

MARANATHA MESSENGER

Weekly Newsletter of

MARANATHA BIBLE-PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

“Present every man perfect in Christ Jesus” (Colossians 1:28).

Private Circulation Only

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Sunday School: 9.45 am Worship Service: 10.45 am Wednesday Prayer Meeting: 8.00 pm

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COUNSEL TO IMPROVE OUR STUDIES

Do It for the Right Motive

Examination time is around the corner again in this time of the year. As students and teachers, we understand that good grades are important. They may well determine what polytechnic, college or University you may attend, what job you may obtain later and what your financial future holds for some.

However, there is much greater goal than just getting As in examinations. **It is the Glory of God!** This goal may enable us to have the right priorities for our studies and for the right motive, to do well for Him. Yes, good grades may allow you to enter a field of study that will give you a platform for a ministry for Christ but **heavenly objectives give us a proper perspective in life.** *And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men (Col 3:23).*

Work Hard

Ecc 9:10 says, *Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.* **Diligence is more important than intelligence and perspiration than inspiration in studies.** Both Albert Einstein and Thomas Edison got Ds in their examinations at one time. They laboured and work hard and finally excelled with great success. God honours the hardworking and industrious but the sluggard and the lazy will have no reward.

Abraham Lincoln could have been neglected by being average (poor, ungainly appearance, etc) but with diligence and God's grace, instead he went on to greatness as the President of America during the Civil War. He once said, "God must have loved the common man because He made so many of them." **Average people become successful not because of their IQs but because God enabled them to do well in their responsibilities as well and they worked hard too.** A godly Christian who is willing to study hard, can be successful in both the classroom and in his career later when he has **acquired good habits and character.** *And Moses said unto God, Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt? And he said, Certainly I will be with thee; and this shall be a token unto thee, that I have sent thee (Exod 3:11-12a).* The presence and power of God and the industry of the Christian student is necessary for being a good example to others in and out of the classroom and in other areas as well (1 Tim 4:12). God helps those who help themselves and when we pray, seek God first and work hard; there is blessing and the favour of God.

Attend Class Attentively and Take Good Notes

This may sound easy but why is it that many are not doing it? Students should attend class with rapt attention, take good notes and summarise each lecture page with notes on the same day and be able to list the salient points. Then a quick review of these notes daily and not at the 11th hour is helpful. Try to figure out what the teachers would ask and study accordingly. Do not play truant and miss any lessons (unless one is sick or for any good reasons) nor come late for lectures!

Use Your Time Wisely

Time is a commodity that God gives to everyone equally and we are stewards of His time.

The 24-hours a day can be easily wasted on something inconsequential or invested into a productive time for prayer, meditation, study and work. Using Time wisely is one of the best assets we can have. When studying in the Bible College, the author would often carry small summary cards of notes and would quickly review them in spare moments during the day or night while waiting for the bus or MRT. Maximising time and other spare moments made a difference. Beware of time robbers (that is, television, computer games, talking on the phone, sms, blog) and remember DIN: (We are stewards of our time, talents and treasure before God). **Do It Now** or **Delay It Not** and FIT: **Finish It Too!**

Another point in regard to the use of time is to break out large study and work projects in bite-size parts. It is quite unlikely that one can finish a 10 or 15 page assignment in one night and will need a week or so. The author would literally use different fruitful moments (even on the aeroplane) of the day to write the summary of books and to study, read, meditate, pray and digest it and write the MM, prepare messages, lectures and Neighbourhood Bible Class and Read, Pray & Grow devotional notes.

With regard to proper use of time, work in agreement with your biological clock. If one is alert at night (like a nocturnal person), so study more at night; if not, wake up early in the morning and be fresh to remember important things. **The well-worn advice of having an organised place to study is to be well heeded**; a comfortable place with books, equipment and good lighting is vital for an effective study. Above all in your studies, remember God first in daily intercession and the meditation of the Word. Good discipline in time management is important. Eph 5:15-16 say, *See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil* and Ps 90:12, *So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.*

Know Your Instructor/Syllabus

If you fight in a war, you need to know the ground conditions well. In the same vein, if you study, you need to know syllabus well and the method of assessment and this will help you to strategise to study wisely. Let the teacher know of your interest in the class and your desire to do well. Ask for his or her suggestions for effective learning of the course materials and his style of teaching and testing and maybe even tips on the study for the examinations. Finally remember 2 Tim 2:15, *Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.* After all, honour God in daily prayer, Sabbath worship, reading of His Word and serve in His Church and He will honour us in return when we seek Him with our requests concerning work, family and studies, submitting to His will (Phil 4:6-8).

