

(5) “ENJOYING GOD IN YOUTH and HELPING YOUTH ENJOY GOD”

## THE INTEGRITY OF INVOLVEMENT

[God’s children must be effective in identifying & achieving spiritual priorities]

2 Tim.2:1-4

### INTRODUCTION:

**Christianity**, with all of its doctrines and religious convictions is based on the teachings of Jesus. Jesus is held by Christians to be the Son of God, the second person of the Godhead, and the Savior of humanity. This teaching is evidenced in the Bible, particularly in the New Testament, showing fulfillment of prophecies revealed hundreds of years before. Rooted in Judaism, Christianity was founded in the first century in Palestine by Jesus and His disciples. It was spread, despite sporadic persecution, through the Roman Empire by missionaries, notably Paul, the apostle.

In order to be everything the Lord wants us to be we should have an awareness of accomplishments that would not allow us to deter from even the most insignificantly-seeming details of obedience! ONE THING which many people do, whether going to the grocery store or packing for a trip, is make a list of whatever we’re trying to put together! This usually will encourage us to stay **FOCUSED ON** and **INVOLVED IN** the obligations at hand without being sidetracked to less important efforts!

**INVOLVE**: “a transitive verb meaning to complicate, entangle, surround, embroil”. Many religious people are so implicated in the affairs of this life that there’s very little **TIME/ ENERGY/ MONEY** at their disposal to devote to the Lord and His cause! YET, the text points out that just the **OPPOSITE** attitude should apprehend US, that we might be wholly resolved to do the will of JEHOVAH! The word literally means to “weave in”; metaphorically - “to be involved”!

### I. THE BIBLE EMPHATICALLY SETS FORTH THE NEED FOR MAINTAINING A PROPER CONTROL OF ONES SELF --- viz, WE’RE RESPONSIBLE FOR OUR OPPORTUNITIES AND ACTIONS!

A. FIRST, there is an **EXHORTATION**: Gal.5:1- “Do not be entangled....!”

1. This verse points out in **WHOSE POWER** the decision rests; that we each decide for ourselves.
2. All the Lord’s support, and encouragement, and enticement, is not only necessary to let us know we **SHOULD** make right choices, **BUT ALSO THAT WE ARE THE ONES, PERSONALLY, WHO DETERMINE OUR OWN COURSE OF ACTION!**
3. This involvement/ entanglement is not something we can step INTO or OUT OF as the notion may strike us! It is **POSSIBLE** to be **OVERCOME** in entanglement, cf. 2 Pet.2:20-22- “For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. 21 For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. 22 But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: “A dog returns to his own vomit,” and, “a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire.”

B. THEN, there is also a **WARNING**: Satan’s efforts will ensnare [**TRAP**] us, if **PERMITTED!**

Matt.22:15- “Then the Pharisees went and plotted how they might entangle [**ensnare**] Him in His talk.”

1. A fatal mistake that so many of us make is in thinking that Satan is not interested in gaining us --- “He knows I’ve been baptized so he doesn’t even try to get me...”! If **that’s the way** we’re feeling friends, **it’s because he’s all ready GOT US!**
2. In this verse Satan was using **his disciples** [the Pharisees] to try to entrap Jesus.

3. **Matt.4:1-11**. Satan **KNEW JESUS was the Son of God**, yet was **TEMPTING HIM** anyhow!  
What makes you think he'd stop trying to seduce you and me, just because we attend services, or pray some, or read our bibles?
- C. Now, reconsider the TEXT> The "passive voice" is used in stating this FACT: ***the wide awake Christian will not be over-involved with the affairs of this life!***
1. "**No man that warreth**" - Are we really set to the task of Christianity?
  2. "**Entangleth himself...**" - Whatever gets us into an **unacceptable circumstance** is OUR OWN FAULT! "**Entangleth**" = **More than just a slight interest; rather, a detour or derailment from a major goal!**
  3. The **OBJECTIVE** in the text is PLAIN, and SHOULD BE our personal intent-- "**..to PLEASE HIM who hath chosen you!**"

## **II. EVERY RELIGIOUS PERSON IS CONSTANTLY FACED WITH DECISIONS REGARDING PRIORITIES ABOUT PERSONAL OBJECTIVES!**

- A. Many worthwhile projects are constantly demanding our time and attention -- ***in every facet of our lives*** -- and those involved in EACH are vying for # 1 priority!
1. **Family Activities**: PTA, School programs, recreation/ vacations, etc.
  2. **Vocational/ Educational Activities**: Union activities, Schooling, Overtime on weekends; Vocational association membership, etc.
  3. **Civic/ Social Activities**: Clubs, Political groups, Causes, etc.
  4. Our own personal **HABITS and HOBBIES**: golf, bowling, camping, fishing, etc.
- B. Do you remember that our RELIGIOUS LIFE is to be incorporated into **EACH** of the facets of our personal lives, and into all of our activities?
1. And **IT MEANS MORE** than just NOT CUSSING on the job! [Altho it surely **includes** that!]
  2. It means that we're still to be taking advantage of every opportunity to SERVE GOD, **viz.**
    - a) Setting a **RIGHT EXAMPLE** before all whom we might influence. [Shine as light] **Matt.5:16**.
    - b) Taking every opportunity to talk with others about the Scriptures. [Evangelism] **1 Tim.4:16**
    - c) **PUTTING GOD FIRST IN EVERY ONE OF OUR ACTIVITIES!** **Matt.6:33**
  3. This is exactly what we see in the life of Paul in Corinth while he was making tents for a living! He continued to SERVE GOD, first and foremost!
    - a) He'd always **PUT DOWN** the needle and skins in order to bear witness for Christ!
    - b) And we've all been around people who **won't even turn off the TV to Communicate Jesus!**

