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**“Reverend”**

*Gary McDade*

The word “reverend” appears in the KJV and ASV in Psalm 111:9 where it is applied to God. The Psalm says, “He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant for ever: holy and reverend is his name.” The only time the word “reverend” is found in the Bible is in Psalm 111:9. According to *Brown-Driver-Brigg’s Hebrew Lexicon* “reverend” translates the Hebrew word *yare’* and may be defined “to fear, to revere, to be afraid.” The one whose name is “reverend” is identified in the text as the same one who sent redemption to His people and commanded His covenant forever, and that one is God.

A very common abuse of this word among religious people is to apply it as a title to mere men (and even women in some cases). Ten reasons are given showing the practice to be wrong.

One, it is wrong to “think of men above that which is written” (1 Cor. 4:6). The apostle said it would constitute being “puffed up one against another.”

Two, it is wrong for Christians to “exercise dominion” over other Christians. Jesus said, “Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant” (Mat. 20:25-27). The word here is *kata-kurieuo* meaning to “try to show one’s authority over” (Barclay M. Newman, p. 94). Students of
the organization of the New Testament church will also recognize the practice prohibited in relation to the role of elders who have authority over a local congregation as shepherds but who are not “lords over” God’s heritage (1 Pet. 5:3; Heb. 13:7, 17). “Lords over” translates kata-kurieuo. Christians do not “exercise dominion” or “lord it over” other Christians.

Three, it is wrong for men to assign and wear religious titles even when the motivation for doing so is esteem and respect because Jesus said, “But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant” (Mat. 23:8-10).

Four, it is wrong for man to call himself God and that is precisely what those taking God’s name, “reverend,” are guilty of doing. Second Thessalonians 2:4 reads, “Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.”

Five, it is wrong to refuse to “speak as the oracles of God” (1 Pet. 4:11). Those calling themselves by a name applied only to God are guilty of doing just that.

Six, it is wrong for men to set anything into the church not authorized by the head of the church—Jesus Christ. Paul taught that God set some in the church: Apostles, prophets, and teachers but no “reverend” (1 Cor. 12:28; cf. Eph. 4:11).

Seven, it is wrong for men to elevate their doctrines in general and the assigning and wearing of religious titles in particular to the level of God’s commandments. Jesus taught, “But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men” (Mat. 15:9).

Eight, it is wrong to refuse to abide in the doctrine of Christ by using the title “reverend.” The disciple whom Jesus love 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).

Nine, it is wrong to forsake the apostles’ doctrine by wearing the title “reverend.” Christians are to continue “stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship” (Acts 2:42). The apostles’ doctrine nowhere authorizes the use of the title “reverend.”

Ten, it is wrong to add wearing the title “reverend” to the Scriptures because the Bible warns, “For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book” (Rev. 22:18).

**Do Not Be Left Out**

*Andy Cates*

There are many denominations in the world today and not one of these is mentioned in the Bible. None of these existed in the first century, the time the New Testament was written. Consider some of the following dates when some of the modern day denominations were established:

- The Catholic Church - ca. A.D. 600.
- The Lutheran Church - A.D. 1517.
- The Baptist Church - A.D. 1522.
- The Episcopal Church - A.D. 1534.
- The Presbyterian Church - A.D. 1536.
- The Methodist Church - A.D. 1729.
The Mormon Church - A.D. 1830.
The Nazarene Church - A.D. 1907.

The word “Church” is used very loosely here, since there is only one church (Mat. 16:18; Eph. 1:22-23; 5:23). The point is clearly made in the Bible that in New Testament times there was only one church.

The church was purchased with the precious blood of Christ, which was shed on the cross. In Acts 20:28, Paul mentions to the elders of the church at Ephesus, the church which Christ “hath purchased with his own blood.”

In the Old Testament, we find prophecy of the establishment of the Lord’s church (Isa. 2:2-3; Mic. 4:1-2; Dan. 2:44; 7:13-14). These prophecies were fulfilled on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2). That is the day the Lord’s church was established. “And the lord added to the church daily such as should be saved” (Acts 2:47).

One who is a member of some other religious organization is outside of the Lord’s body, the body of baptized believers, the saved (Eph. 1:22-23; Mark 16:16). When God sent the flood, the saved were only in the ark (Gen. 7:1, 13; 1 Pet. 3:20). The entrance to the ark was sealed shut to those outside the ark (Gen. 7:16). It is not hard to picture the flood waters rising and those left outside of the ark trying to pry the door open, and screaming “let me in, let me in,” but to no avail. On the Day of Judgment, the door to heaven will be sealed shut to those outside of the body of Christ. Live faithfully for God while there is still opportunity. Do not be left out!

America Is Calling Evil...Good!!!

Harry Persaud

America is calling Evil...Good (Isa. 5:20; Mic. 3:2). From the beginning God condemns homosexuals (Gen. 19:1-29). Homosexuals and Lesbianism are increasing rapidly in our society because the general public is accepting this ungodly “lifestyle” as a way of life. This “perverted marriage” man to man and woman to woman is corrupting the minds and lives of our children and young people. Several denominational (counterfeit) Churches are now promoting and encouraging these “perverted marriages” and accepting them as active members of their (Satan’s) Churches.

It is nauseating to those who serve God and love His Word to witness these “perverted marriages” on television. The drive of woman’s liberation is to gain complete freedom and license for the homosexual lifestyle.

From the beginning: God created them male and female. Thus, the natural and proper sexual relationship is a man and woman joined together as husband and wife in marriage (Gen. 1:27-28; 2:18-24; Mat. 19:4-6; 1 Cor. 7:1-5). In is unnatural for a man to have sexual relations with another man. It is unnatural for a woman to have sexual relations with another woman. God did not make homosexuals. Their actions are a result of their own lust and evil desires (Jam. 1:13-14).

What does God’s Word say about homosexuals? They are an abomination and sin against God (1 Cor. 6:9-10; Rom. 1:26-27). However, homosexuals can be changed (1 Cor. 6:11; Acts 2:38).

If you are guilty of homosexuality, I urge you to be washed, sanctified, justified, and quit this sinful practice. We urge readers to investigate the Bible that they may be enlightened of the profound truth (John 8:32).

Via “Bulletin Briefs”
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Marilyn Hall, Neva Bryant (Tandem Nursing Home, room 505), Ruby Bowman, Jennette Nall, Leroy Johnson (Howard Johnson’s father), Faye Little (Dot Dodd’s mother), Nancy Travis (William Weekley’s daughter), and Debbie Cutler (Paul and Elward Brantley’s sister).

Reading/Invitation
January 7, 2004
Reading: Elward Brantley
Invitation: Ray Foshee
January 14, 2004
Reading: Jerry Caine
Invitation: Louis Herrington

Mark These Dates
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.

Pantry Items Needed
Canned Fruit

Address Change
Tim Lamb’s new address is: 1903 North 60th Avenue, Pensacola, FL 32506. His telephone number is 458-5419. Please update your directory.
The Church That Jesus Saw

Bill Brandstatter

One of the most familiar passages to many Christians is Matthew 16:18. There, Jesus states, “upon this rock I will build my church.” But what was the church that Jesus saw when He spoke those words? He no doubt knew about what the Old Testament writers said regarding the church. Jesus knew about the prophecy of Daniel pertaining to the kingdom. When the church came, the kingdom came. Daniel prophesied that God would set up a kingdom that would never be destroyed (Dan. 2:44).

Later, Jesus told Peter He would give to him the keys to the kingdom of heaven (Mat. 16:19). The establishment of the church was in the eternal purpose of God (Eph. 3:11). Since Jesus was with the Father in the beginning and involved in Creation, He no doubt knew all about the establishment of the church in New Testament times (John 1:1-2). Jesus read and knew about the prophesy of Isaiah pertaining to the Lord’s house being established in the top of the mountains, and all nations flowing into it (Isa. 2:2-3). Later the apostle Paul described the church as the “house of God” (1 Tim. 3:15).

Jesus knew that the name of God’s people in the church would change. Being familiar with the writings of Isaiah, He read Isaiah 62:2. Isaiah stated that the Lord would give His people a new name which the mouth of the Lord would utter. Also He knew that God’s servants would be called by another name (Isa. 65:15). That name was first used in Acts 11:26 when the disciples were first called Christians.

Jesus knew about the day that the church
would be established. Peter stated that “all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days” (Acts 3:24). Jesus being familiar with Old Testament writings, no doubt knew what those days were. He also knew what Joel wrote in Joel 2:28-32. This is what Peter quoted on the day of Pentecost. He prefaced Joel’s words by stating, “this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel” (Acts 2:14). Paul writes to the church at Ephesus and told them that the church was in the eternal purpose of God (Eph. 3:11). Jesus was there in the beginning (John 1:1-2:). He no doubt knew about the establishment of the church before He even came to earth.

We have today at our disposal even more information than Jesus had pertaining to the writings about the church. We have His words. We have the words of the apostles. Yet, with all the information available to us many still are confused regarding the church. Jesus read about the church; we can too. Will I believe what is written, accept it, and obey it? Jesus would want me to since the church belongs to Him (Mat. 16:18; Acts 20:28). We can read the same verses that Jesus read. We also have the words of Jesus Himself regarding the church that He built. In addition, we have the writings of the apostles. With all this information there should not be any problem with understanding about the church. Perhaps we need to look again at the church that Jesus saw.

313 Circle Drive; Vienna, IL 52995

The Date of Revelation and Preterist Integrity

Daniel Denham

Preterism, also called Realized Eschatology, is the doctrine that holds that New Testament prophecy finds its principal fulfilment in the events associated with the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. There are two basic forms of the doctrine: partial preterism and full (or complete) preterism. The former avers that the great bulk of New Testament prophecy finds its fulfilment in A.D. 70 specifically. The latter holds that all of New Testament prophecy has been fulfilled in the Jerusalem event. The leading proponents of the latter version among our brethren have been loosely called Kingites after the primary leader of the movement Max R. King.

On a couple of Internet websites maintained by complete preterists there has appeared articles making use of articles that I wrote some years ago on the subject of the date of the book of Revelation. Preterism, especially complete preterism, applies all of the book to the destruction of Jerusalem. In my articles I dealt with three basic dates that have been suggested for the date of the book’s penning: late, medial, and early. The pre-A.D. 70 or early date is the view held by preterists. It should be noted there are some scholars who are not preterists, however, who hold or have held to the early date, but preterism was not the deciding factor in their assessment of the evidence. In the case of preterists most often it is the concept of preterism and thus the theory itself that is the driving force in the handling of prophetic texts. There is a fanatic dedication to the novelty of the system. The peep-stone antics of its adherents boggles the mind.

In the aforementioned series, I examined briefly some of the central arguments put forth by each view of the time of the penning of Revelation, and in turn considered some of the counter-arguments and answers offered by the
respective opposing views. These articles were published in *Defender*, edited by William S. Cline, who also encouraged the research that went into their production. At the close of the series I clearly indicated that I preferred the medial date (sometime during the reign of Vespasian between A.D. 69-79) in as much as it seems to me to best answer both the textually internal and historically external evidence on the subject. It provides a better harmony of key passages and events, as well as accommodates the specifics laid out in Revelation 17 on the identity of the Beast and the Harlot City in the book.

In seeking to undermine confidence in the more commonly held late date view, which dates the penning around A.D. 95 or 96 in the reign of Domitian, preterists have especially attacked the testimony of Irenaeus as it bears upon the subject. In doing so, some have unscrupulously misrepresented my observations on Irenaeus’ statements concerning the Apocalypse. One writer partially quotes my observations on Irenaeus and seemingly ignores what matters are adduced in its favor. Some brethren have assumed that I am in full agreement with the authors of the websites that have so used my writings. I do not hold to preterism, and I find preterist thought and argumentation to be woefully lacking in substance. In fact, in all of the material I have seen from modern preterists on Irenaeus very little serious study seems to have been done by them in the matter.

I urge them to take up Irenaeus’ testimony as it has come down to us and examine carefully, rather than just giving short shrift to avoid its force. Historically it must mean something. It does have some important bearing on the subject. A more thorough examination would seem to be in order before preterists pull the burial shroud over that body of evidence! Another writer, Don Preston, in an article that appears on several websites declares, and this despite my explicit claim to hold to the medial date, that I am a late-date advocate. The attempt is to cast further doubt on the force of Irenaeus’ testimony: for if a late-date advocate has problems with it, then surely there is sufficient reason for all to doubt it! Some months ago I sent letters and e-mails to some of the sites that have carried this material in order to set the record straight and urge these folk to get it right; yet I have seen only one of my letters even posted on a website, but with the offending article by Preston still being used unchanged! I have yet to receive any letter of clarification, apology, or such like for the misrepresentation. Scholastic integrity should demand a correction of the material to reflect the view of sources more correctly, especially wherein flaws have been pointed out. Perhaps, Preston and others may address this matter forthrightly, but after waiting for several months, I am not holding my breath.

607 72nd Street; Newport News, VA 23605

A Voice from Yesteryear

Paul F. Johnston

“Whoever he is, and whatever he is, he is not a Christian who is not in the church of Christ” (Cyprian, written A.D. 250). Some have thought that such an idea came into being only when “Campbellism” arose a few short years ago. It was not Campbellism, however, which originated the conviction expressed in the above statement, but rather the teachings of the holy Scriptures as revealed by the Holy Spirit, beginning on the day of Pentecost. It is not narrow-mindedness which is responsible for this belief, but belief of what the Bible teaches.
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Marilyn Hall, Neva Bryant (Tandem Nursing Home, room 505), Ruby Bowman, Nancy Travis (William Weekley’s daughter), and Debbie Cutler (Paul and Elward Brantley’s sister).

Reading/Invitation
January 14, 2004
Reading: Jerry Caine
Invitation: Louis Herrington
January 21, 2004
Reading: Jeremy Caine
Invitation: Ray Pierce

Mark These Dates
Every Sunday—Ladies’ Bible class held at 5:00 PM, in the zone room.
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 25-30, 2004—Gospel meeting at Westside Church of Christ. Wesley Simons will be speaking. Sunday: 9:45 and 11:00 AM and 3:00 PM; Monday-Friday: 7:30 PM.
January 28, 2004—Adult Bible Classes Video Series.

Pantry Items Needed
Canned Fruit

2004 Bellview Lectures
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

Concern...A Need Today!

*Toney L. Smith*

The New Testament abounds with lessons from which we can profit concerning the church of our Lord. One of the very best examples we have concerning New Testament Christianity in action and at work is that of the church of Jerusalem. This is the very first congregation established by our Lord upon earth through the apostles (Acts 2). By studying this infant congregation of the Lord’s people, we can learn many principles that should be applied today.

The church in Jerusalem was a church that was concerned. It was concerned in their efforts to do God’s will in all things. That concern was so high, that nothing else really mattered. Great was their concern for apostolic teaching. The Scripture shows that they continued “stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine” (Acts 2:42). They were concerned for the fellowship with their brethren, and in their worship of God. Verse 42 states that they “continued...in...fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.” They were concerned with meeting the needs of others. When there was a need, many sold their possessions and gave what they had to those in need. But most outstanding of all was when opposition to the gospel came, and persecution was upon those good brethren because of their unwavering faith in Jesus, they did not give up. They did not wallow in self-pity and despair. They were scattered abroad and went everywhere preaching the Word (Acts 8:4). They grew in spite of persecution. When they were tested, they withstood the trials. James stated, “Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience”
The church will grow when we stand and past the test of our faith. And our concern for the truth and on another will add to our strength. Lessons are of no value unless they are applied. So, let us notice that the early church grew because they were dedicated to the cause of Christ, and were concerned for the lost. They did not simply offer lip-service, but were doers of that which was good and true (Jam. 1:22). When we just talk about our Christianity, we deceive ourselves and those around us. We think that we serve Christ, but in reality, we serve Satan when we do not act. Do you want to be a genuine Christian? Do you really want the church to grow? Sometimes the way is hard, but we can be encouraged by Paul: “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Phi. 4:13). There will be trials, but there is no life which offers so many blessing and rich rewards. The Lord expects the church to grow. Concern is the way to make it possible. Be concerned for your own soul and for the souls of all mankind. When we really get concerned—just watch the church grow.

If any man will serve Christ, the way is clear. You begin by taking up the cross of submission and obedience to Him. Then repent of your sins, confess Jesus as Lord, and then be baptized into Christ for the remission of your sins (Acts 2:38). It is now that you will be added to the church of Christ (Acts 2:47). You are now to be faithful (Rev. 2:10).

Concern is a vital part of the Christian’s life.

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God-Pleasing Wives

Tom Moore

The proclamation Jeremiah set forth in his day is also true of ours, “A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land” (Jer. 5:30). Let me inform you of some astonishing and horrible news. There are over 1,000,000 divorces per year in America. It has been said that only one out of six marriages today work in the sense of two enjoying being together. It has been documented that 70% of teenage marriages end in divorce within five years. The eventual divorce rate of teenage marriages is 85%! These are startling statistics, and it is of utmost importance to realize that God hates divorce (Mal. 2:16!)

The major reason there are so many divorces in our world today is that husbands and wives do not know or do not fulfill their scriptural obligations in the marriage relationship. Do you know what your duty to your spouse is, your God-given duty? In this article we will explore some of the Bible-given responsibilities of a wife toward her husband.

Wives must love their husbands. Paul instructs older women to “teach the young women...to love their husbands” (Tit. 2:4). This would seem to go without saying, but do not be fooled. It is interesting and very informative that Paul would say the older women need to teach younger women how to love. Most young women would say, “I know how to love my husband.” But love in youth deals mostly with sex-appeal and as the years march on that will change. Young women need to learn to love the inner man—not the outer man which will grow old and less pleasing to the eye.

Wives are to be in subjection to their husbands. “Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord” (Eph. 5:22). When Paul called on wives to submit he gave two reasons: (1) the Lordship of Christ, and (2) the headship of man (Eph. 5:22-23). If a women is truly
submitting to the Lord, she will have no difficulty being submissive unto her husband. This does not make the women a slave or a doormat to be stepped on, but means she will respond voluntarily, positively, and joyfully to her husband’s leadership.

Wives are obligated to care for their husband’s needs. Again, Paul instructs the older women to “teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children” (Tit. 2:5). It is very clear that women have been given charge of “keeping the home.” Paul also says women are to “guide [manage, NKJV] the house” (1 Tim. 5:14). The virtuous women, described in detail in Proverbs 31:10-31, gives more insight into this privilege and obligation.

Wives are to be faithful to their marriage vows. “Let marriage be had in honor among all, and let the bed be undefiled: for fornicators and adulterers God will judge” (Heb. 13:4—ASV). Solomon gives the same warning in this fashion, “Drink waters out of thine own cistern, and running waters out of thine own well” (Pro. 5:15). A woman must give herself sexually only to her husband, otherwise the marriage is defiled in adultery.

Wives should not keep themselves sexually away from their husbands as clearly discussed in 1 Corinthians 7:3-5:

Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.

This is one area that has caused many a marriage to falter. Also, sexual relations between a husband and a wife are not to be used to manipulate one another.

Wives must be good Christian examples to their husbands. Peter declared, “wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; While they behold your chaste conversation [conduct—NKJV] coupled with fear” (1 Pet. 3:1-2). Setting good examples within the marriage relationship is very important, especially if your spouse is not a Christian. Unbelieving husbands can be won to Christ by your godly examples, and believing husbands will be strengthened through the same means.

Wives are to respect their husbands. “Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord” (1 Pet. 3:6). Sarah is one singled out as an example of subjection to one’s husband, and as an example of showing respect. Wives should hold their husbands in the highest esteem. They should not talk down or belittle their husband in any way—especially in the presence of others. Wives should be proud of their man, and will want others to know it. “Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband” (Eph. 5:33).
Sick
Please remember in your prayers:
Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Marilyn Hall,
Neva Bryant (Tandem Nursing Home, room 505), Lucille Staples, (Baptist Hospital, room 290), Ruby Bowman,
Phyllis Brantley, Nancy Travis (William Weekley’s daughter), Maybelle Brown (Dot Brantley’s mother), and Debbie Cutler (Paul and Elward Brantley’s sister).

Reading/Invitation
January 21, 2004
Reading: Jeremy Caine
Invitation: Ray Pierce
January 28, 2004
Reading: Andrew Hatcher
Invitation: Fred Stancliff

Mark These Dates
Every Sunday—Ladies’ Bible class held at 5:00 PM, in the zone room.
January 25, 2004—Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
January 25-30, 2004—Gospel meeting at Westside Church of Christ. Wesley Simons will be speaking. Sunday: 9:45 and 11:00 AM and 3:00 PM; Monday-Friday: 7:30 PM.
January 28, 2004—Adult Bible Classes Video Series.
February 1, 2004—Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
February 8, 2004—Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.

Pantry Items Needed
Canned Fruit
An Apostolic Admonition

Gary McDade

An admonition is an earnest indication of duties or obligations that is presented in a gentle or friendly manner. The apostle Paul had been over some tough terrain with the Christians at Corinth before he gave them “an apostolic admonition.” He wrote, “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Cor. 15:58). The three points he presented in this one statement were intended to lift the brethren above the pitfalls of the past and instill confidence in them for a faithful future.

“Be Ye Steadfast”

The word “steadfast” is from edaios and also carries the meaning “firm.” It also appears in connection with the Christian father who is resolute regarding his virgin daughter remaining unmarried. He “stands firm” on the point. Or, as the KJV says, “Nevertheless he that standeth steadfast in his heart, having no necessity, but hath power over his own will, and hath so decreed in his heart that he will keep his virgin, doeth well” (1 Cor. 7:37). (The ASV placed the word “daughter” after “virgin” within the text on this verse.)

Another place in the New Testament where the word appears is Colossians 1:23. Paul wrote here, “If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister.” The English word “settled” is used as the meaning in
Therefore, the first part of the admonition Paul gave, urges steadfastness, firmness, and being settled. The specific areas of obligation where this would apply according to the context of the book in which they appear are (1) unity, (2) purity, (3) respectability when resolving differences among brethren, (4) responsibility in marriage, (5) separation from worldly practices, (6) reverence in worship, (7) reception of the miraculously confirmed Word of God, (8) edification of the resurrection, and (9) gracious living (cf., 1 Cor. 1-16).

"Be Ye Unmoveable"

The “unmoveable” or “immovable” is from ametakinetos. (The word is found only here in the New Testament.) The Christian’s disposition toward the foregoing list of duties is additionally described as “immovable.” The nuance of meaning contrasting “steadfast” from “immovable” is brought to light in the English definition of the word “immovable.” “Incapable of being moved” is what this word means. In addition, the dictionary mentions this in regard to an emotional stance, that is “not capable of being moved emotionally.” The application of this admonition to a Christian’s life obviously requires a very high degree of determination and dedication. Paul expressed a marvelous disappointment in others for being moved so quickly from their spiritual moorings. It was to the Galatians that he wrote, “I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel” (Gal. 1:6). It is possible for Christians to be moved, and it is also possible for a Christian to determine to remain “immovable.” The Bible says, “Be ye steadfast, unmovable.”

"Be Ye Always Abounding"

The area in which Christians are admonished to be “always abounding” is in the work of the Lord. “Abounding” is from perisseuo meaning, “cause to increase or abound; provide in abundance.” (The word appears 39 times in the New Testament.) The lexicon says in 1 Corinthians 15:58 it means “to be outstanding, be prominent, excel.” Therefore, Christians are admonished to “be outstanding or prominent or excelling” in the work of the Lord. The Lord Himself said, “For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Mat. 5:20). A careful and prayerful inventory should be taken by every Christian on this penetrating point.

Conclusion

The motivation for rising to meet the strenuous demands of this apostolic admonition is given at the end of the passage: “forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.” The labor is not empty or a meaningless effort. It will yield a rich reward. Earlier Paul assured these Christians: “For we are labourers together with God: ye are God’s husbandry, ye are God’s building” (1 Cor. 3:9). Imagine the impact heeding this apostolic admonition could have on the church today, the good that would be generated,
the souls that would be saved, the spiritual strength that would be sustained, and the glorious goal that would be gained.

Sources

Repentance

*W. Kent Graham*

God, and preachers of His Word, has long called for men to repent of their sins. Do you know what it means to repent? Our salvation is dependent upon biblical repentance, and try as we might, we cannot circumvent God’s will! Considering the necessity of humbly submitting to all of God’s commands, and the senselessness of trying to “sneak around” His commands, men with good hearts will want to know how God defines repentance, and what He expects from His penitent believers. It is the only way that we can know with certainty that we have really repented!

Repentance is from a word in the original Bible language which means, “an after-thought, or a change of mind.” In the New Testament, the concept of repentance primarily pertains to “repentance from sin” and carries with it the idea of “turning from sin and turning to God.” John the Baptist preached that God requires His penitent believers to “Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance” (Luke 3:8). The man who truly repents will have change of mind which causes him to turn from his sinful action. This is the only way to “bring forth fruits worthy of repentance.” Repentance is brought on by a contrite heart as an individual realizes that he has sinned against God, creating what the Bible calls “godly sorrow” (2 Cor. 7:10). The one who expresses and experiences genuine biblical repentance will obey Christ’s command to “go, and sin no more” (John 8:11).

Instead of genuine repentance, many people experience “worldly sorrow.” This is a sorrow for sins which results wholly from worldly considerations, and never leads to salvation (2 Cor. 7:10). “Worldly sorrow” leads one away from God, as he obstinately refuses to seek God on His terms. He will try to rationalize, excuse, or explain away his sins which remain after he offers what he thinks is repentance; but he has not truly repented until he experiences a change of heart which causes him to cease from the sinful activity.

A thief who continues to steal, a fornicator who continues in his immorality, a drinker of alcohol who continues to imbibe, a user of tobacco who continues to smoke or chew, and a false teacher who continues to teach error, are all examples of those who cannot say that they have repented of their sins. They have not changed at all, and they continue in their sin! God demands true repentance which always results in a reformation of life as we bring our beliefs and actions into harmonious conformity to God’s most precious Holy Word!

3082 Andrea Lane
Corpus Christi, TX 78414
Sick
Please remember in your prayers:
Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Marilyn Hall,
Neva Bryant (Tandem Nursing Home, room 505), Ruby Bowman, Phyllis
Brantley, Lucille Staples (Baptist Hospital, room 490), Peggy Crowe, Faye Little (Dot
Dodd’s mother), Maybelle Brown (Dot
Brantley’ mother, Sacred Heart Hospital, room 508), Nancy Travis (William
Weekley’s daughter), and Barbra Busch (Bill Busch’s mother).

Reading/Invitation
January 28, 2004
Reading: Andrew Hatcher
Invitation: Fred Stancliff
February 4, 2004
Reading: Daniel Hatcher
Invitation: Henry Born

Mark These Dates
Every Sunday—Ladies’ Bible class held at
5:00 PM, in the zone room.
February 1, 2004–Visitation Group 1
assignment cards handed out.
February 8, 2004–Visitation Group 2
assignment cards handed out.
February 8, 2004–Deacons’ meeting at
5:00 PM, in room 7.
February 15, 2004–Visitation Group 1
assignment cards handed out.
February 15, 2004–Elders/Deacons’
meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
February 22, 2004–Visitation Group 2
assignment cards handed out.

Pantry Items Needed
Canned Fruit
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

Needs of Children

Ben Wright

The pediatrician to whom we take our young son is a good doctor, one who always takes time to explain to us the amazing development of our child, Braden. At every visit we receive a paper which includes his length and weight, among other things. One feature it contains is entitled “Things Baby Needs”—a list of several things that parents must provide in order for children of his age to grow and develop properly. They are very basic points, but things that are so vital for the growth of every child. It is interesting to notice that, in a spiritual sense, our heavenly Father has provided everything on this list for His children.

Talk to them. Communication from parents to children is vital in helping mold them into adults.

In a similar way, we need our Father to talk to us—a need which He has graciously provided in His inspired Word (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Throughout all stages of history, God has talked with His chosen people in various ways (Heb. 1:1-2). He speaks to us now though His Word, and He wants us to listen to Him daily. How would we, as parents, feel if we went days without talking to our children, or if we talked, but our children did not listen? It would certainly be a terrible feeling. It must also hurt God tremendously when we rarely take time to listen to Him speak to us.

Listen to them. I love listening to my young son. I cannot understand anything he says, but he still tries to communicate to me.

God wants to listen to His children. Many passages illustrate God’s desire to hear us (1 Thes.
5:17; 1 John 3:22; Luke 18:1). He has even promised that anything we ask will be given if it is according to His will (1 John 5:14-15). How would we feel if our children would not speak to us for extended periods of time? It must certainly hurt God when we, out of negligence or apathy, fail to speak to Him.

Hold them. There is not a greater feeling for parents than to hold your children up close and feel their warmth and realize how much you love them and they love you.

For children of God, we are held in His hand, and no one is powerful enough to remove us (John 10:28-30). It is shameful that this passage has been so distorted and misinterpreted by those who teach that one can never fall from grace. This passage in no way teaches this incredibly false doctrine. It does, however, show us the great love God has for us, and His desire to keep us protected from Satan and all his worldly charms. The only thing that can remove us from God’s hands is our desire to leave. All parents cringe when they hear about a child who leaves home prematurely. It is terrible to think about a child’s separating himself from the loving care of parents. How sad it is for children of God to give up the love and protection of the Father for the things of this world.

Love them. What a travesty it is to hear about those who neglect their children. Children must be loved in order to develop properly.

God loves us so much (John 3:16), demonstrating His care so vividly that we must recognize there is nothing He could have done to have shown it more clearly. He wants all to be saved (1 Tim. 2:4) and has done everything to make that possible. Hearing stories about the way some people treat their children is heart-rending. There is no greater crime that one could commit than to abuse a child. God loves us all and desires the best for each of us.

God truly cares for us—His children—providing everything that healthy children need. The decision now, is ours—we must choose whether or not to take advantage of these provisions.

Carbon Hill, AL

God, Are You Listening?

Jason R. Roberts

“Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think” (Eph. 3:20).

Someone has well said, “Prayer is the pipeline of our faith to God.” What a blessed privilege it is for God’s children to access the throne of God and to know that He is ever near to hear us in our time of need.

For some, it may seem otherwise. They, at times, feel like God is far away—distant and seemingly uninterested in answering their prayers. Their prayers begin on earth and seem to never leave the ground to heaven above. They often wonder if God is really listening. Is He? God, are you listening to the prayers of your children?

Notice how our verse addresses this question. First of all, the verse says that God is able to do something. What is He able to do? He is able to do what we ask or think. Second, He is able to do all that we ask or think. Third, He is able to do above all that we ask or think. Fourth, He is able to do abundantly above all that we ask or think. Fifth, He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think!

Paul, in writing by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, could have just penned that God was able to do what we ask or think, but he did not. The
intensity behind his words cannot be over-
looked—they are there for a purpose. God wants
His children to be overwhelmingly convinced
that He is available in our time of need—never
doubting His promise to answer our prayers.

What a marvelous privilege it is to pray to our
heavenly Father, knowing that He is able to do
exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or

The Toxins in Cigarettes

Jimmy Ferguson

There are over 4000 chemicals/compounds
found in tobacco. The U.S. Department of Health
says that many of these compounds make cig-
arettes deadly. Here are eleven of the most toxic.
Keep in mind that each time you smoke, this is
what goes into your body.

Acetone—A flammable, colorless liquid used
as a solvent. It is one of the active ingredients
in nail polish remover. The tobacco industry refuses
to say how acetone gets into cigarettes.

Ammonia—A colorless, pungent gas. The
tobacco industry says that it adds flavor, but
scientists have discovered that ammonia helps
you absorb more nicotine—keeping you hooked
on smoking.

Arsenic—A silvery-white very poisonous
chemical element. This deadly poison is used to
make insecticides, and it is also used to kill
gophers and rats.

Benzene—A flammable liquid obtained from
coal and tar and used as a solvent. This cancer-
causing chemical is used to make everything
from pesticides to detergent to gasoline.

Benzoapyrene—A yellow crystalline car-
icigenic hydrocarbon found in coal and cig-
arette smoke. It is one of the most potent cancer-
causing chemicals in the world.

Butane—A hydrocarbon used as a fuel.

Highly flammable butane is one of the key
ingredients in gasoline.

Cadmium—A metallic chemical element
used in alloys. This toxic metal causes damage to
the liver, kidneys, and the brain; and stays in
your body for years.

Formaldehyde—A colorless pungent gas use
in solutions as a disinfectant and preservative. It
causes cancer; damages your lungs, skin, and
digestive system. Embalmers use it to preserve
dead bodies.

Lead—A heavy bluish-gray metallic chem-
ical element. This toxic heavy metal causes lead
poisoning, which stunts your growth, and dam-
ages your brain. It can easily kill you.

Propylene Glycol—A sweet hygroscopic vis-
cous liquid used as antifreeze and as a solvent in
brake fluid. The tobacco industry claims they add
it to keep cheap “reconstituted tobacco” from
drying out, but scientists say it aids in the de-

civery of nicotine (tobacco’s active drug) to the
brain.

Turpentine—A colorless volatile oil. Tur-
pentine is very toxic and is commonly used as a
paint thinner.

Read also 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, Matthew
5:13-16, and 1 Thessalonians 5:22.

Copied
Sick

Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Marilyn Hall, Neva Bryant (Tandem Nursing Home, room 510), Ruby Bowman, Lucille Staples (Baptist Hospital, room 490), Ray Dodd (heart surgery scheduled for February 9), Faye Little (Dot Dodd’s mother), Nancy Travis (William Weekley’s daughter), Maybelle Brown (Dot Brantley’s mother), and Barbra Busch (Bill Busch’s mother).

Reading/Invitation

February 4, 2004
Reading: Daniel Hatcher
Invitation: Henry Born

February 11, 2004
Reading: Bryan Loy
Invitation: Paul Brantley

Mark These Dates
Every Sunday—Ladies’ Bible class held at 5:00 PM, in the zone room.
February 8, 2004—Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
February 8, 2004—Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
February 15, 2004—Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
February 15, 2004—Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
February 22, 2004—Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
February 25, 2004—Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 PM.

Pantry Items Needed
Vegetable and Chicken Soups
Do Not Disturb

Jim Ward

A while back, as Janie and I checked into a motel after a hard day’s travel, I notice several “Do Not Disturb” signs hanging on door knobs up and down the hall. A lot of people, I thought, have that sign hanging on their hearts and minds. They do not want to hear the gospel; they do not want to change their nice, tidy, little lives.

Do Not Disturb!

Churches get letters and calls from people asking them to remove their names from the bulletin mailing list. Frequently they say something like: “We have our own church; so we do not really want a paper from another church.” It is funny how often this happens after the printing of an article on a controversial Bible doctrine such as baptism or denominationalism or a hot moral issue (often with social and political implications) such as abortion or homosexuality.

Do Not Disturb. My mind is already made up.

Then there are the worldly or secular people. “No,” they say, “I am not interested in studying the Bible. I have got too many other things to do.” Or they say, “I have heard that you think you are the only ones going to heaven.” Or as they often put it, “Would I have to give up (here they name a favorite thing) if I became a Christian?” I have had folks ask me about everything from beer drinking, to wearing makeup, to playing tuba in a German polka band—you name it. My usual reply is, “Would you not be willing to give up whatever is necessary to please God and go to heaven?” In essence, many people Reply, “Do Not Disturb.”

Unhappily, I run up against the same barred
doors among unfaithful Christians. They have quit worshiping God and studying His Word. They have gone back to loving the world again, and they have hung a Do Not Disturb over their hearts. They reject offers to study with them. Some of them would not even talk with us over the phone. We try to set up appointments with them only to hear excuse after pitiful excuse. Many of them we can catch only by dropping in on them unannounced. It is sad when God’s children, who “have escaped the pollution of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,” become “again entangled in them and overcome.” This “latter end is worse for them than the beginning” (2 Pet. 2:20).

But saddest of all are those who remain nominally faithful, but will not get vitally and fruitfully involved in God’s work. They talk a good game. They attend most services, love to sing, and “Amen” all the prayers. They tell the preacher, “Good sermon, brother,” and then do exactly nothing about it.

When someone preachers on personal work, they respond: “Tell ‘em preacher. But you know I just cannot remember all those Scriptures. Anyway, that is your job preacher.” Do Not Disturb.

After a lesson on giving, it is “Do you not know how tight things are? Why, the bottom may fall out any day now.” Do Not Disturb.

Let someone teach on disciplining wayward brethren, and it is: “Let somebody else do that; I am not very good at talking to people,” or “Do you not know that it is just going to cause trouble?” Do Not Disturb.

If the elders demand some real Bible study, some hard digging, again and still it is “I do not have the time to study like that. I have to earn a living, you know.” Do Not Disturb.

Some preachers hang Do Not Disturb signs over their hearts. They do not want to get involved when a couple has marital problems (almost always stemming from sin), so they huff and puff about not being junior marriage counselors. Meanwhile, the couple continues in marital misery, with possibly one or both of them on the way to hell because of the sin that caused their problems in the first place.

Some preachers use their work as an excuse to abandon their families. They do not want to give themselves too deeply to their wives and children, so they say, “I have got another meeting tonight, or I have got to play golf to unwind, Do Not Disturb.

Web Site

If you have not visited our Internet web site recently take time now to do so. Sermons presented by Michael Hatcher, preacher for the Bellview congregation, are available in Adobe Acrobat (PDF) format. The 1970, 1972-2004 Defender issues can be viewed in PDF format. The 1997-2004 issues are also viewable in html format. We have recently created a web page for the Beacon. The 2004 issues can also be viewed in PDF format. Our missionary, Lee Davis, has his newsletter posted on the missionary web page. And finally, a web page has been set up for the late Ira Y. Rice, Jr.’s 27-lesson Basic Bible Course. This course is in PDF format and can be viewed by lesson or as the entire course. All of the files on the web site can be downloaded to your computer. The 2001-2003 Bellview Lectures can be viewed on the lectures web page. We encourage everyone who has access to the Internet to make use of the information available.

http://www.bellviewcoc.com
or...” **Do Not Disturb.** This is a subtle sin, because we can do it in the name of the Lord—or can we?

**Do Not Disturb** is a dangerous sign to hang over our hearts. At a motel it keeps the maid from rousing us out of our early morning snooze. But in life, it can keep out Christ, our family, and the neighbors we are to love. Now ask yourself: Have I hung a **Do Not Disturb** sign over any part of my life?