Conclusion

Finally, In all that we do, we are to submit to the sovereignty of God. After all, with our hard-earned grades, we ought to remember that it is the Lord who blesses us and we are to return to give thanks to Him. The student's life is more than As and Bs; it is about the following letters too, namely;

Consecration to Christ
Discipline in Serving God
Evangelism to Save Souls
Faithful to the Very End.

Jack Sin

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Q & A

Q: Can you summarise what exactly is wrong with the new age movement?

A: That is a relevant question for our times. The term "New Age Movement" covers a loosely-structured network of organisations and people who are united by common convictions and values. It is also known as New World Consciousness, or Cosmic

Consciousness, The Aquarian Conspiracy and Holistic Health Movement. Although the label may differ, yet the basic convictions are the same. It is a new perception of reality, a move away from traditional western rational realism to the mystical oriental idealism.

The New Age Movement requires a major thought or paradigm shift. It doesn't follow any of the traditional notions of churches but it draws from Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, Secularism and Selfism. Each person then mixes all that stuff together and arrives at a custom-made religion for him or herself.

The New Age Movement is not simply another new cult; it has no one leader (although Anthony Robbins, Deepak Chopra, Kitaro, Shirley Maclaine have been associated with it) or unified organizational structure. It's more of a creeping influence that advocates a change in people's thinking by mysticism and the supernatural.

Essentially the New Age Movement is a **strange combination of Mysticism and Humanism and man-centred supernaturalism**. Borrowing a few ideas from Christianity, a technique from Hinduism and a dose of Buddhist as Witchcraft, you can create your own personal religion. You can choose anything from astrology, biofeedback, clairvoyance, crystals gazing, channelling, extra sensory power, meditation, hypnosis, rebirthing, self-healing, visualization, magic, witchcraft, yoga and others. Surprisingly, the approach of the New Age appeals to many young people living in the post-modern era.

At the heart of the New Age thinking is the belief that mankind is entering into a new millennium which will bring not global disaster but a new spiritual dimension. By focusing deeply on our inner recess instead of God, we are supposed to recover, being "the ancient wisdom of our true self."

The fundamental assumption of the New Age is that all reality is fundamentally one. This assumption, technically called Monism, has its roots in Eastern and Greek philosophy. The so-called wisdom that will lead us to paradise is that all is one. **"You are God", a lie at best and Satanic strategy at worst.**

One of the features of the New Age Movement is its way of getting in touch with reality. The emphasis is not only that reality is one but that people achieve cosmic consciousness by means of meditation, visualisation, yoga, drugs, chanting, hypnosis, martial arts, sensory deprivation and others. The New Ager believes that it is through '**cosmic consciousness**' that we attain cosmic oneness. On the conscious level, man is separated from God, but in his essential essence 'he is one with God'. His conscious sense deceives his real self as a separate being, but he must transform his conscious thinking by spiritual technology, apparently available today.

The experience of cosmic consciousness is expressed by various terms including self-realisation, enlightenment, God-realisation, self atonement, and Nirvana. This mystical experience produces the feeling of cosmic oneness where all distinctions of good/evil, male/female, reality/fantasy, light/dark and man/God disappear. **Meditation, Yoga, Reiki, Crystals, Astral Projection, Geomancy, Necromancy, Wizardry and Magic**, to reach this oneness. We are seriously warned against these in Lev 19:26-30, Deut 18:11-14 and Isa 47:12-13.

The thinking of the New Age (or Old Age) was first expressed by the wily serpent to our first parents in the Garden of Eden that we shall be gods (Gen 3:5). It is the lie of the serpent that man's destiny and his salvation are within himself. Modern man finds the old lie gratifying and has fallen for it all over again. When a man does not believe for the truth he will fall for any lie. Modern man is no exception to the rule; he finds the false message of the cunning serpent offering hope and power. **It exalts man to the place of God**, giving him a false sense of security and making him a god. This is a spiritual delusion at best. It is Adam falling all over again now in the Garden of a fallen humanity.

For one to think man is the master of his destiny is outrageous. The devastating facts of human experience and history (ie wars) provide more than sufficient evidence to dispel any possible notion of the divinity of man. The word of God says that "For this reason God sends them a strong delusion that they should believe the lie" and many did and will continue today and would have to suffer the serious consequences one day if we do not seek Christ, repent of our sins and believe the truth in his holy Word before it is too late" (2 Thes 2:10,11). Hope this helps.

Jack Sin

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At the Pulpit

Theme for the Quarter:

A Historic Revival Under Ezra

Rev Charles Seet

"Building God's House"

(Ezra 3)

*These hyperlinks work with Word 97 and later version.

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