

Assignment 12:1

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Once upon a time there was a man with 2 PhDs in New Testament Studies, both from prestigious universities. His academic credentials were impeccable and he constantly devoted himself to the study of the New Testament. The Gospels were his speciality. He did not, however, claim and follow Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour.

The Professor's wife was a mature believer with "only" an MA in Biblical Studies. They had a nine-year-old daughter who had just returned from a Christian Children's Camp, where she made the decision to give her life to Christ.

In light of what you have learned in this chapter about the Spirit's role in biblical interpretation, describe how each member of the family might approach John 3:16.

"For God so loved the world that He gave His One and Only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life."

Write at least one paragraph from the perspective of each family member.

Response

What I have learned in the Holy Spirit's role in Biblical interpretation to do with the father and how he interprets **John 3:16** is this:

The father has knowledge and knows New Testament Biblical Studies but because he does not seem to take the whole Bible as inspired by God, the Holy Spirit has minimal impact and effect in his life. The whole Bible is the Old Testament too and he does not relate that to Jesus Christ as being his Lord and Saviour.

Jesus was in the Old Testament too, and the New Testament just embellishes what the Old Testament says about Him.

I would say that the Holy Spirit is not active in this man's life, because without the Holy Spirit one cannot believe that Jesus is our Lord and Saviour.

The father may even be able to quote the New Testament. He reminds me of the Pharisees actually, who Jesus was criticising. This is because the father in this story did not claim to follow Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour.

Belief to him of Jesus dying on the cross would be like belief to most people: "I'm saved because Jesus loves me. Jesus loves the world and I'm part of the world" he would reason.

This man would interpret this Scripture as yes, he is going to heaven anyway (his understanding of it, not COG 7th Day understanding of it). He believes that God loves us, but that is all he has to do about it. This man doesn't actually believe that he has to do anything about it. He believes that just by being him that he will receive eternal life. He believes that all his studies and achievements will get him through the pearly gates.

The woman, on the other hand, is a mature believer in Christ. The Holy Spirit's role in her life is full on and she believes that the Holy Spirit is active in her life. She hasn't studied

like her husband, although she has done some at university too. She actively pursues God.

She studied for her MA because she wants to learn more of what Jesus requires of her.

Eternal life to her is Something to have a goal for, meaning that we can't earn our Salvation, but it is the grace of God that gives it to us and we can't receive the grace of God if we don't know what it is.

She knows that the grace of God is sending His one and only Son to die for us so that we may receive a resurrection, and that is given to those who believe in Jesus.

God is gracious to us she believes and she believes that He asks us to repent of our sins. This woman's belief in Jesus dying on the cross to save us from our sins means that she will give up everything to receive eternal life because she loves Jesus so much.

Now the child is only 9. She is a new believer in Christ and therefore the Holy Spirit has an effect in her life, but only to a degree, at this stage.

The 9 year old child has learnt of Jesus dying on the Cross and her belief in Him is only minimal, bless her soul.

She wants to go to heaven, as she understands it (not as we do COG 7th Day) after she dies, but she hasn't the full understanding of that, being only 9.

She knows that Jesus died for her sins and a sin to her might be looking in class at another student's work and copying down the answers.

She gets baptised and if she has done these things before she's baptised she repents. She may share her lunch with fellow students if they don't have any, showing that she's suffering for Jesus, to prove that she believes in Him.

She knows that Jesus loves her, but because she is only 9, the word "Perish" to her may mean something scary. Belief in Jesus to her may mean doing what her parents say because if she doesn't she's going to hell (her version of it, not ours).

She may believe that it is a real fiery place and believe that by works she will not get there. However, she prays and reads children's Bible stories. Her simplicity will be what Jesus is asking for here, when He says,

"Let the little children come to me and do not forbid them" (**Matt. 19:14**), for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven.

She is aware of this Scripture. Also she is aware of Jesus saying "You must become like little children" (**Matt. 18:3**). So, she will believe that Jesus is speaking to her and will want to do what she feels she can for Him. She will obey her parents because the Scripture says, which she would have learnt: "**Honour your father and your mother that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.**" (**Eph. 6:1-3**).

