

June 27, 2021

Viewpoint from the Valley Grove Church Of Christ

Painless Discipleship

By Joe R. Price

Church attendance is down in America (that's not news). One reason recently noted in a blog is the emphasis on children's sports activities on Sundays (*The Main Reason for Declining Church Attendance: Children's Sports?*, Christianity Today). Parents take their children to play soccer, baseball, football and more instead of Sunday Bible class and worship services. When we moved to Washington over 15 years ago I vividly remember being astonished at the amount of children's sports being played on Sunday mornings. The huge soccer complex near the church's meeting place was filled with the evidence that many people worship recreation instead of God on the Lord's Day.

One way churches are addressing this decline is by rescheduling worship services to accommodate families. By offering Saturday afternoon services they remove Sunday conflicts. Folks are free to do as they please.

Painless discipleship is in vogue. Jesus said, *"If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me"* (Lk. 9:23). By taking children to sporting events instead of worshiping God we are teaching them they are more important than the Lord. We are teaching them they can make plans that hinder them from putting the Lord first (Matt. 6:33). We are teaching them discipleship is adaptable to "me".

We must not have an inconsequential view toward attending worship services (Heb. 10:24-25). Does the illness that keeps you from worshiping on Sunday also keep you home from work on Monday? Being a disciple of Christ requires sacrifice; it is not always easy. Children who learn other things are more important than worshiping God will do those other things. So will adults.

Sacrifice is necessary in order to follow the Savior who sacrificed Himself for us (1 Pet. 2:21; Rom. 12:1-2). Christians gladly offer themselves to the Lord regardless of personal inconvenience. Being faithful means always putting the Lord first (Col. 3:1-4).

Summer Priorities

By Joe R. Price

Every season presents particular challenges to Christians to live morally, to be devoted to God and to offer Him true worship. For example, winter brings temptations to join in the false worship of celebrating the birth of Jesus. Spring offers us Easter and its false service to God. Summer brings its own set of temptations to forsake God and righteousness.

As summer begins we have a good opportunity to review and renew our priorities as children of God:

I will not take a vacation from worshiping God. Worshiping God on the first day of the week ought to be a given (Acts 20:7; Heb. 10:25; Jn. 4:24). Planning a vacation also means planning our worship. Summer fun cannot mean we neglect God.

I will give as I have been prospered. If we get a paid vacation, God has prospered us. With such increase comes the privilege and responsibility to give (1 Cor. 16:2). We will give cheerfully and without neglect at all times (2 Cor. 9:7).

I will only engage in moral activities. The grace of God teaches us to live “soberly, righteously and godly” (Tit. 2:12). Therefore, we will respect God through holy conduct and not view vacation as a time to carelessly and foolishly disregard God’s will through immoral actions (1 Pet. 1:13-17; 2:11-12).

I will be modest at all times.

Modest clothing is not defined by one’s location or activity. Since our clothing is to be marked by “shamefastness and sobriety”, our hearts must contain these attributes (1 Tim. 2:9). Christians know the world does not set the standard for decent dress. Summer is the time when the world “takes it off” — but after all, that is what the world is about (the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eye) — that is what the world does (1 Jno. 2:15-16). But, Christians will not let the world define their modesty.

I will be thankful to God for His blessings. A vacation can easily turn into something that is all about us. But, Christians remember that God is the giver of all good things, and so is always prayerfully grateful to Him. Remember to “rejoice always, pray without ceasing” while on vacation (1 Thess. 5:16-17).

I will obey our parents. Children generally have more free time during the summer. Parents, monitor your children’s activities this summer. Let them play, but also give them chores for which they are responsible. It will do them good. Children, be respectful and obey your parents (Eph. 6:1-3).

I’m sure you can add to this list. Whatever the season, Christians will “seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness” (Matt. 6:33). This must be our priority every day

“Calling On The Name Of The Lord”

By Jarrod Jacobs

I am sure that our dear readers have heard people say words to the effect, “If you are not a Christian, all you need to do is call upon the name of the Lord, and you can be saved.” Some will tell you to pray a prayer saying, “Lord be merciful to me a sinner,” or similar things. Such teaching is a misapplication of what is said in Romans 10:13. The apostle Paul wrote, *“For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”* What does it mean to call upon the name of the Lord? Let us read the context of Romans 10 and find out.

“For ‘everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’ How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!’ But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, ‘Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?’ So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ” (Rom. 10:13-17).

Please notice that after the apostle Paul says we must call upon the name of the Lord to be saved, he asks a series of questions that point out what this means. To call upon the name of the Lord, we must: 1) Hear the gospel (Rom. 10:14); 2) Believe the gospel (Rom. 10:14); and 3) Obey the gospel (Rom. 10:16)!

Therefore, “calling upon the name of the Lord” is a comprehensive thing, not simply saying, “Lord.” In Acts 2:21 we read another time when folks were told to call upon the name of the Lord. Here, Peter quotes Joel 2:28-32. Peter shows that the events happening on the day of Pentecost were a fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy (Acts 2:16), and said, *“And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”* (Acts 2:21).

What did he mean? Were they commanded to simply say, “Lord”? No! They were told to *“hear these words”* (Acts 2:22). Peter then proves that Jesus truly is the Son of God (Acts 2:23-35), and said, *“Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified”* (Acts 2:36). In this text, to *“know for certain”* means to believe. When the people who heard the gospel on this day were told to believe that Jesus is the Son of God, they then asked what they needed to do to be forgiven of murdering the Son of God. Peter responded by saying, *“Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the*

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

“Then they that gladly received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls” (Acts 2:38-41). Based upon hearing and believing the truth, they obeyed! In so doing, they “called upon the name of the Lord”!

Therefore, when one calls upon the name of the Lord, he is simply obeying God’s plan of salvation to hear God’s word, believe that Jesus is the Son of God, repent, and be baptized! Is this not simple? Of course, it is! Let us be about encouraging people to call upon the name of the Lord as the Bible directs us to do, so that all might be saved before it is too late (2 Pet. 3:9)!

Prayers Needed:

Remember to keep these brethren in your prayers as age and health problems keep them from attending. Jay Stewart; Jeanette Cooper; Lowell and Joan Blue; John and Mary Randolph; Ruth Davis; Doug and Alicia Threadgill; Jesse Green; Robin McCartney.

July Birthdays:

The 9th Ruth Davis

The 10th John Randolph

The 29th Opal Yarbrough

Visitors — We pray that you benefit spiritually from our worship together and hope to see you again.

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Sunday

Bible Study . . . 9:30 A.M.

Worship 10:30 A.M.

Worship 5:00 P.M.

Wednesday

Bible Study . . . 7:00 P.M.

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