Evaluating Your Commitment

Kevin D. Beard

Jesus demands commitment. He said, “If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:26). He used the word hate not to refer to literal hatred, but to emphasize the extent of our love for Him. Notice that if one does not possess such a love for Him that he cannot be Jesus’ follower. Either Jesus comes first in our lives, or we cannot have anything to do with Him. Because of this, it is vitally important for us to evaluate our commitment to Him. If it is not what it should be, we must change what we need to change. Maybe the following quiz can help you assess your commitment to the Lord.

Prayer

1. How often do you pray?
   - Several times throughout the day.
   - Before meals.
   - Hardly ever.

2. When are you most likely to pray?
   - In good times and in bad; it does not matter.
   - When things are going bad.
   - I am not very likely to pray.

3. When you pray, how would you classify your prayer?
   - I pray for myself, others, and a wide range of things.
   - I mostly pray for myself.
   - I do not usually pray.
Bible Study
1. How often do you read the Bible?
☐ Every day.
☐ Whenever I can remember to.
☐ Seldom, if ever.
2. How often do you study the Bible?
☐ Several times a week to every day.
☐ Seldom.
☐ Never.
3. Which of these best describes your reason for reading and studying the Bible?
☐ Because I want to learn all I can about God’s will.
☐ Because I feel guilty if I do not.
☐ I do not read or study the Bible.

Giving
1. How often do you give?
☐ Every week.
☐ Every few weeks.
☐ Seldom, if ever.
2. How do you decide how much you will give?
☐ I set aside a generous amount before I do anything else.
☐ I give whatever I happen to have on hand.
☐ I do not give.
3. Why do you give?
☐ Because I love the Lord and I appreciate all He has done for me.
☐ Because I have to.
☐ I do not give.

Worship
1. How often do you attend regular worship services and Bible classes?
☐ Every time.
☐ Only on Sunday morning.
☐ I do not attend regularly.
2. How often do you attend other events, like Gospel Meetings, VBS [Lectureships], etc.?
☐ Every time.
☐ I might come to some of them.
☐ Seldom, if ever.
3. Why do you attend?
☐ Because I love the Lord, and I love my brothers and sisters in Christ.
☐ Because of family tradition.
☐ Because God says I have to.
☐ Because someone else expects me to.
4. Which of these best describe you during the worship assembly?
☐ I concentrate on and participate in everything that is said and done.
☐ I go through the motions without much tonight.
☐ I sit quietly, waiting for time to go home.
5. If you had another appointment on Sunday, before the worship assembly ended, which would you be more likely to do?
☐ Stay for the entire service and be late for the other appointment.
☐ Leave after the Lord’s Supper was served to be on time for the other appointment.
☐ Skip the worship assembly altogether.

Service
1. In relation to the worship assemblies, how would you describe your service to the Lord?
☐ I do many things for the Lord in addition to
New Arrivals

Charles and Alice Williams are proud to announce the birth of their granddaughter, Caroline Elizabeth, on December 18, 2002, to Mike and Carol Williams. Caroline weighed in at 9 pounds.

Sandy Wilkes is proud to announce the birth of her first grandchild, Noah Timothy, on December 22, 2002, to Michael and Sarah Wilkes. Noah weighed in at 8 pounds 15 ounces. His great-grandparents are Fred and Rheba Stancliff.

Our congratulations and best wishes are extended to everyone.

164 17th Street SW
Fayette, AL 35555
Sick

Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Marilyn Hall, Neva Bryant, Ella Hammac, Nancy Travis, Marge Williams, Ruby Bailey, Ruby Bowman, Bill Busch, Dick Lambert (Dot’s husband), Steve Hilburn (Marge Williams’ cousin), Hal Busch (Bill Busch’s father), and Lois Brown (Dale Cunningham’s friend).

Sympathy

Our deepest sympathy is extended to Marge Williams and her family in the death of her cousin Deborah Hilburn on January 5, 2003. Please keep them in your prayers.

Reading/Invitation

January 15, 2003
Reading: Andrew Hatcher
Invitation: Bill Cline
January 22, 2003
Reading: Daniel Hatcher
Invitation: Bill Crowe

Mark These Dates

January 12, 2003–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
January 12, 2003–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
January 19, 2003–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
January 22, 2003–Adult Bible Class Video

Pantry Item Needed
Canned Fruit
Jesus said, “Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again” (Luke 6:38). Giving is not restricted to monetary giving. Often time spent with another is of far greater value than any money we might give them. With that in mind, reflect upon some lessons to be learned from this passage.

First, we cannot out give God. We give, and God sees to it we are blessed in return. But when God gives back unto us it is “pressed down, shaken together, running over.” When you get a box of cereal at the grocery store the manufacturer will inform you that “some settling of contents may have occurred.” Sure enough, you open the box and it has settled to a significant level below what we might consider to be full. That is shaken down, but it is not running over. God will fill your cup till it runs over, and that after it has been shaken together. No, my friend, you cannot out give God.

Second, the things men give to us are actually provided by God. The atheist, agnostic, skeptic, and materialist would have you believe that any material possessions you might obtain in this life are due to your own hard work, ingenuity, or just plain luck. But James tells us that “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above” (Jam. 1:17). God may use others as instruments in His bestowal of gracious blessing unto you, but it is God Who gives nonetheless.

Third, God will give to us according to what
measure we use to give unto others. The story was told of a baker who lived in a village not far removed from Quebec. He regularly bought his butter from a neighboring farmer. One day he became suspicious that the farmer was not measuring the butter accurately, and that his regular purchase of one pound of butter was not quite one pound. So he decided to investigate. For several days he weighed the butter and discovered that the rolls of butter the farmer brought were short the designated amount. This angered the baker so that he took the farmer before the judge. The judge asked the farmer, “Do you have weights by which you measure the butter you sell to the baker?” The farmer answered, “No, sir.” The judge then asked, “How then do you manage to weigh the butter that you sell to the baker?” The farmer answered: “That’s easily explained, Your Honor. When the baker began buying his butter from me, I thought I’d get my bread from him. It is the one pound loaf which he brings me that I’ve been using as a weight for the butter I sell him.”

Now, let us apply this to our plans and goals for this new year. Why not determine that you will give more, even sacrificially, during this new year. You have 352 days left. Will you give of your time to the Lord this year? Why not set aside some time to better prepare yourself to serve in the Kingdom? Why not set aside one extra night a week to make visits; encourage the fainthearted; teach the lost? Why not spend less time in front of the TV, and more time reading and studying? Why not cut back on the times you eat out each week or each month and give more unto the Lord? Why not determine that you will sacrifice a hunting trip, or a week’s vacation to travel to Mexico, Russia, or attend some lectureship? You see, God’s promise is applicable in so many areas. And remember this, “with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again” (Mat. 7:2).

511 Southgate Drive
Mount Pleasant, TX 75455

Never Man Spake like this Man
Barry M. Grider

The chief priests and Pharisees wanted Him arrested. They despised His teaching, His miracles, His life; and they wanted Him to be dead. They anxiously awaited the return of their soldiers, who would deliver Him into their hands. However, upon the officers’ return, they were empty-handed. They did not bring the intended victim. Why? “Never man spake like this man” (John 7:46). His sermon on the mount is still the greatest treatise on human conduct that has ever been written, or ever shall be.

Never man spake about life like He did. What He said would bring happiness was completely different from this world. He said, “Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Mat. 5:3). The world says joy and happiness comes from satisfying the flesh. Jesus says it is just the opposite.

Never man spake about influence like He did. As Christians, He said we are to be the salt and light of the world (Mat. 5:13-16). Salt is a preserver and light is a revealer. Such is our role in an age of sin and darkness.

Never man spake with such authority over the Law of Moses (Mat. 5:17-18). Moses placed himself in subjection to Christ (Deu. 18:15). Furthermore, Jesus proclaimed Himself to be “Lord even of the sabbath day” (Mat. 12:8). Jesus had not only the right to change, but to abolish the entire Mosaic system.
Never man spake making more demands (Mat. 5:20). Jesus, the Master Teacher, had a desire to take His students to a higher level. He has high expectations for His followers. Unlike the religion of the Pharisees, Christianity was a religion concerned about changing the heart of man.

Never man spake with such originality. Jesus studied under no man. In Matthew 5, Jesus says, six different times, “Ye have heard that it was said...but I say unto you.” God’s own voice thund ered from heaven, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him” (Mat. 17:5).

Never man spake like this man when making contrasts. He could so adeptly take the physical and apply such to the spiritual. He noted the contrast between earthly and heavenly treasures (Mat. 6:19-20); serving two masters (Mat. 6:24); man and animals (Mat. 6:25-26); man and the vegetable kingdom (Mat. 6:28-30).

Never man spake like this man when unmasking hypocrisy (Mat. 7:15). No one could hide his true nature from Christ. God can see all things, including the heart of man (Heb. 4:13).

Never man spake with such hope (Mat. 7:7-12). If we can trust our earthly fathers, do we not realize that our Heavenly Father is more loving, caring, and able than our fathers in the flesh?

Never man spake with such authority (Mat. 7:28-29). In fact all authority has been given to Him (Mat. 28:18), and we should submit ourselves to His authority. Just as the officers of the chief priests and Pharisees were in awe of the Lord, so it was with the people who heard His sermon on the mount. They were astonished at His doctrine. Even today, if one will hear His voice, He will stand amazed and say, “Never man spake like this man.”

3950 Forest Hill Irene Road
Memphis, TN 38125

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I Am The New Year

Tom Wacaster

I am the new year; three hundred and sixty five days of unspotted, unspoiled, and unused time. I am a clean slate of opportunity, a reflection of what might be rather than what has been. My diary contains unlimited resolutions, once made in earnest and then broken in haste. I am the fresh breeze of opportunity that blows across the fields of yesterday’s broken and forgotten promises. My features are a mystery, for no one can tell what is in store for tomorrow. Each day brings new insight to what I will be after I have completed my journey. I am the opportunity to achieve those things which for some reason or another were left undone in the previous year. To the financier I am interest accumulated at a fixed percentage rate. To a student I am that one step closer toward receiving an education. To the small child I am another summer camp, Thanksgiving holiday, or Christmas wish. To a parent I contain the joy of watching a child grow and mature. To the young I am dreams and hopes dressed in daily determination. The youngster wonders why I do not come around more often; the aged wonder why I come so often. For some, this year will bring unparalleled opportunities. For others it will bring disaster and ruin. To all, it will bring us twelve months closer to eternity.

511 Southgate Drive
Mount Pleasant, TX 75455
Sick
Please remember in your prayers:
Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Marilyn Hall,
Neva Bryant, Ella Hammac, Nancy Travis,
Marge Williams, Ruby Bailey, Ruby
Bowman, Dick Lambert (Dot’s husband),
Lois Brown (Dale Cunningham’s friend),
and Faye Little (Dot Dodd’s mother).

Sympathy
Our deepest sympathy is extended to
Marge Williams in the death of her cousin,
Steve Hilburn, on January 12, 2003. Please
keep Marge and her family in your
prayers.

Reading/Invitation
January 22, 2003
Reading: Daniel Hatcher
Invitation: Bill Crowe
January 29, 2003
Reading: Brantley Johnson
Invitation: Dale Cunningham

Mark These Dates
January 19, 2003–Visitation Group 3
assignment cards handed out.
January 19, 2003–Elders/Deacons’
meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.

Pantry Item Needed
Canned Fruit

Address Change
Ruth Bamber’s new address is: 210B
Maple Oaks Drive; Pensacola, FL 32534.
Her telephone number is 484-9767. Please
update your directory.
Dear Brother or Sister Lost Sheep...

Jody Durham

This letter is being written in the spirit of Christian kindness and brotherly love. We hope and pray that you will receive it in this way, and that it will serve to awaken, strengthen, and motivate you to come back to the safety of God’s fold.

You see, when members of the church, the flock of God (Acts 20:28), are strong and faithful, they enjoy both the protection of God and the comforting security of being among brethren. They are under the watchful and protective eye of the Good Shepherd (John 10:11, 14). Much as God had built a sheltering hedge or enclosure around the righteous Job (Job 1:10), faithful Christians are blessed with a protective fence which Satan cannot willfully penetrate. Peter describes the devil as an “adversary” who “as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Pet. 5:8). He tries to intimidate us; he delights when we lose heart and cower in fear at the sound of his roar. But as long as we are within the safety of God’s fold, firm in our faith, we are able to resist him (1 Pet. 5:9). Such resistance he cannot bear, and he will soon flee (Jam. 4:7).

Sadly though, when one strays from the fold of God, he wanders in dangerous territory. The “crafty, subtle serpent” oft resorts to trickery to lure us from God’s protective fold where he can attack and devour us at his leisure. What has he used to tempt you.

Some of you were lured away by false
teachers: “led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ” (2 Cor. 11:3, NASV). The “prince of darkness” disguises himself as “an angel of light”—his servants also disguise themselves as “ministers of righteousness” (2 Cor. 11:13-15). He is the lion—his servants are equally lethal wolves (Mat. 7:15; Acts 20:28-31). Like seed which fell by the wayside, some of you barely perceived the truth before Satan took the Word away from your hearts (Luke 8:5, 12).

Some of you fell victim to your own shallowness of soil (Luke 8:6-13). You were eager and responsive to the gospel call at first, but soon went back into the ways of worldliness from which you came. Like seed on shallow, rocky soil in a dry and arid land, it seems you barely had a chance.

Others of you held out longer—you soon took root and began to grow! We hoped and prayed and eagerly awaited for you to mature and produce fruit of your own. Ah, but when we were sleeping the devil came in and sowed his wicked tares (Mat. 13:24ff). You became more concerned about the temporal, the mundane and the earthly and you forgot about the spiritual (Mat. 6:19-21). Anxiety and fear also took their toll as you struggled to compete in this fast-paced, ruthless world. Abandoning your source of spiritual strength, you soon began to wither. Now you are on the verge of perishing: can you gather the strength to outlast the weeds and thorns (Luke 8:7, 14)? Will you still bring forth some fruit unto God?

Dear brother and sister Lost Sheep: we miss you and want you to come home to God’s fold. We know you need us, that is why we are pleading with you now. But we wonder if you know how desperately we also need you! When a member of the Lord’s Body is defective, injured, or missing, the whole body suffers (see 1 Cor. 12:12-26). You may think yourself merely the big toe of the church, but I assure you, your presence is crucial to the body’s well-being. When something is wrong with you—something is wrong with us.

Beyond all this, and most importantly, please return to the Lord for your own soul’s sake—before it is everlasting too late. We live under the reality of two great unknowns: (1) at what moment our lives will end (Psa. 90; Jam. 4:14), and (2) at what time the Lord will return to close the curtain on this earthly existence (Mat. 24:36). Heaven will be too wonderful to miss, and Hell, too awful to endure—so dear brother or sister Lost Sheep, heed the Good Shepherd’s loving call today. Cry out from the pits of darkness and let Him find you and bring you home. Return to the safety and security of the fold. —Ronan, MT

Consequences

You can never tell when we send a word
Like an arrow shot from a bow,
By an archer blind, be it cruel or kind,
Just where it may chance to go.
It may pierce the breast of your dearest friend,
Tipped with its poison or balm;
To a stranger’s heart in life’s great mart
It may carry its pain or its calm.

Anonymous
you lay hold on a happy destiny. How important, then, is thought control!

“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things” (Phi. 4:8). “For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he” (Pro. 23:7).

Author Unknown

Why Repent Publicly???
Is There Some Other Way???
The Wrong Question.

Tim Smith

From time to time over the past couple of decades I have been asked the above two questions in one form or another by those whose lives have been deviant from the will of God and who desired some sort of restoration to faithfulness. Usually it comes from one who has perpetually forsaken the assembly—sometimes for many years. They desire to be considered as faithful but have an aversion to confessing their sin publicly and asking for forgiveness. While I believe the question, as given above, is the wrong question to be asking, let us consider it and endeavor to demonstrate the impropriety thereof.

Who needs to repent publicly? Does, for example, someone who “thought bad thoughts” about another need to repent publicly? No! There is no need or necessity for a public repentance when the sin for which one is repenting is a private one—that is, known only to the sinner and God. Does one who sinned against another in a private setting, the sin being known only to the sinner, the sinner against, and God, need to repent publicly? No! Again, there is no necessity for a public repentance (the sinner needs to confess and repent to God and the offended). The one who needs to repent publicly is the one whose sin is known to the public—that is, one whose infidelity to the Lord and His Will is a matter of common knowledge.

Why do they need to repent publicly? The answer to this question is (to quote a famous detective, in part) elementary... If others know of my sin I am obliged to indicate my error and solicit their forgiveness. If I have forsaken the assembly, I have set a bad example, exerted a bad influence, and (by implication) advocated a lifestyle the end of which is eternal damnation. My sin is an offence to God, but it is also an offence to all who have set themselves to living properly. I must remove the bad example, the bad influence, and so indicate to all that I abandon the former life and adopt the Christian life.

The right question: Why should I not repent publicly when my sin is public knowledge? I can give no positive answer to this query. If one sins, and sins publicly, he/she should willingly make public confession and publicly indicate repentance. In fact, one refusing to do so leaves serious doubt as to his/her genuineness in repenting.

1272 Enon Road; Webb, AL 36376
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Marilyn Hall, Neva Bryant, Ella Hammac, Nancy Travis, Marge Williams, Ruby Bailey, Ruby Bowman, Dick Lambert (Dot’s husband), Lois Brown (Dale Cunningham’s friend), and Faye Little (Dot Dodd’s mother).

Restored
Tim Lamb and Dick Lambert were restored to Christ on January 19, 2003. Please keep them in your prayers and offer encouragement.

Reading/Invitation
January 29, 2003
Reading: Brantley Johnson
Invitation: Dale Cunningham
February 5, 2003
Reading: Bryan Loy
Invitation: Ray Dodd

Mark These Dates
January 29, 2003—Fifth Wednesday
Singing at 7:00 PM, in the auditorium.
February 2, 2003—Visitation Group 1
assignment cards handed out.
February 9, 2003—Visitation Group 2
assignment cards handed out.
February 9, 2003—Deacons’ meeting at
5:00 PM, in room 7.
February 16, 2003—Visitation Group 3
assignment cards handed out.
February 16, 2003—Elders/Deacons’
meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.

Pantry Item Needed
Canned Fruit
Are You Sowing Bountifully?

W. Kent Graham

“But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver” (2 Cor. 9:6-7). From our text we learn that God’s blessings are bountifully bestowed upon Christians who are giving bountifully! The obvious question is: “What is bountiful giving?”

Under the Law of Moses, God’s people were required to give at least a tenth of all of their earnings and possessions; it was the very minimum allotted offering to the Lord, and it was called a tithe. It was sinful to offer Jehovah anything less than the tithe; this was true if a man had one child, or six children; God required a tenth from everyone! They also had the opportunity to give over and above the tithe in the form of a freewill offering; it was here that their giving could be considered “above and beyond the call of duty,” or “bountiful giving.”

However, unlike God’s people under the Patriarchal Law and the Mosaic Law, Christians are not under the “tithing system,” we are under the “Honor System.” The Christian is instructed and commanded to give “as God hath prospered him,” and “according as he purposeth in his heart.” (1 Cor. 16:1-2; 2 Cor. 9:7). But we still need to know how much of our income we ought to give back to the Lord for our offering to be considered bountiful giving. Christians with good and honest hearts, who are truly appreciative of the many blessings and promises
that we enjoy as God’s people, and who genuinely love the Lord, will seek to determine the Lord’s Will concerning the weekly monetary contribution so that we can be certain that we are “sowing bountifully,” and offering an acceptable sacrifice!

All too often, Christians have used the phrases “as God hath prospered him,” and “according as he purposeth in his heart,” to justify offering the Lord less than a tenth of their weekly income. Innumerable Christians place only a dollar or two, or a five or ten dollar bill into the collection plate, while believing that their offering is acceptable unto the Lord. Good brethren, we must sow “bountifully... for God loveth a cheerful giver.” It is extremely unwise for Christians to offer Jehovah less than God’s people were required to offer under the Patriarchal and Mosaic Laws. We are under a better covenant, and we have better promises (Heb. 8:6); it only makes sense that we should offer at least as much as they did, if not more! After all, in His “Sermon on the Mount,” Jesus taught that a raising of standards, not a lowering of standards, would accompany the New Covenant which He was instituting. Rather than hiding behind the trust that Jesus places in us and offering less than God’s people were ever allowed to offer, let us appreciate the fact that we have the greatest spiritual blessing ever accorded to God’s people in the history of the world, and truly “give as we have been prospered.”

Some members of the church do give more than a tenth. They understand their responsibility to support the work of the church, and the Cause of Christ. They know that they must give sacrificially, bountifully, and cheerfully. Is it possible for a Christian who is offering less than the bare minimum which God required of His people under the Patriarchal and Mosaic systems to be considered as giving sacrificially, bountifully, and cheerfully? Before you answer this question, please remember, “the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith” (Gal. 3:24). Now that we are no longer under the schoolmaster, can we honestly justify giving less than it taught us to give? Friends, giving a tenth could hardly be considered giving bountifully under the Old Law, and neither should it now! We must strive to show our love for God and appreciation for His Son by matching the freewill offerings which were over and above the tithe. When we do, we can feel confident that we are giving cheerfully, and sowing bountifully unto the Lord! (Please read James 2:10.)

P.O. Box 1704
Fulton, TX 78358

Average Planned Budget

Richard Stevens

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rent/Mortgage payment</th>
<th>Car(s) payment(s)</th>
<th>Credit card payments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Credit card payments</td>
<td>Electric bill</td>
<td>Water bill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gas—House/Car(s)</td>
<td>Telephones—House/Mobile/Pagers</td>
<td>Savings—Bank/Vacation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Savings—Retirement/Investment
Savings—Kids Future
Insurance—Car/Health/Life/Home
Food/Cleaning Supplies
Dry Cleaners
Weekly Expenses/Allowances
Clothing/Toiletries

Question: Where is the Lord? Christian giving is also planned. On the first day of every week (Sunday), we are commanded to give what we have laid aside for this day. It should be given with forethought and evaluation. We cheerfully give to God and His work (2 Cor. 9:7), knowing that it is God that prospers us! Our purposed offering to God is more important than anything on our man-made lists, because God wants it! Remember, it is God that takes care of us! (Psa. 37:25; 2 Cor. 9:8; Phi. 4:19).

Copied

What Is Truth?

Johnie Scaggs, Jr.

The question is often asked: “Just what is truth?” Although the answer is very fundamental, sometimes we get a little lost in finding the answer because of popular opinion. That is to say that most folks have their own version of what truth really is. To some truth is whatever you believe to be true. To others truth is based on the views set forth by cultural. Of course by this view, truth will change from one cultural setting to the next. It will never stay the same.

Pilate asked the question: “What is truth?” (John 18:38a). Jesus had already answered the question when He stated, “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth” (John 17:17). What is truth? God’s Word is truth. John said, “He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him” (1 John 2:4). Truth is found in keeping the commandments of our Lord. All truth as it relates to biblical matters is found in the pages of God’s Word, the Bible. Peter said concerning this matter that God: “According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue” (2 Pet. 1:3). God has not left us in doubt as to what is truth. He has revealed the truth to us and it is our responsibility to find out what the truth is.

When trying to ascertain what is truth, remember these basic concepts. (1) Truth never contradicts truth. Truth will always agree with itself. (2) Truth does not depend upon my agreeing with it or not agreeing. (3) Whatever the truth says to one person, it says the same to all persons. (4) Truth is truth whether you like it or whether you do not like it. (5) Your feelings do not determine what is truth. (6) Truth is everlasting. (7) It is the truth that will judge each and every person on that great day when our Lord returns for His own.

Truth is not some obscure thing. It can be found and we can understand the truth. That is why we are told to study the Word. “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15).

We should also understand that we can live by the truth and one day see God in all His glory. Why not study His truth more and more each day of your life so that you will one day be ready to stand before Him in the end?
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Marilyn Hall, Neva Bryant, Ella Hammac, Nancy Travis, Marge Williams, Ruby Bowman, and Dick Lambert.

Reading/Invitation
February 5, 2003
   Reading: Bryan Loy
   Invitation: Ray Dodd
February 12, 2003
   Reading: Jim Loy
   Invitation: Ray Foshee

Mark These Dates
February 9, 2003–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
February 9, 2003–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
February 16, 2003–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.
February 16, 2003–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
February 26, 2003–Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 PM, in the auditorium.

Pantry Item Needed
   Canned Fruit

Bellview Lectures
The 28th Annual Bellview Lectures will be held Jun 7-11, 2003. The theme is: Great Old Testament Questions. Make plans now to attend. If you have any questions contact the office.
What Has the Holy Spirit Done for You Lately?

Eddie Whitten

The subject of the Holy Spirit is always a hot topic. There are many who say the Holy Spirit operates on the heart of individuals directly. What He does for them varies with each person. Some claim He leads them away from danger or distress. One man, a so-called preacher, said the Holy Spirit provided a parking space for him. The same man said the Holy Spirit told him that a person to whom he was talking with was lying. Others say this and say that. It is almost like the computer commercial in which a customer says, “It makes your head spin!”

The Holy Spirit works, alright, but the question is: “How does He work?” Does He do something for one that He does not for another? If so, by what criteria does He choose? This kind of question could become embarrassing in some cases. Let us suggest some ways in which the Holy Spirit works today:

1. He gives us God’s revealed Word. John 16:13 should squelch every argument as to the work of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, “Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth.” Paul said, “But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ” (Gal. 1:11-12). Peter wrote, “According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and
godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue” (2 Pet. 1:3).

2. He protects the Word of God. Many attempts have been made to destroy the Bible, both by external means and by internal contamination. Jesus promised: “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away” (Mat. 24:35). He also said that His Word is what would judge man in the final day (John 12:48).

3. He gives us assurance of our inheritance. Ephesians 1:13-14 says that we are “sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is an earnest of our inheritance, unto the redemption of God’s own possession.” The purchased possession is the church of our Lord (Acts 20:28). Jesus is going to present the church to Himself “a glorious church,... holy and without blemish” (Eph. 5:27). The Holy Spirit has revealed that fact to us and Satan cannot change it.

4. He promises us eternal salvation. The Holy Spirit is part of the oneness of God, of Divinity. What God has promised, the Holy Spirit has revealed unto us. The Holy Spirit does not work separate and apart from the revelation of God. He is the revealer of God’s Word. All who would have Him going about doing for one what he will not do for another have a great misunderstanding of the work of the Holy Spirit.

We must be careful that we do not fall into the Pentecostal trap of assigning to the Holy Spirit miraculous works today. He works today, surely, but only through God’s Word.

3616 Brown Trail; Bedford, TX 76021

Some Thoughts On Proper Worship Conduct

Tim Smith

As we worship God, do we pay attention to what we are doing? When the man stands before us and leads the congregation in prayer, do we participate with him? Do we join our thoughts with his and collectively approach the Throne of Grace, petitioning the favor of Almighty God and thanking Him for His blessings to us? We should. When we eat the break and drink the fruit of the vine, do our thoughts go back to Calvary and recall what Jesus did there? Do they look inward to see that we are prepared for the feast? Do they look forward to the time of His return in the clouds? We should be thinking of these things. When we give, do we do it cheerfully, knowing that God loveth a cheerful giver? When we sing, do we think about the words (we must sing with the understanding, you know)? Do we participate fully? (I know that one should not sing a song he/she does not understand, but should they not seek to understand the song when they learn of its existence??? I also know that one should not sing songs that teach error. But songs that teach truth and are understood by the singer should be sung. Sometimes people fail to sing citing their crude voice etc., as an excuse. Such is improper.) When the preacher is preaching, do we study along with him? He has put in many hours on his lesson and we should pay attention and study along with him that we might benefit from his labors.

Having preached for over two decades I have noticed that improper conduct in the public assembly tells us one of three things: (1) the misbehaving brother/sister is ignorant of his/her duties in this respect; (2) the person has fallen away from the Lord and is in need of restoration; or (3) the person is in the process of falling away and is in need of restoration. If the problem is due to ignorance, these thoughts ought to help to enlighten anyone who did not know any better
before. If the problem is due to apostasy full-blown or apostasy-in-progress, again, these thoughts ought to call this to the attention of the errant and assist them in coming back to the Lord before it is everlasting too late.

When the church prays, pray with them; when the church gives, give cheerfully (noting that no charitable endeavors exempt you from the contribution on the Lord’s Day); when the church eats the Lord’s Supper, eat it properly; when the church sings, sing—and do not worry about your ability to hit the notes; when the church hears the sermon, study along—do not worry about how long it takes the preacher to finish, what he is wearing, how he looks, or anything else. Worship is to God. We are there to do His Will and please Him. He has regulated what is to be done, by whom, when, where, and how. May we ever be faithful in obeying Him.

1272 Enon Road; Webb, AL 36376

Bellview Lectures

The Twenty-eighth Annual Bellview Lectures, *Great Old Testament Questions*, will be held June 7-11, 2002. Twenty-nine men will be speaking: “Who told thee that thou wast naked?”-Lynn Parker; “What hast thou done?”-Harrell Davidson; “How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?”-B. J. Clarke; “Who is on the Lord’s side?”-Tom Bright; “What doth the Lord thy God require of thee?”-Joe Galloway; “How shall we know the word which the Lord hath not spoken?”-Randy Mabe; “How shall we order the child?”-Bobby Liddell; “Is there not a cause?”-Marvin Weir; “Art thou he that troubleth Israel?”-Toney Smith; “How long halt ye between two opinions?”-Ronnie Hayes; “Why is the house of God forsaken?”-Gary Grizzell; “Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?”-David Smith; “If a man die, shall he live again?”-Curtis Cates; “How then can man be justified with God?”-Clifford Newell; “What is man that thou art mindful of him?”-Darrell Broking; “If the foundations be destroyed, what shall the righteous do?”-Lee Davis; “What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me?”-Brian Braswell; “Who hath woe...redness of the eyes?”-Geoff Litke; “Who can find a virtuous woman?”-Jerry Martin; “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?”-Guss Eoff; “Were they ashamed when they committed abomination?”-Keith Mosher; “Is there any word from the Lord?”-Kevin Beard; “Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?”-Lester Kamp; “For why will ye die?”-Jesse Whitlock; “Should not the shepherds feed the flock?”-Eddie Whitten; “Is thy God...Able to deliver thee?”-Riley Nelson; “What shall be the end of these things?”-Glenn Hitchcock; “Can two walk together, except they be agree?”-David Brown; “Will a man rob God?”-Howell Bigham. Nine men will have lessons in the book only: “Am I my brother’s keeper?”-Gary Summers; “Who hath made man’s mouth?”-Wayne Cox; “How long wilt thou refuse to humble thyself before me?”-Paul Vaughn; “What have they seen in thine house?”-Tim Smith; “Should such a man as I flee?”-Tom Wacaster; “Will He esteem thy riches?”-Preston Silcox; “Who shall abide in Thy tabernacle?”-John West; “Watchman, what of the night?”-Jerry Murrell; and “Why do we sit still?”-David Jones.

For further information please contact the office by phone, mail, or at our e-mail address (bellview@bellviewcoc.com). Check out our web site listed below for more information. We hope to see you in June.

(http://www.bellviewcoc.com)
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Marilyn Hall, Neva Bryant, Ella Hammac, Nancy Travis, Marge Williams, Ruby Bowman, and Dot and Dick Lambert, Doug Hoffay (Karen Ayliffe’s son).

Reading/Invitation
February 12, 2003
Reading: Jim Loy
Invitation: Ray Foshee
February 19, 2003
Reading: Shelby Nall
Invitation: Louis Herrington

Mark These Dates
February 9, 2003–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
February 9, 2003–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
February 16, 2003–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.
February 16, 2003–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.

Pantry Item Needed
Vegetable and Chicken Soups

New Arrival
Dot and Dick Lambert and happy to announce the birth of their great-granddaughter, Eironna Marie, on January 20, 2003, to Desirah and Robert Vaughn. Eironna weighed in at 6 pounds 9 ounces. We extend our congratulations to all.
Worrying over Worry

Allen Webster

The three best selling prescription drugs in the United States are: Tagamet (an ulcer medication), Inderal (a hypertensive drug), and Valium (tranquilizer). The most wealthy, healthy, intelligent, highly-advanced, enlightened generation ever to occupy this orbiting sphere is literally worrying to death.

It is remarkable and unfortunate that Christians are not immune to this disorder. They have been known to be just as insecure as those whose feet have never stood on the Rock of Ages, whose eyes have not looked to the hills from whence cometh their help, and whose minds are not set on things above.

Most saints know that they ought not to worry, so they end up worrying about worrying. What does the Owner’s Manual say to do about this malfunction?

The birds teach us not to worry (Mat. 6:26). Whoever said that “worrying is for the birds” was off the mark. Birds do not worry! Who ever heard of a bird taking ulcer medication, committing suicide when his stocks crashed, or dying with a heart attack? Birds are not concerned with the future, yet they form no lines at soup kitches or welfare offices. God cares for them.

Surely, God could not be charged with watching out for sparrows and neglecting his own children! We are made in the image of God and infused with a soul from the father (Gen. 1:26-27; 2:7; Heb. 12:9). Birds are not. Thus, if God
cares for them, He cares more for us (Mat. 10:29-31; cf., Rom. 8:32).

The yardstick teaches us not to worry (Mat. 6:27). Whoever heard of a short man worrying himself into a larger size? Was it ever reported that worrying lengthened someone’s life? No! Worry is useless. Stature (helikia) indicates “a stage of growth whether measured by age or stature” (Abbott-Smith). Jesus says worry will not make you older (though we appear to be!) or taller. “Worry never climbed a hill; worry never paid a bill; worry never dried a tear; worry never calmed a fear; worry never darned a heel; worry never cooked a meal; worry never composed a song to sing; actually, worry never did a worthwhile thing.” “Worry is like a rocking chair, it keeps you busy, but gets you nowhere.”

No one can lengthen his life by worrying, but there is evidence that worry can shorten it. When it comes to long life, what we are eating is important, but what is eating us is more important! Studies indicate that 70% of all illnesses are psychosomatic (“relating to bodily symptoms caused by emotional disturbance”).

Worry has been listed as a leading cause of heart trouble, high blood pressure, stomach disorders, and respiratory ailments. “I have never known a man to die from hard work, but many who have died from doubt” (Dr. Charles Mayo). The old English root from which we get worry means “to strangle,” and people are strangling their lives with anxiety. If for no other reason, we should not worry because it destroys the Spirit’s temple (1 Cor. 6:19-20).

Worry falls into three classes. (1) Things that have already happened. Why worry? Eggs cannot be unscrambled and toothpaste cannot be put back in the tube. “Most worries are reruns” (Reader’s Digest). Paul learned to put the past behind him (Phi. 3:13-14). If sin is involved, we should cleanse it in Christ’s blood (Acts 22:16; Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:7), and go on.

(2) Things which must happen. All the worry in the world cannot change some things, for they will happen anyway. We are going to die (Heb. 9:27), so why worry about it? Prepare and let it come (Phi. 1:21). (3) Things which will never happen. A little old lady said, “I always feel bad, even when I feel good, because I know that it will not be long before I feel bad again.” Sad! “It is not the tornadoes that get us, but the termites.” It is said that 85 percent of what we worry over never happens. (The original words for worry have to do with “being concerned with objects in the future; to be anxious beforehand.”)

Why waste the time (Eph. 5:16)? Time should be invested in working instead of worrying. The ant wastes no time worrying about the future. Instead, it constantly works to prepare for tomorrow (Pro. 6:6-8). “Go to the ant.”

A child teaches us not to worry (Mat. 6:32). Children lead us in many ways (Isa. 11:6), and one way is that they trust their parents. It is sinful to worry because it says, “I do not trust my Father to care for me.” Worry is praying to the wrong god and thus insults Jehovah (cf., Psa. 37:1; Pro. 3:5-6; Phi. 4:6-7).

Problems become smaller when they are seen in God’s shadow. Martha was troubled about many things, but Mary was sitting at Jesus’ feet (Luke 10:38-42). Guess which one was content! “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee” (Isa. 26:3). Our coins say, “In God We Trust,” and so should our hearts (Pro. 3:5; Psa. 9:10).

God is unlimited in what He can do (Rom. 8:28; Eph. 3:20; Phi. 4:19), so my problems are not very big to Him. It is much like a child who becomes frustrated with a knotted shoestring. To him it is a major problem and an unsolvable dilemma. He may even deem it worth several tears. Daddy smiles to himself and quickly unties it. The difference is a matter of perspective. Our
major difficulties are only knotted shoestrings to Almighty God. Why get so upset?

A minute of prayer is better than an hour of worrying (Phi. 4:6). We read where Jesus spent an entire night in prayer, but never where He

spent one second in worry. His example is worthy of imitation (1 Pet. 2:21-22).

Worried? Let God handle it.

P.O. Box 520; Jacksonville, Al 36265

Attention Visitors

It was Thursday night and I sat alone in the guard room of our local jail. My Bible class had finished early and I was waiting on the other groups to finish so we could leave together. Every person wishing to visit in the jail must pass through this room.

As I waited I glanced over the signs which were posted to give visitors various warnings and cautions. One sign caught my attention because it was posted at least four different times in key locations. All of the other signs were posted only once. Obviously this was a message they wanted to make sure all visitors understood. What message do you think a jail would want to make sure it got across to its visitors? It was not about bringing in anything that could be used as a weapon. The sign read as follows:

ATTENTION VISITORS
No person admitted unless properly dressed.
1. Shorts must be knee length.
2. No tank tops.
3. No short dresses.
4. No sun dresses.
5. No shirts with obscene language or pictures.
6. No see-through clothing.

Any person that cannot abide by these rules will be refused visitation. (No exceptions)

Why would this be such an important notice to visitors of a jail? Obviously they are aware that the way someone is dressed could have an adverse impact on the people they are charged with housing and controlling. They are aware of the problems that improper dress can create and they want to avoid them with the people they are responsible for.

Should not Christians be even more concerned when it comes to the way they dress? Our dress is to portray an image of godliness. We should be concerned with the problems our dress may cause in the minds of others. Should a jail be more concerned with modesty than a Christian?

Via Seibles Road Church of Christ bulletin
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Marilyn Hall, Neva Bryant, Ella Hammac, Nancy Travis, Marge Williams, Ruby Bowman, and Dot and Dick Lambert, and Doug Hoffay (Karen Ayliffe’s son).

Reading/Invitation
February 19, 2003
Reading: Shelby Nall
Invitation: Louis Herrington
February 26, 2003
Reading: Richard Parker
Invitation: Ray Pierce

Mark These Dates
February 16, 2003–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.
February 16, 2003–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
February 26, 2003–Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 PM, in the auditorium.
March 8, 2003–Bridal Shower for Rebecca Cline at 3:00 PM, in the General Purpose Building. See Nancy Loy for further details.

Pantry Item Needed
Vegetable and Chicken Soups

New Address
Harold Cozad’s new address is: AFRH-Gulfport Room 1709; 1800 Beach Drive; Gulfport, MS 39507-1597. Please keep Harold in your prayers and write to him.
12 Excellent Rules to Promote Harmony Among Church Members Today

1. To remember that we are all subject to failings of one kind or another. Therefore, we need to help each other overcome temptations (Rom. 3:23; 1 John 3:17).

2. To help bear one another’s infirmities (Gal. 6:1-2).

3. To pray one for another in public assemblies, and especially in our private prayers (Jam. 5:16).

4. To avoid going from house to house, for the purpose of tale-bearing tearing down what has been built-up. Even if it is not for that particular purpose, this kind of thing should be excluded from our lives (Heb. 3:13).

5. Always turn a deaf ear to any slanderous report and to lay no charge against any person until well-founded (Tit. 3:2).

6. If a member be in fault, tell him of it in private, before it is mentioned to others. Never make a private matter public without first trying to resolve the ought in private (Mat. 18:15-17).

7. To observe the just rules of Solomon. That is, to leave off contention before it is meddled with (Pro. 17:14).

8. If a member is offended, consider how God-like it is to forgive those who repent and how unlike a Christian it is to seek revenge (Luke 17:3-4).

9. Remember it is always the great task of the devil to promote distance and animosities among members of the church; and we should therefore watch against everything that furthers this end
10. To consider how much more good we can do in the world at large, and in the church in particular, when we are united in our love for one another and for our God. A contrary spirit will never promote the goal of the church (Mat. 5:16; John 17:21-23).

11. We should be ever looking for ways to promote the welfare of the church and one another. We must never forsake a single assembling of the saints, because this aids in promoting love and good works (Heb. 10:25).

12. Last, we must consider the express injunction of the Scriptures, and the beautiful example of Christ as to all of these things (Eph. 4:3, 32; 1 Pet. 2:21; John 13:5, 15).

Author Unknown

Taught Wrong and Baptized Right?

Wayne Jones

Under the banners of acceptance and unity, many in the Lord’s church have developed an open door policy with members of the denominational world. Many, by their own admission, have chosen not to question a person’s claim to salvation or even method of salvation when they leave a denomination to become a member of the Lord’s church. Some have even adopted this idea when it comes to denominational baptism. How can this be? Is it possible to be instructed under a false system and to be baptized for the wrong reasons and still be saved as a result? Can a person be taught incorrectly and baptized correctly?

While all of us might be quick with a response that is based on opinion and supposition, we should be careful in answering this question. Our caution in answering will allow us to consider what the Bible has to say on the matter. Does the Bible teach that a person can be taught wrong and baptized right?

First, it must be understood that baptism is **not the only** step in God’s plan to save man. Man’s response to God’s grace must begin in the mind. Man must realize that he is lost in sin, just like those on Pentecost realized their condition (Acts 2:37). Once a person realizes his spiritual condition, he must also understand that Christ (the only begotten Son of God) is the only source for relief of the burden of sin (Acts 4:12).

