

## ***Week of September 16, 2007***

Dr. Randall L. Adkisson

### **Monday**

John 15:15 "No longer do I call you slaves... but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you.

Many claim that 'religion' is the most dangerous thing in the world. That's probably true. Not because of religious conflicts, but because of religion's ability to excite wrong passions and dull the right ones. God never called us to be more religious, He called us to a relationship with Himself through Jesus the Son. Religion builds strong opinions, but a relationship with Jesus builds a gracious life. Religion often makes one angry, but a relationship with Jesus brings peace. Consciously, cultivate your relationship with the Savior today.

### **Tuesday**

John 3:10 Jesus answered and said to him, "Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not understand these things?"

Even a religious teacher can miss the essence of God's plan for a relationship of grace. Many religious teachers do so today. Facts, dates, scholarly opinions, and information about the Bible do not substitute for a growing, vital relationship with Jesus. Nicodemus had the right information, but it was hollow and empty until he allowed Jesus to encounter his religion. Just as a genuine marriage is more than a legal document, a relationship with Jesus is far more than correct knowledge or religious information. Cultivate your love for Jesus.

### **Wednesday**

James 2:19 You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder.

False security may be the dangerous outcome of a religious life. Just as understanding the principles of the combustion engine will not make the car run, so understanding the 'facts' of religion will not make the spirit soar. Right theology does not insure a genuine or right relationship. Trusting in knowledge without a relationship leads only to a false sense of hope and a failed walk with God. Jesus desires a relationship built upon knowledge, but not knowledge without relationship.

### **Thursday**

John 3:7 "Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'

For Nicodemus and for many of us, it would have been simpler if Jesus had said, "get more education" or "pass the next written exam." Those things leave us in control and in charge. We can point to our accomplishment and wave our certificate. But Jesus told Nicodemus to take a step of uncontrolled surrender instead. "Be born again!" What? How? Birth is so much out of the control of the baby. Relax, trust and enter a new world. Claim no glory for the process or the instigation. Be born again. Do you take pride in your Christianity as if you accomplished something in being a Christian? Perhaps then you should check to see if you have a religion or a relationship.

### **Friday**

Phil. 1:2 Grace to you and peace...

A religious man/woman wants to force opinions and rules upon others. A relationship with God makes one desire a work of grace in his/her own life. A religious experience causes one to judge others. A relationship with Jesus causes me to evaluate my own life. A religion is stagnate. A relationship is dynamic and growing. Sometimes even those with a relationship allow the focus of the relationship to become its rules and obligations. Instead focus upon loving Him and receiving His love, then you will find the joy of His grace.