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**“One of These Days”**

**Danny Box**

Larry and I have known each other since we were little kids. Through grade school and junior high we have been super close friends. Hard to believe now that we are sophomores in high school. I was baptized two years ago. I am really concerned about him ‘cause he goes to this denomination where they hardly ever mention the Bible. He said something about receiving Jesus as his Savior once when he got scared and prayed. How can he believe that stuff, does he not know what Mark 16:16 says? I need to sit down with him and show him what the Bible says about salvation and the church. One of these days I am going try to do that.

Finally, tonight Larry and I are going to walk across that stage and get our diploma from technical school. All that hard work has paid off, and we are ready to take on the world. It really bothers me, though, that Larry is now caught up in a religious group where anything goes at their services. I cannot stand to think of my friend being lost. I need to sit down with him and show him from the New Testament what Jesus says about worshiping in spirit and truth. One of these days I am going try to do that.

Larry and I live in a dream world. After all these years of being friends, we now have been working along side one another in the same company for twenty years. We live on the same road, our families spend all of their free time together, and our kids play on the same ball teams. How much better could it get? But I am still troubled about Larry. He and his family are real devoted to their denomination. What is wrong with him, can he not see that denominations are just man made? I need to sit down with him and show him what God says about the church that Jesus purchased with His blood. Yeah, one of these days I am going try to do that.

Larry lived fifteen more years after his heart attack. But the sad news that I am trying to cope with is today I attended Larry’s funeral. I do not remember a thing the preacher said at the cemetery. All that kept going through my mind was Larry standing before the judgment seat of Christ. Larry is not in Christ, because he never obeyed the gospel. I know that. I have always known that. Oh, if only I had opened my mouth to teach him the Gospel! I just kept putting it off and putting it off. One of these days I going to try to teach him... No, no I will not. He is gone from this life and I never will have another opportunity to teach my friend.

God said, “He that winneth souls is wise” (Pro. 11:30). It is not enough simply to say to ourselves: “One of these days I am going to try to do that.” Let us take our Bibles and go to work teaching the lost, now!

**Deceased**

adapted from an article written by Roger Campbell, Cleveland, TN
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Marilyn Hall, Neva Bryant (Tandem Nursing Home, room 510), Ruby Bowman, Lucille Staples, Ray Dodd, Faye Little (Dot Dodd’s mother), Nancy Travis (William Weekley’s daughter), and Barbra Busch (Bill Busch’s mother).

Restored
Ray Dodd was restored to Christ on February 8, 2004. Please keep him in your prayers.

Reading/Invitation
February 11, 2004
Reading: Bryan Loy
Invitation: Paul Brantley
February 18, 2004
Reading: Jim Loy
Invitation: Bill Busch

Mark These Dates
Every Sunday—Ladies’ Bible class held at 5:00 PM, in the zone room.
February 15, 2004—Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
February 15, 2004—Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
February 22, 2004—Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
February 25, 2004—Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 PM, in the auditorium.

Pantry Items Needed
Vegetable and Chicken Soups
Homosexual Marriages

Tom Wacaster

Times have certainly changed since my childhood days. In some ways that change has been for the better. Socially, medically, technologically, and educationally, we enjoy a far greater standard of living than did our grandparents. But with the advancements in our living conditions there has come a corresponding collapse in our moral living. One area that has suffered from this moral collapse has to do with the family. In the 1950s we saw an increase in the divorce rate, an increase that has yet to peak. In the 1980s society gave up on marriage and began to move toward live-in partners. Universities sponsored co-ed dormitories, with little if any supervision of what goes on after classroom hours. The 1990s saw the push for homosexual rights. Every imaginable attempt has been made to make the vile practice of homosexuality look legitimate. “You were born that way,” or “What the homosexual does in the privacy of his home will not affect you,” were the initial volleys that were fired over the bow of the societal norms. Like the proverbial camel that was allowed to push his nose through the door, eventually the entire camel has managed to push his way into the tent. Government leaders have coddled, cooed, and compromised to the point that the very fabric of our society is now threatened. What started in Vermont, found acceptance in Hawaii, and has now been declared constitutional in the high courts of Massachusetts. We are speaking of the acceptance and legitimization of homosexual marriages. Our Supreme Court cracked the door more than 30 years ago when it legitimizes...
abortion on the grounds that what one does in private in no way affects society. The Supreme Court overthrew the Texas anti-sodomy law on this same flimsy argument of personal privacy. My friends, if this camel is allowed to get into the tent, then I humbly suggest to you, “there goes the tent!” Consider the following concerning homosexual marriages.

First and foremost, homosexual marriage is completely contrary to God’s divine law. Marriage was instituted and defined in Genesis 2:24: “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.” This first marriage serves as a pattern for successive marriages, as implied by Jesus in Matthew 19:4-6. If homosexuality is condemned in the Scripture (and it is, Rom. 1:26-27; Gen. 19:1ff) what makes us think that God will smile on the union of two homosexuals? He will not!

Second, homosexual marriage harms marriage in general. Proponents of gay marriage frequently argue that allowing for it would have no affect whatsoever on the institution of marriage itself. Former Harvard anthropologist Stanley Kurtz, writing in the *Weekly Standard*, reports on various European studies that challenge this argument. Kurtz reports that in those countries where full homosexual marriage rights have been granted, marriage and indeed concrete family structures have been considerably weakened. Mr. Kurtz writes that same-sex marriage has locked in and reinforced an existing Scandinavian trend toward the separation of marriage and parenthood...instead of encouraging a society-wide return to marriage...gay marriage has driven home the message that marriage itself is outdated, and that virtually any family form, including out-of-wedlock parenthood, is acceptable.

Third, homosexual marriage fosters immorality in society in other areas. Sweden, Denmark, and Norway—all of whom have incorporated full homosexual marriage rights over the past ten to fifteen years—have seen jumps in out-of-wedlock births since they legalized homosexual marriage. This deterioration of the traditional family structure has ushered in an era where the majority of children are born outside of marriage. What makes us think that legalization of homosexual marriage is going to strengthen the family? To the contrary, it will weaken the family unit and usher in more radical departures from the biblical definition of marriage. Is it any wonder that some sociologists are declaring that marriage is an outmoded, outdated, and obsolete institution?

Fourth, homosexual marriages give a false impression of respectability of homosexual unions. I wonder in my own mind, why does the homosexual even bother with marriage? What do they hope to accomplish if it is not to give some sense of respectability to this sorted and sinful behavior? If the homosexual rebels and ridicules God’s law on homosexuality, what makes us think they respect God’s law concerning marriage, commitment, fidelity, etc. that comes with the union of two people in marriage?

Finally, homosexual marriage is not just a political issue; it is a moral issue. In fact, it is first and foremost a moral issue. Liberals have attempted to move the issue of homosexual rights and now homosexual marriage off the moral table and classify it as a “civil rights” issue: purely political. But the child of God realizes that this is a moral issue. What is shocking is that some members of the body of Christ will support, encourage, and stand by political candidates that have made it known that they favor homosexual activity and/or marriage.

Dear friend, homosexual marriage runs contrary to all that is right and decent. It is a slap in
the face of God. The homosexual community is laughing at God-fearing people in this country. Let us not be taken in by this devil’s lie that homosexual marriage will not affect your or me. To believe the lie is deadly.

P.O. Box 283; Talco, TX 75487

Hard Times
Bill Smith

The other day I was sitting and talking with a friend who had been a member of the church where I preached at more than 30 years ago. We talked about “those good-ole days.” But suddenly the smile on my friend’s face vanished and was replaced by a deep frown. “But you know, it’s not like it was then,” he said. “We would invite our friends to study the Bible with us, and they would. They would obey the Gospel and become workers in the church. Now, people think you are some kind of self-righteous nut if you try to show them the truth,” he continued.

He was right. These are hard times for the Lord’s church. I feel for young preachers today who face a hostile audience, often even in their own congregations. Religion is still popular, but the truth has suffered at the hands of a nation that has come to believe everything is relative. No wonder even men who once preached the truth have given up and joined the rest of those who submit to the wishes of the people.

But hard times are nothing new to the Lord’s church. It was conceived in a world that was full of religions which men had created. But, when people realized that the philosophies of men did not meet their real needs, they returned to the Lord’s church which had preserved the truth for them.

People have rejected the truth for the lifestyle that Hollywood has expounded for years. The family has been all but destroyed. Sexual perversion has become normal. Violence and hatred run rampant. Children are abused. Drug addition is increasing rapidly. There is mass murder in the workplace, the schoolroom, on the streets, and in the home. Someday people will awaken and begin to search for a better way. The Lord’s church must be there to show them the truth when they do awaken!

So buckle up and hang on. Take the beating the world is giving the Lord’s church right now. If we give up and go along with the crowd, who will be there when the crowd wants the truth again? We have not shed our blood (yet), but we have the truth because others were willing to die for it. We must not let them down. We must not let the lost down. We must not let the Lord down. Better days are coming.
Sick

Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Marilyn Hall, Neva Bryant (Tandem Nursing Home, room 510), Ruby Bowman, Ray Dodd (Sacred Heart Hospital, CCU), Lucille Staples, Ray and Marge Williams, Faye Little (Dot Dodd’s mother), Nancy Travis (William Weekley’s daughter), Barbra Busch (Bill Busch’s mother), and Roy Mathis (Hampton, VA).

Reading/Invitation

February 25, 2004
Reading: Gabe Moore
Invitation: Bill Cline
March 3, 2004
Reading: Shelby Nall
Invitation: Bill Crowe

Mark These Dates

Every Sunday—Ladies’ Bible class held at 5:00 PM, in the zone room.
February 22, 2004—Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
February 25, 2004—Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 PM, in the auditorium.
March 7, 2004—Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
March 14, 2004—Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
March 14, 2004—Deacons meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
March 21, 2004—Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.

Pantry Items Needed

Vegetable and Chicken Soups
In One Generation

Toney L. Smith

Joshua’s days were glorious ones. He was a minister to Moses, servant to God, captain of the host of Israel, and conqueror of Canaan. The people were faithful during his time (Jud. 2:7). Then there arose an unfaithful generation (Jud. 2:10). Things can change very quickly. If children are allowed to grow up without God’s Word, the same thing will occur in the Twenty-first Century. Apostasy can and does happen. It happened to the church at Ephesus (Eph. 2:1; Rev. 2:4; cf., Gal. 5:4; 1 Tim. 5:12). But in Judges 2 we find certain things which brought about apostasy.

From our text we see that the first step to apostasy was their spiritual illiteracy (v. 10), this ignorance of God’s Word has and will bring a great fall to many people. It is said that the Bible is the best selling book of all time. The American Bible Society sold 70 million Bibles in 2000. I wonder just how many are read and studied. Of course we know that there is no way to know God without the Word, and one cannot please God without knowing Him (Heb. 11:6; 2 The. 1:8). Someone has said, and rightfully so, “we have never before gone to worship so often and studied so little.” Spiritual illiteracy is rampant today. The Word must be studied so as to be “furnished unto all good works” (2 Tim. 3:15-17). If we are not really careful, we too will raise a generation which know not the Lord and His Word. Keep your Bibles open and we will not find the doors of heaven closed.

From Judges 2 we also find that apostasy came because the abandoned God. “They
forsook the LORD God of their fathers” (v. 12). When we raise a generation of children without
the Word, we have serious problems because
they will abandon the God made known therein.
Safety is found when we stay near to God. James
4:8 states that we are to “Draw nigh to God, and
he will draw nigh to you.” God never abandons
us, it is our decision to move away from Him
(Isa. 59:1-2). We can help save a generation by
teaching and showing our allegiance to our
Father in heaven.

The people went into apostasy also because
they degenerated into idolatry (vv. 12-13).
Notice that they “followed other gods, of the
gods of the people that were round about them”
(v. 12). Sin is progressive. It begins with thought
and progresses into action. As Israel began to
fellowship the people around them they began to
act like those idolatrous nations. We are warned
against such (Rom. 12:1-2; 1 Th. 5:22; 1 Pet.
2:11). A generation can be saved if we will
practice the age old principle of running from all
evil circumstances (Pro. 5:4; 14:16).

Apostasy brings about the anger of the Lord
(vv. 14-15). It happened to Israel when there
arose a generation that knew not God. We face
the same problem today. We must not raise
a generation that rebels against God and His Word.
It can be overcome with the disposition of Joshua
when he said, “as for me and my house, we will
serve the LORD” (Jos. 24:15). Apostasy must be
avoided because there is a heaven to gain and a
hell to avoid. May God be our guide as we raise
our families. If we will allow Him to rule in our
lives, generations will be saved.

517 Gaylord Road; Dresden, TN 38225

Happiness and Harmony in the Home

Wendell Winkler

They had been married for decades. They
were a source of inspiration to all who knew
them. They were excellent examples of true love.
The precious wife observed: “I cannot remember
the time when I have been unhappy since my
wedding day. Although for a few years I had to
use a clothing box for a dining table, I was happy
with what I had.” How beautiful! Our homes
should be a haven and an early heaven. A happy
home is the bud of which heaven is the blossom.
Yes, a happy home is a foretaste of glory divine.

Henry Ward Beecher said, “A man’s house
should be on the hilltop of cheerfulness and
serenity, so high that no shadows rest upon it and
where the morning comes so early and the even-
ing taries so late that the day has twice as many
golden hours as those of other men. He is to be
pitted whose house is in some valley of grief

between the hills, with the longest nights and the
shortest day. Home should be the center of joy,
equatorial and tropical.” However, instead of the
home being a place of happiness and early
heaven, many homes are caldrons of strife, tur-
moil, quarreling, ill will, suspicion, jealousy and
fault-finding. How different does God desire it?
He, rather, desires that our homes be places of
peace, tranquility, love, understanding, and ful-
fillment.

The Scriptures Teach That our Homes
Are To Be Happy and Harmonious

Jeremiah 16:9 reads, “For thus saith the LORD
of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will cause
to cease out of this place in your eyes, and in
your days, the voice of mirth, and the voice of
gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the
voice of the bride.” Observe the statements of
Solomon said, “Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest” (Ecc. 9:9). Proverbs 5:18 says, “rejoice with the wife of thy youth.” God legislated in the Old Testament: “When a man hath taken a new wife, he shall not go out to war, neither shall he be charged with any business: but he shall be free at home one year, and shall cheer up his wife which he hath taken” (Deu. 24:5).

Proverbs 17:1 states, “Better is a dry morsel, and quietness therewith, than an house full of sacrifices with strife.” Proverbs 21:9 adds, “It is better to dwell in a corner of the house top, than with a brawling woman in a wide house.” Isaiah speaks of the bridegroom rejoicing over the bride. Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, “the L ORD deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead, and with me. The L ORD grant you that ye may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband” (Ruth 1:8-9).

All these passages emphasize that our homes are to be places of harmony and happiness. The home was established to contribute to man’s happiness. Thus, when a home does not contribute to the happiness of those who live therein, it is falling short of one of its God-designed purposes.

Tragically, many homes do not fulfill this Divine design. Maybe you have heard about the little girl who was showing her playmate their new home. Coming to a large room, she paused and said, “This is my father’s den.” The playmate asked, “Does your father have a den?” The little girl responded, “No, he just growsl all over the house.” Then, there was the man who was asked if he woke up grouchy that morning. He responded: “No, I just let her sleep this morning.” Let us avoid being grouchy and growling. Let us be happy, peace-loving, and peace-making.

To Make Happiness A Reality In our Homes—REMEMBER:

Realize happiness is a possibility. Happiness and tranquility in the home is not an elusive dream. Effort must be extended toward this reality, but it is possible.

Make happiness a goal. Remember, if we aim at nothing, we are sure to hit it. Set realistic and challenging goals for you and your family.

Work at the job of building a happy home. Happiness in the home does not come about by merely reading about it, or just wishing for it. Rather, peace and tranquility comes as a result of effort and work. Somebody said a successful marriage is 98% perspiration and 2% inspiration.

Pray for it. John 15:7 says that we may ask what we will (according to His will). Surely, we will (desire) happiness and harmony in our homes.

Avoid little quarrels. A famous judge once said, “Avoid the little quarrels and the big ones will take care of themselves.”

Learn and practice the grace of contentment. In our homes, let us learn to say with the apostle Paul, “I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content” (Phi. 4:11). An old proverb says, “A contented mind is a continual feast.”

Understand that happiness is not tied to “things” (externals). Happiness in the home is inseparably tied to meaningful relationships maintained by each member losing himself in the interest, welfare, and desired good of the other members of the family.

Love and happiness are inseparable. Joy and love are mentioned in the same passage in Ecclesiastes 9:9.

Conclusion

There is nothing more beautiful than the building and maintaining of a happy home. Such contributes immeasurably to the members therein having the exalted privilege of one day being at home with God in the home of the soul.

Northport, AL
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Marilyn Hall, Neva Bryant (Tandem Nursing Home, room 510), Ruby Bowman, Lucille Staples, Ray Dodd (Sacred Heart Hospital, room 311), Marge Williams, Ella Hammac, Faye Little (Dot Dodd’s mother), Nancy Travis (William Weekley’s daughter), and Barbra Busch (Bill Busch’s mother).

Sympathy
Our deepest sympathy is extended to Bill Busch in the death of his father, Harold Busch, on February 22, 2004. Keep Bill and his family in your prayers.

Placed Membership
Edward Vertz has placed membership with the Bellview congregation. His address is: 2395 East Johnson Avenue, Pensacola, FL 32514. Please assist him and offer encouragement as you can.

Reading/Invitation
March 3, 2004
Reading: Shelby Nall
Invitation: Bill Crowe
March 10, 2004
Reading: Richard Parker
Invitation: Dale Cunningham

Mark This Date
March 7, 2004—Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.

Pantry Items Needed
Vegetable and Chicken Soups
Three Great Confessions

Richard Stevens III

There are three confessions that an individual must make to achieve the coveted goal of salvation.

1. The Confession of Christ. This confession, which must be made prior to baptism is like the others—absolute for salvation. “For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Rom. 10:10). The Ethiopian eunuch wanted to be baptized and was told by Philip: “If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest” (Acts 8:36-37a). The eunuch then made the greatest confession of all: “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God” (v. 37b). He was then baptized into Christ (v. 38). That is not the end of verbally acknowledging Christ, it is just the beginning! We continually confess Him as Lord and Christ as we tell others about Him (Mat. 28:19).

2. The Confession of Life. Our everyday life must confess, what we verbally profess. Succinctly, we must live it! Jesus taught that this determines His reply to God: “Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven” (Mat. 10:32-33). Notice, Jesus is not talking about mouth confession only, but more so a way of a God-directed life before men (Mat. 5:16). Moreover, Jesus promised the unwavering faithful in Sardis that He would one day confess their name “before my Father, and before his angels” (Rev. 3:5). Let us also hope for such a day!
3. The Confession of Sins. Many Christians pray to God never acknowledging their sins, while others repetitiously pray: “Lord forgive me of my sins” without having any conscious thought of sins committed. In the area of swearing, unclean things, unclean people, and oaths, the sinner of old was told, “when he shall be guilty in one of these things, that he shall confess that he hath sinned in that thing” (Lev. 5:1-5). God wanted them to confess the wrong they knew they had committed, “in that thing.” Sure, we confess that we might have unknowingly sinned. But, we too, should honestly confess known violations of God’s Word and avoid child-like blanket statements such as “My many sins” and “If I have sinned.” We are told, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). Please observe, that forgiveness of sins is predicated on if they are confessed.

To any in Christ who are in sin, let godly sorrow fill your heart, repent (2 Cor. 7:10), turn to God like David and say, “I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin” (Psa. 32:5).

Will You Submit Today?
Will You Pray and Study Today?
Will Others See Christ in You Today?

The Movie “The Passion of the Christ”

Bill Haywood

I saw the movie the “The Passion of the Christ” this morning. I had two free tickets so Teresa and I went. I had heard all of the hype and so I was curious and a little skeptical.

I have many, many thoughts about this movie. I will try to share my thoughts in some kind of a coherent manner.

First of all, “Was it a good movie?” A qualified yes! Very moving! Immediately after leaving the theater I began to try and decide how I would describe what kind of movie it was. Here is my best shot at describing the movie; it is a docudrama, a movie, Mel Gibson’s commentary and highly moving experience all rolled into one production.

A Docudrama

“The Passion of the Christ” is based closely on the Gospel accounts of the last twelve hours of Jesus’ life. There are some story line filler scenes that do not necessarily contradict the gospel accounts, yet they supply a story line for the movie that is not contained within the gospel accounts. For instance, we know that Simon of Cyrene was pressed into carrying the cross of Christ, but we do not know if Jesus actually fell beneath the load of the cross or if the Romans decided it was most prudent in view of Jesus’ weakened condition that resulted from His scourging. We do not know about any interaction between Jesus and Simon of Cyrene. In the movie they depict Jesus falling beneath the load of the cross and reluctant Simon helping and finally even shouting at the Romans to stop brutalizing Jesus. If someone accepts those sorts of things as simply filling in the storyline for a movie and not as part of the biblical account, I see no problem.

A Movie

There are some very warm and interesting flashbacks in the movie that are obviously not in the biblical account. Again, if you keep in mind that this is a movie, I see no problem. One particular flashback I found especially riveting; Mary the mother of Jesus saw her son fall be-
neath the load of the cross, instantly in her minds’ eye she sees her little boy falling down when He was child and she ran quickly to help, but now as He falls there is nothing she can do. Is that in the biblical account? Although that is very plausible and helps to communicate the storyline of the movie, no, it is not in the biblical account. That is when we need to remember and remind others it is a movie.

**Mel Gibson’s Commentary**

I have some commentaries in my library that have been very helpful to me. Yet, they are just commentaries. Nothing will ever replace the inspired, inerrant, perfect Word of God. Based on my studies I think Mel Gibson captured the brutality of the trial, scourging, and crucifixion pretty well. I think folks need to understand that the cross was not just an inconvenience for Jesus.

**My Take**

I believe members of the Lord’s church will be the ones to gain the most for seeing the movie, the ones who need to see the movie the least, and the ones who will view it with the most critical eye. Let me explain. Despite our disappointment in our low level of biblical literacy, I believe the Lord’s people still have the best Bible education among religious folks. Consequently, we will be able view this movie from a more informed perspective. We will naturally evaluate it based on its adherence to the sacred record of Divine inspiration. When it deviates from the Bible we will be bothered more than others will be.

**My Concerns**

I have some real concerns about this movie. First of all, many denominational people plan to use this movie to evangelize. Which obviously, without a biblical plan of salvation there is no evangelism. When faced with questions and comments our people need to be bold! We need to challenge people to go to the Scripture.

I am also concerned that in our entertainment oriented society that this movie and movies like it will be used at least occasionally to replace the proclamation of the gospel. I can imagine a year or two from now denominations and even a church of Christ showing this movie in worship. We are to “Preach the word” (2 Tim. 4:2), not act out the Word or sing out the Word, but to Preach the Word! The reason is simple: knowledge precedes emotion. This movie was very emotional for me—I know the story! I read the book before I saw the movie. Nothing will ever replace the biblical account!

I am also concerned that there are possibly two very subtle allusions to Catholic doctrine. The movie should be viewed with a critical eye.

**A Little Irony**

There has been a big hullabaloo over this movie as being anti-Semitic, to gruesome, to controversial etc, etc.

Madonna and Britney can swap spit on TV, Justin Timberlake can undress Janet Jackson on national TV (not to mention their horrible lyrics and other lewd behavior) yet the crucifixion of Jesus is too controversial. Yes I am thrilled to see a little balance. No offense to Mel Gibson, it is not surprising it is a good movie. You would have to work hard to blow this wonderful love story.

**My Recommendations**

Before you go, take time to read the gospel accounts (Mat. 26:36-27:66; Mark 14-15; Luke 22:39-23:56; John 18-19). If you have children, I would not take children below the age of 12 (a mature twelve-year-old). I would want to go with my teen and I would want to be able to debrief them after the movie. I would ask questions like where did the movie depart from the Bible. Where did the movie enhance your understanding of the biblical text. Was there anything you did not understand. How do you think a person should respond to the crucifixion of Jesus?

Abingdon Church of Christ
Sick
Please remember in your prayers:
Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Marilyn Hall,
Neva Bryant (Tandem Nursing Home),
Ruby Bowman, Lucille Staples, Ray Dodd,
Marge Williams, Ella Hammac, Faye Little
(Dot Dodd’s mother), Nancy Travis
(William Weekley’s daughter), Barbra
Busch (Bill Busch’s mother), Reggie
Parker (Richard Parker’s brother), and
Eloise Hudgins (Linda Parker’s friend).

Sympathy
Our deepest sympathy is extended to
Lee Davis, in the death of his father, James
Davis, on February 27, 2004. Please keep
Lee and his family in your prayers.

Reading/Invitation
March 10, 2004
Reading: Richard Parker
Invitation: Dale Cunningham
March 17, 2004
Reading: Joshua Wilkes
Invitation: Ray Dodd

Mark These Dates
Every Sunday—Ladies’ Bible class held at
5:00 PM, in the zone room.
March 7, 2004–Visitation Group 1
assignment cards handed out.
March 14, 2004–Visitation Group 2
assignment cards handed out.
March 14, 2004–Deacons meeting at 5:00
PM, in room 7.

Pantry Item Needed
Canned Meat
Judging: Who Made You the Judge?

Jason Rollo

The concept of judging, is perhaps one of the most misunderstood subjects in the world. This truth is clearly seen in the question often heard, “Who made you the judge?” This question specifically, and more importantly the whole concept of judging, needs to be addressed. In this brief article, we will be discussing the concept of proper and improper judging. The problem often lies in the fact that many do not realize (or care to realize) that there is a proper judgment and an improper judgment. In other words, there is wrong judging and there is right judging. There are judgments that individuals must make and there are judgments that they must not make.

The Concept of Judging

Anytime a person asks: “Who made you the judge?” they are really saying, “You have no right to judge me.” If they are referring to such things as color of skin, height, weight, etc.—such a question or statement would be justified (see the next section for more detail). However, if an individual means that no one has a right to point out wrongdoing, sin, etc., then this individual is seriously wrong. For instance, to appeal to the, “You can’t judge me, no one’s perfect,” argument in order to avoid correction of sin in one’s life is self-contradictory. When a person implies that no one has a right to judge are they not in essence doing that which they forbid, namely, “judging?” Certainly so! Hence, the attitude of, “I’m all right, you’re all right, let’s don’t judge anybody,” is self-defacing. It is hypocritical to the core!
Improper Judging

The Bible does speak of (and condemn) certain types of judging. Perhaps the most famous passage on this topic is Matthew 7:1. In this text, Jesus says, “Judge not, that ye be not judged.” Verses 2-5 clearly shows that for one to judge hypocritically is sinful. Paul used similar logic when condemning the Jews for their hypocrisy. He wrote, “Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest dost the same things. But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things. And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest whom which do such things, and dost the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?” (Rom. 2:1-3). Both Jesus and Paul condemned hypocritical judging! Likewise, Jesus showed the sinfulness of judging based on appearance. In John 7:24, Christ declared, “Judge not according to the appearance.” James 2:1-13 and 4:11-12, likewise forbid judging based on appearance or judging without the facts. It is shameful when anyone, especially Christians, judge others based on facial or body features, skin color, monetary worth, social status, etc. Improper judging (whether it be hypocritical judging, judging by appearance, or judging without the facts) is serious sin!

Proper Judging

Although one can judge improperly, one can (and must) judge properly. This judgment is based on God’s Word. Christians can know truth and they can decipher error from it (John 8:32)! The statement, “I am not the judge, but I can, will, and must, tell you what the judge said about the sin in your life,” is a great statement of truth regarding this idea of proper judging. Jesus, Paul, and the other New Testament greats realized the truth of righteous judging. Remember, Matthew 7:1-5, addressed earlier? Although forbidding one type of judgment (improper judging), it in turn commands another type (proper judging). Verse five commands the hypocrite to repent and then, seeing clearly, to “cast out the mote out of thy [his] brother’s eye.” Furthermore, the second half of John 7:24 reads, “but judge righteous judgment.” This is not an option, but a command, just like the first half of the verse! Righteousness is based on God’s Word (Psa. 119:172). Therefore, to judge based on the truth in God’s Word is righteous and good! When Paul condemned the Jews of Romans chapter two for their hypocrisy, he was properly judging such hypocrisy based on God’s Word. When writing to the Corinthians, regarding a man’s sin, he declared, “For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed” (1 Cor. 5:3). Thus, Paul took credible evidence and judged the current situation based on the truth of God’s infallible Word!

Jesus and Paul condemned improper judgment while equally upholding and engaging in proper judgment! May all Christians do likewise!

8701 Mystic Trail; Fort Worth, TX 76118

Ye Do Err

Noah Hackworth

Jesus said, “Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God” (Mat. 22:29). This statement by the Lord was in response to a question put to Him by the materialistic Sadducees who were incredibly ignorant of the Word of God, just like so many folks today. But
the thing to be remembered is the fact that there is no excuse for biblical ignorance save laziness and/or indifference. People who have little biblical knowledge ought not have strong biblical opinions. That there is a super abundance of biblical ignorance prevailing in the world today is absolutely appalling. If people knew more about the Word of God, there would be (1) less unscriptural marriages and divorces, (2) less religious division, (3) no quibbling about whether instrumental music in worship is wrong, (4) more unity among true believers, (5) more righteous living, (6) more happier people, and (7) less murmuring and complaining. Biblical ignorance, however, can only be eradicated by a continual study of the Bible. Otherwise we will continue to err, not knowing the Scriptures.

5342 West La Vida Court; Visalia, CA 93277

Think About It...

The New Testament of Jesus Christ contains:

a. 181,253 words
b. 7,959 verses
c. 260 chapters
d. 27 books

Did you know an average reader (8 verses a minute) who spends 30 minutes a day can read the entire New Testament through in 30 days? Do that every day and one would read the New Testament through 12 times in a year. Do that for just 10 years and one will have read the New Testament 120 times!

Our unfamiliarity with the Bible is a witness against us. No larger than what the New Testament is, why have we not mastered that material? We have been Christians for years, decades even, yet, we fumble through the pages unsure of our destination.

You would think that a book, the only book, which gives us directions to Heaven would be consumed and devoured by people wanting to go to Heaven.

You would think that such a small amount of material, which directly affects our eternal destiny would be read, studied, analyzed, and mastered.

Friends, there is no excuse. Our ignorance betrays us. We have chosen the world over the Word. But it is not too late. Most who read this will have another ten years to live. Spend a half hour every day for those next ten years and you will have read the New Testament through 120 times! Think of it! Such little effort put forth such a great results! What awaits you? Just:

a. 27 books
b. 260 chapters
c. 7,959 verses
d. 181,253 words

via the “Preacher’s PC”
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Marilyn Hall, Neva Bryant (Tandem Nursing Home), Ruby Bowman, Lucille Staples, Ray Dodd, Marge Williams, Ella Hammac, Dick and Dot Lambert, Joyce Brantley, Faye Little (Dot Dodd’s mother), Nancy Travis (William Weekley’s daughter), Barbara Busch (Bill Busch’s mother), Reggie Parker (Richard Parker’s father), Eloise Hudgins (Linda Parker’s friend), and Bonnie Cooper (Linda Parker’s friend).

Reading/Invitation
March 17, 2004
Reading: Joshua Wilkes
Invitation: Ray Dodd
March 24, 2004
Reading: Ray Williams
Invitation: Ray Foshee

Mark These Dates
Every Sunday—Ladies’ Bible class held at 5:00 PM, in the zone room.
March 14, 2004—Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
March 14, 2004—Deacons meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
March 21, 2004—Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
March 21, 2004—Elders/Deacons meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
March 24, 2004—Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 PM, in the auditorium.

Pantry Item Needed
Canned Meat
In days of stress and strife, it is well to remember that worry is no one’s friend, but everyone’s enemy. There are 773,692 words in the Bible, but one will search in vain for a single occurrence of the word “Worry” among them. Worry is not in God’s vocabulary, and should not be in ours (Speaker’s Sourcebook by Doan).

To my way of thinking, there never was a person who had more reason to worry than the apostle Paul. Yet, I know of no Scripture(s) which define his condescension into the pit of worry. Look at the following inspired, God-breathed account of a part of Paul’s life and see if you agree.

Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeymings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness (2 Cor. 11:23-27).

When one stops to reflect upon these terrible circumstances and then realizes that this inimitable and godly man gave us a major portion of
the New Testament, and died for Christ’s sake, it brings a humbling thanksgiving into our minds. One cannot think of problems and things which bring concern without reflecting upon the Patriarch Job. The Bible sums up all of Job’s suffering and pain with this revealing statement: “In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly” (Job 1:22).

Did Paul or Job have reason to doubt, or worry? Most assuredly! Both did! Still, there is no record of either ever delving into needless and unprofitable worrying. Surely, there are compelling reasons to be concerned, but those who have their trust and confidence in Almighty God should not give in to worry. When trials or great tragedy, or loss beset us, these present even more reasons for us to start “Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you” (1 Pet. 5:7).

When this same Paul wrote to his loved ones in Galatia he exhorted them in these words: “And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not” (Gal. 6:9). Reaping promised here obtains only to those who do not faint! That is, they do not start worrying and then give up, or quit. If one is doing wrong, there is reason to be concerned, but that concern should never be the cause of worry which might indicate one’s admission to himself that no change is going to come around, because “I’m going to keep on worrying, or doing what I’m doing!” Those who have their trust and confidence in God know that “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble” (Psa. 46:1). “If God be for us, who can be against us?” (Rom. 8:31).

Man-made Religion Is Godless Religion

Marvin Weir

The religion of Jeroboam was a Godless religion. It was such because it did not come from the will of God, but from the arrogant mind of man. People today can and should learn from the things “written aforetime” (Rom. 15:4). Let us see what is wrong with a man-made religion.

All man-made religions have their origins in the human heart (mind). Jeroboam did as so many do today in relying upon his heart instead of the Word of God (1 Kin. 12:26).

The Bible clearly warns that it is “not in man that walketh to direct his steps” (Jer. 10:23) and that “there is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death” (Pro. 14:12). God’s thoughts and ways are not man’s thoughts and ways (Isa. 55:8-9), thus a system of worship that pleases God can never come from the mind of man.

God’s will for mankind must be revealed, and we have that revelation in His inspired Word (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:3; Jude 3). Anything that attempts to add to, take from, or substitute for God’s Word is simply a perversion of truth (Gal. 1:6-9) and a rebellion against God.

The sole purpose of a man-made religion is to please man instead of God. Jeroboam feared that if the people went to Jerusalem and worshiped as God intended, they would again respect Rehoboam as king of Judah (1 Kin. 12:26-27). Thus, Jeroboam established golden calves in Bethel and Dan to entice the people not to travel to Jerusalem to worship.

Selfishness motivated Jeroboam to offer “alternative worship” to the people, and selfishness motivated the people to accept a religion of convenience! Selfishness is what keeps denominationalism alive today as folks demand to worship in a way that pleases them.
Man-made religion pretends to be for the good of the people. Jeroboam shrewdly said, “It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem” (1 Kin. 12:28b). It does not take much to convince some folks that they should do what God said not to do. Jerusalem was the place God designated for the people to worship and Jeroboam had no right to change it.

The “attend the church of your choice” plea works today because people choose to worship as they please and ignore a “thus saith the Lord.” God condemns such religious division and the souls who practice and promote it will be lost (1 Cor. 1:10-13).

Man-made religion is in opposition to the Word of God. Jeroboam lied to the people, saying, “Behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt” (1 Kin. 12:28). Had not God commanded His people to refrain from making any graven images (Exo. 20:4)? It was Jehovah, the Creator—not some humanly devised idol—who delivered the Israelites from the land of Egypt.

Many today bemoan the truth that there is only one church (Mat. 16:18; Eph. 1:22-23; 4:4; 5:23) while telling any who will listen why they think that many churches ... with the will of God (cf., 2 Kin. 5:11). As one has aptly said, “The ladder to heaven must come from heaven” (John 14:6).

Man-made religion becomes a snare to people. “And this thing became a sin: for the people went to worship before the one, even unto Dan” (1 Kin. 12:30).

Jeroboam changed the object of worship from God to golden calves. It is amazing that so many are so much more impressed with what they can do than with what God can do. All denominations are but attempts to usurp the Word and power of God.

Mere men did not die for the Lord’s church (Acts 20:28), and the Lord certainly did not die for any denomination of men (Psa. 127:1). Denominationalism becomes a snare to so many people because they believe they are worshiping God. But in reality, they are engaging in that which is sinful and in opposition to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Though it has an appearance of being right, man-made religion is ever so wrong! Jeroboam knew that he needed to keep an altar, some priests, and a feast “like unto the feast that is in Judah” (1 Kin. 12:32). Didn’t the people worship? Wasn’t there an outward expression of religious intent? Yes, but that which is not built upon a legitimate and solid foundation will fail and fall (cf., Mat. 7:24-27).

Denominationalism has always mixed in some truth with its error, but no religion that was founded by man has the authority to exist! The Bible is clear: “For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 3:11). The Master spoke the truth when He said, “Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up” (Mat. 15:13).
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Marilyn Hall, Neva Bryant (Tandem Nursing Home), Ruby Bowman, Lucille Staples, Ray Dodd, Marge Williams, Ella Hammac, Dick and Dot Lambert, Joyce Brantley, Edward Vertz, and Reggie Parker (Richard Parker’s father).

Placed Membership
Laura Swayne placed membership with the Bellview congregation on March 14, 2004. Her address is 6087 Hilburn Road; Pensacola, FL 32504. Her telephone is 473-5594. Please make her feel welcome and offer her encouragement.

Reading/Invitation
March 24, 2004
Reading: Ray Williams
Invitation: Ray Foshee
March 31, 2004
Reading: Carl Ayliffe
Invitation: Louis Herrington

Mark These Dates
Every Sunday—Ladies’ Bible class held at 5:00 PM, in the zone room.
March 21, 2004—Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
March 21, 2004—Elders/Deacons meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
March 24, 2004—Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 PM, in the auditorium.

