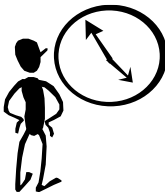


Inside this issue:

<i>On Being Spiritually Minded</i>	1
<i>A.M. Sermon Outline:</i> The Death of Jesus Christ	6
Duty Rosters	7
Announcements & For the Record	8



Time of Assembly



Sunday:	
Bible Study	9:00 a.m.
Worship	10:00 a.m.
Worship	5:00 p.m.
	(every other week)
Wednesday:	
Bible Study	6:30 p. m.

On Being Spiritually Minded

By Jefferson David Tant

“The need of Gods' people has ever been, for spiritual power. The emphasis and tendency too often is, and has been, toward power that comes with prestige, numbers, money [and] the power of weight. The Bible emphasis is on power of a spiritual nature, operation through the inward man.” (Homer Hailey)

We hear much talk about people who are spiritually minded, who are committed, who are Christ-like, who are godly. Just what meaning do these words convey? Are these words that are reserved for the "super-saints," (You know, people like Paul, Aquila and Priscilla, Mary, and Abraham)? Or are these words that should be used to describe the average "Joe and Sue Christian," the people who sit on the same pew with us in the assembly and who sometimes sing a bit off-key?

We want to consider the subject of being spiritually minded, for there seems to be a real lack of this in many places in the Lord's church today. And if people are not spiritually minded, then the only other alternative is to be worldly, or carnally minded. The word of God does not offer any in-between state, although many would like to classify themselves as such. "Oh, I'm religious, but I don't make myself a nut, because I do enjoy some of the things in the world. Nothing really bad, you know, but, hey, a person's gotta live in the world. You know what I mean." Yes, I'm afraid I do know!

Defining "Spiritually Minded"

"For they that are after the flesh mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For the mind of the flesh is death; but the mind of the Spirit is life and peace" (Romans 8:5-6 ASV). *"For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after*

the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace" (KJV). Paul continues his thoughts as he notes in Romans 8:9: "But ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you. But if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

Although this would certainly include the concept of the indwelling of the Spirit, I really believe it goes beyond this. You might say that being spiritually minded is a particular "lifestyle." Of the "Spirit" as used in Romans 8:9, Vincent's *Word Studies* comments: "The divine power or influence belonging to God, and communicated in Christ to men, in virtue of which they become 'pneumatikoi'-- spiritual recipients and organs of the Spirit. This is Paul's most common use of the word." Bryan Vinson, Sr., in his commentary on Romans, notes that Paul "simply states as true that which should be self-evident to any reflecting person, and that is that one who pursues that course in life that is devoted to caring primarily after or for the flesh will necessarily mind or be filled with an interest in those things which can gratify the longings and desire of the flesh. Correspondingly, one who is seeking after the best interest of his spirit will for the same reason mind, or exercise becoming interested in and give attention to those things which advance and secure the best interests of his spirit. The best men of all ages have sought after the things of the spirit, the things that are related to the security, growth, and well-being of their souls" (p. 148-149).

In keeping with such thoughts, we are reminded of Colossians 3:2: "*Set your mind upon things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth.*" As suggested earlier, this has very much to do with a particular lifestyle--the lifestyle of a Christian.

Perhaps some illustrations from sports will help to illustrate the idea. A few years ago I served as a coach for a Little League Softball team. My first team consisted of girls ages 7-10. This was a totally new experience for most of these girls (and for their coach, as well), and it involved a new way of thinking. They not only had to learn the rules and skills of softball, but they also had to learn to think softball. Whenever they were on the field, they had to give their concentration to what was before them. They had to develop this to the point that their reaction to the ball coming their way was almost instinctive -- automatic. Some never developed that skill, and guess what--they never became good players. One little girl served as a pitcher. Whenever a ball was hit (more likely than not, rolled) her way, she would get the ball and just stand there looking bewildered. Meanwhile, everyone was yelling at her, "Throw to first! Throw the ball to first!" She was not "softball-minded." There must have been other thoughts that were running through her mind--homework, the cute boy who sat next to her in English, the spat with her little brother, the new clothes she was going shopping for tomorrow, whatever. Were these bad thoughts? No, but they would distract her from the task at hand.

As Christians, we are on the "playing field," the field of life, 24 hours a day. And yes, there are thoughts of things in the world, not necessarily evil thoughts, but we must develop self-control and self-discipline so that we don't let these things distract us.

Have you ever listened to a radio that was a bit off-frequency? You could hear the program, but it would fade from time to time, and there would be a bit of hissing or static coming through. All very distracting. Then you would adjust the knob, or "fine tune" the setting, and there was all the difference in the world. The program came in loud and clear. The same is true of a TV picture that is out of adjustment. The picture is blurred and faint and really a strain to watch. But with a few adjustments, what a great difference. Isn't this the idea of "set your mind on the things that are above?" Do you get the picture of being spiritually minded?

A spiritually minded person loves the Lord...loves the Word of God...loves the people of God...enjoys assembling together for worship and study...is conscious of being "the salt of the earth" and "the light of the world."

This person is on the same frequency as the Lord because he has "the mind of the spirit." But the one who is not "in tune" always has a struggle. There is static in the background; there are distortions in the picture. Things are just not clear. I can recall times when I was traveling in the car and listening to a radio program of great interest. When I got out of range of the transmitter, it became a great struggle to hear the program. I would turn up the volume, adjust the frequency, and hunch forward to get my ears nearer the speaker. What a chore just to hear a program. And some struggle the same way in living as a Christian. Perhaps they are too far from the "transmitter."

Why Is This Important?

