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The Collection for the Saints

Richard Stevens III

“Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come” (1 Cor. 16:1-2).

Paul instructed the Corinthian brethren along with the congregations in the region of Galatia, as well as the congregations of Macedonia and Achaia (all Gentile congregations) to contribute toward an offering that would go to help, “the poor saints which are at Jerusalem” (Rom. 15:25-26). The offering would also help the whole congregation in Jerusalem (1 Cor. 16:3), and all men (2 Cor. 9:13). It would be a year later before Paul would collect the offering (2 Cor. 8:10-11; 9:2-4). But, by Paul’s instructions and our brethren’s example we have principles for giving.

Giving is commanded: “as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye.” The book of 1 Corinthians is addressed to all Christians as well as those at Corinth (1 Cor. 1:2). Paul also stated that he taught the same things in all the churches (congregations) (1 Cor. 4:17). This means that the command to give is just as valid today as it was then. Giving is not optional! “Let every one of you lay by him in store [in the treasury/reserve]” (v. 2). Christians young and old, rich and poor are commanded to give. The married and unmarried are commanded to give. Older Christians on an fixed income are commanded to give. The sick and shut-in are commanded to give. When you go out of town, the command goes nowhere, you are still com-
manded to give! If you are a single mother with 12 children, you are still commanded to give!

When to give: “Upon the first day of the week.” Paul by divine inspiration chose the day that Christians already assembled on to give their offerings. Earlier when Paul discussed the Lord’s Supper he made the point that when they came together they should wait for one another before taking the communion: “when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another” (1 Cor. 11:33). The first day of the week is the day when the brethren came together to take the Lord’s Supper, they even waited to do so (Acts 20:6-7). Paul used this day as the time to take up the offering. The same is true today, only on Sunday (the first day of the week—Mat. 28:1) is the offering taken up from the saints. This does not mean that we could not take up a benevolent offering for some needy cause, but it is not commanded. If we all gave when and how the Lord wants us to, our collection would be sufficient for all of the Lord’s work. There would be no lack of funds.

How we should give: “as God hath prospered him.” Who prospers us??? We must first understand where all of our blessings come from. We have it to give, because God gives to us. Many Christians rob God. Robbers take the property of others for their own, and that is exactly what some do (Mal. 3:8). God blesses and gives to them, and yet they take it all for themselves. Instead of putting God first (where He belongs) on the top of their budget, He does not even make the list. Some make $300 to $400 and give the Lord $3.00—less than the price of lunch! Under Patriarchal Law, Abram and Jacob gave God a tenth of all they had (Gen. 14:20; 28:22). Under Mosaic Law, the Jews gave several tithes (Lev.27:30-32; Deu. 14:28-29; etc.), plus freewill offerings. We live under a Better Covenant (Heb. 8:6), how shall we give under a tenth!???

The Truth about “Safe Sin”

Marvin L. Weir

According to the name I scribbled on the page the two quotes that follow are from the pen of Mike Jackson. He says:

I like coming up with oxymorons. These are expressions or statements which are apparently self-contradictory but make a point nonetheless. Some examples are: “cruel kindness,” “heavy lightness.” And some on the lighter note include: “clean dirt,” and “tough love.” As a rule these words just don’t go together.

Well, today I shall add another one to the list—“safe sin.” Please let me explain. These are “good” sins (there is another one). Acceptable sins—sins that are laughed about! If put to a vote, these would be removed from the list of sins altogether.

It is obvious that the world in which we live would like nothing better than to vote certain “sins” out of the realm of sinfulness! Our government evidently decided long ago that it would become the expert on sin, and now it informs us all about the so-called social ills of society. The psychologists and sociologists have influenced most folks more than the Bible, thus, now sin has become a disorder, a disease, a fault of one’s own heredity, etc. Never mind that the inspired Word of God says in 1 John 3:4 that sin is “lawlessness” (ASV) or “transgression of the
law” (KJV)! It does not matter with most that they must ignore the fact that the Bible says that “the wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23). And, since some one or some thing can always be conveniently blamed for one’s acts and condition, it would be unthinkable to think that “the soul that sinneth, it shall die” (Ezch. 18:20). Since, according to worldly wisdom on human behavior, changes must continually occur in the way folks think and act, it would be a total surprise to learn that the Bible states: “For ever, O Jehovah, Thy word is settled in heaven” (Psa. 119:89). In other words, sin has always been just that, sin—and always will be! Nothing that man can do or say will change this biblical truth. At the great Day of Judgment, every soul will be reminded that Christ compassionately warned: “He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my sayings, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I spake, the same shall judge him in the last day” (John 12:48).