Consider for a moment the account of Philip and the eunuch as recorded in Acts 8:26-39. When the eunuch realized that he was lost, he inquired about baptism (Acts 8:36). Philip responded by saying, “If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest” (Acts 8:37). If baptism was the only step in the eunuch’s salvation, there would be no need for verse 37. However, Philip understood that unless the eunuch understood some things and was convicted of some things, then baptism would only get him wet.

The same is true in the case of the Jews in Acts 2. When those present asked the apostles what they needed to do in order to have the sin removed from their record, Peter’s response was two-fold. According to Acts 2:38, Peter told them to repent and be baptized. While baptism is an action that can be seen on the outside, repentance is a step in God’s plan for salvation that is primarily mental. When a person repents, he changes his mind based on what he knows about God, His Word, and His plan for man’s salvation. Peter realized that unless these men and women were willing to make a mental decision to turn from Judaism, then being immersed in water would do them no good.
Peter and Philip realized that baptism was not the only step in God’s plan for the salvation of mankind. In fact, both of these men realized that baptism would only benefit those who were thinking correctly. It is for this reason that both Peter and Philip took the time to verbally teach their audiences the Word of God. It is the Word that produces faith (Rom. 10:17) and is an understanding of that Word that leads us to repentance (2 Cor. 7:10).

Perhaps the clearest example of this is found in Acts 19. As this chapter opens, Paul comes to Ephesus and realizes that some of the Ephesians had been baptized by Apollos after hearing his teaching. According to the latter portion of chapter 18, Apollos was teaching the baptism of John after the cross of Christ. John (the baptizer) taught repentance and baptism because Christ was going to die and establish His kingdom. However, after the cross the apostles were teaching repentance and baptism because Christ had already died and established His kingdom. Apparently, those in Ephesus had been taught John’s baptism on the wrong side of the cross. They were sincere and at one time the doctrine that they were taught was correct. However, at the time it was taught to them it was outdated. Paul realized this when those in Ephesus had not even heard of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (Acts 19:2) which took place on Pentecost. Did Paul say, “Well, as long as you are comfortable with it, I won’t question your baptism”? No, that was not Paul’s attitude at all. In fact, notice what Acts 19:4-5 reveals that Paul did. He taught them the truth and the men were baptized with the correct thinking. Could those in Ephesus be taught wrong, but baptized right? Apparently, the answer is no.

Has the doctrine of God changed since Acts 19? Has God’s plan to save man been divinely altered since the days of Acts 2, 8, or 19? No, dear friends, it has not. God still demands that for baptism to be scriptural and effective, the one who is being baptized must understand why he is being baptized. Incorrect thinking and understanding will lead to an incorrect baptism. May we never provide false hope to someone under the banners of acceptance and unity.

How to Discern
Richard Massey

How can we discern whether an act is proper for a Christian? Such as the use of tobacco, wearing revealing clothing, getting tattoos, getting our bodies grossly pierced, etc. Here are a few ways that will help.

Does the Bible command us to do it or not (Jam. 4:17; Ecc. 12:13)? Are there any principles, such as 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, that would prohibit it?

Then honestly test it by asking: Is it a good idea for everyone to do it? Would it be all right if my young kids or grand-kids did it? Would it be good if my Mom or Dad, or Grand-Dad and Grand-Mom did it? Would the preacher gain influence in the community by doing it? Would I admire the elders and their wives if they did it? What if the whole church got tattoos all over their bodies, would it help their image in the community? If it is not a good idea for everyone in the church (young and old), then it is something that I should not do either. If everyone should not be doing it, then it indicates that it is not a sensible and wise thing to be doing.
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Marilyn Hall, Neva Bryant, Ella Hammac, Nancy Travis, Marge Williams, Ruby Bowman, and Dot and Dick Lambert.

Reading/Invitation
February 26, 2003
Reading: Richard Parker
Invitation: Ray Pierce
March 5, 2003
Reading: Joshua Wilkes
Invitation: Fred Stancliff

Mark These Dates
February 26, 2003–Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 PM, in the auditorium.
March 2, 2003–Visitation Group 1 assignments handed out.
March 8, 2003–Bridal Shower for Rebecca Cline at 3:00 PM, in the General Purpose Building.
March 9, 2003–Visitation Group 2 assignments handed out.
March 9, 2003–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
March 16, 2003–Visitation Group 3 assignments handed out.
March 16, 2003–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
March 26, 2003–Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 PM, in the auditorium.

Pantry Item Needed
Vegetable and Chicken Soups
The Great Commission

Noah Hackworth

Introduction
The Great Commission is to be distinguished from the Limited Commission; one is local and the other universal. One involved the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Mat. 10:6). The other involved the whole world (Mark 16:15). One was more likely for the training of the apostles. The Great Commission implies several significant things. It is our intent to examine these implications.

Men Are Lost Without the Gospel
Paul says “it was God’s good pleasure through the foolishness of the preaching to save them that believe” (1 Cor. 1:21). The Greek word σωτηρία (soteria) denotes “deliverance, preservation, salvation.” The word is used of material and temporal deliverance from danger and apprehension (Vine). It is also used of the spiritual and eternal deliverance granted by God (ibid). To be saved implies that we have been rescued from something that is threatening us. In this case it is sin that is threatening the salvation of our soul. No one can be saved from sin until he acknowledges the fact that he is lost in sin and separated from God (Isa. 59:2). Jesus said, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” (Mark 16:15).

Amenability
Amenability means accountability. All men are thus amenable to the law of Christ. Men cannot obey a law to which they are not responsible, for “sin is not imputed when there is no
law” (Rom. 5:13). There are many troubling things in the brotherhood that would be immediately resolved if it were admitted that all men are amenable to the law of Christ. When Paul came to Athens, Greece he saw a city filled with idols and idol worship (Acts 17). The worship of idols is wrong, but not according to Athenian law. Athenian law did not prohibit the worship of idols. However, idolatry is a violation of the law of Christ. It is condemned as a work of the flesh in Galatians 5:19-21. Another case that demonstrates amenability is the example of the Corinthians. Some of them had been engaged in sinful practices. Paul said to them, “but ye were washed, but ye were sanctified, but ye were justified” (1 Cor. 6:11). The sins in which the Corinthians had previously engaged violated the law of Christ which would not be possible unless they were amenable to Christ’s law (1 Cor. 6:9-10). Paul said, “And such were some of you: but ye were washed, but ye were sanctified, but ye were justified” (v. 11).

**Re repent or Stay Lost**

It is sometimes said that men “will be lost” if they do not repent. More correctly stated it is “men will stay lost if they do not repent.” They are already lost and must repent to be saved (Acts 17:30). The people on Pentecost were separated from God by the guilt of their sin, especially the sin of murdering Jesus Christ. Peter told them, “Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins” (Acts 2:38). Jesus articulated the same truth: “except ye repent, ye shall all in like manner perish” (Luke 13:3).

**No One Should Perish**

The Great Commission demonstrates the fact that the Lord does not wish anyone to lose his soul (perish). “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some count slackness; but is longsuffering to you-ward, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Pet. 3:9).

**Knowledge of God**

Jesus said, “And they shall all be taught of God” (John 6:45). God has always been “knowable.” There has never been a time in the history of the world when God could not be known (Rom. 1:20). Concerning the Gentiles who lived anterior to the Christian age, Paul said, “because that, knowing God, they glorified him not as God, neither gave thanks” (Rom. 1:21). They also “refused to have God in their knowledge” (Rom. 1:28). The Great Commission indicates that God wants men to know about Him, and such cannot be without instruction.

**Conclusion**

There is so much more to the Great Commission that the baptism of penitent believers for the remission of sins. All the above things are implied in the evangelism of humanity, and all of them can be effectively accomplished in the execution of the Great Commission. The need for the gospel is universal.

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“Lord, Forgive Me For Lying…”

Oh, Lord, I didn’t mean to lie, but now I realize that I have not only lied, but to thee…I was only searching for an excuse to justify my indifference…but I lied! I lied about being sick on Sunday morning, for I went visiting Sunday afternoon. Oh, Lord, I lied about my work keeping me tied down, for I go to everything else I want to, except church services. Oh, Lord, I lied about my contribution, for I
spend ten times as much as I give to thee for shows, tobacco, sports, recreation, and downright foolishness.

Oh, Lord, I lied about not having clothes good enough to wear to worship for I go to much larger gatherings in public.

Oh, Lord, I lied when I said, “No one spoke to me at church,” for I spoke to no one and left the building in haste.

Oh, Lord, I lied when I blame my absence on the children, for when I want to go some place other than worship, I take them.

Oh, Lord, I lied when I said no one cared if I were absent, for a number called and tried to get us to come back to church.

Oh, Lord, forgive me of the sin of lying, for all liars shall have their part in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone (Rev. 21:8).

Remember: “all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do” (Heb. 4:13).

Author Unknown

Six Good Reasons to Sit in the Front

Roger Wright

A college professor once told me he could usually tell what kind of grade a student would earn by where he sat in the classroom. Guess where the “A” students sit? That’s right. They sit in the front. When we apply this to the times when we come to worship, it helps us to make our worship just a little bit better. Here are some good reasons to sit as a group in the front when we come to worship.

Better Singing. Our singing is much better when people are not scattered over the building. When people sit in the front, they can hear and see the song leader more easily, and he can see and hear them better. This makes for better singing.

Better Able to See and Hear. Occasionally, someone will complain about not being able to hear and see well. Everything possible should be done to eliminate this problem for people, but it also helps when you sit close to the front. You become much more involved, and you learn better when you are closer to the action.

Togetherness. Sitting together in the front promotes a sense of warmth and togetherness. What are we saying to one another when we are physically close but that we do indeed love each other and enjoy one other’s presence?

Consideration of Visitors. When we sit in the front of the building, it provides room in the back for the visitors or latecomers who feel embarrassed by parading down the aisle to find a seat. How would you feel in their position? Let us make our gatherings as warm and convenient as we can for those who come to be with us.

Helps Song Leader and Preacher. It is a real boost to the song leader and the preacher when the crowd is close to them. It is hard to preach over three or four rows of empty pews. On the other hand, when the crowd is “in close,” it helps to provide the encouragement that is needed to do a good job.

Shows Enthusiasm. Everyone knows that the best seats at a football game are on the front row at the 50-yard line. If people desire (and sometimes fight for) these seats, they are called “big fans.” Why must people be considered “fanatics” if they come to worship with the idea of getting involved with their whole beings?
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Marilyn Hall, Neva Bryant, Ella Hammac, Nancy Travis, Ray and Marge Williams, and Ruby Bowman.

Reading/Invitation
March 5, 2003
Reading: Joshua Wilkes
Invitation: Fred Stancliff
March 12, 2003
Reading: Carl Ayliffe
Invitation: Henry Born

Mark These Dates
March 2, 2003–Visitation Group 1 assignments handed out.
March 8, 2003–Bridal Shower for Rebecca Cline at 3:00 PM, in the General Purpose Building.
March 9, 2003–Visitation Group 2 assignments handed out.
March 9, 2003–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
March 16, 2003–Visitation Group 3 assignments handed out.
March 16, 2003–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
March 26, 2003–Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 PM, in the auditorium.
March 31, 2003–Visitation Group Get-together at 6:00 PM, in the general purpose building. A covered-dish meal will precede the meeting.

Pantry Item Needed
Vegetable and Chicken Soups
Sometimes brethren underestimate the power of the Bible Class. This in turn has led to congregations whose classes are unequipped, from cradle role to adult classes, and almost begging for people to teach.

The church in the first century had a steady diet of the Word of God. “Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Acts 2:41-42). The sign of a strong congregation is when it has a strong emphasis upon the Bible, and steadfastness in the truth; the Bible class is such a tool to make this possible.

It is the opinion of this writer that more study, meditation, and Bible knowledge comes from a person’s participation in Bible class; even more that the sermon delivered during worship. Sermons are commanded by the New Testament and exceedingly helpful, but are more beneficial for exhortation and evangelism. On the other hand, the Bible class provides opportunity for questions, and greater discussion of modern-day application to the life of a Christian.

As for children and younger people, who many times may not be able to follow a preacher’s message, Bible classes provide a foundation of Bible knowledge. Preachers are never to assume that every person in the audience knows everything about a certain subject, but when he mentions Noah and the ark, a majority of the people’s education about Noah came from
the Bible class. Thus, Bible classes help the preacher reach the audience with his preaching when the audience is able to recall what it has learned from the Bible study hour.

With such great importance placed upon Bible classes, surely most people would be willing to teach, but that is not always true. Some underestimate their ability to teach, and believe they would not help at all, but neither is that true. It is admitted that a person enters a different stage in his spiritual life when he decides to teach a class. He then acts upon his faith, and shares with others what he has learned or studied. It takes a person of conviction to stand up and tell others what he/she believes the Bible is teaching. A person’s ability can be developed with some basic training about teaching, all he has to do... is be willing to learn and have a love for souls.

Here is a poem entitled, *A Tribute to Our Bible Class Teachers*, expressing the far-reaching impact of the work of a Bible class teacher.

I dreamed the pearly gates were opened wide,  
And I had entered in, for I had died.  
And now must give account for all my acts  
I saw a book there opened with these facts.

I thought, “My roll upon this earth was small,  
Just teaching in a Bible School, my call.”  
For I saw all of the saints God up there,  
And mine was, at most a meager share.

I heard the Master call for my report;  
I stood afraid for mine... was short.  
I trembled and felt I would not pass,  
Then whispered, “I just taught a Bible class.”

And from the throne I hear His voice: “Well done,  
Come in and share eternal life, thou faithful one,  
Although your place was humble and obscure,  
You led the thirsty ones to waters pure.”

And then it seemed that from eternal plains  
There came the sound of voices in refrain,  
That rolled across the mighty sea of glass,  
“They are the great...the teachers of a Bible class.”

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**New Bible Classes Beginning**

Bible classes for the spring/summer quarters began Sunday, March 2. Make plans to attend these classes.

**Sunday Schedule**  
*(March-August 2003)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Young Adults</th>
<th>Great Commission</th>
<th>Bill Cline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adults I</td>
<td>Hebrews</td>
<td>Michael Hatcher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults II</td>
<td>1 &amp; 2 Timothy, Titus</td>
<td>Jim Loy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Converts</td>
<td>Studies In Christian Doctrine And Practical Christian Living</td>
<td>Bill Gallaher</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Wednesday Schedule**  
*(March-August 2003)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Young Adults</th>
<th>Biblical Morals/Ethics</th>
<th>Michael Hatcher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adults I</td>
<td>Ecclesiastes</td>
<td>Fred Stancliff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults II</td>
<td>Isaiah</td>
<td>Ray Foshee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Converts</td>
<td>Studies In Christian Doctrine And Practical Christian Living</td>
<td>Bill Gallaher</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When I awoke I thought of those I'd taught,  
And in their lives; what glory God had wrought;  
I prayed to God, and all that I could say,  
Was, "Make me a better teacher; Lord, day by day."  
And you who teach this Christian way to live  
May feel sometimes you're asked too much to give;  
Some day you will reap eternal joys  
Because you lead to Christ these girls and boys.

Not only does this poem say volumes for teachers who teach the younger age groups, but the same is applicable for those who teach older groups. All Bible class teachers are important, and all can have an impact for good.

Though Bible class teachers may not spend much time, if any, standing in the lime-light, their efforts and sacrifices to teach others will bring untold rewards in heaven. "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time" (1 Pet. 5:6).

How Did He Know That?

It is amazing to observe the truthfulness of the Bible. Ezekiel recorded specific predictions concerning the city of Tyre: (1) King Nebuchadnezzar would destroy the city (26:7-8), (2) Many nations would come against her (26:3), (3) She would be leveled (26:4), (4) The timbers, rock, and soil would be cast into the sea (26:12), (5) It would become a place for spreading nets (26:5), and (6) The city would never be rebuilt (26:14).

Each came to pass just as Ezekiel said. Tyre was besieged by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C. Within thirteen years the city was deserted. Most of the people had moved to the island just off shore. Then in 332 B.C. Alexander the Great took the island city. This was accomplished by scraping the mainland city clean and used some of the material to build a bridge to the island. In 1291, the Muslims thoroughly crushed the remaining evidences of the city. The area has stood in ruins ever since. There is only a small fishing village in that area.

How can we account for Ezekiel's precision in this prediction? How could he look almost 1,900 years into the future and predict that Tyre would be a bald rock where fishermen would spread their nets? God must have told him!

Author Unknown

Would You Rob A Store To Pay For Your Vacation?

Should we be asked, our answer would be a resounding "No!" We would not rob a store, or anything, or anyone to pay for our vacation, or anything else. We would not steal! Period! Or, would we?

There may be times when we come up a little short in our finances so we do not give as much as we have been. We may call it borrowing from the Lord, or we say we just got a little behind. But, if we take what should have been given to the Lord and use it for something else, what does he call it? In Malchi, he called it robbing God (Mal. 3:8).

If you rob someone, you may get caught. If you rob God, you are caught already. You cannot hide it or alibi out of it. Let us be sure we do not rob God to pay for our vacation or anything else!

Author Unknown
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Marilyn Hall, Neva Bryant, Ella Hammac, Nancy Travis, Ray Williams, and Ruby Bowman.

Placed Membership
Gabe Moore placed membership with the Bellview congregation on March 3, 2003. Address information will be provided later. Please welcome him.

Reading/Invitation
March 12, 2003
Reading: Carl Ayliffe
Invitation: Henry Born
March 19, 2003
Reading: Elward Brantley
Invitation: Paul Brantley

Mark These Dates
March 9, 2003–Visitation Group 2 assignments handed out.
March 9, 2003–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
March 16, 2003–Visitation Group 3 assignments handed out.
March 16, 2003–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
March 26, 2003–Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 PM, in the auditorium.
March 31, 2003–Visitation Group Get-together at 6:00 PM, in the general purpose building. A covered-dish meal will precede the meeting.

Pantry Item Needed
Canned Meat
Does the World Know You Have Been Born Again?

Barry Grider

One cannot go to heaven unless he has been born again. “Jesus answered and said unto him [Nicodemus], Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3). Being born again requires one’s baptism into Christ (John 3:5; Gal. 3:27). A candidate for president once commented, “I am a Christian, but not a born again type of Christian.” Yet, one who is truly a Christian has been born again. That is why the term “born again Christian” is really redundant.

A person who has been born again will demonstrate in his life to whom he belongs. “Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust” (2 Pet. 1:4). Soon after a baby is born, friends and relatives begin to ask which parent the child favors. As the child develops, usually similarities exist between parents and children that go beyond facial expressions and color of hair. Attitudes and actions of the children also reflect those of the parents. Those who have been born again ought to clearly reflect their Father in heaven.

First, a person born again will love righteousness. To be righteous is to do what is right. God always acts in accordance with what is right and so will His children. Is there a longing in
your heart for righteousness? Jesus said, “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled” (Mat. 5:6). The one who loves righteousness will feast upon the Word of God (Psa. 1:1-2). He will always desire more, yet always be satisfied. Since one is born again through the incorruptible Word (1 Pet. 1:23), Peter goes on to talk about the Christian’s constant longing to be fed by that same Word. “As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby” (1 Pet. 2:2).

Dear Christian friend, do you love righteousness? If so, you are presently engaged in a serious study of the Word of God (2 Tim. 2:15). You pray with regularity (1 The. 5:17). Worship is not a burden, but a blessing. I know your thoughts are those recorded in Philippians 4:8. Now the opposite of righteousness is unrighteousness. “Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Cor. 6:9-10). Someone may say, “I know a person who was born again but who never exhibited righteousness.” Such a person was not truly born again. One who is born again will have repented of past sins and repentance will demand a change in behavior. One who has genuinely been born again, will say with the Psalmist, “As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God” (Psa. 42:1).

Second, a person born again will hate sin. Some parents never allow their children to use the word hate. I understand the concern because this word for sure can be used in the wrong way, particularly if spoken toward an individual. Never is it right to hate a person, even when someone hates us (Luke 6:35). However, there are some things we should hate, including all sin (Psa. 119:104). As those born again seek to imitate the Father in heaven, there becomes an abhorrence of sin (Gal. 5:17). Since one has been born again, he is a new creature (2 Cor. 5:17) and no longer lives a habitual life of sin (1 John 3:9-10).

Third, a person born again will only desire to do the will of God. Sometimes I feel sorry for new converts. Their energy, zeal, and enthusiasm is often dampened by older members who have lapsed into spiritual lethargy. The apostle Paul was always focused on his mission because he was totally consumed with doing the will of God. He said, “For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain” (Phi. 1:21). Is that your desire? If not, Jesus asks, “And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?” (Luke 6:46). What is
the reward for the one who does the will of God?
“And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever” (1 John 2:17).
Have you been born again? If no, do so today.

If you have been born again, do you show the world that you are a Christian? Many are judging Christianity by what they see in you alone.

3950 Forest Hill Irene Road
Memphis, TN 38125

He Ain’t No Cowboy
Bob Howton

Two western gentlemen were talking and a man dressed in the usual cowboy garb walked up and asked for a job. One of the men told him to throw his gear into the bunkhouse, catch himself a horse, and saddle up for work. Sometime ensued and the cowboy had not returned. The cattlemen walked over to the stables and it only took one look to determine that something was wrong. The man had put a bridle on a horse, but was having a terrible time getting a saddle onto him. Finally he got it on, but discovered that it was on backwards. With a bit of chagrin he reversed the saddle and without cinching it, promptly mounted up. At the first brisk move of the horse, he hit the ground with a dull thud. One of the cattlemen remarked with a grin. “You ain’t no cowboy, you just got on cowboy britches.”

At the risk of bringing the anathema of some brethren down upon my head, I would like to draw upon this tale, in the form of an analogy, as has to do with some present day Elders.

The Bible requires that an Elder be of good report from without and within (1 Tim. 3:7). If this is not true, He ain’t no Elder, he’s just wearing the name. Titus says an Elder must have faithful children (Tit. 1:6). If he does not, He ain’t no Elder, he’s just parading as one. Titus also says an Elder must not be given to wine (Tit. 1:7). (This really means that he should not drink alcoholic beverages at all.) If he does drink, He ain’t no Elder; he’s just another deluded drinker.

Timothy says an Elder must be apt to teach (1 Tim. 3:2). If the man is more apt “Not to teach,” He ain’t no Elder; he’s just someone who loves preeminence. Timothy says an Elder must be blameless (i.e., not guilty of willful sin; 1 Tim. 3:2). Brethren, even if 98% of the congregation “put him in” if he is known to walk in forbidden paths, He ain’t no Elder; he’s just “the Blind leading the blind.” Timothy also enjoins that an Elder must rule well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity (1 Tim. 3:4). If the man does not rule his own house well, and does not have his children in subjection (obedient children) He ain’t no Elder; he’s just a pitiful excuse for a leader and should be rejected.

Timothy says, and numerous other passages bear testimony to the fact that an Elder’s wife must be in subjection to him, must reverence her husband, and submit to him (1 Tim. 3:4; Eph. 5:22, 33). If the man’s wife is not submissive to him, and is not given to hospitality (the elder cannot be given to hospitality if his wife is not hospitable) He ain’t no Elder, he’s just another hen-pecked male who should revert to the henhouse where he can truly rule the roost.

Timothy also enjoins maturity, experience and wisdom, which come only after reasonable age (not an novice—1 Tim. 3:6). If he does not have these qualitites, He ain’t no Elder; he’s just a young upstart who needs patience and instruction.

10990 Country Haven
Cottondale, AL 35453
Sick

Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Marilyn Hall, Neva Bryant, Ella Hammac (surgery scheduled for March 13), Nancy Travis, Ray Williams, Ruby Bowman, Angela Gallaher (Bill and Iris Gallaher’s granddaughter, tonsillectomy scheduled for this week), Wendy Holmes (Joyce Johnson’s niece, heart surgery on March 12), Austin Dodd (Ray and Dot Dodd’s grandson, surgery was done on March 9).

Reading/Invitation
March 19, 2003
Reading: Elward Brantley
Invitation: Paul Brantley
March 26, 2003
Reading: Jerry Caine
Invitation: Bill Busch

Mark These Dates
March 16, 2003–Visitation Group 3 assignments handed out.
March 16, 2003–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
March 26, 2003–Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 PM, in the auditorium.
April 6, 2003–Dinner on the Grounds and Singing. A covered-dish meal will be held in the general purpose building after the morning service and after that singing in the auditorium.

Pantry Item Needed
Canned Meat
Updating Our Books-On-CD

We are in the process of updating our CD and it should be available at our 28th Annual Bellview Lectureship. The cost (if it is not an upgrade) will be $60.00 plus $1.25 postage (if it is an upgrade, please contact us for the cost). What will you get for this money? To start with you will receive all the Bellview Lectureship books beginning at 1988 and going through 2003. However, we found that a few other books were printed in a spiral binding, thus we have the 1975, 1976, and 1978 books on the CD also. These books are: Characters Of The Bible (1978), Back To The Bible (1976), and Remove Not the Ancient Landmarks (1975). Many of those books are out of print and at present this is the only way you can get that material. The cost of the CD goes for the purchase of these books. You are paying $60.00 for sixteen lectureship books and receiving the other three for a total of nineteen lectureship books. Thus, you are receiving sixteen books for less than $4.00 each.

However, while you are paying for the lectureship books, we are placing a great deal more material on the CD than just the books. We are placing all issues of Defender, which we possess, on this CD. Defender began in 1970, but it appears as if it was not printed in 1971, so we have 1970, 1972-2002 issues on the CD.

Next, we have a section we are titling Other Material. I am placing some of my study materials of Bible books on the CD. Those books I have done cover: Philemon, James, 2 & 3 John, and Jude. These are basically commentaries covering every verse in those books. There will also
be the Hatcher-Schweitzer Exchange which was an exchange of letters between myself and a Lutheran pastor dealing primarily with the subject of “Total Depravity” but also covering some other subjects.

We also have included a book by Clifford Newell titled Biblical Ethics. Keith Mosher wrote a tract several years ago titled, Can One Trust His English Bible? which has also been included. Brother Mosher has published two books dealing with inspiration which we were not able to get prepared for this CD but Lord willing will be on next year’s CD. We also have his Romans: A Study Outline on the CD. His son, Mark Mosher wrote a booklet exposing the Lads to Leaders program which we have included. Its title is, Is “The Lads To Leaders/Leaderettes, Inc.” Really Good For Our Children? A book which has been in great demand which we have on the CD is, Studies In...Christian Doctrine And Practical Christian Living written by William S. (Bill) Cline. Another important book which deals with the A.D. 70 doctrine (also called Kingism) is titled, Studies In Refutation Of Realized Eschatology. This book is a compilation of material written by Roy Deaver, Rex A. Turner, Sr., and Robert R. Taylor, Jr. Last, but certainly not least, we have a book written by Dudley Ross Spears of his material which he prepared for a debate with J. T. Payne in 1962. The title of this work is The Refutation Of The United Pentecostal Denomination.

As you can see from the list of material on our Books-on-CD there is a wealth of material available for your usage. This is over 275 megabytes of material. All of it has been done in the Adobe PDF format and the free reader is also included on the CD. Everyone will want to get a copy of this CD or upgrade their previous version.

Doing Our Best
A Message for Older Christians
Jack Gray

We have in our generation some of the most wonderful older Christians imaginable. They inspire our faith by their dedication. We often see them attend services when they are in pain. They smile even when they hurt. They arrange all their plans around the services of the church. Even a ladies’ Bible class takes priority over personal plans; and visitors on Sunday are left at home, if necessary, so as not to conflict with their commitments to worship. Time after time we have seen shining examples of faithfulness; and we delight in it.

There are others who are almost exactly the opposite. They have “retired” from God’s service. They project the attitude of “God will understand.” “Surely He does not expect faithfulness from me anymore.” They can go most anywhere else; but not to the services of the church. They break our hearts and discourage others by their bad examples. We are not nearly so concerned about what the church needs to do with them, as we are with what we fear God is going to do with them on Judgment Day.

Out of our concern for them, and to encourage the faithful, let us share these observations:

1. There is no retirement from God’s ser-
vice. Death is the only release. Faithfulness to the end is required of us all (Mat. 24:13).

2. If you can go anywhere, you can go to worship. Going to the grocery store and to visit friends is just as demanding as church services; and far less rewarding. You might be surprised at how good you would feel all week long, if only you will make a special effort to meet with fellow Christians in worship.

3. Being unable to attend every service does not excuse you from services you could attend. Truly God understands. He does not expect a thing beyond your ability. But, He does expect your best. So when you are unable to attend, do not feel a moment’s guilt because of it; but do not let it hinder you from returning the first time you do feel like it.

4. Age may reduce your talents, but it will never eliminate all of them. It is remarkable what some Christians of advanced years are still doing in God’s service, and a card or call of encouragement may lift a troubled soul. A smile and a good example are priceless. Moreover, your own life will be richer because of what you do for others. Stay active doing what you can do for God and others.

5. Age or infirmity must not become an excuse for unfaithfulness. Why, when you are so near that “other home,” will you risk it all by neglect? You must keep your faith strong, and you do that best through faithful attendance at the assemblies. In doing otherwise, you deprive yourself of spiritual strength.

6. You are preparing for your funeral now. What the preacher says over your body will not mean nearly as much as what other people—and God—remember about the way you really lived.

“Aw...do I haf’ to”

Tim Smith

Have you ever heard anyone ask that question? Perhaps a child, or a less than energetic relative might reply to your request for help with a phrase similar to the one used as a title for this article. Sometimes even “religious people” will utter such a phrase in response to having the Word of the Lord declared unto them. A few examples:

“Aw...do I haf’ to:”

Attend all the services of the church (Heb. 10:25)?
Put the church before everything else—even work and recreation (Mat. 6:33)?
Pray regularly (1 The. 5:17)?
Help the needy (Gal. 6:10)?
Relieve widows and orphans (Jam. 1:27)?

Teach the lost (Mat. 28:19-20)?
Preach the Word (2 Tim. 4:2)?
Obey Jesus in all things (Heb. 5:8-9)?
Submit to God (Jam. 4:7)?
Resist the devil (Jam. 4:7)?
Worship in spirit and truth (John 4:24)?
Avoid the works of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-21)?
Bear the fruit of the spirit (Gal. 5:22-23)?

Of course, the answer is simple: no—but for the lack of such obedience judgment awaits and you will have to face the consequences thereof (Mat. 7:21-23; 25:31-46; 2 The. 1:7-9; John 12:48; Acts 17:30-31; etc.). He is the “author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him” (Heb. 5:8-9).
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Marilyn Hall, Neva Bryant, Ella Hammac, Nancy Travis, Ray Williams, Ruby Bowman, Wendy Holmes (Joyce Johnson’s niece), and Gail Finch (Dick and Dot Lambert’s friend).

Restored
Pam Busch was restored to Christ on March 16, 2003. Please keep Pam in your prayers.

Reading/Invitation
March 26, 2003
Reading: Jerry Caine
Invitation: Bill Busch
April 2, 2003
Reading: Jeremy Caine
Invitation: Bill Cline

Mark These Dates
March 26, 2003–Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 PM, in the auditorium.
April 6, 2003–Dinner on the Grounds and Singing after the morning service.
April 6, 2003–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
April 13, 2003–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
April 13, 2003–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
April 20, 2003–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.

Pantry Item Needed
Canned Meat
Strong Churches

*Neal Pollard*

Everybody wants to be a part of one, but not many are willing to do what it takes to be a part of one. The Lord wants His congregations strong (cf., Eph. 6:10). He has given a pattern to help His children accomplish this. What, then, are some qualities making for strong churches, by divine standards?

**Information.** Congregations need to be informed of current avenues both scriptural and available for spreading the gospel. That may be technological advances, methods of evangelism, or media choices currently popular within the community.

Congregations need to be informed of current religious movements. This is true of the religious world in general and within the church. There are trends and beliefs which come into vogue and are blindly accepted by a large population of folks. As Christians fight the devil for their hearts and souls, we must know the enemy to defeat him (1 Pet. 3:15; 5:8). Unscriptural trends infiltrate the church, too (Jude 4; 2 Tim. 3:6; Mat. 7:15; et al). This can certainly be overdone and one get consumed with getting the goods on false
teachers, but strong congregations get information so as to be able to bear up against “every wind of doctrine” (Eph. 4:14).

**Education.** Imagine a body without a backbone. This is the picture of a congregation without a solid Bible school program. Paul admonishes Christians to “give attendance to reading” (1 Tim. 4:13). Handling aright God’s Word is essential (2 Tim. 2:15). Congregations which give attention to providing a comprehensive study of the Bible aid in children’s and adults’ collective goal of “grow[ing] in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Pet. 3:18). Structure is important. Writing or finding a curriculum that is fresh, non-repeating (how often are great portions of the Bible neglected while the story of Moses or Noah is told annually?), and practical helps put backbone in the congregation.

**Organization.** When one thinks of church organization, two things come to mind—leadership and programs. In the area of programs, how organized is the congregation? Are as many needs as practically possible being addressed? How efficient is the congregation at preparing for and undertaking projects and activities? Poor record-keeping and/or poor communication assassinate the good works in which a congregation must be involved (cf., 1 Tim. 6:18).

What about the leadership of the church? How strong is it? One defined a leader as an individual with two characteristics: “First, he is going somewhere; second, he is able to persuade other people to go with him.” Apply this to church organization. The church can be no stronger than its elders (1 Pet. 5:3). When they are godly and industrious, the flock will usually follow suit. The opposite is true, too. They must be good *delegators.* What about the deacons? Do they know their area of work? Is it clearly defined? Are they aided by a host of volunteers? Where a congregation is truly, scripturally organized, the Lord has a strong body of believers in that place.

**Integration.** Here is another concept having multiple meanings. First, is every individual integrated properly in the work of the church, their unique talents used to the greatest good?

Second, is everyone accepted equally regardless of age, race, economic status, education, or occupation? One brother was a member of a large congregation that was so cliquish that everyone sat in the part of the auditorium that reflected his or her own age and background. He said that nobody hardly ever crossed the fence to reach out in any way to those different from themselves. How tragic! Artificial barriers to fellowship will destroy a congregation’s influence and effectiveness.

**Participation.** Some churches may be dead and not even know it (cf., Rev. 3:1-6, 14-22). Where a few try to do the work God requires of an entire congregation, they bum out and the church’s *candle* burns low (cf., Mat. 5:16). Good, scriptural programs merit enthusiasm and support—none are exempted. Strong churches are active, involved churches. There is mass participation reflected in attendance, giving, evangelism, and other such gauges of great work.

**Visitation.** Here is one watershed move churches make to become strong. When a visitation program is put into place, visitors get the notice they need. Contacts for Christ are thus made. House-to-house fellowship is enhanced (Acts 2:46). Newcomers are made to feel welcome. Non-Christians are made to feel cared for. Weak Christians are encouraged. The ones visiting are built up in the faith. Visitation is every Christian’s responsibility (Mat. 25:34-40)! In turn, it is one sure way to build a strong church.

There are no magic potions or spells which will conjure up a strong church! Strong churches emphasize information, education, organization, integration, participation, and visitation.
Why Sunday Night Worship?

Greg Lewis

Why should we have Sunday night worship? This same question could be, and has been, raised about Sunday morning Bible study and a mid-week Bible study.

Before we answer these questions, let us first look at what worship is and is not. When one thinks about the word worship, it may bring to mind many things. One might think of coming to a building to sing praises, give of our means, fellowship with others, hear someone deliver a message from God’s Word and offer prayers to God. Another person might think of being out in a field enjoying nature. Still another might say it is the person, not the place. Others say you can worship anywhere you want as long as your heart is in it.

We must first understand what worship is and what it entails. The word worship is defined as “to kiss the hand (as a dog might lick his master’s hand), or to prostrate oneself in homage” (Strong’s 4352). It literally means “to lay down before, to be in reverence to, or to adore someone or something.” One must intend to worship for it to be worship. Our heart must be in our worship (John 4:23-24). To worship, we must give homage to someone or something. Some may give almost all of their time to an activity (whether it is a job or a hobby). They may not be calling this worship; but it is in fact worship because they are bowing down before it and giving it precedence over the one true God.

Now that we have looked at what worship is, we still must answer the question of why we should be here during times other than Sunday morning worship.

1. Shows the love we have for God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit (John 12:24-26, 32, 42-43; Mat. 6:24, 33).

2. Allows me to learn more about God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit (2 Tim. 2:15; 2 Pet. 1:5; Eph. 4:12-16).

3. Edifies the church, other Christians, new Christians, and myself (Eph. 4:12-16; 1 The. 5:11; Rom. 14:19; Eph. 5:19).

4. Allows more time for me to be with those of like precious faith (Heb. 10:24-25).

5. Allows those who could not attend the morning service an opportunity to assemble with the saints.

6. Shows that you take seriously your commitment to serve God (Mat. 6:33; 10:37-42).

So, when you think about whether you should attend Sunday Bible study, Sunday evening worship, or Wednesday Bible study, think of the commitment you made to God and all that being there would accomplish by being in services.

8319 Hopkins Road
Richmond, VA 23237
Sick

Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Marilyn Hall, Neva Bryant, Ella Hammac, Nancy Travis, Ruby Bowman, Wendy Holmes (Joyce Johnson’s niece), and Gail Finch (Dick and Dot Lambert’s friend).

Reading/Invitation

April 2, 2003
Reading: Jeremy Caine
Invitation: Bill Cline

April 9, 2003
Reading: Bill Gallaher
Invitation: Bill Crowe

Mark These Dates

April 6, 2003–Dinner on the Grounds and Singing after the morning service.
April 6, 2003–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
April 13, 2003–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
April 13, 2003–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
April 20, 2003–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.
April 20, 2003–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
April 23, 2003–Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 PM, in the auditorium.
April 30, 2003–Fifth Wednesday Singing.

Pantry Item Needed
Canned Meat
Parachute Mentality

Tom Wacaster

Having never worn a parachute, and fortunately never having needed one, I do not know if I can appreciate what a paratrooper goes through in the exercise of his basic skills as a skydiver. While serving in the Coast Guard in Corpus Christi, it was my privilege to work in the field of aviation search and rescue. Those of us who went on search and rescue missions were never issued a parachute, never trained in the use of them, and seldom had one on board when we went out on search and rescue missions. I was told on one occasion that there were always a couple on board, but they were stored under the seats of the pilot and co-pilot (hmmm). I once asked one of my fellow workers if he felt a little uncomfortable flying several hundred miles out into the Gulf of Mexico not having a parachute. He answered in the negative, and then explained that the parachute was bulky, uncomfortable to wear, and interfered with movement around the plane. And, since it was not required that crew members wear the parachute, seldom if ever would you find someone with one strapped to his back. I once read (some years after my discharge from the military) of a sign that hung over the door of a parachute preparation room which read, “If you ever need it, and don’t have it, you ain’t ever goanna need it again.” In time of need it might be great to have one close by, but, hey, who needs it now? Until and unless an emergency arises, we will just leave it stored under the seat. That, my friends, is what I mean by
“parachute mentality.” Do you suppose some members of the Lord’s church have a “parachute mentality”? Think with me on this.

In every congregation there are a small number of Christians who are barely hanging on. There is little, if any, involvement in the work of the church. To them, Sunday morning worship is all that is required, and that only if something else does not interfere. Sunday morning Bible classes, Sunday evening worship, and Wednesday night are purely optional, and that only for the fanatical, right-wing fringe (which they want to avoid at all costs). Asked if Jesus were important they would answer in the affirmative, but if the truth were known, their definition of important is quite different than what God considers important. The faithful, humble, serving child of God realizes that when he was baptized into Christ he “put on Christ” (Gal. 3:27), but that child of God with a “parachute mentality” perceives of Christ as bulky, uncomfortable to wear, and an interference to his free-moving lifestyle that places a premium on business, pleasure, and self gratification. Jesus is stored under the pew at the local church building, ready to grab and strap to the back in time of emergency. But to wear it on a daily basis? Forget it! Sometimes I think we ought to hang a sign over the exit door on our buildings similar to the one referred to above. That sign might read something like this: “If you ever need Him, and don’t have Him, you ain’t never goanna need Him again.”

The Christian with the “parachute mentality” makes at least two fatal blunders. First, he thinks that Jesus is something you put on and off depending on your need, but you know as well as I do that Christianity is a daily walk. I read somewhere that Jesus said, “take up your cross daily.” Second, he thinks that God can be ignored and spurned when things are going well, and then immediately come to the rescue when things turn sour. If I read my Bible clearly, it does not work that way. Dearly beloved, God wants your humble obedience and submission every second, of every minute, of every hour, of every day of the year. It is not that He needs you; it is that you need Him! To think otherwise is to possess a “parachute mentality.”

I Cannot Believe We Are Singing Another Verse
Brad Harrub

Have you ever found yourself impatient during the invitation song? Are you ready to race out of the parking lot so you can beat the crowds at local restaurants? Is your mind already rehearsing conversations you want to have with friends in the congregation? Are you thinking about the current sale going on at the shopping mall down the street? If so, it must drive you absolutely crazy if all four verses are sung rather than the traditional three. What is the value of that extra verse?? There are brothers and sisters sitting in auditoriums all over the world that can literally feel their blood pressure rising when a song leader elects to sing all the verses of a particular invitation song. After all, it is just a waste of time, is
Several nights ago my family arrived home from a long Labor Day weekend out-of-town. We had postponed coming home as long as possible so that we could spend every available minute visiting with family and friends in Nashville. As we were getting settled in, we went through our mail and listened to our answering machine. Message #3 was a dear friend that made us put down the mail as she slowly began to tell us just how important an extra verse really is.

