

LINKS PLAYERS

DAILY DEVOTIONAL FRIDAY BIBLE STUDY FOR NOVEMBER 25, 2011

AT HIS WORD

The man took Jesus at his word and departed. (John 4:50, NIV)

IT'S EASY TO TAKE A GOLF LESSON. The difficulty lies in adhering to the changes the professional has instructed you to make.

In truth, very few of us take another person's word for much of anything. We are testers and triers and experimenters. We are "maybe men," never quite admitting that the other guy knows more than we do. He probably knows less. The difficulty lies in playing that game with Jesus.

If we can extract one consistent observation from Jesus' interactions with others in the gospels, it is this: He saw right through them. The first half of the fourth chapter of John is comprised of Jesus' encounter with the woman at the well. In a few moments' time he was revealing the concealed facts of her life, and soon after she was telling her neighbors, "He told me everything I ever did" (v. 39).

Now, in the later lines of the chapter, Jesus exchanged words with a royal official who had come to Jesus asking the Lord to heal his dying son. Jesus' response was a declaration to all who stood around Him: "Unless you people see miraculous signs and wonders, you will never believe" (v. 48). Jesus wanted people who would take Him at His word, which was chiefly this: He had been sent from the Father to be "the Savior of the world," as a number of the Samaritans had declared Him to be in their belief of His teaching (vv. 41-42).

The man, however, persisted: "Won't you come before my child dies?" Jesus replied that the work was done, the man's son would live. And it is there that we read the line describing the man's faith in action. He took Jesus at His word and departed. Shortly thereafter, the man's servants met him and reported that the son had recovered from his illness, beginning at the very hour of Jesus' pronouncement.

Can the lesson be more obvious? We are each challenged to exercise the faith of the official, to take Jesus at His word. We do so by reading it thoroughly and regularly; we continue doing so by living it out.

The difficulty

Why do you think most people have trouble taking Jesus at His word? At what places do *you* have trouble taking Him at His word?

The strength to follow

Read Matthew 19:16-30. What kept the young man from following Jesus fully? How did Jesus respond when the disciples asked who could be saved when the conditions were so stiff? What rewards did Jesus promise to those who persevere in their following Him?

Our ultimate motivation

Read Colossians 1:15-20. How does a passage like this confirm the focus of our faith as being worth the commitment?