The world has indeed done a number on most people’s thinking. How many people do you know who simply smile upon hearing a filthy joke? What about one eagerly listening to another tell of their sinful encounter? How often do you hear of someone referring to a person’s sinful action as “cute?” Or, one may exclaim, “It’s just the way that boys/girls are today.” Another boldly declares, “We are living in the 2000s, not the 30s or 40s.” Someone else says, “Society has changed,” as if such an explanation makes sin acceptable today. The wisdom of the world would have one believe that the passage of time changes everything. Such is the devil’s lie, and there is no truth in what Satan says (John 8:44). God never changes (Mal. 3:6), and His words/truths will never “pass away” (Mark 13:31).

From the beginning of time sin has been the problem of mankind (Gen. 3:1-19, 22-24). It is sin that separates one from God. Isaiah recorded, “Behold, Jehovah’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, so that he will not hear” (59:1-2). Sin will not change, and neither will the truth that sin separates one from God! People who commit the sins that this world has deemed to be normal and acceptable behavior, glamorous and exciting, will one day learn “that they who practise such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God” (Gal. 5:21).

Listen carefully—no matter what one chooses to believe, there is no such thing as “safe sin!” The high price of sin is the devil’s best kept secret! Sin is always costly, but the devil will attempt to disguise the high price that one will pay for sinful living. Yes, one can live in sin! The apostle Paul notes, “Put to death therefore your members which are upon the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, envy, strife, covetousness, which is idolatry; for which things’ sake cometh the wrath of God upon the sons of disobedience: wherein ye also once walked, when ye lived in these things” (Col. 3:5-7).

One will do well to never forget that God’s Word is true (John 17:17). God’s Word also “abideth for ever” (1 Pet. 1:25). Jesus Christ, the one who came to save the world (Luke 19:10), will at His next coming judge the world (Rom. 2:16). At that great day every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that “Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phi. 2:10-11).

Keep in mind there is no “safe sin,” and all will one day not be accountable to worldly wisdom, but all will “give account to him that is ready to judge the living and the dead” (1 Pet. 4:5).

5810 Liberty Grove Road; Rowlett, TX 75088
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Harold and Elaine Maxey, Bill Hollowell, Marilyn Hall, and Ella Hammac.

Sympathy
Our deepest sympathy is extended to William Weekley, in the death of his sister, Margie Lodgson, who passed away on December 23, 2006. Please keep William and his family in your prayers.

Reading/Invitation
January 11, 2006
Reading: Horace Myrick
Invitation: Johnny McLaughlin
January 18, 2006
Reading: Shelby Nall
Invitation: Will McLaughlin

Mark These Dates
January 8, 2006–Visitation Group 1
assignment cards handed out.
January 8, 2006–Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
January 15, 2006–Visitation Group 2
assignment cards handed out.
January 15, 2006–Elders/Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
January 25, 2006–Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.
February 5, 2006–Visitation Group 1
assignment cards handed out.
February 12, 2006–Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
February 19, 2006–Visitation Group 2
assignment cards handed out.
There are some things that continue to threaten the church of our Lord. They never seem to go away and each generation must face them or the cause of Christ will suffer greatly.

1. **The essentiality of baptism**, in water, of the penitent believer, that his sins may be washed away (forgiven). The simple plan of salvation proclaimed by the apostles for the first time on Pentecost after Jesus’ resurrection from the grave always culminated in baptism. The reason given was for the remission of sin (Acts 2:38). If Jesus is truly to be our Lord, His Word must be honored (Mat. 7:21-23). Rather than trying to justify the failure of a loved one who died without obedience, we must submit to the will of the Lord and leave the judgment day to Him! We will be judged by His Word, not by the well wishes of family and friends. He is not your true friend that will tell you to trust the Lord to do what He has not promised.

