

False Impressions

False impressions. It's can happen so easily. You can meet a person for the first time who paints the wrong picture. Perhaps they were having a bad day, and the whole encounter is off-putting. Maybe it's a great encounter, but one you never experience again. This can happen in relationships, it can happen in careers, and it can happen with your faith.

Jesus surprised many in His day and still does today. What are some of those false impressions?

- That the Messiah's coming would demonstrate impressive military power.
- That the Messiah would reign as King over a physical kingdom.
 - But what did they get?
- That Jesus is a Savior and not a Lord.
- That Jesus is a Lord and not a Savior.
 - But who is He?

Today, I want to make sure that we're looking at our lives correctly. One of you expressed anxiety because of your lack of knowledge. You felt overwhelmed. It's important to capitalize on this because it can leave us paralyzed if we're not careful. Some do a great job at having balanced perspective, while some are hyper-critical and others aren't critical enough. I'd like to address a few possible false impressions in key areas of our lives: prayer, study, suffering, service, and sharing the gospel. There may be one here who needs some encouragement or accountability.

Supplication:

- 1 Thessalonians 5:17 Pray without ceasing,
 - While this passage can be misunderstood (I literally have to have an ongoing prayer throughout the day), we need to pay attention to Paul's instruction. Prayer is all throughout the Bible and holds great significance. That's why we're studying it now. It connects us to our Father and builds our personal faith in God.
- Luke 18:1 And he told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart.
 - So, Jesus did understand that it could be challenging. He said, "the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." You feel as though a faithful Christian should always be praying without problem.

Study:

- Psalm 19:7-14
 - This passage is so true. One should not underestimate the beauty and value of God's word. It changes everything. Everything. When one comes to see it for what it is, you wonder why those of the past didn't keep their Bibles in safes before we had Bible apps.
- 2 Peter 3:14-18
 - You know - sometimes you get into God's word, and it's challenging. It may be something like Peter is discussing. It may be an Acts 8 eunuch moment, and you need help. It may

be a day discovery like the Bereans or a “hearts burn within us” in Luke 24. You’re going to have some good and bad days. But keeping the big picture - it’s a blessing and not a curse to have God’s word will put things into perspective. Growth doesn’t come overnight. It takes time. Some seasons in life will challenge you - schedule gets super busy, and responsibilities can’t be ignored. Sometimes, you need to give yourself grace; other times, you need to push yourself. Every day isn’t a Psalm 19 day, nor should they all feel like a 2 Peter 3 day. Let’s remember that Jesus was the bread of life and we feast on Him as He feasted on the will of His Father.

Suffering:

- Matthew 10:34-39
 - Jesus in no way shape or form gave the impression that life would be peachy. He said we’d have trials and tribulations in this life. He doesn’t owe us anything but eternal separation. Jesus was persecuted. The prophets were persecuted. Paul and the apostles were persecuted. The early church experienced persecution and suffering. So, we need to get our minds straight and have perspective.
- Hebrews 4:14-16
 - There’s a reason we come back to this passage again and again. And Paul discussed his daily anxieties. Or why he reminded us that the Spirit intercedes for us in prayer. Or why Peter encouraged everyone to turn to God with our anxieties. Let’s not be silly about the whole thing, but let us strive to see it as a “light momentary affliction” like Paul. Let us hold on to the big picture and give glory to God.

Serving:

- Mark 6:30-34
 - Jesus couldn’t even get a little time to eat and some peace and quiet. These subtle passages give insight into Jesus’ life. We can be put off by the smallest requests of brethren. There are some brethren who need to be reminded of the labor of love by their fellow brothers and sisters. Jesus humbled Himself to serve us completely.
- Mark 6:35-38
 - Yet, Jesus refused to do everything on His own. He would make them take part and would get some peace and quiet for prayer by the end of the day. Brethren, we’re a body made of many members. We cannot have one body part doing all the moving. Sometimes, someone else needs to jump in while you take a breather.

Seeding:

- 1 Peter 3:13-18
 - When’s the last time you’ve been really challenged in your faith? Yet, they shared their beliefs in a hostile environment. It’s much easier today than it would be back then. Worse case, someone laughs at you, or you get in a little verbal joust. The grace of God should have such a tremendous impact on us.
- 1 Corinthians 3:5-9
 - Having said that - we should remember that we don’t always have to see the thing to fruition. Ultimately, it’s a team effort many times and God is giving the increase. Paul knew the power was in the word of God, and the soil needed to be good. None of that is on you. We simply throw the seed out and let the Lord do the rest.