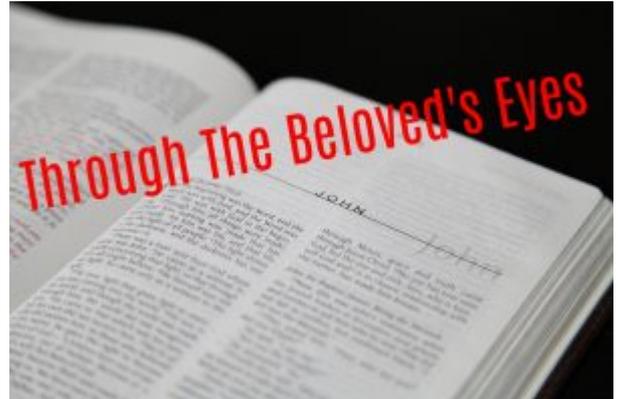


Which Way To Holy?

Message Magazine's Online Devotional for Wednesday, September 7, 2016
We are focusing on getting to know God from the perspective of John the beloved.



Today's Scripture Focus: "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." (John 5:39-40).

There were a number of different factions during Jesus' day who studied Scripture more than average. They customarily wore verses on their clothing and some were even able to recite the entire five books of the Torah. Fastidiously, they fixated on every jot and tittle of the Law, yet many did not actually live the Law. Some knew every word, but lived almost none.

Balanced By God's Inspiration

They trusted so much in their abilities to recall and apply Scripture, that they effectively replaced God's grace in their own lives. The learned lived their lives in such a way as to demonstrate that they thought eternal life was a right, based on obedience. They thought that if they performed just right, and had a firm grasp of rites, ceremonies, and the words of Scripture, they could be recommended to God for salvation. Tragically, most of these proficient professors of religion were their own greatest hindrances to salvation. They placed their trust in perceived obedience to Scripture, rather than the God of Scripture.

A friend once told me that people are capable of performing on either extreme in our own strength. We can live guided only by whether things feel good and are enjoyable. Or, we can focus so much on right doing and deceive ourselves into believing performance makes us worthy. But, as my friend stated, being balanced requires God's inspiration. In this context, balance means that we believe that since God is holy, we too can and must be holy. But, balance recognizes our sheer helplessness to be holy on our own. We realize and embrace the fact that only God can make a person holy. Whatever reward we