Twelve days earlier Stage Road Church of Christ wrapped up their gospel meeting. Hurt Jones was the featured speaker, and his efforts resulted in 42 souls responding to the invitation. On the last night, Burt commented that he wanted to leave Stage Road knowing he had done everything he could to bring lost souls to Christ, so that his conscience would be clear. His last effort was to add one more verse to the invitation song. There had already been many to respond that night, but Burt’s love for the gospel and love for souls was strong enough to beat the traditional three verses. On that occasion, during the extra verse, a young man named David Mills stepped out into the aisle and came forward. The reaction from the family at Stage Road was clearly obvious. This young man had just graduated from high school and had yet to obey the gospel. Everyone was so excited to see him make that walk down the aisle. He was buried with Christ in baptism that very night!

The message on our answering machine went on to describe how this young man and his girlfriend, a few days later, had been out driving around enjoying the long weekend on a Sunday night following evening worship services. Sometime late that night David and his girlfriend were apparently cut off by someone, words were exchanged, and David drove away. Sadly, the man who had cut them off was not finished making his statement, so he followed them. When they came to a stop, the man pulled up behind them and shot a series of three bullets that raced through the body of the car, through the bucket seat, and found their way tearing through David’s body. He died at the scene, just eleven days after being baptized. Fourteen days after being buried with Christ, David Mills was buried in the ground.

I only share this tragic story with you so that you will think. Often we enter worship and just go through the motions: we do not listen to the sermon, we check our watches, we look at what others are wearing. The invitation song becomes just another song... something keeping us from “being done.” Please do not be impatient, someone’s soul could be at stake. The few extra minutes that it took to sing an extra verse two weeks ago are priceless to this young man and his family. Remember, we are not there to be entertained, and we are not the audience. We are to worship and praise God! Also, we must get busy spreading the gospel to lost sinners, instead of bickering and fighting among ourselves. We are spending large quantities of time and energy on nitpicking while evangelism takes a back seat. The truth should always be upheld, but it should also be upheld as we strive to save those lost souls that may need one extra verse. Last, hug your family and friends, because you may not get the chance tomorrow. I talked to many of David’s friends at the funeral, and they all wanted to have one last conversation to tell him how much they loved him and how much he had influenced their lives. Look around, you still have the opportunity with those around you! “A wise man’s heart discerneth both time and judgment” (Ecc. 8:5). Think about it.
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Marilyn Hall, Neva Bryant, Ella Hammac, Nancy Travis, Ruby Bowman, Ray Foshee, O. J. Savage (Karen Hatcher’s father), and Lori Mosley (Joyce Johnson’s daughter).

Placed Membership
Mary Howard placed membership with the Bellview congregation on March 24. Her address is: 8800 Redwing Drive; Pensacola, FL 32534. The telephone number is 456-3658. Gabe Moore placed membership on March 3. His address is: 5749 Hermosa Circle; Pensacola, FL 32526. The telephone number is: 384-4476. Please make them feel welcome.

Reading/Invitation
April 9, 2003
Reading: Bill Gallaher
Invitation: Bill Crowe
April 16, 2003
Reading: Andrew Hatcher
Invitation: Dale Cunningham

Mark These Dates
April 6, 2003–Dinner on the Grounds and Singing after the morning service.
April 6, 2003–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
April 13, 2003–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
April 13, 2003–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.

Pantry Item Needed
Canned Meat
Whatever Became of Sin

Noah Hackworth

Introduction
There is no textbook in existence that more perfectly describes the existence, nature, and function of sin than the Bible; it gives us the only inspired account of the subject (2 Tim. 3:16-17). However, an interesting study of our subject, though uninspired, is a book written by Karl Menniger, M.D., titled Whatever Became of Sin? It was published in New York by Hawthorne Books, Inc. It was copyrighted in 1973, with the first printing occurring in 1975 and the fifth printing in 1976. More that 125,000 hardbound copies are in print. As an uninspired book it is a real eye-opener. According to Seward Hiltner, Professor of Theology and Personality, Princeton Theological Seminary, Richard G. Gray, Saturday Evening Post, and Robert Kirsch, Los Angeles Times, the book takes a look at the totality of man’s social condition, but of course man’s social moral and spiritual condition was infallibly set forth and discussed by the greatest psychologist and physician in the world some two thousand years ago. But, whatever became of sin remains one of the greatest questions of all time. We shall study it from the biblical point of view.

Definition Lost
It has been suggested by some that sin defined as “wrong-doing” will eventually be eliminated and consequently disappear from the dictionary. If this occurs, Situation Ethics will certainly be partially responsible. Society has reached its present level of degeneration because the true definition of sin has been lost. The attitude that
there is no such thing as sin presently exists in the minds of more that a few. “Sin” translates the word hamartia and literally means “missing the mark” (Vine). The KJV says sin is a “transgression of the law” (God’s law). The ASV says sin is “lawlessness.” It is not difficult to see that sin is anarchy, lawlessness, transgression, wrong-doing, etc. We need to understand the nature and function of sin, and we need to know that (1) where there is no law there is no sin (Rom. 5:13), Paul did not know lust until the law made him aware of it (Rom. 7:7); and (2) sin is not inherited, it is acquired (1 John 3:4). Acquired traits are neither transmitted, nor inherited. Adam sinned, but sin did not change his nature.

**Sins Have Been Hidden**

Paul said, “Some men’s sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after” (1 Tim. 5:24). People who are of the persuasion that they can permanently hide or conceal their sins are doomed to failure. God told His people long ago, “be sure your sin will find you out” (Num. 32:23). Achan took of “the devoted thing: and the anger of Jehovah was kindled against the children of Israel” (Jos. 7:1). Sin can never be hidden from God, and it cannot be permanently hidden from others.

**Sin Has Been Denied**

One of the first things people often do with regard to sin is to deny their guilt. The defense mechanism immediately springs into action, and attempts to explain away sin in order to ease the conscience are begun. This initiates action on the part of others to convince and convict the guilty and bring them to repentance, without which they will ultimately perish (Luke 13:3). No one can afford an ego that cannot accept guilt. Simon could not have denied the charge levied against him by Peter relative to his actions regarding the gift of the Spirit, but he did not because he could not. The evidence was there. To his credit Simon confessed his sin and was forgiven.

**Sin Is Made Respectable**

Television with its ungodly producers have made sin to look respectable. Adultery, fornication, extortion, dishonesty, and almost every kind of immorality conceivable has been “glamorized” by the “tube.” God has never looked upon sin with respect and neither should we. We must not offer comfort to those who are living in sin, and we have a love message for them: repent.

**Conclusion**

Sin is devastating to all of us. It wrecks our lives, destroys our homes, and separates us from those we love. The pleasures of sin will, however, be short-lived. Its final reward it death (Rom. 6:23).

What’s it All About?

Bob Patterson

Most of us have noticed when the matter of New Testament Christianity or the church comes up, that sometimes there is a statement that is made and a follow-up question: “I really do not know anything about it,” and “What is it all about anyway?” Considering the fact that admission was made concerning the ignorance in this particular area, it is not hard to understand an obvious lack of interest on their part when they have no concept whatsoever of matters spiritual. Cutting it a little bit finer, it even appears that there are some within the kingdom who have very little concern for anything spiritual. For those who do not know, and for those who really
question what it is all about—here are a few points for your consideration:

What is it all about? It is about **the acknowledgment of God**! In Isaiah 43:7, 21, we are plainly informed that man was created, formed, placed here, and that man is to glorify Him! It should be noted that God did not make man without purpose. Since man has purpose, then man is responsible and accountable (Rom. 14:12; 2 Cor. 5:10). Men need to be told, and perhaps some of our brethren need to be reminded that God “giveth to all life, and breath, and all things” and “in him we live, and move, and have our being” (Acts 17:25, 28).

What is it all about? It is about **the matter of obedience**! Concerning the Bible, it can truthfully be said that it is “a handbook on obedience.” Man has always been under God’s law. This was true during the Patriarchal and Mosaic dispensations, and is true concerning men in the Christian dispensation! Concerning the present law, the New Testament, we are told that Christ “became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him” (Heb. 5:9). All of our lives here will be one of having done good or having done evil (John 5:29)! But, make no mistake about, the Word of God always directs us in the paths of righteousness (Psa. 23:3; 2 Tim. 3:16-17).

What is it all about? It is about **preparing for judgment**! “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment” (Heb. 9:27). Thus, there is an appointment “in the which he will judge the world in righteousness” (Acts 17:31), and, “we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ” (2 Cor. 5:10) where “every one of us shall give account of himself to God” (Rom. 14:12). Since the purpose in judgment is to examine “every man’s work” (1 Pet. 1:17) that “every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad” (2 Cor. 5:10), would it not be foolish for one to ignore the Will of God and be unprepared for the judgment?

What is it all about? Based on the previous observations, obviously, it is about **preparing for eternity**! Following the judgment, there are two eternal regions that await every one. Just as all will be in judgment, all will be in eternity, in one of two places (Mat. 25:46; John 5:19). Thus, the lifetime that is given us here is time that we are granted where we take the Word of God and allow God to mold a soul that is fit for His purpose. In applying God’s Will to our lives we become “partakers of the divine nature” (2 Pet. 1:4), and even though “our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day” (2 Cor. 4:16). One in Christ is blessed “with all spiritual blessings” (Eph. 1:3), and Christ in you is “the hope of glory” (Col. 1:27)

What conclusions can be draw from the points that have been made? It tells us: Life is too precious, death is too certain, life here is too short, judgment is too important, heaven is too wonderful, hell is too horrible—for anyone to ignore God and to squander his life away! Brethren and friends, “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting” (Gal. 6:7-8). That is really what it is all about!

1801 North Adams Street; Beeville, TX 78102
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Marilyn Hall, Neva Bryant, Ella Hammac, Nancy Travis, Ruby Bowman, Ray Foshee, Lucille Staples, Lori Mosley (Joyce Johnson’s daughter), and Lillian Hilburn (Marge Williams’ mother).

Reading/Invitation
April 16, 2003
Reading: Andrew Hatcher
Invitation: Dale Cunningham
April 23, 2003
Reading: Daniel Hatcher
Invitation: Ray Dodd

Mark These Dates
April 13, 2003—Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
April 13, 2003—Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
April 20, 2003—Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.
April 20, 2003—Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
April 23, 2003—Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 PM, in the auditorium.
April 30, 2003—Fifth Wednesday Singing.
May 4, 2003—Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
May 11, 2003—Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
May 11, 2003—Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.

Pantry Item Needed
Canned Vegetables
“Spiritual Boycott”

Tom Wacaster

A boycott is defined by Webster as meaning “to combine in refusing to work for, to buy from or sell to, or to have any dealings with, as a means to show disapproval or to coerce.” While it is possible to refrain from doing business with some company while not actually boycotting that company, the effects are the same. Occasionally we hear of some organized effort to boycott a business because of questionable practices. By the same token, it is possible to be guilty of boycotting the church. This spiritual boycott may be manifested in a number of ways.

First, there are those who boycott the church by refusing to give of their means. They refuse to provide financial support for the church. Disgruntled individuals withhold their contribution when things in the church are not going as they think they should. We are not speaking of those who refuse to give into the common fund of a church that has abandoned the truth. When a church reaches the point that they no longer abide by God’s teaching, not only should the funds be withheld but so should our presence. We are speaking, however, of those who withhold their contribution because they do not like some decision the elders have made, or some sermon the preacher has preached. Refusal to give to the work of the Lord because of some disagreement in matters of opinion constitutes a spiritual boycott.

Second, those who refuse to meet with the brethren actually boycott the church. Lack of attendance implies disapproval at some level. Lip service may be given but actions speak louder
than words. When we habitually refuse to take advantage of Bible study opportunities we imply that such is not important. Our actions actually discourage those who do attend. By our example we say to the new Christian that Bible study is not important and we say to the older Christian that he is wasting his time. There are entirely too many Christians who do not realize the implications of their actions. Absenteeism constitutes spiritual boycott.

Third, failure to support a gospel meeting at the level of the local congregation constitutes a spiritual boycott. The absence of such a large portion of a congregation so typical of today’s gospel meeting effort says to the world, “This is not really that important.” In turn, it speaks volumes to the leaders of the church by implying that you simply do not intend to support this effort. Hence, the church, the speaker of the occasion, and the cause for which Jesus died are all boycotted.

An atheist once remarked that if he believed in God, and in the importance of the gospel, and the essentiality of the church, as do the Christians of the world, that he would spend every penny he had, expend any effort necessary to evangelize, and lend the whole of his life in the support and furtherance of that message. Why is it that some folks cannot see what a skeptic realized to be the implications of our faith. If you were judged by your actions, would men say that you support the church, or that you were presently participating in a spiritual boycott?

511 Southgate Drive
Mount Pleasant, TX 75455

Keeping God First in Regard to Entertainment

Preston Silcox

From the decision of Joshua to serve the Lord (Jos. 24:15) to the demand of Christ to seek God first (Mat. 6:33), the Scriptures are clear as to the preeminent place that the Father and His will are to have in the lives of His followers. In spite of the clear commands of the Book, however, countless Christians are guilty of sloppy service and derelict duty. Unfaithful disciples of the Lord allow everything from friend to foe and employment to entertainment to come between them and their dedication to God. The latter of these possible obstacles—and the challenge of keeping such from actually being a hindrance—is the focus of this article.

Chocked with the Pleasures of Life

Christ warned that there would be some who would, upon hearing the Gospel, initially obey but eventually be consumed by the “pleasures of this life” (Luke 8:14). Certainly there are forms or occasions of entertainment that fall into this deadly category. With such in mind, consider the following contributions that lead to the unfaithful end of those who place entertainment ahead of eternal matters.

Delusion. There are a number of believers who have a warped view of faithfulness. In the minds of too many is the notion that dedication to God is a baptismal certificate, their name in the church directory, and possibly the occupying of a pew on a regular, or even semi-regular, basis. Those thus deceived believe they can serve both God and leisure at the same time. These have yet to understand that God will not share first place with anyone or anything including the
pleasures of this life (Mat. 6:24).

Danger. While many correctly understand that particular forms of entertainment are inherently sinful, some fail to recognize that even innocent kinds of amusement can become wrong. The danger here considered is the fact that any time a thing is exalted above God, that thing becomes immoral (Col. 3:5). When entertainment takes one’s focus away from heavenly concerns (Col. 3:1-2), one is being choked with the pleasures of this life.

Digression. Because of a misunderstanding of faithfulness and/or the exaltation of entertainment, those who began the Christian life correctly, ultimately deviate from the heavenly pathway. Where spiritual concerns used to be at the forefront of their minds, they now focus only on earthly cares; where Christ and His Cause were of utmost importance, now only leisure and fun really matter. Sadly and truly, such a soul is choked with the pleasures of this life.

While many other items contribute to the improper placement of entertainment, the list above names those things that rank among the more obvious and most prominent. With such matters in mind, every child of God would do well to heed the wise and weighty words of 2 Corinthians 13:5: “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves.”

Choosing the Priority of God

God’s Word is filled with commands and principles that encourage and enable the Christian to place God first in all things. The suggestions below are based on such biblical truths and can help the honest seeker of righteousness to avoid being choked with the various pleasures of this life, including entertainment.

Determination. The moment one decides to obey the Gospel is the moment one should make up his mind to put spiritual concerns ahead of every other concern. This, after all, is inherent in becoming a Christian (Luke 14:26-33). When one’s heart is so set, the placement of items such as entertainment will be subject to that faithful Christian’s resolve to always put God first.

Discrimination. The diligent disciple of Christ should understand the importance of discerning not only between the good and the evil, but also between the good and the excellent (Phi. 1:10). When it comes to things like entertainment, one must carefully consider the implications and consequences of his decisions; he must seriously reflect on whether or not his integrity will be compromised, whether or not his service to God and the kingdom will be sacrificed, and whether or not he will be tempted to progress into sin. Like Mary, he ought to choose the “good part” (Luke 10:42).

Demonstration. When one so determines to put a premium on spiritual things and exercises the ability to make proper distinctions in regards to entertainment, he will also keep in mind the influence he has on others. He will realize that the eyes of family, friends, the world, and fellow Christians are watching him, and thus shall be encouraged even more to be wise and careful in his decisions regarding leisure and amusement (Mat. 5:13-16).

Yes, the Scriptures are clear as to the place that God is to have in the life of His people; He desires and deserves first place. The maintaining of this preeminent position requires that the child of God be careful in every aspect of life, including decisions made and actions done in regard to entertainment. May every Christian live by the words of Colossians 3:1-2: “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.”
Sick

Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Marilyn Hall, Neva Bryant, Ella Hammac, Nancy Travis, Ruby Bowman, Lucille Staples, and Lori Mosley (Joyce Johnson’s daughter).

Reading/Invitation
April 23, 2003
Reading: Daniel Hatcher
Invitation: Ray Dodd
April 30, 2003
Reading: Brantley Johnson
Invitation: Ray Foshee

Mark These Dates
April 20, 2003–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.
April 20, 2003–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
April 23, 2003–Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 PM, in the auditorium.
April 30, 2003–Fifth Wednesday Singing.
May 4, 2003–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
May 11, 2003–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
May 11, 2003–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
May 18, 2003–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.
May 18, 2003–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.

Pantry Item Needed
Canned Vegetables
Worship Renewal...A Fatal Attraction

Danny Bennett

Worship Renewal as advocated by Lynn Anderson in his book, In Search of Wonder A Call to Worship Renewal, which includes chapters by Lynn Anderson, Max Lucado, Dr. Rubel Shelly, Mike Cope, Randall J. Harris, Dr. Harold Shank, and Dr. Jack R. Reese, is a diabolical assault upon worship. It goes beyond changing “the order of events, adding a few contemporary songs, and (if radical) using an overhead projector...what is needed is a heart transplant” (76). These self-appointed czars of worship sailing high above masses on lofty charismatic and/or academic wings are leading congregations away from scriptural New Testament worship that is “in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24) and placing souls in danger of being lost eternally. To appear spiritual, intellectual, and attract the naive they chatter about praise, transcendence, awe, wonder, and authenticity and cite the writings of atheist/infidel/modernist theologians/writers; for example: Soren Kierkegaard, Jean-Paul Satre, Reinhold Niebuhr, etc. Worship renewal introduced primarily through Worship and Praise Teams liberates one from biblical authority by offering variety: freedom of choice in all aspects of worship; provides an arena where human experience/feelings can be expressed; and promotes a Social Gospel (satisfying man’s physical needs; i.e., disaster relief, abuse programs, medical clinics, etc., rather than spiritual).

Proponents of worship renewal tell us that revitalization is a must because “congregational worship too often leaves worshippers feeling empty, the wonder and awe having been
quenched by stale and predictable worship services” (back cover). Dr. Shelly says, “Worship so dated in style and method that it is remote from our contemporaries must be seen for the handicap to communication it is” (93). They invariably redefine worship, pervert Scripture, and use the perverted/unreliable NIV. It is interesting to note that they cannot agree on the definition of worship. Lynn Anderson defines worship as “a human response to the majesty of God. So by contemporary worship I mean human response expressed in the language and forms appropriate to the time and place” (20); is “fundamentally praise” (8) and tells us that “all of life offered up to God is spiritual worship” perverting Romans 12:1-2 (15). Dr. Harold Shank agrees that all of life is worship and perverts the same passage (99-100). Mike Cope’s definition is, “Worship, at its best, is a performance or entertainment” reaching down into the sewer of the Existential philosophy of Kierkegaard for support and clarification (31). Dr. Rubel Shelly’s definition of worship, “is neither a place nor an act (or series of acts) but an attitude...summed up for us in the single word wonder” (71). He then contradicts himself by saying that there are three acts of worship; i.e., “prophecy, prayer, and praise” (71-73). However, according to the New Testament there are five acts of worship: the Lord’s Supper (1 Cor. 11:23-26); Teaching/preaching (Mat. 28:19-20); Praying (Acts 2:42; Mat. 6:5-13); Singing (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16); and Giving (1 Cor. 16:1-2).

Some of the unscriptural additions to worship, a number of which are advocated in Lynn Anderson’s book:

(1) Lynn Anderson—falling down, “I cannot but reflect... When was the last time I landed on my face before God in worship?” (19) and “shout... David even danced before the Lord” (19);

(2) Mike Cope—“bowing down” (33);

“proclaim Hallelujah” (35); “a call to worship from Scripture at the beginning of our assemblies...” (43); solos and choirs, “While there is a place for hearing one person or a group of people share a song, prayer, or Scripture...” (44);

(3) Randall J. Harris—injects confession into worship, “confession has not played a prominent role in our assemblies.... Worship begins with the confession of our sinfulness and helplessness, it is a desperate cry of perishing people” (64);

(4) Dr. Rubel Shelly—“I am starting to feel free to laugh aloud, clap my hands, or cry” (69); “Stories, object lessons, color slides, and videos...drama...a six-minute piece of drama...can have more ‘punch’ in awakening people to their spiritual needs than a forty-minute sermon” (86); the expanded role of women; i.e., “standing up and speaking...singing (congregationally, small groups, or solo), reading Scripture...testifying, teaching sub-groups... (whether female, male, or mixed)” (91);

(5) Dr. Jack R. Reese—introduces unscriptural words for the Lord’s Supper; i.e., sacraments and Eucharist (125-127, 130) and advocates fasting (135);

(6) Max Lucado—suggests “spontaneity” (141) and implies silence is not an option in worship (147).

Worship renewal as advocated by Lynn Anderson and friends is fatal doctrinal error. It abandons the New Testament as the authority/pattern for acceptable worship, defiles biblical worship, and profanes the Lord’s church. Those who drink from the cesspool of Satan (infidel/atheist/modernist writers) raffia that the “pure river of water of life, clear as crystal” (Rev. 22:1) have the terrible fate awaiting: “I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity” (Mat. 7:23).

6205 Wall Triana
Madison, AL 35757
## Great Old Testament Questions
### June 7 - 11, 2003

**Saturday, June 7**
- **7:00 PM** “Were they ashamed when they committed abomination?” Jer. 6:15; 8:12
  - Keith Mosher
- **7:45 PM** “Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?” Est. 4:14
  - David Smith

**Sunday, June 8**
- **9:00 AM** “If the foundations be destroyed, what shall the righteous do?” Psa. 11:3
  - Lee Davis
- **10:00 AM** “Who told thee that thou wast naked?” Gen. 3:11
  - Lynn Parker
- **11:00 AM** “Is there any word from the LORD?” Jer. 37:17
  - Kevin Beard

**Monday, June 9**
- **9:00 AM** “For why will ye die?” Eze. 33:11
  - Jesse Whitlock
- **10:00 AM** “Can two walk together, except they be agreed?” Amos 3:3
  - David Brown
- **11:00 AM** “Is there any man that thou art mindful of him?” Psa. 8:4
  - Darrell Broking

**Tuesday, June 10**
- **9:00 AM** “For why will ye die?” Eze. 33:11
  - Jesse Whitlock
- **10:00 AM** “Who can find a virtuous woman?” Pro. 31:10
  - Jerry Martin
- **11:00 AM** “How then can man be justified with God?” Job 25:4
  - Clifford Newell

**Wednesday, June 11**
- **9:00 AM** “Is thy God...able to deliver thee?” Dan. 6:20
  - Riley Nelson
- **10:00 AM** “What shall I render unto the LORD for all His benefits toward me?” Psa. 116:12
  - Bryan Braswell
- **11:00 AM** “Is there not a cause?” 1 Sam. 17:29
  - Marvin Weir

**Dinner Break**
- **7:00 PM** “Will a man rob God?” Mal. 3:8
  - Howell Bigham
- **7:45 PM** “Why is the house of God forsaken?” Neh. 13:11
  - Gary Grizzell

**Thursday, June 12**
- **9:00 AM** “For why will ye die?” Eze. 33:11
  - Jesse Whitlock
- **10:00 AM** “Can two walk together, except they be agreed?” Amos 3:3
  - David Brown
- **11:00 AM** “Is there any word from the LORD?” Jer. 37:17
  - Kevin Beard

**Dinner Break**
- **7:00 PM** “If a man die, shall he live again?” Job 14:14
  - Curtis Cates
- **7:45 PM** “How shall we order the child?” Jud. 13:12
  - Bobby Liddell

**Friday, June 13**
- **9:00 AM** “Who hast wo...redness of the eyes?” Pro. 23:29-30
  - Geoff Litke
- **10:00 AM** “Who can find a virtuous woman?” Pro. 31:10
  - Jerry Martin
- **11:00 AM** “How then can man be justified with God?” Job 25:4
  - Clifford Newell

**Dinner Break**
- **7:00 PM** “Who is on the LORD’S side?” Exo. 32:26
  - Tom Bright
- **7:45 PM** “What hast thou done?” Gen. 4:10
  - Harrell Davidson

**Saturday, June 14**
- **9:00 AM** “Is thy God...able to deliver thee?” Dan. 6:20
  - Riley Nelson
- **10:00 AM** “What shall I render unto the LORD for all His benefits toward me?” Psa. 116:12
  - Bryan Braswell
- **11:00 AM** “Is there not a cause?” 1 Sam. 17:29
  - Marvin Weir

**Dinner Break**
- **7:00 PM** “How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?” Gen. 39:9
  - B. J. Clarke
- **7:45 PM** “How long hal ye between two opinions?” 1 Kin. 18:21
  - Ronnie Hayes
Sick

Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Marilyn Hall, Neva Bryant, Ella Hammac, Nancy Travis, Ruby Bowman, Lillian Hilburn (Marge Williams’ mother), and Lori Mosley (Joyce Johnson’s daughter).

Reading/Invitation
April 30, 2003
   Reading: Brantley Johnson
   Invitation: Ray Foshee
May 7, 2003
   Reading: Bryan Loy
   Invitation: Louis Herrington

Mark These Dates
April 30, 2003–Fifth Wednesday Singing.
May 4, 2003–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
May 11, 2003–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
May 11, 2003–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
May 18, 2003–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.
May 18, 2003–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
May 28, 2003–Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 PM, in the auditorium.

Pantry Item Needed
Canned Vegetables
Have You Moved Away from the Heavenly Father?

Marvin Weir

The world is filled with people who “know not God” and have chosen to “obey not the gospel” of Christ (2 Ths. 1:8). If these individuals continue in this condition the Lord has promised that they will “suffer punishment, even eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his might” (2 Ths. 1:9). Bible truth can be known by those who desire to know it (John 8:32). Jesus said, “If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from myself.” (John 7:17).

There is something, however, even sadder than those who have never obeyed the precious Gospel. This would be the condition of members of the body who have deliberately turned their backs upon the Lord and departed from his Truths. The apostle Peter serves warning to apostate members of the Lord’s church in saying:

For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein and overcome, the last state is become worse with them than the first. For it were better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after knowing it, to turn back from the holy commandment delivered unto them. It has happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog turning...
to his own vomit again, and the sow that had washed to wallowing in the mire (2 Pet. 2:20-22).

So very many today who profess to be at home with the Lord have actually moved far away from the Savior. They claim they believe as they have always believed, but miles and miles separate where they now stand from where they once stood! One thing is for certain—Christ has not moved, and the Bible has not changed (Heb. 13:8; Psa. 119:160).

One who obeys the Gospel and becomes a New Testament Christian has committed to being steadfast to the Lord and His church. If he truly loves Christ and respects His Word, why would he chart a course to drift farther and farther away from the Lord’s church (cf., Heb. 2:1)? God is not glorified and Heaven will not be the home of the one who calls on the Lord but is not willing to obey his will (Luke 6:46).

According to Strong’s and Thayer’s the word steadfast means one has settled in and is immovable. The apostle Paul informed the Colossian brethren that Christ died so they might be presented “holy and without blemish and unproveable before him: if so be that ye continue in the faith, grounded and stedfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel which ye heard, which was preached in all creation under heaven; whereof I Paul was made a minister” (Col. 1:22-23). Please note that Christians are responsible for being steadfast and for not moving away from the hope of the gospel.

Paul also warned the Corinthians, saying, “Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not vain in the Lord” (1 Cor. 15:58). Why is it that so many today thinks that their labor will be counted as worthy when they have moved so very far away from God’s truths? How can multitudes believe that they are Heaven bound even though they glory more so in the philosophies of men than they do in the Word of God? Why is it that some of our older brethren who once practiced pure New Testament Christianity now condone blatant error when it stands before them or sits down beside them? Why is it that so many brethren who once read the Bible and believed it now read the same book and question it? How can an ever-growing number of brethren convince themselves that they want to keep the Christ of the Bible but cast aside and trod underfoot His church (cf., Mat. 16:18; Eph. 1:22-23).

Two things come quickly to mind. First, there is the plague of selfishness that has most folks demanding that their own will be satisfied. Most who claim to follow Christ are so concerned with having things their own way that they would never pray as did the Savior, “not my will, but thine, be done” (Luke 22:42). The “I will do as I please and dare anyone to challenge me” attitude and the “give me what I want” disposition of mind has made mere mockery of the name church of Christ on many buildings across the land.

Second, uncontrolled selfishness quickly demands a lack of respect for the authority of the Lord. A love for the Savior will find brethren keeping the commands of God instead of ignoring them (John 14:15). One will respect and honor the Word of God instead of disputing and showing disdain for it.

The wisdom of man will not save his soul (1 Cor. 1:19-21) nor lead him to an eternal home with God (Jer. 10:23). Have you moved away from the Heavenly Father? If so, our prayer is that you will move back home before it is eternally too late!

5810 Liberty Grove Road; Rowlett, TX 75088
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7:45 PM  “Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?” Est. 4:14  David Smith

Sunday, June 8
9:00 AM  “If the foundations be destroyed, what shall the righteous do?” Psa. 11:3  Lee Davis
10:00 AM  “Who told thee that thou wast naked?” Gen. 3:11  Lynn Parker
11:00 AM  Lunch Break

Lunch Break

2:00 PM  “Should not the shepherds feed the flocks?” Eze. 34:2  Eddie Whitten
3:00 PM  “What shall be the end of these things?” Dan. 12:8  Glenn Hitchcock

Dinner Break

7:00 PM  “Will a man rob God?” Mal. 3:8  Howell Bigham
7:45 PM  “Why is the house of God forsaken?” Neh. 13:11  Gary Grizzell

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11:00 AM  “Is there any word from the LORD?” Jer. 37:17  Kevin Beard
1:30 PM  “Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?” Lam. 1:12  Lester Kamp
2:30 PM  “What is man that thou art mindful of him?” Psa. 8:4  Darrell Broking
3:30 PM  Lunch Break

Open Forum:

Dinner Break

7:00 PM  “If a man die, shall he live again?” Job 14:14  Curtis Cates
7:45 PM  “How shall we order the child?” Jud. 13:12  Bobby Liddell

Tuesday, June 10
9:00 AM  “Who hath woe...redness of the eyes?” Pro. 23:29-30  Geoff Litke
10:00 AM  “Who can find a virtuous woman?” Pro. 31:10  Jerry Martin
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7:45 PM  “How long halt ye between two opinions?” 1 Kin. 18:21  Ronnie Hayes
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Marilyn Hall, Neva Bryant, Ella Hammac, Nancy Travis, Ruby Bowman, Lucille Staples, Paul Brantley (scheduled for a heart catheterization), and Lori Mosley (Joyce Johnson’s daughter).

Reading/Invitation
May 7, 2003
Reading: Bryan Loy
Invitation: Louis Herrington
May 14, 2003
Reading: Jim Loy
Invitation: Tim Lamb

Mark These Dates
May 4, 2003–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
May 11, 2003–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
May 11, 2003–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
May 18, 2003–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.
May 18, 2003–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.

Pantry Item Needed
Canned Vegetables

1 Corinthians 1:30-31
“But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.”
Adultery And Repentance

Steve Higginbotham

One of the most tragic and consequential sins in which man can engage is adultery. It destroys families, lives, and destroys within some people the hope of heaven. Because we live in a time when adultery and divorce are so prevalent, it becomes incumbent upon us to state the truth contained in God’s Word about this sin and its consequences.

Let us suppose that a person divorces and re-maries without the scriptural grounds of fornication (Mat. 19:9). Let us suppose that this person begins a new life with his new wife. They build a wonderful relationship, are happy, and have three children. As time progresses, they desire to become Christians or return to faithfulness if they already were baptized.

Question: Does their baptism or their prayer allow them to pick up where they are and continue together in a sexual relationship? Has their prior adulterous relationship suddenly become a sanctified and holy relationship? In response to these questions some today are eager and vocal in answering in the affirmative. However, let us examine several points.

First of all, there is no question that baptism or prayer will wash away one’s sins (providing one repents of his sins). But repentance demands a resolve to cease from a sinful activity. A couple in an adulterous relationship must resolve to cease from the sinful sexual activity in which they engage if they desire the forgiveness that comes through repentance.

Some suggest that baptism washes away their former adulterous relationship and allows them
to continue together after baptism. However, does baptism or prayer for that matter, sanction as holy that which prior to baptism or prayer was unholy? Can you name one thing that is sinful before baptism, but which after baptism is not sinful? What was sinful before baptism is still sinful after baptism. Baptism or prayer is not some kind of magic that performs marriage ceremonies for adulterers.

Some have suggested that such a position on adultery makes the Gospel “bad news” rather than “good news” to a great and growing number of divorced and remarried people. However, to suggest that the Gospel would not be good news to a couple living in adultery is very short sighted. The message of salvation is always good news! At times, it might require some very difficult decisions to be made, but it is still good news. Could one not also argue that the Gospel would be “bad news” to the drunkard, homosexual, and liar? Would it be considered bad news for a doctor to tell a concerned patient that with a few weeks of radiation (which will have some painful side effects) he can be totally cured?

Some will also claim that God could not possibly ask a man and a woman to break up their relationship if children were involved. While I would never attempt to minimize the difficulty of such situations, the hardship cannot be allowed to determine what is right or wrong. One must remember that the hardship was not brought on by God, but by man’s disobedience to God’s warning. In the past, God has demanded such separations. “Now therefore make confession unto the LORD God of your fathers, and do his pleasure: and separate yourselves from the people of the land, and from the strange wives” (Ezra 10:11). “All these had taken strange wives: and some of them had wives by whom they had children” (Ezra 10:44).

Since the Scriptures teach that when one divorces and remarries without the cause being fornication, he commits adultery, as long as he remains in that sexual relationship, he remains an adulterer. Since this is the case, it becomes imperative to get the message out—to teach people what God said on this important subject. We need to inform the world of God’s law regarding marriage, divorce, and remarriage before they find themselves entangled in this sin, because to a large extent, people will turn their backs on God before they will their mate.

107 Trappers Trail; Glasgow, KY 42141

Two Cripples

Two cripples entered the church one day; Crippled—but each in a different way; One had a body, strong and whole, But it sheltered a warped and twisted soul.

The other walked with a halting gait But his soul was tall and fair and straight! They shared a pew. They shared a book. But on each face was a different look.

One was light with hope and joy And faith that nothing could destroy. The other joined not in prayer and hymn, No smile relaxed his features grim.

His neighbor had wronged him, his heart was sore. He thought of himself and nothing more. The words that were read from the Holy Book Struck deafened ears and forlorn look.

To one came comfort—his soul was fed. The other gained nothing from what was said. Two cripples left the church that day Crippled—but in a different way. A twisted foot did one body mar, But the twisted soul was sadder far!

Author Unknown
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Ronnie Hayes
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Marilyn Hall, Neva Bryant, Ella Hammac, Nancy Travis, Ruby Bowman, Lucille Staples, Paul Brantley (heart bypass surgery scheduled for May 8), and Lori Mosley (Joyce Johnson’s daughter).

Baptized
Eddie Jackson was baptized into Christ on April 24. His address is: 2955 Barrone Street; Pensacola, FL 32526. The telephone number is 456-3658. Please welcome Eddie and offer him encouragement.

Reading/Invitation
May 14, 2003
Reading: Jim Loy
Invitation: Tim Lamb
May 21, 2003
Reading: Horace Myrick
Invitation: Ray Pierce

Mark These Dates
May 11, 2003–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
May 11, 2003–Deacons’ meeting at 4:30 PM, in room 7. Please note the change in start time of the meeting.
May 18, 2003–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.
May 18, 2003–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
May 28, 2003–Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 PM, in the auditorium.

Pantry Item Needed
Peanut Butter and Jelly
How Many Faiths?

Douglas Hoff

Hearing members of denominational churches speak of many different faiths is fairly common. For example, when asked if a person is a Christian, generally the answer will be in the affirmative. However, if the one asking presses his fellow for more details he may say, “But what’s your faith? Are you a Baptist? Methodist? Presbyterian, or some other faith?” A lot of denominations consider those in other denominations to be true Christians even though they recognize differences exist between them. It seems that belief in Jesus Christ as the Son of God is about all that is necessary for this mutual acceptance of “different faiths.”

Hearing members of the Lord’s church speak of many different faiths used to be fairly rare. Unless, that is, they were debating with a member of a denomination. Members of the church of Christ used to be taught that God’s Word recognizes only one faith. Anyone reading the Scriptures with an open mind comes to this inescapable conclusion. Perhaps the best passage to show this point is Ephesians 4:4-6 where Paul wrote, “There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.” It is worth noting that the word faiths does not even occur in the English translation of the Bible.

Other verses also attest to the fact that God approves of but one faith. For example, Acts 6:7
speaks of certain Jewish priests who were obedient to the faith. Which faith? Such a question is unnecessary since there is only one faith! Luke also mentions “the faith” in a number of other verses in Acts (13:8; 14:22; 16:5; 24:24).

Why then has it become so common to hear people speak of different “Christian” faiths? Clearly, not because the Bible teaches this concept. Man is a proud creature who does not like to admit error. Instead of insisting on strict adherence to the tenets of this one approved faith, many opt for inclusion of other faiths. After all, if one has to be right on every point of doctrine, then no one can be saved, or so the thinking goes. Thus, instead of determining to be right with God, many consciously or subconsciously agree to disagree and hope every so-called “Christian” will be saved. This kind of thinking has infiltrated the Lord’s church. God knows no human being can be sinlessly perfect (Jesus Christ being the lone exception). Since the Scriptures clearly teach at least some people will be saved, then sinless perfection is not essential to man’s salvation. However, it would be twisted thinking to conclude that one can be saved without obeying the one faith. That is not open for debate or interpretation.

Sadly, some of our so-called “Christian” schools/colleges/universities now talk like the denominations. In July 2002 the Christian Chronicle ran a short article entitled, “Preachers of Different Faiths Commune at RC Conference.” It stated that “About 140 ministers from 14 different Christian faiths and 27 states participated in a communion service as part of Rochester College’s fifth Sermon Seminar May 20-22 at the Rochester Hills, Michigan school.” For those who do not know, Rochester College was formerly known as Michigan Christian College.

To be fair, this article could be using the phrase “different Christian faiths” accommodatingly. That is, the writer may have chosen to express that fact that ministers from 14 different denominations attended the seminar. However, more was communicated than simply acknowledging the presence of such false teachers.

Checking the calendar for 2002 one finds that May 20-22 corresponded to Monday through Wednesday. There is no biblical authority for having communion on any day other than Sunday (cf., Acts 20:7). Also, 2 John 9-11 teaches that Christians are not to have fellowship with false teachers. Denominational preachers do not abide in the doctrine of Christ since they have never obeyed the one faith and its requirements. Therefore, Christians should not encourage them in their religious works but rather reprove them. This certainly rules out having religious fellowship (i.e., communion) with them (2 Cor. 6:14-17).

When speaking of Christians we might be tempted to speak of true Christians as opposed to false Christians or false brethren (2 Cor. 11:26; Gal. 2:4). Would it not be wonderful if we did not have to make such distinctions? In reality, saying Christian is the same thing as saying true Christian since a false Christian is not a Christian at all. However, since Satan masquerades as an angel of light and his ministers transform themselves into ministers of righteousness (2 Cor. 11:14-15), there will always be a need to distinguish between true and false Christians. The one true faith produces true Christians; anything else curses souls (Gal. 1:6-9).
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Reading/Invitation
May 21, 2003
Reading: Horace Myrick
Invitation: Ray Pierce
May 28, 2003
Reading: Shelby Nall
Invitation: Fred Stancliff

Mark These Dates
May 18, 2003–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.
May 18, 2003–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
May 28, 2003–Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 PM, in the auditorium.

Pantry Item Needed
Peanut Butter and Jelly

Galatians 1:6-9
“I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.”
MEETING TIMES

SUNDAY:
9:00 A.M. BIBLE CLASSES
10:00 A.M., 6:00 P.M. WORSHIP

WEDNESDAY: 7:00 P.M.

BISHOPS: Paul Brantley, Bill Gallaher, Fred Stancliff
MINISTER: Michael Hatcher
DEACONS: Henry Born, Elward Brantley, Jerry Caine, Bill Crowe, Louis Herrington, James Loy, Richard Parker
MISSIONARY: Lee Davis

Updating Our Books-On-CD

We are in the process of updating our CD and it should be available at our 28th Annual Bellview Lectureship. The cost (if it is not an upgrade) will be $60.00 plus $1.25 postage (if it is an upgrade, please contact us for the cost). What will you get for this money? To start with you will receive all the Bellview Lectureship books beginning at 1988 and going through 2003. However, we found that a few other books were printed in a spiral binding, thus we have the 1975, 1976, and 1978 books on the CD also. These books are: Characters Of The Bible (1978), Back To The Bible (1976), and Remove Not the Ancient Landmarks (1975). Many of those books are out of print and at present this is the only way you can get that material. The cost of the CD goes for the purchase of these books. You are paying $60.00 for sixteen lectureship books and receiving the other three for a total of nineteen lectureship books. Thus, you are receiving sixteen books for less than $4.00 each.

However, while you are paying for the lectureship books, we are placing a great deal more material on the CD than just the books. We are placing all issues of Defender, which we possess, on this CD. Defender began in 1970, but it appears as if it was not printed in 1971, so we have 1970, 1972-2002 issues on the CD.

Next, we have a section we are titling Other Material. I am placing some of my study materials of Bible books on the CD. Those books I have done cover: Philemon, James, 2 & 3 John, and Jude. These are basically commentaries covering every verse in those books. There will also be the Hatcher-Schweitzer Exchange which was an exchange of letters between myself and a
Lutheran pastor dealing primarily with the subject of “Total Depravity” but also covering some other subjects.