So, in summary, the **mother** is the fully mature believer and has the Holy Spirit active in her life. **The 9 year old girl**, the Spirit's role is minimal at this stage, but He is there and the **father** does not have Him at all, because He does not believe that He exists.

However, cognitively, the father knows that there is One and he is not interested enough to find out if he has Him or not. The 9 yr old girl, the Holy Spirit works in her most in discerning spiritual truths. Like, she knows Jesus died for her to save her from sins, but the mother, the mature believer, the Holy Spirit works more in her life and she is able to care for her family through the Holy Spirit's help.

Select one of the following passages and walk through the Lectio Divina exercise described in this chapter. Write a one or two page reflection of what this experience has meant to you.

The passage I have chosen for this exercise is **Matthew 6:31 to 33** on worry.

“Therefore do not worry saying what shall we eat or what shall we drink or what shall we wear. For after these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.”

Lectio Divina basically means meditate and having done that my thoughts brought me to the word sufficient. **Sufficient** for the day is its own trouble means that it is enough. Jesus is saying that sufficient for today is its own problems and that is all we need to handle. We can't worry about tomorrow for tomorrow hasn't come yet and we can't change what the outcome will be tomorrow by worrying. Jesus says in an earlier verse (verse 27) **“which of you by worrying can add 1 cubit to his stature”**

If we are 5 foot 11 today we will be 5 foot 11 tomorrow. We cannot change the outcome. The outcome is in God's hands! Another word which stands out in this passage is **‘knows’**. **Psalm 103:14** states **“He knows our frame. He remembers that we are dust.”** Jehovah God made us. He remembers that we are dust. He formed us and gave us life. **Genesis 2:7**

God is all knowing and all powerful. **Psalm 147:5** states that Jehovah's knowledge of us is infinite. It has no end. Because of this why should we worry.

The scripture **Matthew 6:31-33** states that we need all these things food, drink and clothing and these are necessities. Jesus says in previous verses **28-30** that we should consider the lilies of the field and how they grow. Why does He say this? It is because God made them and they do not worry about how they grow. Jesus goes on to say that the grass of the field which is here today and gone tomorrow is thrown into the oven. **“Will He not much more clothe you, you of little faith.”?**

In Bible times that's exactly where grass was thrown, into the oven. Wood was scarce so the Israelites used to throw grass and flowers into the fire, to burn to start a fire, to keep warm and cook food. Jesus is demonstrating that life is fleeting and we should have faith in Him

Our heavenly Father knows that we need such things to keep ourselves alive. But our heavenly Father knows that we need Him too. Jesus is saying here that if we seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness then all the other things will be added to us.

What is the Kingdom of God? I interpret it to mean at the start of the day pray and read my Bible, meaning have time for God. That's the first thing I do every morning. But to seek righteousness means to actively pursue what God and Jesus want for us. They want a relationship with us.

God and Jesus want us to know that the kingdom is in our hearts and also it will be a Paradise on Earth after we die. Jesus died on the cross so that we could be forgiven and have an opportunity of repentance for our sins.

It says in **Micah 6:8** **“He has shown you O man, what is good, and what does the Lord require of you, but to do justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God?”**

To do justly means To be honest with ourselves and everyone and treat them right.

Matthew 7:12 **“says do unto others as you would have them do unto you”**. To love mercy means to show kindness to everyone, even when they don't deserve it. We need to be giving to the poor, our neighbours etc and the homeless. To walk humbly with our God means to be self-sacrificing and not to brag about our good deeds, always putting others before ourselves. We Need to be willing to help out when needed. We have to be humble before God, praise Him, worship Him and thank Him. He is the One who made us and we have to be mindful of this continually.

“Come to me” Jesus says **“all you who labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me for I am gentle and lowly in heart and you will find rest for your souls For my yoke is easy and my burden is light”**

Matthew 11:28-30

If we take Jesus at His word and meditate on the scriptures and believe in Him we will be less likely to worry.