

Weekly Bible Reading – Week 13

Sunday Acts 14:8 – 15:29
Monday Acts 15:30 – 16:34
Tuesday Acts 16:35 – 18:11
Wednesday Acts 18:12 – 19:28
Thursday Acts 19:29 – 20:38
Friday Acts 21:1-36
Saturday Acts 21:37 – 23:10

Those Requesting Prayer

Bryan Bailey Sr.'s father, Elwood Gaskins ✕ Jo Byrnes
Joyce Coones ✕ Sleatha Gore ✕ Faye Kilpatrick ✕ Gary Ogden

Gospel Meetings

Our meeting begins *one week from today*. **Jeff Himmel** from the Spring Warrior congregation in Perry will be preaching. Jeff's wife is Sara, and they have two children: Angela and Michael.

We have posted on the bulletin board in the back two lists: one is a meal list to feed the preacher. They have requested one meal per day. There's also a list for song leaders; please sign on the night you can lead singing. Thanks!

One more thing — next Sunday we're meeting at regular times (9:30, 10:20, and 5:00). Monday through Friday will be 7:30 each evening. Sunday afternoon everyone's invited to *The Hinds* for a pot-luck dinner (so bring something "pot-lucky").

November 7-9 (Fri-Sun) ✕ Old Town ✕ Buddy Payne, preaching.

Birthdays & an Anniversary

Devoise Lord (*yesterday*) ✕ Savannah Smith (*Tuesday*)
Everett & Ethel Jones (*Tuesday*) ✕ Angie Watson (*Friday*)

↪ Chiefland Church of Christ ↪

Meeting at 211 NE 2nd Street in beautiful Chiefland, Florida
Post Office Box 2539, Chiefland FL 32644 • (352) 493-1242

Things Above

"If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth."

— Colossians 3:1-2 —

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No Progress Without Practice

By Gary Henry • www.brasstacks.org

It is foolish to think that we can make progress in the habits of godliness by doing nothing more than listening and learning. While these are essential, they are not enough. It takes practice to make progress, and we should not expect that to be any less true than in spiritual matters than in those of a worldly nature.

When we meet individuals who have become adept at the disciplines of the godly life, we often suppose that there are just more devout than we are. Or perhaps we think that there are more intelligent or insightful. Or we wish that we could have read the books and heard the sermons that they've read and heard. But when we think this way, we betray an ignorance of the real thing that produces spiritual

progress: practice. The trait that distinguishes the adept from the inept is that the adept have done certain things ... over and over and over, every day, for many years.

Prayer. Not all of our prayers are of equal quality. Keeping in mind a scriptural definition of “good” praying, it must be said that we do not pray as well at some times as at others. Paul mentioned that “we do not know what we should pray for as we ought” (Rom. 8:21), and the disciples asked Jesus, “Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples” (Lk. 11:1).

But how do you make progress in your prayer life? Well, we certainly need to learn all we can about the principles of prayer, but the time comes when we have to start practicing the art of prayer. It cannot be learned any other way than by praying ... over and over and over, every day, for many years.

Understanding. It would be hard to overestimate the importance of Bible study, but frankly, some people do a better job than others of correctly understanding what the Bible teaches. The Ethiopian eunuch, for example, was reading the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, but he was having trouble understanding what the passage meant (cf. Acts 8:30–34). So we need to work not only on the quantity but also the quality of our Bible study.

But how do you make progress in your understanding of the Scriptures? It cannot be done by the simple investigation of hermeneutics; it requires patient repetition of the act of Bible study. You are not likely to find a mature, responsible student of God’s Word who arrived at that point any other way

than by doing Bible study ... over and over and over, every day, for many years.

Discretion. Isn’t it refreshing when we encounter some older Christian who has grown very wise in matters of discretion and discernment? In a good sense, don’t we “envy” those who have learned how to size up a difficult situation and see which course of action is best to take? Surely we do, and of all the abilities we need in this life, none is more vital than the ability to take God’s general principles, apply them to a specific situation, and discern what God would want done. Paul wrote, “Do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is” (Eph. 5:17).

But how do you learn to be a better decision-maker? There is only one way, and the Hebrew writer puts his finger on it when he spoke of those “who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil” (Heb. 5:14).

In matters of godliness, then, there aren’t any shortcuts. Being a beginner is just hard; that’s all there is to it. Time will have to pass before we can be more skilled. But the passage of time will not, by itself, guarantee improvement (cf. Heb. 5:12); we have to actually do the things that need improving — and do them repeatedly.

So let’s look for every opportunity to practice the things we want to improve. God deserves nothing less than our very best, and the best that we can do won’t be done unless we pray, study our Bibles, and use our discretion ... over and over and over, every day, for many years.