We also have included a book by Clifford Newell titled Biblical Ethics. Keith Mosher wrote a tract several years ago titled, Can One Trust His English Bible? which has also been included. Brother Mosher has published two books dealing with inspiration which we were not able to get prepared for this CD but Lord willing will be on next year’s CD. We also have his Romans: A Study Outline on the CD. His son, Mark Mosher wrote a booklet exposing the Lads to Leaders program which we have included. Its title is, Is “The Lads To Leaders/Leaderettes, Inc. “ Really Good For Our Children? A book which has been in great demand which we have on the CD is, Studies In...Christian Doctrine And Practical Christian Living written by William S. (Bill) Cline. Another important book which deals with the A.D. 70 doctrine (also called Kingdom) is titled, Studies In Refutation Of Realized Eschatology. This book is a compilation of material written by Roy Deaver, Rex A. Turner, Sr., and Robert R. Taylor, Jr. Last, but certainly not least, we have a book written by Dudley Ross Spears of his material which he prepared for a debate with J. T. Payne in 1962. The title of this work is The Refutation Of The United Pentecostal Denomination.

As you can see from the list of material on our Books-on-CD there is a wealth of material available for your usage. This is over 275 megabytes of material. All of it has been done in the Adobe PDF format and the free reader is also included on the CD. Everyone will want to get a copy of this CD or upgrade their previous version.

Some Soul Jarring Thoughts

Dave Dugan

The researcher...George Barna was recently asked what trends did he see in the religious world. He gave these observations from his research. Please remember that Mr. Barna concentrates on the denominational world for his information; but we in the Lord’s church can learn from him to a degree.

Teens are falling away from the “main line churches” and seeking spiritual fulfillment in other areas.

More and more who call themselves “Christians” have less and less to do with the Scriptures and doctrine.

More and more who do attend church are making much more money; but giving less and less to the church.

More and more in the future will have up to four or five church homes and not just one.

Just a thought or two for you to consider: As the pressures of these things continue in our society the Lord’s church must continually teach and preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. We must press with all the love and care that we have for souls the subjects that many need to hear in order to save their soul. We must press: Christ the captain of our salvation (Heb. 2:10); the uniqueness of the one body (Eph. 4:4; 1:22-23); baptism for remission of sins (Acts 2:38); God approved worship (John 4:24; Heb. 10:25). The list could go on; but my point is, we need to thoroughly ground each generation. Let us do that together.
Great Old Testament Questions  
June 7 - 11, 2003

Saturday, June 7
7:00 PM “Were they ashamed when they committed abomination?” Jer. 6:15; 8:12  
Keith Mosher  
7:45 PM “Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?” Est. 4:14  
David Smith

Sunday, June 8
9:00 AM “If the foundations be destroyed, what shall the righteous do?” Psa. 11:3  
Lee Davis  
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Lynn Parker  
Lunch Break
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Glean Hitchcock

Dinner Break  
7:00 PM “Will a man rob God?” Mal. 3:8  
Howell Bigham  
7:45 PM “Why is the house of God forsaken?” Neh. 13:11  
Gary Grizzell

Monday, June 9
9:00 AM “For why will ye die?” Eze. 33:11  
Jesse Whitlock  
10:00 AM “Can two walk together, except they be agreed?” Amos 3:3  
David Brown  
11:00 AM “Is there any word from the LORD?” Jer. 37:17  
Kevin Beard  
Lunch Break  
1:30 PM “Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?” Lam. 1:12  
Lester Kamp  
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Darrell Broking  
3:30 PM Open Forum:

Dinner Break  
7:00 PM “If a man die, shall he live again?” Job 14:14  
Curtis Cates  
7:45 PM “How shall we order the child?” Jud. 13:12  
Bobby Liddell

Tuesday, June 10
9:00 AM “Who hath woe...redness of the eyes?” Pro. 23:29-30  
Geoff Litke  
10:00 AM “Who can find a virtuous woman?” Pro. 31:10  
Jerry Martin  
11:00 AM “How then can man be justified with God?” Job 25:4  
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7:45 PM “What hast thou done?” Gen. 4:10  
Harrell Davidson

Wednesday, June 11
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Riley Nelson  
10:00 AM “What shall I render unto the LORD for all His benefits toward me?” Psa. 116:12  
Bryan Braswell  
11:00 AM “Is there not a cause?” 1 Sam. 17:29  
Marvin Weir  
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Ronnie Hayes
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Marilyn Hall, Neva Bryant, Ella Hammac, Nancy Travis, Ruby Bowman, Paul Brantley, Lucille Staples, and Lori Mosley (Joyce Johnson’s daughter).

Reading/Invitation
May 28, 2003
Reading: Shelby Nall
Invitation: Fred Stancliff
June 4, 2003
Reading: Richard Parker
Invitation: Henry Born

Mark These Dates
May 28, 2003–Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 PM, in the auditorium.
June 1, 2003–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
June 15, 2003–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
June 22, 2003–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.
June 22, 2003–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.

Change of Address
Julie Cotten’s new address is: 5245 Bankhead Drive; Pensacola, FL 32526.
Fran Waters’ new address is 8201 Kause Road; Pensacola, FL 32506. Please update your directories.

Pantry Item Needed
Peanut Butter and Jelly
Dress Code? Or, Respect for God?

Eddie Whitten

The Bible does not specify a dress code, so why do elders try to impose a certain type of dress for members when we assemble for worship? The Bible teaches that God looks not on the outward man but on the heart. Most of our younger generations of today are not aware that “casual dress” in the services of worship to God, grew out of the rebellious days of the hippies and baby boomers of the 1960s. Respect for, and submission to, authority was dealt a severe blow by the “independent” thinking of that era. Like most other things that challenged the “establishment,” the initial shock soon wore off and that which once was “unthinkable” became acceptable.

The secular world still places great emphasis on dress. Business executives wear suits to work and usually require their younger aspirants to do the same. Quality of work is usually enhanced by neat and proper dress. The reputation of the company is represented to a great degree by the way employee’s dress. The reason: A respect for those representing a company generates a respect for the company represented. Contrary to what one may think, those who respect their person, their values, and their employers command the respect of those who do not.

It is a source of genuine distress to see the lack of respect for God displayed by so many in our worship services. Preachers are no exception; in fact they should be leaders in trying to keep the congregations aware of the Divine nature of
God. God should be exalted to the ultimate degree of respect, adoration, reverence, and awe before whom His children should humble themselves. Slovenly dress, casual, unkempt foot-wear, carelessness in presentation all profess that we have no awareness of the greatness of the God we profess to serve. Those who see God’s representatives in such common and presumptuous attire cannot have respect for the God they represent. It is no wonder that it is difficult to try to convince lost souls of their need to revere God, when it is apparent that He is not revered by those claiming to represent Him!

It is not a dress code that needs to be enforced. It is a desperate effort to instill in the hearts of Christians the abject respect that God’s children should have for their heavenly Father. Every example of the Old Testament, and every principle of the New Testament shows the need to glorify the God of heaven. Old Testament priests had to wash their clothes, and so make themselves clean (Num. 8:6-7).

A dress code? Not in the least! A plea to honor and glorify God in our dress? Yes!

1350 N. Abrego Drive
Green Valley, AZ 85614

Visitation

It should be remembered that you do not have to be on the “visitation team” to visit. Just turn off your television, turn off the lights, get into your car, start the engine, put the transmission in “D” and head out. We have lots of people in our congregation who would enjoy a visit. Your visit will make you feel good as well as the people you visit.

Author Unknown

New Bible Classes Beginning

Bible classes for the spring/summer quarters began Sunday, June 1. Make plans to attend these classes.

Sunday Schedule
(June - August 2003)

| Young Adults | Great Commission | Bill Cline |
| Adults I | James | Paul Brantley |
| Adults II | Hebrews | Michael Hatcher |
| New Converts | Studies In Christian Doctrine And Practical Christian Living | Bill Gallaher |

Wednesday Schedule
(June-August 2003)

| Young Adults | Ascertaining Bible Authority | Michael Hatcher |
| Adults I | Ecclesiastes | Fred Stancliff |
| Adults II | Isaiah | Ray Foshee |
| New Converts | Studies In Christian Doctrine And Practical Christian Living | Bill Gallaher |
Great Old Testament Questions  
June 7 - 11, 2003

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Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Marilyn Hall, Neva Bryant, Ella Hammac, Nancy Travis, Ruby Bowman, Paul Brantley, Lucille Staples, and Lori Mosley (Joyce Johnson’s daughter).

Baptized
Randy Reynolds was baptized into Christ on May 25, 2003. Please keep Randy in your prayers and offer him encouragement.

Reading/Invitation
June 4, 2003
Reading: Richard Parker
Invitation: Henry Born
June 11, 2003
Bellview Lectures

Mark These Dates
June 1, 2003–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
June 15, 2003–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
June 22, 2003–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.
June 22, 2003–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
June 25, 2003–Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 PM, in the auditorium.
June 30, 2003–Visitation Group Get-together at 6:00 PM. A covered-dish meal will precede the meeting.

Pantry Item Needed
Peanut Butter and Jelly
Why Christians Should Not Curse

Michael Light

We are bombarded on all sides with foul language. Through the television, radio, movies, videos, and now the web, we have great resources for good and bad. Last year we purchased a TV Guardian (a language filtering device that connects to your television set). It has been amazing to now see how much garbage was getting through undetected. Most of the media outlets have been very successful in gradually transforming the family oriented programming of a few decades ago to programming that would have once been given a rating of “R.” It is not surprising that those of the world will watch (and listen to) the trash in modern “entertainment;” but it is sickening to see members of the Lord’s blood bought body (the church) polluting their eyes and ears with this garbage. Many even try to defend it or act like it is no big deal. But in fact it is a very serious issue.

As with all moral issues we need to realize that we must have authority from God’s Word before we can engage in the activity under question. Colossians 3:17: “And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.” One could argue successfully that Christians should not curse simply because such language is not authorized (permitted) by the Word of God. God expects us to live by a higher moral and ethical code then those in the world. Notice what Christ says in Matthew 5:44-47: “But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use
you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?” If someone in the world gives us a cussing, we as Christians are not to respond in kind.

The Bible speaks of the tongue and mentions that the tongue can be used for good or evil. Notice a few passages from the great book of Proverbs on the subject. Proverbs 12:15-18: “The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise. A fool’s wrath is presently known: but a prudent man covereth shame. He that speaketh truth sheweth forth righteousness: but a false witness deceit. There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword: but the tongue of the wise is health.” Notice also Proverbs 17:20: “He that hath a froward heart findeth no good: and he that hath a perverse tongue falleth into mischief.” What we say is of great importance. Many people can put on religious fronts but ungodly speech will prove otherwise. Pure speech is a necessity for the faithful of God.

One of the most sobering passages in the New Testament on this subject is found in Matthew 12:36-37: “But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.” Jesus affirms that every word we speak will be answered for one day. Our speech is serious to God. Notice Exodus 20:7: “Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.” Notice God will not hold the one who offends in speech guiltless. Also read Paul’s admonition in Ephesians 4:29: “Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.” Notice the list of things that are not to proceed from our mouths: “But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth” (Col. 3:8).

We are taught to control our tongue in James 3. We should use our tongue for good. “Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man” (Col. 4:6). We should avoid cursing. “Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be” (Jam. 3:10). When we are careless with our mouths, we are being careless with our souls.

The gospel of Christ has the power to change us from our former sinful selves into justified, sanctified, blood bought sons and daughters of God. As such we should use our tongues as instruments of righteousness, spreading the gospel to those who are lost. We are to confess the wonderful name of Christ with our mouths (Rom. 10:9-10). We are to speak good things (Mat. 12:34), “for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.” Also, we must be able to answer for our hope in Christ. “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear” (1 Pet. 3:15). Our speech is to be pure, seasoned with salt, and aimed at helping others find the Lord. Foul language will not help us in this endeavor. May we strive to grow more like Jesus in our speech.

P.O. Box 158
Bangs, TX 76823
Great Old Testament Questions  
June 7 - 11, 2003

Saturday, June 7
7:00 PM  “Were they ashamed when they committed abomination?”  Jer. 6:15; 8:12  Keith Mosher
7:45 PM  “Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?”  Est. 4:14  David Smith

Sunday, June 8
9:00 AM  “If the foundations be destroyed, what shall the righteous do?”  Psa. 11:3  Lee Davis
10:00 AM  “Who told thee that thou wast naked?”  Gen. 3:11  Lynn Parker

Lunch Break

2:00 PM  “Should not the shepherds feed the flocks?”  Eze. 34:2  Eddie Whitten
3:00 PM  “What shall be the end of these things?”  Dan. 12:8  Glenn Hitchcock

Dinner Break

7:00 PM  “Will a man rob God?”  Mal. 3:8  Howell Bigham
7:45 PM  “Why is the house of God forsaken?”  Neh. 13:11  Gary Grizzell

Monday, June 9
9:00 AM  “Who hath woe...redness of the eyes?”  Pro. 23:29-30  Geoff Litke
10:00 AM  “Who can find a virtuous woman?”  Pro. 31:10  Jerry Martin
11:00 AM  “How then can man be justified with God?”  Job 25:4  Clifford Newell

Lunch Break

1:30 PM  “Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?”  Lam. 1:12  Lester Kamp
2:30 PM  “What doth the LORD thy God require of thee?”  Deu. 10:12; Mic. 6:8  Joe Galloway
3:30 PM  Open Forum:

Dinner Break

7:00 PM  “If a man die, shall he live again?”  Job 14:14  Curtis Cates
7:45 PM  “How shall we order the child?”  Jud. 13:12  Bobby Liddell

Tuesday, June 10
9:00 AM  “Who hath woe...redness of the eyes?”  Pro. 23:29-30  Geoff Litke
10:00 AM  “Who can find a virtuous woman?”  Pro. 31:10  Jerry Martin
11:00 AM  “How then can man be justified with God?”  Job 25:4  Clifford Newell

Lunch Break

1:30 PM  “What doth the LORD thy God require of thee?”  Deu. 10:12; Mic. 6:8  Joe Galloway
2:30 PM  “Art thou he that troubleth Israel?”  1 Kin. 18:17  Toney Smith
3:30 PM  Open Forum:

Dinner Break

7:00 PM  “Who is on the LORD’s side?”  Exo. 32:26  Tom Bright
7:45 PM  “What hast thou done?”  Gen. 4:10  Harrell Davidson

Wednesday, June 11
9:00 AM  “Is thy God...able to deliver thee?”  Dan. 6:20  Riley Nelson
10:00 AM  “What shall I render unto the LORD for all His benefits toward me?”  Psa. 116:12  Bryan Brasswell
11:00 AM  “Is there not a cause?”  1 Sam. 17:29  Marvin Weir

Lunch Break

1:30 PM  “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?”  Isa. 6:8  Guss Eoff
2:30 PM  “How shall we know the word which the LORD hath not spoken?”  Deu. 18:21  Randy Mabe
3:30 PM  Open Forum:

Dinner Break

7:00 PM  “How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?”  Gen. 39:9  B. J. Clarke
7:45 PM  “How long halt ye between two opinions?”  1 Kin. 18:21  Ronnie Hayes
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Marilyn Hall, Neva Bryant, Ella Hammac, Nancy Travis, Ruby Bowman, Paul Brantley, Lucille Staples, and Lori Mosley (Joyce Johnson’s daughter).

Reading/Invitation
June 11, 2003
Bellview Lectures
June 18, 2003
Reading: Carl Ayliffe
Invitation: Paul Brantley

Mark These Dates
June 22, 2003–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
June 22, 2003–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.
June 25, 2003–Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 PM, in the auditorium.
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Pantry Item Needed
Fruit Juice

John 13:20
Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.”
A Lot of Straw

Steve Harris

Very few religious scholars would dispute that Martin Luther was responsible for describing the epistle of James as a “right strawy one.” Apparently, the renowned reformationist could not accept James’ inspired teaching on justification by works and not faith only. Thus, it seems, he simply ignored the book’s authenticity. In so doing, Luther spread “a lot of straw” throughout most of the New Testament, without even realizing it.

James 2 is not the only place where works are emphasized; the New Testament is filled with passage after passage denoting the essentiality of works on the part of every professed believer. Did Martin Luther ascribe a “strawy nature” to Ephesians, Titus, or perhaps 1 Peter? I do not think so. But why not, since all these epistles and many others plainly reveal that works are a necessary component in getting our souls to heaven? Let us explore this issue more closely.

Paul, Peter, or John never taught that works of obedient faith conflicted with, flatly-contradicted, or negated grace—just the opposite is true. All the New Testament writers confirmed (even Matthew) the obligatory nature of keeping the law of Christ, which obviously meant that God intended for man to demonstrate faith in Him through works. A few examples are very much in order.

Paul revealed by inspiration that Christians are to be always “abounding in the work of the Lord” (1 Cor. 15:58). Was this written as an optional matter? Can we not abound in the work of the Lord always and still be accepted in His
sight? “No,” is the obvious answer. The Spirit’s admonition in this verse is not a “take-it or leave it” type command. Would Martin Luther brand 1 Corinthians as a “right strawy epistle”? I doubt it. But why not, since consistency would really demand it?

Furthermore, what would Luther do with Titus; for in that great epistle Paul related the divine truth that Christians are to be a “peculiar people,” “zealous of good works” (Tit. 2:14). Can you or I not be a person of zealous works and still go to heaven? Who could imagine such a faithless system?

What about Ephesians? Is it a strawy epistle? According to Luther, it should be. The eternal, foreordained law of God’s people walking in good works is found in Ephesians 2:10. Is it fine and dandy for us to ignore this teaching and rely solely on grace and mere mental agreement with God to secure our salvation? Who would be so foolish as to draw such a conclusion? Martin Luther, perhaps?

While he was at it, Luther should have spread a little straw over the book of Acts. According to Luther’s reasoning, Luke must have misunderstood the Holy Spirit as Luke was recounting Paul’s appearance before King Agrippa, because Paul said that repentance is demonstrated through the appropriate works—works of obedient faith as outlined in God’s Word: “that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet [suitable, worthy] for repentance” (Acts 26:20).

And what about Peter? Let us not forget him. I wonder if Martin Luther labeled Peter’s writings as “strawy”? In 1 Peter 1:17, Peter wrote that we will be judged by our work. It sounds like work is pretty important, since our eternal destiny will be considered in light of it.

In no way is this writer suggesting that works alone can save, for they cannot. God’s plan for our salvation involves His grace, love, and mercy; but it also includes man’s part: faith, obedience, law-keeping based on our love for and dependence upon God—and yes, works. No straw here, just truth.

Steele, MO

No Assembling Required

Luke Shira

Recently in a church bulletin that I received, there was an article by Doug Peters titled “No Assembly Required.” He pointed out how folks always want things simple, like wanting to buy items already assembled so there is a no assembly required. Some have this same idea regarding church attendance, regardless of the many Scriptures that tell us to assemble. The church in Corinth came together and was instructed to “lay by him in store” as they had been blessed (1 Cor. 16:2). One thing is certain, they could not have carried out this command unless they came together. Also, Paul told the church in Troas to come together, “on the first day of the week” to take Communion. Again, how could they follow this command unless they assembled together?

Often the churches in the New Testament came together more than the first day of the week, for edifying, evangelism, and Bible study. If the church does not assemble regularly how can it carry out these functions?

An important part of a congregation assembling is to hear the preaching of God’s Word, this one cannot do out on the river, or down by the sea side apart from the assembly. There has been a gradual drifting away from the Old Paths, but the words of the book of Hebrews ring out. In the tenth chapter verse 22, we are told that our assembling is “full assurance of faith,” then in verse 25, “Not forsaking the assembling of
ourselves together.” Now verse 26 says “For if we sin wilfully.” Can you be certain that wilfully missing the assembly is not dangerous? Verse 27 says, “But a certain fearful looking for of judgment.” Yes, assembling is important, and not to assemble is dangerous indeed.

via the Highlands Church of Christ Bulletin

Our Books-On-CD

The updated CD is now available. The cost (if it is not an upgrade) is $60.00 plus $1.25 postage (if it is an upgrade, please contact us for the cost). What will you get for this money? To start with you will receive all the Bellview Lectureship books beginning at 1988 and going through 2003. However, we found that a few other books were printed in a spiral binding, thus we have the 1975, 1976, and 1978 books on the CD also. These books are: Characters Of The Bible (1978), Back To The Bible (1976), and Remove Not the Ancient Landmarks (1975).

Many of those books are out of print and at present this is the only way you can get that material. The cost of the CD goes for the purchase of these books. You are paying $60.00 for sixteen lectureship books and receiving the other three for a total of nineteen lectureship books. Thus, you are receiving sixteen books for less than $4.00 each.

However, while you are paying for the lectureship books, we have placed a great deal more material on the CD than just the books. All issues of Defender, which we possess, will be on this CD. Defender began in 1970, but it appears as if it was not printed in 1971, so we have 1970, 1972-2002 issues on the CD.

Next, we have a section we are titling Other Material. I am placing some of my study materials of Bible books on the CD. Those books I have done cover: Philemon, James, 2 & 3 John, and Jude. These are basically commentaries covering every verse in those books. There will also be the Hatcher-Schweitzer Exchange which was an exchange of letters between myself and a Lutheran pastor dealing primarily with the subject of “Total Depravity” but also covering some other subjects.

We also have included a book by Clifford Newell titled Biblical Ethics. Keith Mosher wrote a tract several years ago titled, Can One Trust His English Bible? which has also been included. We also have his Romans: A Study Outline on the CD. His son, Mark Mosher wrote a booklet exposing the Lads to Leaders program which we have included. Its title is, Is “The Lads To Leaders/Leaderettes, Inc.” Really Good For Our Children? A book which has been in great demand which we have on the CD is, Studies In...Christian Doctrine And Practical Christian Living written by William S. (Bill) Cline. Another important book which deals with the A.D. 70 doctrine (also called Kingism) is titled, Studies In Refutation Of Realized Eschatology. This book is a compilation of material written by Roy Deaver, Rex A. Turner, Sr., and Robert R. Taylor, Jr. Last, but certainly not least, we have a book written by Dudley Ross Spears of his material which he prepared for a debate with J. T. Payne in 1962. The title of this work is The Refutation Of The United Pentecostal Denomination.

As you can see from the list of material on our Books-on-CD there is a wealth of material available for your usage. This is over 275 megabytes of material. All of it has been done in the Adobe PDF format and the free reader is also included on the CD. Everyone will want to get a copy of this CD or upgrade their previous version.
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Marilyn Hall, Neva Bryant, Ella Hammac, Nancy Travis, Ruby Bowman, Paul Brantley, Lucille Staples, and Lori Mosley (Joyce Johnson’s daughter).

Reading/Invitation
June 18, 2003
Reading: Carl Ayliffe
Invitation: Paul Brantley
June 25, 2003
Reading: Elward Brantley
Invitation: Bill Busch

Mark These Dates
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Pantry Item Needed
Fruit Juice

Romans 5:5
“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”
What the Preacher Sees

Chris Perry

The old adage is often quoted by wise mothers and gray-haired grandfathers: “Walk a mile in someone’s shoes…” A popular country song from a few years back advises one to “put yourself in my shoes, walk a mile for me.” Indeed, time and experience teaches that a change of perspective is always helpful. Therefore, I would like to present a change in perspective which, for most, would be quite drastic. Imagine a Sunday not far from the one just passed. Imagine on this particular Sunday the opening songs being sung, the opening prayer being led, and the preacher standing up to preach. Now imagine that instead of me doing the preaching, you are the one walking up to the pulpit to lead the congregation in a study of God’s Word (ladies, pretend you are men or preaching for only ladies). I would like to describe for you what you might see:

In the front several pews would be the ghosts who so frequently haunt the local congregation in every place. With powerful and effective methods unbeknownst to me, these ghosts prevent any from sitting in the front several pews. In the front several pews would be the ghosts who so frequently haunt the local congregation in every place. With powerful and effective methods unbeknownst to me, these ghosts prevent any from sitting in the front several pews. Now, the Bible teaches against such nonsense as returning from the dead to haunt the living—note such passages as Luke 6:19-31 and 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 (at the Second Coming will the dead be raised). However, with such a widespread fear of sitting in the front pews, the only explanation I can come up with is a superstitious belief in front-pew ghosts.
Behind these non-existent beings would be the congregation, the group to whom you are preaching this day. Dispersed within this number are the wonderful attentive souls. As you preach, their fingers nimbly search the Scriptures to see whether the things you say are so (Acts 17:11); their hands write vigorously the outline you present, recording it for further study. They do this not because they respect the words you say, but because they realize the power that is contained in the Word of God that you preach (Rom. 1:16; 2 Tim. 3:16; 4:2). As you notice their interested eyes, you are encouraged and edified, your “sermon tank” recharged for another whole-hearted effort.

As your eyes continue to move around the room, however, that tank begins to drain. In the back is a young man, arm propped on the back of the pew, no Bible in hand. Carefully he examines the dirt under his fingernails, paying special attention to the thumb and forefinger. Perhaps he took literally the admonition by Paul in 2 Corinthians 13:5 to “examine yourselves.” Perhaps, also, he forgot Christ’s teaching that those who worshipped Him were to do it with their attitude and their intellect (John 4:23-24). To his right and slightly forward sits an older couple, eyes narrowed, nearly closed. Were they physically unable to remain awake, you might excuse them; however, later that afternoon he will recount for you the three-hour football game he watched with eyes not-so-narrowed. Occasionally, bladder control problems will spread throughout the congregation, and person after person will excuse themselves from their worship to God to use the restroom or get a drink of water. Notes are passed, whispers are exchanged, dinner plans are made, all in the place of careful attention to the Word of God as it is being presented.

Having thus imagined, consider for a moment some even bigger shoes in which to place yourselves—what does God think when He witnesses a scene such as the one just described? When such was done by the Pharisees, He said that only in this life would they have their reward (Mat. 6:1ff). When God’s chosen nation claimed to worship Him, yet served Him only in deed and not in heart, He turned His back on their offerings (Isa. 58; Mal. 2). So, which are you in the worship assembly? Are you the attentive, interested soul, hungry for God’s Word, or the indifferent, preoccupied soul who is present in body only? Christ taught that “by their fruits ye shall know them” (Mat. 7:20), and I pray that from where I stand in my shoes I shall see the fruits of devoted Christians.

Private Kingdoms
Danil Denham

Jesus Christ is reigning as “the King of kings and the Lord of lords” (1 Tim. 6:14-15; Rev. 17:14). The church of our Lord is His kingdom on earth (Mat. 16:18-19). Those who are in the church are citizens of the kingdom (Col. 1:12-13; Rev. 1:9). The righteous cause of that kingdom—the seeking and saving of the lost (Luke 19:10)—is the greatest endeavor on earth. It should be the passion of every blood-bought believer. Our purpose for being saved is to help save others (1 Cor. 9:22).

Yet there are some who seem to have other agendas in life that run counter to this great and noble purpose. Many who have become members of the precious body of Christ have sold their allegiance over time to other causes. Some of
these have become enamored with creating their own “private kingdom.” They seek to carve out a piece for themselves from out of the midst of God’s people. It appears as if they believe the church exists to give them some special province over others without regard to Bible authority or moral restraint.

Over the years I have seen members of the church who have sought to manipulate the church for financial gain. One brother some years ago set about and succeeded in destroying an eldership simply because he wanted control of the church property which adjoined his own business. He was angry with the elders because they would not simply deed a portion of the property to him for his plans for expansion. So he began a whisper campaign to discourage and dishearten the elders into quitting.

Another brother in a congregation elsewhere in the country went into city politics and actually became mayor of the city in which he resided. The position had long been an honorary one without remuneration other than for job-related expenses. The brother persuaded the city aldermen to vote for him and them a special salary. The only problem was that the meeting in which the deed was done clearly violated the sunshine laws of the state. The brother then tried to use his position in the local congregation as an elder to pressure members of the church to rally in support of his actions. He accused those who would not support him in the matter of being traitors to the cause of Christ, etc.

Another elder in yet another city, when confronted with the misuse of church funds for personal gain among other disturbing charges, refused to resign from the eldership though the majority of the men called upon him to do so. He not only sought to justify his actions, but insisted that the Lord had spoken to him and told him specifically to remain an elder!

The notion of carving out a private portion for one’s own rule or dominance is not new. Such folk were present in apostolic times as well. Diotrophes, for one, was a man who sought to establish his own “private kingdom” (3 John 9-10). Bullying tactics, abusive manners and speech, ungodly dealings, and high-handed and hateful acts typify such a personality. Instead of being satisfied with being a citizen of the heavenly kingdom and a child of the King of the Universe, these seek to have pre-eminence and develop a rule or ruin mentality. It is the latter condition that inevitably comes about from the pursuit of the former. The message by Jehovah from the mouth of an heathen king in Daniel 4:37 should be remembered, lest we be led away by the same temptation: “those that walk in pride He is able to abase.”

Not For Sale

A well-dressed couple came into a toy shop with their two children. “We want some toys that will keep the children entertained,” the mother said. “My husband and I both work and the children are alone a great deal.”

The sales girl showed them a variety of games and play equipment, but to each there was some objection. “It seems to me,” the mother said impatiently, “that if you knew what we were looking for; you could find it among all these toys.”

The sales girl sighed, “I’m sorry ma’am, but I believe what you are looking for—what your children want—is a mother and a father, we do not sell those here.”

Author Unknown
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Marilyn Hall, Neva Bryant, Ella Hammac, Nancy Travis, Ruby Bowman, Paul Brantley, Lucille Staples, and Richard Parker.

Reading/Invitation
June 25, 2003
Reading: Elward Brantley
Invitation: Bill Busch
July 2, 2003
Reading: Jerry Caine
Invitation: Bill Cline

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July 6, 2003–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
July 13, 2003–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
July 13, 2003–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
July 20, 2003–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.

Pantry Item Needed
Fruit Juice
Can You Read this Without Crying?

The following letter appeared in the Letters to the Editor section of a newspaper. The picture it paints could be duplicated many times over. Many people ask the question: “What’s wrong with society nowadays?” Fathers and mothers must bear responsibility for the future because they hold their children in their hands—but only for a short time:

Dear Editor:

While staying in the vicinity of Leesburg for a much-needed rest, I would like to send this message to everyone who will read it. Three months ago I sat in a court and heard a judge say “Twenty years!” He was pronouncing sentence on my 21-year-old son, a punishment for drinking, gambling, and robbery, which ended in the shooting and near death of a man. The sentence might have been less, but my son took a sneering, defiant attitude all through court, ridiculing every law officer who spoke to him.

But the crowning, shocking climax came when the judge sternly asked: “Young man, don’t you believe in God?” My son laughed long and loud as he said, “God? Who’s that? I felt that every eye in the courtroom turned to look at me.

My parents saw to it that I attended Bible classes on Sunday when I was small. I learned all about God. After I was married, I decided to attend again and take my children with me. We went only on “special” days. Soon I joined a bowling team that competed on Sunday afternoons. I couldn’t attend church services and get ready to leave in time to bowl—and bowling
was such fun! If only I had those years to live over again! Night after night I have paced the floor with the words: “God? Who’s that?” echoing in my ears.

My son was thirteen years old the Sunday the police came as I was leaving with my bowling bag. I waited impatiently while they told me my son had been caught breaking a window the night before. I practically forgot about it and went on my merry way. By now attending church was completely a thing of the past. The years went by, one by one, to end up in a courtroom.

When I think of the wasted years of “having fun” instead of meeting God at His appointed time, I am sick with shame. I am trying to make restitution by urging others: “Don’t forget God!”—Mrs. D.L.

How calloused our society has become to the needs of our children! The childhood years fly by quickly, but many fathers and mothers see their children only a few hours each day. Just a little “quality time” is not enough when it comes to training up children. Who is there to teach them upright values and good morals? Who is there to set a good example of kindness and patience? Who is there to hug them and kiss away the tears of some childhood grief? Who is there to care whether or not they ask: “God? Who’s that?” The sad answer is often, “Nobody.” Parents, the responsibility is yours. Will you assume it for the sake of the future of our nation? Will you assume it, more importantly, for the sake of your child’s soul?

Author Unknown

Bibliolatry, Are We Guilty?

J. A. McNutt

In recent years I have heard the charge of “Bibliolatry” applied to faithful brethren and loyal gospel preachers. If I understand the implications of this charge we are being indicted on a form of idolatry, where the literal book (the Bible) is being made an idol, an object of superstitious reverence. If any of our brethren have made the material, leather bound, copy of the Bible an object of worship, instead of God who gave us the message that it contains, they are showing less common sense and understanding than I have always given my brethren credit for having. Who worships the book? I doubt that many intelligent religious people, or any informed Christians would be guilty of this charge.

Who Is Guilty?

Christians have always been known as a Bible believing, God fearing people. It is not wrong to be known as a people who respect and follow the Bible because this book contains God’s message to man. It is not wrong to quote it extensively in a sermon, to depend upon it for authority, and to honor its precepts. I have heard gospel preachers who give numerous quotations from the Scriptures referred to as “Bible bangers,” but I still like to hear the preacher cite Bible authority for what is being taught from the pulpit. One can hear lectures on social issues, economic problems, and human philosophy elsewhere but when we attend religious services it should be to hear the Word of God proclaimed.

According to the divine record (Acts 2 and Acts 8), gospel preachers in the first century preached the word, preached Christ, things concerning the kingdom of God, and preached the gospel with the results that thousands were converted to Christ. The powerful and effective work of Apollos as a gospel preacher is described
in these words, “For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ” (Acts 18:28). If this is “Bibliolatry” Apollos was guilty.

**The Key to Growth**

I have just finished reading a book titled *The Ten Largest Sunday Schools, And What Makes Them Grow*. It is interesting to note that every single one of the ten schools mentioned is operated by conservative and aggressive religious bodies that profess to preach the Bible, and make an appeal based on biblical teaching and a rejection of modernism. Although I do not concede their claim to biblical authority on several points of teaching, I am convinced that the basic reason for their growth is their strong appeal to a public that is sick and tired of the “social gospel” and want to hear the Bible preached and taught. It is both ironic and tragic that at the very time, that denominationalism has failed to meet the world’s desire for biblical teaching, that some of “our pseudo-intellectuals” have decided that plain Bible preaching is no longer relevant.

**Power in the Written Word**

Paul tells us, “For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Heb. 4:12). When our Lord was tempted by Satan in the wilderness, he rejected every temptation with a direct appeal to the written word of God. Three times our Saviour said, “It is written” (Mat. 4). If this is “Bibliolatry” our Lord was guilty.

The liberal claims to trust in the person of Jesus and to imbibe the spirit of Jesus apart from the word, but there is no such thing as trusting in and believing a person while rejecting the words of that person (John 6:63).

Peter affirms that Christians have been “born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever” (1 Pet. 1:23).

James also asserts the power of the Word in transforming our lives by the declaration: “Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures” (Jam. 1:18). God’s Word has the power to create life and transform human personality.

**The Literal Book?**

I am sure that God never intended that anyone should worship the literal book composed of paper, ink, and the binding that holds it together any more than he desires that we should worship the cross, but I would hesitate to trample on a likeness of the cross because of what it symbolizes. I do not worship, but I respect that for which it stands.

I do not worship the Bible, but I believe that it contains the Word of God; I love to see people bring a Bible to church services, and to see Bibles in the home that are being used and read frequently. I would handle the Bible with respect because of what it contains and for what its contents have meant to countless thousands of dedicated followers of Christ. I have my mother’s Bible with the notations and the passages that she underscored with her own hands, I read the notes that she made on the margins, and I have a picture of her sitting in her chair and reading God’s book, and it means something to me. I have a deeper faith in God’s Word because of her example; as a child I believed that book because she did, and now I believe it because of the same reasons that she did. If this be “Bibliolatry” make the most of it, because I plead guilty.

_Copied_
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Marilyn Hall, Neva Bryant, Nancy Travis, Ruby Bowman, and Lucille Staples.

Reading/Invitation
July 2, 2003
Reading: Jerry Caine
Invitation: Bill Cline
July 9, 2003
Reading: Jeremy Caine
Invitation: Bill Crowe

Mark These Dates
June 25, 2003–Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 PM, in the auditorium.
June 29, 2003–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
June 30, 2003–Visitation Group Get-together at 6:00 PM. A covered-dish meal will precede the meeting.
July 6, 2003–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
July 13, 2003–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
July 13, 2003–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
July 20, 2003–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.
July 20, 2003–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
July 23, 2003–Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 PM, in the auditorium.
July 30, 2003–Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00 PM, in the auditorium.

Pantry Item Needed
Fruit Juice
Loving God

Preston Silcox

Answering the lawyer who asked what the great commandment in Moses’ law was, Jesus declared, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind” (Mat. 22:37). Jesus agreed that man has the duty of loving the Creator with his entire being. Since one proves love by actions rather than by mere words (1 John 3:18), consider a few responsibilities a person must meet in order to demonstrate his deep and all-encompassing love for God.

God’s Word must Be Cherished

This principle is found in Deuteronomy 11:1: “Therefore thou shalt love the LORD thy God, and keep his charge, and his statutes, and his judgments, and his commandments, alway.” No one can truly love the Lord and discard His revealed will. Jesus pointed out this fact when He said, “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15). All who sincerely love God want to know His will for them. Since the Bible declares that will, those who love God search the Scriptures and meditate upon the precepts revealed therein (Psa. 119:47-48).

All Wickedness must Be Abhorred

The Psalmist commanded, “Ye that love the LORD, hate evil” (Psa. 97:10). The person who truly loves God, absolutely despises sin; he sees it as a very ugly thing. He grasps God’s view of it—as the vomit to which the dog turns (2 Pet. 2:22)—and with all his might, works diligently to avoid it. He knows that wickedness will cost
the masses their souls (Mat. 7:13-14), and so he labors to warn the world (Mat. 28:18-20). While many attempt to dabble in sin and declare their allegiance to Jehovah, no one can truly love God without disdaining transgression.

The World must Be Properly Viewed

Recall the words of the Savior in Matthew 6:24: “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.” Loving God and serving the temporal cannot take place simultaneously. Those who seek those things above and who set their affections on the same, are the ones who demonstrate proper love for the Lord (Col. 3:1-2). These realize that they are only sojourners, searching for a city “whose builder and maker is God” (Heb. 11:10).

True Worship must Be Enjoyed

David displayed an attitude that all should possess when given the opportunity to worship God: “I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD” (Psa. 122:1). Such gladness exhibits one’s devotion and love to the Creator and Sustainer of life. There are many who show their disdain for God by their poor attitude toward true worship. Like Israel of old, they are weary of God and demonstrate such by viewing worship as a burden rather than a blessing (Isa. 43:22-23). Of course, just the opposite are those who long to “worship him in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24).

There are numerous other responsibilities that come along with loving God with all of one’s being, but those above stress that positive actions, not mere words, accompany true devotion to God. May every person who claims to love God with all his heart, soul, and mind demonstrate that love in deed and in truth (1 John 3:18).

4006 Sunset Street
Muskogee, OK 74403

The Day of the Lord

Marvin Weir

The Bible clearly states that there is coming a “day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God” (Rom. 2:5). The Lord reveals that “Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?” (Mat. 7:22)? All people need to realize that they will give an account for the life they have lived at the “day of judgment” (Mat. 10:15). Let us now study some truths about “the day of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 1:8).

The certainty of the day of judgment is as certain as the resurrection of Christ. The Bible reminds all to consider that “inasmuch as he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead” (Acts 17:31). The resurrection of the Lord Jesus from the dead is an indisputable fact.

The time of the day of judgment is unknown although many have arrogantly but falsely predicted the date. William Miller, founder of the Adventist movement, set the time of the Lord’s return between March 1843 and March 1844. Joseph Smith, founder of the Mormon church, predicted that the Lord would return to judge the world in 1891. People today are more likely to remember Hal Lindsey and his
prophecy that the Lord would return in 1988. There were those who just knew that the year 2000 would be the time that the Lord would return to judge all nations.

There is one thing that all date setters for the Lord’s return have in common—they grievously err from the truth! Inspired revelation has long been complete (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:3) and it says not one word nor gives one hint as to the day that the Lord will return to judge the world. The Bible does tell us, however, “But of that day and hour knoweth no one, not even the angels of heaven, neither the Son, but the Father only” (Mat. 24:36).

The day of judgment connected with the return of Christ will bring an end to this world—not establish some earthly kingdom. Peter says, “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up” (2 Pet. 3:10). Christ is not now King (Luke 1:32-33; Rev. 3:21) reigning over members of His kingdom (Col. 1:13). When the Lord returns to judge this world, He will then “deliver up the kingdom to God” (1 Cor. 15:24).

At the day of judgment all the dead will be raised—not just a select few! Jesus Himself says, “Marvel not at this: for the hour cometh, in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment” (John 5:28-29). There will be no more opportunities to prepare for eternity when the day of the Lord arrives.

The day of the Lord will not be a secret to anyone. Some have falsely taught that the Lord has already come a second time but only a few were aware of His coming. One who is familiar with the inspired Scriptures will quickly recognize the fallacy of such teaching. The apostle Paul proclaimed, “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (1 Th. 4:16-17). All those who are living and all those who have died will be acutely aware of the day of the Lord.

The day of judgment will be sudden and at a time not expected. The Bible warns all who will hear by saying, “Therefore be ye also ready; for in an hour that ye think not the Son of man cometh” (Mat. 24:44). Again, God’s Word declares, “For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night” (1 Th. 5:2). The Lord reminds his disciples to be ready and watch, saying, “But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what hour the thief was coming, he would have watched, and not have left his house to be broken through. Be ye also ready: for in an hour that ye think not the Son of man cometh” (Luke 12:39-40).