2. **Marriage and divorce** concern the essential unit of society which must be preserved. The Laws of the Lord are simple and must be obeyed if the individual is to prosper and society to survive. Much of our social concerns today can be traced to the failure of the home. God hates divorce. Why? It is an enemy of the home and every member is in jeopardy. Anyone who divorces, for any cause, has offended the fundamental framework of the family. It brings immediate sorrow to many and eventually unhappiness to all! It is true that the Lord gave an exception in the law (Mat. 19:1-9) naming fornication as a just cause for divorce and remarriage.
That is why fornication is also hated by God. It too is an enemy of the marriage union. More is at stake than just the flimsy whims of the selfish husband or wife. God’s order is ignored and his commandments disobeyed and mankind will suffer.

3. The place of woman in the home is another issue that relates to marriage and divorce. It greatly affects the home as God would have it. A godly woman must be in the home in order to exercise her godly influence. There is a misguided social effort to liberate the housewife. This concept takes away a mother’s great contribution of stability to her family. Where else in our modern world are they teaching kindness, honesty, consideration for others, good manners, refinement of character, cleanliness of mind and body? Are they doing it in a laboratory 24 hours a day? No, this can only be done in a Godfearing home. That is God’s plan for man; it is His will! The next time you hear of a horrible crime committed by some young punk, remember, his mother probably was not there those years when he really needed her! The housewife (mother) needs to be praised, not liberated! No father can do what the mother must do! A child without a mother is deprived of the greatest force for good...These are perilous times.

condensed from “The Richwood Report”

Satan’s Gunboats

Andy Cates

During most of my time in the United States Coast Guard, I was stationed on a Law Enforcement ship. We would often sail between Cuba and Mexico boarding northbound vessels. We would send over a boarding crew, of which I was sometimes a member, and search vessels for illegal drugs. One beautiful, calm day at sea, I was posted at lookout, scanning the horizon with a large pair of binoculars, we would call the “Big Eyes,” for a boat or ship to board. We were very near Cuban waters and suddenly I saw in the distance three Cuban gunboats, all facing our direction. They were likely waiting for our ship to cross over into Cuban waters. Upon my reporting the situation to the Captain, he had the Helmsman turn us back away from the waters of Cuba.

The devil is always “seeking whom he may devour” (1 Pet. 5:8). He has some gunboats, so to speak, aimed in the direction of the Lord’s church, desiring to cause it serious harm. However, he will never destroy the church. “It shall stand for ever” (Dan. 2:44). Though Satan has many in his fleet, we will notice three of his gunboats. Sadly, even some members of the church are in Satan’s gunboats (Mat. 12:30).

The Gunboat of Indifference. “Woe to them that are at ease in Zion” (Amos 6:1). Many people today claim to be Christians but are at ease in the ship of Do Nothing, whittling on the driftwood of Do Less. The church is not without some Doctor Dolittles. Those that do little assembling, do little work for the Lord, do little giving, do little reaching the lost, et al. We must “work out...[our] own salvation with fear and trembling” (Phi. 2:12). We are always to abound “in the work of the Lord” (1 Cor. 15:58). Are we drifting on this gunboat of Satan? If so, let us jump ship for the safety found in being fully committed to Christian service on the Ship of Zion.

The Gunboat of False Doctrine. “If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God” (1 Pet. 4:11). In many congregations, this pas-
sage has been replaced with the words, “If any man speak, let him speak as he and his hearers desire,” or “Let him speak in a way that will not rock the boat or go against some people’s lifestyle.” Satan is saying “All aboard,” and people are walking the gangway of this gunboat in droves. They want their itching ears tickled and false teachers are glad to oblige (2 Tim. 4:3). Preachers and teachers must “preach the word” (2 Tim. 4:2). Let those on the gunboat of teaching and/or bidding God speed to error (2 John 9-11) abandon ship and again seek security on the Ship of Zion.

The Gunboat of Worldliness. The captain of lies and deceit, Satan, makes sin look so inviting (2 Cor. 11:3), but its pleasures are only for a season (Heb. 11:25). This gunboat appears to be a fun boat, but its destination is devastation. Christians must live in the world but are not to be of the world (Rom. 12:1-2; 1 John 2:15-17). If you are on this boat, sailing under Satan’s colors (flag), “come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord” (2 Cor. 6:17).