Pantry Item Needed
Canned Meat
There are many paradoxes in Christianity. If we are to win, we must first be willing to lose. If we are to live, we must first be willing to die. Furthermore, in the kingdom of Christ the way up is down. No group demonstrates this attitude better than deacons—God’s special servants. While deacons do not possess authority in a local congregation, they do set forth a marvelous example for all Christians to follow.

I. THE DEFINITION OF A DEACON.

Deacon is from the word diakonos which means servant. It denotes a type of service rendered free of charge or willingly. Sometimes the word is translated “minister.” Every Christian, in a general sense, is a deacon (servant). In this regard, a woman may be called a deaconess (Rom. 16:1). However, there is a specific group of men identified as deacons in the organization of the church. Notice the salutation to the church at Philippi: “Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons” (Phi. 1:1). Perhaps no better nor succinct statement regarding church organization was ever written in the New Testament.

II. THE DEMANDS OF BECOMING A DEACON.

The qualifications for becoming a deacon are set forth in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. These qualifications must be met if God’s plan is to be executed properly. The deacon is to be grave, he takes his calling seriously. He is not to be double tongued, therefore he does not speak out of both sides of his mouth and he can be trusted. He is “not given to much wine,” which
means he does not permit himself to be held under the sway of alcohol. For those who contend this passage authorizes drinking in moderation, see also Ecclesiastes 7:17. The deacon is “not given to filthy lucre,” he is not a covetous man. He “holds the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.” Paul often used the term mystery to describe the scheme of redemption which God has revealed. A deacon is grounded and settled in the truth and lives by that truth. Also, the deacon is the husband of one wife and all his family submits to his headship in the home. Likewise his wife is to “be grave, not slanderous, sober, faithful in all things.” Both the deacon and his wife play a vital role in the success of the local congregation and therefore must meet the above demands.

III. THE DEMONSTRATION OF A DEACON. Perhaps it would be helpful to have an example for deacons to follow. I believe Jesus is the perfect example for preachers. Likewise, He is the perfect one for deacons to follow. Our Lord was a servant (Phi. 2:7). Never was this displayed better than in the upper room meeting with His disciples. Just prior to His death, Jesus on His hands and knees washed His disciples feet (John 13:5). No other man can be more like Jesus than a faithful deacon.

Deacons can often help alleviate the responsibilities of elders, who must first and foremost tend to the spiritual needs of the flock (Acts 20:28; Heb. 13:17). Deacons perform many menial but necessary tasks. When tasks are assigned they faithfully and dutifully fulfill them. Furthermore, these men know the work they have been given to do. When the work ceases—one ceases from being a deacon!

Paul wrote, “For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus” (1 Tim. 3:13). It is no wonder from this pool of men a congregation will often choose elders. Truly, in the kingdom of Christ, one cannot lead until he learns to serve. Jesus said, “Whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister” (Mark 10:43). Since the way up is down, no one is higher in God’s eyes than faithful deacons.

3950 Forest Hill Irene Road
Memphis, TN 38125

Self-Examination

Tom Moore

The beloved apostle Paul boldly proclaimed, “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?” (2 Cor. 13:5). The word “examine” comes from peirazo and means to prove or to scrutinize. This Greek word refers to trying metals by the powerful action of heat; and the idea here is, that we should make the most thorough trial of our faith, to see whether it will stand the test as we examine it along side of the Word of God.

Self-examination is very important in many aspects of life. The sailor, as he travels the sea
must continually refer to his compass to make sure he is sailing in the desired direction. A mason as he lays brick must persistently look to his string line to make sure his rows of bricks are plumb and level. The carpenter will frequently study the blueprints to make sure that the house he is building will meet the inspectors and owners approval. The man with high blood-pressure will check his pressure often to make sure it is within safe parameters.

It is very sad that much of the religious world do little in the area of self-examination. Many hold firm to their traditions, never questioning their validity. Others fail to examine their beliefs because they have a greater desire to please self than they do to please God. And, perhaps, most fail to examine their beliefs out of mere ignorance or unfounded trust in man.

The Bible is replete with passages demanding and encouraging us to be involved in self-examination. James encourages us in this fashion as he says:

> But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed (Jam. 1:22-25).

We must use God’s Word as a mirror and look for our imperfections, and make the appropriate changes. Using God’s Word as a mirror, we will see ourselves as we really are—the mirror does not lie!

Amos shows the need for self-examination in his use of the “plumbline.” This great prophet writes:

> Thus he shewed me: and, behold, the Lord stood upon a wall made by a plumbline, with a plumbline in his hand. And the LORD said unto me, Amos, what seest thou? And I said, A plumbline. Then said the Lord, Behold, I will set a plumbline in the midst of my people Israel: I will not again pass by them any more: And the high places of Isaac shall be desolate, and the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste; and I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword (Amos 7:7-9).

The plumbline is, because of gravity, the perfect vertical standard. The Lord is seen standing in the midst of Israel holding a plumbline seeing how they measure up to His Standard. We need to hold the plumbline of God’s Word alongside of our lives to see how we are measuring up. Are we out of plumb with the Word of God?

The Hebrews writer, as he writes of Moses, declared, “Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount” (Heb. 8:5). The word pattern comes from *tupos*, and means “a die, a stamp, a model, a figure, a form, a pattern, or a print.”

Albert Barnes states, “The allusion is to a pattern such as an architect or sculptor uses; a drawing or figure made in wood or clay, after which the work is to be modeled. The idea is, that some such drawing or model was exhibited to Moses by God on Mount Sinai, so that he might have an exact idea of the tabernacle which was to be made.” As we look at our lives are we living up to the model that is set forth for us in holy writ?

Our souls are too precious not to be examining ourselves to see whether or not we are living as the Almighty would have us to live. Will you examine your life carefully and honestly?
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Marilyn Hall, Neva Bryant (Tandem Nursing Home), Ruby Bowman, Lucille Staples, Ray Dodd, Marge Williams, Ella Hammac, Dick and Dot Lambert, Joyce Brantley, Edward Vertz, and Reggie Parker (Richard Parker’s brother).

Reading/Invitation
March 31, 2004
Reading: Carl Ayliffe
Invitation: Louis Herrington
April 7, 2004
Reading: Elward Brantley
Invitation: Ray Pierce

Mark These Dates
Every Sunday—Ladies’ Bible class held at 5:00 PM, in the zone room.
March 28, 2004—Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
March 31, 2004—Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00 PM, in the auditorium.
April 4, 2004—Dinner on the Grounds and Singing after the morning service.
April 4, 2004—Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
April 11, 2004—Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
April 11, 2004—Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
April 18, 2004—Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.

Pantry Item Needed
Canned Meat
“The Passion of the Christ”

David B. Smith

By now, most people are familiar with the controversy surrounding a newly released filmed titled “The Passion of the Christ.” The movie is a product of the famous actor/director Mel Gibson, who funded the project from his own assets (with estimates for the costs floating somewhere in the neighborhood of $25 million dollars). Of course, this seems like a small investment now—since, at the point of this writing (March 9, 2004), the movie has grossed close to $224 million dollars. It is probable that the total gross for the movie (including home video sales) will exceed the billion dollar mark. But what Gibson may gain financially, he has no doubt lost in “Hollywood acceptability.” His production has placed him on the black list of many powerful Hollywood producers and executives, an industry that is not only sympathetic to the Jewish community but highly immoral (and thus opposed to the concept of salvation by means of the sacrifice of Jesus, the Son of the Living God).

Even within the church of the Christ, opinion is divided about the film. And as would be expected, several extremes have developed. On one hand, there are some who have exalted this film in such a way as to suggest that it provides an atmosphere akin to a worship service of the saints. In a sense, those of this extreme have joined others from the world who are suggesting the movie was guided by or inspired of God. On the other hand, there are some who are opposed to the film in such a way as to suggest that those who do view the film either have weak faith or somehow blaspheme the all-sufficiency of the
Scriptures. Both extremes are wrong.

With that, this article will seek to answer questions some may have regarding the film. This writer believes he is in a position to answer the questions that follow in a fair manner, since the information provided to the questions is firsthand (having seen the film).

1. Is the film anti-Semitic? There are many high-ranking Jewish Rabbis who believe that it is, but there is no anti-Semitism in the film. The account is very clear that everyone is guilty of causing the need for Jesus’ sacrifice. Jews and Gentiles alike, “all have sinned” (Rom. 3:23). In fact, the film recalls the conversation in John 10:16-18 and also includes the statement of Jesus to Pilate in John 19:11. In both instances, Jesus makes it clear that the sacrifice was actually of His own doing. But everyone in the film, everyone except Jesus, is guilty; so there is no anti-Semitism.

2. But won’t Jewish people be offended? Not unless they idolize men like Caiaphas and the entire Jewish tribunal that illegally tried Jesus. The film offers an excellent portrayal of the hate and envy of the Jewish leaders toward Jesus; and most people forget that during the Jewish trials, “some began to spit on him, and to cover his face, and to buffet him, and to say unto him, Prophecy: and the servants did strike him with the palms of their hands” (Mark 14:65). There is little doubt that this is one of the more difficult scenes to watch; and surely no Jewish man or woman today would be offended, only angered at the madness of the men who crucified Jesus.

3. Does Gibson soften the account to make it easier for the Jews? Not at all. The controversial phrase “His blood be on us, and on our children” (Mat. 27:25) is still in the movie, just after Pilate washes his hands. However, the subtitles do not appear while the Jewish leaders make this response to Pilate.

4. But the movie has an “R-rating.” Why is it rated “R”? The movie received an R-rating because of the violence. The physical aspect of the movie is quite graphic. And the rating is supplied in an effort to keep small children, or young people without adult accompaniment, from seeing the film.

After seeing the film, this is a fair rating. However, it must be said that the movie is not nearly as graphic as some of the pre-reports made it out to be. Yes, it is graphic but entirely bearable.

5. Doesn’t the movie have curse-words? Only one. During the accusations against Peter, he offers a response which includes the word “damn” (in the sense of condemnation). But remember, the Bible plainly says of Peter, “he began to curse and to swear, saying, I know not this man of whom ye speak” (Mark 14:71).

6. But should a Christian go to an “R-rated” movie? This is not a precisely stated question, since this movie does not match the content of most rated-R movies. Objection cannot be based simply on the rating letter, since there are many “G” and “PG” rated movies that have sexual overtones, language or immodest apparel. It is content that causes a movie to be bad/wrong, and this movie has no objectionable content (in that sense).

7. How accurate is the film with the biblical account? For the most part, the film is very accurate. Most of the account (including conversations) follows John’s record of the events. Though, there is a good amount of material supplied from the other accounts of Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

8. Aren’t there contradictions in the movie? It would probably be better to call them embellishments. The movie does explore some areas where the Bible is silent, like Mary’s involvement or Malchus’ contemplation of the events in
the Garden. Perhaps the most glaring embellishments are the personification of Satan and the tormenting of Judas by demon possessed children. It is sure that this was Gibson’s way of trying to provide a context to the movie. The movie would have been as effective without this feature; but people who know the biblical account will find no real distraction. As long as Christians are fulfilling the command to “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good” (1 Th. 5:21), no one will be taken off guard or believe anything they should not.

9. But what about Catholic overtones? There are a few; but one would have to know what to look for to find them. Perhaps the most obvious is found in the movie’s attempt to explain the origin of the “shroud of Jesus” (which is a sham to begin with). But remember, this is a visual depiction of the last twelve hours of Jesus’ life before burial. There is little if no room in the movie for anyone to preach a sermon of false theology. The only words spoken are primarily those found in the account of John, and those statements were presented accurately.

10. But doesn’t this deny the all-sufficiency of the Bible? Not at all, no more than a commentary or Bible dictionary denies the all-sufficiency of the Bible. The fact is: no one can explain at depth the process of “scourging” or provide minute details of crucifixion simply from the Bible account. Remember that the Bible was written to an audience with an intimate understanding of these procedures. The movie can serve to paint a better visual picture of the horrible procedures endured by the Christ. No one denies the all-sufficiency of the Bible by researching outside material, in order to learn more about the history or meanings of certain items.

11. Will the audience be overly emotional? It is unlikely that members of the Lord’s church will be, if they make the choice to see it. Perhaps some in denominationalism will be overly emotional, since denominationalism appeals to the emotions of men in the first place. But legitimately, it would be hard for any sincere person to avoid all emotion. There is no subject more emotional than the great sacrifice of Jesus for sins.

12. Are the characters depicted well? About as well as one could imagine. Herod is presented as the drunken, licentious man that one would expect. Pilate and the Roman soldiers are depicted particularly well. And one would probably benefit from hearing the account in the original languages, in order to get a sense of what things must have been like in that day.

13. Should Christians go see the film? That is an individual choice entirely. No one will be more or less spiritual because they either do or do not go to the film. Obviously, those who have a conscience-issue should refrain from going (Rom. 14:22-23). Most people, however, would probably benefit from the visual aspect. In fact, most people simply do not realize that the “scourging” and the “crucifixion” were really as bad as the movie depicts them. In this writer’s judgment, this is the real benefit of the movie. But again, it is an individual choice—a matter of judgment.

In the end it must be reiterated that this movie is not a replacement for the Gospel; it is not an inspired account. But the movie is making people think seriously about the magnitude of Jesus’ actions. If anything, this article is a reminder to all interested readers that doors of opportunity are being opened (Mark 16:15-16; Col. 4:2-6)—doors to explain the Bible account of the crucifixion, to show what the Bible does and does not reveal, and to explain to people what their real response should be to this great sacrifice.
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Marilyn Hall, Neva Bryant (Tandem Nursing Home), Ruby Bowman, Lucille Staples, Ray Dodd, Marge Williams, Ella Hammac, Dick and Dot Lambert, Joyce Brantley, Edward Vertz, and Reggie Parker (Richard Parker’s brother).

Restored
Pam Busch was restored to Christ on April 28, 2004. Please keep Pam in your prayers.

Reading/Invitation
April 7, 2004
Reading: Elward Brantley
Invitation: Ray Pierce
April 14, 2004
Reading: Jerry Caine
Invitation: Fred Stancliff

Mark These Dates
Every Sunday—Ladies’ Bible class held at 5:00 PM, in the zone room.
April 4, 2004—Dinner on the Grounds and Singing after the morning service.
April 4, 2004—Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.

Pantry Item Needed
Canned Meat

Daylight Saving Time Begins
Daylight Saving Time begins on Sunday, April 4. Set your clocks ahead one hour on Saturday evening.
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

Bellview Lectures

I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?” Gal. 4:16—Ronnie Hayes; “How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?” Heb. 2:3—Gary Colley; “For what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?” Heb. 12:7—Gary Summers; “Faith without works is dead?” Jam. 2:20—Guss Eoff; “What is your life?” Jam. 4:14—Lynn Parker; and “Who shall be able to stand?” Rev. 6:17—Tommy Hicks. Lessons that will be in the book only are: “Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith!” Mat. 8:26—Wade Webster; “What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” Mat. 16:26—Lester Kamp; “Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us?” Luke 2:48—Ken Ratcliiff; “Lord, are there few that be saved?” Luke 13:23—Steve Yeatts; “Understandest thou what thou readest?” Acts 8:30—Randy Mabe; “Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?” Acts 19:2—Brian Kenyon; “Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?” Acts 19:2—Wayne Price; “If God be for us, who can be against us?” Rom. 8:31—Paul Vaugh; “Wherefore then serveth the law?” Gal 3:19—Michael Hatcher; “Are ye not then partial in yourselves?” Jam. 2:4—John West; “Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you?” Jam. 3:13—Ted Clarke; and “Where is the promise of his coming?” 2 Pet. 3:4—David B. Smith.

If you are planning on attending the Bellview Lectures be sure to make your motel reservations now. Comfort Inn (8690 Pine Forest Road) offers the following price (tax not included) $59–1 to 2 people per room. Their phone number is 850-476-8989. When calling for reservations be sure to tell them you will be attending the Bellview Lectures.

Pensacola is a great place to take your summer vacation and at the same time attend the Bellview Lectures. For further information please contact the office by phone, mail, or at our e-mail address. Check out our web site listed below for more information. We hope to see you in June.

850-455-7595
bellview@bellviewcoc.com
(http://www.bellviewcoc.com)

### Spiritual Ignorance

**Marvin Weir**

Religious apostasy and moral depravity had set up shop on every street corner throughout the ten tribes of Israel. God declared that He had a controversy with Israel “because there is no truth, nor goodness, nor knowledge of God in the land” (Hos. 4:1). The prophet pointed out that “there is nought but swearing and breaking faith, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery; they break out, and blood toucheth blood” (Hos. 4:2).

Adam Clarke comments on the above verses, saying:

Where there is no truth there will be lies and perjury; for false swearing is brought in to confirm lying statements. And when there is no mercy, killing, slaying, and murders, will be frequent. And where there is no knowledge of God, no conviction of his omnipresence and omniscience, private offences, such as stealing, adulteries, etc., will prevail. These, sooner or later, break out, become a flood, and carry all before them. Private stealing will assume the form of a public robbery, and adulteries become fashionable, especially among the higher orders; and suits of crimson render them more public, scandalous, and corrupting. By the examination
ignorance of God’s will.

Ignorance of God is often willful! The people of Hosea’s day had rejected knowledge. The same type of attitude was characteristic of many during Paul’s day. Paul declared, “For being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God” (Rom. 10:3). The only standard that many subject themselves to is the standard that they set. Legend is the number of folks today who intend to please self instead of God. They love darkness rather than light (John 3:19) and thus willfully reject the instructions of the glorious Gospel.

Willful ignorance of God is fatal! One who willfully rejects the light of the Word of God cannot have fellowship with Jehovah. There are many who are guilty of willful rejection of God, but they would argue that such is not true. However, those who so argue might say, “I know what that verse of Scripture says, but this is what I believe in my heart.” Or, “I would not trade this feeling in my heart for a whole stack of Bibles.” Such statements as these indicate that this person has determined he will do as he pleases regardless of what God’s Word says.

Many times today folks reject baptism as being necessary for salvation. They say, “I just know I was saved when I accepted Jesus into my heart.” How do they know? “For he that believeth not shall be condemned” (Mark 16:16). I know that this is true because God’s Word is truth (John 17:17).

Listen again to the words of Hosea: “Because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee” (4.6). Spiritual ignorance will not be a source of comfort in the Day of Judgment. Resolve to learn of God’s will for your life while there is still time to obey!
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Marilyn Hall, Neva Bryant (Tandem Nursing Home), Ruby Bowman, Lucille Staples, Ray Dodd, Marge Williams, Ella Hammac, Dick and Dot Lambert, Joyce Brantley, Edward Vertz, and Reggie Parker (Richard Parker’s brother).

Reading/Invitation
April 14, 2004
Reading: Jerry Caine
Invitation: Fred Stancliff
April 21, 2004
Reading: Jeremy Caine
Invitation: Henry Born

Mark These Dates
Every Sunday—Ladies’ Bible class held at 5:00 PM, in the zone room.
April 11, 2004—Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
April 11, 2004—Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
April 18, 2004—Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
April 18, 2004—Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.

Pantry Item Needed
Canned Vegetables

Address Change
Tim Lamb’s new address is: 2251 Highway 97, Molino, FL 32577. His mailing address is P.O. Box 200, Molino, FL 32577. His telephone number is 587-3244. Please update your directory.
Summer is quickly approaching. The retail stores are full of lighter and shorter clothes to accommodate the warmer climate. Finding modest dresses and shorts are harder and harder each year. The world cares very little about God’s standard for modesty. It is embarrassing to walk around in public places and see the attire of some or the lack thereof. Society has made it more difficult for families and congregations to stand firm on the issue of modest apparel.

There are several myths about modesty that need to be dispelled. First, modesty has little to do with style. One can be modest and still be in style or fashionable. Style is not the standard Christians should use in regards to how much clothing they wear. Second, modesty is not determined by culture or society. Since when have a group of people become the Christians’ standard? Did not Jeremiah say, “O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps” (Jer. 10:23)? Third, modesty is not a matter of opinion. What I think or feel is modest or immodest is not relevant. Did not Solomon pen, “There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death” (Pro. 14:12)?

Modesty is a Bible topic. Since the very beginning of time, God has spoken about how He desires His people to be clothed. He made “coats of skins” to cover Adam and Eve as their attire of “fig leaves” provided insufficient coverings. May we also note although Adam was covered by this apron of fig leaves he knew it was not adequate and thus told God he was naked (Gen. 3:10).

Bringing out the Ruler

Rob L. Whitacre
Therefore, a person can have some clothing on and still be considered naked by the Lord.

The standard for modest dress must be understood in the light of the following principles. First, godly attire always covered the thighs of a man and woman (Exo. 28:40-43; Isa. 47:1-3). The exposure of one's thigh was considered nakedness in the sight of God. New Testament writers admonished ladies to be “discreet [and] chaste” and to “adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety” (Tit. 2:5; 1 Tim. 2:9). Our dress should not draw attention to our bodies or cause us to be ashamed and embarrassed if we find one of the opposite sex looking at us. A man or woman who wears immodest clothing will usually tug and pull on it when others look upon their skimpy outfit. What may be just long enough while standing may be entirely too short while sitting!

One of the safest ways to determine if what I am wearing is modest is by bringing out the ruler. Paul said, “And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful” (Col. 3:15). Would I walk down the street in this outfit with my Lord? Would what I am wearing invite others to stumble (Luke 17:1-2)? Is what I am wearing in harmony with purity, honesty, goodness, virtue, love, and praise (Phil. 4:8)? Is my outfit designed for sexual appeal and arousal and thus inviting sin to knock on my door? Remember, fornication begins with the eyes (Mat. 5:28)!

Modest apparel is not “old fashioned,” “out of date,” or “out of style.” It reflects our mind-set and lifestyle. May we so dress as to exemplify our Savior and denounce sin. May we take great care and respect for our bodies by clothing them with purity and chastity. The pleasing sight of a man and woman are left to the holy institution of marriage (Heb. 13:4). May we all keep it that way by dressing modestly.

A Father’s Commitment

In 1924, the Summer Olympics were held in Paris. One of the athletes heading to Paris that year was an American named Bill Havens. Everyone knew that he as a shoo-in for a gold medal in the canoeing event, for he was far superior to all his competition.

But, Bill Havens found out that his wife was going to have a baby during the exact time that he was scheduled to compete for his gold medal. He had to make a decision; to miss the opportunity of his lifetime, or to miss the opportunity of a lifetime. He chose to stay home with his wife and miss out on going for the gold. He was alongside his wife when she gave birth to a boy named Frank.

Now move ahead to 1950. Think about all the years that had passed since 1924. Think about all the doubts, the second guessing, “Did I do the right thing, or not?” In 1950, the Olympics were held in Helsinki, Finland and competing in the canoeing event, was Bill’s son, Frank Havens. Bill received a telegram that said, “Dear Dad, Thank you for being there for me when I was born. I want you to be the first to know that I’m bringing home your gold medal for you that should have been yours in 1924. I love you, Frank.”

Fathers mean a lot to their children. Their behavior can greatly influence the lives of the little ones that they bring into the world. Bill had no idea that his decision to stay home for the birth of his son would be remembered in such a vivid way some twenty-six years later. Our sacrifices for the children do make strong and lasting impressions.

Author Unknown
Great New Testament Questions
June 12-16

Saturday, June 12
7:00 PM “Where is he that is born King of the Jews?” Mat. 2:2
Keith Mosher
7:45 PM “By what authority doest thou these things?” Mat. 21:23
David Brown

Sunday, June 13
9:00 AM “This is an hard saying: who can hear it?” John 6:60
Lee Davis
10:00 AM “To Whom shall we go?” John 6:68
Greg Lewis
Lunch Break
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Reading/Invitation
April 21, 2004
Reading: Jeremy Caine
Invitation: Henry Born
April 27, 2004
Reading: Andrew Hatcher
Invitation: Paul Brantley

Mark These Dates
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Pantry Item Needed
Canned Vegetables
Does Your Daughter or Son Dance?

I was reading Ann Lander’s column, as usual, the other day, and I came across a very interesting thought concerning dancing. I thought I would pass it on to you with a few comments. In discussing different types of dance and the different holds that the participants engaged in; a young teen-age girl made this remark concerning an incident that happened to her:

“My boy friend and I were practicing some new steps the other evening when my father came home. He is a little deaf and the battery must have gone dead in his hearing aid. He couldn’t hear the music and he threw my boyfriend out of the house before I could explain.”

I wonder if they were really dancing? Where was the mother of this girl all this time? Probably changing the records for them, or out to some social club, etc. Of course, she possibly would not have cared if she had been home. So many mothers want their daughters to grow up to be popular, until they will go to any lengths to accomplish such. They never stop to think of all the immorality and degradation in the world today because of the dance. Neither does she stop to think of the teaching of the Bible on the subject of dancing. Dancing is a form of lasciviousness and reveling and such that participate in it, shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven.

There would be many men thrown out into the streets if the music would stop more often when their loved ones (?) are in the close embrace of another man. Many of the dances of our day and time are of such lascivious nature, that if it were not for the music you would think you were looking at a public sex-orgy. And to think that brethren and sisters in the church condone
their children doing such things and train them
up to participate in such! God forbid that our
young ones should be brought up to see no
danger in such lasciviousness.

Author Unknown

What Will Your Checkbook Say about You?

G. K. Wallace

Some time ago I read about a man who has
written many biographies. He noted that it was
easy to find out what a man said and what he had
done, but when it came to finding out what kind
of man he really was, the biographer was up a
stump. Then be discovered that the surest way to
get to the truth was to look at the stubs of old
checkbooks. What a man gave his money for—
that tells the tale. Why not stop before you read
any further and get out your checkbook for the
past year? What does it say about you? It might
say:

This man cares more about entertainment—
football, hunting, fishing, golf, tennis, and mov-
ies than he does the Lord.

This man cares more about civic interests—
clubs, community projects, and the Red Cross
than he does about the lost.

This man cares more about vacations and
traveling (just look at those gas bills) than he
does about the expansion of the kingdom of God.

This man cares more about temporal security
—bonds, stocks, and other investments than he
does about treasures in heaven.

Would you be ashamed if suddenly your
checkbook began to blab the truth about you to
all your friends and neighbors?

Deceased

Parenting

Tom Moore

One Sunday a preacher was entertained in a
farm home of a family of a rural church. The
preacher was impressed by the intelligence and
unusually good behavior of their only child, a
little four-year-old boy. Then the preacher dis-
covered one reason for the child’s charm. The
mother was at the kitchen sink, washing the in-
tricate parts of the cream separator when the little
boy came to her with a magazine. “Mother,” he
asked, “what is this man in the picture doing?”
To the preacher’s surprise she dried her hands,
sat down on a chair and taking the boy in her lap,
she spent several minutes answering her son’s
questions.

After the child had left, the preacher com-
mented on her having interrupted her chores to
answer the boy’s questions, saying, “Most
mothers wouldn’t have been bothered.” “I expect
to be washing cream separators for the rest of my
life,” she told the preacher, “but never again will
my son ask me that question.” “A child left to
himself bringeth his mother to shame” (Pro.
29:15). Think about it!

823 North Main Street; Malvern, AR 72104
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May 5, 2004  
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Invitation: Bill Busch

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Broken Clocks and Broken Books

Bill Haywood

There is no shortage of religious books available today. Many of these books have some good content, but that is not to say that they are all good books.

There is an old saying that even a broken clock is right twice a day. Most of us know when a clock has stopped, and we are bright enough to know if a clock is off by many hours. But what if a clock is only off by ten minutes? Ten minutes is not much, or is it? What if you are ten minutes late for an airline flight? What if you are ten minutes late for a job interview? What if the groom arrives at his wedding ten minutes late? Some things do matter!

Many of the religious books that are hot-sellers are not off by hours but minutes. Dangerously important minutes! Some books are full of doublespeak. Others are filled with blatant error.

One such example is *The Purpose Driven Life* by Rick Warren. Warren is the “Pastor” of the Saddleback Community Church in Lake Forest, California. Saddleback has become the Mega-church model for churches that want to attract thousands of members. Incidentally the Lord’s people already have a model church that we follow. The Holy Spirit has revealed the ideal church within the pages of Scripture, and we are exhorted to follow that pattern (Heb. 8:5; 1 Tim. 1:13). As a writer Warren is good. The book is extremely popular. Because of the popularity of this book I purchased it several months ago so I would know something about it. There are some good points but I would describe it as a broken
Warren is sloppy in the interpretation of Scripture and regularly puts into the biblical text what he desires to find rather than digging out of the text what is actually there to be found. Let me share just a few examples.

On page 34 Warren incorrectly states, “God won’t ask about your religious background or doctrinal views. The only thing that will matter is, did you accept what Jesus did for you?” Now consider what Jesus had to say, “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. 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? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity” (Mat. 7:21-23). Jesus said we must do the will of the Father! Here in Matthew 7 are folks who would say “We have accepted Jesus!” Yet, Jesus says “I never knew you.”

On page 58 Warren discusses the importance of commitment to Christ. He writes “Real life begins by committing yourself completely to Jesus Christ...all you need to do is receive and believe.” I would agree that to experience the best life one must be committed to Jesus. But it is wrong to say all you have to do is “receive and believe.” Jesus said we must repent (Luke 13:3). Jesus said we must confess Him before men (Mat. 10:32-33). Jesus said we must be baptized (Mark 16:16). Jesus said we must be faithful unto death (Rev. 2:10). Warren’s view of receiving does not include acts of obedience, as the next point will illustrate.

On page 120 you will find this statement: “Baptism doesn’t make you a member of God’s family, only faith in Christ does that.” That cannot be reconciled with Scripture. Consider 1 Corinthians 12:13: “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body.” Ephesians 1:22-23 tells us the body is the church. The church is the “household [family] of God” (Eph. 2:19). Warren’s view is that baptism is important but not essential to salvation. The Scripture certainly states that baptism is essential to salvation (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; Rom. 6:1-5; Gal. 3:27; 1 Pet. 3:21).

On page 58 Warren explains “Warren’s plan of salvation.” “I invite you to bow your head and quietly whisper the prayer that will change your eternity: ‘Jesus, I believe in you and I receive you’” He continues on page 59 to say that if you said that prayer sincerely you are now part of the family of God. That is Warren’s plan but not God’s plan! The idea of the one completely outside of Christ being made right by reciting the “sinners prayer” is foreign to the Bible. I agree God does not ask man to earn his salvation, but it is a grievous thing to add to the Scripture what is not in Scripture (Rev. 22:18-19). The “sinners prayer” is an addition of man!

This book has some interesting and even good insights, but The Purpose Driven Life is not a guide for your spiritual journal. The Word of God is your guide! “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). We gain a knowledge of Him (Jesus) through the Word (John 6:44-45).

There is presently a lot of excitement in the religious world about this book. We need to be excited about The Book, the Holy Spirit inspired, inherent, perfect will of God, the Bible.

Copied

Editor’s Note: Sadly there are some congregations in our area who are using this book in their “Bible” teaching program. It seems strange to me that Christians must go to the denominational world to teach us how to live the Christian life!
### Great New Testament Questions

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Reading/Invitation

May 5, 2004
Reading: Daniel Hatcher
Invitation: Bill Busch

May 12, 2004
Reading: Bryan Loy
Invitation: Bill Crowe

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assignment cards handed out.

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May 16, 2004—Visitation Group 1
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May 16, 2004—Elders/Deacons' meeting at
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May 23, 2004—Visitation Group 2
assignment cards handed out.

May 26, 2004—Adult Bible classes video
series at 7:00 PM, in the auditorium.

Pantry Item Needed

Canned Vegetables
Mother’s Day

Curtis L. E. Graves

Mother’s Day. I hope you have already sent your card or bought your present or perhaps both. Mother’s Day is of course not a special religious day to be observed. It is good, however, to have a day on which we can honor our mothers. It would be even better to show our honor for them every day. That can be done in a number of ways. Perhaps that is a topic we can talk about later.

For this article I want to look at some other ideas. For instance: Mothers are people that have always been considered to be special. In Genesis 3:20 we read, “And Adam called his wife’s name Eve; because she was the mother of all living.” It is also said of Sarah in Genesis 17:16: “And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her: yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her.” Notice also the following passages: “And they blessed Rebekah, and said unto her, Thou art our sister, be thou the mother of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them” (Gen. 24:60). “The inhabitants of the villages ceased, they ceased in Israel, until that I Deborah arose, that I arose a mother in Israel” (Jud. 5:7). “He maketh the barren woman to keep house, and to be a joyful mother of children. Praise ye the LORD” (Psa. 113:9). “For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother’s womb” (Psa. 139:13).

No woman should ever feel that there is something wrong with being a mother or a “stay home mother” or a “homemaker.” Mothers should be honored (Exo. 20:12; 21:15, 17; Lev.)
There is no evading this simple truth. The parent that so treats and impresses his child is the worst enemy that the child has. He will be made to feel this when he meets that child at the judgment of God. It is better to face the questions honestly now. Think about it!

Author Unknown

19:3; 20:9; Deu. 5:16; Pro. 20:20; 28:24; Mat. 15:4-6). Children should obey their mothers in those things that do not violate God’s will (Pro. 1:8; 6:20; 10:1; Deu. 21:18-19; Eph. 6:2). At the same time mothers should also be concerned for their children (Jud. 5:28; 1 Sam. 2:19; 1 Kin. 3:27). We have examples in the Bible of many who were good mothers. We also have examples of those who were not (2 Chr. 22:3).

Mothers, determine that you will be good examples for your children and the world to see being obedient to God in all things. Children, see to the needs of your mothers and obey her. Jesus did (John 19:26-27; Luke 2:51).

1021 Mt. Pleasant Rd; Chesapeake, VA 23322

It Is Spring Again

Frank Chesser

It is Spring again. Naked branches clothe themselves with splendorous color. Brooks sparkle with new life as they course their way through woods and meadows of green. Birds sing, nest, and fly incessantly in search of food for hungry mouths. Butterflies wing their way through sunlit skies. Fish spawn, flowers bloom and grow and newly attired boughs sway gently in balmy breezes as the symphony of nature sings its songs of joy.

It is Spring again. Members of the kingdom once saved by grace and redeemed by blood have rejoined the ways of the world. Nature robes itself, and man disrobes. Skimpy apparel becomes commonplace. Snakes shed their skin, and men shed their clothes. Professed Christians cease walking by faith.

In shame, Adam and Eve hid among the trees of Eden. Void of shame, many in spiritual Israel put their partially clad form on public display. Emerging from the womb of winter, nature arrays itself in resplendent color. Rising from the sphere of worldliness, the image of God wraps itself in the cloak of lasciviousness. Purity gives way to lust.

Teaching on modesty in dress is seldom done and when done, is largely ignored. Such efforts are viewed as archaic and out-of-touch with the times. The extreme permissiveness of modern society has blinded the minds of many in the church with regard to the very essence of spirituality. In matters of dress, there is often no distinction to be seen between members of the church and members of the world. Such people are viewed by those in the world as no different from themselves, and thus, have nullified their spiritual magnetism in drawing men to Christ.

There is no justification for joining Spring’s parade of flesh. Participation cancels the light of one’s influence and aligns him with the world. It is wholly inconsistent with the principle of holiness “without which no man shall see the Lord” (Heb. 12:14). It is lascivious in its very nature, and “they who practise such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God” (Gal. 5:21).

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Marge Williams, Ella Hammac, Joyce
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(Linda Worley’s daughter), and Mildred
Johnson (Howard Johnson’s mother).

Reading/Invitation
May 12, 2004
Reading: Bryan Loy
Invitation: Bill Crowe
May 19, 2004
Reading: Jim Loy
Invitation: Dale Cunningham

Mark These Dates
May 9, 2004–Visitation Group 2
assignment cards handed out.
May 9, 2004–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00
PM, in room 7.
May 16, 2004–Visitation Group 1
assignment cards handed out.
May 16, 2004–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at
5:00 PM, in room 7.
May 23, 2004–Visitation Group 2
assignment cards handed out.
May 26, 2004–Adult Bible classes video
series at 7:00 PM, in the auditorium.
Jun 6, 2004–Pre-lectureship meeting after
the evening service, in room 1. Those
who have assigned duties should plan
to be there. The meeting is however,
opened to everyone.

Pantry Items Needed
Peanut Butter and Jelly
The Church is to be Pure

Toney L. Smith

The New Testament teaches that the church is the bride of Christ. Ephesians 5:22-33 shows the relationship of Christ to the church. There is a clear comparison between the marriage relationship and that of Christ and the church. A wife is to maintain purity and fidelity to her husband (the husbands as well). Her goal should be to bring honor and respect to her husband, never doing that which would defile the relationship. The church should be thus minded. As the bride of Christ we should always strive to be pure and maintain a life that would bring honor to our head.

The church must be **pure in doctrine**. God has provided the church with the doctrine which it is to teach and by which it is to live (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Christ taught the doctrine which was given Him by the Father (John 5:30; 7:16-18) and in turn the apostles, by direction of the Holy Spirit continued to deliver the message from God (John 14:26; 16:13; Acts 2:4; 1 Cor. 14:37). The early church was busy in teaching and promoting the pure message of salvation. They continued in the apostle’s doctrine (Acts 2:42) and were admonished to hold fast to sound doctrine (1 Tim. 1:3-7; Gal. 1:8-9; Jam. 1:21). The church has a great responsibility to maintain its purity. This certainly begins with sound doctrine. When the bride of Christ refuses to fight against error and shuns its responsibility to put away false doctrines, it becomes guilty of spotting and staining the good name of her head.

The bride of Christ is to be **pure in living**. Every Christian has this responsibility (Tit. 2:10;
Every individual is accountable (2 Cor. 5:10). Does this individual responsibility remove the responsibility we have to others in the body? No, we all have a responsibility to one another, thus maintaining the purity of the body. Who is responsible? Who must be on guard to keep away things which would hinder the purity of Christ’s bride? The answer is clear. Every member! The elders (Heb. 13:17), the preachers (2 Tim. 4:2-4), and every member (1 Th. 5:14-15; Gal. 6:1-2).

Maintaining the purity of the church sometimes requires discipline. One example of this is found in 1 Corinthians 5:1-13. The church at Corinth was allowing a sinful condition to go unchecked. Paul said to them, “Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?” (v. 6). Clearly, Paul is saying that when sin is allowed to disrupt the purity of Christ’s bride the whole church is affected. Just as yeast permeates the whole lump, sin, which is tolerated, will multiply throughout the body.