The day of judgment and the Lord’s appearing will be looked forward to only by those who are His faithful children. One must be able to truthfully say as did the apostle Paul, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day; and not to me only, but also to all them that have loved his appearing” (2 Tim. 4:7-8).

May we watch and be prepared for the day of the Lord.

5810 Liberty Grove Road
Rowlett, TX 75088
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Marilyn Hall, Neva Bryant, Nancy Travis, Ruby Bowman, Lucille Staples, and Emmanette Hughes (Shelby Nall’s sister).

Baptized
Trevor Denham was baptized into Christ while attending Indian Creek Youth Camp. Please keep him in your prayers and offer him encouragement.

Reading/Invitation
July 9, 2003
Reading: Jeremy Caine
Invitation: Bill Crowe
July 16, 2003
Reading: Bill Gallaher
Invitation: Dale Cunningham

Mark These Dates
July 6, 2003—Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
July 13, 2003—Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
July 13, 2003—Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
July 20, 2003—Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.
July 20, 2003—Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
July 23, 2003—Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 PM, in the auditorium.
July 30, 2003—Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00 PM, in the auditorium.

Pantry Item Needed
Fruit Juice
The Right Choice of Words

Noah A. Hackworth

Introduction

Words are among the most powerful things on earth, but finding the “right words” to say at the “right time” is often difficult. Words have not only been known to start wars, but also end them. How many times have we said the wrong word at the wrong time? Or even the right word but at the wrong time. Timing is an important factor. Before the right word can be spoken the right idea must be in the mind since words are the vehicles of expressed thought. We can in many instances overlook our poor choice of words, but there are times when our “word choice” conveys unscriptural thoughts to others.

The Problem

One of the more critical areas where word choice is extremely important is prayers uttered around the Lord’s Table. Sometimes the members, at least the knowledgeable ones, will cringe at the words used in such prayers. Brethren need to pray “from their hearts,” but they also need to pay attention to what they are saying so there will be no misunderstanding in their minds or in the minds of others.

Who Shed The Blood?

Many times through the years brethren have mistakenly thanked God (the Father) for the blood He shed for our sins. Many times this mistake involves difficulties in getting the right nouns and verbs in their right place, as well as distinguishing between first, second, and third person. Again, we can overlook poor grammar, but it is absolutely essential to know the identity of the Person who died on the cross for our sins,
and it most assuredly was not God the Father, but rather Jesus His only begotten Son (Mat. 26:28). Hopefully such loose verbiage is not the result of biblical ignorance; if so we need to feel a bit of embarrassment.

**Accidental or Intentional?**

Prayers are often uttered thanking God for the blood Christ “spilled” on the cross, but in the minds of some this connotes an accident. The shed blood of Christ most assuredly was not an accident. Christ said, “For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins” (Mat. 26:28). “Shed” translates the word ἐκχυσάμενον, present passive from ἐκχύω, “to pour out,” indicating “life given up in death.” No accident is involved here! You cannot pour something by accident. So Christ did not “spill” His blood. He shed it. It was deliberate.

**Lord’s Supper Prayers**

Communing with the Lord around His table on the first day of the week is such an honor (Acts 20:7). And the prayers that are said in thanksgiving for the “bread” and “fruit of the vine” need to be direct and to the point. These prayers do not need to include “everything under the sun,” such as physical blessings, prosperity, personal safety, families, favorable weather, the opportunity to serve, etc., etc. Brethren sometimes say these things, but such takes our minds away from what we really need to be thinking and saying and doing. Our minds need to be on nothing save the death of our Lord. The communion is to “shew the Lord’s death until he come” (1 Cor. 11:26). “Shew” is the translation of καταγγέλλετε and means “to declare.” It is the Lord’s death that is being declared, not His miracles, or all the other wonderful things He did. Thanking God for all His wonderful blessings needs to be done, but at some other time; not around the communion table.

**The Need to Concentrate**

Nothing should be said or done at the communion table that will take our minds away from the death of our Lord. Nothing should be done that will interrupt our powers of concentration. Reading long portions of Scripture, especially if it is not appropriate, is sometimes distracting. On any occasion the wrong word of phrase can be a “slip of the tongue,” which is one thing, but words and phrases for which there is no biblical precedent should be abandoned. There is a need for brethren to be cautious about what they say and do at the communion table. We owe it to the Lord and to ourselves to be precise in the observance of the Lord’s Supper.

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5342 West La Vida Court
Visalia, CA 93277

An Attitude That Helps the Work of the Church

*Tim Smith*

Have you ever considered just how important attitude is when it comes to the work of the local congregation? It is most important. An attitude of helpfulness, of cooperation, of sincerity, of love, and of dedication will go a long way to helping an individual mature and a congregation “gel.”

An attitude devoid of these qualities usually affects the congregation in much the same way that a cancerous tumor affects the human body.

There is much work to be done in the local congregation each week. The sick need to be checked on, the weak or erring members need to
We apologize to all for a mistake in the bulletin last week (Vol. XXXII, No. 26, June 30, 2003). In the fine article by Marvin Weir titled: “The Day of the Lord” an extra word was accidentally inserted into the text which totally changed the meaning. Under the heading: “The day of judgment connected with the return of Christ will bring an end to this world—not establish some earthly kingdom” the sentence under consideration reads: “Christ is not now King (Luke 1:32-33; Rev. 3:21) reigning over members of His kingdom (Col. 1:13).” The word not should be excluded from the sentence thus making it to read: “Christ is now King (Luke 1:32-33; Rev. 3:21) reigning over members of His kingdom (Col. 1:13).” We try our best to make sure there are no mistakes, but being human sometimes they do get by us. (We sometimes tell people we put them in just so they can catch them.) We are very sorry this one slipped by us and apologize for any inconvenience it might have brought to anyone.

MH
Sick

Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Marilyn Hall, Neva Bryant, Nancy Travis, Ruby Bowman, Lucille Staples, and Emmanette Hughes (Shelby Nall’s sister).

Reading/Invitation
July 16, 2003
Reading: Bill Gallaher
Invitation: Dale Cunningham
July 23, 2003
Reading: Andrew Hatcher
Invitation: Ray Dodd

Mark These Dates
July 13, 2003–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
July 13, 2003–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
July 20, 2003–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.
July 20, 2003–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
July 23, 2003–Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 PM, in the auditorium.
July 30, 2003–Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00 PM, in the auditorium.

Pantry Item Needed
Canned Meat

Mark 11:24
“Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.”
Holy Ground and Spiritual Shoes

Eddie Whitten

“And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground” (Exo. 3:5). Most who read this passage will recall the event that evoked this admonition. Moses saw a bush burning but not being consumed. He said, “I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt” (Exo. 3:3). The occasion of this turn of events was God calling Moses to lead His people out of Egyptian bondage. There are some lessons we can, indeed must, learn from this exchange.

1. God’s Presence is Holy. Moses was in the presence of God. He was unaware that God was present when he “turned aside” to see the burning bush. God made him aware of His presence and commanded that in His presence Moses was to honor Him. We should be aware of our need to honor and revere the very presence of God when we meet with Him in worship. The worldly influences of our lives must be thrust from us when we assemble to worship our Father. He meets with us when we come together in the spirit of worship and we should be acutely aware of His presence. In so doing, we pay Him our love and our honor.

2. We Humble Ourselves in His Presence. Moses was commanded to remove the shoes from off his feet. This is a demonstration of humility and submission toward God. God does not permit a sociable or familial camaraderie between Himself and man. Men do not have the power, wisdom, nature, or honor of God; therefore they are not to exalt themselves to the level
of God. To do, or think, such is blasphemous and presumptuous. Jesus stated, “So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do” (Luke 17:10).

3. We Must Do As God Commands. God had a mission for Moses. Moses made excuses for not doing as God commanded, but all his excuses were to no avail. God knows our hearts; He knows our minds, He knows our capabilities and our limitations. God does not ask of us more than He knows we are capable of doing. God has asked that we serve Him faithfully. We must be involved in all those responsibilities which we accepted as His children.

4. We Can Do As God Has Commanded. Moses could not fool God. God had a commission for him and He made it possible for him to accomplish that task. We are given a commission and He can make it possible for us to accomplish it. As long as we realize that we walk on Holy Ground in God’s service; that we remove from our hearts the shoes of independence and self-sufficiency, and do the work assigned for us to do, we can bring to reality Paul’s claim, “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me (Phi. 4:13).

1350 North Abrego Drive
Green Valley, AZ 85614

Alternatives to the Gospel
Tom Bright

Webster defines alternative as “the choice between two things.” If I want to go to New York City, there are alternative routes that I might take and still get to my destination. There are also alternative modes of travel. I could walk, or ride a bus, train, or airplane.

If I want to see the Rose Bowl game live, I must go to Pasadena, California—there is no other choice. If I want to see Madison Square Garden, I must go to New York City—there is no option. If I want to see Big Ben, I must go to London—there is no alternative.

All know that in some areas of life, there are options, but in other areas of life there are no choices. For instance, a man can live without his tonsils and appendix, but he must have a heart, lungs, and liver.

There are no alternatives to the Gospel. Paul wrote, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek” (Rom. 1:16). Bloomfield wrote, “The sense is, For it is the powerful means appointed by God for the salvation of all who believe and embrace it.” There is no alternative to the gospel.

Some expect a direct impact of the Holy Spirit upon the human spirit to bring conversion. This is in total disregard of the principle affirmed by Jesus, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” (Mark 16:16). Jesus affirmed the free moral agency of man. Man can decide to believe and be baptized, or he can refuse to obey.

In Romans 1:16-17, Paul wrote that the gospel reveals the righteousness of God. The “righteousness of God” does not refer to an attribute or characteristic of God, that is, that He is a righteous Being. It refers to the means by which God declares man righteous. Righteousness is justification because of the forgiveness of sins.

In Romans 10:1-4 Paul explains that Israel was ignorant of God’s righteousness. Paul was not saying that Israel was ignorant of the fact God is a righteous being. He was saying they
were ignorant of the means appointed by God by which man could be declared righteous—the gospel. They, being ignorant of the gospel plan of salvation, were trying to establish their own righteousness.

The gospel reveals the righteousness of God—there is no alternative!

Paul told the Corinthians that he had begotten them through the gospel (1 Cor. 4:15). Peter mentions this begettal. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (1 Pet. 1:3). Twenty verses later he clarifies the means of this begettal. “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever” (v. 23). The gospel is the begetting power—there is no alternative!

The gospel calls us into the service of God. Paul speaks of a “holy calling” (2 Tim. 1:9). He refers to being “called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord” (1 Cor. 1:9). He also informs us that God “hath called you unto his kingdom and glory” (1 The. 2:12).

He settles the how of the calling when he wrote “Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 The. 2:14). Jesus affirmed that no man could come to Him “except the Father which hath sent me draw him” (John 6:44). In the next verse he says, “Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me” (v. 24). The only source of our learning of Him is the gospel. The gospel calls to obtain glory—there is no alternative!

The gospel sanctifies us. The Bible ascribes sanctification to God (Jude 1), the truth (John 17:17), faith (Acts 26:1, 8), the Word (Eph. 5:26), God’s Will (Heb. 10:10), the covenant (Heb. 10:29), and the Holy Spirit (2 The. 2:13). This does not mean there are seven different sanctifications. The child of God is sanctified only once, but by all these.

Sanctification is possible for man, with God as its author, the Holy Spirit as the agent through inspired men, who revealed “the word of the truth of the gospel” (Col. 1:5). It is the gospel that sanctifies—there is no alternative.

There is no alternative to the gospel. There is no other means by which man can be saved. When one adds something to the gospel, he produces a perverted gospel. When one takes something from the gospel, which [sic] is not another gospel. Let each of us preach the whole gospel—nothing more, nothing less.

1620 Fuller Road; Dyersburg, TN 38024

A Congregation Grows When...

• each member has a deep concern for the lost.
• each member enters into the worship service with much feeling and enthusiasm.
• each member is interested in improving his or her teaching ability.
• each elder and deacon is dedicated to the work.
• each member is personally involved in the work.
• each member is willing to purpose and give as he or she has been prospered.
• each member lets brotherly love express itself to every other member.
• each member is willing to truthfully say, “Here am I Lord, send me.”

Author Unknown
Sick

Please remember in your prayers:
Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Marilyn Hall,
Neva Bryant, Lucille Staples, Ruby Bowman,
Nancy Travis, Dot Lambert,
Emmanette Hughes (Shelby Nall’s sister),
and Doug Mowery (Debra and Denise Mowery’s brother).

Baptized

Dashean Chavez was baptized into Christ on July 7, 2003. Please remember him in your prayers.

Reading/Invocation

July 23, 2003
Reading: Andrew Hatcher
Invitation: Ray Dodd
July 30, 2003
Reading: Daniel Hatcher
Invitation: Ray Foshee

Mark These Dates

July 20, 2003—Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.
July 20, 2003—Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
July 23, 2003—Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 PM, in the auditorium.
July 30, 2003—Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00 PM, in the auditorium.
August 3, 2003—Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
August 10, 2003—Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.

Pantry Item Needed

Canned Meat
When Christians do not pray, study and grow (outside the worship or class setting), they are openly declaring their religious rigor mortis. 

Rigor mortis is a postmortem condition in which the muscle tissue chemically changes and stiffens. It is a gruesome symbol of death and has earned the deceased the nickname Stiff. God’s church sometimes witnesses rigor mortis in local churches and individual Christians.

When churches fail to grow and be active, they show signs of religious rigor mortis. The mission of the church is three fold: evangelism, benevolence, and edification. However, many congregations tend to dwell on edifying its members to the neglect of evangelism and benevolence to their communities. Worse still is the fact that many of these churches do not edify well, failing to provoke Christians to love and good works (Heb. 10:24-26).

In cases like these, religious rigor mortis has set in as the church becomes content with the status quo. Churches like this are stagnant, being content with a few services a week and their yearly gospel meeting, never pushing its members to fulfill their individual duties.

Religious rigor mortis is not just the bane of congregations, but many Christians succumb to its stiff fetters. Christians are obliged to work, serve and grow. Failing to do these things shows rigor mortis. Some saints warm the pews at the appropriate time, but not much more. Others do not even do this, often attending less than a third of the church’s assemblies. Some stagnate, thinking the good done by the church will be
applied to them, regardless of the fact they do not help in the church’s growth. It is certainly possible for members of a living and growing congregation to be individually dormant and thus spiritually dead.

When Christians do not pray, study, and grow (outside the worship or class setting), they are openly declaring their religious rigor mortis. These spiritual stiffs neglect their obligation to teach their neighbors, encourage their brethren, or to feed the hungry. In speaking of the judgment day, Jesus said that those saints who do not fulfill their duty to others will be told, “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not” (Mat. 25:41-43).

Rigor mortis is a grim sign of death. Religious rigor mortis is a gruesome and grim sign of spiritual death. Are you a spiritual stiff plagued by religious rigor mortis? Maybe you are only starting to have stiffening of the joints (sort of a spiritual arthritis) like the church in Sardis that was dying and stiffening. Jesus encouraged them to “strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die” (Rev. 3:2). Do not let rigor mortis set in your spiritual body. Get busy working for the Lord and strengthening His church.

Leonard Church of Christ
206 Fannin St.; Leonard, TX 75452

A Great Tragedy

Tom Moore

There is a great tragedy occurring in our world today. The tragedy I am referring to is the every growing deterioration of our young people. To understand what I mean, consider the following information set forth by the Fullerton, California Police Department and the California Department of Education concerning the problems of the past and present in our schools:

**Top Problems in 1940**
1. Talking
2. Chewing gum
3. Making noise
4. Running in the halls
5. Getting out of line
6. Wearing improper clothing
7. Not putting paper in the waste basket

**Top Problems Today**
1. Drug abuse
2. Alcohol abuse
3. Pregnancy
4. Suicide
5. Rape
6. Robbery
7. Assault

One would have to be blind not to see how many of our young people are changing for the worse. I have heard of teachers being afraid of their students—and unable to keep peace in the classroom. The word of John rings true, “the whole world lieth in wickedness” (1 John 5:19). To stop this fast growing problem we need to get at the root of the problem—the **home**. Yes, I believe that most of the problems with our youth could be solved if parents would fulfill their God-given responsibilities. How can we be God-pleasing parents? How can we turn the tide of our deteriorating youth?

First, we must own up to the fact that there is a problem, and that we must do something about it. I have learned a long time ago that if something is important and needs to be accomplished—the best way to make sure it is done is to do it
yourself. Beloved, as we stand around pointing fingers at every one else—the problem goes unsolved. Blaming does not solve any problem—**action** does.

Second, we must use the proper prescription to gain the desired result. One of the reasons that a host of young people are turning out bad is that many parents are not using the Bible as the instruction manual in raising their children. Paul taught that parents must train and admonish their children in the Lord (Eph. 6:4). Solomon declared, “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it” (Prov. 22:6). From these two verses, three important points stand out:

1. We must “train” our children to become faithful Christians.
2. We must use the Bible as our training manual.
3. We cannot train our children in something we have little knowledge of ourselves.

Third, we **must know** who our children are associating with. It is never more true than now that “Evil companionships corrupt good morals” (1 Cor. 15:33). If we allow our children to run around with the wrong crowd—we are setting them up for a spiritual fall. Please do not allow your children to run around with evil influences. Sure, our children will complain—they complain about a lot of things—but we will do what is best for them if we are loving parents. Solomon said, “Chasten thy son, seeing there is hope; And set not thy heart on his destruction” (Prov. 19:18).

Fourth, we need to be good examples for our young people. Our children learn more from what they see than from what we say. Remember, little eyes are watching us carefully—they want to be just like Dad and Mom. We must be great Christian examples at all times. Jesus warned, “But whoso shall cause one of these little ones that believe on me to stumble, it is profitable for him that a great millstone should be hanged about his neck, and **that** he should be sunk in the depth of the sea” (Matt. 18:6). Are you a Christ-like or worldly example for your children?

Finally, we need to discipline our children. The lack of parental discipline is a major problem plaguing our young people. In our world, for the most part, little discipline takes place in the home. But, consider the words of Solomon, “My son, despise not the chastening of Jehovah; Neither be weary of his reprover: For whom Jehovah loveth he reproveth; Even as a father the son in whom he delighteth” (Prov. 3:11-12). I firmly believe that if parents will be strong with “the rod of correction” fewer problems will exist among our young people. “He that spareth his rod hateth his son; But he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes” (Prov. 13:24). “Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; But the rod of correction shall drive it far from him” (Prov. 22:15). “Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell” (Prov. 23:13-14). We need to love our children enough to discipline them.

Our children are the church of tomorrow. How strong will the church be in the years to come? Are you doing your part as parents?

Copied
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Marilyn Hall, Neva Bryant, Nancy Travis, Ruby Bowman, Lucille Staples, Dot Lambert, Emmanette Hughes (Shelby Nall’s sister), Wanda Batten, Faye Little (Dot Dodd’s mother), LeRoy Johnson (Howard Johnson’s father).

Baptized
Ashley Wilkes and Megan Denham were baptized into Christ on July 10, 2003, while attending Indian Creek Youth Camp. Christie Simoneaux was baptized into Christ while attending the Carolina Bible Camp. All are granddaughters of Fred and Rheba Stancliff. Please keep them in your prayers.

Sympathy
Our deepest sympathy is extended to Curtis A. Cates in the death of his father, Curtis C. Cates, on July 21, 2003. Please keep brother Cates and his family in your prayers.

Reading/Invitation
July 30, 2003
Reading: Daniel Hatcher
Invitation: Ray Foshee
August 6, 2003
Reading: Bryan Loy
Invitation: Louis Herrington

Pantry Item Needed
Canned Meat
The First Time

I saw him in the church building for the first time on Wednesday. He was in his mid-70s, with thinning hair and a neat brown suit. Many times in the past I had invited him to come. Several other Christian friends had talked to him about the Lord and had tried to share the good news with him.

He was a well-respected, honest man with so many of the characteristics a Christian should have; but he had never put on Christ. “Have you ever been to a church service in your life?” I asked him several years ago. We had just finished a pleasant day of visiting and talking. He hesitated. Then, with a bitter smile, he told me of a childhood experience over sixty years ago. He was one of many children in a large, impoverished family. His parents had struggled to provide food, with little left for housing and clothing. When he was about ten, some neighbors had invited him to worship with them. The Bible class had been very exciting. He had never heard such songs and stories before. He had never even heard anyone read from the Bible.

After class was over, the teacher took him aside and said, “Son, please don’t come again dressed as you are now. We want to look our best when we come to worship the Lord.” He stood in his ragged, unpatched overalls, looked at his dirty, bare feet, and said, “No, Ma’am, I won’t ever.” “And I never did,” he said, abruptly ending our conversation.

There must have been other factors to have hardened him so, but this experience formed a significant part of the bitterness in his heart. I’m sure that Bible teacher meant well. But what if she had really understood the love of Christ?
What if she had studied and accepted the teachings found in the second chapter of James? What if she had put her arms around that dirty, ragged little boy and said, “Son, I am so glad you are here, and I hope you will come every chance you get to hear more about Jesus”?

I reflected on the awesome responsibility a teacher has to welcome little ones in His name. How far-reaching her influence is! I prayed that I might ever be open to the tenderness of a child’s heart, and that I might never fail to see beyond the appearance and behavior of a child to the eternal possibilities within.

Yes, I saw him in the church house for the first time Wednesday. And as I looked at that immaculately-dressed old gentleman lying in his casket, I thought of the little boy of long ago. I could almost hear him say, “No, Ma’am, I won’t, ever.” And I wept.

Author Unknown

Christ and His Doctrine

Adron Doran

There seems to be an element among the pulpiteers of the churches of Christ who propose that preaching should be directed away from an emphasis on the doctrine of Christ toward “a change in emphasis” to exalting Christ Himself. They charge that the undue emphasis which churches of Christ place on doctrine is causing some people to think that congregations are more responsive to matters of doctrine than they are to the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We are told that we must see the “church in transition” by transforming itself from the image of a church of doctrine orientation to that of a church of Christ orientation.

Fortunately, the charges simply are not well taken! There has never been a time when the churches of Christ have neglected to represent a “Christ-exalting movement.” The preachers during the first century delivered a Christ-centered message. Christ told His apostles to teach the disciples “to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.” These disciples, therefore, “continued steadfastly in the Apostles’ doctrine.” The evangelists during the early days of the Restoration Movement in America went forth preaching that Jesus is the Christ the Son of the living God. This kind of preaching continues among those faithful to Christ in the twenty-first century as they fill their sermons with the exaltation of Christ as well as Bible doctrine.

There seems to be no explanation for these charges except an evident intent to ridicule, down-grade, and belittle the “mainline churches of Christ” and to influence them to become more like the people around about. We must not concede that the preaching of the gospel has become an either/or proposition. We preach doctrine or we preach “Christ and Him crucified.” I am convinced that if we preach either, we preach both. One cannot preach Christ without preaching His doctrine nor can one preach the doctrine of Christ without exalting Christ.

The apostles and early disciples gave attention to both Christ and doctrine at the same time. Paul told the church at Corinth that “we preach not ourselves, but Jesus Christ the Lord” (2 Cor. 4:5), yet he admonished Timothy to “give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine” (1 Tim. 4:13). Simon Peter in his sermon on Pentecost not only exalted Christ but he also said that God had exalted Jesus. Yet, Peter told the hearers who were convinced that God had made that same Jesus whom they had crucified “both Lord and Christ” and that they must “Repent, and
be baptized...in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins” (Acts 2:38). The apostle had no reluctance to preach the doctrine of baptism while at the same time exalting Christ. Phillip used the prophecy of Isaiah to preach Jesus unto the eunuch (Acts 8:35). However, they had not traveled very long and very far until the eunuch was convinced that the doctrine of Christ required him to confess and be baptized in water.

When we preach about the church today, we exalt Jesus Christ as the head and as “the Savior of the body.” When we meet around the table to observe the Lord’s Supper, we do so in memory of Christ and to show the Lord’s death. We preach baptism in water for the remission of sins as the means by which we get into Christ and put Him on.

It was with the deep concern which John had for the pre-eminence of Christ and regard for His doctrine that he wrote: “Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son” (2 John 9).

The Colossian Christians learned from the pen of Paul that what they said or did (word or deed) must be spoken and performed in the name of Jesus Christ and that they must give thanks to the Father through Jesus (Col. 3:17). He did not distinguish between the importance of what we say about Christ and what we do that Christ tells us to do.

The efforts of some modernist teachers and writers to move the churches of Christ away from doctrinal matter under the guise of our responsibility to exalt Jesus Christ seems to me to be comparable to the practices of the liberal Disciples of Christ who engineered the innovations of affiliation with missionary societies and the introduction of mechanical instruments of music in worship during the latter part of the 1800s. To them it matters little what we do as worship just so long as the focus is on our faith in God and in His Son, Jesus Christ. We can well be drifting rapidly into the currents of liberalism today which will take us in the same direction which the Christian Church has gone—we accept the man (Christ) but not the plan (doctrine). My sixty-three plus years in the pulpits of churches of Christ have convinced me that we must not lose our distinctive plea in matters of faith and practice.

Deceased

A Church Can Grow When...

Each member has a deep concern for the lost. Each member enters the worship with enthusiasm. Each member is interested in intense Bible study. Each teacher is interested in improving his/her teaching ability. Each elder and deacon is dedicated to the work. The preacher preaches the Word of God with love. Each is personally involved in his work of soul saving. Each member lets brotherly love express itself to every other member.

A Church Cannot Grow When...

We stay away from worship and Bible class. When we gossip about others. When we are indifferent toward the work of the church. When we live ungodly lives. When we criticize everybody and everything that is done. When we complain about the elders and the preacher. When we refuse to help with the work. When our feelings are easily hurt and we pout.

We are either helping the church to grow or we are not. Let us do all that we can to help!

Via Rising Star Bulletin
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Marilyn Hall, Neva Bryant, Ruby Bowman, Nancy Travis, Dot Little (Dot Dodd’s mother), LeRoy Johnson (Howard Johnson’s father), Emmanette Hughes (Shelby Nall’s sister), and Wanda Batten.

Reading/Invitation
August 6, 2003
Reading: Bryan Loy
Invitation: Louis Herrington
August 13, 2003
Reading: Jim Loy
Invitation: Ray Pierce

Mark These Dates
August 3, 2003–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
August 10, 2003–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
August 10, 2003–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
August 17, 2003–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.
August 17, 2003–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.

Pantry Item Needed
Canned Meat

Address Change
Tony and Vanessa Liddell’s new address is 2838 County Road 150; Moulton, AL 35650-9771. Please keep them in your prayers and write to them as they begin this new work.
What Will Help One Excel as a Christian

Curtis A. Cates

It is my belief that most Christians wish to make their lives as effective for the Lord and His cause as possible. We are not satisfied with the ordinary, just being mediocre. “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might” (Ecc. 9:10). We want to give God our full measure, using to the greatest possible potential the talents He has given us. What will help us please Him in this way?

One, the Christian must have “God within.” Enthusiasm. “What do ye more than others?” (Mat. 5:47). Do we go the extra mile (Mat. 5:39-44)? Let Christ be seen in you (John 3:1-2; Mat. 5:13-16; Acts 6:10).

Two, the Christian must prepare for effective, dedicated service. If you have the ability and potential to preach, develop those talents (2 Tim. 2:2). If you have the ability to teach Bible classes, prepare yourself (Heb. 5:12-14; 2 Tim. 2:15). If you can carry a tune, young men, develop as good song leaders. And, what a need we have to develop as great elders and deacons (1 Tim. 3:1-15)! Use your talents, brethren.

Three, the child of God must be confident in the Lord. “And who is sufficient for these things? (2 Cor. 2:16). Paul knew that in the Lord and with His help (Phi. 4:13), he was sufficient. The Spirit strengthens us through His Word, through faith (Eph. 3:16; Rom. 10:17; Eph. 6:17). Realize, dear reader, that you (as Esther) may be raised up “for such a time as this!” (Est. 4:14). Stand in the gap, dear friend!
Four, Christians must have the courage of their convictions. The Christian soldier is not afraid of criticism. In fact, the Lord tells us the faithful will undergo persecution (Mat. 5:10-12; 1 Pet. 4:16). “Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong” (1 Cor. 16:13). “Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ” (2 Tim. 2:3). “Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee” (Jos. 1:9). If you work for the Lord, believe me, the devil is not pleased and will criticize you! One can do nothing and avoid criticism.

Five, faithful children of God have one unified goal—to seek the kingdom first (Mat. 6:33). What did Paul say? “This one thing I do” (Phi. 3:13-14). Those who seek the praise of God rather than of men have their priorities straight (John 12:42-43).

Six, we must be dedicated, diligent hard workers. With our minds on the Lord (Phi. 1:21), we will labor. “If any would not work, neither should he eat,” Paul observed in the secular realm (2 The. 3:10); can we expect approval from God and be lazy slackers in the spiritual realm? Success does not come from breaks in life but from hard work. The command is to “work” (2 Th. 3:12; 1 Cor. 15:58)! “Give of your best to the Master” (cf., 2 Pet. 1:5-11). Do not be satisfied with mediocrity; God is not!

Should Women Take the Lead?

Richard Stevens III

Women leading men in the home and spiritually is an agenda supported and promoted throughout our country. But have they reasoned correctly? Should women take the lead...

In the home? Men and women are equal spiritually in the sight of God, “neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:28), but we are assigned different roles. Women were created as a “help meet,” helper of the man (Gen. 2:18). “Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man” (1 Cor. 11:9). “For Adam was first formed, then Eve” (1 Tim. 2:13). Nothing inferior is intended, as she is his counterpart and they are to fulfill God’s will together (Gen. 1:26-27). Nevertheless, women were sentenced to child bearing and submission, “thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee” (Gen. 3:16). Further evidence that God intends for the man to take the lead in the home follows: “Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church:...Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing” (Eph. 5:22-24; see also Col. 3:18; 1 Pet. 3:1, 5).

In preaching? Joel foretold of women prophesying (Joel 2:28). Philip had four daughters that prophesied (Acts 21:8-9). The church of Corinth (chapter fourteen) had women that prophesied. Paul stated that women prophesied (1 Cor. 11:5), but still made the point a couple of verses prior, “the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man” (1 Cor. 11:3). Even prophesying women (speaking under divine inspiration) were to be submissive to their male counterparts. Paul told the prophesying women in the congregation where men were also present to, “keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith
the law” (1 Cor. 14:34; see v. 35). Silence in this passage is the Greek word *sigao* which means to hold one’s peace. The prophesying women had to be quiet and let the men do the teaching and preaching (1 Tim. 2:11-12). This is the way God wants it done when and where men and women are present. The Bible referring to creation (1 Tim. 2:13-14; 1 Cor. 11:8-9), signifies this arrangement is not cultural, but continuous.

**In teaching?** Women can teach women and children publicly in assemblies without men, or privately teach anyone (Tit. 2:2-3; Acts 18:26). In 2 Timothy 2:2 the Bible says, “And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also” (2 Tim. 2:2). The word “men” in this passage is *anthropos* meaning human beings, male or female. The point is clear, God intends for women to teach others also. But, men are to teach publicly in mixed assemblies of men and women, “Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence” (1 Tim. 2:11-12). God intended for spiritual men to lead publicly, as in this immediate context of public prayer, “that men [male—*aner*] pray” (1 Tim. 2:8).

**In church leadership?** Elders (Acts 14:23), also called bishops (Phi. 1:1), shepherds (1 Pet. 5:1), pastors (Eph. 4:11), presbytery (1 Tim. 4:14), are the Lord’s leaders (Acts 28:17, 28; 1 Tim. 5:17; Heb. 13:17). Women could not qualify for leadership, since individuals must be male, the *husband* of the one wife (1 Tim. 3:1-2; Tit. 1:5-6). The same is true of deacons (1 Tim. 3:12).

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**Time: a Precious Commodity**

*Paul D. Kearby*

Time is precious. It was created by God for man’s wise use. Consider five minutes. It does not seem like much, but look what can happen in that time:

- In five minutes the earth revolves 6,000 miles in its orbit.
- In five minutes an electric current travels around the earth 3,000 times.
- In five minutes a ray of light travels 55.9 million miles.

Now consider what five minutes can do in the realm of spirituality:

- Five minutes of prayer each day will greatly influence your life.
- Five minutes spent on the phone to a shut-in can be rewarding to both them and you.
- Five minutes spent making personal visits can sow the seed of kindness and friendship.
- Five minutes encouraging a new Christian can influence them for eternity.
- Five minutes spent visiting the sick will spread some love where it is needed most.
- Five minutes spent reading the Bible will allow you to read through each of the following books: Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Haggai, Malachi, Titus, Philemon, 2 Peter, 2 & 3 John, and Jude.

So much can be accomplished in five short minutes: Let us wisely use the time God gives and try to make every moment count toward giving Him the glory and serving His people.
Sick

Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Marilyn Hall, Neva Bryant, Ruby Bowman, Nancy Travis, Faye Little (Dot Dodd’s mother), LeRoy Johnson (Howard Johnson’s father), and Emmanette Hughes (Shelby Nall’s sister).

Reading/Invitation
August 13, 2003
Reading: Jim Loy
Invitation: Ray Pierce
August 20, 2003
Reading: Gabe Moore
Invitation: Fred Stancliff

Mark These Dates
August 10, 2003–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
August 10, 2003–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
August 17, 2003–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.
August 17, 2003–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
August 27, 2003–Adult Bible Classes Video Series

Pantry Item Needed
Canned Vegetables

Ephesians 3:16-17
“That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love.”
The man huddled on the cabin floor and he was slowly freezing to death. It was high in the Rockies in southwestern Alberta and outside a blizzard was raging. John Elliott had logged miles that day through the deep snows of the mountain passes. As he checked for avalanches, dusk and exhaustion overcame him. He decided to “hole up” for the night. Wearily, he made it to his cabin; but, somewhat dazed with fatigue. He did not light a fire nor remove his wet clothing. As the blizzard blasted through the cracks of the old cabin’s walls, the sleeping forest ranger sank into oblivion as he was paralyzed by the pleasure of the storm’s icy caress.

However, his dog sprang into action and with unrelenting whines the dog finally managed to rouse his near-comatose friend. The dog was John’s constant companion. He was a St. Bernard, one of a long line of dogs famous for their heroics in times of crisis. “If that dog had not been with me, I would be dead today,” John Elliott said, “When you are freezing to death you actually feel warm all over and you do not wakeup because it feels so good.”

This story illustrates the spiritual condition of many people. They are cold spiritually and, sadly, they are oblivious to their true condition. Thankfully, we have friends who can wake us from our frozen comfort before it is too late.

Solomon put it this way: “Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his
fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up. Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone? And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken” (Ecc. 4:9-12). James reminds us: “Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins” (Jam. 5:19-20).

Copied

Give Me the Truth

If you are my friend, if you are concerned about my soul, give me the truth. Do not flatter me. Do not praise my virtues while remaining silent about my vices. Do not fear the truth will offend me. Do not treasure our friendship, our friendly relations, above. Do not think by ignoring my sins, you can help me. Do not think that being blind to my sins will prove yourself charitable. However I may react to it, whatever may be my attitude toward you after you have done it, give me the truth. For the Truth, and only the Truth, can make me free from the shackles of sin, strengthen me in the pathway of righteousness, and lead me to heaven’s joy.

If I am wavering, weak, lukewarm, indifferent, neglectful; if I have been overtaken in a trespass; if I have been drawn into the pleasure of the world, if I have been led astray by error; or if I have done none of these, but simply need to grow in knowledge and be edified, give me the truth!

Author Unknown

In Defending the Faith

“Be Wise As Serpents and Harmless as Doves”

Barry M. Grider

Jesus said to the twelve, “Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves” (Mat. 10:16). Jesus warns that in the midst of enemies, His servants must be prudent, cautious, and careful as serpents, yet maintain the gentleness and peacefulness of a dove. This admonition still serves the followers of Christ well, even today. The church of our Lord is threatened with various extremes. Both radicalism and liberalism have harmed the body of Christ in a significant way. This has caused some to react with an unbecoming attitude. A wise older preacher once said to me, “Despite many departures from the faith, those who are faithful must always behave like Christians.” The current digression has caused many to be skeptical of others and to sometimes begin questioning the integrity and soundness of brethren, often unnecessarily. Those who love God’s truth and want to defend it should remember, for example:

1. **Be firm, but not factious.** It is important that God’s people hold true to their convictions. Never is there any room to compromise that
which is sacred. Such is condemned in the Bible repeatedly. However, one should never confuse his conviction with his opinion. An opinion can sometimes be elevated above Scripture, and many are willing to break ties with faithful brethren over an opinion. While remaining true to our beliefs, let us never promote division, but let us always be “Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:3).

2. Be cautious, but not conspiring. The Bible teaches us to be watchful for the Lord’s cause (Eze. 3:17; 1 Cor. 16:13). However, we are not to hang on another’s every word just to try and catch someone in error. Often because of petty jealousies or misunderstandings, “Christians” engage in character assassination under the guise they are protecting God’s truth. Even after a brother may clarify or even repent of something he has stated, many will keep a distance from him or continue to conspire against him, unwilling to forgive. Sometimes it is easy to identify a false teacher. When the evidence is there, and one fails to repent, such should be made known to the entire brotherhood (Rom. 16:17). If you are not sure about another’s specific doctrinal stance, be quiet until you are sure. Be willing to give the individual the benefit of the doubt, instead of saying, “There is something wrong with that fellow, I just can’t place my finger on it.” Such an attitude is certainly not in accord with the lovely description of a Christian (1 Cor. 13:7).

3. Be narrow-minded, but not closed-minded. Jesus said, “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32). Truth by its very nature is narrow. Salvation comes to those who walk the narrow way (Mat. 7:14). I am thankful for airline pilots, doctors, pharmacists, etc. who are narrow-minded. But to be closed minded is a very dangerous attitude to possess. If you have already made up your mind about a specific Bible subject, and are unwilling to change your thinking, even when proven wrong, you should be alarmed about yourself. Because of pride, some refuse to open their minds and listen to others.

4. Be bold, but not brash. Joshua was encouraged to be “strong and of a good courage” (Jos. 1:6). Likewise, Christians are to exhibit the same in the Lord’s service (1 Cor. 16:13). This is particularly true when one considers the following admonition, “that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3). This is a command, not an option. While contending earnestly for the faith demands our boldness and courage, it does not entail our being brash and caustic. Never be hasty or rush to judgement in condemning another; and, for sure, do not resort to sardonic statements that are meant to hurt an individual personally (Gal. 5:15).

5. Be studious, but not snobbish. To know the truth demands our study (2 Tim. 2:15). The only way Christians can teach others is by being diligent students of the Book themselves (1 Pet. 3:15). Every Christian should be grateful for those who have sacrificed time and money to be educated and skilled in God’s Word. How beautiful is the picture of the one who has collected a vast knowledge of the sacred Scriptures, faithfully teaches the truth to others, maintains his integrity, and still walks humbly before his fellow man. Always be willing to share what you have learned, but never let the devil cause you to think, because of your knowledge, that you are superior to your other brothers and sisters in Christ.

May we ever be diligent in combating error of any stripe. Christ, His church, the truth of God, are definitely worth defending. However, we must always maintain the proper conduct, or else our efforts in defense of the faith will become futile.

3950 Forest Hill Irene Road; Memphis, TN 38125
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Marilyn Hall, Neva Bryant, Ruby Bowman, Nancy Travis, Faye Little (Dot Dodd’s mother), LeRoy Johnson (Howard Johnson’s father), and Emmanette Hughes (Shelby Nall’s sister), Julie Harrell (Dick and Dot Lambert’s daughter), and Gail Finch (Dick and Dot Lambert’s friend).

Reading/Invitation
August 20, 2003
Reading: Gabe Moore
Invitation: Fred Stancliff
August 27, 2003
Reading: Shelby Nall
Invitation: Henry Born

Mark These Dates
August 17, 2003–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.
August 17, 2003–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
August 27, 2003–Adult Bible Classes Video Series
September 7, 2003–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
September 7, 2003–Attendance Drive and Dinner on the Grounds, after the morning service in the general purpose building.
September 14, 2003–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
September 14, 2003–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.

Pantry Item Needed
Canned Vegetables
MEETING TIMES

SUNDAY:
9:00 A.M. BIBLE CLASSES
10:00 A.M., 6:00 P.M. WORSHIP

WEDNESDAY: 7:00 P.M.

BISHOPS: Paul Brantley, Bill Gallaher, Fred Stancliff
MINISTER: Michael Hatcher
DEACONS: Henry Born, Elward Brantley, Jerry Caine, Bill Crowe, Louis Herrington, James Loy, Richard Parker
MISSIONARY: Lee Davis

Take a Little Honey

When the seven-year famine arose in Egypt, it also prevailed through all of Canaan. Jacob in sending his sons to Egypt for the second time told them to take gifts for Joseph. Jacob in instructing his sons what gifts to take, told them to take a little honey (Gen. 43:11). Gifts were often used in the Old Testament to gain favor. Jacob sought the return of his sons Simeon and Benjamin. Honey was often used in the Old Testament to show prosperity and goodness. The term “flowing with milk and honey” was used by God to picture the abundance of the goodness of the land of Canaan, as the promised land for Israel (Exo. 3:8; 13:5; Num. 13:27; 16:13; Deu. 6:3; 26:9). Saul’s son, Jonathan, almost lost his life because of eating honey. Honey was one of the gifts that the wife of Jeroboam took to the prophet Ahijah, when she went to inquire of the fate of their son (1 Kin. 14:3).

The taste of the Manna sent from heaven to feed the children of Israel in the wilderness is said to have tasted “like wafers made with honey” (Exo. 16:31). No meat (meal) offering made to God was to contain honey (Lev. 2:11). Honey is used to illustrate the “sweetness” of God’s Words (Psa. 19:10; 119:103). Butter and honey are the foods the child of the prophecy of Isaiah 7:14 would eat to know to refuse evil, and choose the good (Isa. 7:15).

