

LIFE GROUPS

Sermon Discussion Notes

Pastor Pip Taylor: 'A Long Obedience in the Same Direction'

Having a “tourist” mindset in faith means that we “visit” experiences with God rather than walk daily with Him. The danger in this is that we can assume that these experience mean that we “know” what it is to walk with God and be disciplined by Him, however they do not produce the same life change and spiritual maturity that comes from the daily, slow walk with God. Eventually we can become dissatisfied in our faith and have 3 different responses:

1. Keep seeking “better” and “more” experiences.
2. Compartmentalise our faith to just the experiences and seek our joy and contentment from things and people other than God.
3. Walk away from faith altogether thinking that we have been lied to about God and how He works in and through us.

Q: Have you seen this dissatisfaction at times in your own life? How have you approached faith like a “tourist”?

A better option is to honestly look at our perspectives and see if we have adopted a “tourist” mindset when it comes to faith, rather than that of a “disciple” and “pilgrim”.

Book: Eugene Peterson. A Long Obedience in the Same Direction: Discipleship in an Instant Society. We are more and more conditioned to expect immediate solutions to big issues.

“One aspect of the world that we have been able to identify as harmful to Christians, is the assumption that anything worthwhile can be acquired at once” (Peterson).

The spiritual maturity of knowing God with increasing- intimacy, trusting Him in everything, bearing the fruits of the Spirit, breaking free from addictions and destructive behaviours and walking in the assurance of Christ’s work on the cross for us, for example, does not come instantaneously, but from the long, slow walk of being disciplined by the Holy Spirit who lives within us.

Experiences can be used by the Spirit in our lives, but are not a substitution for the daily work He does in Scripture + Prayer, and Prayer + Scripture.

Q: Can you think of an experience that God has used to draw you into a more intentional daily walk with Him?

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Scripture + Prayer, and Prayer + Scripture; not two separate entities. *“It is this fusion of God speaking to us (Scripture) and our speaking to Him (prayer) that the Holy Spirit uses to form the life of Christ in us”* - Peterson. The supernatural work that is necessary to sanctify and disciple us requires a supernatural being. It cannot be done by a person.

Q: What might be some ways that we can engage scripture and prayer in this way?

“A disciple is a learner, but not in the academic setting of a schoolroom, rather at the worksite of a craftsman. We do not acquire information about God but skills in faith.” (Peterson). A Disciple (mathetes) is to be a person who spends their life apprenticed to their master, Jesus Christ. This relationship is a constant growing-learning one.

READ: Hebrews 13:14-15

A Pilgrim (parepidemos) is to describe that we are *“a people who spend our lives going to someplace, going to God, and whose path for getting there is the way, Jesus Christ”*. This world is not our home.

Q: Is there a time in your life where you can see that the Holy Spirit was changing you incrementally over a long period of time and you only saw the change in yourself in hindsight?

Q: In the past year of journeying with God, where have you seen Him display His character and promises, so that they no longer were things you simply knew or could recite from the Bible, but became things you know to be true because you have seen them displayed?

READ: Hebrews 12:1-2.

Q: Has God been already at work in showing you how He wants you to follow Him this year? (eg consider the kind of tasks you engage, the priorities you set, or the rhythms you adopt).