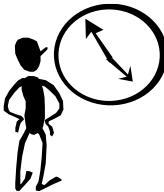


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Time of Assembly



Sunday:

Bible Study 9:00 a.m.
Worship 10:00 a.m.

Every other Sunday night:

Bible Study 4:00 p.m.
Worship 5:00 p.m.

Wednesday:

Bible Study 7:00 p. m.

Christ First! Last! and Always!

By Jefferson David Tant

“I beseech you ... brethren ... to present your bodies a living sacrifice ... And be not fashioned according to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind” (Romans 12:1-2). We all know the words. Do we really know what they mean?

“All to Jesus I surrender,
All to Him I freely give;
I will ever love and trust Him,
In His presence daily live.
All to Jesus I surrender,
Humbly at His feet I bow;
Worldly pleasures all forsaken,
Take me Jesus, Take me now.
All to Jesus I surrender,
Lord, I give myself to Thee;
Fill me with Thy love and power,
Let Thy blessing fall on me.
I surrender all ...
All to Thee, my blessed Savior,
I surrender all” (J. W. Van de Venter).

We know the words, but do we sing them from the heart, or just from the lips?

We must all agree that many of God’s people are sorely lacking in real spiritual life. There is no zeal. There is no fire. The salt has lost its savor. The light has grown dim. Perhaps we need to confront ourselves soberly with a tough question: “Do I put Christ first in my life by complete surrender and commitment to Him?” Right now, jot down the things in life that are most important to you. Be perfectly honest — don’t fudge. Be sure to include job, family, personal comfort, social relationships, possessions, Christ, etc.

If Christ is not honestly at the head of the list, ask,

“Would I be willing to put Christ first — ahead of my social life?” Sometimes when we might have the opportunity to serve Christ, whether it be attending mid-week Bible study, or visiting the sick, etc., we are excused because “This is my night to bowl,” or “Our company stayed too late...”

Did you take a job knowing you would be unable to participate in worship assemblies and Bible studies regularly? Be really frank with yourself. Is Christ first? Have you put absolute faith and trust in His promise of [Matthew 6:33](#)?

Did you miss a gospel meeting in order to see your son play in the baseball game? The excuse: “This creates a bond between me and my son, and will help me lead him in the way of Christ.” But which came first — Christ or family? Can we actually put Christ first — ahead of them? Why should God ask such an outlandish thing? Yet, we recall Jesus saying, “*He that loveth father or mother ...son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me*” ([Matthew 10:33](#))

Sure, the problem is difficult. If you don’t believe it, try it yourself. The same test was put to Abraham when he was asked to sacrifice his son, Isaac. Abraham became the “father of the faithful” when he answered the question in God’s favor. The rich young ruler ([Matthew 19](#)) “*went away sorrowful*” because he answered the question in what he thought was his own favor. Like the ruler, we have allowed our material prosperity and our environment to bind, gag, and deliver us to the world, the flesh, and Satan.

What a joy of release when we can finally say, “I surrender all.” Then will we have presented our bodies a “living sacrifice unto God.” Then will we fully realize that we are not our own, “*for ye were bought with a price*” ([I Corinthians 6:19-20](#)). Then the world will take knowledge of us, that we have been with Jesus ([Acts 4:13](#)). Then will the Lord be Alpha and Omega — *forever!*

Put Forth the Effort

By Bart Campbell

Thomas Edison has been considered by some to be the "King of Inventors." He once made this statement. "Genius is 1% inspiration and 99% perspiration." Edison was responsible for the inventions of the incandescent lightbulb, the gramophone, and moving pictures. But Thomas Edison claimed that his achievements were not the result of genius so much as the product of perspiration -- in other words, through **persistent effort**. It was characteristic of Edison, that once he started an experiment, he would become so absorbed in this project that he would literally forget to sleep. He became oblivious to the passage of time, which was one reason why he never wore a watch. Someone once asked him what he considered was the secret to his success. He replied, "Don't look at your watch!" Some have even speculated that he invented the electric

lamp because it annoyed him when it turned dark outside which would interfere with the completion of the experiment or project that he was currently working on.

I use this characteristic from the life of Thomas Edison to emphasize a spiritual principle. Jesus was once asked if only a few would be saved? He answered: "**make every effort to enter through the narrow door, because man, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able to**" ([Luke 13:23-24](#)).

Jesus says that many will not make it to heaven because they did not make the effort to enter the narrow door. As a disciple of Christ, I should have the trait of character to make the effort and work. James told us that faith without works is dead -- [James 2:26](#). Our true character, development, and growth as a Christian, will be evident by the persistent effort that we put forth. Thomas Edison recognized his productivity as an inventor was more due to the effort that he put forth than it was to his genius. The same is true with us as Christians. Our success at making it to heaven will be more because of our desire and will to get to heaven than it will because of our intelligence or status in life. If we really desire to spend an eternity in heaven, then let us put forth the effort ("**make the effort**" as Jesus said).