On the day I spotted those gunboats marking Castro’s boundary, they were not pointed at each other. They were together as one in team and purpose. Satan does not have his gunboats aimed at denominations and man-made religious organizations. He already has them on his side. They are pointed at the church, but, as long as we are faithful to God’s will, we will not sink at the hands of the enemy of our souls. “Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world” (1 John 4:4).

Also, had I not been at lookout, I would never have seen those vessels of the enemy. We must always be at lookout today for Satan and his wicked ploys. He is crafty and can sneak up on us. “Be sober, be vigilant” (1 Pet. 5:8). “Watch ye” (1 Cor. 16:13). Got on your “Big Eyes?”

The Dreaded Task
Richard Massey

“I found the task that I had dreaded so, Was not so difficult when once begun: It was the dread itself that was the foe, And dread once conquered means a victory won.”

How true is the above statement. The first time brethren asked me to teach a Bible class (is was 5th and 6th graders), I recoiled—grimly dreading even the thought. I guess the elders were hard pressed for teachers, so my arm was twisted until I finally relented. Once I got started, however, the task became such a joy that I did not want to stop. I even enjoyed decorating the classroom with my own homemade posters. I have been teaching ever since, and enjoying every minute.

It is the “getting started” that seems to be the real hurdle. If we can get past that, the rest goes easier. Is there a hurdle between you and attendance to Bible class, or attendance on Sunday nights? Is there a hurdle for you in leading a public prayer, or inviting your neighbor to church? There are precious benefits that accompany each victory we win over dread. One result is we become a fruitful and stronger Christian. Dread makes us weak and unproductive.

Are there important things that you should be doing, but because of dread you have not accomplished them? Let me encourage you to get past the dread. Look to the Lord for strength (Eph. 6:10-11; Phil. 4:13). Lean on you brethren for support (Gal. 6:2). Remember, it is “not so difficult when once begun.”
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Harold and Elaine Maxey, Bill Hollowell, Marilyn Hall, and Ella Hammac.

Reading/Invitation
January 18, 2006
Reading: Shelby Nall
Invitation: Will McLaughlin
January 25, 2006
Reading: Elward Brantley
Invitation: Ray Pierce

Mark These Dates
January 15, 2006–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
January 15, 2006–Elders/Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
January 25, 2006–Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.
February 5, 2006–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
February 12, 2006–Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
February 19, 2006–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
February 19, 2006–Elders/Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
February 22, 2006–Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.
March 5, 2006–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
March 12, 2006–Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
March 19, 2006–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
Christianity: A Counter Cultural Movement

Scott Elliott

Many people today are teaching that the writers of the New Testament were merely teaching things which were part of that culture, but this is simply untrue. Many of the things, which are taught in the New Testament had nothing to do with the culture of the first century. In fact, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ made this statement in John 17:16: “They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.” Jesus and the apostles broke customs in order to further the Gospel. Jesus broke custom in order to further the Gospel when He spoke to the Samaritan woman at the well in John 4:4-26. Many of the teachings in the New Testament were not customs in the first century or part of their culture. Tertullian, an early Christian writer, wrote, “Our contest lies against the institutions of our ancestors, against the authority of tradition, against man-made laws, against the reasoning of the worldly wise, against antiquity, and against customs” (David Bercot, Will the Real Heretics Please Stand Up, p. 25).

Even non-Christians recognized Christianity as a counter-cultural movement. Around A.D. 170 Celsus, a Greek philosopher, wrote a book titled “True Doctrine” which was devoted to Christians. In this book, he criticizes Christians for several reasons. He criticizes them for abandoning Judaism, but he also criticizes them because they “revolt against the institutions of the Greco-Roman world, against the customs and traditions of the cities, against the wisdom which had been handed down for generations by

Celsus described Christians as “people who wall themselves off and break away from the rest of mankind.” It is clear from the writings of Celsus and other non-Christian writers that Christianity was a counter-cultural movement when it began.

In Malachi 2:16 we learn that God hates divorce, but divorces were prevalent amongst the Jews and pagans. Christians viewed divorce differently than the culture in which they lived. Many people who lived in the first, second, and third centuries viewed marriage as “an ordinary contract that can be set aside by any human institution,” but the Christians who lived in this same time rejected these ideas (Everett Ferguson, *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, p. 271). There is only one reason for divorce and that is fornication (Mat. 19:9). Some Christians today would rather accept the pagan view of divorce rather than the biblical one.