We do not have enough space to list all that causes the bride to become impure. Congregations become unfaithful to the head of the church when they fail to carry out every command from God. Remember, it is up to us to keep the bride pure.

The Progressive Nature of Sin

Marvin Weir

The Bible has much to say regarding the dangers of sin. James warns, “Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death” (Jam. 1:13-15). The subject of sin must be carefully studied because the consequences of impenitent sins are eternally disastrous. There are numerous examples given in the Scriptures to substantiate the fact that sin is progressive.

First, Genesis 3 reveals the progressive nature of Eve’s sin. She allowed herself to doubt the Word of God, and then the slide downward became easier. Such is always the case! Next Eve saw the forbidden fruit, then took, ate, and gave it to her husband.

Second, we see the same steps occurring in the heart of Achan. The people were forbidden to take “devoted things,” or the spoils of war. Achan confessed his sin by saying he saw, coveted, took, and bid the treasures in the earth beneath his tent (Jos. 7:21).

Third, the Psalmist warns that a downward spiral begins by walking in the counsel of the wicked, standing in the way of sinners, and finally sitting in the seat of the scoffers (Psa. 1:1).

For the child of God, the last state (falling from grace, or becoming entangled again in sin) is worse than the first (an alien sinner)! It is better not to have known truth than to know truth and run from it (2 Pet. 2:20-22).

In recent years we have seen the progressive nature of sin practiced in the Lord’s church by those of liberal and modernistic persuasion. Peter’s words will echo in all apostates ears in that day!
Great New Testament Questions
29th Annual Bellview Lectures: June 12-16

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7:45 PM  “By what authority doest thou these things?” Mat. 21:23  David Brown

Sunday, June 13
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10:00 AM  “To Whom shall we go?” John 6:68  Greg Lewis

Lunch Break

2:00 PM  “What is truth?” John 18:38  Eddie Whitten
3:00 PM  “For what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?” Heb. 12:7  Gary Summers

Dinner Break

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7:45 PM  “Is Christ Divided?” 1 Cor. 1:13  Michael Shepherd

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1:30 PM  “Why stand ye here all the day idle?” Mat. 20:6  Larry Powers
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3:30 PM  Open Forum:

Dinner Break

7:00 PM  “How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?” Heb. 2:3  Gary Colley
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10:00 AM  “How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?” Luke 1:34  Curtis Cates
11:00 AM  “Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth?” Luke 12:51  Jerry Murrell

Lunch Break

1:30 PM  “Carest thou not that we perish?” Mark 4:38  Terry Hightower
2:30 PM  “What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness?” 2 Cor. 6:14  Tim Smith
3:30 PM  Open Forum:

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7:00 PM  “Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?” Luke 6:46  Charles E. Orr
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7:45 PM  “Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?” Gal. 4:16  Ronnie Hayes
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Marilyn Hall, Neva Bryant (Tandem Health Care), Ruby Bowman, Lucille Staples, Ray Dodd, Marge Williams, Ella Hammac, Mildred Hall, April Hadnagy (Linda Worley’s daughter), and Mildred Johnson (Howard Johnson’s mother).

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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 29th Annual Bellview Lectureship. The cost (if it is not an upgrade) will be $65.00 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 2004. 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 the lectureship books are out of print and at present this is the only way you can obtain that material. The cost of the CD goes for the purchase of these books. You are paying $65.00 for seventeen lectureship books and receiving the other three for a total of twenty lectureship books. Thus, you are receiving seventeen 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, 1972-2003 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: Joshua, Philémon, James, 2 & 3 John, and Jude. These are basically commentaries covering every verse in those books.

Additional material includes An Approach to Moral Questions and 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, *The Book God "Breathed" Vols. 1 & 2*. 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 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 Kingsism) 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. Paul Vaughn has two books on the CD: *Daniel: A Man Who Trusted In God* and *Notes On the Book of Hebrews*. We also have Ira Y. Rice, Jr.'s *Basic Bible Course*. This material is also located on our Internet web page. 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.

**"A New Commandment That Is Old"**

1 John 2:7-11

In these verses John offers a standard which shows that one truly is a child of God. He emphasizes the need to love as Christ loved. The heart of this passage is based in the fact that walking in the steps of Jesus means to walk in love. Let us observe from 1 John 2:7-11 these three things:

1. **THE OLD COMMANDMENT** (v. 7).
   The phrase "from the beginning" refers to the beginning of the Christian age. He says "ye have heard from the beginning." There had always been a command to love, but now the command was emphasized even more. Paul summed up the Christian’s responsibility in these words, “by love serve one another” and “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Gal. 5:13-15). John was not giving them something they did not know.

2. **THE NEW COMMANDMENT** (vv. 8-11). The word for new is *kainos* meaning new in character (2 Cor. 5:17). Thus requiring a different measure than before. This new kind of love was stressed in the new age (Christian age). Jesus said, “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another” (John 13:34). This new love was a way to demonstrate ones discipleship. Notice that darkness is gone and the true light shines. Christianity came and men are now to walk in the light (1 John 1:7; John 1:4-5).

3. **LESSONS TO LEARN.** (1) A proof of walking in the light, is love for the brethren (v. 9); (2) Love of our brethren is equated with being in fellowship with God (v. 9); (3) Walking in the light removes stumbling (v. 10); and (4) The darkness makes us blind (v. 11).

*Author Unknown*
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7:45 PM “Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?” Gal. 4:16
Sick
Please remember in your prayers:
Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Marilyn Hall,
Neva Bryant (Tandem Health Care), Ruby
Bowman, Lucille Staples, Ray Dodd,
Marge Williams, Ella Hammac, Mildred
Hall, April Hadnagy (Linda Worley’s
dughter), Mildred Johnson (Howard
Johnson’s mother), and John Moore (Gabe
Moore’s brother).

Reading/Invitation
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Reading: Gabe Moore
Invitation: Ray Foshee
June 2, 2004
Reading: Shelby Nall
Invitation: Louis Herrington

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New Arrival
Our congratulations is extended to Jim
and Nancy Loy in the birth of their grand-
son, Quinn Maddux Brazell, on May 17, to
Jamie and Scot Brazell. He weighed 9
pounds 9.3 ounces and was 21 inches long.
Our congratulations is also extended to
Rubye Bailey, his great-grandmother.
Whose Side Are You On?

Sam Dilbeck

Like schoolboys on the playground drawing a line in the sand to challenge each other’s Royalty, power, and valor, so God challenges us. “He that is not with me is against me” (Mat. 12:30). Drawing His own line of obedience, He challenges us to cross it. But what will happen if we accept His challenge?

Loyalty

First, by crossing His line through obedience, we show our loyalties to Him and His cause. Similar to the boys’ challenge of all supporters to cross the line, so God calls us to cross. In so doing, we demonstrate our desire to ally ourselves with Him; our choice to be forever loyal to Him; our intent to pledge our service to Him wholly; and finally, our longing to be His children.

On the other hand, by refusing or delaying obedience, we proclaim our loyalty to the devil. If we are not wholly for, or allied with Him, we are completely, totally and wholly against Him (Mat. 12:30). By not choosing obedience, we remain children of the devil (1 John 3:10). In fact, not only are we the devil’s children, we are doing his will (John 8:44). One does not have to draw pentagrams, burn candles, or sacrifice animals to Satan to do his will. Satan is satisfied when we only refuse or delay obeying God!

Where are your loyalties?

Power

Second, when we obey and cross God’s line in the sand, we show our submission to His power and authority to rule the universe and rule our lives. Many times on the playground, it is the bully that draws the line and calls for others to
join him. The masses usually follow because of the bully’s strength and authoritative presence. Though God is not a bully, He does have incomparable strength and the authoritative presence of the universe. By obeying His Will, we acknowledge and submit to Him (Rom. 6:16-18) and His authority (Mat. 28:18; 1 Cor. 15:27).

Rebellion toward obedience is a sign of following the wrong authority. The only right authority to follow is the authority of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23). Aside from this source, all other sources are impotent and sinful. By following other men, we declare that God is no better than the common human. By following our instincts, emotions, or intellect, we condemn our souls to destruction (Pro. 14:12; Jer. 10:23). Following creed books, manuals, church disciplines, confessional, and catechisms, we elevate humanity to deity and dethrone God. Yea, by refusing to cross that line, we challenge the power and authority of the Creator (Rom. 9:20f).

To whose power do you submit?

Valor

Valor has to do with bravery. In the case of God’s line in the sand, crossing it manifests valor. God has not promised a life of ease and peace from the world. In fact, the world hates those who cross the line (John 15:18-19). The world mocks and ridicules those obedient to God (2 Tim. 3:12; 1 Pet. 4:4). But, for those brave enough to cross over to God’s side, blessings and life await (Mat. 5:12).

Cowardice consumes those who wait to obey. Fear of commitment plagues many, because they see alliance with God as too demanding. True, Satan does make allegiance with him easier and less threatening than God, but all of his allies will fall with him on the Day of Judgment. Some are afraid of the attacks and persecution associated with being a Christian, however, God assures us that these are nothing to fear (Mat. 10:28).

So, are you brave enough to cross that line?

It behooves each of us to check the book and see if we have crossed His line on His terms. We cannot buy our way past; we cannot sneak past, or fake our way past the line. The only way to cross over is in the hand of God, carried by His grace based upon your obedience. Anything short of this and we remain treasonous, powerless cowards!

Fifteen Reasons Why We Say “The church of Christ”

1. Christ built it (Mat. 16:18).
2. Christ called it “His” (Mat. 16:18).
3. It is “His” body (Eph. 1:22).
4. He is the chief cornerstone (Eph. 2:20).
5. It is His own house (Heb. 3:6).
6. He gave Himself for it (Eph. 5:26-27).
7. It is His wife (2 Cor. 11:2; Rev. 19:9).
8. He is the Savior of the body (Eph. 5:27).
9. He is the Head of all things to it (Eph. 1:22).
10. The Lord added to it “such as should be saved” (Acts 2:47).
11. We are all baptized into one body (1 Cor. 12:13).
12. The one body is the church (Eph. 1:22).
13. All baptized believers are the church (1 Cor. 1:12).
14. The connecting link through the ages is the “Seed,” the Word of God (Luke 8:11).
15. Eternal life in Christ is the goal of all (John 10:27-28).

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Invitation: Louis Herrington
June 9, 2004
Reading: Richard Parker
Invitation: Ray Pierce

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June 20, 2004–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
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June 23, 2004–Adult Bible classes video series at 7:00 PM, in the auditorium.
June 27, 2004–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
June 30, 2004–Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00 PM, in the auditorium.

Pantry Items Needed
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“Contend for the Faith” (Jude 3-4)

Wade Webster

Jude wrote, “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. For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ” (Jude 3-4). Jude saw the need to write the brethren and to exhort them to “earnestly contend for the faith” because of false teachers that had “crept in unawares.” Jude could write this same letter to any host of congregations today. Let us notice three things that these verses teach the Christian about contending for the faith.

First, we see the manner in which we are to contend. Jude said that we are to earnestly contend. The phrase earnestly contend is literally “to wrestle, strive, or agonize.” The secular writers used these words to describe the intense effort that the athletes put forth to win the Grecian games of the first century. Paul, in comparing the Christian life to a race, used similar terminology (1 Cor. 9:24-25). Likewise, the phrase earnestly contend, describes the intense efforts which are to characterize the faithful as they stand for the truth. We cannot give a halfhearted stand for truth and fulfill this command. The Lord has never been satisfied with those that are trying to remain in the middle
between what is right and what is wrong. He condemned the Laodiceans for their luke-warmness and the congregations of Pergamos and Thyatira because they failed to stand against the false teachers that were among them (Rev. 3:14-16; 2:12-15, 20). We must never be “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).

Second, we see the message for which we are to contend. Jude said that we are to earnestly contend for “the faith.” The phrase the faith stands for the system of faith that we have revealed for us in the New Testament. For example, in the book of Galatians we read concerning Paul, “But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed” (Gal. 1:23). Also, in the book of Acts we read that “a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith” (Acts 6:7). As Christians, we are not to contend for just any religious doctrine, but, rather, for what the New Testament teaches.

Third, we see the men with whom we are to contend. Jude wrote, “For there are certain men crept in unawares” (Jude 4). Here, Jude told the brethren the men against whom they were to contend for the faith—false teachers. These false teachers were trying to turn “the grace of our God into lasciviousness.” Jude wanted the brethren to stand up for the truth, which included standing against these false teachers. After warning the brethren of the presence of the false teachers, Jude begins a lengthy description of the false teachers to help the brethren to be able to detect them (vv. 8-16). Jude wanted these brethren to have the attitude that Paul expressed in the book of Galatians. Paul wrote, “And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: 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). We are not to harbor false teachers but rather to mark and avoid them (Rom. 6:17-18). False teachers may appear to be the ministers of righteousness, but they are in reality the ministers of Satan (2 Cor. 11:15). We must not support them in any way lest we become partakers or ministers of their evil deeds and suffer with them in their condemnation (2 John 9-11).

Jude wrote the brethren to teach them the manner in which they were to contend, the message for which they were to contend, and the men against whom they were to contend. May we also heed Jude’s words and stand against the false teachers of our day who are making “havoc of the church.”

980 Meridian Road; Crossville, TN 38555
Great New Testament Questions
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Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Marilyn Hall, Neva Bryant (Tandem Health Care), Ruby Bowman, Lucille Staples, Ray Dodd, Marge Williams, Ella Hammac, Mildred Hall, and Mildred Johnson (Howard Johnson’s mother).

Reading/Invitation
June 9, 2004
Reading: Richard Parker
Invitation: Ray Pierce
June 16, 2004
Bellview Lectures

Mark These Dates
June 6, 2004–Pre-lectureship meeting after the evening service, in room 1. Those who have assigned duties should plan to be there. The meeting is however, opened to everyone.
June 6, 2004–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
June 20, 2004–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
June 20, 2004–Lectureship critique after the evening service, in room 1.
June 23, 2004–Adult Bible classes video series at 7:00 PM, in the auditorium.
June 30, 2004–Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00 PM, in the auditorium.

Pantry Items Needed
Peanut Butter and Jelly
A Summer in Harmony With God

Andy Cates

The summer months are upon us, and what a beautiful time of year it is. The springtime has brought a resurrection of new life. The trees are now lush with green foliage, and the flowers are bursting with blooms. The warm weather brings a time of family outings including picnics and all sorts of recreational activities. During this time of the year, we must continue to be active in keeping up our guard against Satan’s ploys. He uses the summer to his advantage in numerous ways.

Immodest Apparel: During the summer months, few are the places we can go and not be surrounded by people who are scantily clad. God’s Word clearly condemns the wearing of immodest clothing. Following God’s creation of Adam and Eve, “they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed” (Gen. 2:25). However, after they sinned, “the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons” (Gen. 3:7). With sin the shame of nakedness, and even their aprons of fig leaves were not enough clothing, as we read that “God make coats of skins, and clothed them” (Gen. 3:21). In Mark 5:15 we are told that the man who had previously been demon-possessed, was “clothed, and in his right mind.” This implies that while demon-possessed and not in his right mind, he was naked. One may ask, “Where is the line drawn between modesty and immodesty?” When a person dresses in a way that can cause impure thoughts in another, that person’s attire is immodest, which is sinful. In our
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Updated CD
The 1988-2004 books, all Defender issues of 1970, 1972-2003, along with numerous other books, tracts, and studies are available on computer disk in Adobe Acrobat Reader (PDF) format (making it useful for both Intel and Macintosh computers). The Acrobat Reader is also provided on the CD. The CD is completely indexed allowing searches of all the books at the same time (you can find every occurrence of a word or phrase such as “baptism for the remission of sins” in every book at the same time). The cost of the CD is only $65 plus postage/handling fee of $1.25 (total is $66.25) in which you receive all the lectureship books (less than $5 per book) and other material. If you purchased a previous version of our CD, then check with us for an upgrade at a significant reduction in price upon the return of the previous CD. Take advantage of this great offer. Order from Bellview Church of Christ.

dress, let us “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil” (1 Th. 5:21-22).

Mixed Swimming: This topic ties in with “immodest apparel.” Mixed swimming involves those of the opposite sex wearing the immodest clothing of swimsuits, bikinis, etc. Again, this is condemned by God’s law, as noted above. When going to the beach, let us locate one that is secluded. Thankfully, there are still a few of those left that we can enjoy with our families.

Faithful Attendance of Services When on Vacation: When summer comes, families often go on vacation, but we must never take a vacation from God. When Jacob heard that his beloved son Joseph was alive, he set out for Egypt to see him (Gen. 45:26-28). However, on his way, Jacob stopped at Beersheba to offer sacrifices to God (Gen. 46:1). Jacob is an example to us. He showed what was first priority in his life. He, no doubt, could not wait to be reunited with his son, but that did not keep him from stopping and worshiping the Almighty. Some people wrongly believe that if they are not in the vicinity of their home congregation, they do not have to attend the services of the church. When we travel, we should seek to be in places where the saints will be assembling at the regular times of worship. “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching” (Heb. 10:25). Attendance of every service is a command of God, at home and away. Our love for the Lord and our desire to worship Him should not end when we pull out of the driveway on vacation.

May we enjoy the summer, but let us ever be aware of Satan’s desire to pull us away from God. “But seek ye first the kingdom of God” (Mat. 6:33).
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(Sandy Wilkes' daughter-in-law).

Reading/Invitation
June 16, 2004
Bellview Lectures
June 23, 2004
Reading: Carl Ayliffe
Invitation: Fred Stancliff

Mark These Dates
June 20, 2004–Visitation Group 2 assign-
ment cards handed out.
June 20, 2004–Lectureship critique after
the evening service, in room 1.
June 23, 2004–Adult Bible classes video
series at 7:00 PM, in the auditorium.
June 26, 2004–Baby Shower for Julie
Moore. See Karen Hatcher, Karen
Ayliffe, or Iris Gallaher for details.
June 30, 2004–Fifth Wednesday Singing at
7:00 PM, in the auditorium.
July 4, 2004–Visitation Group 1 assign-
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July 11, 2004–Visitation Group 2 assign-
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July 11, 2004–Deacons meeting held at
5:00 PM, in room 7.
July 18, 2004–Visitation Group 1 assign-
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July 18, 2004–Elders/Deacons meeting
held at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
The Final Judgment

Tim Smith

“When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats” (Mat. 25:31-32).

“But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only” (Mat. 24:36).

“Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not” (Luke 12:40).

“For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night” (1 The. 5:2).

“Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh” (Mat. 24:44).

“For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works” (Mat. 16:27).

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; 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).

“So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God” (Rom. 14:12).
Lectures on the Internet

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Is the Church Costing Too Much?

Last Sunday another golfer sank the last putt on the 18th green and received a check for $50,000 for four rounds of golf plus an automobile for himself and one for his wife. This week the papers reported that a certain popular singer will receive $100,000 per week for her current singing engagement. Americans spend annually more on dog food than on church contributions. It is not unusual for an individual to pay more for his country club membership than he gives to the church. Is the church costing too much?

Let me share an experience with you. On June 2, 1940, a little girl was born to us. She cost us money from the moment she was born. As she grew from babyhood to girlhood, she cost even more...her dresses and shoes were more expensive and we had to have the doctor through all those childhood diseases. She was even more expensive during her school and teen years. She needed long dresses to go to parties. When she went to college, we discovered, along with other parents, that all the college expenses are not listed in the catalogue. Then after graduation she fell in love and married. She was married in a church wedding and that, too, cost a lot of money.

Then, five months after her marriage, she suddenly sickened and within a week she was dead. She has not cost us a penny since the day we walked away from her grave.

As long as the church is alive she will cost money, and the more alive a church is, the more money she will cost. Only a dead church, like a dead child, is no longer expensive.

Think it over. A church with a little more in one year than the above mentioned singer receives in one week of singing could minister to thousands both here and around the world. Is the church costing too much?

Author Unknown
**Great New Testament Questions**

29th Annual Bellview Lectures: June 12-16

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Reading/Invitation
June 23, 2004
Reading: Carl Ayliffe
Invitation: Fred Stancliff
June 30, 2004
Reading: Elward Brantley
Invitation: Henry Born

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The most treasured material possession of the youthful bride and the aging widow is her wedding band. More sentiment attaches to this small item than all the heirlooms of two families. It is, to her, much more than just costly gold and diamonds.

Exchanging rings is an ancient practice. Why has it continued? What is a wedding ring?

A wedding band secures a permanent commitment. A ring is made of materials which symbolize the permanence of the marriage relationship. In times when marriage has become a revolving door, rings dogmatically say, “What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder” (Mat. 19:6). A sad smile appears when considering what some have said: “I took a band of gold and made a twenty-four carat mistake”; “Too much matrimony ends in alimony”; “I found out we were not fit to be tied.” The ring constantly repeats the vow, “till death do us part.”

In early times, kings pressed state rings into a wax seal to make documents official (cf., Gen. 41:42; Est. 8:8). Two scripturally eligible people exchange rings on entering into an official lifetime relationship recognized by the state, society, and the Savior (Rom. 7:2).

A wedding ring symbolizes pure love. As the gold of which rings are made has been refined and purified, so the love of two people has been refined and strengthened during the courtship period. It will continue to grow purer through the years of matrimony as each learns better to: “love, cherish, and nourish.” “So ought men to
love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church” (Eph. 5:28-29). The wedding band stands for self-sacrificing love, not self-justifying lust (cf., Mat. 5:28). It stands for love which will remain: “In sickness and in health, in poverty and in wealth, for better or for worse.” As the ring is an endless circle, so the love of two people will go on throughout life.

A wedding ring serves as a practical reminder. Each time husbands and wives look to the third finger on their left hand, they are reminded that they belong to one another. The ring says to others, “I am not free to flirt because I am lovingly committed to my mate.

May God help all to see the significance of wedding rings!

P.O. Box 512; Jacksonville, AL 36265

How Elders and Preachers Can Effectively Assist Terminally Ill Members

Robert Hall

“It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting: for that is the end of all men; and the living will lay it to his heart” (Ecc. 7:2). When an elder or a preacher visits a member of the congregation who is terminally ill, he visits the house of mourning. Elizabeth Kubler-Ross in her book, On Death and Dying, describes five stages through which we pass in the process of grief. These stages of grief are shock and denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. When a close family member dies, an individual will go through the grief process. Most people accept this a normal behavior. But we must also accept the fact that an individual who learns that he or she is terminally ill will go through a grief process. One may actually mourn his or her own death before it occurs. Therefore, the terminally ill Christian should be allowed to mourn his or her own death.

One way that elders and preachers can assist is by giving the terminally ill member permission to mourn. Paul said, “weep with them that weep” (Rom. 12:15). Let the member know that he or she can be comfortable showing his or her emotions in your presence and that you are going to be comfortable showing yours. Furthermore, while you sorrow together remind the dying Christian, “that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope” (1 Th. 4:13). For “Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8), we have put our faith in Him, we have obeyed Him. Therefore, we belong to Him and are heirs according to promise (Gal. 3:26-29).

Elders and preachers can also assist the terminally ill member by assuring him or her that they will assist the surviving members in every way possible. A terminally ill individual is usually concerned about the welfare of loved ones that will be left behind. This concern is for their material well being as well as their spiritual maturing. The terminally ill member may be a father who has young children. He is concerned about who will help and guide them in understanding how to rightly divide the Scriptures and live their lives in harmony with God’s Holy Word. In such cases, elders and preachers have a tremendous opportunity as well as a great responsibility to help mold young lives to become faithful.
Finally, elders and preachers can be a great source of comfort to the family of the terminally ill member. I know of no better methods than prayer and reading with the family from the Holy Book given to us by the God of all comfort (2 Cor. 1:3). Paul said, “Wherefore comfort one another with these words” (1 Thes. 4:18). The principle is true for all of Scripture; God’s Word will comfort His faithful children.

**The Wrong Question**

*Gordon Smith*

Instead of “what has the church done for me?” would it not be better to ask, “what have I done for the church?”

Instead of “why don’t they visit me?” shouldn’t we ask, “how often do I visit?”

Instead of “why don’t I get more out of worship?” we should ask, “what do I put into worship?”

Instead of “why doesn’t he repent?” it should be, “do I need to repent?”

Instead of “why doesn’t the preaching satisfy me?” we should ask, “if I were preaching would I satisfy everyone?”

Instead of “why isn’t the church doing more?” we should ask, “what am I doing for the Lord?”

Instead of “why doesn’t he agree with what I have been taught?” it might be better if we ask, “am I certain that what I have been taught is scripturally correct?”

Examining others is one of our favorite pastimes. Examining ourselves is one of our least favorite. Yet the only way we can go to heaven is by examining ourselves (2 Cor. 13:5). What a wonderful world it would be if we would all recognize the truth.

**What If**

What if God could not take the time to bless us today because we could not take the time to thank Him yesterday?

What if God decided to stop leading us tomorrow because we did not follow Him today?

What if we never saw another flower bloom because we grumbled when God sent the rain?

What if God did not walk with us today because we failed to recognize it as His day?

What if God took away the Bible tomorrow because we would not read it today?

What if God took away His message because we failed to listen to the messenger?

What if God did not send His only begotten Son because He wanted us to be prepared to pay the price for sin.

What if the door of the church was closed because we did not open the door of our heart?

What if God stopped loving and caring for us because we failed to love and care for others?

What if God would not hear us today because we would not listen to Him?

What if God answered our prayers the way we answer His call to service?

What if God met our needs the way we give Him our lives?

Author Unknown
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Marilyn Hall, Neva Bryant (Tandem Health Care), Ruby Bowman, Lucille Staples, Ray Dodd, Marge Williams, Ella Hammac, Mildred Hall, Dick Lambert, Sarah Wilkes (Sandy Wilkes’ daughter-in-law), and Nancy Travis (William Weekley’s daughter).

Reading/Invitation
June 30, 2004
Reading: Elward Brantley
Invitation: Henry Born
July 7, 2004
Reading: Jerry Caine
Invitation: Paul Brantley

Mark These Dates
June 30, 2004–Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00 PM, in the auditorium.
July 4, 2004–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
July 11, 2004–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
July 11, 2004–Deacons meeting held at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
July 18, 2004–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
July 18, 2004–Elders/Deacons meeting held at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
July 25, 2004–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
July 28, 2004–Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 PM, in the auditorium.

1 Corinthians 13:6
“Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth.”
Can Judging Ever Be Proper?

Toney L. Smith

There is a lot of talk concerning judging in this day and time, and the conclusion can be carried to two extremes. The misunderstanding concerning this topic is compounded by the times in which we live. Our age dislikes doctrine and its restrictive principles. It craves liberties and compromise and advocates “anything goes for a quiet undisturbed lifestyle.” Really, our world dislikes anyone who will bring it face to face with responsibilities and sinful conduct. Consequently many go to Matthew 7:1-4 to advocate their idea of “no judging at all.” Some are prone to justify their lifestyles and want others to overlook sinful activities. It is, “I’ll leave you alone if you will leave me alone.”

The question we must answer is, “What does God say?” I believe that God intends and requires that we make judgments as to activities of self and of others. Let us observe some things relative to the topic: “Can Judging Ever Be Proper?”

1. Just what is judging? The word judge, krino (spivo), means to make a distinction; to separate; to exercise judgment upon; to call to account. The word does not mean to form an opinion. It is not imputing wrong motives for others actions. The wrong standard is never to be used, because that same standard will be applied to us (Mat. 7:2). Any judgment is to be based upon the proper standard, which is God’s Word.

2. What judgments are forbidden? It is true, we cannot pass the final judgment upon people. All will ultimately stand before the great judge in the last day (Mat. 25:31-33; Mat. 7:23). It is im-
proper to make judgments based upon the wrong standard. It must never be what I think or feel. All must be based upon God’s Word (1 John 4:1).

3. **What judgments must to be done?** In 1 Corinthians 5 Paul instructed the church to withdraw from the sinner. In 2 Thessalonians 3:6 we read, “Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly.” In doing so, proper judgments must be applied. We must oppose religious error and false teachers. Jesus did (Mat. 15:9), Paul taught the same (Gal. 1:9; 2 Tim. 2:16-17; Tit. 3:10). Jesus said, “Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment” (John 7:24). Even in Matthew 7 we are told that we could know “them by their fruits” (Mat. 7:15-16). And always remember, the purpose of making these judgments is encourage one to repent and save the soul (Luke 17:3; Mat. 18:15-17).

Let us be careful that we do not get caught up in the worldly mind-set with regard to this subject. Never try to elude correction based upon the false notion that others cannot make judgments and seek to restore the lost (Gal. 6:1-2). Just as Nathan came to David and said, “Thou art the man” (2 Sam. 12:7), we should be thankful that someone cared enough to correct.

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**Calvin’s Quandary**

*Daniel Denham*

The French theologian John Calvin (A.D. 1509-1564) built the system known as Calvinism on two basic inter-related assumptions. First, he assumed that God maintained complete, active, and sovereign control over even the most trivial of minutia in His government of the Universe. Everything that happens God directly causes to happen. He held to view of God that portrayed Him as a rigid and rigorous micro-managing Deity. Calvin also had a severe turn of mind himself (His classmates dubbed him “The Accusative Case”) and ascribed such an attitude to God. This severe view of the divine nature saw a Deity who was just waiting for man to get out of line so that He could punish him! Second, Calvin believed, like his mentor Augustine of Hippo (A.D. 354-430), that man was morally, totally depraved from conception (hence hereditary total depravity). The doctrine of original sin was a cornerstone in his view of man, which Calvin came to hold due to his erroneous assumption mentioned earlier relative to the nature of God. If man was totally depraved, then he could do nothing at all to save himself, and, by extension, once saved he could not do anything at all to be lost, but would surely persevere in his faith regardless. From these basic assumptions arose the key tenets of the T-U-L-I-P by way of the synod of Dort (A.D. 1618-1619), which formally codified the teachings of Calvin in opposition to Arminianism.

The basic problem of Calvinism and the subsequent quandary in which Calvin and his successors found themselves lies in these two assumptions. If man can do nothing at all to save himself because he is totally depraved (assumption #2), then he has no genuine free will. Without genuine free will he is nothing more than an automaton—doing only what he is made to do. If God is the One who makes him do
it, then God must be the author of every action in which men engage and this includes sin! Thus, Calvinism implies that God is the active author of sin. He made the Devil and his angels to sin, and He made man to sin. Every evil deed ultimately God willed to occur! If everything happens because God makes it happen (assumption #1), then even sin is actively caused by God who then punishes the sinner who complied with His fiat to sin! Thus, Calvinism in turn implies that God is not really a just God. He is reduced to a meta-physical monster responsible for every evil act and thought that men and angels may commit. Every murder, including Hitler’s murder of six million Jews, and every sexual deviancy, including incest and pedophilia, God is culpable for as to its causation.

Calvin himself wrestled with the question of free will, but ultimately came down on the side of Augustine’s view of depravity that precluded any ability to choose to counter. The result is a tragic doctrine that impugns the character of God and enslaves Calvinism’s adherents to a system that corrupts man’s understanding of himself and cripples the cultural ethos. Edward Palmer, a noted Calvinist, stated that God “has foreordained everything” to such an extent that it includes “the moving of a finger, the beating of an heart, the laughter of a girl, the mistake of a typist—even sin.” The implications of such a doctrine are immense and devastating. The Christian system bears no semblance to Calvinism!

Calvinism also cannot provide any effective and compelling answer to atheism’s argument from evil. God, according to Calvinism, is the author of evil: so any attempt at an answer from its premises is doomed to failure from the start. Calvinists are forced to talk inane about “the mystery of suffering,” etc. They say that rather than focusing on the pain and evil in the world, men should focus on the good things that God has ordained, which sounds nice on the surface, unless one is faced with the anguish of watching a loved one being tortured to death by a sadistic murderer or a child crushed by car driven by a drunkard. Calvinism implies the murderer murders because God makes him do it, and the drunkard and his driving are as much God’s handiwork as the lilies of the field and the sparrows of the air! Atheism rejoices at the prospect of confronting the failures of Calvinism.

Calvinism’s implication that God is unjust is seen especially in the frequently ignored doctrine of double predestination, also called pretention. Not only are the elect ones individually, unconditionally, and unchangeably predestinated to be saved as per Calvinism, but the non-elect are equally individually, unconditionally, and unchangeably predestinated to be lost! God, according to classic Calvinist teaching, predestinated the non-elect to sin, and to remain in sin, and thus to be forever lost in Hell fire. He would make them sin, and then would punish them for it. This He determined to do before the world even existed. He would elect them to be lost in order to damn them. Calvinists, not surprisingly, do not like to talk about this aspect of their view of predestination, which is founded upon the two false assumptions John Calvin made several centuries ago!

Calvinism is a false and pernicious system. Yet some of our brethren have become enamored with its view of salvation by grace alone through faith alone. Let us oppose it with every fiber of our being. It is a monstrous lie against the very nature of God. The wooden theology of Calvinism feeds the steam of atheism in our nation today!
Sick
Please remember in your prayers:
Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Marilyn Hall,
Neva Bryant (Tandem Health Care), Ruby
Bowman, Lucille Staples, Ray Dodd,
Marge Williams, Ella Hammac, Mildred
Hall, Dick Lambert, Sarah Wilkes (Sandy
Wilkes’ daughter-in-law), Nancy Travis
(William Weekley’s daughter), and
Norman Dodd (Ray Dodd’s cousin).

Reading/Invitation
July 7, 2004
Reading: Jerry Caine
Invitation: Paul Brantley
July 14, 2004
Reading: Jeremy Caine
Invitation: Bill Busch

Mark These Dates
July 4, 2004–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
July 10, 2004–Baby shower for Julie Moore at 3:00 PM. See Karen Hatcher,
Karen Ayliffe, or Iris Gallaher for details.
July 11, 2004–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
July 11, 2004–Deacons meeting held at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
July 18, 2004–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.

New Arrival
Our congratulations is extended to
Gabe and Julie Moore in the birth of their
son, Michael Braydon, born on June 22.
He weighed 6 pounds 14 ounces and was
19 inches long.
They Clap Their Hands and Shout; They Dance and Play, but They Do Not Burn Incense

Noah Hackworth

Introduction

Despite the fact that “all things must needs be fulfilled, which are written in the law of Moses, and the prophets, and the psalms, concerning me” (Luke 24:44), as Jesus said, we still have people who base their religion on “the law,” i.e., the Old Testament, or law of Moses. It is needful to know that the Old Testament is the New Testament concealed, and the New Testament is the Old Testament revealed. The law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, and having done so it has been nailed to the cross (cf., John 1:17; Acts 3:22-24; Gal. 3:24; Col. 2:14—ASV).

The Truth of the Matter

The Old Testament is not the standard by which we are obligated to live. Many people today have the same problem people had almost 200 years ago. When Alexander Campbell came to America from Antrim, Ireland he subsequently discovered that folks were not distinguishing between the Testaments. On one occasion, a large number of people insisted that Campbell preach. In Memoirs of Campbell, Richardson says:

On this occasion, which proved to be quite a memorable one, there was a large con-
course present, gathered around the stand, or seated within hearing beneath the shade of the beautiful leafy elms and toweling plane trees, which line the borders of the creek, as it winds through the picturesque valley enclosed by lofty hills. When Elder Cox concluded, Mr. Campbell rose, and delivered a discourse founded on Romans viii. 3: “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.” This was the famous “Sermon on the Law.”

Campbell, in his discourse that day, showed that Christians are under law to Christ, and not to Moses. According to Richardson, Campbell’s son-in-law, Campbell’s method was (1) ascertain what ideas we are to attach to the phrase “the law” in this and similar portions of Scripture; (2) point out those things which the law could not accomplish; (3) demonstrate the reasons why the law failed to accomplish these objects; (4) illustrate how God has remedied these relative defects of the law; and (5) deduce such conclusions from these premises as must obviously and necessarily present themselves to every unbiased mind.

The Same Mistake Today

There are people today who base what they do in worship on the Old Testament. They cite book, chapter, and verse for their practices. They clap their hands and shout; they dance, but they do not burn incense. We wonder why the latter is omitted. Since burning incense was a vital part of Old Testament religion, and since an appeal is made to the Old Testament for authority, why is it that only certain portions of the Old Testament are cited? James would have trouble with this because he said, “whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is become guilty of all” (2:10). It is a pitiful thing to appeal to an abrogated covenant (Eph. 2:15) for authority to “clap the hands,” “shout,” and “dance” in so-called worship.

In Spirit and in Truth

In spirit and in truth is ἐν πνεύμα καὶ ἀληθεία and refers to an attitude or disposition of the mind (a mind-set) coupled with truth, or according to the direction of truth. A worship that differs from the worship of John 4:24 is a false worship. William Barclay has pointed out that a false worship: (1) Selects what it wishes to know and understand about God, and omits what it does not wish. (2) Is an ignorant worship. In the last analysis, religion is never safe until a man can tell, not only what he believes, but why he believes it. (3) Is a superstitious worship. With regard to “true worship” which has the authority of the New Testament behind it, Jesus said, “for such doth the Father seek to be his worshipers” (John 4:23). The religious world, and some of our brethren as well, have a lopsided view of “spirit and truth.” With these folks it apparently is “all spirit” with little, if any, emphasis on “truth.” But what has to be remembered is that one without the other is invalid. Spirit and truth must come together just like faith and works.

The Refiner

There was a group of women in a Bible study on the book of Malachi. As they were studying chapter three, they came across verse three, which says: “he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver.” This verse puzzled the women and they wondered what this statement meant about the character and nature of God. One of the women offered to find out about the process of
refining silver and get back to the group at their next Bible study.

That week this woman called up a silver smith and made an appointment to watch him at work. She did not mention anything about the reason for her interest in silver beyond her curiosity about the process of refining silver. As she watched the silver smith, he held a piece of silver over the fire and let it heat up. He explained that in refining silver, one needed to hold the silver in the middle of the fire where the flames were hottest so as to burn away all the impurities. The woman thought about God holding us in such a hot spot—then she thought again about the verse,

That he sits as a refiner and purifier of silver.