What is the lesson for us? We need to “take a little honey” with us in our lives. We are to be peacemakers (Mat. 5:9). We are to do unto others as we would have them do to us (Mat. 7:12). We are to turn the other cheek, go the second mile,
love our enemies (Mat. 5:38-45). Solomon in Proverbs 27:1 said, “A soft answer turneth away wrath.” We need to have a little honey (kindness, favor, understanding, compassion) in every avenue of our lives: in the church, at home, in the work place, and everyday dealing with others. Surely, a little of this honey in the church would go a long way to making relations with others in the church better. That in turn would make the work of the church go better, and the eventual outcome would be the salvation of more souls.

How many members of the church have been discouraged because of the coldness and harshness of other brethren? How many have been lost to the cause, because some member was selfish and unthoughtful of the needs of others? How many non-members have been turned away because they did not see “a little honey” in the lives of the church members they knew, but instead saw ill-will, bitterness, haughtiness? Yes, brethren we need to “take a little honey” with us in our lives as Christians.

How many marriages and homes would be saved or be better marriages and homes if every member of the family would “take a little honey” in their lives? What better example fathers and mothers would be to their children to show kindnesses and sweetness, instead of harshness, anger, and get-evenness.

In everyday walks of life, think of the change that would take place if beginning with us as Christians everyone showed courtesy, kindness, and patience with others that they meet. All the world will probably never so act, but for it to improve it will have to begin with those of us who profess to be children of God. Space will not allow me to quote all of them here, but let me encourage you to read the following Scriptures: Mat. 5-7, John 13:34-35, Col. 3, Gal. 5:19-23; 6:1-10, 1 Pet. 3:8-9, Jam. 2:14-26, Rom. 12. Others could be added, but I think these sufficient to impress the point that we need to have the spirit of “taking a little honey” with us in our lives.

Let me close the article with a warning given by Solomon in Proverbs. “It is not good to eat much honey: so for men to search their own glory is not glory.” “Hast thou found honey? eat so much as is sufficient for thee, lest thou be filled therewith, and vomit it” (Pro. 25:27, 16).

What do these verses have to do with the thought of our lesson? They present a very vital lesson to us. The lesson is that our actions must be genuine. We must be careful that we do not get in to doing things for show and flattery. If our deeds of goodwill and kindness are not sincere, if they are for show or flattery the good of them can be lost and potentially do more harm to the church than good.

Yes, we need to take the gift of honey to others, but let us have the spirit of Jesus in so doing.

Author Unknown

None of These Things Move Me

Gary Colley

Our title comes from Paul’s inspired pen, and stands out because of his conviction for truth. These words should express our thinking and stand for the Truth also! Paul looked forward to the victorious finish of his course, desiring to have that time with joy (2 Tim. 4:7-8). He served the Lord in the faithful preaching of the Gospel (Rom. 1:14-16). Wherever his work was ac-
cepted, he testified “the gospel of the grace of God” (Acts 20:24). No doubt multitudes were brought to obedience under his preaching. Many enemies wanted him to stop his work, even tried to put barriers in his path, but he remembered Who he was serving. He was not trying to please men, but God (Gal. 1:10).

He Was Not Moved by Liberals

No one ever stood more firmly on the Truth than did Paul. When some at Corinth wanted Paul to follow their own philosophies rather than the Gospel, Paul said, “Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you” (1 Cor 1:10). “In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” meant they were to do all by His authority. He also said, “For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified” (1 Cor 2:2). He said of the apostles and their teaching, “Now we have received, not the spirit [or disposition] of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth” (1 Cor 2:12-13). Of “false brethren,” who tried to turn him and others away from the Gospel (Acts 20:28-30; 2 Tim. 4:3), Paul said, “To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you” (Gal. 2:4-5).

He Was Not Moved by Those Who Wanted to Control Him

Paul loved the brethren! But he was not blind to the fact that some, at times, became enemies of the cross of Christ! (Phi. 3:18). One comes to be an enemy of the cross when he puts aside the Lord’s authority for his own personal desires and self-promotion. These oppose everything except their own way, and desire to control every situation. These, at times, act like spoiled children. Paul met these and said, “Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men” (1 Cor 14:20). He exhorted the Christians at Corinth to act like grown-ups instead of children (1 Cor. 16:13-14). It is much easier to deal with a twenty-inch baby than with one who is six feet tall! Paul was not moved away from the right pathway by these. Let “none of these things” move us either!

285 William Road
Collierville, TN 38017

I’m Saved; I Can Feel It

A gospel preacher was talking to a woman who said she knew she was saved. The preacher said, “How do you know you are saved?” She made the following reply: “I was attending a religious service one time and all of a sudden I felt light as a feather...I felt I was floating...I felt I was saved.”

The preacher questioned the woman as follows: “Were you really floating?” “Certainly not,” she replied. “Were you light as a feather?” he asked. “Of course not,” she said. “Were you saved?” asked the preacher, “Oh yes, I was saved,” the woman said.

The preacher then asked this significant question. “If you could not trust your feelings about the first two things, why do you trust them about the third thing? Even though you felt light as a feather that didn’t make it so. Even though you felt you were floating, you were not floating. And because you felt like you were saved, that didn’t make it so.”

Via “The Thomson Trumpet”, Thomson, GA
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Marilyn Hall, Neva Bryant, Ruby Bowman, Nancy Travis, Faye Little (Dot Dodd’s mother), LeRoy Johnson (Howard Johnson’s father), and Emmanette Hughes (Shelby Nall’s sister), Julie Harrell (Dick and Dot Lambert’s daughter), and Gail Finch (Dick and Dot Lambert’s friend).

Reading/Invitation
August 27, 2003
Reading: Shelby Nall
Invitation: Henry Born
September 3, 2003
Reading: Richard Parker
Invitation: Paul Brantley

Mark These Dates
August 27, 2003–Adult Bible Classes
Video Series
September 7, 2003–Visitation Group 1
assignment cards handed out.
September 7, 2003–Attendance Drive and
Dinner on the Grounds, after the
morning service in the general purpose
building.
September 14, 2003–Visitation Group 2
assignment cards handed out.
September 14, 2003–Deacons’ meeting at
5:00 PM, in room 7.
September 21, 2003–Visitation Group 3
assignment cards handed out.
September 21, 2003–Elders/Deacons’
meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.

Pantry Item Needed
Canned Vegetables
Growth: Numerical and Spiritual

Tom Wacaster

We frequently hear men pray, “God give us growth both numerically and spiritually.” I have often expressed the same sentiment in my prayers to the Father. Growth is the natural outgrowth of the right input. Growth does not just happen; it is caused to happen. The cause, however, must be according to God’s divine law, not man’s ingenuity.

I read of a young boy who desired to be a basketball player when he grew up. Unfortunately for that young lad, the genetic pool from which to draw his needed height simply was not there. None of his family members were tall. In fact, his parents, grandparents, and siblings were all short, in comparison to the typical Los Angeles Lakers, or Dallas Maverick.

So the young man set about to “stretch” himself to the desired length. He would hang upside down from a self-made contraption that he threw over his dorm door. All he succeeded in doing was injure his back and cause multiple health problems. He sought growth the wrong way.

Back in 1933, Cled Wallace wrote an article for the Gospel Advocate in which he told of a church in Smackover, Arkansas. The church struck oil on its property, and the revenue was quite extensive. After much deliberation they decided they would pay annual dividends to the members. Needless to say, the membership of that congregation increased quite dramatically once the word got out that there would be financial dividends for members. In fact, it
increased so rapidly that eventually the members had a meeting and decided that no more members would be accepted (I do not recommend that as a viable solution). The point we are making is this. Growth is good, if it is accomplished the way God intended.

Peter wrote, “Putting away therefore all wickedness, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as newborn babes, long for the spiritual milk which is without guile, that ye may grow thereby unto salvation” (1 Pet. 2:1-2). Paul told us, “So belief cometh of hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ” (Rom. 10:17). To grow individually we must feed on the Word of God. It is impossible to grow otherwise. Mark it down, the man who does not spend time in the book will remain a spiritual infant. Time, in and of itself, does not make a person grow spiritually. I have had brethren tell me they have been a Christian for thus and thus years. So? All that says is that they have had the time to grow.

Now, if a congregation is to grow spiritually, then each member must grow spiritually. Hence, the spiritual growth of a congregation is proportionate to the degree to which each member feeds on the Word of God. This calls for good study habits on the part of each member, and good wholesome preaching from the pulpit of that congregation. Any attempt to grow a church in numbers without the simultaneous spiritual growth of its members is an act in futility. We can coddle, comfort, consort, and compromise the word so as to “bring em’ in,” but in the final analysis we will only fill the church with spiritual pygmies and we will the worse for it. Let us keep praying for growth, both numerical and spiritual. But then let us set about to improve our own level of spiritual maturity by a careful study and application of God’s Word to our life.

511 Southgate Dr; Mount Pleasant, TX 75455

New Bible Classes Beginning

Bible classes for the fall/winter quarters began Wednesday, September 3. Make plans to attend these classes.

**Sunday Schedule**
*(September-November 2003)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Instructor(s)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Young Adults</td>
<td>Successful Christian Living In Today’s World</td>
<td>Bill Cline, Jerry Caine</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adults I</td>
<td>1 &amp; 2 Peter, Jude</td>
<td>Michael Hatcher</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adults II</td>
<td>James</td>
<td>Paul Brantley</td>
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<tr>
<td>New Converts</td>
<td>Studies In Christian Doctrine And Practical Christian Living</td>
<td>Bill Gallaher</td>
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**Wednesday Schedule**
*(September-December 2003)*

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<tr>
<td>Adults I</td>
<td>Isaiah</td>
<td>Ray Foshee</td>
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<td>Adults II</td>
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<td>Bill Gallaher</td>
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Help Build Bible School Attendance...

Rake Up...
- Members
- Absentees
- Visitors
- Neighbors
- Relatives

By...
- Visiting
- Telephoning
- Writing
- Praying
- Ministering

Attendance Drive and Dinner on the Grounds
September 7
A covered-dish meal will be held after the morning service in the general purpose building.

A Short Story About Nobody

Fred Somebody, Tom Everybody, Pete Anybody, and Joe Nobody were neighbors, but they were not like you and I. They were odd people and hard to understand. Their lives were really strange.

All four belonged to the same church, but you could not have enjoyed worshiping with them. Everybody went fishing on Sunday mornings or stayed home to visit friends or relatives who would drop in. Anybody wanted to go to worship, but he was afraid that Somebody would not speak to him so he just stayed home to avoid that problem. Nobody went to church.

Really, Nobody was the only faithful one of the four. Nobody did visiting. Nobody worked on the church building. Nobody could be found doing what was needed to be done. Once they needed a Bible class teacher. Everybody thought that Anybody would do it, and Somebody thought that Everybody should. Guess who finally did it? That is right...Nobody did!

It happened that a fifth neighbor (an unbeliever) came to live in their community. Everybody thought Somebody should try to teach him and win him to Christ. Anybody thought that Everybody should try, and Somebody thought that Anybody could do a better job. But guess who finally won this man to Christ? That is right...Nobody did!

Author Unknown
(The above may be a cute little story, but it packs a big lesson!)
Sick
Please remember in your prayers:
Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Marilyn Hall,
Neva Bryant, Ruby Bowman, Nancy Travis,
Elward Brantley, Tim Lamb, Faye Little (Dot Dodd’s mother),
LeRoy Johnson (Howard Johnson’s father), and
Emmanette Hughes (Shelby Nall’s sister),
Julie Harrell (Dick and Dot Lambert’s daughter),
and Gail Finch (Dick and Dot Lambert’s friend).

Reading/Invitation
September 3, 2003
Reading: Richard Parker
Invitation: Paul Brantley
September 10, 2003
Reading: Joshua Wilkes
Invitation: Bill Busch

Mark These Dates
September 7, 2003–Visitation Group 1
assignment cards handed out.
September 7, 2003–Attendance Drive and
Dinner on the Grounds, after the
morning service in the general purpose
building.
September 14, 2003–Visitation Group 2
assignment cards handed out.
September 14, 2003–Deacons’ meeting at
5:00 PM, in room 7.
September 21, 2003–Visitation Group 3
assignment cards handed out.
September 21, 2003–Elders/Deacons’
meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
September 24, 2003–Adult Bible Classes
Video Series.

Pantry Item Needed
Canned Vegetables
Serving Christ Takes Time

Barry M. Grider

The biggest excuse people give for not serving the Lord is that they do not have enough time. It seems that most people are busier than ever, yet are we really accomplishing anything of eternal value? Jesus Christ knew His responsibilities and was dedicated to duty. He utilized His time efficiently and accomplished His mission in three short years. When one examines the life of Jesus he notices the Lord never really seemed in a hurry, yet He was always where He needed to be and was always doing what He needed to be doing. Following Christ means sacrificing our time on behalf of His cause. It is possible for some to verbally commit themselves to the Lord but refuse to put their words into action. Remember the following exchange:

And it came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain man said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head. And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God. And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house. And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God (Luke 9:57-61).

The first man did not really understand the import of his words. The other two volunteers allowed other things to hinder them from fol-
lowing Christ. The bottom line—“We just don’t have time right now.” This is a grievous mistake made by many. Each of us has 24 hours in every day and 168 hours in a week. It is imperative that we check our priorities. God, who invented time for man’s benefit, knew how much time we needed in every day. He has given us enough time to work, rest, eat, enjoy family and recreation, and, yes, do His will. However, doing His will does take time. It takes time to study (2 Tim. 2:15). It takes time to pray (1 The. 5:17). It takes time to work (Heb. 10:25). It takes time to get involved in the work of the church (Acts 2:42ff; 1 Cor. 15:58). It takes time to teach others the Gospel (Acts 8:4). Paul wrote, “See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil” (Eph. 5:15-16).

So, in order to serve Christ, we must sacrifice with regard to time. Yet something amazing occurs when we get our priorities in order. It seems our time will then multiply. Often, the elders of a congregation will assign specific tasks to the busiest brethren. Why? The elders know that those busy working in the Kingdom will get the job done. Brethren who are walking in darkness find regular church attendance and involvement in the Lord’s work burdensome. However, those who love truth and practice such have an amazing energy. Isaiah wrote, “But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint” (Isa. 40:31). Yes, time spent on behalf of our Lord is always time well spent.

3950 Forest Hill Irene Rd; Memphis, TN 38125

What Repentance Is (And Is Not)

Douglas Hoff

Repentance is the universal responsibility of mankind. God has commanded everyone to repent (Acts 17:30). He is patiently waiting for men to do so. Jesus taught that whoever will not repent will perish. Without repentance God will not forgive sins (Acts 8:22). Since it is essential to obtaining and maintaining one’s salvation, it is vital to know exactly what repentance is and what it is not.

Repentance is not just being sorry for sins. Godly sorrow brings about repentance: “For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death” (2 Cor. 7:10). The cause of repentance cannot be the same thing as the effect.

Do not confuse repentance with reporting sins. Merely admitting one has committed sin is not the same as repenting of it. Though Pharaoh said, “I have sinned” the sacred record does not indicate he ever repented. In fact, he continued to harden his heart until he was finally destroyed in the Red Sea with the rest of his army (Exo. 8:15; Psa. 136:13-15). Likewise, King Saul admitted, “I have sinned” but he too died in his sin.

The passage of time is not equal to repentance. Sins must be taken care of, not ignored “For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil” (Ecc. 12:14). Given enough time men usually forget their sins but God does not forget.

Repentance occurs when a person experiences godly sorrow and then has a change of mind. Godly sorrow occurs in a person’s heart when he recognizes his actions are contrary to the will of God. Worldly sorrow is nothing but regret for
being caught. Jesus illustrated repentance by referring to a father and his two sons (Mat. 21:28-29). The first son defied his father’s will but later obeyed. This change in attitude is called repentance.

John the Baptist taught repentance bears fruit (Luke 3:8-9). The Old Testament taught the necessity of returning stolen things (Lev. 6:2-5). Zacchaeus offered to restore fourfold (Luke 19:8). If a man was guilty of stealing cars his repentance would be questioned if he refused to return the stolen cars or if he continued to steal cars.

Considering the preceding information repentance can be defined as a change of will caused by godly sorrow which leads to reformation of life. Repentance can and should occur quickly. Jesus taught that a man can repent seven times in one day (Luke 17:3-4). Repentance can occur as soon as a person is willing to turn away from sin and live according to God’s law. It is never wise to remain in sin because it hardens the heart (Heb. 3:12-13).

Repentance is perhaps one of the most difficult commands God has ever given mankind. It requires the admission of guilt and the determination to do better. Since sin entered the world it has been man’s responsibility to fight temptation and sin (Gen. 4:7). Unfortunately, not enough people take this charge seriously. As a result, they let sin gain the mastery over them. Do not let this happen to you.

1019 E. Gordon Ave; Effingham, IL 62401

Has This Ever Happened To You?

You went through an entire service without even thinking what you were singing?
You bowed your head and closed your eyes during the prayer, but really did not become involved in it?
You were more interested in when the preacher would finish the sermon than in what he was saying during the lesson?
You allowed some minor noise near you to completely upset you so that you could not really worship?

These and many other things happen, don’t they? Here are some of the reasons/solutions:
1. Do not come to worship expecting to be entertained; this is not the purpose.
2. Be a participant rather than just a spectator.
3. Prepare yourself mentally when coming to worship. Think about the what and why concerning worship.
4. Resolve that you are going to worship no matter what others do. There are many events and functions we attend where there are many distractions, but we accept them. We do not condone noise in worship, but let us be determined that it will not keep us from worshiping.
5. Do not think that services have to be conducted differently to be meaningful.
6. Examine often your motives for worshiping. Habit may become the motive.
7. Bring your Bible and run references during the sermon.
8. Take notes during the sermon. The time will pass faster, and you will retain more of the lesson.
9. Make a list of words in the songs that are unfamiliar to you and find definitions later.
10. Come to services with the positive attitude that it is a privilege and that you truly worship in spirit and in truth.

Author Unknown
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Marilyn Hall, Neva Bryant, Ruby Bowman, Nancy Travis, Edward Brantley, Tim Lamb, Faye Little (Dot Dodd’s mother), LeRoy Johnson (Howard Johnson’s father), and Emmanette Hughes (Shelby Nall’s sister).

Reading/Invitation
September 10, 2003
Reading: Joshua Wilkes
Invitation: Bill Busch

September 17, 2003
Reading: Ray Williams
Invitation: Bill Cline

Mark These Dates
September 14, 2003–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
September 14, 2003–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
September 21, 2003–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.

Pantry Item Needed
Canned Fruit

Directory Change
Bill and Iris Gallaher’s new e-mail address is: bjgallaher@panhandle.rr.net. Please update your directory.

New Arrival
Karen Ayliffe is pleased to announce the birth of her grandson, Gabriel Michael Hoffay, on August 27. He weighed 8 lbs 6 oz. His parents are Donny and Nicki Hoffay. Our congratulations to all.
How tragic it is that many choose to bring children into this world, those who are “an heritage of the Lord,” and then abandon or neglect them!

Concerning the importance of being like Christ, Paul said, “Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ” (1 Cor. 11:1). Whereas there are many areas of concern with respect to imitating the Lord, parenting is one of the most important. We know that our Lord did not have a wife and children, but we also know that He did direct the conduct of husbands and wives and children. Let us take a few minutes to notice some of the instructions left by the only perfect man this world has ever known concerning our duties as parents.

Parenting is one thing in life that is optional in almost every case. When a male and female decide to engage in sexual intercourse they run the risk of conception. This is true of both married and non-married couples. Seeing then the voluntary nature of the role of “parent,” it behooves all parents to see to it that they rear their children in the proper way. The Psalmist wrote, “Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward” (Psa. 127:3). How tragic it is that many choose to bring children into this world, those who are “an heritage of the Lord,” and then abandon or neglect them!

We know that parents are to provide for the physical needs of children, for Paul wrote, “But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel” (1 Tim. 5:8). But as
well as having the responsibility of providing food and shelter, parents are charged with leading their children in such a way as to guide them through life and into heaven, for Paul again wrote, “And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4). Many times parents leave the leading up to the ones who should be following. Many times parents simply leave their children to guide themselves through life. Both of these are demonstrations of negligence.

Parents have been charged with the responsibility of administering discipline to their children. Paul argued about this, using the proper relationship between children and parents to demonstrate the proper relationship between God and his children: “If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby” (Heb. 12:7-11). Though it may not be easy, the parents will be held responsible for their efforts (or lack thereof) with respect to disciplining those who are in their charge. Is it not better to restrict the privileges of (or even spank the bottom of) those we love today in the hopes that they will have a better tomorrow? May God give us Christ-like parents!

1272 Enon Road; Webb, AL 36376

Building Solid Homes

Thomas Eaves

To build a house or any other structure, you must first lay a foundation. To build a happy marriage, you must also lay a solid foundation. We are very fortunate in that we have a source which can furnish us with the answers to the pro-
problems in life (2 Tim. 3:16-17). The Bible has the answer to the break-up of American homes.

The Foundation for a Successful Home
The ultimate Authority in our lives and in our homes is Jehovah God.
1. God is the Head of Christ (1 Cor. 11:3).
2. Christ if the Head of man (1 Cor. 11:3).
3. Man is the head of woman (1 Cor. 11:3).
5. The Bible furnishes us with all things that pertain unto life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3).

What Are Some of the Things Which Contribute to a Successful Home?
1. A happy home is one where Jesus Christ is the Head and His Word is the Supreme Authority (John 12:48).
2. The husband is the head of the home (Eph. 5:23). This means that he furnishes the leadership in the spiritual, physical, and mental areas of those in his household.
3. The wife is to be in subjection to the leadership of the husband (Eph. 5:22). Marriage is not to be one lifelong battle over “who is to wear the pants” in the family; God has already decided that.
4. The husband is to love his wife to the point that he would be willing to die for her (Eph. 5:25).
5. The wife is to love her husband (Tit. 2:4).
6. With the exception of their love for Jehovah God and His Son Jesus Christ, husbands and wives are to love each other more than parents, children, in-laws, or anyone else.
7. Children are to be obedient to their parents (Eph. 6:1-2).
8. Christ is to be first in their lives (Mat. 6:33; Phi. 121).

Deceased

What Is Valuable?

Brother J. D. Tant once stayed in a home during a meeting where a son had been shot a few nights before (not fatally) for stealing watermelons. The father spent a great deal of time explaining the boy was a little wild, boys had to sow wild oats, and all the young fellows were doing it. But before retiring, he said to brother Tant: “Come out in the back yard. I want you to see my fine watchdog.” They both admired the large mastiff, but brother Tant asked: “But why do you keep him tied up?” the man replied, “Oh, he would get to roaming around and get shot.” This was an opening for brother Tant, who asked, “Dear man, why don’t you tie up your boy?”

Yes, we tie our dogs to keep them from roaming the streets and in many places where danger lurks. We check to see that the dog is safe for the night, but some folks go to bed without prayer, still wondering if Junior will be home. It is about time to reshuffle our values, and take a spiritual inventory! A boy should be worth a lot more than our dogs, even in our confused and bewildered society.

“Train up a child in the way he should go, And even when he is old he will not depart from it” (Pro. 22:6). “The rod and reproof give wisdom; But a child left to himself causeth shame to his mother” (Pro. 29:15). “And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but nurture them in the chastening and admonition of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4).

via “Words of Life”
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Marilyn Hall, Neva Bryant, Ruby Bowman, Nancy Travis, Charles Williams, Faye Little (Dot Dodd’s mother), LeRoy Johnson (Howard Johnson’s father), Emmanette Hughes (Shelby Nall’s sister), and Edna Worley (Linda Worley’s mother).

Sympathy
Our deepest sympathy is extended to Julie Moore in the death of her father who passed away on September 2, 2003. Please keep Julie and her family in your prayers.

Reading/Invitation
September 17, 2003
Reading: Ray Williams
Invitation: Bill Cline
September 24, 2003
Reading: Carl Ayliffe
Invitation: Bill Crowe

Mark These Dates
September 14, 2003–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
September 14, 2003–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
September 21, 2003–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.
September 21, 2003–Ladies’ Bible class at 5:00 PM, in the zone room.
September 21, 2003–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
September 24, 2003–Adult Bible Classes Video Series

Pantry Item Needed
Canned Fruit
Are You Growing Spiritually?

Charles Box

Spiritual growth is an essential part of preparing for heaven. “But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen” (2 Pet. 3:18). Paul described spiritual growth by saying, “But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ” (Eph. 4:15). The Hebrew Christian had to be reminded of the need for spiritual growth (Heb. 5:12-14). Following are some indicators of spiritual growth.

You grow spiritually by producing the fruit of the Spirit in your life. “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law” (Gal. 5:22-23).

Love is affection, good will, or benevolence toward others. Joy is gladness both received and shared with others. Peace is tranquility, harmony and concord. Long-suffering is patience or endurance. Gentleness is goodness and kindness. Goodness is uprightness of heart and life. Faith is the conviction of the truths we hold. Meekness is gentleness or mildness. Self-control is temperance. As the fruit of the Spirit increases in life spiritual growth is taking place.

You grow spiritually by increasing in love for lost souls. “I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for
it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek” (Rom. 1:14-16). Let no one around you say, “no one cared for my soul.” “I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul” (Psa. 142:4). Pray for the Lord to use you in being a soul winner. God’s plan for evangelism is simple. One who has learned the truth must share Christ with another. “And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also” (2 Tim. 2:2).

To grow spiritually by faithful attendance at all the assemblies of the church. Christians must assemble faithfully, with the right attitude, having a strong desire to worship and serve God (Heb. 10:24-25). Faithful attendance provides an opportunity for growth and also an opportunity to edify others.

You grow spiritually by developing Christ likeness. “My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you” (Gal. 4:19). Christians must have the mind of Christ and follow His example (Phi. 2:5; 1 Pet. 2:21). The moon reflects the light of the sun. Christians reflect the light and likeness of God’s Son. Has Christ been formed in you?

You grow spiritually by developing a stronger desire to go to heaven. “This world is not my home” (Phi. 1:21-24). Our desire for that heavenly home must be strong. “But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city” (Heb. 11:16). Do you really want to go to heaven? Is heaven the goal of your life? And are you willing to do what is necessary to get there?

Other indicators of spiritual growth are:
(1) Developing the right mind-set (Col. 3:1-4),
(2) Giving liberally and cheerfully (2 Cor. 8:1-5; 2 Cor. 9:7),
(3) Regular, daily self-examination (2 Cor. 13:5),
(4) Gaining knowledge of God’s Word (2 Tim. 2:15),
(5) Steadfast involvement in the Lord’s work (1 Cor. 15:58),
(6) Praying constantly (1 Th. 5:17-18), and
(7) Developing a stronger fellowship with the brethren (Rom. 12:10; John 13:34-35). You are either growing or dying spiritually. Which direction is your spiritual life headed? The proper spiritual direction leads to heaven—our ultimate goal!

Farewells at Death

Jason R. Roberts

It is indisputable fact that all men will eventually die (Heb. 9:27). The only exceptions are those who will be living upon the earth when Christ returns. Realizing the gravity of this truth, and that our precious lives are like “a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away” (Jam. 4:14), one should be vitally interested in the quality not the quantity of the years he spends upon this earth (cf., Psa. 90:12). Throughout the years, infidels and agnostics have ridiculed and blasphemed the God of Heaven with the very breath that He has given them (Gen. 2:7; Acts 17:25b). What is interesting and somewhat startling about these infidels is this: when the time comes for them to breathe their last breath, history records that many of them died speaking about God, Jesus Christ, and eternity. Why? Could it be that at that moment
when the curtains of their lives were about to be drawn to a close, and that all hope was now lost, that these infidels suddenly realized the terrible, dark plight awaiting them beyond the grave?

Consider some of these statements that fell from the lips of some infamous people before they died:

Edward Gibbon (1737-1794), the noted English Historian whose Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire is one of the greatest pieces of history of all times, unfortunately said these dark words to those at his bedside: “This day may be my last. I will agree that the immortality of the soul is at times a very comfortable doctrine. All this is now lost, finally, irrevocably lost. All is dark and doubtful.”

Voltaire, the noted French infidel and prolific writer used his poisonous pen attempting to destroy Christianity until the day he died. He once boasted, “In twenty years Christianity will be no more. My single hand shall destroy the edifice it took twelve apostles to rear.” Shortly after his death the very house in which he printed his foul literature became the depot for the Geneva Bible Society. A Physician, Trochim, who was at Voltaire’s bedside, said that he cried out most desperately: “I am abandoned by God and man! I will give you half of what I am worth if you will give me six months’ life.” Realizing the futility of his desperate request, he then cried, “Then I shall go to hell; and you will go with me. O Christ! O Jesus Christ!”

Robert Ingersoll (1833-1899), the famous American lawyer and prominent agnostic, frequently lectured on purported biblical inaccuracies and contradictions. His famous lecture, “The Mistakes of Moses” led one defender of the Bible to say that he would like to hear Moses speak for five minutes on “The Mistakes of Ingersoll.” Standing by Ingersoll’s Christless grave, his brother exclaimed: “Life is a narrow vale between the narrow peaks of two eternities. We strive in vain to look beyond the heights. We cry aloud, and the only answer is the echo of our wailings.”

Contrast the pitiable statements above with the triumphant declarations of the apostle Paul, who said of his approaching death, “For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing” (2 Pet. 4:6-8).

As death approaches, the Christian is sustained by an endless hope, not devastated by a hopeless end!

2909 Penbrook Drive
Valdosta, GA 31605

Just A Thought

All the water in the world, however hard it tried, could never sink a ship, unless it got inside—All the evil in the world, the blackest kind of sin, Can never hurt you one least bit, unless you let it in! “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

O Christ! O Jesus Christ!”

2909 Penbrook Drive
Valdosta, GA 31605

Just A Thought

All the water in the world, however hard it tried, could never sink a ship, unless it got inside—All the evil in the world, the blackest kind of sin, Can never hurt you one least bit, unless you let it in! “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

All the water in the world, however hard it tried, could never sink a ship, unless it got inside—All the evil in the world, the blackest kind of sin, Can never hurt you one least bit, unless you let it in! “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever” (1 John 2:15-17).

Author Unknown
Sick

Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Marilyn Hall, Neva Bryant, Ruby Bowman, Nancy Travis, Charles Williams, Faye Little (Dot Dodd’s mother), LeRoy Johnson (Howard Johnson’s father), Edna Worley (Linda Worley’s mother), and Robert Ayliffe (Carl Ayliffe’s father)

Reading/Invitation
September 24, 2003
Reading: Carl Ayliffe
Invitation: Bill Crowe
October 1, 2003
Reading: Elward Brantley
Invitation: Dale Cunningham

Mark These Dates
September 21, 2003–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.
September 21, 2003–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
September 21, 2003–Ladies’ Bible class will start meeting every Sunday at 5:00 PM, in the zone room.
September 24, 2003–Adult Bible Classes Video Series
September 29, 2003–Visitation Group Get-together at 6:00 PM, in the general purpose building. A covered-dish meal will precede the meeting.

Pantry Item Needed
Canned Fruit
Our Attitude—a Help or Hindrance?

Bob Patterson

As strange as it may sound, the word *attitude* is not found in the Bible. This being the case, there is, however, many synonyms which are used to convey this particular area. According to Webster, *attitude* has to do with the “posture of a person; pose (in portrait); mental or moral disposition.” Once again, according to Webster, *disposition* has to do with the “temperament in disposing of matters in life, or the weight we give to our problems.” Thus, by the combination of these two definitions we are able to understand that our attitude expresses the depth of thought concerning the matters with which we deal in day-to-day life.

As a Christian, our attitude toward the authority of Christ (Mat. 28:18), our respect or lack of respect of His Word (Rom. 11:22), and whether or not “the love of Christ constraineth us” (2 Cor. 5:14), will not only determine much of the outcome of the problems we face, but also our very lives! It will also determine how we rear our children, whether we work or goof-off on the job, whether we are faithful in our attendance for Bible study and worship or not, whether we are really serious about teaching and preaching the Gospel of Christ to those who are lost or not, as well as how we handle the difficulties, persecutions, problems, trials, and troubles that come to us in life!

We would do well to remember the instruction that Paul wrote to the Christians in Philippi, “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus” (Phi. 2:5). In that same context, Paul then referred to the humility and submission
have no desire to either preach or set up a situation for the Gospel to be preached, most Gospel Meetings will be filled with the sound doctrine. (This is said because it seems to be a trend among liberals to refrain from meetings like this, for apparent reasons. Most of this persuasion consider a “Gospel meeting” a “boring tradition” to be avoided.) The real problem is lack of attendance—whether from the hosting congregation or from sister congregations. In fact in many congregations, the lack of support in recent years has lead said congregations to lose interest in hosting a meeting. But, why is the attendance so poor? In the past, Gospel meetings were conducted with phenomenal attendance. Aisles and foyers would be filled with chairs for both saints and sinners. And, the stories are still told of the sometimes hundreds of miles driven one-way, just to hear the Gospel preached. And, who would exclude the famous tent meetings—conducted so often in the past, and with great success? In the past, brethren were regularly faced with the good problem of finding sufficient seating for the masses of people. In the present, there are hardly enough people to make the auditoriums look half-full. What has happened?

Ultimately, the questions of attendance at such events is left to an individual answer—that is, only the individuals absent can explain what prevents them from coming. And, there may be legitimate reasons for some who are not there. There does seem to be an increase in the number of ailments faced by people today. Of course, with this is the increase in medication. And, because of sicknesses and medication, some people cannot make the meeting. But, this is not the norm, and so the question still exists: what is the problem?

Perhaps the question can be answered by looking at the successful nature of the meetings of yesteryear and placing the general state of the church some decades ago along side of the church today—for comparative purposes. Consider the following points:

1. The attendance crisis in meetings today can be attributed, at least in part, if not primarily, to the blatant worldliness of members of the church. How else can it be explained? In the days gone by, buildings were filled with members of the church from many places because their interest was spiritual. But the world now fills so much of the brethren’s time that they simply have no time for extra-activities, like a Gospel meeting. Priorities have changed tremendously over the passing of time. In the long list of things to do, “church” falls behind sports, vacations, and like social events. It is not uncommon to find that the reason someone missed (i.e., skipped) the assembly was that the meeting (or lectureship) conflicted with a favorite television program or a child’s ball game. Some even attempt to justify absence on the basis of limited time, as if the meeting was a nuisance because it occurred on a day or evening off. But, such paltry excuses can be attributed to nothing more than sheer worldliness. Jesus’ parable makes it clear that worldliness smothers all affection for godly things (Luke 12:15-21). So, it is expected that when a man’s concern is for the world, he will not care for the affairs of the church. Perhaps those who are exchanging their soul for the world will learn the lesson of true worth before it is too late (Mat. 16:26).

2. Looking back at the past and the success of meetings then, and comparing that to the current state of affairs, lack of personal evangelism can be ascribed as one of the causes for such poor attendance. One needs only to read a meeting report from long ago to know that the meetings of earlier generations were saturated with evangelistic efforts in the community. In fact, the time at which the Lord’s church was reported as the fastest growing group in the world was the same time Gospel Meetings saw their biggest turnouts.
advantageous or a disadvantage? May each of us
determine to have the proper priorities (Mat. 6:33), to lay up for ourselves proper treasures
(Mat. 6:19-21), and to “seek” and to “set our af-
factions” on things above (Col. 3:1-4), so that
one day we will hear our Lord say, “Well done,
thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been
faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler
over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy
lord” (Mat. 25:21, 23)!

1801 North Adams Street
Beeville, TX 78102

What Do I Owe The Lost?
Tim Smith

This is a study of responsibility, or that which
every person who is a faithful Christian owes
every person who is not. We know that Jesus, our
Lord and Savior, lived a life of sacrifice, laboring
on behalf of others; but many fail to see that we
have responsibilities to the lost as well.

Just what do I owe the lost? I owe the lost
an opportunity to hear the gospel of Christ. In
what is styled “The Great Commission,” Jesus
said, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the
gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is
baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not
shall be damned” (Mark 16:15-16). My duty to
the lost in this commission is to teach them the
gospel. Jesus said that apart from believing and
obeying the gospel, salvation is unattainable;
therefore, since hearing is necessary to believing
(Rom. 10:17), I must teach them the gospel.

I must be able to answer to the lost for
the faith that I have in Christ. Peter wrote, “But
sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be
ready always to give an answer to every man that
asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you
with meekness and fear: Having a good con-
science; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as
of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely
accuse your good conversation in Christ” (1 Pet.
3:15-16). When I am able to successfully defend
my own faith in Christ it stands forth as an an-
swer to my critics and an argument for faith on

their part.

I must be able to turn the lost from foolish
inquiries and direct them toward matters of
importance concerning the salvation of their soul,
as Paul said, “But avoid foolish questions, and
genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about
the law; for they are unprofitable and vain” (Tit.
3:9). Many times we are confronted with matters
that do not matter; we must be able to direct
people to a consideration of what does matter.

I must lovingly point lost souls to Christ,
overcoming the rashness of temperament, as Paul
told the young evangelist, “And the servant of
the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all
men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instruct-
ing those that oppose themselves; if God perad-
venture will give them repentance to the ac-
knowledging of the truth; And that they may
recover themselves out of the snare of the devil,
who are taken captive by him at his will” (2 Tim
2:24-26). I must know when to turn from one lost
person to another, for the Lord said, “Give not
that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye
your pearls before swine, lest they trample them
under their feet, and turn again and rend you”
(Mat. 7:6). We pray never to have to turn from a
lost soul.

1272 Enon Road
Webb, AL 36376
Sick

Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Marilyn Hall, Neva Bryant, Ruby Bowman, Nancy Travis, Charles Williams, Ray Williams, Pam Busch, John Bamber, Faye Little (Dot Dodd’s mother), LeRoy Johnson (Howard Johnson’s father), Edna Worley (Linda Worley’s mother), and Robert Ayliffe (Carl Ayliffe’s father).

Reading/Invitation
October 8, 2003
Reading: Jerry Caine
Invitation: Ray Dodd
October 15, 2003
Reading: Jeremy Caine
Invitation: Ray Foshee

Mark These Dates
October 5, 2003–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
October 12, 2003–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
October 12, 2003–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
October 19, 2003–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.
October 19, 2003–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
October 22, 2003–Adult Bible Classes Video Series

Pantry Item Needed
Canned Fruit
Reflecting on the Current State of Gospel Meetings

David B. Smith

The year is quickly coming to an end; and, with the end of one year and the beginning of another, most everyone pauses to reflect upon the various activities in which they have been engaged. In a spiritual sense, it is always good for members of the church to reflect upon what they have accomplished or begun and determine how those works can be made more effective. But, to reflect properly upon some works requires the perspective offered from more than a year’s time. In some cases, the reality of certain occurrences will only be made known as that activity is judged across several years of time. Even then, trends in current years can sometimes be known only by honest comparisons with the past generations. Perhaps no single activity of the church can be more vividly contrasted in such a way than Gospel Meetings. And, perhaps, no one sees what is happening more than the preachers who either speak at these meetings or travel extensively enough to have gleaned such knowledge. When everything is taken into account from the current state of Gospel meetings and compared to those in the past, the conclusion is sure: things are not what they once were. Now, this is not written to intimate that the Gospel is not being proclaimed. While it may be true that some people have departed from the faith and
have no desire to either preach or set up a situ-
ation for the Gospel to be preached, most Gospel
Meetings will be filled with the sound doctrine.
(This is said because it seems to be a trend
among liberals to refrain from meetings like this,
for apparent reasons. Most of this persuasion
consider a “Gospel meeting” a “boring tradition”
to be avoided.) The real problem is lack of at-
tendance—whether from the hosting congre-
gation or from sister congregations. In fact in
many congregations, the lack of support in recent
years has lead said congregations to lose interest
in hosting a meeting. But, why is the attendance
so poor? In the past, Gospel meetings were
conducted with phenomenal attendance. Aisles
and foyers would be filled with chairs for both
saints and sinners. And, the stories are still told
of the sometimes hundreds of miles driven one-
way, just to hear the Gospel preached. And, who
would exclude the famous tent meetings—
conducted so often in the past, and with great
success? In the past, brethren were regularly
faced with the good problem of finding sufficient
seating for the masses of people. In the present,
there are hardly enough people to make the audi-
toriums look half-full. What has happened?
Ultimately, the questions of attendance at
such events is left to an individual answer—that
is, only the individuals absent can explain what
prevents them from coming. And, there may be
legitimate reasons for some who are not there.
There does seem to be an increase in the number
of ailments faced by people today. Of course,
with this is the increase in medication. And, be-
cause of sicknesses and medication, some people
cannot make the meeting. But, this is not the
norm, and so the question still exists: what is the
problem?
Perhaps the question can be answered by
looking at the successful nature of the meetings
of yesteryear and placing the general state of the
church some decades ago along side of the
church today—for comparative purposes. Con-
sider the following points:

1. The attendance crisis in meetings today can
be attributed, at least in part, if not primarily, to
the blatant worldliness of members of the church.
How else can it be explained? In the days gone
by, buildings were filled with members of the
church from many places because their interest
was spiritual. But the world now fills so much of
the brethren’s time that they simply have no time
for extra-activities, like a Gospel meeting.
Priorities have changed tremendously over the
passing of time. In the long list of things to do,
“church” falls behind sports, vacations, and like
social events. It is not uncommon to find that the
reason someone missed (i.e., skipped) the
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conflicted with a favorite television program or
a child’s ball game. Some even attempt to justify
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2. Looking back at the past and the success of
meetings then, and comparing that to the current
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of earlier generations were saturated with evan-
gelistic efforts in the community. In fact, the time
at which the Lord’s church was reported as the
fastest growing group in the world was the same
time Gospel Meetings saw their biggest turnouts.
Make plans now!

