

Bible Studies for Life: August 23

By Clay Anthony

We Strengthen One Another • Ephesians 5:8-21



Anthony

If you are of a certain age, you are familiar with the acting work of Jay Smith. Smith was a Canadian born athlete in the 1940s who excelled in lacrosse. Chances are you have never seen a lacrosse game but you are familiar with Jay's work as he got into acting. His best work was done in playing a sidekick and loyal friend. The star of the hit show was always getting the glory but in the background the viewer always knew that this trusted sidekick did a great deal of the heavy lifting. You know Jay better by his stage name of Jay Silverheels and his portrayal of Tonto on the serial "The Lone Ranger". Paul invited the Ephesians to contemplate how they too have been helped in their walk with Christ. There is a great truth in the sentiment that there are no Lone Ranger Christians. We bring strength to one another to accomplish any tasks for Christ.

Strength to Stand

Paul reminds the Ephesians that once they were entangled in horrible sins. They were encouraged to cast those sins aside and are now being challenged to *walk* and *discern* as people who had been changed by Christ. (9-10) When it comes to sin, there must be no secrets among believers. Light is to be shone *by*

Christians and even *for* Christians who find themselves struggling to act as they should. (11-12) We should not take such “shining” as spreading rumors, interfering with or hurting others. This shining is the exposing of dangerous sin (13). Furthermore, helping others to stand against sin is one of the more Christ-like behaviors that we can exhibit. Our arousal to *unfruitful works* (evil) around us (11) is paramount to our dealing with them. When standing against sin, we need all the help we can find.

Strength for Wisdom

Believers are admonished to inspect the way they *walk* or *live out* their faith. (15) One clear way to do this is to guard our time. It is true that no person alive will be able to say to God upon their death that they had no time to do His will. Hours spent on social media and on entertainment prove otherwise. Those who use their time wisely will indeed discover the will of God. It is foolish to live in any other manner. Believers who care are the best resource to point out better uses of time in our lives and churches. A quick diagnostic is to realize that we have a total of 168 hours to live each week. How many of those hours are spent on Godly pursuits?

Strength in the Spirit

Indeed, it is wrong for anyone to be drunk with wine, beer or abuse drugs in any fashion. Paul was making an analogy here for what life is like in the Holy Spirit. Just as one could abuse alcohol to become drunk, likewise Paul states that the Holy Spirit enters and takes over a person’s thoughts and actions – but in a positive manner. Paul then list five participles as to how one can live out a life filled with the Spirit. Believers should (1) speak (2) sing (3) make music (4) give thanks and (5) submit to your fellow believers. These five actions make for peace-filled relationships and give a Spirit-filled witness to a watching world. We should also never take for granted those “Tontos” that God has blessed us

with to hold us accountable during and love us through our struggles.

Live It Out

Without being too intrusive there may be no easy way to discover where a fellow believer is struggling. A good idea then would be to turn your attention internal. Where are you struggling in your fight for sin?

Anthony is director of the Collaborative Missionary Network, Oxford/Holly Springs.