

MESSAGE # 2: PERSIST IN PERSONAL SPIRITUAL EFFORTS

Biblical Passages: Hebrews 12

I. Introduction to the Subject:

Too often, in our attention to group activity we lose sight of the fact that the quality of the group is largely the aggregate quality of its membership. (A philosophical speculation but with some merit). We often expect the group to be what we are not and this is a deadly attitude when it comes to the local fellowship. We may well expect it to provide what we do not put in and so find fault with it for not meeting needs, etc., which, in the first place are ours to meet. My thinking in this talk is to tell myself and any others that we should be sure we are developing spiritually before we fault the fellowship for not developing properly. I am not talking about fleshly efforts but commitment of life and the growth in spiritual areas which are personal and yet affecting to the whole body. To persist in spiritual effort is to offer help and strength to the total fellowship and it is a much more beneficial offering than the criticisms which are often given otherwise. The author of Hebrews offers direct advice to this situation and it is summarized nicely in chapter 12.

II. Discussion:

- A. Persist in personal holiness (12:1)...the following of a life style in which one sees oneself set apart for God. We put aside whatever impedes our spiritual growth and dexterity in order that we might patiently live and serve God. When the impedimenta are removed we are both more serviceable and more competent in our perceptions.
- B. Persist in proper humility (12:2ff) accepting the Lord as our example and remembering the way He ran His race as a lesson for how we might run ours. Humility is the matter of knowing who you are and who God is and keeping the relationship in proper order. A study in the contrast of pride and humility is helpful but often painful.
- C. Persist in practical honesty (12:4). Don't exaggerate the nature of problems and/or differences. Learn to accept the necessary rebukes the Lord addresses to us in our lives and never allow