## **III. BUT, IN ORDER TO GET WHERE THE LORD WANTS US TO BE, WE MUST SET WORTHWHILE GOALS [LIKE PAUL]- "BUT THIS ONE THING I DO"....**

- A. By **setting goals** we are activating our COMMITMENT! By **WRITING DOWN** our goals we're giving ourselves a much better chance of being successful! [About **3%** **write down goals specifically**; about **10%** have their goals **in their minds**. the **3%** does from **40% to 100% MORE** than the **10%!** **IF WE REALLY BELIEVED THIS, WHAT DO YOU SUPPOSE WE'D BE DOING IN OUR SERVICE TO GOD?**
1. Strange, or new, activities are not easy to engage in consistently!
  2. The more your commitment to Jesus Christ is manifested the easier it becomes ... you begin "telegraphing" your intentions and **others HELP YOU!**
- B. We need short-range goals. When goal-oriented activities become habitual the first hurdle has been surpassed!

1. Just like attending services on Sunday and Wednesday nights, we realize we're obligated at these times because of long established practice! [Don't have to STOP each week and consider whether or not we're going to attend!]
2. Persistency will bring **SUCCESS**, and **that** is what cements us into any program!

C. We also need long range goals.

1. Much time, thought, and prayer need to go into setting objectives for this congregation.
  - a) ILLUS: A preacher was asked to come and work with a congregation.
    - 1) In order to evaluate the situation he asked, "What are your long range goals?"
    - 2) "Just trying to **hang on** long enough until we get the building paid off."
  - b) **PLEASE REALIZE THAT YOU WILL NEVER DO MORE ACCEPTABLE WORK FOR THE LORD THAN YOU INTEND TO DO!**
2. Jesus did not die for congregations to **JUST "HANG ON!"** **Heb 11:13-16-** *"All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. 14 For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own. 15 And indeed if they had been thinking of that country from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return. 16 But as it is, they desire a better country, that is a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them."*
3. Some people, both younger and some even "more mature," who were asked about specific goals in serving the Lord replied with **answers like ---**
  - a) **"I really want to faithfully serve the Lord, BUT FIRST** I have to get this schooling behind me; **OR,** get settled in a job; **OR,** get this courtship & marriage over with; **OR,** get my kids raised; **OR,** retire from the pressures & stresses of this strenuous job.....**THAT'S IT -- when I retire I'll work for the Lord!"** **2 Cor.6:2; Heb.3:15; Jno.9:4; Josh.24:15-16-** *"And if it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."* 16 And the people answered and said, "Far be it from us that we should forsake the LORD to serve other gods;"
  - b) **"I INTEND to be faithful as a Christian, but I'm the only one in my family and I just can't do it by myself!"**
  - c) **"I would LIKE TO BE a good member, but it's so hard when it seems like no one really cares about whether I am or NOT!"**
4. We need to remember that maturity is a gradual process. **Phil 3:12-** *"Not that I have already obtained it, or have already become perfect, but I press on in order that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus."*

D. How do we find/ MAKE time for doing the Lord's work? [We ALL have the same amount of time: **86,400 seconds per day!**]

1. It's back to the basics of PRIORITIZING!
  - a) You've barely been able to schedule an entrance exam at the college you really want to attend but, while taking it, that special black-leaded pencil broke. Take out knife, hand

- slips, cut finger and it's bleeding! **WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO NOW?** YOU HAVE THE PERFECT ALIBI FOR NOT SUCCEEDING! [First mile I ran in h.s., bicycle on track. Only reason I didn't trip and END this self-inflicted torture was lack of nerve!]
- b) It's unplanned! Unscheduled! Would you cry and go have the hospital TAKE CARE of the finger, or just wrap a handkerchief around it and finish the College entrance exam so you wouldn't have to wait another year?
2. **The ONLY THING most of us would have to stop doing in order to have more time to work for the Lord is "WASTING TIME"!**
  3. Seminars on "*TIME MANAGEMENT*" teach us that every minute we spend in PLANNING will save twice that amount of time in execution! Why don't we try using efficient, proven methods for doing the most important work on earth: Saving Souls!!!

### **III. A PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF A LESSON REGARDING PRIORTIZING GOALS MIGHT FIND SOME OF US "LACKING" IF WE WERE TO BE "MEASURED" TONIGHT!**

- A. Without making "new" laws, nor even stretching the Lord's actually words, notice just what He expects of US, REGARDING SETTING OUR GOALS & PRIORITIZING EFFORTS in our---
1. Responsibilities to OTHERS: Matt.25:31-46 [Dividing sheep/goats at Judgment]
  2. Responsibilities to OURSELVES: Matt.25:1-14 [the Foolish Virgins]
  3. Responsibilities to the LORD: Matt.25:15-30 [the Talents]
- B. NOW, TODAY, is there anything you and I, as adults or as teenagers, are involved in that's keeping ANY OF US from faithful and steadfast adherence to the expectations of GOD?
1. Have you allowed family activities to have a greater hold on you than God's Service?
  2. What about your vocational/ educational (job or school) activities?
  3. What about your perceived Civic or Social obligations?
  4. How about your personal HABITS or HOBBIES? [Are you ADDICTED to anything that deters acceptable religious activity?]

### **CONCLUSION:**

**Gal. 5:1-** "For freedom did Christ set us free: stand fast therefore, and be not entangled again in a yoke of bondage." This LIBERTY/ FREEDOM in Jesus Christ is a result of F+R+C+B= FREE TO BE HIS SERVANTS because we've been made FREE FROM SIN! **Rom.6:17-18.** We mustn't allow Satan to entice us to be his servants, even though he may appeal to us through our family, or job, or school, or any other avenues. **James 5:8-** "Be ye therefore patient, stablish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh!"