The culture in which the early Christians lived was a very immodest one. One of the most immodest customs that went on was public bathing. Clement of Alexandria wrote these words about the public baths: “The baths are opened promiscuously to men and women. And there they strip for licentious indulgence (for from looking, men get to loving). It is as if their modesty had been washed away in baths. Those who have not become utterly destitute of modesty shut out strangers. Yet, they bathe with their own servants and strip naked before their slaves” (David Bercot, *A Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs*, p. 66). We learn from reading our Bibles that this type of behavior should be rejected by Christians. We must dress modestly and appropriately. In 1 Timothy 2:9-10 Paul stated, “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.” Jesus informs us in the Sermon on the Mount that we are not even to look at a woman to lust after her. This type of Christian behavior was quite different than what most were accustomed to in that day.

Paul’s writings on the role of women in the church are probably more often associated with the culture of the first century than any other teaching in the New Testament. Paul’s teachings on this subject have nothing to do with the culture in which he lived and everything to do with what God wants. What Paul wrote was not his words but the words of God (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Bercot states, “Roman women were hardly known for their submissive character” (*Will the Real Heretics Please Stand Up*, p. 36). In fact, many women held the same positions as men. Women played an important role in pagan religions of that day. One early Christian writer wrote, “Some temples are governed by a woman with one husband, and others by a woman with many husbands” (Bercot, p. 36).

The teachings on the role of women found in the New Testament are commands and not customs. If they were customs then Paul would have broke them to further the Gospel just as Jesus broke custom to further the Gospel when He spoke to the woman at the well. The attacks on 1 Timothy 2:11-12 and 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 have more to do with the culture in which we are living than they do with the culture in which Paul lived.

The first century Christians were not influenced by culture and neither should we be. We are living in a time when our culture and customs are getting further and further away from the teachings of Christ. We must proclaim the Word
For your information:
Everyone knows about the hurricanes which struck our area the past two years, not only here in Pensacola but also in surrounding areas. As a result of these hurricanes, there has been an influx of people coming into Pensacola. First there were workers to help repair things here, then there were evacuees from surrounding areas. One of the results of this inflow of people was the rising cost of motels. In addition to those costs, there has also been a considerable increase in travel expenses. After considerable thought and prayer, the elders have decided to cancel the Bellview lectureship for the time being or at least make considerable changes to it. We express appreciation to all those who have supported the lectureship and this congregation through the years, and in the future it might be that we return to having the lectureship.

Doctrine
Curtis L. E. Graves

Does it matter what a person believes? Does it matter what a person does in religious matters? We hear from many different religious teachers that the only thing that counts is living a clean, upright life. Is this true? Can a person really be saved no matter what he believes? To answer “yes,” would be to say that doctrine is not necessary! If someone says that doctrine does not matter, then has he not set up his own doctrine? If someone says that all you have to do is live a good life, is that not a doctrine? Perhaps the reason that some want to do away with doctrine is because man has set up so many of them. However, the fact that man has tried to make his own way, his own doctrine, does not change the fact that the Bible is our authority and should be our only doctrine.

“One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all” (Eph. 4:5-6). To be pleasing to God it is true that I must live a good, moral life. There is no doubt of that. However, there is more that I must do. I must keep the commandments of the New Testament. “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15). The rich young ruler lived a good moral life, but he was not saved because he did not obey the commandments that were given to him. Cornelius was a good moral man, but he was not saved until he was baptized as he was commanded. “And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days” (Acts 10:48). For one to be pleasing to God, he must live a good, moral life, and also keep the commandments of God!

1021 Mt. Pleasant Rd; Chesapeake, VA 23322
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Harold and Elaine Maxey, Bill and Kay Hollowell, Marilyn Hall, and Ella Hammac.

Reading/Invitation
January 25, 2006
Reading: Elward Brantley
Invitation: Ray Pierce
February 1, 2006
Reading: Jerry Caine
Invitation: Fred Stancliff

Mark These Dates
Every Sunday–Ladies’ Bible Class at 5:00 pm, in the zone room.
January 25, 2006–Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.
February 5, 2006–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
February 12, 2006–Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
February 19, 2006–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
February 19, 2006–Elders/Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
February 22, 2006–Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.
March 5, 2006–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
March 12, 2006–Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
March 19, 2006–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
The Memorial to Christ

Gary W. Summers

A November 5 news story, written by Aron Heller of the Associated Press, is titled “Archaeologists Discover Ancient Church.” Of course, the reference is to an ancient building, estimated to have been in existence in the fourth century. The actual ancient church, the one Jesus established, dates back to the first century, and it is still in existence (Mat. 16:18; Acts 20:28). That building consists of living stones (1 Pet. 2:5).

