

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

HOW is a genuine love for the Lord going to develop? Is it not by the teaching of God's word? As the individual grows in grace and in knowledge, his love will increase. (2 Peter 3:18).

Which prompts another related thought:

HOW does one grow in grace and in knowledge? Will it not come through personal study and meditation on God's word? Is this not the theme of the hymn we sing, "TAKE TIME TO BE HOLY"?

Does not "spiritual growth" point to the need for teaching? Shall we be content to "baptize" and basically leave them to themselves thereafter ~ ["swim or drown" concept]?

Consider in regard to physical growth, what results would come if we gave birth to a baby, then left them to themselves to survive?

Babes in Christ, need to be 'fed' properly; they need to be taught how to 'eat' (i.e., study properly, recognizing the particulars of context; the need for, and how to establish authority).

Otherwise, will not their convictions will be as "someone else preached on the matter"? Is this not what Paul's concern was in Eph. 4:14-15?

"...we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up..."

It is truly a test as to whether our confidence is in the power of God's word to convict, reprove and exhort, or whether we use the bible as a "front", while, in reality, our "tradition" is to do as Bro. Hall pointed out, "give them roles" for which they are unqualified.

Spiritual growth takes "time" (as the hymn says); so does physical growth; there is no shortcut; no steroid...time is needed. The benefit of time, is, it will develop patience in our lives.

The need for patience is seen from these passages:

Rom. 2:7 - to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life;

Heb. 10:36 - For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised.

James 1:3 - knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.

2 Peter 1:6 - and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness,

As a child will benefit physically from patience, so will the babe in Christ benefit spiritually...developing patience is necessary to spiritual growth; bible study will develop patience, for there is no shortcut to learning. We can do a 5-15 minute prep; a "skimming over" and then teach a class, etc. but is this what Jesus died for?

Is not discipleship, following the example of Jesus? Did not Jesus state that "Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me"? (John 6:45)

Let us resolve to address spiritual growth needs, by using the resource of God's word...it contains the power to save (Rom. 1:16). Let us have enough faith in it to do what it alone can do, and teach it.

Faithfulness needs a proper foundation; that foundation is a love & respect for God's word. That will come in time; time spent in study and meditation of God's word. Faithfulness is dependent upon knowledge...knowing how to "handle aright" God's word. This must be taught; a babe, left to himself will develop bad habits, physically AND spiritually. While he may survive, what will his life be compared a life wherein he was taught properly? Did Jesus merely intend for us to only 'survive', or to grow and flourish? Students need a teacher. Each generation needs taught.

Proper spiritual growth is the only way to ensure faithfulness on our part. It will be the fruit produced, when the seed of love for God's word is sown.