Gospel Meeting
with
B. J. Clarke from Southaven, MS
October 26-31
Sunday: 9:00, 10:00 AM, and 7:30 PM
Monday-Friday: 7:30 PM

The reports of old often speak of the great numbers of conversions evidenced during the meetings. It is well-known and undeniable fact that the church today is hardly as evangelistic as she should be. Is it because many are ashamed of the Gospel (Rom. 1:16; Mark 8:38)? Or, lazy? Unconvincing of the power of the Gospel to save? For whatever reason, the lack of evangelism has negatively impacted Gospel meetings. And, perhaps some view the absence of sinners from meetings as an indication that meetings are no longer effective. Of course, this is not true. Meeting houses will be filled when the church works fervently to fill them.

3. If there is a third, perhaps it is the lack of passion for Bible study. Again, this is evident by comparing the general state of the church in the past to that of the present. There was a time when the church was highly respected in nearly every community for her tremendous knowledge of the Scriptures—which, of course, has been God’s desire for His people from the earliest of time (cf., Deu. 4:1-13; Mat. 5:16; Col. 4:2-6). Perhaps this is where worldliness has made its largest impact. A general state of apathy exists toward the continual study of the Scriptures, and those occasions devoted toward learning. Now, there are still many people interested in growth and knowledge. But, many are not. And, naturally, if a man does not desire to study the Bible, then a Gospel meeting would carry no real appeal or incentive to him.

All of this is from the perspective of a man who has traveled enough to know that things are not what they once were, and that these three points are most likely the causes of such poor attendance. And, the time to make a difference—especially for the good of future generations—is now. It is simply hard to comprehend why a Christian would willfully refrain from such a great occasion. In the words of the late Franklin Camp, “There is something wrong with a person’s heart that claims to be a Christian and is not interested in a Gospel Meeting” (Old Truths In New Robes, p. 35).

700 Jolly Road; Calhoun, GA 30701
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Marilyn Hall, Neva Bryant, Ruby Bowman, Nancy Travis, Charles Williams, Ray Williams, Pam Busch, John Bamber, Faye Little (Dot Dodd’s mother), LeRoy Johnson (Howard Johnson’s father), Edna Worley (Linda Worley’s mother), and Robert Ayliffe (Carl Ayliffe’s father).

Reading/Invitation
October 8, 2003
Reading: Jerry Caine
Invitation: Ray Dodd
October 15, 2003
Reading: Jeremy Caine
Invitation: Ray Foshee

Mark These Dates
October 5, 2003–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
October 12, 2003–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
October 12, 2003–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
October 19, 2003–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.
October 19, 2003–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
October 22, 2003–Adult Bible Classes Video Series

Pantry Item Needed
Canned Fruit
What Are We Doing with the Gospel?

Danny Box

The gospel of Christ is “the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth” (Rom. 1:16). We know that the gospel is “given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Tim. 3:16-17). We know that the gospel is the complete and perfect will of God given to man (1 Cor. 13:10). But even though we know all of this, many are doing nothing with the gospel.

We are not sharing the gospel. Our Lord told us to “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15). We read in the book of Acts where the first century Christians “went every where preaching [sharing] the word” (Acts 8:4). Are you sharing the gospel with those around you?

We are not defending the gospel. Paul said that he was “set for the defense of the gospel” (Phil. 1:17). Jude encouraged us to “earnestly contend for the faith” (Jude 3). Paul told the brethren that he was “ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus” (Acts 21:13). Do we love the gospel enough that we would be willing to die defending it?

We are not enjoying the gospel. Christ died for our sins so that we do not have to. The gospel, by our obedience to it, makes us free from sin and death. Nothing is as great as being made free, so why do we not “Rejoice in the Lord always” (Phi. 4:4). We have the greatest gift that has ever been given to man, but in many instances we do not enjoy that gift.
We are not living the gospel. Paul instructed Timothy to “be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity” (1 Tim. 4:12). The Lord came to this earth and lived so that we would have an example to follow, and could “follow his steps” (1 Pet. 2:21). Our Lord said, “Let your light so shine before men” (Mat. 5:16). Are you living the gospel?

Brethren and friends what are you doing with the gospel? Are you sharing it, defending it, enjoying it, and living it?

Deceased

What Would You Do

Bob Howton

A preacher was telling his congregation a very moving story of three men on a boat which ran into a violent storm. A father and his son owned the boat and they had invited the son’s friend to go fishing with them. The father and his son were both faithful and dedicated Christians, but the friend had never shown any interest in anything spiritual, and had rebuffed all attempts to try to teach him the plan of salvation.

With waves getting more and more boisterous, the father searched frantically for life preservers. By some strange and unexplainable quirk of fate, the father found only one life preserver on board the heaving and gyrating boat. About this time a huge wave swept over the frightened men, and the two boys were washed overboard. The father watched in horror as both boys started drifting away from the boat. Should he put the life preserver on and try to save the boys? Should he throw it to one of the boys, and if so, which one? He pondered the dilemma for only a brief second, and then threw the preserver to the unsaved boy.

The congregation sat in stunned silence for a brief moment, because some of the folks knew that the preacher had lost his son in a terrible accident. One of the members stood to his feet and asked, “Preacher, did this really happen to the young man who was leading singing, broke from where he was standing and running to the preacher, threw his arms around him and began weeping openly. When he had gained his composure enough to speak, he said, “Yes! Sir! It most surely did happen! This preacher was captain of that boat, and I am the young man who was unsaved at that terrible time. He threw me the life preserver, because he knew I didn’t have a prayer of a chance to go to Heaven, and he sacrificed his precious son, whom he knew was safe in the arms of Jesus. I had never known such love before. May God bless this good and wise man!”

Each of us, who has been blessed with forgiveness of sins, can surely relate to this moving story, and the most touching part of it is that God, our Heavenly Father sacrificed His only begotten Son upon the cross of calvary, that each one of us might be saved. The sad and almost inconceivable idea in connection with this, is that in spite of His sacrificial gift, some refuse to “lay hold on eternal life” (1 Tim. 6:12). The Hebrew writer asks the sobering question: “Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God” (Heb. 10:29). Very sobering thought!

10990 Country Haven; Cottondale, AL 35453
Bellview Church of Christ
Gospel Meeting
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Sunday - Friday Evenings: 7:30 P.M.

with

B. J. Clarke
Southaven, Mississippi

Speaking on:

Sunday Bible Class: Reasons To Rejoice
Sunday Morning Worship: Life’s Four Greatest Questions
Sunday Evening Worship: Who Is My Mother And Who Are My Brethren?
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Friday Evening: Four Weighty Words

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Visitation Group 3 - Wednesday; All groups - Thursday
Visitors are invited to every meal.
Sick

Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Marilyn Hall, Neva Bryant, Ruby Bowman, Nancy Travis, Charles Williams, Ray Williams, Pam Busch, John Bamber, Sheila Myrick, Jean Cline, Faye Little (Dot Dodd’s mother), LeRoy Johnson (Howard Johnson’s father), Edna Worley (Linda Worley’s mother), and Robert Ayliffe (Carl Ayliffe’s father).

Placed Membership

Marian Word has placed membership with the Bellview congregation. Her address is 12 Easton Street; Cantonment, FL 32533. The telephone number is 857-1801. Please welcome her.

Reading/Invitation

October 15, 2003
Reading: Jeremy Caine
Invitation: Ray Foshee

October 22, 2003
Reading: Andrew Hatcher
Invitation: Louis Herrington

Mark These Dates

October 12, 2003–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
October 12, 2003–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
October 19, 2003–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.
October 19, 2003–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.

Pantry Item Needed

Vegetable and Chicken Soups
God has blessed man with the ability to labor and it has always been His will that man work. Before Adam and Eve sinned: “God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it” (Gen. 2:15). Man was never to be idle. There are a number of areas in which we labor, and the Lord’s work is most important of all. Christ told each of the seven churches of Asia, “I know thy works.” He walked in their midst (Rev. 2:1). He knows our works as well. What are His thoughts as He examines our works in the kingdom?

Many brethren want to observe progress while sitting in their easy chair. They want to see the church prosper and grow, but they do not want to roll up their sleeves and take part in the work. If the question were asked as to how many members there are in a particular congregation, how much different would that number vary if the question were asked as to how many workers are in that congregation? David wrote, “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity” (Psa. 133:1). This thought could apply to the brethren’s cooperation in the Lord’s work also. The old sayings are true: “Grumblers never work, and workers never grumble.” “A mule cannot kick and work at the same time.”

When the call goes out on board a ship: “All hands on deck,” we can be sure the work is going to get done. The call rings out in the Bible: “All hands to the Lord’s work.” Jesus said, “I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work”
We too must work for the Lord while it is the day of life, before the setting of life’s evening sun. Once the day is over, we will never have the opportunity again.

Think back for a moment; is not some of the best rest you can remember the rest you received after a hard days work? For the Lord’s faithful laborer, the sweetest rest awaits. “I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work” (Rev. 14:13)—the blessing of work!

**A Successful Gospel Meeting**

What can you and I do to help make this meeting a success? Read the following carefully and prayerfully:

1. It depends on our **attitude**. Are we looking forward to it? Do we realize its potential for good? Are we excited about the cause of Christ?

2. It depends on our **attendance**. Some meetings fail because 50% of the members do not attend any service except Sunday and Wednesday. Will you clear your schedule so you can be present every service?

3. It depends on our **invitation**. Regardless of all the advertising done through printed announcements, newspapers, etc., visitors will usually attend only if personally invited by a Christian friend.

4. It depends on our **friendliness**. Do your friends feel welcome and wanted in our services? How many of us make a special effort to greet visitors and invite them back?

5. It depends on our **participation**. Nothing kills a service so effectively as a combination of back seat sitting, inattention during the services, and poor singing. How simple these problems are to solve!

6. It depends on our **prayers**. Are we praying for the preacher, the song leaders, those who need to respond?

7. It depends on our **encouragement**. A word of love and encouragement to one who needs to respond to heaven’s invitation means so much.

Yes, a successful gospel meeting depends on us. Let us do our part!

*Author Unknown*
Bellview Church of Christ
Gospel Meeting
October 26 - 31, 2003
Sunday Morning: 9:00 & 10:00 A.M.
Sunday - Friday Evenings: 7:30 P.M.
with
B. J. Clarke
Southaven, Mississippi

Speaking on:

Sunday Bible Class: Reasons To Rejoice
Sunday Morning Worship: Life’s Four Greatest Questions
Sunday Evening Worship: Who Is My Mother And Who Are My Brethren?
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Visitors are invited to every meal.
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Marilyn Hall, Neva Bryant, Ruby Bowman, Sheila Myrick, Jean Cline, Edna Worley (Linda Worley’s mother), Robert Ayliffe (Carl Ayliffe’s father), and LeRoy Greathouse (Harold Maxey’s brother-in-law).

Reading/Invitation
October 22, 2003
Reading: Andrew Hatcher
Invitation: Louis Herrington
October 29, 2003
Gospel Meeting with B. J. Clarke

Mark These Dates
October 19, 2003–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.
October 19, 2003–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
October 22, 2003–Adult Bible Classes Video Series
November 2, 2003–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
November 9, 2003–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
November 9, 2003–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
November 16, 2003–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.
November 16, 2003–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
November 26, 2003–Adult Bible Classes Video Series

Pantry Item Needed
Vegetable and Chicken Soups
Essentials for a Good Gospel Meeting

If we have the ingredients for a good gospel meeting, we must have at the very least these five essentials:

1. **Powerful Faith.** The success of anything will depend on our belief in it. To believe firmly in God’s grace and His ability to use us mightily during the meeting will assure a great meeting. Let us give ourselves to Him without reservation and be willing to work for the glory of God and for the growth of the church. We have faith in God’s Word and faith in the ability of God’s messenger, so let us go forward in this powerful faith to greater accomplishments “without faith it is impossible to please him” (Heb. 11:6).

2. **A Prevailing Prayer.** Pray for the safety of brother Clarke and his good health while he is with us. Pray for his physical strength that he may be able to do his part effectively and powerfully. Pray for the lost that they may hear the gospel obediently and be saved. Bring them to hear the sermons. Pray for the saved that they may be strengthened in the faith. Pray for our song leaders. Remember that all-out effort in the meeting each time that you pray. “The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much” (Jam. 5:16).

3. **Personal Love.** Let the love you have for lost souls motivate you to more active participation in bringing them to the services and inspiring them to obey the gospel. Any duty performed, backed by love, is a blessing. We will serve unselfishly those whom we love. “Love one another with a pure heart fervently” (1 Pet. 1:22).

4. **Persistent Effort.** Persistent effort is the secret to success. Many times we give up too
soon. It may be that the time we have someone nearly converted we give up and that person is lost. There is such a need for persistence in religion, especially in personal evangelism. To succeed in anything we must continue to work and strive toward a victorious conclusion (1 Cor. 15:58; Rev. 2:10).

5. **Personal Attendance.** Nothing tells others how important our gospel meeting is any more than our own conviction to be present at all services. There are lots of things that can get in the way, but if it is truly important we will not be hindered from being there. Volumes are spoken silently when I make every effort to not miss any of the meeting. “Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men” (2 Cor. 3:2). You and I are essential parts of success. Plan to attend and invite all of your friends, neighbors, relatives, co-workers, etc., and be at every lesson to encourage everyone when they arrive.

*Adapted from the “Boulevard News”*

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**What Builds a Strong Church?**

*Charles Box*

There are two divine institutions—the home and the church. A third institution exists with God’s approval—government. God desires strong homes and strong churches. Both are an honor to His name. The following are some things that contribute to building strong churches:

**Prayer builds strong churches:** When Peter was released from prison by the angel of the Lord he went to a home where the church was gathered for prayer. “And when he had considered the thing, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together praying” (Acts 12:12). Our work will never be bigger than our prayers.

**Friendliness builds strong churches:** “Let brotherly love continue. Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares” (Heb. 13:1-2). People who attend our assemblies should be overwhelmed with kindness and friendliness. Brethren should greet them with smiles, greetings, and hand shakes in the parking lot, foyer, as they enter and leave the auditorium, and those who sit near them should give them special attention. When visitors leave our assemblies they should be glad they came.

**Faithfulness builds strong churches:** You may suffer for a little while, but if you will remain faithful to God the church will be strong and you will be blessed. “Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life” (Rev. 2:10). Strong churches are built by those willing to teach God’s Word; those who work and serve with Christ-like hearts.

**Liberality builds strong churches:** The liberality spoken of here is liberality in giving, not in doctrine. Strong churches must be loyal to God’s Word! Liberality in giving is a quality which builds strong churches. “He that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness” (Rom. 12:8).

Some members build the church; Others tear down what is built. Are you a builder? “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might” (Eph. 6:10).

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Sick

Please remember in your prayers:
Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Marilyn Hall,
Neva Bryant (Baptist Hospital, room 127),
Ruby Bowman, Sheila Myrick, Jean Cline,
Edna Worley (Linda Worley’s mother),
Robert Ayliffe (Carl Ayliffe’s father).

Sympathy

Our deepest sympathy is extended to

Reading/Invitation

October 29, 2003
Gospel Meeting with B. J. Clarke
November 5, 2003
Reading: Daniel Hatcher
Invitation: Ray Pierce

Mark These Dates

November 2, 2003–Visitation Group 1
assignment cards handed out.
November 9, 2003–Visitation Group 2
assignment cards handed out.
November 9, 2003–Deacons’ meeting at
5:00 PM, in room 7.

Pantry Item Needed

Vegetable and Chicken Soups

Daylight Saving Time Ends

Day light saving time ends on Sunday, October 26. Set your clocks back one hour on Saturday evening.
Some Thoughts on Selecting a Pew

Tim Smith

I would suggest to you that the selection of a pew can be very important—indeed, in some instances even more important than the selection of a house or a vehicle. I came to learn this the hard way—some years ago my family and I went to “try out” at a congregation and made the mistake of sitting in “someone else’s” pew during the Bible Class hour. The lady, meaning no harm at all I am sure, was most upset! (By the way, this is the only congregation I ever looked at for the purpose of “trying out” that I turned down—not because of the lady, but for other reasons). Someone was “kind enough” to tell my wife of “our error” so that she could move before I preached.

Obviously, to some people the pew they occupy is very important. I have noticed that, once a person has been sitting in one location for an extended period of time even the preacher comes to recognize it as “their pew.” We get comfortable there and it is just the place we go to when we enter the auditorium. So I have decided that perhaps a few words about the selection of the proper pew might well be in order.

When you select a pew, consider how important an unobstructed view of the pulpit area is to you. If you like to see what is happening without having to dodge the backs of other people’s heads, you will need to sit closer to the front of the building than the back. Consider how important quiet is to you. If you prefer fewer noisy distractions, select a pew closer to the front of the building than to the back. Consider the effect people exiting the auditorium during the sermon
to get a drink of water, or use the restroom facilities, etc.). If these things distract you (and they usually do), select a pew closer to the front of the building than to the back.

Some years ago I lived in the St. Louis, Missouri area. From time to time I would have the opportunity to see the Cardinals play baseball or the Blues play hockey. If I was purchasing a ticket (as opposed to having been given one), I would go to the window and, in the sections of the arena/stadium I could afford, I would ask the ticket vendor to put me as close to the action as he/she could. I never once asked to be put in the limited-view area, the nosebleed seats, or the most difficult area to see the game in an undistracted atmosphere. In the worship assembly, all seats are the same price. Why not select one that is most conducive to enhance the worship experience?

1272 Enon Road; Webb, AL 36376

Pride

Ryan Kepke

For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man (Mark 7:21-23).

Most have a certain concept or concepts where pride is concerned. There is a sense where pride is good. Pride is the quality or state of being proud as delight or elation arising from some act, possession, or relationship (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary). Pride in a job well done for example. This is pride which either displays or usually takes a disposition of good pleasure toward a particular job done well. Whether we sweep, mop, make corporate decisions, or lead in part during worship having done our very best we delight or develop pride. In other words, when you give your all and thereby reflect on a job well done, a sense of pride or self-elation is developed in the result or action required relative the responsibilities. This pride is good and all should possess a healthy portion.

The condemnation of pride however, is the disposition to exalt self above others. “The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate” (Pro. 8:13). Pride from this view is evident and without difficulty seen throughout society. Our respective places of employment will often prove this assertion true. Usually and indirectly however, this pride develops the attitude believing one to be God or a god and thereby does not have to submit their will to anyone or anything. Admittedly this attitude, unless you are the boss, will not get one very far within the company (Psa. 10:2). Even then the boss has “other boss” and will submit in some fashion. This attitude is not possessed among Christians. I do not know of one place in holy writ where pride is mentioned from the positive perspective. However pride is as much sin as is adultery (1 John 3:4). May each search inwardly (from where pride originates), and with great effort, repent of and thereby guard against that pride condemned, lest we become “full of pride,” are consumed, and therefore fall.

“Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall” (Pro. 16:18).
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Baptized
Austi McLeod was baptized into Christ on October 22, 2003. Please keep her in your prayers and offer her encouragement.

Reading/Invitation
November 5, 2003
Reading: Daniel Hatcher
Invitation: Ray Pierce

November 12, 2003
Reading: Bryan Loy
Invitation: Fred Stancliff

Mark These Dates
November 2, 2003–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
November 9, 2003–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
November 9, 2003–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
November 16, 2003–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.
November 16, 2003–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
November 26, 2003–Adult Bible Classes Video Series

Pantry Item Needed
Vegetable and Chicken Soups
The Christian Choice on Abortion

Justin Thompson

Abortion comes from the root word abort, which means: “To miscarry in giving birth; also, to fail of development.” The definition of abortion is: “The act of aborting: the expulsion of a fetus before it is viable, miscarriage: also, arrested development: also an imperfectly developed birth or product.” The definition that applies to our discussion of abortion is the ending of a pregnancy prematurely, and destroying the fetus for any number of reasons. Many people argue that a woman has the right to an abortion because it is her body that it affects. People who argue this believe that a woman out of sheer convenience can terminate her child because the pregnancy is unwanted. It is also said that human life does not start at the point of conception, but only after the fetus is viable is it counted among the living. Abortion is also justified by many. Some claim that unfortunate circumstances warrant an abortion. Some reasons for the defense of abortion are that the child may be born into poverty, or may have an illness. It is also concluded that it is not right to make a rape victim or someone subject to incest to keep a child. Also, many believe that young teenagers should not have to carry a child. The debate goes on and on in defense and we are deafened by the roar that a woman has the right to choose!

Many formulate their opinions on these topics on what was just mentioned, however, by turning to their political groups and politicians. Brothers and sisters, this is not a political issue—it is an
issue that threatens the very Word of God! It is our duty as Christians to fight our American Holocaust and share with our fellow Americans the teaching of the Bible on this topic. The Bible in no way condones abortion. The fundamental for abortion is that life does not begin at conception. According to the Bible there is no distinction between life at conception and afterwards. In Exodus 21:22-23 it gives reference to what happens to two men who are fighting and cause an intervening pregnant woman to give birth. If no harm came, then a fine could be levied for carelessness. However, if any harm followed, to the mother or baby, justice was meted out. The mother and child had equal protection under the law. Moses said “life for life” indicating that the life of an unborn child is equal in value of the one that caused the premature birth.

God is the giver of all life, so why would we cancel a gift that was given to us by the Creator? Luke 1:41 is one of the most crushing arguments to abortion: “And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost.” Brephos is translated babe or young children in Greek and is used also in Luke 2:12, 16 when referring to baby Jesus. It is also used in Acts 7:19 talking about young children that have already been born. Brephos is used by the Holy Spirit to refer to the unborn in the womb and the young born out of the womb. It is obvious that God makes no distinction between the unborn and the born child. The Bible from the moment of conception holds it as legitimate and protected by all the divine teachings against murder. The individual is the same person within the womb just as he or she is when they are born. This is shown in Isaiah 49:1-5: “Listen, O isles, unto me; and hearken, ye people, from far; The LORD hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name. And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me, and made me a polished shaft; in his quiver hath he hid me; And said unto me, Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified. Then I said, I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain: yet surely my judgment is with the LORD, and my work with my God. And now, saith the LORD that formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the LORD, and my God shall be my strength.” Isaiah was the same Isaiah that was in his mother’s womb and was the same Isaiah when he wrote these verses inspired by the Holy Ghost.

The argument that a woman has the right to deal with her body as she sees fit does not hold up either. The Bible tells us that the child within her is not a part of her body, but is a separate body and soul. Anyone that takes an innocent life is worthy of damnation. Many people say that rape and incest are cases that should be exceptions, but understanding what the Bible teaches would still say that it is wrong to do such even though the acts leading to pregnancy are unfortunate. A human’s life is not less in value to another just because of who its father or mother is. A person can be born out of rape or incest and can still be a wonderful individual. Sin is not inherited, and it is still murder to abort a child that results from rape or incest.

Fellow Christians, it is time that we defend the Bible and its teachings and not allow this mass murder to continue. People that are our friends, family, associates, and even our sisters in Christ that abort children are murders and are in danger of hell fire. We must warn them and we must also stop this problem that affects every one of us. It is our duty to warn people and it is also our duty to stop abortion. It is in our power! We
must vote properly for candidates who will stand against abortion and will not threaten the Word of God. “Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3).

Editor’s Note: Justin is the sixteen (almost seventeen) year-old grandson of Richard and Linda Parker, members here at Bellview.

Lasting Peace
Jerry L. Martin

Peace, in the Greek, carries a meaning “to set at oneness, to make whole.” The Hebrew language uses shalom which expresses sincere desire for one to “fare-well in body, mind, soul and estate.” Peace is such a soothing word. It engenders hope, promises, happiness, and gives meaning as well as purpose to life. Individuals crave peace of mind. Couples desire to dwell together in peace and harmony. Families want to function and communicate in an environment of peace. Congregations endeavor to keep “the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.” Communities and even nations spend huge amounts of money to promote peace. Why is something so beautiful and so sought after so hard to achieve and maintain? The answer is that many have redefined the meaning of peace. Others are seeking it from the wrong source. Lasting peace can only be had when we recognize and accept the:

God of Peace. He is the source of lasting peace. “Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you” (2 Cor. 13:11). We waste our time if we go to any other source for peace (1 Th. 5:21-23).

Peace from God. He designed peace that lasts. “Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Phi. 4:6-7). God’s prescription for peace is outlined in Paul’s letter to the church at Colosse (Col. 3:12-17).

Peace with God. God desires that all mankind be at peace with Him. “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. 5:1). We can have peace with God only through Jesus “for he is our peace” (Eph. 2:12-17).

Those who accept the God of peace and His terms for real peace are the only ones who will have lasting peace. When we honestly and sincerely want and make peace with God we will have taken the first step in securing personal, marital, family, congregational, and extended peace. “Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always by all means. The Lord be with you all” (2 Th. 3:16).

1935 Mount Badon Cove
Cordova, TN 38018
Sick
Please remember in your prayers:
Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Marilyn Hall,
Neva Bryant, Ruby Bowman, Sheila Myrick, Ray Williams, and Mildred Hall
(Phyllis Brantley’s friend).

Reading/Invitation
November 12, 2003
Reading: Bryan Loy
Invitation: Fred Stancliff
November 19, 2003
Reading: Jim Loy
Invitation: Henry Born

Mark These Dates
November 9, 2003–Visitation Group 2
assignment cards handed out.
November 9, 2003–Deacons’ meeting at
5:00 PM, in room 7.
November 16, 2003–Visitation Group 3
assignment cards handed out.
November 16, 2003–Elders/Deacons’
meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
November 26, 2003–Adult Bible Classes
Video Series

Pantry Item Needed
Canned Meat

2004 Directory
The 2004 directory will be printed
soon. If you have any changes to the
directory and have not notified the office
please let us know as soon as possible. If
we do not hear from you the entry for you
and/or your family will remain the same.
"The Old Watch"

Tom Wacaster

It has been a few years since the old watch quit working. That old Timex watch succumbed to the ravages of time and age. Contrary to popular belief, even the watch that “takes a licking and keeps on ticking” finally gave up the ghost.

I came across that old watch sometime back, and wondered why I had discarded it for a new one. It did not take me long to remember why I put that which was nigh unto vanishing away into an old box in my closet in exchange for a new one at the local super market. I could not rely upon the Timex. The problem was not that it never ran. It ran great—when it ran. But for some reason when the long hand approached the 12, it would stick. It never stuck in the same place either.

Sometimes it was around the 10; at other times around the 11, or just shy of the 12. Sometimes it would stick for just a second or two; more often than not, however, it stuck for several minutes at a time. So over the course of just a few hours the watch would be so far off time that it was, for all practical purposes, useless.

I have known a lot of brethren that are like that old watch. Every congregation has their fair share of unreliable members. Oh, they run great when the hand is on the down side of 12. But when it became an uphill struggle to reach the high mark, they would get stuck, bogged down on first one thing and then another. When all is said and done, such brethren simply cannot be
Webster defines *reliable* as, “to rest with confidence, as when we are satisfied of the veracity, integrity, or ability of persons, or of the certainty of facts or of evidence; to trust with, on, or upon.” The Bible puts it this way: “who shall sojourn in thy tabernacle?... He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not” (Psa. 15:4).

Once a promise is made, even if circumstances should turn out to be not as ideal as we had anticipated, we are obligated to follow through on our commitment. Even if it means our own “hurt.”

While we may not be shocked at the lack of dependability of those who are not members of the Lord’s body, we are taken aback at the increasing number of Christians who make promises, but fail to fulfill them. Where is that once-faithful soul who swore allegiance to his or her Master but no longer attends faithfully? What has happened to that would-be Bible class teacher who once said, “I’ll teach,” only to be among the growing number who cannot be depended upon to be present for class, much less to teach? Where are those men who signed up to serve on the table, knowing full well that you cannot depend upon them to be there when it comes time for them to serve. All too often talent cards lay stacked in the church office, or entered into a computer. But when it comes time to pull names for service, like the nine ungrateful lepers, duty to one’s Lord and Master has been relegated to the back burner, and trustworthiness has once again fallen upon hard times.

I threw that watch away that day. It was of no value to me whatsoever. On the judgment day, those who failed to follow through on their word will, like that old watch, be discarded by the Owner and Master of all mankind.

324 County Road 4765; Boyd, TX 76023

Believing Error Condemns the Soul

Keith A. Mosher, Sr.

How many professed Christians really know what is being taught in their denomination? Does it matter what a man believes as long as he “believes in God”? Why even ask about what one believes? The proposition of this article is that the Bible teaches that to hold error and to transgress doctrine condemns the soul to eternal damnation. Note the following texts from Holy Writ.

A Timeless Warning!

“Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves” (Mat. 7:15). Why did Christ warn His disciples about false prophets? Does this verse imply that some professed prophets do not teach the truth and are to be avoided? Compare Romans 16:17-18: “Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.” This text explicitly implies several things. First, there are those who do not teach the truth. Second, sound doctrine can be learned as to avoid error. And third, those who listen to error are deceived, therefore lost.

Practice must Follow Profession

“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but
he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven” (Mat. 7:21). Does this verse teach that just because one calls Jesus “Lord” does not guarantee entrance to heaven? It does. This, then, implies that one must do His will, and must therefore know it. Many false prophets talk about finding God’s “will for one’s life.” The will to be found is the one left by revelations (Heb. 9:15-17; 2 Pet. 3:9). God has already revealed His will for man. Those who do not do it are lost.

The One Gospel must Be Obeyed!

“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be dammed” (Mark 16:15-16). The necessary implications of this text are that something called the “gospel” is to be preached, and only those who believe it and are baptized shall be saved. The phrase, “the gospel” means there is only one. People who believe anything else are lost.

Man Can Know and must Do God’s Will

“And he said also to the people, When ye see a cloud rise out of the west, straightway ye say, There cometh a shower; and so it is. And when ye see the south wind blow, ye say, There will be heat; and it cometh to pass. Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky and of the earth; but how is it that ye do not discern this time? Yea, and why even of the prophets? For indeed, if they know prophecy, it is so; so also if they know something about the time. Yea, and why even of the teachers of the law and of the prophets? For they indeed knew that which was right.

“He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day” (John 12:48). The only record of Jesus’ teaching is in the New Testament. Those who do not receive those words, that is, those same words, will be judged by His Word anyway. One, therefore, must know what He taught and obey it. No other teaching will suffice.

“Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved” (Acts 11:14). Peter’s sermon to Cornelius was in words, whereby a salvation could be achieved. Suppose Peter spoke the wrong words, what would have been the result?

A Perverted Message Denies Bible Authority

“But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed” (Gal. 1:8). The apostle Paul, who under inspiration penned the Galatian epistle, only knew one message. His direst command was not to depart from it. Why?

Abiding in Truth Blesses the Soul

“Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed” (2 John 9-10). One can go beyond the doctrine, and those who do are not to be invited into one’s house. Why? Is unsound doctrine destructive to the soul? The only answer must be in the affirmative. Honest seekers of truth who believe in biblical authority will recognize that what is believed is eternally important to the soul.

“Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:31-32).
Sick

Please remember in your prayers:
Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Marilyn Hall,
Neva Bryant, Ruby Bowman, Sheila
Myrick, Ray Williams, Robert Ayliffe
(Carl Ayliffe’s father, under Hospice care),
and Mildred Hall (Phyllis Brantley’s
friend).

Reading/Invitation
November 19, 2003
Reading: Jim Loy
Invitation: Henry Born
November 26, 2003
Reading: Gabe Moore
Invitation: Paul Brantley

Mark These Dates
November 16, 2003–Visitation Group 3
assignment cards handed out.
November 16, 2003–Elders/Deacons’
meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
November 26, 2003–Adult Bible Classes
Video Series
December 7, 2003–Visitation Group 1
assignment cards handed out.
December 14, 2003–Visitation Group 2
assignment cards handed out.
December 14, 2003–Deacons’ meeting
held at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
December 21, 2003–Visitation Group 3
assignment cards handed out.
December 21, 2003–Elders/Deacons’
meeting held at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
December 24, 2003–Adult Bible Classes
Video Series.

Pantry Item Needed
Canned Meat
Some years ago a friend of mine was visiting a congregation in the western part of the nation. His observance of the disruptions in worship is something to think about.

He watched as the younger people were allowed to play games as the worship service was going on. Many times the older ones were the ones who were encouraging the games played by the children. Not only did these people not get anything out of worship, but they disturbed everyone else who was sitting around them.

This just goes to show that many do not know the purpose, nor do they understand what worship is. If they did they surely would not disturb the worship assembly, and would act more worshipful.

For us to answer the question, “What is worship?” we must first understand what it is not.

1. Worship is not a time for fun and games. Children should be trained at an early age to respect worship. They are never too young to be trained.
2. Worship is not a time to manicure our fingernails.
3. Worship is not a time to catch up on our sleep.
4. Worship is not a time to balance our checkbooks.
5. Worship is not a time to allow our children to run wild. Someone could be hurt by someone running into them.
6. Worship is not a time to communicate with those around us (whispering and note passing).
7. Worship is not just a time to give of our means and take the Lord’s Supper. It is the time that we do those things, but we also are to sing, pray, and hear the Word of God taught.

**Worship is:**
1. A time to praise the living God.
2. A time to remember the love of Christ as He died for us.
3. A time of encouragement, uplifting, and exhortation.
5. A time to leave behind the cares of the world.
6. A time to focus on bowing before God.
8. A time for things to be done decently and in order.

Additionally the nursery is not a place to go and shut out the worship service. It is the place set aside for mothers to train and take care of their little ones. Even in the nursery there is to be respect for worship. (Adapted from an article by Garry Stanton.)

517 Gaylord Road; Dresden, TN 38225

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**You Are a Christian If You—**

_Eddie Whitten_

Peter wrote, “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Pet. 5:8). Being a Christian is a sobering thought. It is laced with pitfalls, one of the most dangerous being a lack of vigilance, or as we usually state it: Apathy. It is so easy for one to let slip his main commitment when he stated to Christ and to the world that he was putting on Jesus, God, the Bible, the church as his number one priority. Things interfere with our time, prayers, benevolence, worship, and service. Soon it becomes a chore, or even perhaps a bother to take time to “go to church.” When it becomes a matter of “going to church” we might ought to take stock of our selves. Let us consider: You are a Christian if you—

1. **Read (study) your Bible daily.** A person needs food for his physical body every day. A Christian will see it that his spiritual body receives spiritual food every day as well. Without spiritual food (the Word of God) one’s faith will grow weak. Paul said, “faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17). There is no substitute for study.
2. **Pray daily.** Prayer guards one’s heart. Paul said, “Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Phi. 4:6-7). We need to keep our heart on things spiritual.
3. **Do good unto others daily.** Paul admonished, “As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith” (Gal. 6:10). God knew that doing good unto others will help the door have a greater sense of gratitude for the blessing of helping others. A heart turned inward will soon turn to stone.
4. **Live righteously daily.** People see us in a different light than we see ourselves. Others can see through hypocrisy. If we say we are something and then prove otherwise through our actions, we destroy what influence we might
could have with them. Honesty is never wrong, and a good name is to be desired. Solomon said, “A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold” (Pro. 22:1), and “A good name is better than precious ointment” (Ecc. 7:1a).

5. Worship every time the church assembles. A Christian who is dedicated to his Lord, will not miss the opportunity to assemble with the saints. The phrase, “go to church,” is wrong! The church assembles to worship God! Not for social considerations, but to worship and adore our Creator, Sustainer, and Rewarder (Heb. 11:6). One who claims to be a Christian and then forsakes the worship is not what he claims to be.

It is easy for one to make all sorts of claims, but the proof of the pudding is in the eating. It would be good for all of us to take stock of ourselves, be honest with our hearts, and ask the questions: “Am I really being a Christian, or am I trying to fool God?”

1350 N Abrego Drive; Green Valley, AZ 85614

Three Beautiful Psalms

Daniel Denham

By themselves Psalms 22, 23, and 24 are literary masterpieces. The sweep of their individual messages, the beauty of their words, and the consolation of their advice would place them at the very front of literature, even if divine inspiration were never involved in their ultimate origin. The music that they bring to the human heart is incredible. But with the indisputable fact of their heavenly origin, their dolce tones are all the more pure and uplifting, and when taken together as a wonderful three part harmony, they form a sublime symphony heralding events in the life of the Messiah Himself!

I urge you to read each psalm carefully and separately at first. Then reread them one after the other in flow. In Psalm 22, we have the Suffering Savior, who—forsaken by God and man—will give Himself on the cross for sinners. The psalm is filled with allusions to the Lord’s sufferings before and during the awful events at Calvary. Its words remind us that He indeed was “a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief” (Isa. 53:3). In Psalm 23, the beautiful Shepherd Psalm, we see the Good Shepherd (cf., John 10:7-18), and the provisions that He makes for His sheep. His care, comfort, and consolation is stressed throughout. In Psalm 24 we see the Reining Sovereign, the Lord of glory triumphant in battle and ascended through the everlasting doors of heaven to reign at God’s right hand as Daniel also prophesied (Dan. 7:13-14) and as the New Testament records (Acts 1:9-11; 2:29-36; Eph. 1:21-23)! The three together stress His sacrifice, service, and sovereign power. Each testifies of salvation provided in His death, perfected through His work despite His own suffering, and preserved by His victory over death. Together they speak of death, resurrection, and ascension—sorrow, comfort, and jubilation! Again, read them carefully and prayerfully alone, but then read them together and see if your appreciation for them is not all the more enhanced! These psalms by themselves would make David well-deserving of the appellation “the Sweet Singer of Israel”; for the Spirit of God authored their melody and lyrics so unfailingly.

607 72nd Street; Newport News, VA 23605
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Marilyn Hall, Neva Bryant, Ruby Bowman, Ray Williams, and Mildred Hall (Phyllis Brantley’s friend).

Sympathy
Our deepest sympathy is extended to Carl Ayliffe in the death of his father, Robert Ayliffe, on November 11, 2003. Please keep Carl and his family in your prayers.

Reading/Invitation
November 26, 2003
   Reading: Gabe Moore
   Invitation: Henry Born
December 3, 2003
   Reading: Shelby Nall
   Invitation: Bill Busch

Mark These Dates
November 26, 2003–Adult Bible Classes
Video Series
December 7, 2003–Visitation Group 1
   assignment cards handed out.
December 14, 2003–Visitation Group 2
   assignment cards handed out.
December 14, 2003–Deacons’ meeting
   held at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
December 21, 2003–Visitation Group 3
   assignment cards handed out.
December 21, 2003–Elders/Deacons’
   meeting held at 5:00 PM, in room 7.

Pantry Item Needed
Canned Meat
They Have Taken Away the Lord
Noah Hackworth

Introduction
Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene, along with other women came to the tomb where the body of Jesus had been placed by Joseph and Nicodemus. They were expecting to find the Lord because they had prepared spices to anoint His body, but the tomb was empty. In an expression of apparent surprise and confusion, Mary said, “They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him” (John 20:1-2). Mary’s understanding, along with that of others, was woefully lacking because no one had taken the body of Jesus; His body had not been stolen. Those who visited the tomb should have known it would be empty. Jesus had repeatedly taught (e.g., John 2:19) that He would be raised from the dead the third day. In fact, God raised Him according to Paul (Acts 17:31). “They have taken away the Lord” is a significant phrase. It is descriptive of what has happened in many areas in our world today. Consider this:

God out of Government
The New Testament church is not a political structure; its business is not politics. The Bible authorizes civil government (Rom. 13), but the separation of church and state must always be understood (cf., Rom. 14:17). The church does not administer the affairs of state. The state does not administer the affairs of the church (Mat. 22:21). However, it is our perpetual hope that those who administer the affairs of state would
be people who at least acknowledge the existence of a Supreme Being as well as subscribe to a high standard of morals. Dr. Howard A. Kelly, physician and radiologist said, “Where the Bible is dishonored, life becomes cheap and science an early victim, or it survives in destructive form.” Herbert L. Willett said, The Bible is the Magna Charta of human liberty; the Declaration of Independence from the oppression of ignorance and superstition; the Emancipation of Proclamation of the soul of man.” He again declared, “The passion for social righteousness, democracy, industrial liberty, universal education, equal suffrage, child welfare, civic purity and international brotherhood are all inspired by the Bible. The reformatory movements, which have removed much of the blight of inhumanity to children, woman, criminals, and animals, of intemperance, and the social vices that gnaw at the vitals of the world, owe their inception and progress to the same book.

**God out of Education**

While we are not saying that the public school classroom is the place to teach spiritual principles, a great percentage of educators in our public schools are not influenced by a Higher Power, and this is one reason (a large one) why “Christian” schools and “home” schools exist.

Western civilization is founded upon the Bible; our ideas, our wisdom, our philosophy, our literature, our art, our ideals, come more from the Bible than from all other books put together. It is a revelation of divinity and of humanity; it contains the loftiest religious aspiration along with a candid representation of all that is earthly, sensual, and devilish. I thoroughly believe in a university education for both men and women; but I believe a knowledge of the Bible without a college course is more valuable than a college course without the Bible (William Lyon Phelps).

**God out of Religion**

Modernists and liberals have long sought to remove God from the realm of religion. Religion is formed from re “back” and lego “to bind.” Hence religion binds man back to God. It is difficult to see why men would want to remove God from the very system designed to bring them back to God. Attempts to get God out of religion involve (1) rejection of the Bible as the verbally inspired Word of God, (2) rejection of the authority of Christ, (3) denial of the virgin birth, and (4) repudiation of biblical miracles. We are reminded of what happened in the first century: There was no room for Christ in the inn, among His own people, in the Roman empire, or among His disciples, and there is very little room for the Lord in the religion of today.

5342 West La Vida Court; Visalia, CA 93277

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**The Body and the Blood**

*Gary W. Summers*

Few texts in the New Testament deal with the Lord’s Supper, but all of them agree that the unleavened bread (which was used for the Passover feast and which was therefore used as a model for the Lord’s Supper) represent the Lord’s body.

