

Bedford Bulletin

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"God
made
us alive..."

Together
with Christ
Ephesians 2:5

Dangers of Growing Accustomed

It is normal to grow accustomed to various situations, our surroundings, weather, taste, people etc. Consider these definitions of "accustomed": From [www.macmillandictionary.com] "1. to think/start to think that something is normal or natural because you have experienced it regularly over a period of time." From [Webster] "1: often used or practiced: 2: adapted to existing conditions." For example, for many of us Ohioans when the cold of winter comes, we grow accustomed to the cold. When the temperature rises from a week of sub-zero's to say 40 degrees, we see people walking around without a coat singing, "we're having a heat wave". Likewise, in summertime temperatures are in the high 90's and drop to the 40's we feel as though we are freezing. When Sharon and I moved up to work with you saints here at Bedford it took some time to get accustomed to the house layout, the neighbors, and the surrounding cities.

Growing accustom to things, sometimes is a good thing, and sometimes is a bad thing. One example: Growing accustom to the dark in a physical sense is a good thing because it will help you to see objects and avoid stubbing your toe, or tripping and falling over and getting hurt (John 11:9-10), but in the spiritual sense getting accustom to the dark is one of the most terrible things that a person can do because that means you are growing accustom to something that is sinful. We are told in Jeremiah chapter 10 of the dangers of growing accustom to the way of the world. Thus says the Lord, "...Do not learn the way of the Gentiles...³ For the customs of the peoples are ^[a]futile;" (vs.2-3). Learning "the way of the Gentiles" for the Jews happened not because they set out to learn it, but because they listen to and associated

Knowing & Doing God's Will

Proverbs 11:14

with Gentiles for so long that they just begin to practice what *“the Gentiles”* were doing. In the context the Gentiles were making, and worshipping idols made by man's hands, idols that have no power, no ability to walk, talk nor to do evil or good, nothing like the God of Israel who with a mighty arm freed them from bondage in Egypt (Exo. 13:3). Those who make and worship idols, *“...are altogether dull-hearted and foolish; A wooden idol is a ^{lb}worthless doctrine”* (Jer. 10:8). There are many “idols” today, both physical and social that zealously compete for our time and attention and to grow accustom to them, is to grow dangerously accustom to the darkness. It may be we are accustom to spending so much of our time with close friends or family that when they visit on a Sunday we grow accustomed to staying home with them believing God won't mind if we skip the assembly once or twice a month. Maybe you have grown dangerously accustom to busyness with activities and projects all week long that you begin to grow accustom to saying no to personal Bible study, no to the assembly and soon you find you are not studying or worshipping at all. Over the years I have clearly noticed an increase in number of brethren who have grown dangerously accustom to making excuses, calling them reasons. “My family is visiting from out of town...”, “I worked a 50 hour week...”, “I need to mow my lawn...”, “My car needs an oil change...”, “This is the only day that...”, “God understands...” If you were to sit down and meditate on these, you would notice it is a commonplace practice in the “world”. “Boss, I hope you'll understand, I need a day off because, my family is visiting”, etc., and maybe even your boss will grow accustomed to your “reasons”, but not so with God for He will remember your faithfulness, and punish your unfaithfulness (Rom. 11:21-23).

Since March of 2020 all around the world many brethren have ceased to assemble publicly, choosing to protect themselves and the ones they love from infection, which is a caring thing to do. I want to be clear, the threat was real, and for those good brethren who stayed home clearly, there isn't any sin involved. We are all praying to see the day when we will be able to resume services as they were before. God bless you who praying and fighting the good fight in the face of this “pandemic”, keeping yourself and your loved ones as safe as possible. I know it has been hard for us all. Food for thought. I remember what happened when Jeroboam told the people, *“It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem”* (1 Kings 12:28). They grew accustom to worshipping the two calves of gold in Bethel and Dan and *“this thing became sin”*