She asked the silver smith if it was true that he had to sit there in front of the fire the whole time the silver was being refined. The man answered that yes, he not only had to sit there holding the silver, but he had to keep his eyes on the silver the entire time it was in the fire. If the silver was left even a moment too long in the flames, it would be destroyed. The woman was silent for a moment. Then she asked the silver smith, “How do you know when the silver is fully refined?” He smiled at her and answered, “Oh, that’s easy—when I see my image in it.”

“He Chickened Out”

David Sproule

She had certainly gained his favorable attention, but was obviously unaware of it. He had been watching her for some time, not really sure how to approach her or what to say to her. Some days he would come close to talking to her, but he would always “chicken out” at the last minute. At home, he would stand in front of the mirror, practicing the exact words, voice inflection and gestures he would use on that great, momentous occasion.

But he was nervous. As with anyone in his position, the thought that he might say something wrong or embarrass himself was ever-looming in his mind. But the thing that he feared the most was rejection. The thought of her saying, “No,” had caused him many times to walk away from the perfect opportunity to speak to her.

He was so nervous and fearful that he started looking for help. Interestingly enough, he started praying about it. He could so clearly picture the ideal end that he wanted to achieve, he thought God would help supply the means to reaching that end—namely the courage and guts to walk up to her and ask her. Still, he kept searching. He read books. He even found some classes which gave him some practical tips, some proven methods and some motivating thoughts, which inched him closer and closer to asking her.

But he delayed. The thought of rejection was overwhelming. The thought that he might say or do something that would destroy his “relationship” (if you want to call it that) with her held him back. Tragically, the day came when she was killed in a car accident. He had waited and waited and waited so long that his opportunity had forever passed. He would never be given the chance to ask her again. The special relationship that he sought to have with her would never become a reality. He would be haunted for the rest of his life, not knowing how she would have answered the question, “Will you come to church with me and have a Bible study?” How tragic!

Do not wait! Do not delay! Ask him or her today! (Do not chicken out!)
Sick
Please remember in your prayers:
Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Marilyn Hall,
Neva Bryant (Tandem Health Care), Ruby
Bowman, Lucille Staples, Ray Dodd,
Marge Williams, Ella Hammac, Mildred
Hall, Dick Lambert, Sarah Wilkes (Sandy
Wilkes’ daughter-in-law), and Nancy
Travis (William Weekley’s daughter).

Reading/Invitation
July 14, 2004
Reading: Jeremy Caine
Invitation: Bill Busch
July 21, 2004
Reading: Andrew Hatcher
Invitation: Bill Crowe

Mark These Dates
July 10, 2004–Baby shower for Julie
Moore at 3:00 PM, in the zone room.
See Karen Hatcher, Karen Ayliffe, or
Iris Gallaher for details.
July 11, 2004–Visitation Group 2 assign-
ment cards handed out.
July 11, 2004–Deacons meeting held at
5:00 PM, in room 7.
July 18, 2004–Visitation Group 1 assign-
ment cards handed out.
July 18, 2004–Elders/Deacons meeting
held at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
July 25, 2004–Visitation Group 2 assign-
ment cards handed out.
July 28, 2004–Adult Bible Classes Video
Series at 7:00 PM, in the auditorium.
August 1, 2004–Visitation Group 1 assign-
ment cards handed out.
August 8, 2004–Visitation Group 2 assign-
ment cards handed out.
Elders and a Desire to Serve

Lynn Parker

Certainly elders are to be men that have met qualifications set forth in Scripture (1 Tim. 3:1ff; Tit. 1:6ff). But let us narrow our study and look at an elder’s approach to the weighty work before him. The attitude of elders, and those that would be elders, is of utmost importance to the spiritual welfare of every congregation. As those that will give account for not only themselves, but also the flock over which they exercise oversight (Heb. 13:17), the bishops simply must be men that are mature, godly, well-balanced, and desiring to serve.

Being an Elder Is Hard Work

The Bible tells us, “Faithful is the saying, If a man seeketh the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work” (1 Tim. 3:1—ASV). The word translated seeketh means “to stretch oneself out in order to touch or grasp something, to reach after or desire something” (Thayer). Is it proper that a man desire to serve as an elder? Not only is it proper, it is essential that an elder desire the work, and a most burdensome and demanding work it is! It requires effort, energy, zeal, time, study, and much prayer. It is not fulfilled at three worship assemblies each week or by having one’s name on the bulletin masthead. Peter writes that God’s elders oversee the flock willingly and not of constraint (1 Pet. 5:2). L. R. Wilson correctly observed:

One should never undertake the work of an elder as a matter of compulsion. One who reluctantly attempts to do so will miserably fail. This great work cannot be successfully done with an unwilling spirit. No
matter how great the sacrifice or how arduous the task, it must be done cheerfully, gladly, and of a ready mind” (L. R. Wilson, Congregational Development, p. 26).

Pity the elder who would rather be doing something—anything—else than doing the work enjoined by God upon the pastors of the church. He views his work as a drudgery, perhaps an unwelcome burden, and he is an elder only because his arm was twisted. Pity the flock with whom this unwilling elder works as it will never receive the proper, due, diligent care from one who does not want to serve. A child would never enjoy confidence and security in a home where mom and dad were unwilling and unhappy to be parents. Let such an elder step down yesterday for the good of the church. Do not coerce such a man into serving—he is not qualified to be an elder.

The Diotrephes Syndrome

On the other hand is the ambitious man who covets the title elder for personal gain, personal promotion, or to further his personal agenda. The apostle of love warned of “Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them” (3 John 9). Here is the man who seeks to be an elder out of less than noble motives. Perhaps this man is absolutely convinced that he ought to be appointed an elder, and resents brethren who do not share his conviction. You surely have heard of someone who desires to rule or ruin, but the Bible states that the bishop cannot be a self-willed man (Tit. 1:7). In other words, he is not an arrogant, self-pleasing man. The Diotrephean attitude is one of “my way or the highway.” It is tyrannical and dictatorial. It is unapproachable. It craves applause, and gets intoxicated with authority. It is often associated with the man who is contentious, quick-tempered, and hyper-critical. Look among the chief critics of elders in any congregation and you may very well find a man who, although he will not admit it, is disgruntled because he was not appointed to be an overseer. Such an attitude proves that he has no business being an elder, and the congregation was wise in not appointing him.

God’s Man

So then, between two extremes is the proper attitude that humbly seek to serve, that love souls, and that finds joy in the most challenging and difficult of works. He gently leads the flock, protects it from error, and loves the precious church of our Lord more than life itself. Let us be thankful for faithful elders who desire to energetically serve. May we ever be co-workers with them and never discouragements to them. To you truly qualified, godly elders who exhort you to continue on in your good work, “And when the chief Shepherd shall be manifested, ye shall receive the crown of glory that fadeth not away” (1 Pet. 5:5).

**Christian Characteristics**

*Danny Box*

In 1 Corinthians 16:13-14, Paul wrote these words, “Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong. Let all your things be done with charity.” Contained in these two verses are five characteristics that all of us as Christians are to possess. Look with me at these.

**First the Christian is to “Watch.”** That is to be alert and on guard. There are several things that we need to watch. We must watch our mouths (Psa. 141:3). We must watch our actions...
(1 Tim. 4:12). We must watch our thoughts (Phi. 4:8). In fact as a Christian we must watch ourselves in all things (2 Tim. 4:5). If we watch ourselves we will be able to avoid temptation (1 Cor. 10:13).

**Next the Christian is to “Stand fast.”** As a child of God we are to have strong convictions (Heb. 3:14). We must not bend or break in matters of faith, nor can we compromise in any way. We must stand on the rock solid foundation of Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

**Then we are to “Quit” like men.** This simply means to behave as grown men. We must have courage (2 Sam. 10:12), and we must have wisdom (Isa. 46:8). We must put away childish things lest we be moved (Eph. 4:13-14). The only way that we can be useful in the service of the Lord is if we behave ourselves as men (Heb. 5:14).

In all of this we must be “Strong.” We must be strong in the Lord (Eph. 6:10), strong in the faith (Heb. 11:33-34), and do all that we can to stand in the face of the enemy (Luke 11:21-22). There is no place for weaklings in the Lord’s army.

**In all things we must have “Love.”** Paul wrote, “Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up... Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth... And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity” (1 Cor. 13:4, 6-8, 13). As Christians we must love in deed and in truth (1 John 3:17-18). We must love God, the Lord, our brethren, the lost, the Truth, and the church. All of this must be done fervently (1 Peter 1:22).

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**Not Impressed**

**Joe Spivy, Jr.**

Mack Lyon wrote many years ago of a visit by Booker T. Washington to Andrew Carnegie. Carnegie, a well-known philanthropist, was asked by Washington to invest in Negro education. When the interview ended, a check was given by Carnegie in the amount of one thousand dollars.

When Washington saw the amount of the check he said, “Sir, I have failed to impress you with the bigness of the cause I represent.” When next they met, Washington again requested aid. At the conclusion of that meeting a check was given by Carnegie in the amount of five hundred thousand dollars—quite a difference.

While there are many good causes in our day which deserve our support, none can rival the cause of Christ. Sometimes you must wonder if we have been impressed with the bigness of that cause. Like Mr. Carnegie, we give lip service and then only a paltry portion of our effort, time, and/or money.

Until we are impressed with what it means to be a Christian, the beauty of Christ’s body, the church, the need for fellowship among brethren, and the great power found in the gospel, we will continue to give only tokens to our Lord.

What have you given to the Lord? What real sacrifice have you made? What commitments kept? Surely it is the case that our offering to God, or our whole life, in the totality of all its elements, reveals how impressed we are with the bigness of the cause of Christ. How impressed are you?
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Marilyn Hall, Neva Bryant (Tandem Health Care), Ruby Bowman, Lucille Staples, Ray Dodd, Marge Williams, Ella Hammac, Mildred Hall, Dick Lambert, Sarah Wilkes (Sandy Wilkes’ daughter-in-law), and Nancy Travis (William Weekley’s daughter).

Reading/Invitation
July 21, 2004
Reading: Andrew Hatcher
Invitation: Bill Crowe
July 28, 2004
Reading: Daniel Hatcher
Invitation: Dale Cunningham

Mark These Dates
July 18, 2004–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
July 18, 2004–Elders/Deacons meeting held at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
July 25, 2004–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
July 28, 2004–Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 PM, in the auditorium.
August 1, 2004–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
August 8, 2004–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
August 8, 2004–Deacons’ meeting held at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
August 15, 2004–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
August 15, 2004–Elders/Deacons’ meeting held at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
August 22, 2004–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
Prayer

Toney L. Smith

Prayer is a wonderful blessing for the child of God. In Daniel 6:4-11, Daniel prays in spite of the king’s prohibition of prayer. Prayer is a powerful part of our lives. The words prayer, prayers, praying, and pray are found 451 times in the Bible—Prayer is important. Therefore, we will observe some things concerning this great privilege.

1. What is prayer? Prayer means to petition, request, or entreat. It is the way in which we communicate with God (Rom. 10:1). Prayer involves praise (Mat. 6:9), thanksgiving (Phi. 4:6), confession (1 John 1:9), and petitions (Phi. 4:6).

2. Why should we pray? Prayer is a direct command (1 The. 5:17). It is a means of obtaining blessings (Jam. 4:2). Prayer is a powerful tool in the hand of the faithful (Acts 4:32).

3. When should we pray? Petitions should be as often as our needs and thanksgivings as often as our blessings (Psa. 55:17).

4. For what should we pray? We should pray for strength in temptations (Mat. 26:41), for wisdom (Jam. 1:5-7), for unity (John 17:20-21), for forgiveness (Mat. 6:12), for the sick (2 Sam. 12:16), and for people in general (1 Tim. 2:1).

5. What hinders our prayers? Prayers are hindered by allowing sin to remain in our lives ( Isa. 59:1-2), by praying selfishly (Jam. 4:3), and by doubting (Jam. 1:5-8).

6. Who can pray? The obedient (1 John 3:22), the submissive (1 John 5:14), and the faithful (John 15:7). Please notice that the sinner is not heard. One who continues in sin is not heard (1 Pet. 3:12; John 9:31; Psa. 66:18; Isa.
7. **How should we pray?** It really does matter how we pray. We must pray fervently (Jam. 5:16), and we must pray believing (Mark 11:24). Our prayers are to be addressed to the Father, not to Jesus. (John 16:23).

8. **God really does answer prayers.** The Bible clearly teaches that God hears and answers our prayers and receives the thanksgiving we offer before Him (Isa. 65:24; Psa. 118:5; 120:1; Heb. 4:16; 1 Pet. 3:12; Mat. 7:7-11).

   Prayer is the faithful child of God’s way of communicating with Him. It can bring about changes in our lives and in the lives of others as God works in the realm of His providence. May we ever have the attitude found in Luke 11:1; “one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray.”

517 Gaylord Road; Dresden, TN 38225

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**Led by the Spirit**

**Roy J. Hearn**

Romans 8:14 says: “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” Everyone interested in salvation should understand how this is accomplished. Often it is shrouded in darkness, due to false teaching, and people fail to investigate God’s Word, and are thereby deceived.

The church of Christ is often misrepresented. Opposers say God must do the converting and say we deny it. Also, that one must be converted by the Spirit and power of God and imply we deny it. Some say that the heart is changed by faith and that faith is a gift from God and say we deny that. But we believe all these things to be true. There is no difference on what God does, but how He does it. “To the law and to the testimony” (Isa. 8:20) and let that decide.

1. **Faith is produced by the Word of God.** Jesus prayed for a certain class of people, that is, those who believe on Him through the words of the apostles, His personal representatives on earth (John 14:26; 16:13-15; 2 Cor. 5:18-20). John 20:30-31 shows that saving faith comes through the written Word of God. Peter said that the Gentiles believed by hearing the Word from his mouth (Acts 15:8).

   Apostle Paul testifies that faith comes by hearing the Word of God (Rom. 10:17). But that one must hear before faith can be produced (Rom. 10:14). There is no belief without first hearing the Word. All these witnesses agree. The only difference is that now the Word that produces faith is written in the New Testament. Paul told Timothy to preach the things he had heard from him with many witnesses (2 Tim. 2:2).

   Further, he said that we should stand fast in the Word he had taught whether by word or letter (2 Th. 2:15), and that any who would teach a different doctrine would be accursed (Gal. 1:6-9).

2. **How the Holy Spirit gives faith.** As shown above, in reference to John 16:13-15, the Spirit was sent to the apostles to guide them into all truth. 1 Peter 1:12 says they preached the Gospel with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven. Acts 2:1-4 reveals the coming of the Holy Spirit, and that the apostles began to speak with other languages as the Spirit gave them utterance. In Revelation 2:1, Christ said, “Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write.” Verse 7 says, “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.” So, the Spirit speaks through the written Word.

   Where is all this found? In the New Testament. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 says that the Scripture
furnishes all one needs for perfection. 2 Peter 1:3 states that everything that pertains to life and godliness comes through knowledge, and for that reason one should study (2 Tim. 2:15).

3. **How people are converted by the power of God.** Romans 1:16 says the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believes it, and that faith comes by hearing (Rom. 10:17). This Word was given by the Holy Spirit to the apostles (1 Cor. 2:13). Paul said the Gospel came to him by revelation (Gal. 1:11-12). Peter affirmed that the Gentiles were purified by faith, which was produced by his preaching (Acts 15:7-9). Also, one purifies his soul in obedience to the Truth (1 Pet. 1:22).

Without doubt, therefore, the Scripture teaches that faith is a gift of God, but that it comes from the study of God’s Word, and not by some mysterious, direct means.

4. **This is demonstrated by divine example.** Acts 2 reveals that the Holy Spirit spoke through the apostles to the multitudes (Acts 2:1-4, 22). When they heard the Word preached they were pricked in their hearts—made believers. The Word of God is the sword of the Spirit (Eph. 6:17). It was wielded by the mouths of the apostles (Acts 2:1-4, 22-27, 8:4-5, 12) When the people on that Pentecost day heard the Word preached by the apostles, they were pricked in their hearts, convicted of sin.

5. **The Pentecostians led by the Spirit.** Their change, or purification, was begun, and the effect produced by the power of the Holy Spirit. They were led by the words spoken by the apostles. But where? They were led to cry out, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” Then Peter answered and said, “Repent, and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins” (Acts 2:37-38).

With this example it is clear to see that to be led by the Spirit, to receive faith, and be saved by the power of God is produced by the written Word now. Please observe that the whole process of conversion was begun in preaching the Gospel, hearing the Gospel which produced faith and repentance, and salvation was consummated in baptism.

6. **Is something besides the Word needed?** How do you know Christ is the Son of God? “The Bible says so.” Don’t you need some other proof? “No, for the Bible says so.” How do you know there is a heaven to be gained and hell to be avoided? “The Bible says so.” Do you not need other testimony? “No, the Bible is enough.”

If one were to hear Christ say, “Thy sins are forgiven thee,” how would you know you were pardoned? “Christ said so.” Would you not need other proof? “No, for Christ said so.” The same Christ said that in order to be saved one must (1) Believe in Him as God’s Son (John 3:24). (2) Repent of sins (Luke 13:3; Acts 3:19). (3) Confess Him before men (Mat. 10:32; Acts 8:37). (4) Be baptized to be saved (Acts 2:38; 10:48; Rom. 6:3-6). Christ promises to save when one obeys His Word. Why fight it?

Deceased

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**Sentence Sermons**

Making a sin legal does not make it right.
The most important things in life are not things.
What we do and what we say advertises what we are.
We first make our habits then our habits make us.

*Author Unknown*
Sick

Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Marilyn Hall, Neva Bryant (Tandem Health Care), Ruby Bowman, Lucille Staples, Ray Dodd, Marge Williams, Ella Hammac, Mildred Hall, Dick Lambert, Sarah Wilkes (Sandy Wilkes’ daughter-in-law), and Nancy Travis (William Weekley’s daughter).

Reading/Invitation

July 28, 2004
Reading: Daniel Hatcher
Invitation: Dale Cunningham
August 4, 2004
Reading: Bryan Loy
Invitation: Ray Dodd

Mark These Dates

July 25, 2004–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
July 28, 2004–Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 PM, in the auditorium.
August 1, 2004–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
August 8, 2004–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
August 8, 2004–Deacons’ meeting held at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
August 15, 2004–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
August 15, 2004–Elders/Deacons’ meeting held at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
August 22, 2004–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
August 25, 2004–Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 PM, in the auditorium.
One Nation Under God

Tom Wacaster

As most of you, I have fond memories of my school days. One memory was the daily routine of pledging allegiance to the flag of the United States of America. The words of that pledge were drilled into our minds and repeated every day, as we stood, facing the flag, with our right hand placed over our heart. “I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America. And to the Republic, for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.”

It is quite unfortunate that some now want to strike the words, “under God” from the pledge. But this author is convinced that to strike the words “under God” from the pledge would not only be a grievous mistake, but that it would take from the very essence of the pledge itself. Take a closer look at the words, “One nation, under God.” Each word is significant in and of itself, but united, they suggest a solid foundation upon which this great country was founded, and upon which she must stand if she is to survive as a nation. Think about those four words for just a moment.

First, we are “one nation under God.” Fifty states, independently ruled by their own state laws and constitution, but united in one purpose. From sea to shining sea, our diversity has come together in one great melting pot to produce the greatest nation upon the face of this earth. United we stand; divided we fall. Oh sure, there have been differences. But by in large, we have stood united in our basic goals and beliefs, nationally speaking.

Second, we are “one nation,” a people
occupying a land and governed by law. That very law, The Constitution, with its amendments and Bill of Rights, has provided stability for more than 228 years. We must not forget, however, that nations are ordained of God. Consequently, they must function and operate according to the laws of the One Who has granted them the authority to exist, lest they cease to be a legitimate nation.

Third, we are “one nation under,” suggesting that we realize that all men submit to something. If we do not submit to the law of the land, we submit to our own selfish ambitions and desires. A lawless people are nothing more than a “law unto themselves,” incapable of achieving anything of lasting value. A nation without control is nothing more than an anarchy. Our nation is bordering on complete collapse. We have sown to the wind, and we are soon to reap the whirlwind, if we do not alter our course and begin a rapid retreat back to the arms of our God and His counsel.

Finally, we are “one nation under God.” When Irving Berlin wrote his song, “God Bless America,” he caught a glimpse of what it means to be “under God.” I wonder if those who sing that song have read the words, or listened to the message communicated in that song. Pleading for God to bless America, those who sing ask the Almighty to “Stand beside her, and guide her, thru the night with a light from above.” Our country has been through some dark times. For the most part, our history shows that our leaders and citizens have sought God’s counsel in times of trouble. But somewhere around the middle of the last century we ceased to seek God’s counsel, and we depended upon our own ability and military might. God will guide this nation, or any nation, through the night of tyranny, the night of despair, the night of economic downturns and disasters. But He will only guide us with the “light from above,” i.e. His divine Word. Yes, our blessed nation has often walked through the valley of darkness, but we emerged from those valleys of darkness because we put our trust in God.

So you see, it is important that we keep the words “under God” in the pledge of allegiance. To remove those words “under God” from the pledge moves us ever closer to becoming a secular nation, endangers our unity, and threatens our very existence as a nation. Let it always be said that we are “One Nation Under God.” For in the day that we cease to put ourselves in submission to the One Who made us great, we will cease to be “One,” and we will cease to be a “Nation.”

P.O. Box 283; Talco, TX 75487

Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs

Noah Hackworth

Introduction

“Speaking one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord” (Eph. 5:19). “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts unto God” (Col. 3:16). Singing in worship is much more important than we think. It requires planning, careful thought and concentration. The two passages cited above (1) make singing tremendously important because it is a method of teaching and admonishing, (2) teach that singing in worship is
corporate, and (3) show that the nature of our singing is psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Our purpose in this article, therefore, is to briefly discuss our singing.

Things to Understand

First, the songs in our hymn books are not inspired, though many of them are outstanding in arrangement and content. The men and women who wrote the songs we sing were not inspired by the Holy Spirit. Next, in every hymn book there are songs we cannot sing unless we are willing to recognize and apply the figure of speech known as the metaphor. If we attach a literal meaning to every word in every song, there will be more than a few songs we cannot sing. Next, any song that has definite words and phrases which repudiate or contradict the Scriptures should be put aside. Last, it is not my personal responsibility to legislate to the entire church what songs should or should not be sung, though a suggested song critique would be the personal privilege of anyone. The omission of any specific songs would likely be a task for the local church under the scrutiny of its elders. Robert Milligan, in *Scheme Of Redemption*, has made some very valuable suggestions relative to the kind of songs Christians should and should not sing. He says, “But every thing which is false in sentiment, or which is in any way inconsistent with the dignity and purity of the Holy Scriptures, should be excluded from every collection of Psalms, and Hymns, and Spiritual Songs.” Milligan also pointed out that the songs we sing should (1) honor God as our Creator, Preserver, and Redeemer, (2) cultivate and improve our own hearts, and (3) convict sinners and persuade them to repent. With Milligan’s assessment we cannot disagree. One of the greatest songs in my judgment that honors God as our Protector, Preserver, and Redeemer is “Our God He Is Alive.” As far as the cultivation or improvement of our heart is concerned, “Have Thine Own Way, Lord” is excellent. Finally, regarding the persuasion of sinners to repent, there is no better song than “None of Self, All Of Thee.”

The Design of Psalms and Hymns

Songs and hymns are designed to cultivate and nurture the spirit, not arouse our fleshly instincts. For example, in a certain city at a mid-week service the entire worship hour was given to singing. Brethren, one after the other, were coming to the front of the assembly to lead a song. The service was orderly and meaningful until all of a sudden a brother hurried to the front of the auditorium clad in sloppy, loose-fitting, sandals and “cut-off” jeans which had begun to unravel at the bottom, and with a loud “fingernail-snaping,” “toe-tapping” approach, he went to work on the song. When he finished, the audience was definitely aroused but for the wrong reason I fear. This brother should have had his right foot “nailed to the floor.” Really, our songs and hymns deserve a better approach than this. Brothers ought not come to the worship period dressed in undesirable attire in the first place.

Reciprocation

So-called “praise groups” or choirs cannot take the place of congregational singing in worship. It is designed to be reciprocal, that is “back and forth.” “One to another.” If it be contended that Ephesians 5:23 and Colossians 3:16 authorize “solo” singing rather than congregational, it should be recognized that such a view overlooks the fact that the words “teaching and admonishing one another” implies an assembly. A congregation of two hundred or more could not teach and admonish one another through “solo” singing. Some of the best sermons ever preached have been preached through congregational singing.
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Marilyn Hall, Neva Bryant (Tandem Health Care), Ruby Bowman, Lucille Staples, Ray Dodd, Marge Williams, Ella Hammac, Mildred Hall, Dick Lambert, and Wanda Batten.

Sympathy
Our deepest sympathy is extended to Al Flesher in the death of his wife, Jean, on July 15, 2004. Please keep Al in your prayers and offer assistance as needed.

Baptized
Dallas and Karen Diamond’s niece, Tara Stewart, was baptized into Christ on July 11, 2004.

Reading/Invitation
August 4, 2004
Reading: Bryan Loy
Invitation: Ray Dodd
August 11, 2004
Reading: Jim Loy
Invitation: Ray Foshee

Mark These Dates
August 1, 2004—Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
August 8, 2004—Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
August 8, 2004—Deacons’ meeting held at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
August 15, 2004—Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
August 15, 2004—Elders/Deacons’ meeting held at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
August 22, 2004—Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
Abusing the Lord’s Supper

Bill Jackson

In looking into 1 Corinthians 11, we have these words from the apostle to help us see Corinth’s condition as regards worship:
(1) Coming together for the worse (v. 17),
(2) Coming together in a divided state (v. 18),
(3) Coming together with an allegiance to men (v. 19),
(4) Coming together with no thought as to the significance of the supper (v. 20),
(5) Coming together in mixing their common-meal items in with worship (vv. 21-22), and
(6) Coming together with no discernment of the body of the Lord, and thus their participation was in an unworthy manner (vv. 27-29).

The apostle indicates a great spiritual sickness in their midst, with some of them actually “in death” (v. 30). The wonderful privilege of worship was being abused, perverted, and mishandled. We must continually examine ourselves (2 Cor. 13:5) in this and in every way, that we insure that our worship will be in spirit and in truth (John 4:24).

But we want to speak of the abuse of the Lord’s Supper in our own time, and in some particular ways wherein we should now stop and examine ourselves with a determination to improve. We make mention of these points regarding the abuse just noted:

(1) **We abuse the Lord’s Supper when there is no anticipation of worship.** The Christian is a worshiper, and worship is to be a great and continual part of his life. Yes, “exhorting one another” (Heb. 10:25). The Supper is mentioned as a rallying cause of the saints
on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7). If the Supper is meaningless to us as we think of it and as we approach the observance of it, it will be meaningless as we partake as well.

(2) We abuse the Supper if we have the view that “this is all that matters.” There are five avenues of worship, and if five are necessary, then all five are important. There has been too much of an attitude that says, “Just so I get the Lord’s Supper!” For all its importance, it is not all important! It is fruitless to be half-hearted in all other worship, and then try to be of a spiritual mind when it is time to observe the Supper.

(3) We abuse the Supper if we think that observance somehow makes up for the time misspent in sin, indifference, and carelessness. Not one word is said in the New Testament about the Lord’s Supper affecting “cleansing” for the disobedient child of God! If he is unfaithful to God, he is in no better position to partake of the Lord’s Supper than he is to sing or pray. Without making proper correction in life, he only adds sin to sin in going through the motions of Lord’s Supper observance.

(4) We abuse the Supper if we spend the week or weekend in fun and games, perhaps on vacation, and just barely squeeze in time to make a service, arriving late and nearly to the point of exhaustion, and we do manage to “get the Supper.” Body and mind in such shape for worship is needed to worship “in spirit”—with spirit and understanding (1 Cor. 14:15). It is an abuse of all worship, and not just the Supper, when I can barely find an hour to give to God!

(5) Finally, one of the most flagrant abuses is on the part of those who wilfully absent themselves on Sunday mornings, and then will rise to partake on Sunday evenings as if some matter beyond their control blocked them that morning. We know that sicknesses and emergencies arise, but we are thinking of the willful absence, and then the Sunday evening partaking, as if God would subsidize the negligence. This is an abuse of the purpose and intent of the Lord’s Supper—a memorial with significance for spiritual people!

May we examine ourselves in this avenue of worship, and in all others, that we will truly worship God in spirit and in truth (John 4:24), and that our coming together be for the better (1 Cor. 11:17)!

Deceased

Zeal for Truth

Toney L. Smith

In Revelation chapter 3 we are shown a vivid picture of a church which was described as being lukewarm. The church at Laodicea was neither hot nor cold, but was in such a state that the Lord would “spew” them out of his mouth. The problem with these brethren was that they had no zeal for the Lord and His truth. They were caught up in other things which required their attention. For this reason the truth was made to suffer in that community.

Zeal is defined as: “to seek or desire eagerly, to earnestly want or to be jealous.” In 2 Corinthians 7:7 the word zeal is seen when Paul says, “wherewith he was comforted in you, when he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me; so that I rejoiced the more.” Thus, zeal carries the idea of having a fervent mind. Its fundamental meaning relating to truth is to be a burning, ardent, and overwhelming desire to know and practice truth.

In the world today it is evident that lukewarm is normal. There is little concern for that which God has spoken. More often than not, the idea is: “do what makes you happy,” or “it matters not...
what you do, God will understand and be happy with you.” There is a zeal for neutrality when it comes to spiritual matters. It is far too often the case that God’s people are as they were in Amos chapter six where we find these words: “Woe to them that are at ease in Zion” (v. 1). Being at ease or lukewarm will sell one into the bondage of sin.

Is there not now a need to awaken from slumber and once again have a strong zeal for truth? There is a great need for rekindling zeal so that truth will shine brightly upon a world that is in darkness. The world is rushing headlong into eternity without the light of God’s Word, and the church is quickly slipping into apostasy in many places because brethren are “at ease in Zion.”

The evidence of a weakening position relative to denominationalism is clearly seen. Some are busy trying to whitewash denominationalism by extending to them the hand of fellowship (Eph. 5:11). Some can find no distinction whatsoever with the churches of Christ and the man-made religious groups. We even hear where some call those who oppose such things as “weaker brethren.” I for one, feel that it is time to stand zealously in defense of the gospel of Christ (Jude 3). And that includes opposing every false way.

Our brethren in the First Century were zealous for truth. They were so zealous that they opposed religious groups, individuals, and whole government bodies as they defended and protected God’s truth (Acts 5:12-32) Brethren, have we ever stopped to realize the great debt which we owe those brave saints? Without them truth surely would have suffered at the hands of its enemies. Today, zeal for truth must once again be set ablaze, never to be extinguished.

Being zealous is to stand for God and to oppose all that would oppose him. In Numbers 25, the wrath of God was turned from Israel because Phinehas was active against sin in the camp. Just think about it today—sin is often allowed to grow and grow within the body of Christ. In doing so, are we not becoming an afflicted people because we tolerate sin (a lack of zeal for truth)?

Zeal for truth must be restored. If not, we will see an apostasy of such magnitude that it will stagger the mind. Men are leaving Bible authority and doing those things which will destroy. Zeal for truth is a must if Christianity is to be magnified. Zeal can only be restored when men love God’s Word, live God’s Word and long for others to have it. May we ever follow Revelation 3:19: “be zealous therefore, and repent.”

Be a Leader

Some parents adopt a philosophy of letting their children follow their heart-felt feelings. Have you heard, “I am not going to try to influence my children when it comes to religious matters? I am going to let him make his own decisions?” One might as well reason: “I am not going to try to prejudice my garden in favor of strawberries. I am going to let the clods decide between cockleburs and strawberries.” God surely wants us to influence our children in the way of righteousness (Deu. 6:6-7). Notice Proverbs 20:11: “Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right.” One commentator said the verse teaches: “Parents should observe their children, that they may manage them accordingly.” Each parent must observe a child to know him. This is just as natural as conceiving, carrying, and giving birth to a little one. Once the observation is made, formulate a plan to lead the child to Christ and His righteousness (Pro. 22:6; Mat. 6:33; Eph. 6:4).

Author Unknown
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Marilyn Hall, Neva Bryant (Tandem Health Care), Ruby Bowman, Lucille Staples, Ella Hammac, Marge Williams, Mildred Hall, Dick Lambert, and Wanda Batten.

Reading/Invitation
August 11, 2004
Reading: Jim Loy
Invitation: Ray Foshee
August 18, 2004
Reading: Gabe Moore
Invitation: Louis Herrington

Mark These Dates
August 8, 2004—Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
August 8, 2004—Deacons’ meeting held at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
August 15, 2004—Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
August 15, 2004—Elders/Deacons’ meeting held at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
August 22, 2004—Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
August 25, 2004—Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 PM, in the auditorium.
August 30, 2004—Visitation Group Get-together at 6:00 PM, in the general purpose building. A covered-dish meal will precede the meeting.
September 26-October 1, 2004—Gospel meeting with Bob Hawkins. Make plans now to attend and bring family, friends, co-workers with you.
“Thirty-Three Cents to Nowhere”

Tom Wacaster

My son-in-law once told me that practicing medicine is, in the final analysis, an educated guess. The field of medicine, and practice of the same, is no different than any other area of work. Mistakes are made! We let those little “goofs” get by, and end up trying to “save face” or make amends. Each week we try to send letters to those out of town visitors and let them know we appreciate their visit. One of those letters came back to us the other day. We typed the letter, put it in the envelope, and even put the proper postage stamp in the upper right-hand corner of the letter. But we forgot the address. Blank! Nada! As it turned out we mailed thirty-two cents to nowhere. The Post Office, not knowing the proper destination, stamped the letter, “Return to Sender,” and it arrived back to us four days after it was first posted. As I placed the letter on the desk to be re-addressed, I thought, “Thirty-Two Cents to Nowhere.”

Many a life is just like that. We each possess a soul of tremendous value. Oh, much, much more than thirty-two-cents. Your soul is worth more than all the riches of the world, for our Savior once asked, “What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” (Mark 8:36). You have been made in the image of God, stamped with inestimable value! Whether or not you arrive at your intended destination is up to you. Unfortunately, most of humanity can be described with the words, “Thirty-two-cents to nowhere.”

The atheist is on a dead-end path to destruction. When once he enters into eternity he
will discover that there is a God in heaven, and that his life has been utterly wasted. He will be returned to his Sender, without excuse, and condemned by His God for playing the part of a fool. Yes, his life is “thirty-two cents to nowhere.”

The profligate and immoral waste their lives in pleasure, and like the prodigal, they squander all that God gives to them in waste and riot. Like the atheist, they will eventually arrive at eternity’s door with Divine Judgment starring them in the face. Having rejected the Divine standard, while becoming a law unto themselves, they too will best be described as “thirty-two cents to nowhere.”

The rich man who built bigger barns, and became complacent while wallowing in the abundance of his material possessions, is still another who thought he could beat the system. Priorities placed on the temporal, he neglected the spiritual. Just another soul labeled, “thirty-two cents to nowhere.”

Where do you fit in? Fathers, are you fulfilling your responsibility in leading the family and teaching those precious children about God, life, and responsibility? Will your faith in God, and living up to your God-given responsibilities see you safely to your destination? Or can your life be described as “thirty-two cents to nowhere”?

When will men learn that life is fleeting, time passes swiftly, and that eternity is sure? Every single one of us are nothing more than strangers and sojourners through this life. Like a letter placed in the mailbox, each one of us begins that journey toward our destination from the very moment of our conception. Why is it that so many fail to carefully examine the package that will carry the soul for some threescore and ten years, without making absolutely sure that the address is on the outside which will bring us safely to that heavenly home?

As I stared at that blank envelope, and thought about those words, “Return to Sender,” it struck me that, like that letter, all of us will eventually be returned to our Sender. Those who have lived faithfully before God will receive the blessings of eternal life with their Maker to sit at His feet through all the ages world without end. Tragically, those who have wasted their lives will be returned to Sender with an eternal epitaph that reads, “Thirty-Two Cents to Nowhere.”

P.O. Box 283; Talco, TX 75487

Spare the Rod?

Dave Dugan

Growing up my mother and father practiced what is called the “raise them on the barrel stave (figuratively speaking) and raise them often” as one method of discipline on me.

Now, do not get the idea that I was beat to death by either of my parents for I was not. But, I knew from an early age that a spanking could come when I violated mom and dad’s rules of living. Mom and dad’s rules of living were shaped by God’s Word and their own backgrounds. Both were brought up in Christian families.

I learned some important principles about spanking and they are indelibly imprinted upon my mind to this very day. First, a spanking could come at anytime. Mom nor dad never waited to
carry out a spanking if my actions or words warranted such. Even if I pleaded for “time-out”; it never came. **Second,** a spanking could come from either parent. This was terrible disconcerting to me; since I saw other children being told now wait till your daddy gets home and he will discipline you. Mom spanked when dad was not around. Dad spanked when mom was not around. **Third,** a spanking could even come from a grandparent. What a shock to my small bottom! Other grandparents were lenient with their grandchildren. Mine were not. It seems that my grand-

**Fourth,** I found that I could not play my parents against each other. Nor could I play my grandparents against my parents. Not that I did not try. But, it did not work. They had all made up their minds as to what proper conduct was and they saw to it that I conducted myself properly. **Fifth,** I found that they always seemed to know the score. They reminded me often they had once been children too. A thought that amazed me until I began to grow up. I thought they had always been adults and those pictures of them when they were small were really of somebody else. **Sixth,** I could never threaten my mother, father or grandparents with abuse for they never abused me. Yes, they spanked me, but then I deserved it for each spanking was in relation to an infraction of rules and I knew it. In fact, I probably missed out on some spankings that were really needed because I was not caught. But, thank God for forgiveness of sin.

Several years ago Dr. Benjamin Spock admitted that in his writings he lead a couple of generations astray by advising not to spank when appropriate. We are still plagued by the “anti-spankers.” Spanking is not abuse if it is done properly. I can remember spanking our own children and sometimes it hurt us more than the child. After all with diapers a spanking is pretty well cushioned to the one receiving the spanking.

From my experience those who withhold all physical discipline have children who are unruly and ill-mannered. Yes, there are exceptions, but they are few. Those who wisely use physical discipline as one tool of discipline have children that obey rules and are well-mannered.
Sick

Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Marilyn Hall, Neva Bryant (Tandem Health Care), Ruby Bowman, Lucille Staples, Ella Hammac, Marge Williams, Mildred Hall, and Dick Lambert.