Go back to Romans 8. "*But ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you. Now note carefully. "But if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His"* (Romans 8:9). What does it mean to have the Spirit of Christ? It means to be spiritually minded. And what happens if you are not spiritually minded? **You do not belong to Christ!**

When you have people who are spiritually minded, you have people who have great power, who truly can make a difference in the church, in the home, in the school, in the workplace, in the community, yea, even in the world. Do you remember the great commotion in Thessalonica when Paul and Silas came to town? The Jews were beside themselves with jealousy, and dragged certain brethren before the rulers of the city, charging that "*These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also*" (Acts 17:6). Here we see the power of the gospel coupled with the power of a committed life. What a potent combination!

The bottom line is: if I am not spiritually minded, then I won't be going to heaven. In 2 Corinthians 3:18, Paul writes of our being "*transformed into the image*" of our

Lord. John declares in I John 3:2: "*Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that, if he shall be manifested, we shall be like him; for we shall see him even as he is.*" You see, only those who are "like him" are going to be in heaven with him. He doesn't want any "misfits" there. And what will we be doing in heaven? What little information we are given indicates that we will be in the presence of God giving him praise and adoration, and we will be in the great company of God's children of all ages. Now, if I don't enjoy these things on earth, if I am not spiritually minded, then I won't enjoy being in heaven, will I? But where do I learn to be spiritually minded? Where do I develop this lifestyle? Here and now!

How Do I Become Spiritually Minded?

"Okay, I admit that a lot of my focus is on things that are in the world. And I see the point you are making about the importance of being spiritually minded. But frankly, some of those things just don't turn me on. What can I do about it?" I'm glad you asked because there are things that will help.

The first thing to do is make up your mind -- set your goal. What was it Paul wrote in Colossians 3:2? "*Set your mind on the things that are above.*" This is not a matter of what one enjoys or doesn't enjoy. This is a matter of the will. I can remember a time when I didn't enjoy brushing my teeth. But somewhere along the way I came to understand the importance of it and made myself do it. Now I don't feel right unless I do brush them. It was simply a matter of my determining what was good for me and then moving toward the accomplishment of that. We all do things like this. The doctor tells the "Couch Potato" that he must exercise if he wants to live. C.P. doesn't enjoy exercise, but he knows he must do it. And guess what? He eventually comes to enjoy it, as well as the benefits it brings. It's a matter of making up one's mind. And if you want to go to heaven, you must set that as your goal and then set out to accomplish that goal.

Certainly, prayer has a part in developing a spiritual mind. Is spiritual wisdom a part of being spiritually minded? James tells us that if we lack wisdom, we should pray for it, and God will grant our request (James 1:5). Is resisting temptation a part of being spiritually minded? Christ taught his disciples to pray that the Father "*bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one*" (Matthew 6:13). Prayer has the power of enlisting the Father's aid and motivating us to do something about that for which we pray.

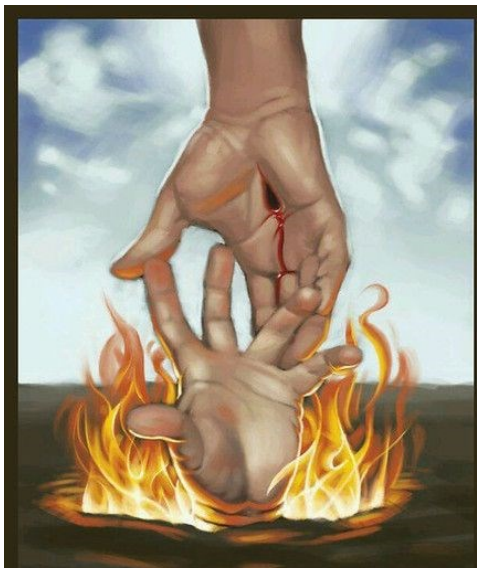
Studying the Word will certainly enhance our spiritual nature. Paul's admonition to young Timothy was to be an example "*in word, in manner of life, in love, in faith, in purity*" (I Timothy 4:12). Sounds like some spiritual qualities, right? What does Paul suggest will help Timothy develop these things? Among other things in I and II Timothy, Paul does suggest: "*Till I come, give heed to reading ... Be diligent in these things*" (I Timothy 4:13,15); "*Give diligence to present thyself approved unto God, a workman*

that needeth not to be ashamed, handling aright the word of truth" (II Timothy 2:15); "But abide thou...in the sacred writings which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (II Timothy 3:14-15). You don't know where to start? Ask someone. Ask an elder, a preacher, or someone whose knowledge of the scriptures you admire. They will be happy to help you.

It is also important to associate with spiritually minded people. Here is another matter of choice. You choose your friends, your companions. And there is much truth in what we hear about peer pressure. Most of what we hear is negative, but peer pressure also has a positive side to it. If it is true that *"evil companionships corrupt good morals"* (I Corinthians 15:33), is it not equally true that "good companionships encourage good morals?" Just makes good sense.

Finally, I encourage those who would grow in spiritual mindedness to be faithful in attending the assemblies of the saints. What better place to receive instruction, to be encouraged, to be lifted up, and to be strengthened than in the presence of God and his people as they offer praise and thanksgiving, and as they study together from the eternal word of God? We are so often told in the Scriptures to encourage one another. Hebrews 10:23-25 states it this way: "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope that it waver not; for he is faithful that promised: and let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works; not forsaking our own assembling together, as the custom of some is.." We are to be strong and not waver; we are to help encourage one another, to stir one another up in love and good works. How are we to do this? In this text, we accomplish this by "not forsaking our own assembling together." In other words, when we come together, we accomplish this mutual encouragement.

May God bless us all as we strive to be spiritually minded -- to be like Christ. *"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service. And be not fashioned according to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God"* (Romans 12:1-2).



Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death?

Thanks be to God,
who delivers me through
Jesus Christ our Lord!

Romans 7:24-25