

The Lakeview Lamp

“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” -Psalm 119:105

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Absence

Hal Hammons

More often than we would like, we are forced by circumstances to keep one or both of our girls home from school. We don't like doing it. We look for excuses not to do it. The vast majority of the time, we don't do it. But it happens sometimes. It happens to everyone. Usually it is an illness or other medical situation. Occasionally it is an unusual family situation. But the girls know what to do on Monday morning without being told. Tracie and I don't debate between ourselves whether it is a good idea to send the girls to school that day. We don't ask ourselves whether they got enough sleep the night before; we know they did because we consciously and willfully forced circumstances upon the girls where they would get enough sleep the night before. In short, going to school is the rule, not the exception. And we make few exceptions.

When the exceptions occur for one of our girls, we take steps to make

sure the impact of the absence is as minimal as possible, both for her and for those whose life will be impacted by their absence. We call the school with the news as soon as we can, because we know people are responsible for our girls' presence at school and will be checking on them. Since dozens of children will miss school on any given day, it just makes sense to make it as easy as possible for the school officials. Plus, it's nice to have someone on the other side of the phone demonstrate a genuine regret at not seeing our daughter and express a genuine hope that she will be able to be back to her normal schedule soon.

We also make sure that missing a day of school will have minimal impact on our child's education. We make sure she does what she must do to get back in school as quickly as possible, first and foremost. She's not out playing in the yard in the afternoon after staying home "sick" in the morning. We take the opportunity to make sure her lessons for that day are completed properly, and we send her back to school with specific instructions to bring back any work that might have gone uncompleted during her absence. We make sure we do nothing to lessen in her mind the importance of going to school whenever possible. This helps our children learn that an absence is a burden, not a blessing.

We just think that's common sense.

Why don't more brethren apply the same "common sense" reasoning to assembling with the saints, including Bible study – especially for our children? Which is more important: their secular or spiritual education? Fathers, for which will God hold us responsible for neglecting **(Eph 6:4)**?

“Make vows to the Lord your God and fulfill them.”– Psalm 76:11

Desiring What Is Good

Troy Nicholson

If the Bible said that something was good to desire, would you desire it? In **1 Timothy 3:1** it says, *“If any man sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a good work.”* Men, do you desire this good work?

Desiring to be an overseer should not be taken lightly. With it comes much responsibility, which is demonstrated by the many requirements God places on such a man (:2-7). Yet with it can also come much reward.

A church is lacking when it does not have elders/overseers (**Titus 1:5**). Paul’s *“deep concern for all the churches”* (**2 Corinthians 11:28**) led him to make sure they all had elders. He made sure that they were appointed in every church, whether through instruction to Titus (**1:5**) or personally through his travels (**Acts 14:23**). Men can help keep churches from lacking today by desiring to be elders.

When Paul knew that *“savage wolves”* would come in among the church, he turned to the elders to lead in watching out for them (**Acts 20:28-29**). What a rewarding feeling to know that you are directly involved in *“sparing the flock”* by being an elder.

Peter addressed fellow elders about their responsibility of shepherding the flock with the proper attitude and action (**1 Peter 5:1-3**). He then talked about the reward in doing so when he said, *“And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade*

away” (:4). Great work and responsibility? Yes. Even greater reward? Yes.

Granted, being an overseer is not for everyone. For one reason or another, not all men meet the standards that God has set forth for an overseer. Even if a man does meet them, he must not take on the work “*by compulsion*” (1 Peter 5:2). He also must be sure that he does not desire the work “*for dishonest gain.*”

There are many reasons to set your heart on being an overseer. There are many reasons to desire such a good work. A man cannot begin too young developing himself into the kind of man God calls to be an overseer. Churches need them. Wolves are turned away by them. Great reward is received by them. Do you desire to be one?

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"This is the day the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it" (Psalm 118:24).