**THE CHRISTIAN AND SELF-RENEWAL (8)**

**What Can I Do?**

**INTRODUCTION** - Today, we continue our study of the Christian and self-renewal.  It is my hope that by this time we understand the need for renewal in our minds and in our lives.  Once we have given due consideration to how we ought to think we need to act upon that.    Today, we want to notice some practical things that we can do that will promote self-renewal and notice why they do.

**I.** **Sanctify yourself - give yourself to God -**

A.     In our last lesson we began noticing some things we need to do including a realization of what God expects (that we grow), self-examination, planning, removing obstacles and getting started right where you are at.  These all PREPARE us to work.

B.     Having prepared ourselves to begin the work of transforming ourselves for renewal, we need to dedicate our lives to serving God.  The ONLY way we are going to grow as we ought to is if we decide to put Him first and *sanctify* ourselves to His service.

C.    The word, *sanctify* means, “to set apart”.  It is the same Greek word from which the words “holy” and “saint” are derived.

               i. **1 COR. 6:11** - When you first became a Christian you did this.  Numerous passages remind us of the change that took place.  **ROM. 6:3-6**

               ii.    But are we where we ought to be now?  Perhaps what we need to do is RE-dedicate our lives to Him.  This is important because if we desire to thrive spiritually, we HAVE TO be in a proper relationship with Him.  And our priorities have to be straight with Him first.

               iii.    **2 TIM. 2:21-22; 1 THESS. 4:3-4; 1 PET.2:9-10; 1 PET. 3:15** - Numerous passages call for sanctification.

               iv. **ROM. 6:16-18** – You ought to be servants of righteousness.

**II.** **Study God’s Word -**

1. How does Bible study promote renewal?  This is somewhat self-explanatory.

              i. The more you know, the more you will grow.   How can we know what God would have us to do?  How can we know we are pleasing to Him?  How can we know HOW to grow?  The answer to each of these questions and many more is the same – through study of His word.

               ii.    **GAL. 1:11-12** - We need an accurate understanding of the fact that what we have IS the word of God.  That is inspired and as such it MUST be followed and respected.  What we have recorded is not the words of men, but the message through Jesus Christ.
**2 TIM. 3:16-17** – The word of God is profitable and it tells us how we can benefit.
**1 COR. 14:37** - Paul challenges them – let him who is spiritual acknowledge the source of his gospel.
**1 THESS. 2:!3** - Paul commended the brethren in Thessalonica for their attitude about His message. What is your attitude toward the word of God?

                 iii. **ACTS 17:11** - What made the Bereans fair minded? They searched the scriptures daily.

                 iv.  **JN. 17:17** - How are we sanctified today?  By the truth of God’s word.

1. Bible study needs to be a regular part of the Christian’s life.

                  i. **1 PET. 2:2** - Tells us to “desire the pure milk of the word” that we may grow thereby.

                 ii.  **2 TIM. 2:15** - tells us to “give diligence to present ourselves approved unto God

                iii.  **COL. 3:16** – let the word of Christ dwell in you richly

**III.** **Pray -**

A.    We have noted in times past that communication is a two way street.  Bible study is how God communicates with us today.  Prayer is how we communicate with Him.

               i. We are told to pray continually.

 **EPH. 6:18** – praying always with all prayers and supplications

 **COL. 4:2** – continue earnestly in prayer.
**1 THESS. 5:17-18** – pray without ceasing.

               ii.   Jesus and the apostles taught us how to pray and what to pray for.  It is frequently mentioned in God’s word, both publicly and privately.

1. How does prayer promote renewal? In two ways

               i.     **JAMES 4:8** - It brings us closer to God – It calls for us to draw near to God and He will draw near to us.  **5:12** – we are told if we are suffering, pray about it.
1 Peter 5:7 – we are to cast all our cares upon Him.
As God answers our prayers, it can only bring us closer to Him.  In so many examples of godly men in the Bible we find regular prayer in their lives – Abraham, David, Daniel, Jesus, Paul, etc.

                             ii.               It makes us aware of our relationship with God and how we need Him, etc.  One of the benefits of regular prayer is the fact that it reminds us of what our needs are.  As God’s promises to us are fulfilled (not Him giving us everything we ask for) it strengthens our relationship with Him.

