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Devotion for September 21st, 2021

"Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths. Rather train yourself for godliness; for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come. The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance. For to this end we toil and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all people, especially of those who believe."

- 1st Timothy 4:7-10

In this Bible passage, St. Paul was writing to Timothy, who was a pastor of a congregation of Christian believers. He advised Timothy to stay away from irreverent, silly myths. Maybe we can think of some of these myths that some people rely on, but that have no value to them physically or spiritually.

Let me share one that I thought of: astrology. What a useless idea that the stars in the sky have anything to do with who you are or who you will be. If the heavenly bodies have that influence, then it would make sense whether you were born at night or during the day, as the stars are different at these times. Also, the earth would have the most effect as we all stand on it. The ancient Greeks assigned animals and/or human characteristics to each month based on star constellations. They worshipped creation and not the Creator. It is even sillier to use this system to predict the future.

Instead, St. Paul advised Timothy to train himself in godliness and he called this trustworthy. St. Paul said godliness helps us here on earth and in the future life to come. So, what is this godliness that St. Paul was writing about? I think it is to be God-like. Doesn't that really sound like a very tall order? What if we were to use Jesus as our example? Jesus was and is the Son of God and the Son of Man. He would be a great example.

Jesus lived a sinless life. He was always obedient to His Father in heaven. He followed the commandments. He showed love to His neighbors and even to His enemies. Jesus gave His life out of love for all. We can't die for the sins of the world like Jesus did, but we can share that good news with those who have not heard or need to hear again.

However, I think St. Paul was referring to how we live as Christians. As we live we are being formed by the trials that come upon us. We are strengthened by these trials as we remain in the faith worked in us. We are changed, improved, we become more God-like as we are forged in the fires of life's trials. We are being prepared for more. Maybe even for things that will come in the life to come. Maybe we won't just be sitting on clouds and playing harps.

We go forward in the faith that God loves us and that the promises of God are true: the forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

*In Christ Jesus,
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