Reading/Invitation
August 18, 2004
Reading: Gabe Moore
Invitation: Louis Herrington

August 25, 2004
Reading: Shelby Nall
Invitation: Ray Pierce

Mark These Dates
August 15, 2004–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
August 15, 2004–Elders/Deacons’ meeting held at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
August 22, 2004–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
August 25, 2004–Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 PM, in the auditorium.
August 30, 2004–Visitation Group Get-together at 6:00 PM, in the general purpose building. A covered-dish meal will precede the meeting.
September 12, 2004–Attendance Drive and Dinner on the grounds after the morning service in the general purpose building.
September 26-October 1, 2004–Gospel meeting with Bob Hawkins. Make plans now to attend and bring family, friends, co-workers with you.
What to Do with False Teachers

Tim Smith

“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” (Rom. 16:17-18).

Paul is addressing the matter of those whose teaching is in conflict with or opposition to the teaching of God as it is given through the New Testament of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. He is appealing on an intimately personal level to those whose souls were of great concern to him (thus, “I beseech you”). He tells them to do something—surely everyone must be able to see that. The context demands that they either comply with his instructions or suffer eternal damnation. He is not “suggesting one possible way of dealing with those who feel differently than we do.” He is not offering his opinion on what one can do. He is telling brethren what they must do with respect to false teachers if they would be counted as faithful.

He first says that those who teach error are to be marked and avoided. That is, identify them as teachers of error and then have no part with them. Make the determination that based on their teaching and its comparison with the Bible, they are false teachers. Make that determination for yourself and then indicate the same to others and have neither part nor lot with them. I ask you, how is this best done? For example, suppose that I took the articles and sermon outlines of false teachers and used them in this bulletin and posted
them on our website. Would that be identifying them as false teachers and avoiding them? Suppose that I began to solicit the use of brethren who are false teachers for Gospel Meetings. Would that be identifying them as false teachers and avoiding them? Suppose that a false teacher were to hold a meeting (it would not be a “Gospel” meeting) in our area and I announced the same on these pages, announced it in the assembly, posted fliers for the meeting, attended it myself, and encouraged others to do so also at every opportunity. Would that be identifying them as false teachers and avoiding them? Of course not. That is plain enough, one would think, that anyone with average intelligence and even the slightest desire to go to heaven could see it, right? Apparently not—for many do that very thing regularly and seemingly find no fault with it at all—in fact, when opposed for it the fight vigorously against the very Book they claim to love and serve.

Paul tells us that these men teach things “contrary to the doctrine”—that is, things that are opposed to the doctrine of Christ. They espouse false doctrines. It is not merely a matter of them teaching things that are different from the things that I teach, or that some other preacher teaches—they are teaching things that run contrary to the one faith. This implies our ability to know what “the doctrine” is. We can know what is right and we can determine that things contrary to what is right are themselves wrong, and we can and must mark and avoid those who persist in teaching such doctrines.

Paul tells us what the teachers of error do—they cause “divisions and offences.” When a false teacher introduces his erroneous doctrines into the midst of otherwise faithful children of God, division follows—it must. But, whose fault is the division? Is it the fault of the one who refuses to compromise? The one who continues to stand for the old paths? Could it be? NO! The individual who introduces unscriptural doctrines and practices into the church is the individual who is guilty of dividing the body of Christ and is charged with offences against God and man.

Paul further tells us that people who so behave are not serving the Lord—their protestations to the contrary notwithstanding. They may think that they are serving Him; they may claim to be serving Him; but they are serving “their own belly.” They are doing what they want to do and not what He wants them to do. When I hear some false teacher complaining about a defender of the truth, begin to blame the faithful for the heartache and strife present in so many congregations today I think of these verses (i.e., the text). The simple truth is that when a man teaches something contrary to God’s truth, God’s faithful must stand up and oppose that man because Paul says so in these verses.

This is not exactly rocket science that we are discussing—the teaching is clear and plain and anyone desiring to know the truth on this matter

Make plans now:

Gospel Meeting with Bob Hawkins
September 26 - October 1, 2004
can do so easily. Why is it, then, that we see so many who continue to use those men who teach error for gospel meetings, as teachers in their schools, on their websites, in their bulletins, and etc.? If it is because they were formerly ignorant of these two verses, then we should see all who read these lines abandon such practices now. If it is because they do not care about these verses, then brethren, the action should come on our part. We must respect the teaching of the apostle herein given and cease and desist supporting those who will not support the truth. May God help us to recognize error and the teachers thereof and treat both accordingly.

1272 Enon Road Webb, AL 36376

““The Abundant Life””

Toney L. Smith

How do you look at life? Is it a drab and dull existence? Is it full compulsion and drudgery? Or is it exciting, challenging, and full of real joy, peace, power, and real meaning?

“The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly” (John 10:10). The abundant life is found only in Christ! What a great tragedy that many attempt to separate religion from life. When human desires are put in place of faith and trust, life’s true meaning is lost. Life really is sad without Christ.

The good news of real Christianity is that it brings real joy and peace to our lives. In Christ we are never anxious for anything, because we know that “all things work together for good to them that love God” (Rom. 8:28). When we love God and keep His will, we show that we love God, man, and life.

517 Gaylord Road; Dresden, TN 38225

Love Is the Proof

In 1 John 3:11-18 we are given a way in which we can prove that we are the children of God. John has previously declared that God’s children practice righteousness. In our text, he emphasizes the importance of love as a proof that one is God’s child. Love is more than emotion. It is action, which is moved by the emotion. From these few verses we see some things concerning love that needs our consideration.

1. Love Is Commanded (v. 11). John recorded earlier in John 15:12: “This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.” Love has been defined as goodwill in action. If love were only an emotion, it would not be commanded.

2. Love Contrasted (v. 12). Cain’s action toward Abel is seen as a contrast to love (Gen. 4:1-8). Genuine love is not jealous and is not selfish.

3. Love Confirmed (vv. 13-14). John uses the word “know” so as to give assurance. We can observe our spiritual state by observing our love.

4. The Consideration (vv. 16-18). Let us consider the demonstration of God’s love (1 John 3:16). God’s love is an observable demonstration (John 3:16) and ours is also subject to observable demonstration. (1 John 3:17).

Love is not an item to be put on a shelf!

Author Unknown
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Marilyn Hall, Neva Bryant, Ruby Bowman, Lucille Staples, Ella Hammac, Marge Williams, Mildred Hall, Dick Lambert, Quinn Brazell (Jim and Nancy Loy’s grandson), Clifford Newell, and Hayden Lohr (William Weekley’s neighbor’s grandson).

Sympathy
Our deepest sympathy is extended to the family of Wanda Batten who passed away on August 4, 2004. Wanda was a past member of this congregation. Please keep her family in your prayers.

Placed Membership
Nellie Read has placed membership with the Bellview congregation. Her address is 6982 Pine Forest Road, Apt. 108; Pensacola, FL 32526. The telephone number is 941-1308. Please update your directories.

Reading/Invitation
August 25, 2004
Reading: Shelby Nall
Invitation: Ray Pierce

September 1, 2004
Reading: Richard Parker
Invitation: Fred Stancliff

Mark These Dates
August 22, 2004—Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
August 25, 2004—Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 PM, in the auditorium.
To God Be the Glory

Eddie Whitten

It may be the case that the failure to see God through our faith constitutes a major flaw in our biblical understanding. It is an accepted fact that society has such a great influence on how we look at things. Among the things society affects so greatly is our worship and service to God. It should not be that way. It should be just the opposite. The church should be having more affect on society than it does. At least one of the reasons for this anomaly is that God is not being glorified in all that we do. Jesus said that we must seek God and His Kingdom first (Mat. 6:33). We glorify God in many ways, a few of which follow: We glorify God—

With Reverence

“He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant for ever: holy and reverence is his name” (Psa. 111:9). The name of God should be considered holy in our minds always. He should be supreme in every aspect of one’s life, not as a requisite to be met. The first commandment under the Law of Moses was, “Thou shalt have no other gods before me” (Exo. 20:3). Reverence should cause respect for God as for no other. The nature and attributes of God are such that we should be awestruck by His power, His love, His mercy, and His justice. He is not inconsistent in His rule. He demonstrates His love for us by allowing us to live in a world He sustains by His very Word. There is no power greater than the power of God. There is no love greater than God’s love for man. Even in the face of disrespect for Him, He forgives man when he
repents. He provided salvation to every person who will submit his will to Him by sending His Son, Jesus, to die for us. Such love should cause us to reverence Him.

The lack of reverence displays itself in our dress, our attitude during worship, our language and ultimately, our overall conduct.

**With Obedience**

Jesus said, “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). He also asked, “And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say” (Luke 6:46).

The Law of Moses was given to the Jews to guide them to its purpose of bringing the Messiah into the world. Judges and prophets were used to convey to the people God’s directions to them. Repeatedly they disobeyed God and paid a terrible price. God blessed them when they did obey Him. He was giving us the record of His nature, His sovereignty, His Deity. Regardless of His longsuffering toward us. He demands our obedience to His will. Man cannot chart his own salvation. Jesus is the author of eternal salvation (Heb. 5:9).

**With Service**

Our service in the kingdom of God glorifies His name. Joshua challenged the Israelites with a serious choice. He told them they had a choice of serving the idol gods that others worshiped, or serving Jehovah. He said his choice was to serve Jehovah (Jos. 24:15). This is a choice each of us must make. There cannot be an admixture of loyalty to both God and the world (Mat. 6:24).

Again, the Old Testament is filled with examples of the people of God serving idols to the displeasure of God. Some of the examples of disservice to God involved self. Moses was prohibited from the promised land because he did not glorify God by striking the rock when God had told him to speak to it. Service that is acceptable to God is that which speaks to the world our love, adoration, submission, and devotion to the cause of His Son, Jesus the Christ. May we devote our lives to that end.

**Wavy Hair**

*Bob Howton*

Many years ago, the noted columnist Ann Landers gave the following advice to one who wrote her:

Dear Ann: I’m twenty two years old and have never been so head-over-heels in love as now. I’m walking on air! The man is thirty, has beautiful wavy hair and a perfect build. I want to marry him and he’s begging me to say “yes,” but I’m not quite ready because of three things. (1) He drinks a little too much and sometimes forgets where he left the car, or where his billfold is, etc. (2) He likes to job-hop. He has no trouble getting good jobs, but soon gets bored and quits. (3) He teases me quite a bit just to get my attention, then later says that he was just kidding. I’m willing to overlook his failings, because no one is perfect. He says he will change after we marry. Will he?? (Just call me Joyful!)

Ann Landers’s reply is worthy of note and evaluation in other realms.

Dear Joyful: Congratulations on your offer of marriage from a job-hopping lush with a faulty memory. No! marriage won’t change him but it will you! You won’t find him so thrilling when he forgets to bring the pay
check home. The teasing and periods of unemployment won’t be so cute when you have children to feed, and doctor bills to pay. If you want a thoroughly messed up life, go ahead and marry the guy just because he has a head of wavy hair.

In consideration of the fact that the above portrays a temporal, or here-and-now scenario, many of us can relate the same sort of ideas to a relationship which will have eternal consequences. Situation: The young girl becomes completely enamored with a handsome guy, who makes her heart do flip-flops. He is charming, very popular, and much sought after by the young ladies. He is not a member of the Lord’s church, but claims that this will not be a problem if she will marry him. He has a pretty bad habit of cursing, and likes to take a “social nip” every so often. He also likes to have his night out with the boys every week. (These boys are not the types you would want to bring home to meet Mother or Aunt Junie Belle.) He is barely getting by at school, and has never sought a part time job. All this will change, he avers, when they get married. Marry him? Only if you want to have his cursing turn on you, as he slams out of the house to go and be with the boys. Only if you wish to have the same strained relationship each Lord’s Day, as you beg him in vain to go with you to worship services. Only if you are prepared to worry about the next house payment every month, and never have a dime for anything. Marry him? Never until he proves himself. If he is not willing to change, drop him like a rotten potato! Otherwise, you will suffer in misery and disappointment.

Consider: A young man from a loving, righteous family, shows much potential in spiritual matters. He becomes hopelessly infatuated with a beautiful young lady who really does not share his passion for the church and things spiritual. His attempts to teach her are met with whining arguments, and comparisons to her misguided concepts of what the Bible teaches. She likes the bright lights and the night crowds, but promises that she will be willing to go to “your Church” some. Her belief is that one church is as good as another. Marry her? Never, until she proves herself. Her loveliness does not equate to Godliness nor to her worth in God’s eyes. “Beware lest ye...fall from your own stedfastness” (2 Pet. 3:17).
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Marilyn Hall, Neva Bryant (Tandem Health Care), Ruby Bowman, Lucille Staples, Ella Hammac, Marge Williams, Mildred Hall, and Quinn Brazell (Jim and Nancy Loy’s grandson).

Reading/Invitation
September 1, 2004
Reading: Richard Parker
Invitation: Fred Stancliff
September 8, 2004
Reading: Carl Ayliffe
Invitation: Henry Born

Mark These Dates
August 30, 2004–Visitation Group Get-together at 6:00 PM, in the general purpose building. A covered-dish meal will precede the meeting.
September 5, 2004–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
September 12, 2004–Attendance Drive and Dinner on the grounds after the morning service in the general purpose building.
September 12, 2004–Deacons’ meeting held at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
September 12, 2004–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
September 19, 2004–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
September 19, 2004–Elders/Deacons’ meeting held at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
September 22, 2004–Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 PM, in the auditorium.
September 26, 2004–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
Don’t Call Him a Cowboy, Until You See Him Ride

Gary Colley

Don’t Call Him a Cowboy, Until You See Him Ride

Gary Colley

This was the title of a country song played recently on our local radio station. I had not heard the song before, nor have I heard it since, but the thought surely impressed me the first time! A few years ago it was not unusual to hear someone comment about those who dressed like cowboys as “drug-store cowboys.” These actually had never been near a horse or a cow, much less ridden a horse or roped a cow. This meant that they looked like or identified themselves with one thing, but because of their lack of actions the looks were deceiving. Many call themselves cowboys or make other such claims, however one needs to be sure to “see him ride” before seriously calling him a cowboy!

We Might Say:

Don’t call him “a Gospel Preacher” until you hear him preach. He may have his Doctor’s degree in some subject, perhaps other than the Bible, hanging in a prominent place of his house, but you need to listen closely to his preaching before calling him a Gospel preacher!

Don’t call him “a Christian” until you see how he lives. Many talk a good talk. But when it comes to applying Christian principles to their lives, “Don’t call him (or her) a cowboy, until you see him (or her) ride!”

Don’t call them “the Lord’s servant” until you see them serve the Lord. Some call themselves the Lord’s servants, but serve the
Bellview Church of Christ
Gospel Meeting
September 26 - October 1, 2004
Sunday Morning: 9:00 & 10:00 AM
Sunday - Friday Evenings: 7:30 PM
with
Bob Hawkins
Terre Haute, Indiana

Speaking on:
Sunday Bible Class: Following the Advice of the Multitude and Seeking Smooth Seas
Sunday Morning Worship: Uselessness of Trying to Save Self By Self
Sunday Evening Worship: I Believe God
Monday Evening: Salvation Was Only in the Ship
Tuesday Evening: The Fickle Mind of Men
Wednesday Evening: Courage Found in Faithful Brethren
Thursday Evening: The Hope of Israel
Friday Evening: Preaching the Kingdom

Covered-dish meal will be provided at 6:00 PM by the Visitation Groups as follows:
  Visitation Group 1 - Monday and Wednesday
  Visitation Group 2 - Tuesday and Thursday
Visitors are invited to every meal.
devil instead! Have you ever wondered why Jesus would say to those who professed to be His followers, “And why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?” (Luke 6:46). The Lord’s servants are those who submit themselves in faithfulness to do His Will (Rom. 6:16-18).

Don’t call him or her “faithful” until you know how they attend the services and conduct their life. Faithfulness to the services of the church is not the only identifying mark of faithfulness, but is one of the manifesting marks of the Lord being able to depend on us (Heb. 10:25).

Don’t call him or her “a faithful steward” until you see how they give their money to the Lord and His work. A look at our check book will readily tell if we have our priorities straight concerning putting the Lord first (Mat. 6:33), and if the Lord can truly love us (2 Cor. 9:7).

Don’t call him “an elder” until you see him shepherding, feeding, and tending the flock. It has been said of some elders that they do the deacons work, while the deacons do nothing.

Don’t call him a “deacon” until you see him being attentive and helpful to the elders in carrying out the work of the church.

It is not enough just to “call one a cowboy, until you see him ride!” In other words, let us all strive to be consistent with that which we claim to be and do. Jesus said, “by their fruits ye shall know them” (Mat. 7:20).

285 William Road; Collierville, TN 38017

God’s People Are Distinctive

Jim Lewis

The great thrust of liberalism is to make the church to become like the world around us. In a world so filled with sin and indifference to godliness, it is refreshing and uplifting to notice the distinctiveness of a faithful Christian.

A true follower of Christ is:

**Distinctive in speech**—The Christian’s speech is “sound speech, that cannot be condemned” (Tit. 2:8). There is a noted void of profanity and vulgarities. He calls Bible things by Bible names (1 Pet. 4:11). His language is the language of godliness, not worldliness.

**Distinctive in doctrine**—His consent is only to “the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness” (1 Tim. 6:3). The Christian is greatly concerned about abiding only in the doctrine of Christ (2 John 9), and will teach no other doctrine than that which is authorized by the Lord (Gal. 1:6-8; Col. 3:17).

**Distinctive in worship**—Historically, apostasy makes its inroads by changing the way in which man worships God. A true follower of Christ avoids the vain worship of teaching man’s doctrines (Mat. 15:9). He also refuses will worship (Col. 2:23), and he rejects the idea that man can worship God in ignorance (Acts 17:23). The Christian distinctively worships God in spirit and in truth (John 4:24).

**Distinctive in manner of life**—A true follower of Christ always conducts himself in a manner which “becometh the gospel of Christ” (Phi. 1:27). The Christian’s modest apparel is distinctive from the world’s dress (1 Tim. 2:8-10). His entertainment is unlike that of the world’s. His priorities in all matters place Christ first. What this world needs is more distinctiveness! “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?” (2 Cor. 6:14)?
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Marilyn Hall, Neva Bryant (Tandem Health Care), Ruby Bowman, Lucille Staples, Ella Hammac, Marge Williams, Mildred Hall, Dot Lambert, and Marian Word.

Sympathy
Our deepest sympathy is extended to Marge Williams in the death of her mother, Lillian Hilburn, who passed away on August 28, 2004. Please keep Marge and her family in your prayers.

New Arrival
Fred and Rheba Stancliff are the proud great-grandparents of Kaylia Lyn Wilkes born on August 28, 2004, to Michael and Sarah Wilkes. She weighed in at 9 pounds 7 ounces and was 21 inches long. Please keep them in your prayers.

Reading/Invitation
September 8, 2004
Reading: Carl Ayliffe
Invitation: Henry Born
September 15, 2004
Reading: Elward Brantley
Invitation: Paul Brantley

Mark These Dates
Every Sunday–Ladies’ Bible class will meet at 5:00 PM, in the zone room.
September 5, 2004–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
September 12, 2004–Attendance Drive and Dinner on the grounds after the morning service in the general purpose building.
Gospel Meetings Build Up the Church

The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation today just as it was in the first century. There are many ways of teaching the Gospel but let us not forget, that one of the most successful ways is the Gospel meeting. We have all seen the power of Gospel meetings. Many of us obeyed the Gospel during such efforts, and have seen our friends and loved ones respond in obedience. In this article we are considering how a Gospel meeting builds up the church.

1. Gospel meetings have played a very important part in establishing and building up local congregations since the day of Pentecost. They are no less necessary and useful in reaching the lost and building up the church today.

2. Preparation for the meeting builds up the church as it provides the opportunity to emphasize the importance of soul-saving. Every member should have a prospect list of his own. Nothing does more to quicken our own interest in the preaching of the Gospel than endeavoring to get others to hear and obey it.

3. Attending the services of a Gospel meeting strengthens members by providing the opportunity for indoctrination and spiritual development. In every church there are new members who need such instruction. Even the most mature Christian needs to hear the “first principles” again and again to become “Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith” (Col. 2:7). It adds power and strength to one’s spiritual life to listen to lessons on prayer, the Christian graces and themes that emphasize Christian duty. In these meetings, our vision is enlarged, our
courage is increased, inspiration is received, and members are built up in the faith.

4. The meeting provides opportunity for contacting new prospects. If a careful record is made of those in attendance, many new names will be furnished for further visitation. Every individual who comes into the meeting house is a possible prospect. Too often, they are never gained because no record of their visit is made and further contact is impossible. It is tragic to neglect those who show interest to attend our services. Let us all provide a cheerful, friendly welcome to all who attend our Gospel meeting.

Author Unknown

Preach the Word

Tim Smith

What is to be the means of reaching sinners and bringing them to salvation today? This is a question of great importance, perhaps (due to the common practices of the day) of greater importance now than ever before so far as church history is concerned. What must happen to a man/woman before conversion can take place?

We see many appealing to the emotions of men and women in an effort to convert them, telling death-bed stories, tugging on their heart-strings, crying, and trying to induce the same from the hearer, etc., but do such tactics convert? Such things often move people to walk down aisles and confess sins or be immersed, but does that equal conversion? If a man hears a sad story and professes a commitment to the Lord as a result of the emotion of the moment, is he converted to the Lord? I would suggest to you that he is not. While the emotions play a role in our conversion, there must be the change of mind that will demonstrate itself in the change of life present also. This change of mind does not come about as a result of hearing about dear old uncle Bill and his heartfelt conversation with his wayward son on his deathbed—it comes about as a result of considering the testimony of the New Testament writers, accepting it, and committing oneself to the life that must be lived by the Christian.

I have heard preachers who were most able speakers appeal to no more than the emotions, and I have seen droves of people walk down the aisle following the speech—but all too often I have also witnessed those people falling away from their commitment as soon as the heated emotions of the moment cooled. Why is this? It is because the people were not converted to Christ, they were but emotionally moved.

When I consider the story of the Cross etc., emotions follow. When I consider the duties enjoined on Christians, emotions follow. When I consider Heaven/Hell, emotions follow. In fact, sufficient emotions follow to motivate me to action. Such is as it should be. We should appeal to the facts of the Scriptures and fully present them and make them the basis of our argument and appeal and then such emotions as follow will (most likely) be the proper ones. In doing this we give the hearers the proper basis for their faith (cf., Rom. 10:17) and, at least, point them in the proper direction from the start.

May we be careful to offer the sinner before his/her conversion exactly what will be needed to maintain his/her faith following conversion. The Word saved them in the First Century, and if we are to be saved in the Twenty-First, it will be by the same Word.
Bellview Church of Christ
Gospel Meeting
September 26 - October 1, 2004
Sunday Morning: 9:00 & 10:00 AM
Sunday - Friday Evenings: 7:30 PM
with
Bob Hawkins
Terre Haute, Indiana

Speaking on:
Sunday Bible Class: Following the Advice of the Multitude and Seeking Smooth Seas
Sunday Morning Worship: Uselessness of Trying to Save Self By Self
Sunday Evening Worship: I Believe God
Monday Evening: Salvation Was Only in the Ship
Tuesday Evening: The Fickle Mind of Men
Wednesday Evening: Courage Found in Faithful Brethren
Thursday Evening: The Hope of Israel
Friday Evening: Preaching the Kingdom

Covered-dish meal will be provided at 6:00 PM by the Visitation Groups as follows:
Visitation Group 1 - Monday and Wednesday
Visitation Group 2 - Tuesday and Thursday
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Lucille Staples, Marilyn Hall, Ruby Bowman, Ella Hammac, Marge Williams, Mildred Hall, Dot Lambert, Bill Busch, and Clifford Newell.

Sympathy
Our deepest sympathy is extended to Sheila Myrick in the death of her mother, Neva Bryant, on September 3, 2004. Keep Sheila and her family in your prayers. Also, keep Lucille Staples (Neva’s sister), and Sharon Caine and Pam Busch (Neva’s nieces) in your prayers.

Reading/Invitation
September 8, 2004
Reading: Carl Ayliffe
Invitation: Henry Born
September 15, 2004
Reading: Elward Brantley
Invitation: Paul Brantley

Mark These Dates
Every Sunday–Ladies’ Bible class will meet at 5:00 PM, in the zone room.
September 12, 2004–Attendance Drive and Dinner on the grounds after the morning service in the general purpose building.
September 12, 2004–Deacons’ meeting held at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
September 12, 2004–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
September 19, 2004–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
September 19, 2004–Elders/Deacons’ meeting held at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
If the Local Congregation is Not Important, Why...?

Andy Cates

There have been some at times that demean and question the importance of the existence of the local congregation. Since the Bible is the authoritative Word of God and furnishes man completely unto every good work (2 Tim. 3:16-17), we must seek a “thus saith the Scriptures” on this vital topic. “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32). God is pleased when we search the Scriptures (Acts 17:11).

If the local congregation is not important, why did the preaching of the gospel establish congregations in every city? When the gospel was preached on the day of Pentecost, the congregation in Jerusalem was established and every Christian was a member of it (Acts 2:41, 46-47). When the gospel of the Lord Jesus was preached in Antioch, why was there a congregation established and why were Barnabas and Saul “assembled...with the church” there (Acts 11:20-26)? When Paul and Barnabas preached on their first missionary journey, why were congregations established everywhere they went? When Paul preached in Corinth, was not the congregation in Corinth established (1 Cor. 1:2)? These examples could be multiplied. How can anybody criticize the sacred patterns of God?

If the local congregation is not important, why did Paul and Barnabas ordain “elders in every church” (Acts 14:23; cf., Tit. 1:5)? Why would it be commanded, “Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch...”
for your souls” (Heb. 13:17), speaking of the
eldership? Why would Paul instruct the elders of
the church at Ephesus, “Take heed therefore unto
yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which
the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed
the church of God, which he hath purchased with
his own blood” (Acts 20:28)? If the congregation
is not important, why is such care taken to ap-
point qualified men to serve the church in such a
vital capacity? In the case where there is not a
plurality of men who are qualified to serve as
elders, the faithful men of the congregation are
given this responsibility and authority. If the
local congregation is unimportant, having
biblically authorized leadership is unimportant.

If the local congregation is not important,
why are we commanded not to forsake “the
assembling of ourselves together, as the
manner of some is; but exhorting one another:
and so much the more, as ye see the day
approaching” (Heb. 10:25)? When we assemble
with our fellow members of the congregation of
which we are part, we receive strength, we give
strength; we “provoke unto love and to good
works” (Heb. 10:24). Paul commanded that “the
whole church ...come together” (1 Cor. 14:23).
The church in Jerusalem “continued stedfastly in
the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in
breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Acts 2:42).
The Bible is silent regarding “floating members,”
“members-at-large.” Those who profess to be
Christians, yet are not members of a local
congregation are not faithful to God!

If the congregation is not important, why
did our Lord send such strong rebuke and
beautiful blessing to the seven churches of
Asia, according to each congregation’s
spiritual standing (Rev. 2, 3)? Christ addressed
each congregation and not only that, He
repeatedly commanded, “He that hath an ear, let
him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches”
(Rev. 2:7).

Each congregation of the Lord’s people mat-
ters. Each is paramount in seeking and saving the
lost, feeding and strengthening the saved, and
assisting the needy. Speaking of local congre-
gations Paul wrote, “Salute one another with a
holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you”
(Rom. 16:16).

Being Added to the Body
or Joining a Church?

Ed Johnson

Luke teaches that we were added to them: the
church. Our being added to the church, by God,
came about in the same way that it did in the first
century. On that day of Pentecost, those Jews
were added to the church as a result of certain
teaching, as a result of recognizing a certain
authority, and as a result of obeying certain
commands. The “being added to” requires the
same thing today.

In becoming a member of a denomination,
one has perhaps two available options. He can
select the denomination he would like to be a
part of and join it. Or, his parents can select the
right group for him and have him indoctrinated
into its teaching before he is old enough to give
it any thought. In either case, his membership is
based on the doctrines, the teaching, and the
authority (or lack of same) of that particular
group. Since that group was not founded on the
truth, was not established by Christ, and is not
authorized (or even mentioned) by Christ, it is
not the church which Jesus built (Mat. 16:18), it
is not the body of Christ, and will be destroyed
(Mat. 15:13).
Bellview Church of Christ
Gospel Meeting
September 26 - October 1, 2004
Sunday Morning: 9:00 & 10:00 AM
Sunday - Friday Evenings: 7:30 PM
with
Bob Hawkins
Terre Haute, Indiana

Speaking on:
Sunday Bible Class: Following the Advice of the Multitude and Seeking Smooth Seas
Sunday Morning Worship: Uselessness of Trying to Save Self By Self
Sunday Evening Worship: I Believe God
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Thursday Evening: The Hope of Israel
Friday Evening: Preaching the Kingdom

Covered-dish meal will be provided at 6:00 PM by the Visitation Groups as follows:
Visitation Group 1 - Monday and Wednesday
Visitation Group 2 - Tuesday and Thursday
Visitors are invited to every meal.
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Marilyn Hall, Ruby Bowman, Lucille Staples, Ella Hammac, Marge Williams, Mildred Hall.

Reading/Invitation
September 22, 2004
Reading: Jerry Caine
Invitation: Bill Busch
September 29, 2004
Gospel Meeting with Bob Hawkins

Mark These Dates
Every Sunday–Ladies’ Bible class will meet at 5:00 PM, in the zone room.
September 19, 2004–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
September 19, 2004–Elders/Deacons’ meeting held at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
September 22, 2004–Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 PM, in the auditorium.
September 26, 2004–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
October 3, 2004–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
October 10, 2004–Deacons’ meeting held at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
October 17, 2004–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
October 17, 2004–Elders/Deacons’ meeting held at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
October 27, 2004–Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 PM, in the auditorium.
Hurricane Ivan  

*Michael Hatcher*

As a result of our visit by Ivan, there were some things which were suspended for the time while we were waiting for power to be restored and for us to get back to some semblance of normalcy. During this time the bulletin was not published (we are skipping the volume numbers of those which were not published), and also *Defender* will not be published during the month of October.

There was some damage to the building here and a great deal of clean-up that has been required because of Ivan. Most of the members of this congregation suffered some damage to their houses and a few suffered extensive damage. Thankfully almost all of our members escaped without any injury physically, although we did have one (to my knowledge) who was injured. Almost every person would say that this has been a very emotional time. The devastation Ivan brought will remain a lasting memory, no doubt, for all of us. However, there are bright spots as well. The concern that brethren from other locations have shown has been overwhelming. Two congregations organized the shipment of food, water, and other necessities and brought those goods down to us. The opportunity to hand out those goods to those who are in need and some who have lost everything was a sight to behold. Those who were not members of the Lord’s church were given tracts about the church and invited to attend. We pray that some will take heed and obey the gospel of Christ. However, whether this happens or not, brethren can take solace in the
fact that we were doing what God desires of us in doing good to all men.

Additionally, there are brethren who have and are sending financial help to the congregation here. The elders here have been keeping a record of those who have sent money and will be making sure that it is used in the best way possible. We know that financial aid has come from the generous hearts of Christians all over the nation.

There have also been those who have come here to help us in the cleanup. These brethren have taken time out of their schedule and made the trip here to work—and work they did. They did this out of the goodness of their heart and without any expectation of any financial pay.

We want to express our appreciation to all those who have helped in whatever way it has expressed itself. Individuals and congregations all over our great brotherhood have joined together to aid us in this time of need. We thank each and every one of you!

Developing Godly Character

Marvin L. Weir

The apostle Paul reminded the brethren at Colosse that upon becoming a child of God those things inconsistent with Christianity were to be “put off.” He also reminds his listeners that there are certain things that must be “put on” if one is to please God. And, last but not least, there are those things to “let in” and those things to “cast out” as proof of one’s faith.

Let us first note some things that are to be put off. Paul specifically mentions “anger, wrath, malice, railing, shameful speaking” (Col. 3:8) in admonishing these brethren to “put off the old man with his doings” (v. 9). The Bible is clear that one who genuinely obeys the gospel and “is a new creature: the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new” (2 Cor. 5:17). There are other sins the Bible mentions that must not be practiced, but rather “put to death” if one is to live the Christian life (1 Cor. 6:9; Gal. 5:19-21).

The influence of the world is strong. Worldly ways have slowly but surely overcome many without them realizing the distance they have traveled. Followers of Christ must exercise every care not to conform to worldly standards, but to transform themselves with Christian character that is well pleasing unto God (cf., Rom. 12:2).

Let us now observe some things that the faithful child of God will desire to put on. The Bible says the one who is converted to Christ will “have put on the new man, that is being renewed unto knowledge after the image of him that created him” (Col. 3:10). In the Old Testament Ezekiel challenged the people by saying, “Cast away from you all your transgressions, wherein ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel?” (Eze. 18:31)? To the Ephe-sian brethren Paul says, “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them” (Eph. 2:10).

One who is truly a “new creature” in Christ will put on certain virtues. Paul told the Colossian brethren: “Put on therefore, as God’s elect, holy and beloved, a heart of compassion, kindness, longsuffering, forgiving one another, and forgiving each other, if any man have a complaint against any; even as the Lord forgave you, so also do ye: and above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfectness” (Col. 3:12-14).
There are those things a Christian will “let in” his heart. Paul said, “And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to the which also ye were called in one body; and be ye thankful” (Col 3:15). There will be no peace for the one who does not believe in and trust in God. Jesus said, “These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye may have peace. In the world ye have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). The prophet Isaiah knew the formula for the peace that all need. He said, “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee” (Isa. 26:3). The apostle Paul also says to “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly” (Col. 3:16). Ignorance of the Word of God will destroy one (cf., Hos. 4:6). The Psalmist knew the value of storing up God’s Word in our minds. He said, “Thy word have I laid up in my heart, That I might not sin against thee” (Psa. 119:11). Reading God’s Word is one thing. Accepting it as truth, believing it, and laying it up in our mind is what really matters.

There are those things a Christian will cast out of his life. Loyal service to the Master and to His church will be forthcoming from the steadfast child of God. Paul said, “And whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him” (Col. 3:17). The authority for the things we do always comes from Christ.

Hearty service to the cause of Christ will be rendered joyfully. One must not forget the admonition that says, “Whatsoever ye do, work heartily, as unto the Lord, and not unto men” (Col. 3:23). Lip service and mere pretense is but to make mockery of sacred matters (cf., Mat. 15:9).

“Giving thanks to God the Father through him” (Col. 3:17) will not be neglected by the one who truly loves the Lord. Ingratitude has ravaged the world like a plague of locusts. Do you remember the ten lepers that Christ made clean? Only one upon seeing he was healed turned back and gave thanks—a Samaritan! The question Christ asked is both penetrating and demanding, “Were not the ten cleansed? but where are the nine?” (Luke 17:17).

Christian character is something that man must add to his life. God will not do it for one! The rewards of Christian character are many, but when we cross over Jordan to that “house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens” (2 Cor. 5:1), our hope will become reality and our joy made complete.

Develop Christian character while it is yet today!

5810 Liberty Grove Road; Rowlett, TX 75088

The Influence Upon Our Children

If Christian parents do not teach and influence their children in the righteous values and principles of God’s Word—then be assured someone else will do your job for you. Only they will not use the Bible and the blessed laws of purity found therein. Society stands ready to influence your children with the ungodly ways of this world. The TV they watch, the video games they play, their peers at school, the magazines they read, the movies they view, the music they listen to, and current pop culture will instill in them principles for unrighteous living. Is that what we want? We use our influence in training dogs, cats, cattle, horses, flowers, and trees. Are not children more important than these? Parents, wake up before it is too late.

Author Unknown
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Harold and Elaine Maxey, Marilyn Hall, Ruby Bowman, Lucille Staples, Ella Hammac, Marge Williams, Mildred Hall, and Ray Dodd.

Reading/Invitation
October 13, 2004
Reading: Andrew Hatcher
Invitation: Dale Cunningham
October 20, 2004
Reading: Daniel Hatcher
Invitation: Ray Dodd

Mark These Dates
Every Sunday–Ladies’ Bible class will meet at 5:00 pm, in the zone room.
October 10, 2004–Deacons’ meeting held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
October 17, 2004–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
October 17, 2004–Elders/Deacons’ meeting held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
October 27, 2004–Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.
November 7, 2004–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.

New Addresses
Harold and Elaine Maxey’s temporary address is Asbury Place; 4916 Mobile Highway, Room 10; Pensacola, FL 32506. Their phone number is 456-0750. They need visits and any assistance you can provide.
Talisha Brantley’s new address is 9515 Wanda Drive; Pensacola, FL 32514.
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

Blessings in Christ

Preston Silcox

Ephesians 1:3 declares that God “hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." Consider some of the great gifts of God that one finds “in Christ.”

Redemption—“Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 3:24).

Freedom from condemnation—“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (Rom. 8:1).

The love of God—“Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 8:39).

Sanctification—“Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours” (1 Cor. 1:2).

Newness of life—“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2 Cor. 5:17).

Liberty—“And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage” (Gal. 2:4).

Wholeness—“And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power” (Col. 2:10).

Grace—“Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim. 2:1).

Salvation—“Therefore I endure all things for...
the elect’s sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory” (2 Tim. 2:10).

Are you “in Christ” where these spiritual blessings abide and abound? The only door of entrance is baptism: “For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ” (Gal. 3:27). This is the “one baptism” of Ephesians 4:5 and it is preceded by faith (Mark 16:16), repentance (Acts 2:38), and confession of faith in Jesus (Rom. 10:9-10; cf., Acts 8:36-37). God’s bountiful blessings await you in His dear Son—will you not come in?

4006 Sunset Street; Muskogee, OK 74403

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Two Reasons Why Women Are Not to Be in Roles of Public Leadership in the Church

Bobby Duncan

I have never wanted anybody to be mistreated. It is not fair for women to be paid less than men are paid for doing the same job. The rights of women are kept constantly before us. But to say that women should be treated fairly is not equal to saying that men and women should always be permitted to do the same things. It is quite obvious that men and women literally cannot do the same thing; a man cannot bear children, and a woman cannot beget children. Men and women are different.

