

Bible e-Study on the book of Hebrews (3)

Partners

“Therefore, holy brothers and sisters, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, whom we acknowledge as our apostle and high priest.”

Hebrews 3:1

NUGGET – Discipline and deceit. Two words you don’t normally associate with one another. When you hear or speak of discipline it usually carries the connotation of either punishment or of a rigorous regimen. And when contemplating deceit we generally take see that applied as a personal affront or offense. But in this chapter from Hebrews we see both deceit and discipline as important players. In fact these two can almost be seen as partners of a sort.

As we continue on in Hebrews we are getting from the author that Jesus is supreme. He is Lord, master, creator, fully human and fully divine. He has come among us to be the One who purifies us from our sins. And now we are reading that He is the One on whom we are to fix our thoughts on. That’s because Jesus is our apostle and high priest according to the nugget verse today.

Jesus as our high priest has offered the correct and proper sacrifice needed to win for us the ‘heavenly calling’ that we are given to share in. That sacrifice, of course, is His own body and blood, sacrificed on the tree of the cross. Jesus is the priest *and* the sacrifice. So how does this play into discipline and deceit being partners for us?

Again, in the nugget verse we are exhorted to ‘fix your thoughts on Jesus.’ This takes discipline. This takes practice. This takes repetition on our part. It is to become our regimen. We do this because of what Jesus has become to us. as our apostle, Jesus is the one who teaches and instructs us. If we do not discipline ourselves to listen to Him, to fix our thoughts on Him then we face the partner we spoke of, deceit.

Looking at verse 13 in this chapter, we’re warned to not ‘be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness.’ That is key for us who ‘share in the heavenly calling.’ We like to think that we’re pretty smart, pretty savvy and aware. But deceit *counts* on that. Deceit needs us to be confident in *ourselves*. It counts on us to focus our thoughts inward. In that way it can work its will against what the Lord would have us focus on, His grace.

That’s why we need to fix our thoughts on Jesus, otherwise, when we are fixated on ourselves, we are more easily exposed to the deceit of sin. Sin, by its nature *is* deceitful. It cannot be trusted, relied upon, or expected to be honest about itself. Sin is something that can ‘harden’ us according to verse 13. That is not what the Lord would have for us.

So discipline and deceit, these erstwhile ‘partners’, team up to help us. They can help us as long as we pay attention to what they both do. Mindful then that sin, being what it is, seeks to draw us away, by deceit, from our heavenly calling in Jesus Christ. And knowing *that* drives us to rely on God's grace and mercy alone for that heavenly calling we have been given. The other partner, discipline, can help us to remain alert to sin, on the one hand, *and* fix our thoughts on God's grace and mercy in Jesus Christ. By doing *that*, we are strengthened against the deceit of sin.

APPLICATION -

1. What is your regimen when it comes to how you think? Perhaps give some thought as what your ‘default’ thinking centers on. Is it inward or outward focused? Self or others? Gospel or greed? Training in thinking takes discipline and practice, perhaps it’s ok to spend a few minutes each day, thinking about how you think.

PRAY – Dear Jesus, thank you that You are our apostle and high priest. Give us strength of mind to focus on Your grace to us, that we may honor You by serving our neighbor. May we keep other in mind as You keep us in mind. In Your name, amen.