

## The Wednesday Word, August 12, 2026: Brother Earnest Effort

DG Miles McKee

Let me introduce you to Brother Earnest Effort. He's a decent soul, but alas, he has not been established in Gospel truth.

All he knows to do is 'to do'!

He makes his personal efforts and condition the centre of his Christian life. Without knowing it, he is brewing himself a lethal spiritual cocktail of woe! After continually taking stock of himself he sees the ongoing rottenness of his very being. After all, he lives with himself. Everywhere he goes — there he is.

He has tried rededicating himself to God so often that his re-dedicator has just about worn out. He still sees his secret thoughts and they are not good. He knows the cesspool of filth that bubbles up at the most inopportune moments. He gets deeply troubled by the continual plague of lusts and wicked thoughts that bombard him, but instead of looking to Christ for deliverance he tries more discipline and gets up earlier to have a longer quiet time. He even volunteers to help with the feeding program for the homeless. But still, everywhere he goes there he is!

And Brother Earnest Effort is a member of a church. He sometimes hands out the Sunday bulletins and is on the greeting committee. His church is full of nice decent people but it's a church which does not have the Gospel on centre stage.

Brother Earnest Effort takes his seat each Sunday and week after week Pastor Practical Preacher teaches the folks things like how they can have a better life, how they can be debt free, how to succeed in life, how to have a better marriage, why they should not gossip, how to overcome a bad temper and the like, but Brother Earnest Effort, while he appreciates all the information, remains deeply anguished, troubled and untouched.

Earnest Effort agrees with Pastor Preacher but looks again at his own heart and says to himself, "Pastor Preacher is quite right, I shouldn't gossip and judge; I shouldn't get annoyed and angry with people the way I do, but after all this time I still keep falling into these things." He now thinks in his heart that he perhaps he must not be saved!"

After several years of this, Brother Earnest Effort feels so condemned that he eventually drops out of Church life, separates himself from the church assembly and joins the ranks of the casualties and spiritual cripples! One of the ironies of the whole thing is, after killing him with legalistic subjectivism, the church then condemns him because he dropped out. Pastor Preacher says with pious voice, *"He went out from us, but he was not of us; if he had been of us he would surely have remained with us"*. Thus Brother E. Effort is discarded and is left to wonder why it is that the Church is the only army on earth that buries its wounded!

What Brother Effort was not taught however, was that true guilt free victorious living can only be realized through continual exposure to the Gospel. That's why the Gospel is the essential message for believers. But Brother Earnest Effort never really got to hear the Gospel because Pastor Practical Preacher pandered to the subjective cravings of his congregation. Brother Effort, therefore, never grasped that the big issue wasn't him, but rather Jesus the Lamb. He never was challenged by such questions as...

Was Jesus a suitable sacrifice?

Was He qualified to die?

Was He sinlessly perfect?

He was never told that in the Old Testament, the High Priest examined the sacrificial lamb. If the lamb was found to be without blemish or impediment it was reckoned as a fitting sacrifice and the guilty party went free.

The priest examined the Lamb ... not the one who brought the lamb. If the lamb was accepted, then the one who brought the lamb was accepted and reckoned innocent. So it is with us. Our Lamb, the Lord Jesus, has been slain and because of His shed blood all charges against the believer have been dropped.

Brother Earnest Effort was never taught this! He never grasped that the believer's confidence was to be in the Lord Jesus. He never saw that the believer's sins had been perfectly purged by the perfect blood of the perfect Priest.

“But” Earnest asks, “what happens when I sin?”

He’s got two options.

- 1) Beat himself up over his wretchedness and try harder or
- 2) Take his sin to the blood and confess that Jesus Christ has died for him and has been punished in his place.

As he grows in his understanding of the Gospel, he learns to thank and trust the Lord for His wonderful cross.

He learns that salvation isn't about giving our lives to Christ, it's about BELIEVING Christ gave His life for us. He now delights in redemption, reconciliation, grace and everything else that relates to the Gospel.

And that’s the Gospel Truth!