Some have thought recently to use leavened bread in this memorial observance of His death, but this action defies the symbolism. Jesus Christ is our Passover (1 Cor. 5:7). Although this refers to Him as the Passover lamb, which was sacrificed, nevertheless, only unleavened bread would be associated with the feast. No authority exists for using anything but unleavened bread to represent the Lord’s body.

Likewise the fruit of the vine represents His
blood; that fruit is never referred to in the Scriptures as “wine” (Greek oinos). No one could possibly understand that anything other than unfermented fruit could be used. Thus, the bread and the fruit of the vine are both unfermented—untainted by anything that would alter the nature of those pure substances.

Matthew, Mark, and Luke record that Jesus blessed (or gave thanks for) the bread (Mat. 26:26; Luke 22:19). Then He broke it and gave it to the disciples, saying, “Take, eat; this is my body” (Mat. 26:26). Luke adds: “This is my body which is given for you” (Luke 22:19). Paul adds in his account, “which is broken for you” (1 Cor. 11:24). The word broken is not in most ancient texts, but the alternative, “which is for you,” seems a bit awkward. Certainly, the breaking of the bread suggests the broken body, but the only inspired Word used is given (Luke 22:19).

Does the Kings James’ use of broken convey an erroneous idea? No. The Lord’s body was broken, although none of His bones were (John 19:36). His flesh was torn apart by the brutal scourging He received prior to the crucifixion. The flesh upon His head was broken open by the crown of thorns, which was first placed, then beaten into Him. The skin of His hands and feet were broken by the nails that went through them. His body was broken by the spear that pierced His side, from which came forth His saving blood (John 19:34).

In effect, whether the word broken belongs in the text or not, it cannot be disputed that the idea belongs there. Jesus allowed His body to be given (broken) for us and His blood to be shed. How could we do otherwise but honor this sacrifice each Lord’s day?

3671 Oak Vista Lane
Winter Park, FL 32792

How Gullible Are We?
Tom Moore

A freshman at Eagle Rock Junior High won 1st prize at the Greater Idaho Science Fair, April 26. In his project, he urged people to sign a petition demanding strict control or total elimination of the chemical “dihydrogen monoxide.” And for plenty of good reasons, since:

1. It can cause excessive sweating and vomiting.
2. It is a major component in acid rain.
3. It can cause severe burns in its gaseous state.
4. Accidental inhalation can kill you.
5. It contributes to erosion.
6. It decreases effectiveness of automobile brakes.
7. It has been found in tumors of terminal patients.

He asked 50 people if they supported a ban of the chemical. Forty-three said “Yes,” six were undecided, and the last one? Well, only one knew that the chemical, dihydrogen monoxide, was water (H₂O).

There are many in the religious world who are just a gullible. Millions always believe, without ever investigating, whatever their preacher espouses from the pulpit. Many would not know the difference between truth and error it is slapped in the face. That is why we need to be more like the Bereans (see Acts 27:11). Being gullible is what leads to religious error that will damn one’s soul.

Copy
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Marilyn Hall, Neva Bryant (West Florida Hospital, room 214), Ruby Bowman, Tim Lamb (Pavilion at West Florida Hospital, room 809), and Mildred Hall.

Baptized
We rejoice with Mildred Hall in her decision to be baptized into Christ on November 23, 2003. Please keep her in your prayers and offer her encouragement and any assistance you can. Mildred’s address is: 288 East Olive Road, Apt. 13D; Pensacola, FL 32501. Her telephone number is 478-7474.

Reading/Invitation
December 3, 2003
Reading: Shelby Nall
Invitation: Bill Busch
December 10, 2003
Reading: Richard Parker
Invitation: Bill Cline

Mark These Dates
December 7, 2003–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
December 14, 2003–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
December 14, 2003–Deacons’ meeting held at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
December 21, 2003–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.

Pantry Item Needed
Canned Meat
How Should a Christian View Christmas?

Allen Webster

The American “Christmas Season” is filled with many enjoyable and worthwhile customs. It is a happy time of year. The attitudes that are especially noticeable—love, good will, peace, joy, giving—are what God intended for men to exhibit year around. The exchanging of gifts, laughter, and love rekindles our spirits and strengthens our families. Everybody but Scrooge loves Christmas.

We often hear that “Jesus is the reason for the season” and “Let’s put Christ back in Christmas.” Christians ask, “How should I celebrate Christmas?” or “Should I celebrate it at all?” Since we should be “ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh” (1 Pet. 3:15), this topic deserves consideration. What does the Bible say about Christmas?

Christians May Enjoy this Season as a National Holiday. Christians do not have to cease to be happy in Jesus at “Christmas” just to be different from others. Paul says, “Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice” (Phi. 4:4). He also wrote, “Rejoice with them that do rejoice” (Rom. 12:15). This would include Christmas as much as any other day. There is not enough happiness in the world anyway. This is a good time to teach our children that “It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35).

Christians observe many non-religious holidays (e.g., July 4, Labor Day, Memorial Day, Valentine’s Day), and can celebrate “Christmas” in this sense (unless, it violates the conscience—
Ode to a Hireling Preacher

Preach a sermon, preacher,
But make it short and sweet;
Our stomachs strike at twelve o’clock
A hungering for to eat.

Preach a sermon, preacher,
We care not what you say,
As long as you leave us alone
And fire the other way.

Preach a sermon, preacher,
Make it good and plain;
But don’t you dare to get so close
As to call sin by its name.

Preach a sermon, preacher,
Make it what we love to hear,
We’ll pat you on your spineless back
While you scratch our itching ear.

Author Unknown

Rom. 14:23). This falls into the area of Christian liberty (Rom. 14:3-6). Since our jobs give us time off, it is a blessing for our homes. If there was ever a need for strengthening families, it is now. It gives parents time to teach children and spouses time to strengthen relationships (Deu. 6:6-7; Eph. 5:25-29; 6:4).

Christians must Not Celebrate Christmas as a Holy Day. The word Christmas is not found in the Bible. It originated with the Catholic church (“Christ Mass”) to commemorate Christ’s birth and was first practiced in the Fourth Century. It was not practiced by Christians in Bible times. There is no direct statement, example, or implication that one should celebrate Christmas in the Bible (cf., Rev. 22:18-19). In fact the opposite is the case.

Paul addressed this issue (in principle) with the Galatian church: “Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain” (4:10-11). The Colossian church faced those who wanted them to celebrate religious days and were told, “Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ” (2:16-17).

God expects Christians to strictly follow the Bible (“observe all things whatsoever I have commanded”—Mat. 28:20; “speak as the oracles of God”—1 Pet. 4:11; not “go beyond what is written”—2 John 9, Col. 3:17). Therefore we observe only one religious holiday—Sunday (Acts 20:7). God set this day apart to memorialize, not His Son’s birth, but His death (1 Cor. 11:2-24). Christians rejoice in this “unspeakable gift” fifty-two times a year!

People cannot actually celebrate Christ’s birth anyway because God did not reveal the birth date (perhaps because He knew people would celebrate it). Before the fourth century A.D., there were three guesses as to His birth (January 6, March 25, and December 25). December 25 was ordered as the day in A.D. 357 by Liberious, Bishop of Rome (Britannica Encyclopedia). World Book Encyclopedia says that day was chosen probably “because the feast of the sun, or winter solstice, was a familiar Roman feast celebrating the victory of light over darkness.” (Thus Christmas began as a Catholic compromise with paganism.) The evidence points to an autumn, or perhaps spring, date because shepherds take flocks to the mountains in winter and only during summer months would they spend
the nights with their flocks. It does not really matter when He was born, only that He was born (Mat. 1:21-25).

To pursue men’s traditions is to make worship vain. “But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men” (Mat. 15:9). Jesus spoke to those who make “the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye” (Mark 7:13). It is wrong to celebrate religious days not authorized in the New Testament.

Christian Should Avoid Leaving the Wrong Impression with the World. Since influence is so important in converting the lost (1 Pet. 3:1-2), it behooves each Christian to guard his carefully (Rom. 14:21). During this time of year we should avoid giving the impression that we celebrate a religious holiday. Going about singing religious songs may be understood by us, but does it leave the impression that we are celebrating Christ’s birthday? Cards sent with religious scenes also leave that impression, so we should choose cards without religious connotations. Nativity scenes, obviously, should not be place in our yards or houses. “Christmas plays” should also be avoided for the same reason. We should try to avoid the “religious” part of Christmas.

Go ahead, enjoy this festive time of year! Be thankful to God for all your blessing and joys, but be careful not to compromise the truth.

P. O. Box 520; Jacksonville, AL 36265

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Two Doors Down

John Scott

Two doors down I witnessed a tragedy Saturday. No, not one that we will read of in the Star Telegram but nonetheless a tragedy. A huge moving van opened its cavernous mouth and consumed the furniture and belongings of a young family. Three blond-headed boys got in a station wagon headed east and followed the van with their mother; the daddy in his sedan went west. The tragedy of a freshly broken home.

Two doors down I never knew of any domestic turmoil. They smiled and waved as I jogged down the street. He always asked how many miles I was going. Their well-manicured lawn matched all the rest and revealed none of the misery which must have been endured behind closed doors.

Two doors down stands an empty house that will always silently rebuke me. I never reached out to that family. I introduced myself on the day they moved in but that was it. No invitations into our home; no invitations to worship with us; no meaningful interactions with them at all. Just smiles and waves and talk of how many miles I planned to run.

We are busy people—all of us. This is a fast-paced society in which we live. We run on well-defined tracks. Little time to venture off our tracks and slow our pace to interact with people who are not imperative for our ongoing well being.

But let us remember, we can and must continously extend the healing ministering hands of Christ because there are people hurting, families shattering, lives tormented just two doors down.

Copied

What an opportunity to change our ways and begin making a difference in the lives of others. Invite every family you know to our services!
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Marilyn Hall, Neva Bryant (West Florida Hospital, room 214), Ruby Bowman, Tim Lamb, Ray Dodd, Mildred Hall, and Hall Busch (Bill Busch’s father).

Reading/Invitation
December 10, 2003
Reading: Richard Parker
Invitation: Bill Cline
December 17, 2003
Reading: Joshua Wilkes
Invitation: Bill Crowe

Mark These Dates
December 14, 2003–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
December 14, 2003–Deacons’ meeting held at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
December 21, 2003–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
December 21, 2003–Elders/Deacons’ meeting held at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
December 24, 2003–Adult Bible Classes Video Series.
December 28, 2003–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.

Pantry Items Needed
Peanut Butter and Jelly

Moved
Ruth Bamber has moved to Arkansas. Her new address is: 506 West 16th Street; Hope, AR 71801. Please keep Ruth and her family in your prayers.
I once heard the late, great evangelist Andrew M. Connally say, “Denominationalism is of the devil and all who remain in such until death will be lost.” While this may offend many, including some members of the Lord’s church, it is a most accurate and compelling Bible truth. Simply stated, our Lord did not die for denominationalism. He built His church (Mat. 16:18), shed His blood for His church (Acts 20:28; Eph 5:23), is the Head of His church (Eph. 5:25; Col. 1:18), reigns over His church (Acts 2:36-32), and will save His church (Eph. 5:25). Since there is only one body (Eph. 6:4), faithful preachers have always condemned divisive and devilish denominationalism.

However, within the ranks of denominationalism itself, there has long been much to debate as various religious groups sought to defend their erroneous doctrines by means of Scripture. At least these proponents of error should be commended for trying to prove their beliefs by the Bible and for being convicted enough to try to win people to their way of thinking.

Today, however, there is a growing tendency away from denominationalism to something perhaps even worse: pluralism! Instead of religious bickering and infighting, all the religious groups are being persuaded to put unity ahead of doctrine and come together on “common ground.” While it would be a most marvelous thing to see all the denominations give up their errors and unite together on God’s truth, this is not what is
in mind. Pluralism calls for all religious groups, including those outside of “Christendom,” to see the value in each existing group and to tolerate all opinions in our diverse culture, that one might see the benefits offered by each group. This is not to say there has never been unity in diversity before. For example, various denominational groups have always stood unified in their opposition toward the Lord’s church. Yet, in recent times we see more toleration and acceptance of error and more retaliation toward the Truth.

Unfortunately, the church of Christ has not been spared from the evil doctrine of pluralism. Notorious statements that have been made by heretical teachers, such as, “Anytime I hear someone call God ‘Father,’ I see a brother,” demonstrate how far astray some have gone in order to attain pseudo-unity. More and more, we have brethren who are involved in the ecumenical movement through sharing pulpits with various denominational preachers, conducting youth devotionals with other religious groups, etc. These meetings, for sure, are not intended to teach the lost the truth. Such brethren must be reminded of the words of the apostle Paul, “And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them” (Eph. 5:11).

Often these promoters of union with every denominational stripe appeal to Jesus’ prayer for unity in John 17. Yet, this so-called unity movement stands in direct contrast to Jesus’ prayer. No, it was not the intention of the Lord to have everyone just getting along, respecting the whims and opinions of each other, and forgetting allegiance to His divine truth. Truth is exclusive, not inclusive. It is, by its very nature, narrow (Mat. 7:13-14).

So what should be our attitude toward pluralism? The same as it has been toward denominationalism. Remember these words, “Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds” (2 John 9-11). May our constant plea be unity, but unity that is authorized by the God who says, “the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable” (Jam. 3:17).

3950 Forest Hill Irene Road
Memphis, TN 38125

Every Member’s Work Enhances Church Growth

*Robert Meredith*

In Matthew 20:1 one reads, “For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard. And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard.” Jesus goes on to teach us what we call the parable of the vineyard, or the eleventh hour, where a householder hires laborers into his vineyard. The householder represents Christ and the vineyard, His church. Therefore, Jesus is pictured as calling (2 The. 2:14) workers for His vineyard. This verse shows us that the church is a place of labor, and it is every Christian’s responsibility to be laboring in
His kingdom/vineyard. Too often, some think that it is the elders, deacons, or preachers job to tend to the work of the church. However, James, writing to the church (Jam. 1:1; Gal. 6:16) declares, “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world” (Jam. 1:27). When one considers the topic of church growth, there are two areas one needs to consider: spiritual and numerical. Peter commands us to grow spiritually (1 Pet. 2:2; 2 Pet. 3:18) as does Paul (2 Tim. 2:15). Jesus Himself taught that numerical growth will come when the seed of God’s Word is sown in a good heart (Luke 8:15).

Evangelism is one of the three works of the church, and a part in which every member should be involved. Jesus commanded us to go into all the world (Mark 16:15). It may be that you cannot go overseas to a foreign land, however, the mission field lies right outside your door. The first century church gives us a great example to follow. Saul of Tarsus made havoc of the church, and the scattered church went everywhere preaching the Word (Acts 8:4). Today in the United States, we do not face such persecution, but we should still have the desire to teach as we have the opportunity. Christians today can evangelize by teaching Bible classes, inviting others to services, or conducting home Bible studies. All of these help fulfill the Great Commission.

Benevolence is another way of enhancing church growth. When the world sees that the church cares not only for her own, but also for those of the world (Gal. 6:10), it will help open doors of opportunity for numerical growth. But even if that does not happen, the spiritual growth of the members will be enhanced.

A third work in which every member can be involved is edification, which means to build up or to strengthen. Each of us has the responsibility of edifying our fellow Christians. Too many in Christ’s church have the attitude of the one talent man of Matthew 25 and feel that they cannot do great things, so they do nothing at all. One needs to realize that the one talent man was not lost because he only had one talent, but because he did not do what was expected of him. Each church member can speak words of encouragement to the downtrodden, to new converts, and to the elders who labor in overseeing the flock. Furthermore, every member can edify by his attendance. In Hebrews 10:24, the Holy Spirit commands us to, “consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works.” Once again this is a command and it is not optional. One must provoke unto love and to good works. But how? Verse 25 tells us, “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together.”

Every individual has influence which can be used for good or bad. On one occasion my wife invited someone to church services, and the lady asked, “Is that where so and so goes?” When my wife responded, “Yes,” the lady said “I do not have anything against the church of Christ, but if he goes there I do not want anything to do with it.” Is your influence such that church growth is enhanced or diminished? The apostle Paul commands us to “present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service” (Rom. 12:1). Each member’s work enhances church growth. Jesus proclaimed, “He that is not with me is against me: and he that gathereth not with me scattereth” (Luke 11:23). Paul wrote, “I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase” (1 Cor. 3:6). Let us strive to do our part to enhance church growth.

Trenton, TN
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Marilyn Hall, Neva Bryant (Tandem Nursing Home, room 505), Ruby Bowman, Tim Lamb, Ray Dodd, Jennette Nall (Sacred Heart Hospital, room 530), and Hal Busch (Bill Busch’s father).

Sympathy
Our deepest sympathy is extended to Shelby Nall in the death of his sister, Emmanette Hughes, who passed away on December 3, 2003. Please keep Shelby and his family in your prayers.
Our deepest sympathy is also extended to Ruby Bowman in the death of her brother, Bill Owens, who passed away on December 7, 2003. Please keep Ruby and her daughter Madeline Graves in your prayers.

Reading/Invitation
December 17, 2003
Reading: Joshua Wilkes
Invitation: Bill Crowe
December 24, 2003
Reading: Ray Williams
Invitation: Dale Cunningham

Mark These Dates
December 14, 2003–Visititation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
December 14, 2003–Deacons’ meeting held at 5:00 PM, in room 7.

Pantry Items Needed
Peanut Butter and Jelly
The Purpose of a Pattern

Winfred Clark

I am aware from the very beginning that there are those who decry the idea of a pattern for our religious practices. Some are opposed to what they call “pattern mentality.” Should this cause us to move away from a discussion of such in an objective manner? I think not and so do many other people.

When you speak of a pattern you speak of a plan to follow. You speak of that which is like a map or blueprint. It speaks of something that has been revealed to man in such a way that he can know what God will expect of him. This is surely the case in God’s dealings with man.

We should have no reluctance in using the term “pattern.” Did not God use that word when speaking to Moses (Exo. 25:9, 40)? Is this not the same word that was used by the writer of the book of Hebrews when he said, “See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount” (Heb. 8:5)? Listen to the apostle Paul, “Hold the pattern of sound words which thou hast heard from me” (2 Tim. 1:13—ASV). How would it be possible for one to hold a pattern if one did not exist? The term “hold” carries the idea of “adherence to.” But how could you adhere to that which does not exist? Yes, there is a pattern and it serves a very useful purpose. We need to take the time to look at some of the purposes of a pattern.

A Pattern Gives Direction

None of us should deny the need for direction for “it is not in man that walketh to direct his
steps” (Jer. 10:23). Such was surely the case with Noah in the long ago. When he was told to build the ark; he was told exactly what to do (Gen. 6:14). He was told to use “gopher wood.” That would mean only gopher wood. He was given directions as to its size. These directions were followed (Gen. 6:22). He had no trouble knowing what God wanted him to do for he had a pattern to follow.

We have a pattern, which gives direction as to what we are to say. Peter points this out when he says, “If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God” (1 Pet. 4:11). So a man has a pattern to follow as he speaks. He is not left to say just anything in the name of the Lord. It must be according to and in harmony with the words of God. He has a pattern for his speech. This would surely be a part of the reason men are not to add to or take from the Word of the Lord. Such would alter the pattern and in so doing not say what God’s Word would say.

A Pattern Promotes Unity

If all follow the same pattern, and we must, then all will speak the same thing. There will be unity of speech if all “hold fast the pattern of sound words.” This would be a part of the reason Paul would say, “the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also” (2 Tim. 2:2). Take a moment to look at that passage.

Paul says, “the things.” That would mean something understandable. It would mean the propositional truth that Timothy heard from Paul. It would be the teaching of an apostle. This becomes the pattern. This is the blueprint that is to be followed. After such is heard, this could in turn be passed on by teaching other men. Those men would be able to pass this same thing on also. This would surely insure unity of speech. This would mean that one generation after another could continue to speak the same thing. Culture or the passing of time would not change it.

Such will promote unity of action. Paul knew that this possibility existed for he said, “as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye” (1 Cor. 16:1). By following the words of the apostle as a pattern for action, you will have unity of action. All in the church at Corinth could do as all in the churches of Galatia. This would be consistent with what Paul had said before, “as I teach every where in every church” (1 Cor. 4:17). If all those churches would follow the pattern laid out by Paul’s teaching, you would have unity of action. There would be no division.

A Pattern Preserves Identity

The thing that helped identify the child of God under the Old Testament was the pattern which he followed. He was given certain instructions as to how he was to act. You will find that the Jew was to observe the Sabbath as a holy day (Exo. 28:8). This would serve to set him apart from the inhabitants of the land into which they came. They would be identified by such practices as they followed the Lord. His Word being the pattern for their lives.

This is also true of the child of God today. He is what he is because he follows a certain form or pattern of teaching. In fact, Paul said of those at Rome: “ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you” (Rom. 6:17). This would be equal to saying they have obeyed the gospel. Each one of those in the church at Rome would be what he or she was because they have all followed that same pattern in obedience. They have all come from the same form or mold and thus would all be the same. They would all be one in Christ. There would be no difference in their religious identity. As long as men follow the same pattern then they will all be the same.
As you see the gospel move throughout the Roman world; you see men and women following the same instructions. They are all Christians. You do not have one kind of a Christian in Jerusalem and another kind in Antioch. They all came from the same mold or pattern. The same seed that was planted in Jerusalem was also planted in Antioch. The seed brings forth after its kind (Gen. 1:12). Such will surely preserve identity. That is surely the case with the gospel, which is the pattern for all that follow in matters that pertain to the soul.

Deceased

I Believe in Santa’s Cause

Bill Brandstatter

Many years ago the singing group, The Statler Brothers, had a song titled, “I Believe In Santa’s Cause.” As I think about the meaning of that song, I realized that I, too believe in Santa’s Cause.

Santa’s Cause involves happiness for all people. Santa is one who spreads good will. It should be my desire to live peaceably with all men (Rom. 12:18). Santa wants everybody to be happy. There is nothing negative ever said about Santa. Santa brings smiles, joy, and happiness to everyone he is around. In a world full of violence, bloodshed, and despair, Santa brings joy, peace, and happiness. The Christian should shine and stand out in the midst of a crooked generation (Phi. 2:15). The Christian should be the light that is needed to bring happiness to all around.

Santa’s cause involves giving. No one can think about Santa without thinking of giving. This time of year involves giving. Unfortunately many people are getters, not givers. Some love to get, but do not like to give. Giving involves sacrifice. Jesus said “It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35). Is this our attitude generally around Christmas?

If we did not get any presents under the tree, how would we feel? Perhaps many young children are taught that getting is more important than giving. When we give presents we feel good. How do we feel when we have to give money to a certain cause? Are we stingy or liberal? The giving that Santa represents ought to be a very real part of the Christian’s life year round.

Santa’s cause also involves universal love. Santa looks at children in Afghanistan and Iraq the same way he does children in America. We, too should have a universal love for all people. The Bible says God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34). Neither should Christians be biased or partial (Jam. 2:9). This time of year the love for many is shown. From the church that gives baskets to the needy of the community to the individual who makes a special gift to send to someone, universal love is seen in many areas. God’s universal love for the world caused Him to send His Son into a world that was full of sin.

Let us believe in Santa’s cause year round. The thought of spreading happiness, good will and universal love should be part of the Christian’s life 12 months a year. Do you believe in Santa’s cause?

313 Circle Drive; Vienna, IL 62995
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Marilyn Hall, Neva Bryant (Tandem Nursing Home, room 505), Ruby Bowman, Tim Lamb, Ray Dodd, Jennette Nall, and Ray Foshee.

Restored
Dale Cunningham and Andrea Justice were restored to Christ on December 14, 2003. Please keep them in your prayers.

Reading/Invitation
December 24, 2003
   Reading: Ray Williams
   Invitation: Dale Cunningham

December 31, 2003
   Reading: Carl Ayliffe
   Invitation: Ray Dodd

Mark These Dates
December 21, 2003–Visitation Group 1
   assignment cards handed out.
December 21, 2003–Elders/Deacons’ meeting held at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
December 24, 2003–Adult Bible Classes Video Series.
December 28, 2003–Visitation Group 2
   assignment cards handed out.
December 31, 2003–Fifth Wednesday
   Singing at 7:00 PM.
January 4, 2004–Visitation Group 1
   assignment cards handed out.
January 11, 2004–Visitation Group 2
   assignment cards handed out.

Pantry Items Needed
Peanut Butter and Jelly
Now He Is Gone

Preston Silcox

Surely you know this person as well as I. He was faithful to attend as he learned more and more about God, His Word, the church, and the needs of his soul. Eventually he was baptized into Christ and seemed zealous to learn and grow as a Christian. In time, however, he appeared to “cool off.” His attendance slowed down as well as his participation in other church activities. The days finally arrived when he was nowhere to be found; he was never at Bible class and never at worship. What happened?

The World Did Not Care

Of course, who would expect it to? The world rushed along with its own business of self-absorption, temporal pleasures, and near-sighted ambitions, all the while kindly inviting him to participate. Because he had been a Christian only a short while, in a way he had not yet ventured far from the world, so its call was loud and its sights were visible and alluring. Friends and family outside of Christ did not understand how fragile he was as a new creature. They were not aware of the spiritual struggles they were causing within him; they were simply acting like they always did and expected him to take part as he always had. Now he is gone.

Christians Did Not Care

While not every single brother and sister in Christ acted haphazardly around or toward him, the fact is, too many did. There were some who were no better than the world as they set stumbling blocks before him, tempting him to revert back to his old ways. Others failed to encourage him as a Christian, themselves forgetting how
difficult it is being only a babe in Christ. And, of course, there were those who saw him drifting, but decided it was not their business to confront him, reasoning that such would be sticking their noses in where they did not belong. Now he is gone.

He Did Not Care

Obviously, a great portion of the blame was his. Plenty of other Christians have remained faithful in spite of struggles with worldly temptations and inconsiderate brethren. Like those, he had heard the truth and had been warned about the danger of drifting. He knew the importance of spiritual growth and focusing on heavenly goals. The sad fact is he did not value his soul enough. Now he is gone.

Surely you know this person as well as I. Unfortunately, he is too well known. He is seen in practically every congregation and is neglected by virtually the same people. He began well, but now he is gone.

4006 Sunset Street; Muskogee, OK 74403

Lasting Peace

Jerry L. Martin

Peace, in the Greek, carries a meaning “to set at oneness, to make whole.” The Hebrew language uses a word shalom which expresses sincere desire for one to “fare-well in body, mind, soul and estate.” Peace is such a soothing word. It engenders hope, promises, happiness, and gives meaning as well as purpose to life. Individuals crave peace of mind. Couples desire to dwell together in peace and harmony. Families want to function and communicate in an environment of peace. Congregations endeavor to keep “the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.” Communities and even nations spend huge amounts of money to promote peace. Why is something so beautiful and so sought after so hard to achieve and maintain? The answer is that many have redefined the meaning of peace. Others are seeking it from the wrong source. Lasting peace can only be had when we recognize and accept the:

God of Peace. He is the source of lasting peace. “Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you” (2 Cor. 13:11). We waste our time if we go to any other source for peace (1 Th. 5:21-23).

Peace of God. He designed peace that lasts. “Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Phi. 4:6-7). God’s prescription for peace is outlined in Paul’s letter to the church at Colosse (Col. 3:12-17).

Peace from God. Since He is the source of peace and designed peace for us, true and lasting peace can only come from Him. “To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. 1:7). In almost every epistle Paul wrote, he expressed his prayer that Christians have the peace that comes from God (1 Cor. 1:3; 2 Cor. 1:2; Gal. 1:3; Eph. 1:3; Phi. 1:2).

Peace with God. God desires that all mankind be at peace with Him. “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. 5:1). We can have peace with God only through Jesus “for he is our peace” (Eph. 2:12-17).

Those who accept the God of peace and His terms for real peace are the only ones who will have lasting peace. When we honestly and sin-
After the exiles returned from Babylonian captivity, following the decree of Cyrus in 536 B.C., the work of rebuilding the temple was impeded by the enemies of Judah and Benjamin (Ezra 4:1). Later under Artaxerxes (Psuedo-Smerdis) construction came to a complete halt. Not until Haggai and Zechariah stirred the hearts of the people did the work resume (Ezra 5:1-2). Once again, the opposition forces arose to try and halt the rebuilding of the temple. However, we read, “But the **eye of their God** was upon the elders of the Jews, that they could not cause them to cease, till the matter came to Darius: and then they returned answer by letter concerning this **matter**” (Ezra 5:5).

While the term “eye of the Lord” is used metaphorically, we should know the Lord is constantly aware of what we say, do, or even think. The writer of Hebrews records, “Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do” (Heb. 4:13). This can be very comforting and assuring for some, yet for others, it should be very frightening and alarming. Truly, if we stopped to consider that the Lord can see and hear everything we say or do, it would cause a very real change in the behavior of many of us. The one who chooses to go to the golf course or remain in bed on Sunday morning, instead of worshiping with the saints, needs to remember the eyes of the Lord are watching. Likewise, the one who cheats on his spouse, or his taxes, or on an examination, needs to remember the eyes of the Lord are watching. Each of us would do well to remember the words of Solomon, “For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, and he pondereth all his goings” (Pro. 5:21). That includes the wicked behavior of man. Jeremiah writes, “For mine eyes are upon all their ways: they are not hid from my face, neither is their iniquity hid from mine eyes” (Jer. 16:17). Not only can God see everything we do, He also knows our hearts and what we are thinking. Of Jesus, it is said, “he knew what was in man” (John 2:25). On more than one occasion, Jesus demonstrated His ability to ponder the hearts of men. Remember when the scribes and Pharisees watched Jesus to see if He would heal a man on the Sabbath day, the Scriptures say, “But he knew their thoughts” (Luke 6:8). With this in mind, we should surely think on those things which are pure and holy as admonished by the apostle Paul (Phi. 4:8).

It is very comforting to the Christian to know the Lord has His eyes upon us. “For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers” (1 Pet. 3:12). While this speaks of God’s constant care, protection, and watchfulness, it also reminds us that He recognizes those things we do to glorify and honor Him. It is for sure that God will not only recognize those things we do on His behalf, He will also reward us.

Let us live each day with a constant awareness that the eyes of the Lord are watching. May this realization cause us to cease from sin that we may walk in a manner well-pleasing in His sight.

**The Eyes of the Lord**

*Barry M. Grider*

After the exiles returned from Babylonian captivity, following the decree of Cyrus in 536 B.C., the work of rebuilding the temple was impeded by the enemies of Judah and Benjamin (Ezra 4:1). Later under Artaxerxes (Psuedo-Smerdis) construction came to a complete halt. Not until Haggai and Zechariah stirred the hearts of the people did the work resume (Ezra 5:1-2). Once again, the opposition forces arose to try and halt the rebuilding of the temple. However, we read, “But the **eye of their God** was upon the elders of the Jews, that they could not cause them to cease, till the matter came to Darius: and then they returned answer by letter concerning this **matter**” (Ezra 5:5).

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**The Eyes of the Lord**

*Barry M. Grider*

After the exiles returned from Babylonian captivity, following the decree of Cyrus in 536 B.C., the work of rebuilding the temple was impeded by the enemies of Judah and Benjamin (Ezra 4:1). Later under Artaxerxes (Psuedo-Smerdis) construction came to a complete halt. Not until Haggai and Zechariah stirred the hearts of the people did the work resume (Ezra 5:1-2). Once again, the opposition forces arose to try and halt the rebuilding of the temple. However, we read, “But the eye of their God was upon the elders of the Jews, that they could not cause them to cease, till the matter came to Darius: and then they returned answer by letter concerning this matter” (Ezra 5:5).

While the term “eye of the Lord” is used metaphorically, we should know the Lord is constantly aware of what we say, do, or even think. The writer of Hebrews records, “Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do” (Heb. 4:13). This can be very comforting and assuring for some, yet for others, it should be very frightening and alarming. Truly, if we stopped to consider that the Lord can see and hear everything we say or do, it would cause a very real change in the behavior of many of us. The one who chooses to go to the golf course or remain in bed on Sunday morning, instead of worshiping with the saints, needs to remember the eyes of the Lord are watching. Likewise, the one who cheats on his spouse, or his taxes, or on an examination, needs to remember the eyes of the Lord are watching. Each of us would do well to remember the words of Solomon, “For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, and he pondereth all his goings” (Pro. 5:21). That includes the wicked behavior of man. Jeremiah writes, “For mine eyes are upon all their ways: they are not hid from my face, neither is their iniquity hid from mine eyes” (Jer. 16:17). Not only can God see everything we do, He also knows our hearts and what we are thinking. Of Jesus, it is said, “he knew what was in man” (John 2:25). On more than one occasion, Jesus demonstrated His ability to ponder the hearts of men. Remember when the scribes and Pharisees watched Jesus to see if He would heal a man on the Sabbath day, the Scriptures say, “But he knew their thoughts” (Luke 6:8). With this in mind, we should surely think on those things which are pure and holy as admonished by the apostle Paul (Phi. 4:8).

It is very comforting to the Christian to know the Lord has His eyes upon us. “For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers” (1 Pet. 3:12). While this speaks of God’s constant care, protection, and watchfulness, it also reminds us that He recognizes those things we do to glorify and honor Him. It is for sure that God will not only recognize those things we do on His behalf, He will also reward us.

Let us live each day with a constant awareness that the eyes of the Lord are watching. May this realization cause us to cease from sin that we may walk in a manner well-pleasing in His sight.
Sick
Please remember in your prayers:
Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Marilyn Hall,
Neva Bryant (Tandem Nursing Home, room 505), Ruby Bowman, Tim Lamb,
and Jennette Nall.

Reading/Invitation
December 31, 2003
Reading: Carl Ayliffe
Invitation: Ray Dodd
January 7, 2004
Reading: Elward Brantley
Invitation: Ray Foshee

Mark These Dates
December 28, 2003–Visitation Group 2
assignment cards handed out.
December 31, 2003–Fifth Wednesday
Singing at 7:00 PM.
January 4, 2004–Visitation Group 1
assignment cards handed out.
January 11, 2004–Visitation Group 2
assignment cards handed out.
January 11, 2004–Deacons’ meeting held
at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
January 18, 2004–Visitation Group 1
assignment cards handed out.
January 18, 2004–Elders/Deacons’
meeting held at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
January 25, 2004–Visitation Group 2
assignment cards handed out.
January 28, 2004–Adult Bible Classes
Video Series.

Pantry Items Needed
Peanut Butter and Jelly
Is Truth Relative or Objective?

David Smith

With the inception of the damnable theory of evolution, an enormous number of people have adopted the notion that truth is relative. In fact, it is estimated that nearly eighty percent of the current population subscribes to a relativistic view of truth. In matters of religion, this view is especially apparent; and, more often, it is set forth in the familiar words, “That’s just your interpretation.” These words are intended to convey the notion that truth can and does mean different things to different people. But, such a view of truth does not correspond to the one supplied by God. The Bible is objective truth, rather than subjective. And, when passages such as John 8:32, 17:17, and 1 Corinthians 1:10 are considered, it is clear that men not only can understand the Bible alike but must understand it alike. The account of Matthew 12:1-9 provides sufficient evidence of this fact. Jesus calls attention to the fact that the religious leaders had read the Word of God but had not understood the meaning (Matt. 12:3, 5, 7). No man, therefore could have dismissed his responsibility toward the truth by simply claiming that this was Jesus’ personal interpretation. There are no versions of truth; truth has but one meaning. The scathing rebuke of the Pharisees (Matt. 12:7) indicates that there is only one fixed meaning to the Sacred Text, and they had missed it. An objective book cannot carry subjective interpretation. Hence, all men can and must understand the Bible alike. And, because of the objective nature of truth, anything that is “not of the truth is a lie” (1 John 2:21). As a result, man needs to put his every
belief and practice to the test of Scripture (1 Thes. 5:21). Truth is never contradictory. If, for example, a man denied the necessity of baptism, he would be wrong (1 Pet. 3:21), and thus believe a lie. Truth is not relative/subjective; rather, it is objective and concrete.

The Church, and Present Trends

Bob Patterson

As a general rule, most parents want things to be better for their children than it was for them. As we think about this, each member must recognize that the strength of the church today will provide for the strength of the church tomorrow. Thus, there is the need for every member to be what God would have them to be and to do what God would have them to do. Every area of obligation, responsibility, and privilege in serving God must be characterized by our giving all diligence and adding to our faith “virtue; and to knowledge; and to temperance; and to patience; and to godliness; And to brotherly kindness; and to love” (2 Pet. 1:5-8). In our obeying God, and performing well in the work, worship, and service that God demands, we have every reason to expect that the next generation will be greatly benefited by our efforts.

The basis of our concern is in knowing what can happen within one generation’s time! In Judges 2:10, we read, “And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel.” Thus, knowing what can take place in one generation’s time, we had better do our very best! Let us consider, for just a moment, some current trends which we are facing. If these trends continue, we are concerned that the church in the future...

1. Will be made up of primarily older members! Obviously, because God is not a high priority, we are losing many of our young people (Ecc. 12:1). Older saints are truly a blessing, but let us remember that God has so designed His will for man that every accountable being can respond obediently, and begin to live by that inspired rule, and grow up in faithful service! As parents, let us teach our children that youth is the time to remember and to begin to serve God (Ecc. 12:1; Eph. 6:1-4; Col. 3:20; 2 Tim. 1:5; 3:14-15).

2. Will be hurting in the area of leadership! In many places the church will not have elders and will not have much prospect of having elders in the future. Sadly to say, many elders today are filled with men who either do not possess the qualifications that God has given (1 Tim. 3:1-7; Tit. 1:5-9), or they do not have any concept of the work that God has placed upon them (Tit. 1:9-11; 1 Tim. 3:2; Acts 20:28-31; Heb. 13:17; 1 The. 5:12-15; 1 Pet. 5:1-3; Eph. 4:11-16; Jam. 5:13-16). There are also many attacks against elderships by some who are unwilling to be submissive and obedient to those men charged with the watch-care of their souls (Heb. 13:17). Thus, there is not very much appeal for men to desire this work!

3. Will have little (if any) discipline! The idea of fellowship to many is absolutely meaningless, making the “discipline” that is often involved...
meaningless as well! All manner of misconduct is virtually overlooked (or tolerated) without consequences. We dare not neglect this area of responsibility (1 Cor. 5; 2 Cor. 2:1-9; Rom. 16:17-18; 2 The. 3:6, 14-15; Tit. 3:10-11). Discipline ignored for years usually means discipline ignored permanently!

4. Will have homes which are unscriptural, or if not unscriptural, homes which are virtually powerless as far as having and demonstrating a godly influence! We are already well aware of the fact that marriage-divorce-remarriage has crippled the church. As a matter of fact, I was personally told by an elder (in a congregation where I was working concerning a couple in an unscriptural relationship), “Bob, How can you be so sure? After all, the scholars disagree among themselves!” In discussing this area, Cline Paden (Sunset School of Preaching) stated to me, “I wish that Jesus had not left us with the problem of marriage, divorce, and remarriage.” Can any doubt what direction this kind of thinking will lead the church toward? Jesus, the Master Teacher, was very plain in the area of marriage, divorce, and remarriage (Mat. 5:31-32; Mark 10:11-12; Mat. 19:1-9). Beyond that problem, there are many other areas of concern relating to the family which are being ignored (Eph. 5; Eph. 6:1-4; Col. 3:8-17; Tit. 2:1-8; 1 Pet. 3:1-7).

5. Will replace New Testament truth and work, opting instead to please and entertain the membership! Should we be surprised? I mean, after all, one who is ignorant of the truth is not going to call for a return to the “old paths, where is the good way” (Jer. 6:16) because he does not know any better. Likewise, the same will be true concerning various areas of work because one must go to the Word of God in order to be “throughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Tim. 3:17). Minus the Bible, ears will be tickled (2 Tim. 4:3-4), the church will no longer “holding forth the word of life” (Phi. 2:16), fun will be the order of the day, and souls will be lost (2 Cor. 4:3)!

I sincerely hope that we will consider these points of concern. I am very much aware of the fact that what has been outlined here is characteristic of many congregations of the Lord’s church today. Brethren, we must “give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip” (Heb. 2:1).

The Church at Colosse

After Paul had given introductory remarks for the church at Colosse, he expresses thanksgiving for them. From these things we can learn some important things which should be emulated by the church today.

**They were known for their faith (Col. 1:4).** This reputation came from a steadfastness in Christ (Col. 1:5). They were actively in pursuit of the faith which would save.

**They were known because they loved the saints (Col. 1:4).** They were much like the church at Thessalonica (1 Th. 4:9-10). Their love for the brethren was a part of an active faith.

**They were productive (Col. 1:5-6).** They had been bearing fruit since the day they heard and knew the grace of God (Col. 1:6). This activity proved they were disciples (John 15:8).

**Conclusion:** This church had some qualities that would be well if implemented in the churches of today. Our work and love for the Lord as well as our brethren should be seen by the community. This work would involve exhorting the faithful (Heb. 10:24) and bringing the erring back (Gal. 6:1-2).  

*Author Unknown*
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Marilyn Hall, Neva Bryant (Tandem Nursing Home, room 505), Ruby Bowman, and Jennette Nall.

Reading/Invitation
January 7, 2004
Reading: Elward Brantley
Invitation: Ray Foshee
January 14, 2004
Reading: Jerry Caine
Invitation: Louis Herrington

Mark These Dates
January 4, 2004–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
January 11, 2004–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
January 11, 2004–Deacons’ meeting held at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
January 18, 2004–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
January 18, 2004–Elders/Deacons’ meeting held at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
January 28, 2004–Adult Bible Classes Video Series.

Pantry Items Needed
Peanut Butter and Jelly

2004 Bellview Lectures

Is Truth Relative or Objective?
David Smith

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