Yotam Tepper is the lead archaeologist of the dig “on the grounds of a prison near the biblical site of Armageddon,” in northern Galilee. Those working for 1½ years on this project have discovered the floor of a building, and pictures were taken and released by the Israel Antiquities Authority. One picture shows a Mosaic in the floor of two fish, which were symbols of Christianity in the early centuries after its establishment (perhaps, based on Jesus telling the disciples that He would make them “fishers of men”—Mat. 4:19).

Far more explicit, however, is one of the inscriptions on the floor of this fairly large church building. Michelle Chabin notes that the writing says that the structure was dedicated to “The God Jesus Christ as a memorial.” There were various geometric patterns but no crosses in the floor.

Of what significance might this find be? It shows that those in the early 300s believed that (1) Jesus lived; (2) He was God in the flesh; and (3) He was worthy of remembrance. What a coincidence! The Bible teaches the same thing! In fact, the Word says that brethren were “Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious
appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Tit. 2:13). It should not be surprising that the church had not lost sight of this crucial doctrine—the Deity of Christ—since they were persecuted, tortured, and killed rather than deny Him (Mat. 10:32-33). Other doctrines may have weakened, but this central truth of Christianity remained firm.

Technically, there is nothing wrong with dedicating a church building to the One through whom we worship God—the One who is mediator between God and man (1 Tim. 2:5). Probably the motives of these early Christians were pure, but there are two better ways of remembering Him.

The first way to remember Him is the way He showed the disciples on the night He was betrayed. He wanted them to eat the bread, representing His body, and to drink the cup, representing His blood, in remembrance of Him. This we do each Lord’s day, just as our brethren in the first century did. Jesus did not ask to be remembered by church buildings or other monuments made out of brick and stone which could be bombed into oblivion. He did not ask to be remembered by crucifixes or other religious paraphernalia that smacks of idolatry. He chose two items easily accessible and extremely perishable which would remind us of His sacrifice for our sins. Lest we think, because our sins are forgiven, that we now walk according to our own goodness and rightousness (which is still as filthy rags—Isa. 64:6), we have been given a weekly reminder that we always stand in need of—in order to appreciate our Savior.

The second way we can remember Jesus is in the way that we live. Certainly, we must avoid being forgetful hearers (Jam. 1:25) and must let our light shine in the world of lost men and women (Mat. 5:16). Paul told the Corinthians: “Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men” (2 Cor. 3:2). In our conduct, our actions—even our attitudes, we must reflect to others God-likeness. When they look at us and how we behave, they should see a reasonable facsimile of our Heavenly Father. We observe the way in which Jesus dealt with others; these manners and ways of thinking should be incorporated into our lives. We have a Divine memorial to observe. We have Divine commandments to keep. Doing both will bring honor to Jesus.

3671 Oak Vista Lane; Winter Park, FL 32792

“"How Many People Do You Know?"”

David Sproule

Have you ever stopped to think how many people you know? Outside of the church, how many people do you know?

In the workplace, how many people do you know? Co-workers, your boss, the manager, the president, the secretary, supervisors, customers, clients—how many do you know by name? 5, 10, 20, 50, 100? How many of them know you by name?

In school, how many people do you know?
The principal, the vice principal, teachers, counselors, maintenance workers, fellow-students—how many do you know by name? 5, 10, 20, 50, 100? How many of them know you by name?

In your neighborhood, how many people do you know? Neighbors, superintendents, security guards—how many do you know by name? 5, 10, 20, 50, 100? How many of them know you by name?

In your community, how many people do you know? Your doctor, lawyer, bank teller, grocery store clerk, dry cleaner, club members, favorite waiter, fast-food workers, hair stylist, your children’s teachers, babysitters, other parents—how many do you know by name? 5, 10, 20, 50, 100? How many of them know you by name?