**IV.** **Giving -**

1. WE have to learn as Christians that we are here to share with others.

             i.   **PHIL. 2:3-4** - Learn to give and to do good for others.  It’s not about you!

             ii.   **TITUS 3:14, 2:14** - The Christian life is a life of good works – **EPH. 2:10.**

             iii.  **MATT. 7:12** – Jesus taught earlyabout the golden rule. Multitudes of passages tell us to “love your neighbor as yourself” – **MATT. 22:39, JAMES 2:8, GAL. 5:14**

            iv.    **HEB. 13:16**- says that we should not forget to do good and to share, “for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.”

1. How does giving promote renewal?

              i. **LUKE 6:38** - If we expect God to give to us, we need to give to others.
**2 COR. 9:6-8** - Paul also said it to the Corinthians – don’t sow sparingly.
**PROV. 19:17** - Says, “He who has pity on the poor lends to the Lord, And He will pay back what he has given”

             ii.      **PROV. 28:27** - Giving prevents selfishness.  Selfishness makes us miserable AND is condemned.  ***“He who gives to the poor will not lack, But he who hides his eyes will have many curses.”***
**2 TIM.3:1-5** -Describes the selfish person and tells us to stay away from such.

            iii.      **ACTS 20:35** - It gives purpose to your life.  It may not be something we totally understand, but giving to others makes you feel good about yourself.  It makes everything more pleasant.
Paul quoting the words of our Lord, ***“It is more blessed to give than to receive”***

            iv.      If you want to prosper in this life – GIVE! GIVE!  GIVE!

C.    What are we to give? Some have the ability to give physical possessions, but not all have this ability in great abundance.  But we can still give!  Give away your faith to others, give someone a smile, a phone call, a note of encouragement.  Help someone in some small way that they can’t repay you.  This will revitalize your soul.

**V.** **Worship God – both private and public -**

A. We need to worship God both formally and informally.

              i. We have already discussed two acts of worship – prayer and Bible study, but let us briefly mention worshipping God in general.

              ii. **MATT. 4:10; 1 COR.10:22** - God has ALWAYS demanded that we worship Him.  Even Genesis 4 shows God expecting worship according to a prescribed pattern.  He is a jealous God who expects us to worship Him ONLY – don’t provoke Him to jealousy.

              iii**. JN. 4:24** says, “God is Spirit; and they that worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth.”
**1 PET. 2:5,9** - To impress the importance of worship today consider this.  Under the Old Law, the priests administered the acts of worship.  Peter describes us as a royal priesthood – offering up spiritual sacrifices to God.

B.     How does worship promote renewal?

               i. **HEB. 12:28-29** - It reminds us of our place in life – we are created being in submission to our Creator. In this it also humbles us so that our growth will be in what it ought to be.
**LUKE 18:13-14** - I am reminded of the tax collector in Luke who smote his breath and would not so much as look up begging God for forgiveness. (13)

               ii. **HEB. 13:15-16** - It draws us closer to Him as we are praising Him.  As we offer Him the sacrifices of our lips and do good, with such things He is well pleased.

**VI.** **Attendance -**

A.     **MATT. 18:20** - If you truly want to thrive spiritually, you need to be where God wants you to be – and that is right here in the Lord’s church.  You ought to desire to be here as often as you possibly can.
Jesus said ***“where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them”***
**PSA. 122:1** - David had the right attitude when he said, ***“I was glad when they said to me, ‘Let us go to the house of the Lord.’”***
**HEB. 10:25** expressed great concern about brethren who had abandoned the “assembling of ourselves together.”

B.     How does attendance promote renewal?

               i. Those of “like precious faith” become the major influence in our lives and they encourage us to thrive in Him.

              ii. And IF our attitude is right, they will keep us on the right path and correct us when we veer off of it.

             iii. Friends, if you truly desire spiritual self-renewal, you WILL assemble with the saints as often as you can.  If you want to grow in Him, you NEED to assemble as often as you can.

**CONCLUSION** –

We can see some things we can do to promote spiritual self-renewal in our lives.

More could be added, but these are the main things that will make you more of what you ought to be IF your mind is what it ought to be.

IF we will do these things to the fullest of our ability, we will grow and prosper and as a result so will the church here at Mary Esther.