



We Swim for Jesus!

“Dearest friends, when I was there with you, you were always so careful to follow my instructions. And now that I am away you must be even more careful to do the good things that result from being saved, obeying god with deep reverence, shrinking back from all that might displease Him. For God is at work within you, helping you want to obey Him, and then helping you do what He wants.” Philippians 2:12-13

Bible Verse for Week #23

Life Application notes

1. While Paul was with the Philippian believers, they were careful to obey God and serve Him together. But now that Paul was gone, he reminded them to be even more careful and serious about their faith. It is easy to depend on a pastor, youth leader, parent, or another strong Christian to keep us on track spiritually. But the real test of our faith comes when we are on our own, away from our spiritual mentors.
2. Paul tells the Philippians to obey God with “deep reverence” (“fear and trembling”). One’s relationship with God is serious and should not be taken lightly. Taking our faith for granted, we can forget to pray and read the Bible, overlook or rationalize what we consider to be “little” sins, and be flippant about spiritual issues. Instead, we should always approach God with deep reverence.
3. A quick reading of this verse could lead us to think that salvation is by works and that the Christian life depends on what we do. But a closer look reveals an important phrase: God is working “in you”. When we give our lives to Christ, the Holy Spirit takes up residence inside us. There He works to change us from the inside out, making us more like Christ (see Rom. 8:29 and 2 Cor. 5:17).

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“Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. John 13:34

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4. The first change in a new Christian comes in the area of desires: The individual wants to obey God and to serve others. Paul underscores this truth in this passage where he explains that God works in us, on our will. This doesn't mean that you are perfect and never have wrong desires (see Rom. 7). But it means you can have hope because God is working for change in your life as you yield control to Him.
5. In addition to changing our desires, God gives us the power to do what He wants. When you feel overwhelmed by temptation or powerless to do what you know is right, talk to God about it. Ask Him to give you the strength to take that first step ... and then the next one ... and the next.
6. God's purpose for our lives is to make us like Christ (Rom. 8:29). To do this, the Holy Spirit works in us, changing our desires and giving us the power to do what God wants. But God doesn't force us to obey Him – He leaves that choice up to us. What has God told you to do? Do it. As you obey God in the small matters, He will trust you with larger ones.

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