(v.30). They did not have a real reason like Covid-19 rather they just followed the king's command and I believe grew dangerously accustomed to the convenience. Those of us who are still waiting for things to "get back to normal", for a vaccine that will stop the deadly consequence of this virus, are not sinning like those under the command of the king. But please, with this in mind, let us still be ever the more diligent that we don't grow dangerously accustom to the comforts of "worshiping at home. Let us be careful that we don't make Bethel and Dan our homes, and the "online worship" our golden calf. Remembering God's intention is for the saints to assemble physically and spiritually to worship Him (Acts 20:7; John 4:24). Pray for the day to come soon when we can safely do all this together again, to sing, teach, give, partake of the Lord's Supper, and pray together (2 Tim. 1:13; Col. 3:15-16; 1 Cor. 16:1-2, 11:23-25; Col. 4:2), the definitive word, "together".

Until then, let's all remember that because "*He has delivered us from the power of darkness and ^[a]conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love*" (Col. 1:13) we must make every effort to continually grow accustom to the light, not the darkness. Because "*...God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us*" (Rom. 5:8), we must make every effort to continually grow accustom to the light, not darkness. Because we know that Jesus "*...loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood*" (Rev. 1:5), we must make every effort to continually grow accustom to the light, not darkness. Jesus said, "*Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you*" (John 12:35), knowing then it is possible to grow accustom to the darkness, to be overtaken by it.

In Jeremiah the Lord says, "*You shall call Me, ... 'My Father', and not turn away from Me*". (Jer. 3:19b). Long before Covid-19 it was no secret that many turned away, and even in the church today many treat the Father like a wife who, "*...treacherously departs from her ^[d]husband*" (v.20a) and the result, many today, "*...have perverted their way; They have forgotten the Lord their God*"(v.21b).



"Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."

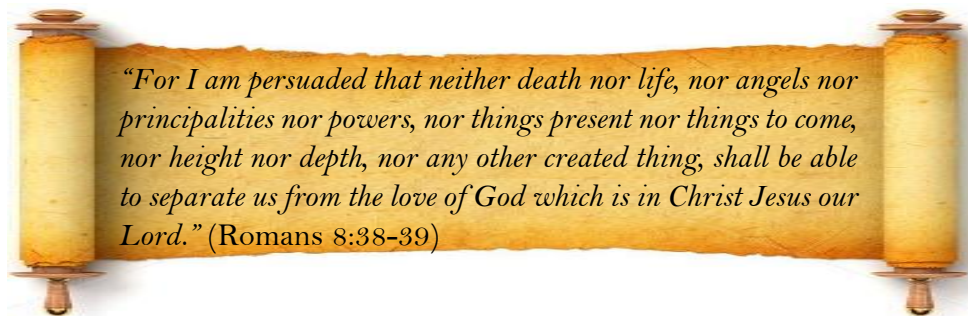
People don't need a virus to fall dangerously accustom to missing worship, don't need a virus to stop personal Bible study, don't need a virus to avoid telling others about Jesus. The proof is clearly seen in many that have done this long before there was such a thing as a coronavirus.

To live a spiritual adulterous life, perverting our way is easy to do. Just grow dangerously accustomed any form of an idol, then begin to forget the immeasurable

sacrifice He made on that cross. As God's children we need the pure oil of fellowship found in Christ which makes our lamp burn continually (Lev. 24:2; 1 Cor. 1:9; Matt. 5:13-15). Fellowship via the word and with one another. Always remember where you were and where you are, and where you want to be. (1 Cor. 6:11; 2 Cor. 5:1-2).

In Love

David Scarpino



Please
Come visit us

Times of Our Services

Sunday Morning Bible Study	9:00 AM
Sunday Morning Worship	9:50 AM
Sunday Evening Worship	6:00 PM
Wednesday Evening Bible Study	7:30 PM

What Must I Do to Be Saved?

1. Hear the gospel ----- John 6:45; Romans 10:17
2. Believe the gospel ----- John 8:24; Hebrews 11:6
3. Repent of sins ----- Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30
4. Confess Christ ----- Matthew 10:32; Romans 10:10
5. Be baptized ----- Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38
6. Remain faithful unto and until death ----- Revelation 2:10; Matthew 10:22