

cont'd from front...

A lot of people believe God approves of their life choices because they think they've come to know God through their experiences. I recently met a young man like this. He was living with his girlfriend and believed there was nothing wrong with their fornication because, as he said, "I experience God through my girlfriend's love." He was assuming he had learned enough about God through general revelation to conclude there was no such thing as "fornication."

I gave the young man this example: if you walk into a room and see a man you've never met, you can probably reach several conclusions about him based on some general observations. You might say, "That guy seems friendly. He is talking to everyone in the room, he is smiling, and he is laughing." So you might conclude, "I think he is probably a nice guy and we could be great friends."

Your impression might be spot on. But even if it is, you would be out of line to say, "I'm pretty sure that guy would be ok with me taking his car keys and taking his car for a spin." You cannot determine someone's will by simply getting a general impression of them through simple observation. If you want to know someone's will, they have to speak to you.

General revelation is limited in its nature. There are things you can know about God based on general revelation, but you cannot know God's specific thoughts through general revelation. Those who assume they can know God or know God's will without "religion," are sadly mistaken.

#### God Revealed Through Scripture

The other way God reveals Himself to mankind is through, what is called, "special revelation." In other words, God has, at times, communicated through special "inspired" people (see Hebrews 1:1-2). Concerning this, the apostle Paul wrote, "Who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God" (1 Corinthians 2:11).

In context, Paul is explaining why people should listen to the apostles' teaching. He said the apostles had received "the Spirit who is from God," so they could understand the things freely given them from God (vs. 12). He said the apostles had "the mind of Christ" (vs. 16). The apostles' job was to "impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God" (vs. 7). The Spirit of God revealed to the apostles God's secret thoughts. In turn, the apostles imparted God's thoughts to others through their teaching, preaching, and writing.

So if we want to know the mind of Christ and the thoughts and wisdom of God, we must devote ourselves "to the apostles' teaching" (Acts 2:42). We must receive their word, "not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God" (1 Thessalonians 2:13). These men "were carried along by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21) and their words are "trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance" (1 Timothy 4:9).

You cannot know the thoughts of God unless you devote yourself to reading and understanding Scripture (see 2 Timothy 3:16-17).

#### Not Religious, Not Spiritual

It is actually impossible to be spiritual without being religious. Those who are trying to figure God out through the natural world are not being spiritual. They are relying on the physical to teach them about the spiritual. A newborn baby, a warm embrace, a mountaintop experience are all physical experiences; they move us through our physical senses. The only way to spiritually know God is through the religion of Christ.

Bible study, worship, fellowship with the church, and selfless obedience – these are spiritual experiences and expressions. Paul said only the spiritually minded accept the apostles' teaching and become a part of Christ's church, "The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Corinthians 2:14).

Being in the church, accepting the teaching of Scripture, assembling together to worship and study, selflessly giving of yourself – this is true Christian spirituality.

#### Are You Listening?

March 26, 2017

## church of Christ at Alisal

67 Eucalyptus Drive  
Salinas, California 93905-2728  
(831) 424-9800 or 726-1319  
Paul McCollum, preacher  
pulpitpaul@razzolink.com

### The Farmers Market at Hilo, Hawaii



In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it. (John 1:1-5)

MEETING UPON THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK  
Listen on AM Radio 880 KKMC in Salinas, California  
2nd Friday of each month @ 1:30 pm

Bible Classes..... 9:00 A.M.  
Assemblies..... 10:00 A.M. & 5:00 P.M.

<http://churchofchristalisal.com/>

WEDNESDAY

Bible Class, Singing, & Prayer..... 6:30 P.M.

# Welcome

Good Morning Brothers and Sisters!

## This Week's Sermon's

A.M. - Right or Easy?

P.M. - The War on Morality



### HOW LONG WILL I LIVE?

Raymond Elliott



Daffodil

Recently I received a questionnaire from the investment company where I have my IRA. One section dealt with "Investment Time Horizon." In other words, how many more years do I plan to live and invest in my IRA. The choices ranged from "0-2 years" to "more than 20 years." First of all, I have not invested any monies in my IRA in several years. I have been doing the opposite. I have been receiving the much needed funds to supplement my Social Security income.

