

Glad Tidings

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

Vol. XXV

January 4, 2015

No. 1

Read and Pray

(Jerry Fite)

What kind of relationship would you have if you only occasionally talk to someone, but know nothing about them personally? How close to someone are you if you hardly ever talk to them? Being close would probably be the last thing you could honestly say about such relationships. What kind of relationship do you have with God as you begin a new year?

Would you describe your talking to Him in prayer as being “steadfast” or strong, and “unceasing” or constant which characterize prayer in faithful Christians (Acts 2:43, I Thessalonians 5:17)? Are you praying to God, knowing very little about Him and His will? How do you pray “according to His will”, or expect His affirmative answer if we do not know what is “pleasing in His sight” (I John 5:14, I Jn. 3:22)?

Stagnant knowledge of God does not foster unceasing prayer. Haphazard prayer to God hinders a close relationship with Him. Learning of God by reading His Word and talking to God in prayer are essentials to a healthy relationship with God.

Jesus honored Scripture by standing up to read it before a gathered people in the synagogue (Luke 4:16-17). By the reading of specifics from Isaiah’s prophecy, people could relate Jesus’ miraculous work with fulfillment of God’s revealed Word (Luke 4:18-19; Isaiah 61:1-2).

Paul exhorted Timothy to pay close attention “to reading, to exhortation, to teaching” (I Timothy 4:13). Christians in local churches were to read the letters Paul wrote to specific churches (Colossians 4:16). Paul even placed the church in Thessalonica under an oath that “this epistle be read unto all the brethren” (I Thessalonians 5:27). If Paul is exhorting Timothy to be involved in “public reading” of His letters to the saints, it still puts a premium on reading.

The truth that we can understand God’s Word should encourage our reading of it. After he revealed God’s mystery of salvation through Christ for both Jew and Gentile, Paul reminds the Ephesians, “...as I wrote before in few words, whereby, when ye read, ye can perceive my understanding in the mystery of Christ” (Ephesians 3:3-4).

Jesus spent much time in prayer unto His Father in heaven. The Son of God after fulfilling God’s righteousness by being baptized by John, was “praying” as the heavens were opened and God’s voice came from Heaven identifying Jesus as His Son (Luke 3:22-23). He withdrew himself to private places to pray (Luke 5:16). Jesus spent all night in prayer before choosing His 12 apostles (Luke 6:12-16).

The extent of prayer in Jesus’ life did not end in giving thanks as he stood before food (John 6:11), but continued in setting aside private time to express to God His need (John 17). Jesus had absolute and intimate knowledge of His Father (Jn. 7:29). Could it be the more we know about God, and are aware of His glory, the more we will want to spend time in opening our heart to Him?

The more we read, the better we will “watch and pray” (Matt 26:41). We will know, and be reminded of the ways of the Devil (I Pet. 5:8). We will then seek God’s help through prayer as we seek forgiveness and express our particular weaknesses (Matt. 6:12-13). Let us fill our year with reading and praying!