Consider, are we putting forth the effort to enter the narrow door to heaven, when we are consistently late to a Bible class as many congregations of the Lord's people have on a Sunday morning? Maybe we do not motivate ourselves to be in class at all. "Oh, I have studied that book before and I don't need to learn any more about it." "The teacher is such a bore, I am not edified by his presentation of the material." Even if such excuses are true, does this attitude show that we are really making an effort to be present and learn more from the Word of God?

Would you have the same attitude if you were in a foot race and were tied for the lead? As hard and as fast as you could run, the other runner is working just as hard and running just as fast as you. Then you see the finish line. How bad do you want to win? You may know more than the opposing runner and maybe even are more qualified as a runner, but you know that at this point of the race, the winner will be the one who first crosses the line. If you want to win the race, you very well might put forth the effort, even to the point of stretching your chest as far out as you can so that you are the first to break the tape (or cross the beam of light). That will be the way that you will win, so you **put forth the effort!** Why then do we not put forth the effort, **make the effort**, to study the source that we will be judged by on the Judgement Day ([John 12:48](#))? Why do we not put forth the effort to arrive at Bible class in time, prepared to participate in the discussion, having studied the material so as to be prepared for the topic?

Remember what Paul told Timothy: "...*give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine ... give yourself entirely to them that your progress may be evident to all!*" ([I Timothy 4:12-15](#)) Is the effort that we put forth, worth going to heaven? Is the effort we make, worth the recognition by God our Father?

What About Latter-Day Revelation from God?

By Clem Thurman

Nearly all of the denominations that have sprung up since 1800 have as a basis "latter-day revelation." That is, some religious leader (nearly always self-appointed) claimed to have direct communication from God in which is revealed a new system of religion. But the Bible says, "*God is not a God of confusion, but of peace*" (I Corinthians 14:33). We know, therefore, that all of these cannot be from God, for they contradict one another in many different ways. God has always wanted His people to "*be of the same mind and of the same judgment*" (I Corinthians 1:10), and He exhorts us, "*Let there be no divisions among you.*"

But we don't have to concern ourselves over which one of these "latter-day revelations" is right because the Bible clearly shows them all to be false. All of God's will for man is given to us in the Bible, and we are forbidden to have any other guide. "*Every Scripture is inspired of God and is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness. That the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work*" (II Timothy 3:16,17).

I had a couple of young men come to my door a few years ago with much the same message, new revelation, as is being discussed in this question. They claimed that God had revealed many new teachings that were not in the New Testament, that this was "another testament of Jesus Christ." As we discussed this and compared it with the Bible, I asked them if this "new teaching" had been preached by Paul and the other apostles. They replied, "No." I then read with them the Scripture:

"I marvel that ye are so quickly removing from Him that called you in the grace of Christ unto a different gospel; which is not another gospel only there are some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema. As we have said before, so say I now again, if any man preacheth unto you any gospel other than that which ye have received, let him be anathema" (Galatians 1:6-9).

They nearly knocked the door off its hinges getting out of my house, and I haven't seen them since! And so it is with all of these "latter-day revelators."

When the apostle John completed the Book of Revelation in about A.D. 96, all of God's will had been revealed and recorded. When some were not content to abide by the Scriptures, the apostle Paul wrote: "*That in us ye might learn not to go beyond the things which are written*" (I Corinthians 4:6). If it had not been written in the days of the apostles, it is counterfeit! Again, note these Scriptures:

"Seeing that His divine power hath granted unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that called us by His own glory and

virtue" ([II Peter 1:3](#)).

"Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. If any-one comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet; for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds." ([II John 9-11](#)).

"I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto them, God shall add unto him the plagues which are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life, and out of the holy city, which are written in this book" ([Revelation 22:18,19](#))

And one more:

"Beloved, while I was giving all diligence to write unto you of our common salvation, I was constrained to write unto you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints" ([Jude 3](#)).

These passages of Scripture show us that God's will has been completely and for all times revealed to us in the Scriptures. Man dare not tamper with it -- by adding to it or taking from it -- for it will make man "complete," lacking in nothing. Our plea is simple. Return to the Bible as the only guide in religion, the only authority. Then we will all be one in Christ, as He prayed that we would be ([John 17:20,21](#)) and commanded that we be ([I Corinthians 1:10-13](#)).

Is There a Set Time For Someone to Die?

By Jeffrey W. Hamilton

It is a fact that living means each of us will eventually die, barring those who will see our Lord's return. *"And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment"* ([Hebrews 9:27](#)). In speaking of King Saul and why David did not want to raise a hand against him, David said, *"As the LORD lives, the LORD shall strike him, or his day shall come to die, or he shall go out to battle and perish"* ([I Samuel 26:10](#)). The question though is whether the day of one's death a predetermined day or one that is determined by God based on various factors.

David once asked, *"LORD, make me to know my end, and what is the measure of my days, that I may know how frail I am. Indeed, You have made my days as hand-breadths, and my age is as nothing before You; certainly every man at his best state is but vapor"* ([Psalm 39:4-5](#)). By this, David is not asking to know when he would die, but that he would be able to keep in mind that life is short. We have all heard of people who drastically changed behavior after they had a close brush with death. We all need that attitude because our choices would greatly change if we knew how little time we have left. Job realized that it is God, not man, who ultimately determines the length of