In recent years, certain religious groups have tried to remove the distinction that exists between men and women by putting women in various leadership roles formerly reserved for men only. Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 2:9-14,

In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works. 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. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.

This prohibition by the inspired writer has been explained away(?) by saying the reason for this prohibition was cultural. Since our culture is different, then the prohibition does not apply to our time and our culture.

But you will observe that Paul himself, by inspiration, gave two reasons for this prohibition, and neither of those reasons has anything to do with culture. Reason number one is in verse 13: “For Adam was first formed, then Eve,” then it will be true that women are to “learn in silence with all subjection.” When the time comes that it is no longer true that “Adam was first formed,
then Eve,” then, and only then, will it be permitted by God for women to have roles of public leadership in the assemblies of the saints.

The second reason given by the inspired writer for this prohibition is in verse 14: “And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.” Is it still true in modern times and in our modern culture that “Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression”? So long as that is true it will be true that women are to “learn in silence with all subjection.” When the time comes that it is no longer true that “Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression,” then, and only then, will God permit women to have roles of public leadership in the assemblies of the saints.

One may say, “What do these two facts have to do with the matter?” Whether we know the answer to that question or not does not change the Word of the Lord. It is not ours to understand why; it is ours to obey.

Deceased

On Placing Membership

Periodically, folks ask about the custom of placing membership with a congregation when moving to a new location. Does the New Testament say anything about it? Is this a custom of recent origin? What is its purpose anyway?

Perhaps one example which could be cited is found in Acts 9:26, After obeying the gospel, Saul “assayed to join himself to the disciples.” Was he not desirous of letting it be known that he was “one of them”? Incidentally, this has reference only to those who have already obeyed the gospel and have been added by the Lord to His church (Acts 2:47). But why not just float around, attending here and there? Some have used the term suitcase Christianity to apply to this phenomenon.

On the other hand, have you ever wondered why people place membership in a local congregation? Here are a few reasons, as listed by Charlie Thomason (of Wichita Falls):

1. It makes practical sense. A congregation needs to know that you can be counted on to be there, to serve, to teach, to work, and to contribute.

2. It makes your intentions clear. A Christian who continually visits a particular congregation will be less likely to be involved in the real inner workings of that body because their intentions are not clear. After all, they may be somewhere else next week or next month.

3. It makes good shepherding sense. According to Hebrews 13:17, elders are to watch over souls as men who must give an account. If an eldership is to be responsible for souls, they must know which souls fall under their responsibility. How can they possibly know if a Christian does not place himself or herself under their oversight? Finally, consider the case of Phoebe (Rom. 16:1-2) and those who obeyed the gospel on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:42-47). Not only did Phoebe know that she was a member of the Lord’s church in Cenchrea, but so did others, including the apostle Paul and the millions who have read this statement since the first century. Earlier the church in Jerusalem had 3,000 in one day who became members of that local body. The Bible says, “And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.... And all that believed were together, and had all things common” (Acts 2:42, 44).

Via “The McLoud Messenger”
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Harold and Elaine Maxey, Marilyn Hall, Ruby Bowman, Lucille Staples, Ella Hammac, Marge Williams, Mildred Hall, Richard Parker (Naval Hospital), and Linda Worley (surgery scheduled for Oct 14).

Reading/Invitation
October 20, 2004
Reading: Daniel Hatcher
Invitation: Ray Dodd
October 27, 2004
Reading: Bryan Loy
Invitation: Ray Foshee

Mark These Dates
Every Sunday—Ladies’ Bible class will meet at 5:00 pm, in the zone room.
October 17, 2004—Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
October 17, 2004—Elders/Deacons’ meeting held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
October 27, 2004—Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.
November 7, 2004—Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
November 14, 2004—Deacons’ meeting held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
November 21, 2004—Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
November 21, 2004—Elders/Deacons’ meeting held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
November 24, 2004—Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.
November 29, 2004—Visitation Group Get-together has been cancelled.
Prayer and the Supreme Court

Bob Spurlin

“Here we go again,” as a former president said several years ago. June 19, 2000, the Supreme Court voted 6 - 3 that would prevent students from offering a prayer before football games. This voluntary act of prayer before athletic events was opposed by the A.C.L.U., which had been a practice for numerous years, yet this liberal group has opposed Freedom of Religion for many years. Chief Justice Rehnquist, in his descent said the decision “bristles with hostility to all things religious in public life.” Ironically, there were only two families that were represented by the A.C.L.U., while the remainder of the school favored the practice of prayer before athletic events. It is very sinister, to think that the Supreme Court is now beginning to censor the religious speech of private citizens. What happens when the school has a talent contest and a student wants to sing “Amazing Grace”? Is the student going to be banned because the Word of God is used? We can see that the Supreme Court’s ruling will have far reaching effects.

This writer was able to attend school where prayer was allowed in the classroom. During homeroom, prior to the beginning of regular classes, we voluntarily could recite a Bible quotation, name the books of the Old Testament or New Testament, and willingly lead a prayer. Never were students or faculty objecting because of the use of God, Bible quotations, or religion being brought into the classroom. During this period of time there were no student uprisings, no weapons or guns being brought on the school campus,
Unlike what is the norm today. Many schools today have a police officer on duty at the school while metal detectors are being installed at most schools. More and more of our schools seem like a war zone with teens killing teens and unfortunately we have far too many Columbines where thirteen students and faculty members were murdered, and the two teens responsible committed suicide. In 1962, the Supreme Court ruled that Bible reading and prayer would be eliminated from the schools. Since that time there seems to be a direct correlation to the increase of delinquency and crime among our young people. Many contributing factors could be offered for this deviant lifestyle, but this writer is convinced that the Supreme Court’s decision in 1962, was the beginning of an unraveling of the morals of our young people. Recently the Supreme Court ruled that pornographic channels like *Playboy* and others have the right to the public airways in our homes, yet we cannot have prayer before a football game or other athletic event. What a sad picture?

We must elect officials that appoint judges which will pass laws that protect our freedoms and not take them away. Baccalaureate services have traditionally been associated with graduation services at the end of the school term. However, the baccalaureate services are being omitted more and more during a day of freedom and liberty. A preacher who gave an inspirational speech to the graduating students, who challenged them to be successful and reach for the stars as they proceed with their lives, normally conducted this service. Dear reader, this writer is convinced that you feel as outraged about this matter as do I. Since we are in the midst of an election year, let us make sure that we elect those that respect the laws of our founding fathers and vote for those who will best reflect our views as citizens.

122 Brooks Lane; Somerville, AL 35670

When Wickedness Is Established by Law

*Tom Wacaster*

There is an interesting verse in the 94th Psalm which adequately describes the way a number of people think. The verse reads, “Shall the throne of wickedness have fellowship with thee, Which frameth mischief by statute?” (v. 20). The context of the Psalm is a consideration of the wicked and their foolish opposition to God. But these were not just your run-of-the-mill participants in evil. The Psalmist was not writing to the *heathen*, but to those who should have known better. Those to whom the Psalmist wrote were God’s chosen people. They had, somewhere along the way, cast off all restraint, reaching a point in their downward plunge into apostasy that was characteristic of the *nations* about them. Arrogant and proud, they actually boasted themselves in their iniquity. There was little regard for life. They despised their heritage. The widow and fatherless were a nuisance, so much so that they thought it advantageous to slay and murder those less fortunate than themselves. Injustice was the order of the day. The widow, sojourner, and the fatherless were imperiled (v. 6). And just about the time one would think they could go no lower, the writer informs us that “they say, The LORD shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard it” (v. 7). Could it be that Israel had arrived at this point in time where they regarded the God of heaven as nothing more than the “God of Jacob.” Was He not their God as well? Oh, how the mighty had fallen. According to verse 20, the *throne* itself had become...
corrupt. The leadership was corrupt from its head to its toe. The Psalmist seeks to remind the people that God does not have fellowship with such a corrupt nation. But what is shocking about all of this is the fact that this corrupt nation had actually passed certain statutes which legalized their mischief. What a perverse way of thinking. It is the kind of thinking that says human law overrides God’s law; that man is in a better position to determine right and wrong than is the Almighty; that a mere stroke of the pen can turn that which is wicked into that which is right! Israel needed to be reminded that such a “throne of wickedness” stands squarely against God! They will not have His blessings! Oh how our beloved nation needs to hear this lesson. In the last 100 years we have seen the legalization of drinking, the sale of alcohol, para-mutual betting, abortion on demand, homosexual rights, the lottery, casino halls, houses of ill repute, etc. Now politicians clamor for legalization of drugs and homosexual marriages. The philosophy seems to be: “If we can just get it on the books, ratify it by the States, and get it signed by the President, it is right and acceptable.” Have we become so foolish as to think that God does not see or hear? There is one more verse in this Psalm that gives a clear indication of the fruits of this kind of thinking. The 21st verse reads, “They gather themselves together against the soul of the righteous, and condemn the innocent blood.” When enough laws are passed legalizing the mischief in which men desire to participate, the righteous element in society will actually become the enemy. I fear that we may have already arrived at such a point in our nation’s trek away from God. Those who oppose immodesty are labeled prudish. Opposition to drinking and/or gambling makes one judgmental. If you say anything about the homosexual movement you are a homophobe. Anti-abortionists are radicals. We could go on, but I think you get the picture. Liberal lawmakers are doing their best to “frame mischief by a law.” Bills pending, waiting for examination and approval, will move us further and further away from the God of heaven. When the Psalmist asked the question: “Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with thee” (v. 20) he was asking a rhetorical question, the answer to which is a resounding “No!” I do not know how long God will wait before He renders judgment on this nation. But there is a point in time when His patience will run out, and “he shall bring upon them their own iniquity, and shall cut them off in their own wickedness; yea, the Lord our God shall cut them off.” America, prepare to meet thy God!

P.O. Box 283; Talco, TX 75487

Some Things the Bible Says About Baptism

• It requires much water (John 3:23).
• They came to the water (Acts 8:36).
• They went down into the water (Acts 8:38).
• It is a burial (Rom. 6:4).
• Jesus came up out of the water (Mat. 3:16).
• Rejoicing followed baptism (Acts 16:34).
• Baptism is for remission of sins (Acts 2:38).
• Baptism saves (1 Pet. 3:21).
• Baptism is for those old enough to hear, believe, repent, and confess (Acts 2:37-38; 8:37).
• Baptism will wash away sins (Acts 22:16).
• We are baptized into the death of Christ in order to reach His blood (Rom. 6:3; John 19:33-34).
• It is a command (Acts 10:48).

Author Unknown
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Harold and Elaine Maxey, Marilyn Hall, Lucille Staples, Ella Hammac, Marge Williams, Richard Parker (Naval Hospital), and Linda Worley.

Reading/Invitation
October 27, 2004
Reading: Bryan Loy
Invitation: Ray Foshee
November 3, 2004
Reading: Jim Loy
Invitation: Louis Herrington

Mark These Dates
Every Sunday—Ladies’ Bible class will meet at 5:00 pm, in the zone room.
October 27, 2004—Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.
November 7, 2004—Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
November 14, 2004—Deacons’ meeting held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
November 21, 2004—Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
November 21, 2004—Elders/Deacons’ meeting held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
November 24, 2004—Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.

Daylight Saving Time Ends
Daylight Saving Time ends on Sunday, October 31. Set your clocks back one hour on Saturday evening.
“William Jennings Bryan’s Challenge to Atheism”

(A number of years ago William Jennings Bryan wrote a challenge to atheists. Its message continues to be timely. It was delivered by Mr. Bryan in Orchestra Hall, Chicago, Illinois, on May 4, 1911.)

“Is the Bible the work of man, or is it an inspired book? Is it the product of human wisdom, or did its authors speak as they were commanded by the Lord? Atheists and materialists declare that it is merely the work of man; that it was written under the limitations that apply to human wisdom. Taking this position, they must necessarily contend that, unless man has degenerated in ability and declined in wisdom, he can now produce a book equal to the Bible. Let them produce it. Judged by human standards, man is far better prepared to write a Bible now than he was when our Bible was written. The characters whose words and deeds are recorded in the Bible were members of a single race; they lived among the hills of Palestine in a territory scarcely larger than one of our counties. They did not have printing presses, and they lacked the learning of the schools; they had no great libraries to consult, no telegraph wires to bring them the news from the ends of the earth, and no newspaper to spread before them each morning the doings of the day before. Science had not unlocked Nature’s door and revealed the secrets of rocks below and stars above. From what a scantily supplied storehouse of knowledge they had to draw, compared with the unlimited wealth of information at man’s command today! And yet these Bible characters grapple with every problem that confronts
mankind, from the creation of the world to eternal life beyond the tomb. They have given us a diagram of man's existence from the cradle to the grave, and they have set up sign posts at every dangerous point along the path. We turn back to the Bible for the Ten Commandments, which form the foundation for our statute law, and for the Sermon on the Mount, which lays down the rules for our spiritual growth. The Bible gives us the story of the birth, the words, the works, the crucifixion, the resurrection, and the ascension of Him whose coming was foretold in prophecy, whose arrival was announced by the angel voices, singing “Peace and goodwill”—the story of Him who is the glowing figure of all time, whom the world is accepting as Saviour and as the perfect example. Let the atheists and the materialists produce a better Bible than ours, if they can. Let them collect the best of their school to be found among the graduates of the universities—as many as they please, and from every land. Let the members of this selected group travel where they will, consult such libraries as they please, and employ every modern means of swift communication. Let them glean in the fields of geology, botany, astronomy, biology, and zoology, and then roam at will wherever science has opened a way; let them take advantage of all the progress in art and in literature, in oratory, and in history—let them use to the full every instrumentality that is employed in modern civilization; and when they have exhausted every source, let them embody the results of their best intelligence in a book and offer it to the world as a substitute for this Bible of ours. Have they the confidence that the prophets of Baal had in their god? Will they try? If not, what excuse will they give? Has man fallen from his high estate, so that we cannot rightfully expect as much of him now as nineteen centuries ago? Or does the Bible come to us from a source that is higher than man—which?

Remember

Tim Smith

When things are not going in the way you wish them to go, nor in the way you think best, remember: “It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps” (Jer. 10:23).

When the things you have received are not the things you wanted, remember: “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights” (Jam. 1:17).

When you are depressed with the cares of this life, and you do not think yourself capable of going on, remember: “The peace of God, which passeth all understanding” (Phi. 4:7) can be yours.

When you try to live right, but fall victim to sin, remember: the Psalmist declared, “Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee” (Psa. 119:11).

When you feel your temptations are greater than you can bear, and you fear that their weight will soon collapse your supports, remember: “God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able” (1 Cor. 10:13).

When you feel that no man before you has ever carried the kind of load you must carry, remember: Jesus carried His cross to Calvary (John 19:17).

When you think that your contributions of time and effort are useless, and that you can offer nothing to God worth-while, remember: Paul declared that your labor in the Lord is not in vain (1 Cor. 15:58).

When you feel that you are incapable of
Much has been written recently concerning church growth. This has occurred largely because the church of our Lord has not grown as rapidly as it did in times past. This disturbs many, and it should! The church grew rapidly in the first century (Acts 2:41, 47; 4:4; 5:14; 6:7). It grew rapidly during the early years of the restoration movement in the nineteenth century. It grew rapidly following World War II and up through the 1960s. It is my observation that during the past thirty years there has been a widespread loss of distinctiveness in the doctrine and practice of the churches of Christ. With this loss of distinctiveness has come a decrease in the rate of growth.

Sadly, much of the written material on church growth misses the mark as to what will cause the church to grow as it did in times past. Emphasis is often placed on meeting the temporal needs of men—the social, emotional, and entertainment needs—above the spiritual needs—salvation from sin and growth in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ. Also, emphasis is placed on the need to develop personal relationships rather than to convict men of sin and convert them to Christ. There seems to be a great desire in many to be accepted by the non-religious and sectarian-religious world, thinking this will bring about church growth.

Let us take note that whenever the church has grown rapidly, it has also made many enemies. This is inevitable. When the distinctive gospel of Christ is preached, it will soften the hearts of some unto obedience while it will harden the hearts of others unto rebellion. We cannot seek to be acceptable to all men and at the same time seek to spread the gospel. Jesus warned, “Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets” (Luke 6:26). When we individually as Christians and collectively as the church proclaim the distinctive gospel of Christ, we can expect two results: we will make converts and we will make enemies! We can expect to gain dear friends and make hostile adversaries. Let us seek to meet the deepest needs of men by teaching them the gospel of Christ. When we do, the church will grow again as it did in times past.
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Harold and Elaine Maxey, Marilyn Hall, Lucille Staples, Ella Hammac, Marge Williams, Richard Parker, Linda Worley, and Wanda Lewis (Linda Parker’s cousin).

Reading/Invitation
November 3, 2004
Reading: Jim Loy
Invitation: Louis Herrington
November 10, 2004
Reading: Gabe Moore
Invitation: Ray Pierce

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An Exercise to Use During Communion:
Seven Reminders
One Lord
Two thieves
Three crosses
Four soldiers who gambled for Jesus’ garments (John 19:23-24)
Five wounds: four nails in Jesus’ hands and feet, one spear in His side (Psa. 34:20, no broken bones!)
We live in a world that is filled with religious confusion. Many people boldly state that it is impossible for all to understand the Bible alike. This reasoning simply fuels the cry: “That’s your interpretation, and this is my interpretation.” The majority of the religious world has agreed that God expects people to interpret His Word differently. This false conclusion is what keeps denominations in business. They agree to disagree and then loudly proclaim: “Attend the church of your choice.”

What about attending the church of God’s choice? Is anyone listening? Who do we worship? Who are we to glorify? Who are we to please? Who are we to obey? Is the answer to these questions man or God?

There is not a single denomination that believes the Word of God is settled in heaven! Man-made churches have their annual conventions so they can “add to” and “take from” their creed books. They vote on whether or not to support abortion. They vote on whether or not to accept same-sex marriages. They vote on whether or not they should condemn homosexuality. Can these people who profess to believe the Bible not see the error of their way? Do they not see the fallacy of man-made churches?

The Word of God says, “For ever, O Jehovah, Thy word is settled in heaven” (Psa. 119:89). Is God’s Word decided or settled by a court of man? Absolutely not! Is God’s Word decided or settled by church leaders, boards, synods, or conventions? Absolutely not! Is God’s Word decided or settled by what the majority of folks
think? No, not at all! Listen again as the inspired Word speaks in stating, “For ever, O Jehovah, Thy word is settled in heaven.” The what and the where speak volumes to those who will listen. What is settled? The Word of God! Where is it settled? In Heaven!

God’s Word was settled long before man ever decided to vote on it. All of the votes in the world cannot change nor alter one of God’s Holy Scriptures. The folly of ignoring the Word of God is seen in Adam and Eve sinning and being cast from the garden (Gen. 3:1-19). Noah was blessed and his life spared because “Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he” (Gen. 6:22). Moses taught the Israelites, “Ye shall observe to do therefore as Jehovah your God hath commanded you: ye shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. Ye shall walk in all the way which Jehovah your God hath commanded you, that ye may live, and that it may be well with you, and that ye may prolong your days in the land which ye shall possess” (Deu. 5:32-33).

Jesus pleaded, “If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments” (John 14:15). The apostle John stated, “For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous”(1 John 5:3). The last book of the New Testament warns, “I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto them, God shall add unto him the plagues which are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life, and out of the holy city, which are written in this book” (Rev. 22:18-19).

Friends, God’s Word is holy, just, pure, and right! The Psalmist well said, “The sum of thy word is truth; And every one of thy righteous ordinances endureth for ever” (119:89). One cannot, by the process of voting, change God’s Truths! Even though man votes to change God’s Truth, such does not occur. The apostle Paul sums it up quite well by saying, “God forbid: yea, let God be found true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy words, And mightiest prevail when thou comest into judgment” (Rom. 3:4).

Can we understand the Bible alike? Absolutely! Paul pleaded with the Ephesians, “Wherefore be ye not foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is” (Eph. 5:17). The Word of God states all who love Him “must worship in spirit and truth” (John 4:24). The Word of God states all who love Him “must worship in spirit and truth” (John 4:24). Such is a simple task if the authority of Christ is honored (Mat. 28:18) and all accept the fact that God’s Word “is settled in heaven” (Psa. 119:89).

Christ built His church (Mat. 16:20), and He only built one (Eph. 4:4) of which He is Head (Eph. 1:22-23). Remember, “It is settled,” and the whims and wishes of men will never change it!

Ten Reasons to Study the Bible

The Bible yields sweet fruits to him that reads. Its depths are unfathomable, and its riches are unlimited (Rom. 11:33).

A knowledge of Gospel truth is necessary before we can be made free from sin (John 8:32). We cannot make clear to unsaved people what is not clear to ourselves. “The disciple is not above his teacher.” The blind must not lead the
The possession of a working knowledge of the Bible arms one for the warfare of life. “And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (Eph. 6:17).

A working knowledge of the Bible “furnishes the man of God to every good work.” There is a Bible message to cover every condition and problem of every human being. It can be used in every emergency from the cradle to the grave (2 Tim. 3:13-17).

The knowledge of the Bible enables one to be comforted and offers help to discouraged and distressed brethren. “Therefore comfort one another with these words” (1 Thess. 4:18).

Only by a knowledge of the Word of God can you feed your soul. “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Mat. 4:4).

A lack of Bible knowledge will make you a workman that needeth to be ashamed, because you do not know how to handle aright the word of truth (2 Tim. 2:15).

A knowledge of the Bible is the only safeguard against fatal error. “Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the scriptures, neither the power of God?” (Mark 12:24).

We cannot be the parents we ought to be without nurturing our children in the chastening and admonition of the Lord (Eph. 6:4).

**Can I Go to Heaven?**

*Danny Box*

Heaven is that “prepared place for a prepared people.” We can read of the beauty of heaven in Revelation 21:10-22:5. We should all want to go there, but often times we see people who want to do as little as possible and get into that beautiful city. Taking into consideration what many try to do, let us ask the following questions:

**CAN I GO TO HEAVEN on one service a week? NO!** Not if I am able to attend more but choose not to. “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some” (Heb. 10:25)

**CAN I GO TO HEAVEN and love the things of the world? NO!** John wrote, “Love not the world...If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him” (1 John 2:15).

**CAN I GO TO HEAVEN and not work for the Lord? NO!** Listen to the words of James, “Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone...For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also” (Jam. 2:17, 26).

**CAN I GO TO HEAVEN and live any way I choose? NO!** We must live “faithful unto death” if we expect to receive a crown of life (Rev. 2:10). We must live our life as instructed in Titus 2:12: “denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.”

**CAN I GO TO HEAVEN and not be obedient to the Lord’s plan of salvation? NO!** We must hear the word (Rom. 10:17); we must believe that Word (John 8:32); we must repent of our sins (Luke 13:3); we must confess Christ as our Lord (Mat. 10:32); and we must be baptized for the remission of sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38). It is only by obedience that We Can Go to Heaven!
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Harold and Elaine Maxey, Marilyn Hall, Lucille Staples, Ella Hammac, Marge Williams, Richard Parker, Linda Worley, and Wanda Lewis (Linda Parker’s cousin).

Sympathy
Our deepest sympathy is extended to Joyce Johnson in the death of her sister-in-law, Faye Marciniak, on October 30, 2004. Please keep Joyce and her family in your prayers.

Reading/Invitation
November 10, 2004
Reading: Gabe Moore
Invitation: Ray Pierce
November 17, 2004
Reading: Shelby Nall
Invitation: Fred Stancliff

Mark These Dates
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November 29, 2004—Visitation Group Get-together has been cancelled.
To the Bible student, the words of this title are very familiar. For Paul wrote, “Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation” (2 Cor. 6:2). Sadly, many people today seem to get in a hurry only when they are on the freeway or in the “20-item or less” express line at Wal-Mart and not when it comes to obedience to God. Albeit, the latter is where the urgency really counts. “To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts” (Heb. 4:7).

Our obedience to the Lord must be first and foremost in our lives. We must not tarry. This was the point Jesus made in Luke 9:59-62: “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. Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.” The Lord expected these men to follow Him immediately. We must be prompt in following Christ in our obedience to Him.

It is extremely dangerous to tarry. Though he trembled at Paul’s preaching, Felix decided to wait for a convenient season to obey (Acts 24:25), and, as far as we know, that convenient season never came. The heart of Felix became harder as time passed. The convenient season will never come for many, because to them, turning from a sinful life is so inconvenient. King Agrippa told Paul, “Almost thou persuadest me
to be a Christian” (Acts 26:28). Agrippa was almost persuaded, almost, but lost.

When we read of conversions in the New Testament, we observe that those who obeyed did so without delay. They that received the Word gladly on the day of Pentecost heard one sermon and obeyed (Acts 2:41). The Ethiopian eunuch heard one sermon and obeyed (Acts 8:26-39); so did Cornelius (Acts 10), Lydia (Acts 16:13-15), and the Philippian jailer (Acts 16).

“Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin” (Jam. 4:17). May we as Christians and those who are non-Christians not put off until tomorrow what we know to do today. Let us not harden our hearts. “Behold, now is the day of salvation.”

The Bible: God’s Precious Gift To Us

Tom Wacaster

I recently had the opportunity to dig out one of my older lectureship books during some research I was doing for a lecture assignment. The book to which I refer was the Ninth Annual Shenandoah Lectures, entitled A Handbook on Bible Translation. Though now out of print, it is a veritable gold-mine of information pertaining to translation methods, with a review of some of the modern English translations now on the market. There is also information on the Bible itself, with lessons on the subject of inspiration, the reliability of the Bible, and the indestructible nature of God’s Word. One important truth that emerges over and over again in our study of this great book we call “The Holy Bible” is the fact that this message from heaven is indestructible. Through Peter our God has reassured us that His word “liveth and abideth for ever” (1 Pet. 1:22-24).

Through the years critics have attacked the Bible with unrelenting fervor. The critics have faded into history, their works scarcely read and seldom remembered, but the Word of God marches on. This book is still the best seller. Because of its beauty and influence upon the lives of men, many a tribute has been paid to this sacred volume: and rightly so. Among other things of interest in the lectureship book, was this tribute that Henry Van Dyke wrote, perhaps the most noble words ever ascribed to the Bible. I share them with you:

Born in the East and clothed in Oriental form and imagery, the Bible walks the ways of all the world with familiar feet and enters land after land to find its own everywhere. It has learned to speak in hundreds of languages to the heart of man. Children listen to its stories with wonder and delight, and wise men ponder them as parables of life. The wicked and proud tremble at its warnings, but to the wounded and penitent it has a mother’s voice. It has woven itself into our dearest dreams; so that love, sympathy, devotion, memory, and hope put on the beautiful garments of its treasured speech. No man is poor or desolate who has this treasure for his own. When the landscape darkens, and the trembling pilgrim comes to the valley of the shadow, he is not afraid to enter; he takes the rod and staff of Scripture in his hand; he says to friend and comrade, ‘Goodbye; we shall meet again’; and, confronted by that support, he goes toward the lonely pass as one who walks through darkness to light (246-247).
How grateful we should be for the precious word of God. We should read and study it as a hungry man longs for food, or a thirsty man for water to sooth his dry, parched lips. Here is the manna for our soul, the light for our path, and the strength for the hour. Do not neglect it, for it will judge you in the last day. I will close with a poem written by brother Grady Duncan, deacon at the North Jefferson Church of Christ in Mt. Pleasant, Texas. We run it with his permission.

**Daddy’s Bible**
Grady L. Duncan
16 July 2000

Daddy has left us, his life’s work done.
Only one thing leaving, to me, his son.
It is his old Bible, all tattered and torn.
Each page is wrinkled, soiled or worn.
Its condition, atrocious, but not from abuse.
It happened through time, with frequent use.
From cover to cover, each page was read.
You can tell he loved it, by the life he led.

Many words are circled, verses underlined.
In the margins, other thoughts you will find.
Much time in reading, and study was spent.
Learning what was written, and just what it meant.
No greater treasure, could I possess,
Than that old Bible. I am so blessed.
Its condition has gone, from bad to worse,
As I’ve considered each note and underlined verse.
It now holds a place among precious things,
Not for its beauty, but for the memories it brings.
Every Daddy should follow his example and leave,
A worn out Bible, to which his son can cleave.
No greater blessing, could a man bestow,
Than a knowledge of a Savior, who loves us so.
Now that I know him, and his promises, won,
What more can I say, but, “Thanks Dad”—With love, Your Son?

—With love, Your Son

Grace and Peace

*Curtis L. E. Graves*

“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). Grace and peace were common expressions of greeting used by Paul. Paul, himself, was well acquainted with the grace and peace of God. Having an atmosphere of grace and peace within the church enables it to face a world of conflict, social problems, frustrations, and friction. Without that sense of grace and peace the church would lose its effectiveness in its task of taking the gospel to the world and being lights to the world. Our Lord prayed for peace and we must seek it in Him.

The child of God cannot win with hatred and strife. We must be spiritually minded, and walk as Christ and not as man. We can escape the hatred and strife of the world in the kingdom of peace, the one church that Jesus built! Not only can we have grace and peace ourselves but we can also share with others how they may have it.

“For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace” (Rom. 8:6).

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith” (Gal. 5:22). “For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost” (Rom. 14:17). “Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord” (Heb. 12:14).

1021 Mt. Pleasant Rd; Chesapeake, VA 23322
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Harold and Elaine Maxey, Marilyn Hall, Ella Hammac, Marge Williams, and Bill Hollowell (hip replacement surgery scheduled for November 11).

Reading/Invitation
November 17, 2004
Reading: Shelby Nall
Invitation: Fred Stancliff
November 24, 2004
Reading: Richard Parker
Invitation: Henry Born

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December 19, 2004–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
December 19, 2004–Elders/Deacons’ meeting held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
The Seven Pillars of Unity

Preston Silcox

Architecturally and aesthetically, the Greeks contributed a great deal to the world with their Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian pillars. As free-standing works of art and as support columns of superstructures, these masterpieces of beauty and brawn dominated ancient cityscapes, appear in modern classical-style buildings, and illustrate eternal principles. In light of this latter contribution, consider Paul’s exhortation to unity in Ephesians 4:1-6:

I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 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. This unity—demanded by the Spirit-inspired Word—rests firmly, but dependently, upon seven essential pillars:

1. One body—unity in organization.
2. One Spirit—unity in life.
3. One hope—unity in desire and expectation.
4. One Lord—unity in authority.
5. One faith—unity in message.
6. One baptism—unity in practice.
7. One God and Father—unity in worship

(Foy E. Wallace, Jr., “The Unity of the
So long as the faithful diligently maintain these vital columns, unity flourishes in the Lord’s church. When men alter or remove one or more of these pillars, however, unity comes crashing down and division demolishes the Lord’s house.

When men prefer denominationalism to the one church of the New Testament, turn from the Spirit by ignoring His life-giving Word, or place their desires and expectations in things not heavenly, they forfeit biblical unity. When individuals refuse to submit to the Lord of lords, substitute human doctrines for truth, accept just any religious practice as scriptural, of necessity they turn their devotion from the Father and cause division.

The unity that God demands rests upon the very pillars that He put in place. Man has no right to alter, to remove, or to replace these essential columns of God’s choosing; he has only the responsibility of maintaining them!

4006 Sunset Street; Muskogee, OK 74403

Preaching Christ

Barry M. Grider

"Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them" (Acts 8:5). Anyone who claims he is a follower of Jesus would surely expect Him to be preached. Many are willing to admit that Jesus is the Savior. The Bible is replete with references indicating Jesus alone saves. Our Lord stated, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6).

Peter, who was a witness of the resurrected Christ, said, “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). Since Jesus is the Savior, sometimes sincere religious people will say, “Preach the Man and not the plan” (as if there is no plan) or “Preach Jesus and leave everything else [i.e., doctrine] alone.” In other words, some erroneously conclude that all that is necessary in becoming a Christian is to believe Jesus lived, died, and arose from the dead and after believing that fact ask him to come into your heart and life all that is involved in preaching Christ? Is that all Phillip did when he went down to preach in Samaria. Fortunately, we do not have to speculate.

In Acts 8:12 we learn what it means to preach Christ. “But when they [Samaritans] believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.” Preaching Jesus included preaching about the kingdom. The kingdom of God is the church of Christ. Jesus used these terms interchangeably in the following passage:

And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven (Mat. 16:18-19).

Now why was it so important that Phillip preach about the kingdom/church? When one is born again, he is born into the kingdom (John 3:3, 5). The saved are added to the church (Acts 2:47). Being translated into the kingdom corresponds with being redeemed through the blood
Where “U” Are Needed

“U” are needed in Bible ST-DY! (not in “ignorance”).
“U” are needed in S-PORT! (not in “neglect”).
“U” are needed in NITY! (not in “division”).
“U” are needed in D-TY! (not in “irresponsibility”).
“U” are needed in B-ILDING! (not in “tearing down”).
“U” are needed in CH-RCH! (not in the “world”).

Now consider the conversion of the Ethiopians as recorded in the latter portion of Acts 8. “Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus” (v. 35). Since that Scripture speaks of the suffering servant pictured by Isaiah, it is obvious that preaching Jesus means relaying the most beautiful story ever told—the story of Jesus. Yet, Phillip’s message to the nobleman included more than just the life of Jesus, for this man was convinced he must be baptized. “See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?” (v. 36). Connect this passage with Acts 8:12 and we understand what it means to preach Christ.

We urge every religious person to consider all the Bible says concerning man’s salvation. Pithy statements that water down and even deny man’s responsibility before God need to be countered with clear biblical teaching. Preaching Christ is needed today. However, let the Bible answer what it means to preach Christ. Furthermore, once he has been preached, let each of us be obedient to His message.

3950 Forest Hill Irene Rd; Memphis, TN 38125

Author Unknown
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Harold and Elaine Maxey, Marilyn Hall, Ella Hammac, Marge Williams, Richard Parker, Bill Hollowell, and Amy Dial (Howard Johnson’s niece).

Reading/Invitation
November 24, 2004
Reading: Richard Parker
Invitation: Henry Born
December 1, 2004
Reading: Carl Ayliffe
Invitation: Paul Brantley

Mark These Dates
Every Sunday–Ladies’ Bible class will meet at 5:00 pm, in the zone room.
November 21, 2004–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
November 21, 2004–Elders/Deacons’ meeting held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
November 24, 2004–Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.
November 29, 2004–Visitation Group Get-together has been cancelled.
December 5, 2004–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
December 12, 2004–Deacons’ meeting held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
December 19, 2004–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
December 19, 2004–Elders/Deacons’ meeting held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
December 22, 2004–Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.
December 29, 2004–Fifth Wednesday Singing.
What Is a “Church of Christ” Position?

Neal Pollard

Sometimes a new or weak Christian, still learning, says, “The church of Christ believes that...” Such a statement is dangerous if the person making the statement has the concept that the beliefs and teaching of the church of Christ are merely part of a man-conceived system peculiar to the group of which he now is a part. Proper teaching should change that mind set through the course of time. Perhaps, positively, one who speaks of a “church of Christ position” speaks of the distinctiveness of the Lord’s church on a Bible matter as contrasted to how the world and denominations stand on such.

It is disturbing to think, however, that some within the body of Christ who speak of a “church of Christ position” speak disparagingly of some of the doctrinal stands Gospel preachers and godly elders take on issues like modest apparel, mechanical instruments in the singing portion of worship, woman’s role in the worship and leadership of the church, marriage, divorce, and remarriage, along with a host of other moral and doctrinal positions. There are several unfortunate implications stemming from a statement like the one under consideration.

Is it implied that one view is as good as another? One viewpoint on a matter of judgment may be as good as another, but the examples given above do not fall within the realm of judgment. For example, it is not scriptural to teach that immodesty is acceptable to God. It is dangerous to limit a biblical matter to a “church of Christ position” as if it were a single stance among several other, equally acceptable
positions. The net result of such tolerance is the religious confusion that exists today. No rational person would say, "It is his position than a untreated rattlesnake bite will kill the one bitten." It probably is his position, but what other position would one take? In the same way, when the "church of Christ preacher" preaches "one husband, one wife, for life, except for spousal fornication and death," that is clearly "his" position as he derives it from Bible study. However, what other position could one hold and still please the Lord? And, it is the same with every matter of faith within the Bible.

Is it implied that the Bible and belief therein is purely subjective? In a cultural climate that is openly tolerant of diverse views and expressions, some religious people may feel the pressure to be as tolerant with every religious view and conclusion. Yet, it is important to see that the Bible is an objective standard rather than a subjective suggestion. Such attempts to dilute the pattern of Scriptures opens the door for any position to be valid. If there is no set right or wrong on a matter, is everything right? The Bible teaches that there is a "form of doctrine" to be obeyed (Rom. 6:17). "Truth" sanctifies (John 17:17), but if there are a hundred truths, which one should be believed? The Bible commands that one "Hold fast the form of sound words" (2 Tim. 1:13). God and Christ expect religious unity (cf., John 17), and one can be confident that they have made it possible for such unity to exist.

Is it implied that erroneous views will not be condemned? If the church of Christ holds the "position" that baptism is essential for salvation, and the Baptist believes that faith apart from baptism saves, will both be saved? Can it be said that those who believe, teach, obey, and therefore live according to error will be lost? Of course, no one desires to be offensive in teaching the Bible, and one should never be unnecessarily offensive. However, moral courage must cause Christian teachers to identify sin and its wages (Rom. 6:23). The Bible teaches that many will be condemned (Mat. 7:13-14). Those who stand condemned are those who are disobedient and who walk contrary to the will of God (cf., Mat. 7:21-24; Heb. 5:8-9; 2 The. 1:8; 1 Pet. 4:17; etc.). Certainly Christ will be the Judge before whom every individual stands (Mat. 25:31-34). But, as certainly, He will judge justly—according to the written Word of God and the book of one's life. If He will save those who lived contrary to His will, who will be lost on that day? Will anyone be lost?

One should never accept anything simply because a "church of Christ" preacher, teacher, elder, or other member says it! The standard of right will always be the Bible. Whatever is done religiously must be according to the authority of Christ (Col. 3:17). May one never dismiss Bible teaching by crediting they stand as only a "church of Christ position." May our every position, as God's people, be what God teaches. Let us stand boldly there (cf., 1 Cor. 3:10-12)! Then, the position one holds can confidently be shared with the saints and the lost.

