

LETTERS FROM GRANDPA # 154

Dearest grandchild,

Last week's letter dealt with being an active part of a church that it might be a support group for you, and that you might also support others.

Today's letter will deal with Bible study. In the "short term" neither church attendance or Bible study may seem important, but in the "long term" they are! Putting a little money in the bank every week may not seem important at the time, but when you face a financial crisis you will be glad you did. It is sad to see people face a spiritual crisis with no Christian friends or knowledge of the Bible. Since we are commanded to "study to show ourselves approved unto God" (2 Tim. 2:15), studying the Bible is like building a solid house on a rock foundation. If your house is not built upon a rock, when the storms come, it will be too late .

Jesus was tempted in all points like we are tempted, yet without sin (Heb. 4:15). One major test came just after He was baptized. That's when He went into the wilderness for 40 days where He was tempted by the devil. FYI, sins come in three categories. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life (1 Jn. 2:16). The original sin in Eden involved a tree that was good to look at, good for food, and desirous to make one wise. The temptations of Jesus in the wilderness involved turning stones into bread, receiving all the kingdoms he could see, and leaping from a pinnacle of the temple to become famous. Jesus, as you know, faced every temptation by quoting Scripture. Ephesians 6:17 states that the Word of God is the Sword of the Spirit. The Latin word for "sword" is "gladius" from which we get the word "gladiator". The gladiator who does not know how to use a sword is doomed to defeat. So is the Christian who is not familiar with the Bible. The temptations you face will also come in these same three categories. You too can be victorious over the devil if you do what Jesus did!

When you are sick the doctor will often send a culture to the lab to see what antibiotic is best suited to make you well. In this regard the Sword of the Spirit is specifically prescribed by God to defeat the devil. The Scriptures came as men of God were inspired by the Holy Spirit (2 Pet. 1:21). God specifically designed this spiritual sword to defeat a spiritual enemy. You cannot defeat a spirit with physical weapons. "The weapons we fight with are not of the world" (2 Cor. 10:4). The devil is a spiritual being and cannot be destroyed by bullets and bombs. Neither is the devil afraid of human wisdom and philosophy. He cowers in fear, however, when faced with the Sword of the Spirit. When you "resist" the devil as Jesus did, he will flee from you (James 4:7).

Jesus went so far as to say: "**Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God**" (Matt. 4:4) Famine and pestilence go hand in hand. When someone does not have enough physical food they are vulnerable to all sorts of physical illness and disease. The same is true spiritually. Those with a poor spiritual diet are vulnerable to spiritual sickness and disease.

On my website www.boycemouton.com there are a series of video interviews called

“Ventures in Faith”. One of these interviews was with the late J. Russell Morse. He went to China as a missionary in 1921. In 1959 he was imprisoned by the Chinese Communists. For over 450 days he was kept in solitary confinement not knowing whether he would live or die. With no Bible, he was glad that he had spent a lifetime hiding the Word of God in his heart. He said it was amazing how many Scriptures he was able to remember. Without a calendar, he took communion every day. Of course his only option was to use his meager supply of rice to remind him of the Body of Jesus. He drank also water to remind him of the precious blood of Christ that atones for our sins. Because he knew how to use the Sword of the Spirit he came out of the prison stronger spiritually than when he went in. The Reader’s Digest published a book about 6 years of his amazing ministry titled “Exodus to a Hidden Valley.”

It is hard to walk an unused path. If you keep walking on that path, however, it will be a little easier every day. This same truth applies to Bible study. The more you do it, the easier it becomes., and the more successful you are in defeating the devil. Please read and study the Bible every day!

Here is an anonymous poem published many years ago in the Ozark Missionary Reporter.

*Though it's cover is worn and it's pages are torn and though places bear traces of tears.
Yet more precious than gold is this book, worn and old, that can shatter and scatter my fears.
This old book is my guide, 'tis a friend by my side, it will lighten and brighten my way.
And each promise I find soothes and gladdens my mind as I read it and heed it each day.
To this book I will cling, of it's worth I will sing though great losses and crosses be mine.
And I cannot despair, though surrounded by care, while possessing it's blessings divine.*

I love you,

Grandpa Boyce