

Week of Sept 16-22

HOLY SHODDY

Scripture Reading: Read Colossians chapter 3

What was the name of your favorite teacher? Was he or she an elementary, middle school, or high school teacher? Perhaps that favorite teacher was a professor from college. In a few weeks, as I write this, my alma mater will be presenting a lifetime achievement award to one such person from my college days, Dr. Marvin Wilson. He is entering his 50th year of teaching biblical studies this year. He will be honored at a dinner during homecoming Columbus Day weekend and I will have the opportunity to attend and express my appreciation for his investment in my life while I was a student at Gordon College in the early 1980's.

Dr. Wilson has a brilliant mind, is an excellent communicator and a wonderful teacher. He is also a humble and godly man who integrates well his learning and his spiritual life. He is a master of witticisms, those one-line sayings that make you stop and go "wow!" One of his favorites was "Holy shoddy is still shoddy."

The significance of this statement was brought home to me in dramatic fashion after I graduated from college. I was part of an ordination choir that was to sing at one of our denomination's yearly meetings. We were sent the music ahead of time to review and practice on our own. When we arrived for our group practice, I overheard one of the choir members behind me say that she didn't bother to practice ahead, she was just going to trust the Lord. After hearing her sing, I understood completely what my professor meant! Not practicing but expecting the Lord to come through resulted in a poor offering to the Lord on her part and a painful outcome for those around her! She may have felt she was being spiritual but, in reality, what she offered was still shoddy.

According to Dr. Wilson, God should get our best efforts at whatever we do. The apostle Paul would certainly agree. Take a look at what he had to say in verses 23-24: "*Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.*" Notice, we are to work at whatever we do with all our heart. No half-hearted or mediocre effort here. No holy shoddy for the Lord. Rather, we are to give the best we have to offer. But, as Paul makes clear both here and earlier in verse 17, this effort should be for the right reasons. "*And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*" We don't strive to succeed to bring glory to ourselves nor to gain people's approval. It is the Lord Christ that we serve and it is in His name we honor.

Action Step: Two questions to consider: 1) Are you coasting in life, giving a half-hearted effort to whatever you do, and living in a state of mediocrity instead of giving your best? Or, 2) Are you striving to succeed and give your best but doing it to bring glory to yourself and/or gain people's approval instead of doing it as to the Lord?

Prayer Focus: For the Lord to empower you to work with all your heart at whatever you do for His glory.

Take-a-way: *Holy shoddy is still shoddy. So, give God holy excellence instead.*