

Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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Spiritually Engaged

(Jerry Fite)

When we “walk by faith and not by sight”, we are engaged spiritually (2 Corinthians 5:7). When we renew daily the “inward man” while acknowledging the decay of the “outward man”, we are engaged spiritually (2 Corinthians 4:16-18). When we “present our bodies a living sacrifice” unto God, we are engaged spiritually (Romans 12:1).

Applying these and other New Testament Scriptures will not occur if we are not striving to live spiritual lives. It is not easy to live spiritually in a world dominated by what we see with our eyes, and driven by fleshly desires we feel. Let us take a quick look at areas of our life that will demand us being spiritually engaged.

Jesus said we are to “strive to enter in by the narrow door” (Luke 13:24). The narrow or restrictive way is the only way unto eternal life. Jesus and His way revealed through the Gospel is that only “way” (John 14:6). Jesus said we are to “strive”, which translates the Greek word

“ANGONIZOMAI”. If we “agonize” to enter, we certainly are engaged, and are concentrating on making sure we enter the restrictive door unto eternal life. Remaining in that way will demand we “contend earnestly for the faith which was once and for all delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3).

This same Greek word is used by Paul in maybe a more familiar context of agonizing effort. Paul writes, “And every man that striveth in the games exercise self control in all things. Now these do it to receive a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible” (1 Corinthians 9:25). Contending in the games for a medal does not happen without prior stringent training and self-discipline. Receiving the incorruptible crown will not happen for us if we are not engaged daily in exercising self-control.

Prayer demands spiritual insight. We pray to God whom we cannot physically see, and often for spiritual blessings we confess we need and desire. Do we strive in prayer? Epaphras did

constantly on behalf of his brethren in Colossae. He was “always striving for you in his prayers, that ye may stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God” (Colossians 4:12). The goal of spiritual assurance is a goal of the spiritually engaged. Knowing God will assist in endeavors which are according to His will, the spiritually engaged continually strive in prayer. Paul pleads for such engaged people: “Now I beseech you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in prayers to God for me” (Romans 15:30). Encouraged by the Lord’s authority, and driven by love of the Spirit, spiritually engaged people do not mind striving in prayer for their brethren.

Constantly striving in prayer will be coupled with diligent spiritual work. Like Paul, we will teach and admonish to present every man “perfect in Christ” (Colossians 1:28-29). Praying, teaching, and admonishing characterize the spiritually engaged. Are you striving with self-control to enter the narrow door?