Well, I am approaching my 82nd birthday, the Lord willing, in the month of May; so, how many years should I select, if I plan to do any investing in my IRA? By God's grace, providence and "by reason of strength", I have surpassed the "four score years" mentioned in Psalm 90:10. My cardiologist, at my last checkup, said, "I will see you next year." But, he did not give me a guarantee when I asked him if he would. He then said, "Has God ever given you a guarantee?"

When you consider the facts, as found in the Word of God, you know that death is no respecter of persons. "The living know that they shall die" (Ecclesiastes 9:5); "It is appointed for men to die once" (Hebrews 9:27); that life "is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away" (James 4:14). Furthermore, death is no respecter of age. During the month of February, 2017, two young men of my acquaintance died, unexpectedly. One friend was only forty-eight years old and a relative of mine died when he was fifty years old. Someone has said, "The old must die and the young do die".

Let it be understood, it is not the quantity of life that is important; rather, it is the quality of life that means so much because it affects our eternal destiny. A person who lives for Jesus Christ, will die in Christ and will be blessed eternally (Revelation 14:13). An individual who enjoys longevity of life but lives without God, will die without God in eternity. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (unprepared) (Hebrews 10:31).

Are you interested in knowing what selection I chose relative to how long I might live should I decide to invest in my IRA? It is said that a positive attitude contributes to the longevity of one's life; so, I selected the bracket, (6-10) years, but I did so, knowing that I have no assurance I will live another day. But I have this precious promise from the Lord Jesus Christ: "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. "And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die, Do you believe this?" (John 11:25, 26). I do, because I trust in Him. If we know how to live (in Christ), we will know how to die.

My heart's desire is that every believer will "repent and be baptized for the remission of sins" and the Lord will add you to His church of which He is the Savior (Acts 2:38, 47; Ephesians 5:23; Colossians 1:18).



### A Message to Those Who Are "Spiritual, But Not Religious"

Wes McAdams

There are many people who consider themselves to be "spiritual, but not religious." They "experience" God in the gentle breeze, the rolling hills, the majestic mountains, and the love of friends and family. They consider themselves to be Christians, in some sense, but want nothing to do with "organized religion." They don't want the church and they don't want the Bible. They want Jesus and they want spiritual experiences, but that is it. If that describes you or someone you know, allow me to share a few thoughts with you.

#### God Revealed Through Nature

There are two ways God reveals Himself to mankind. The first is often called, "general revelation." General revelation is what you can know about God by studying the things He has created. The apostle Paul said:

"For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made" (Romans 1:20a).

You can learn something of God by standing on a mountaintop and beholding the grandeur of the land stretched out before you, holding a precious newborn baby, or even falling deeply in love with someone. When we experience these natural things, we have an overwhelming sense of "awe," giving us the general impression that God must be "awesome."

Additionally, deep down in our hearts, we all seem to have a general sense of morality. Most everyone in the world thinks some things are wrong and some things are right. Though we may disagree on how to go about it, we all believe fairness and justice are good things. This sense of morality gives us the general impression that God must be as upset about suffering, injustice, and cruelty as we are.

#### The Problem with General Revelation

Therefore, we may assume we know God after coming down from a mountaintop experience or after traveling the world and meeting interesting people. We may assume we understand God's will after something like becoming a parent or becoming a spouse. But the problem is, all of these assumptions are just that, assumptions. They are a good place to start, but a horrible place to stop.

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## Announcements

1. Brother Paul will be giving the invitation this Wednesday evening.

**Singing and prayer this coming Wednesday evening! Please be prepared!**

~ On the Prayer list

**Judy McCollum** - for knee pain due to arthritis..

**Beverly Pereria**- healing from the stroke and progress with the her physical therapy at Natividad in Salinas.

**Bobby Glover** - to successfully teach others about Jesus while in prison.

**Michael White** - for helping others as he serves his time.

**Our country** - and President Trump and our leaders.

**All the saints** - and the knowledge and zeal to teach those who are outside the body of Christ.

**Have a blessed week!**