Copied

Will You Make A Visit?

1. A new couple visits our services. A few people speak to them. We send a letter expressing our appreciation for their visit, but will they return?
2. A lonely person is in a nursing home. The long days grow into weeks, and the weeks into
months. Occasionally someone stops to visit, but often they feel that they have been forgotten.

3. An elderly member is home. Because of health and advanced age, he or she cannot attend worship. In past years they never missed a service, but now no one remembers to visit them.

4. A new family moves into town. They are unacquainted with the town and have no friends or relatives here. They have no church preference. If we visit them, perhaps they will come to services and learn the truth.

5. A new family places membership. Perhaps the preacher will visit them. But it would mean a lot if several members of the church would stop by and get acquainted.

6. A member of the church begins to miss services. The occasional miss becomes a pattern, and he is seldom seen anymore. What might have happened if concerned Christians had made visits into that home?

7. A member of the church loses a loved one. We are usually prompt to visit at the time of the bereavement and before the funeral, but what about the long hours of loneliness and adjustment after the funeral, when all the relatives have gone home?

8. A new convert is baptized and added to the church. We tell them how happy we are to have them as a new brother or sister, but do we continue to encourage them, teach them that this is a new beginning, not the end? Do we help them to remain faithful in living the life of a Christian? Is there a visit you need to make? Do not put it off! Do it today!

Author Unknown

As We Grow...So Grows the Congregation

David B. Jones

The Bible teaches that the body of Christ is singular in nature. We read: “There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling” (Eph. 4:4). “And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence” (Col. 1:18). There is one body and the body is the church, therefore there is one church. This church is the one to which God adds the saved: “Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved” (Acts 2:47). When one is obedient to the Gospel, God adds him or her to the body of the saved. Paul said that Jesus is the Savior of the body (Eph. 5:23). Thus, Jesus will save those who are obedient to the Gospel by adding them to the church.

The Bible also reveals the fact that the body is one, but the members are many: “For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another” (Rom. 12:4-6). The body is composed of many members who have different talents and various ways to help the church. It is the responsibility of each member to grow so the whole body will grow. The member who is not growing as he or she can is hindering the growth of the entire body of Christ. We have several clippings we have compiled which help illustrate this point. It is our prayer that each reader will read these, seeing himself or herself first. We all need to examine ourselves and see if we are growing as we ought.

P.O. Box 383; Nesbit, MS 38651
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Harold and Elaine Maxey, Marilyn Hall, Ella Hammac, Marge Williams, Bill Hollowell, and Amy Dial (Howard Johnson’s niece).

Reading/Invitation
December 1, 2004
Reading: Carl Ayliffe
Invitation: Paul Brantley
December 8, 2004
Reading: Elward Brantley
Invitation: Bill Busch

Mark These Dates
Every Sunday—Ladies’ Bible class will meet at 5:00 pm, in the zone room.
November 29, 2004—Visitation Group Get-together has been cancelled.
December 5, 2004—Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
December 12, 2004—Deacons’ meeting held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
December 19, 2004—Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
December 19, 2004—Elders/Deacons’ meeting held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
December 22, 2004—Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.
December 29, 2004—Fifth Wednesday Singing.

Directory
The 2005 members’ directory will be printed soon. If you have any changes please contact the office.
Leaders and “Ordinary” Members

Tom Wacaster

The Lord designed His church so as to provide capable and qualified leadership. That is why the Holy Spirit set forth the qualifications for elders and deacons (1 Tim. 3:1-13; Tit. 1:5-9). While leaders are important, we must not overlook the fact that a congregation needs its ordinary members in order to function. The five talent man is a blessing to the Lord’s church, but so is the one talent man. Those who serve as elders, providing they serve well, are to be counted worthy of “double honor, especially those who labor in the word and in teaching” (1 Tim. 5:17). In view of Paul’s admonition that we “Render...honor to whom honor” (Rom. 13:7), it is important that we not forget the value that the ordinary member plays in the function and growth of the church. All too often this ordinary member perceives of himself as unimportant at best, and a “non-entity” at worst. That kind of attitude is self-defeating. It will lead to apathy and indifference, rob one of his zeal, and bring the work of the Lord’s church to a screeching halt if it is allowed to spread throughout the congregation. From time to time we express our appreciation to those of you who work behind the scenes. In many instances we do not even realize the work you do and the influence you render for the cause of Christ. But be assured that God knows your labors, and that is all that counts anyway. Your reward will be great in heaven. I do not know who wrote the following poem, but it certainly expresses my sentiments and the value of those of you who are ordinary members.
“An Ordinary Member”

Just an ordinary member,
Of the church, “I heard him say,
But you’d always find him present,
Even on a rainy day.
He had a hearty hand clasp,
For the stranger in the aisle,
And a friend who was in trouble,
Found sunshine in his smile.
When the sermon helped him,
He told the preacher so,
And when he needed comfort
He let the preacher know.
He always gave so freely
And tried to do his share,
In all the ordinary tasks
For which some have no care.
His talents were not many
But his love for God was true.
His prayers were not in public,
But he prayed for me and you.
“An Ordinary Member”? I think that I would say,
He was Extraordinary,
In a humble sort of way.

A great big thanks to those of you who help in
so many ways. Rest assured your labor is not in
vain in the Lord (1 Cor. 15:58). May your num-
ber increase.

P.O. Box 283; Talco, TX 75487

What Does 1 Peter 3:18-20 Teach?

Douglas Hoff

Certain passages of Scripture are practically
breeding grounds for strange ideas. One good
example is 1 Peter 3:18-20. From these words
some have concluded that after Jesus was cru-
cified He went into Hell and preached the gospel
to the lost!

For Christ also hath once suffered for sins,
the just for the unjust, that he might bring
us to God, being put to death in the flesh,
but quickened by the Spirit: By which also
he went and preached unto the spirits in
prison; Which sometime were disobedient,
when once the longsuffering of God waited
in the days of Noah, while the ark was
a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight
souls were saved by water (1 Pet. 3:18-
20).

However, that is not what Peter was trying to
tell his reader. The main idea of 1 Peter is suf-
fering for doing what is right in the sight of God.
The apostle was reminding Christians that God
will take care of the wicked who mock and
oppose righteousness. Jesus was crucified for
doing the will of God, yet he was resurrected to
glory (1 Pet. 3:22). One day those who refused
the grace of God will stand before the Judge of
all the earth and be sentenced to suffer ever-
lasting punishment.

Peter showed the recipients of his letter that
God has always judged and punished the wicked.
He cites the example of the sinners who lived
during the days of Noah as proof of this point.
Jesus was brought back to life by the spirit of
God (cf., Rom. 1:4). It was by the Spirit that he
went and preached to the spirits in prison. But,
what does this mean? First, consider that Peter
said the (Old Testament) prophets spoke by the
Spirit of Christ who was in them (1 Pet. 1:10-11;
cf., 2 Pet. 1:21). Second, Noah was a preacher of
righteousness (2 Pet. 2:5). How did Noah know
what to preach? By the Spirit of Christ in him.
When Noah was preaching to the people of his
day Christ was preaching through him. To whom did Christ preach? Those people who rejected the message of salvation from the lips of Noah.

When Peter wrote his letter the souls of those antediluvians were in prison. According to Peter’s second letter the angels who sinned were cast into Hell (literally, Tartarus—the deepest abyss of Hades). Those wicked angels were delivered into chains of darkness reserved for judgment (2 Pet. 2:4). Such was also the destiny of those who lost their lives and souls in the Flood. The idea of being in chains is connected with being in prison.

Peter makes it clear he is discussing the people of Noah’s time when he mentions the construction of the ark. Jesus never went and preached the Gospel to lost souls in Hell. Such would be utterly contrary to everything the Bible teaches. There is no such thing as a second chance after death (Heb. 9:27). If there were a second chance, which lost soul would not take advantage of the opportunity to escape his torment? Since those who die in sin are doomed to eternal punishment, there is absolutely no point in Jesus going to Hell to preach the gospel. The time to hear, believe, and obey the gospel is in this life.

Hold My Mule

The old man could not carry a tune in a syrup bucket, but he loved to sing loudly, even if he was badly off-key. Besides this, he was bad about “amening” the preacher which embarrassed some of the brethren in the assembly. Services had degenerated into an undignified assembly because of this old farmer. He simply got too involved in the goings on and forgot himself.

Four or five of the well-to-do members decided that this old man was too crude for the congregation. They appointed themselves as the ones to go out to the old brother’s farm and talk to him.

When they arrived at his old farm house, he was out in the field plowing with his old mule. Though it was a bit beneath their dignity, they finally walked out through the dusty plowed ground (soiling their clothes) to talk to him. “Brother Jones” they began, “We want to talk to you about your singing. We don’t mean any harm or offense, but you just can’t sing. We wish you would try not to sing so loud because it ruins our services.”

“I’m sorry,” he replied. “It’s just that when I look at these old clothes that I wear and then I think of the robes that God has for me, I can’t help singing. When I see that old shack I live in and realize that it might fall down any time and then think about the beautiful palace that God has prepared for me, I just have to yell the wonderful name of Jesus at the top of my lungs.”

“As a matter of fact,” he said, “would one of you hold my mule? I feel like singing right now.” Just then he burst out into a chorus of “Count Your Many Blessings.”

As the men walked away and left the old man singing “...count your many blessings, name them one by one, and it will surprise you what the Lord has done,” they began to see him a little differently than they had before. They started to understand his deep appreciation for spiritual things.

One said to the rest, “You know, his singing isn’t really all that bad.” Another joined in, “I never realized how sweet his voice really is!”

Author Unknown
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Harold and Elaine Maxey, Marilyn Hall, Ella Hammac, Marge Williams, Bill Hollowell, and Amy Dial (Howard Johnson’s niece).

Placed Membership
Johnny and Susan McLaughlin and their son, Will, have placed membership with the Bellview congregation. They also have a daughter, Elena. Their address is 7094 Raburn Road; Pensacola, FL 32526. The telephone number is 941-0334. Please welcome them and offer any assistance they may need.

Reading/Invitation
December 8, 2004
Reading: Elward Brantley
Invitation: Bill Busch
December 15, 2004
Reading: Jerry Caine
Invitation: Bill Crowe

Mark These Dates
Every Sunday–Ladies’ Bible class will meet at 5:00 pm, in the zone room.
December 5, 2004–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
December 12, 2004–Deacons’ meeting held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.

New Arrival
Bill and Iris Gallaher are pleased to announce the birth of their great-grandson, Brennan Thomas Hindman, on November 17, 2004. Our congratulation is extended to everyone.
When a Family Member is Overtaken in Sin

Lynn Parker

The reaction of godly parents to the spiritual conduct of their children is easily predictable. “The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice: and he that begetteth a wise child shall have joy of him. Thy father and thy mother shall be glad, and she that bare thee shall rejoice” (Pro. 23:24-25). John wrote concerning some dear brethren in the Lord, “I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth” (3 John 4). If godly children bring a tear of joy to the eyes of spiritual parents, then it is certainly true that unrighteous offspring bring heaviness of heart to parents who love the Lord and His will. The wise man wrote, “A foolish son is a grief to his father, and bitterness to her that bare him” (Pro. 17:25).

What does it say about the parties involved when a child walks in sin and the parents are embarrassed—not by the sin—but by the biblically-commanded efforts to restore the sinner? Mark it down, write it in bold letters, and highlight this in yellow: When family members are opposed and even angry with the church’s efforts to restore a wayward child of God, they offer more than a glimpse to all of at least part of the reason the child fell away! We have even seen a young person who was in fornication, forsaking the assemblies, and sadly, impenitent about her sin. The elders were seen talking to their daughter about her soul’s condition! They would have John rewrite his
statement to read: “I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in sin and no one embarrasses the family by trying to restore them.” What a tragedy to think that an erring church member will die in sin and lose his soul, and his earthly family did not support scriptural efforts to bring the sinner back.

I know of quite a number of cases where, when a young person did wrong, the family lashed out at everyone else. They thought their precious child could do no wrong! Brethren, God’s commands regarding restoration of the erring are not suspended due to family connections. There may be times when a child will refuse to listen to church members but could still be reached by their earthly family who let him know that by word and deed that all is not right, something is grievously wrong, and repentance alone will fix the situation. Mad family members will never change this truth: “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).

1650 Gander Slough Rd; Kingsbury, TX 78638

How to Be Miserable in 20 Easy Steps

1. Use “I” as often as possible.
2. Always be sensitive to slights.
3. Be jealous and envious.
4. Think only about yourself.
5. Talk only about yourself.
6. Trust no one.
7. Never forget a criticism.
8. Always expect to be appreciated.
10. Listen greedily to what others say of you.
11. Always look for faults in others.
12. Do as little as possible for others.
13. Shirk your duties if you can.
14. Never forget a service you may have rendered.
15. Sulk if people are not grateful for your favors.
16. Insist on consideration and respect.
17. Demand agreement with your own views on everything.
18. Always look for a good time.
19. Love yourself first.
20. Be selfish at all times.

This formula is guaranteed to work!

Author Unknown

Watch for These Warning Signals

1. Lack of time for Bible study, church assemblies, or Christian service.
2. Devoting of more time to reading newspapers or novels than the Bible.
3. Preference for the company of the irreligious to that of Christians.
4. Looking for reasons to justify something you have already done or decided to do.
5. Evaluating the sermon more by its length than by its content.
6. Becoming more prone to illness on Sunday than on other days of the week.
7. Stretching one week’s excuse to cover two or more weeks of absence from church.
8. Thinking of the church in terms of “they” rather than “we.”
9. Reaction to sorrow, doubts, or personal problems by avoiding Christian association which might help to resolve them.

10. Resentment toward being visited by representatives of the church.

These danger signals are early symptoms of the various aspects and development phases of worldliness, a malignancy far more deadly than cancer. Early diagnosis and intensive prolonged treatment are of utmost importance.

Should any one of these warning signals be detected, it should receive immediate attention.

This stubborn ailment has been known to respond favorably to massive ingestion of Bible study, combined with regular and sustained attendance at worship assemblies, and committed involvement in teaching, visitation, and personal service, augmented by increased exercise of prayer and sacrifice.

Author Unknown

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The Danger of Neglecting Fundamentals

Richard Massey

It is **never** safe to neglect the fundamentals of God’s Word. Fundamentals are the basic facts of the Holy Scriptures. They are the **foundational principles** upon which other tenets are built (Heb. 5:11-14). Our learning process must begin with fundamentals. In grade school you first learned your A-B-C’s. Next, you learned words. Following that you moved on to sentences. Finally, you advanced to other matters of comprehension. But, learning the alphabet was crucial to your educational advancement.

Some folks were never fully grounded in the fundamentals of the Gospel. This handicaps their spiritual development. If they try to be teachers and preachers of the Gospel, they become a danger to the church. Their teaching is skewed and their doctrines destructive. They are like a person trying to teach the subject of math, having never understood the fundamentals—i.e., adding and subtracting. Such individuals do not make good math teachers. The same is true with teachers of the Gospel.

How can the following be true? “Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth” (2 Tim. 3:7). How can these learn biblical information, but not know the Truth? Perhaps they never understood the basics. In the church today there are preachers that see no sin in the use of mechanical instruments of music in worship. Some will have spiritual fellowship with anyone that calls God “Father” and Jesus “Savior.” They no longer believe that baptism is necessary for salvation. This is a far cry from Jesus and the apostles. It is not what preachers of the past stood for.

What is bringing about these changes? Why has this become so widespread? Believe it or not, it has a lot to do with a neglect of fundamentals. Brethren in the pew are not as fundamentally sound as in years gone by. Many elders have not been grounded in the basics. They are, in part, to blame for the success of false teachers across the brotherhood. They should be removing false teachers from the pulpits, instead they are not able to recognize false teaching when they hear it.

Fundamentals must be taught in all of our classes. We need to start early in grounding our children and new Christians in the elementary facts of the gospel. It is an important step in bringing real strength to the church.
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Harold and Elaine Maxey, Marilyn Hall, Ella Hammac, Marge Williams, Bill Hollowell, and Amy Dial (Howard Johnson’s niece).

Reading/Invitation
December 15, 2004
Reading: Jerry Caine
Invitation: Bill Crowe
December 22, 2004
Reading: Jeremy Caine
Invitation: Dale Cunningham

Mark These Dates
Every Sunday—Ladies’ Bible class will meet at 5:00 pm, in the zone room.
December 12, 2004—Deacons’ meeting held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
December 19, 2004—Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
December 19, 2004—Elders/Deacons’ meeting held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
December 22, 2004—Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.
December 29, 2004—Fifth Wednesday Singing.
January 2, 2005—Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
January 9, 2005—Deacons’ meeting held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
January 16, 2005—Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
January 16, 2005—Elders/Deacons’ meeting held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
January 26, 2005—Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.
What About “Social” Drinking?

Andy Cates

There are many people who admit that the Bible condemns drunkenness, which it does, but claim that it is all right to drink socially. They say there is nothing wrong with having a drink or two. Let us notice what God’s Word says.

Numerous verses can be cited which condemn the drinking of alcohol in any amount. In the book of Proverbs, much is said defeating the use of alcohol. Solomon wrote in Proverbs 20:1: “Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.” Often in the Bible, the term wine does not refer to alcohol, but rather to fresh juice from grapes. However, in this verse, it is in reference to alcohol, being used in connection with “strong drink.”

“Wine is a mocker”—It negatively effects one’s thinking, influencing his conduct. He has a loose tongue, and makes unwise choices.

“Strong drink is raging”—How many fights have broken out due to alcohol use? The old Westerns picked up on this, did they not? People thrown across the bar, into tables, out the window into the dusty street, or maybe even into the watering trough. The one who partakes of alcohol, in any amount, is “not wise” and guilty of sin.

The wise man also wrote by inspiration of God: “Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth its colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder”
(Pro. 23:29-32). The questions of verse 29 are answered in verse 30. Alcohol had the same effect on the user at the time this passage was written as it does on those today.

“Wounds without cause”—He wakes up with wounds hours later and was too drunk to know from where they came. “Redness of eyes”—This is an outward display of the inner body’s suffering.

The message of this passage is: have nothing to do with alcohol; do not so much as look at it; stay away from it! It bites like a serpent and stings like an adder. The beer commercials leave out that part. When we see a serpent in the path, would we not turn from it? In the same manner, yea faster, we must turn from alcohol, a deadly serpent of Satan.

Paul listed “the works of the flesh” which includes “drunkenness...and such like.” Would not “and such like” include the drinking of alcohol, even in the smallest amount? Surely it would, and “they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God” (Gal. 5:19-21).

Further, we are to “Abstain from all appearance of evil” (1 Th. 5:22). Social drinking is absolutely an appearance of evil. Other verses could be noticed which defeat social drinking, but space will not allow it. No one can scripturally defend the drinking of alcohol socially.

Other points can be observed which crush the erroneous belief that social drinking is acceptable behavior before God. If it takes a person four drinks to get drunk, after one drink is he not one-fourth drunk? Also, no person ever became an alcoholic who did not take that first drink.

Alcohol impairs the mind. When one’s mind is impaired even slightly, he is no longer sober. Paul wrote that we are to “live soberly” (Tit. 2:12). It is a sin to take poison into the body. Drinking alcohol in any amount is sin. That is the way the Bible puts it.

Romans 8:14 says: “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” Everyone interested in salvation should understand how this is accomplished. Often it is shrouded in darkness, due to false teaching, and people fail to investigate God’s Word, and are thereby deceived.

The church of Christ is often misrepresented. Opposers say God must do the converting, and say we deny it. Also, that one must be converted by the Spirit and power of God, and imply we deny it. Some say that the heart is changed by faith; that faith is a gift from God, and say we deny that. But we believe all these things to be true. There is no difference on what God does, but how He does it. “To the law and to the testimony” (Isa. 8:20) and let that decide.

1. **Faith is produced by the Word of God.**

   **Led by the Spirit**

   **Roy J. Hearn**

   Jesus prayed for a certain class of people, that is, those who believe on Him through the words of the apostles, His personal representatives on earth (John 14:26; 16:13-15; 2 Cor. 5:18-20). John 20:30-31 shows that saving faith comes through the written Word of God. Peter said that the Gentiles believed by hearing the Word from his mouth (Acts 15:8).

   Apostle Paul testifies that faith comes by hearing the Word of God (Rom. 10:17). But that one must hear before faith can be produced (Rom. 10:14). There is no belief without first hearing the Word. All these witnesses agree. The only difference is that now the Word that produces faith is written in the New Testament. Paul told Timothy to preach the things he had heard from him with many witnesses (2 Tim. 2:2). Further, he said that we should stand fast in the
Word he had taught whether by Word or letter (2 Th. 2:15), and that any who would teach a different doctrine would be accursed (Gal. 1:6-9).

2. How the Holy Spirit gives faith. As shown above, in reference to John 16:13-15, the Spirit was sent to the apostles to guide them into all truth. 1 Peter 1:12 says they preached the Gospel with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven. Acts 2:1-4 reveals the coming of the Holy Spirit, and that the apostles began to speak with other languages as the Spirit gave them utterance. In Revelation 2:1, Christ said, “Unto the angel of the church at Ephesus write.” Verse 7 says, “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.” So, the Spirit speaks through the written Word.

Where is all this found? In the New Testament. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 says that the Scripture furnishes all one needs for perfection. 2 Peter 1:3 states that everything that pertains to life and godliness comes through knowledge, and for that reason one should study (2 Tim. 2:15).

3. How people are converted by the power of God. Romans 1:16 says the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believes it, and that faith comes by hearing (Rom. 10:17). This Word was given by the Holy Spirit to the apostles (1 Cor. 2:13). Paul said that Gospel came to him by revelation (Gal. 1:11-12). Peter affirmed that the Gentiles were purified by faith, which was produced by his preaching (Acts 15:7-9). Also, one purifies his soul in obedience to the Truth (1 Pet. 1:22).

Without doubt, therefore, the Scripture teaches that faith is a gift of God, but that it comes from the study of God’s Word, and not by some mysterious, direct means.

4. This is demonstrated by divine example. Acts 2 reveals that the Holy Spirit spoke through the apostles to the multitudes (Acts 2:1-4, 22). When they heard the Word preached, they were pricked in their hearts—made believers. The Word of God is the sword of the Spirit (Eph. 6:17). It was wielded by the mouths of the apostles (Acts 2:1-4, 22-27; 8:4-5, 12). When the people on that Pentecost day heard the Word preached by the apostles, they were pricked in their hearts—convicted of sin.

5. The Pentecostians led by the Spirit. Their change, or purification, was begun, and the effect produced by the power of the Holy Spirit. They were led by the words spoken by the apostles. But where? They were led to cry out, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” Then Peter answered and said: “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins” (Acts 2:37-38).

With this example it is clear to see that to be led by the Spirit, to receive faith, and be saved by the power of God is produced by the written Word now. Please observe that the whole process of conversion was begun in preaching the Gospel, hearing the Gospel which produced faith and repentance, and salvation was consummated in baptism.

6. Is something besides the Word needed? How do you know Christ is the Son of God? “The Bible says so.” Do you not need some other proof? “No, for the Bible says so.” How do you know there is a heaven to be gained, and hell to be avoided? “The Bible says so.” Do you not need other testimony? “No, the Bible is enough.”

If one were to hear Christ say: “Thy sins are forgiven thee,” how would you know you were pardoned? “Christ said so.” Would you not need other proof? “No, for Christ said so.” The same Christ said that in order to be saved one must (1) Believe in Him as God’s Son (John 8:24); (2) Repent of sins (Luke 13:3; Acts 3:19); (3) Confess Him before men (Mat. 10:32; Acts 8:37); (4) Be baptized to be saved (Acts 2:38; 10:48; Rom. 6:3-6). Christ promises to save when one obeys His Word. Why fight it?

Deceased
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Harold and Elaine Maxey, Marilyn Hall, Ella Hammac, Marge Williams, Bill Hollowell, Linda Worley, and Amy Dial (Howard Johnson’s niece).

Reading/Invitation
December 22, 2004
Reading: Jeremy Caine
Invitation: Dale Cunningham
December 29, 2004
Reading: Andrew Hatcher
Invitation: Ray Dodd

Mark These Dates
Every Sunday–Ladies’ Bible class will meet at 5:00 pm, in the zone room.
December 19, 2004–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
December 19, 2004–Elders/Deacons’ meeting held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
December 22, 2004–Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.
December 27, 2004–The children of Fred and Rheba Stancliff wish to invite the members of the Bellview congregation to a 50th wedding anniversary dinner at 6:00 pm, in the general purpose building. No gifts please.
December 29, 2004–Fifth Wednesday Singing.
January 2, 2005–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
January 9, 2005–Deacons’ meeting held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
January 16, 2005–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
Ask and it Shall Be Given unto You

Tom Wacaster

How refreshing to know that God has “given unto us exceeding great and precious promises” (2 Pet. 1:4). The Bible is filled with promises for strength, material sustenance, spiritual guidance, and forgiveness of sins. Someone has said that there are enough promises in the Bible for us to read and meditate on a different one every single day of the year. In addition to the promises, God’s Word is replete with statements pointing out the ability of God to fulfill His promises. The Old Testament demonstrates the omnipotence of our God through recorded miracles, prophecies made and fulfilled, etc. These all declare with force that our God can provide.

As we study the New Testament and examine the life of Christ, it is obvious that Jesus possesses a dual nature—He is human and He is divine. The uniqueness of that makeup will perhaps never be fully appreciated by man, at least not in this life. The dual nature of Christ helps us to understand the willingness of God to give us those great promises, and to appreciate as never before the ability of God to provide His creatures with intended blessings. From Matthew 7:7, we read the words of our Savior: “Ask, and it shall be given you.” One of the greatest blessings we have as God’s children is the privilege of prayer and the power available through this designated avenue of communication with our Creator. But despite the fact that the promises are given in God’s Word so many fail to receive the fullness of those promises simply because they do not ask (Jam. 4:2). The lack of prayer in the lives of so many Christians is due in
part to at least two gigantic misunderstandings. One of these is man’s misconception of God’s empathy for His children, and the other is lack of faith in the effectiveness of prayer. May I suggest to you that our understanding and believing in the dual nature of Jesus actually helps us to hurdle these two obstacles to healthy prayer life.

Think for a moment about the human nature of Jesus. The “Son of man” has experienced the feelings peculiar to man. The Hebrews writer tells us, “We have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Heb. 4:15). He has suffered the loss of a loved one, and wept tears of sorrow (John 11:35). He has been discouraged over the hardened hearts of those whom he taught (Mat. 23:37-39). He has faced the temptations of Satan, and come forth victorious (Mat. 4:1-11). This human nature of Jesus assures me that God can and does know how I feel. When we are tempted to accuse God of not knowing how we feel, or lose sight of God’s pity for us, may we remember that the human nature of our Lord enhances God’s empathy for us. What motivation to keep on praying as we ought.

Now consider the divine nature of Jesus. It is absolutely necessary that I believe in this characteristic of my Master. The Jehovah’s Witnesses deny the divinity of Jesus, and as we study this point the force of that denial will become apparent. There are abundant passages which testify to the divinity of Jesus (see John 1:1-3; Col. 1:15-18; et al.). No man has ever seen the Father. We have, however, seen the power of God demonstrated in the life of Jesus. The miracles He performed and the teaching He proclaimed are not the product of humanity, but of divinity. “No man can do these miracles that thou doest, except...”(John 3:1-3). Even the Pharisees recognized the implicit teaching of Jesus’ divine nature and sought to put Him to death because He made Himself “equal with God.” When Jesus declared, “whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do” (John 14:13), it is the divine nature of Christ that gives me the assurance His promises will be fulfilled. He who healed the sick, cast out demons, raised the dead, and walked on water can surely provide. If Jesus is not divine (as per the Jehovah Witness’), then Jesus was a liar and a fraud and the promises He has given mean absolutely nothing. But beloved, if Jesus is divine, then my faith in the power of prayer with God’s ability to provide ought never waver. It is my conviction that the absence of prayer in the life of a child of God is evidence of a lack of faith in God Himself, and as such, is sinful (Heb. 11:6).

May God help us to fully appreciate the power of prayer as we reflect upon the dual nature of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Conflict Resolution

Tim Smith

Conflict resolution—whatever is that? Sadly, many have just such a reaction when it comes to the very practical issue of resolving conflicts in character and purity of life. It is very important to resolve issues—issues between brethren, between the church and the community, between man and God, and etc. Too many issues are left unresolved, and as a result souls are being needlessly lost.

When, for example, one brother sins against another personally, a resolution of some sort must follow in order for at least one of the parties
to come out of the affair without sin. According to Matthew 18 the offended party is to approach the offender with his sin and seek resolution. If this fails, he is to take one or two with him. If this fails, the matter is to be told to the church. If this fails, the offender is to be disciplined further by being held and treated as a lost person. All too often the first step is never taken; in most cases in which the first step is taken, the second is not; if the first and second are, far too often the third is not; and etc. Personal offences involve not only the two parties initially involved, but also God—and God is the holder of forgiveness and His terms must be met—by all parties—if the issue is to be resolved.

When a person sins publicly and must be disciplined, the discipline being from nothing but a personal admonition all the way up to withdrawal of fellowship, the public sin must be resolved if forgiveness is to follow. All too often someone will sin publicly and then, when their hand is called (pardon the reference...), they say something on this order: “If I have offended anyone, then I repent...” Technically, they are not repenting—they are not even confessing! If you have sinned, confess it and bring forth fruit meet for repentance. If you have not committed the act of which you are accused, or if the act is not actually sinful—why are you coming forward? Own up to the sin, confess it, apologize, and then live properly thenceforth.

When matters of scriptural propriety are raised in the local congregation and hard decisions have to be made—make them! Then stand by them—there is no room for compromising and sweeping issues under the rug and etc. If a matter is raised and a scriptural solution is reached, make that known and make it the rule from then to the end of time. Resolve the issue once and for all and be done with that phase of the matter. Again, all too often people fail to drive the point home and issues have to be dealt with over and over again.

1272 Enon Road; Webb, AL 36376

Who Is a Wise Man?

Toney L. Smith

In James 3:13 we read: “Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.” Most everyone wants to be considered wise. However, some seek to find wisdom in the wrong place. Wisdom is not the same as educational intelligence. Real wisdom is obtained from God (Jam. 1:5). By this I mean we can have real wisdom when we turn to God, study His word, and are faithful to it. Wisdom is knowing how to apply what we have learned.

There is a false idea concerning wisdom. The Bible describes it as “wisdom of this world” (1 Cor. 1:19-24). Who then is the wise man?

1. **He who fears God.** This fear motivates us to live in accordance to God’s will for mankind. Fear of the Lord helps us to make sure we are in Christ and to remain faithful (Pro. 1:7; Ecc. 12:13-14; Heb. 10:31; Acts 2:37).

2. **The wise man demonstrates a life based upon the Word.** Wisdom is putting into action that which we know we should do (Jam. 3:13; 2:26; 1 John 1:7).

3. **The wise man will obey the Gospel and live according to it** (2 Th. 1:7-9). The wise man has the assurance of salvation (2 Tim. 4:6-8).

1036 Inwood Drive; Hurst, TX 76053
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Harold and Elaine Maxey, Marilyn Hall, Ella Hammac, Marge Williams, Bill Hollowell, and Amy Dial (Howard Johnson’s niece).

Reading/Invitation
December 29, 2004
Reading: Andrew Hatcher
Invitation: Ray Dodd

January 5, 2005
Reading: Daniel Hatcher
Invitation: Ray Foshee

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Just Like Them

Bob Howton

While browsing through Robert G. Lee’s book, Sourcebook of 500 Illustrations, my attention was arrested by a timely, objective view of the Baptist Church’s stand on things long ago. A simple contrast, and comparison with the Lord’s church today, results in some disturbing similarities.

How shall Southern Baptists not grow? What are some courses which will lead to mediocrity, if not to oblivion? Several avenues readily come to mind.

(1) Practice open Church membership—This will devalue our Baptist position.

(2) Disregard the scriptural meaning of, and invitation to, the Lord’s Supper—This will cheapen baptism.

(3) Play down the importance of Baptism

—This will stifle our testimony.

(4) Emphasize ecumenicity (Worldly cooperation or unity)—This will erode our distinctiveness.

(5) Be apologetic about the name “Baptist”—This will weaken our prestige.

(6) Deny direct kinship with the New Testament Christians—This will tap the root of biblical and doctrinal strength.

(7) Minimize the importance of training—This will close the churches on Sunday evenings.

(8) Take the side track of fanatic conser-

ervatism, or radical liberalism—This will produce a series of splinter groups.

(9) Solicit financial support from non-Baptist—This will make beggars of the churches.

“There are other ways which might open the
way to denominational nothingness, but this combination would probably make the other steps unnecessary.” (“Baptist Editor,” 1960s).

Observation: This insightful introspection of the Baptist belief, by one of its own, while generally tainted with Baptist twists on the doctrines examined, gives us a perfect springboard from which to launch our own investigation of the directions we sometimes take in the church of Christ.

(1a) Receive all who come, despite known adulterous unions, those whose only baptism was administered by denominational groups, and not for the remission of sins. Then, those who have been scripturally withdrawn from, and they who believe “One Church is as good as another.”

(2a) Fail to teach that those who do not partake of the Lord’s Supper “have no life in you” (John 6:53). Disregard the clear instruction to partake on the “First day of the week” (Acts 20:7). Pervert the Truth to make it say that all must partake from One container. Distort the 24-hour Day indicated in Scripture, to say that all are required to partake at the “Morning Service” only.

(3a) Do not teach that Baptism “doth also now save us” (1 Pet. 3:21), or that it has been commanded (Acts 10:48), or that it is for the “remission of sins” (Acts 2:38).

(4a) Do not teach we are all to speak the same thing, be of one mind and accord (1 Cor. 1:10).

(5a) Forget that disciples were called “Christians” first in Antioch (Acts 11:26). Do not teach that there is “no other name under heaven whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

(6a) Do not preach of “walking in the old paths” (Jer. 6:16). That is too old fashioned.

(7a) Disregard “study to show thyself approved” (2 Tim. 2:15) and “train up a child in the way he should go” (Pro. 22:6). Do not bother to “try the spirits” (1 John 4:1).

(8a) Do not stress, “choose you this day whom you will serve” (Jos. 24:15) nor say, “the way of man is not in himself;” but say rather, “If it feels good do it.” That will win the crowds every time.

(9a) Do not follow the biblical pattern of financing the church. Have pie suppers and yard sales! Doing these things, we can be sure that we will fail, because God will not be with us!

10990 Country Haven; Cottondale, AL 35453

Planets and Our Influence

Andy Cates

For many years astronomers had been successful in accounting for the motion of all the planets with the exception of Uranus. They did this considering the sun’s influence on the planets and the influence of the planets on each other. To the scientists, Uranus was acting orkly. It did not keep with the path that the astronomers believed it should follow. An astronomer named Bouvard made it known that he felt that Uranus was being influenced by an unknown body.

Calculations were conducted and a telescope was aimed to the area in space where it was believed the unknown influencing body might be located. When gazing through the powerful eyes of the telescope this body came into view, the planet we know as Neptune.

There is a lesson here for people of all ages and certainly young people. Planets far far away from us have an influence upon each other, but we can bring this much closer to home. The lives
of people, young and old, exercise a tremendous influence on others.

Our influence as Christians—As Christians our actions are being watched by others. We could use the old “fish in the fishbowl” illustration. Those who know we are Christians closely observe the lives that we live. They are looking to see if we live as we claim. Our Lord said in the Sermon on the Mount, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Mat. 5:16). Our influence can do great good in aiding to lead the lost to Christ or can be a negative influence in leading the lost farther away from Christ. Is our light shining brightly? Or, is it dim, flickering, or even extinguished?

Our influence as parents—Parents, little eyes are watching us. What they observe will have an enormous effect on whom they become when they reach adulthood. They look up to us for guidance in how to live. Our country would be in much better shape if all parents had a righteous influence on their children. Let us train up our children in the way they should go (Pro. 22:6), by teaching and example.

The influence of young people—Young people, your influence on others is very great. Paul told young Timothy, “Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity” (1 Tim. 4:12). Though it sometimes may seem hard to believe, other young people will respect your decision not to give ear to dirty jokes, nor to give into drinking and drugs, immoral behavior, etc. This can have a positive effect on your peers. Be a righteous example to others in all areas of your life. Remember, God is always with you and Jesus always loves you.

The influence of Neptune on Uranus is thousands of miles away from us, but our influence is right here, right now. Let us not go out of orbit in being a proper influence on others. May we remember this as we prepare ourselves, and others for eternity.

No One Made It

Sir Isaac Newton was in his office one day when he received a knock at his door. He opened it to find a good friend of the scientific community who happened to be on the opposite side of the beginning of the universe controversy.

As he entered the room his eyes were drawn to a large table on which sat a scale model of the universe. It was exquisitely detailed—painted even down to the circles on Saturn. It was mechanical—a handle caused the planets to rotate around the sun. this moving replica was an amazing site.

“My what a wonderful thing this is!” he exclaimed. “This is the most extraordinary thing I have seen! What genius put this together? I should really like to shake his hand.” Sir Newton replied, “No one made it.” His friend retorted, “You must think that I am a fool....Some very wise and talented person made this.”

Newton’s reply is still a wise answer to the current controversy. “This thing is but a puny imitation of a much greater system whose laws you and I know, and I am not able to convince you that this mere toy is without a designer and a maker. Yet you profess to believe that the great original from which the design is taken has come into being without either designer or maker. Now tell me, by what sort of reasoning do you reach such incongruous conclusions?”

Author Unknown
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Harold and Elaine Maxey, Marilyn Hall, Ella Hammac, Marge Williams, Bill Hollowell, and Amy Dial (Howard Johnson’s niece).

Reading/Invitation
January 5, 2005
Reading: Daniel Hatcher
Invitation: Ray Foshee
January 12, 2005
Reading: Bryan Loy
Invitation: Louis Herrington

Mark These Dates
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John 14:11-12
“Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works’ sake. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.”

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Bob Howton

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