In your family, how many people do you know? Parents, children, siblings, grandparents, grandchildren, uncles, aunts, cousins, distant relatives—how many do you know by name? 5, 10, 20, 50, 100? How many of them know you by name?

Add up the numbers from the last five paragraphs. Stop and think, how many people do you know by name? 50, 100, 200, 500, 1,000? How many of them know you by name?

Now, since all of these people are not members of the church, which one will you teach the Gospel to this year? If you know 100 people by name, is it too much to expect you to teach 1% of them? How many do you think God would like you to teach? How about teaching the Gospel to 3% of the people that you know who are not members of the church! What if you took one night each week in 2004 to teach the Gospel? How many could you teach in 52 sessions?

End-Time Backlash

Tim Smith

We know that “of that day and hour” we are ignorant—and so forever shall remain right up until “that day and hour.” We are given no signs concerning its arrival, no warnings, no pre-indicators, nothing. He will come “as a thief in the night.” That true, could it be that many, out of sheer exhaustion from fighting against the error of the prevaricating prognosticators, have grown careless in their watching? The fact that we have no signs or indications whatsoever in no wise means that He will not come today!

We do not know when He comes, but we do know that He is coming. It may be today. It could be tomorrow. It could be next week. It could be twenty thousand-years in the future. We do not know. Our part is to live right. So living it will not matter when He comes.

Equally important with the date of His return, and equally unknown to us, is the date of our death. We do not know when our natural life will end. It could be today. It could be tomorrow. It could be next week. It most certainly will not wait twenty-thousand years! Still, we do not know when it will be. Now, if people ignorant of their own coming death will not live right, is it any surprise that something that may yet linger twenty thousand years distant has failed to move them?

In the final analysis, it does not matter when He comes or when we die if we are living right. To be prepared for the one is to be prepared for the other. To live right is to die right and that is to be with Him in Heaven forever. Are you living right? May God bless you as you study and obey His Word.

1272 Enon Road; Webb, AL 38376
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Harold and Elaine Maxey, Bill and Kay Hollowell, Ella Hammac, Marilyn Hall, and George Herbert (Pam Busch’s father).

Reading/Invitation
February 1, 2006
Reading: Jerry Caine
Invitation: Fred Stancliff
February 8, 2006
Reading: Jeremy Caine
Invitation: Carl Ayliffe

Mark These Dates
Every Sunday—Ladies’ Bible Class will meet at 5:00 pm, in the zone room.
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Running Away from Problems

Preston Silcox

We sometimes advise those who refuse to face and fight their problems that it is impossible to merely run from them. While this is true in one sense, in another sense, running away is often the very thing individuals need to do. In fact, running away is the exact manner in which God’s faithful can fight certain problems they face. Consider a few problems from which we must run away, or flee.

We must run away from the sins of the world. While those outside of Christ might constantly engage in transgressions against God, the faithful fight temptations against God, the faithful fight temptations to do evil by running away from such enticements. Paul commanded the Corinthians to “flee fornication” (1 Cor. 6:18), and on another occasion pleaded with the same group to “flee from idolatry” (1 Cor. 10:14). After a discussion on the “inordinate desire for the wealth of this world and the attendant foolish and hurtful lusts associated therewith” (Clarke 220), Paul told Timothy, “But thou, O man of God, flee these things” (1 Tim. 6:11). Additionally, he instructed this young preacher to “Flee also youthful lusts” (2 Tim. 2:22). Just as Joseph of old ran away from the enticing presence of Potiphar’s wife (Exo. 39:11-13), so must all children of God flee the problematic and sinful allurements of this world.

We must run away from the influence of false teachers. In His introduction to the allegory of the Good Shepherd, Jesus observed that sheep flee from the stranger because they do not recognize his voice (John 10:5). The late Guy N.
Woods said of this verse, “The lesson is obvious. Jesus is the good shepherd; faithful disciples will hear (understand and heed) his voice; they will not listen to strangers (false teachers) who would lead them astray” (205). No doubt, the idea of “fleeing” in John 10:5 is synonymous with the command of “avoiding” in Romans 16:17: “Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.” The influence of false teachers, then, is definitely a problem from which the faithful must run.

We must run away from the punishment awaiting the wicked. John asked the impenitent Pharisees and Sadducees who came to his baptism, “who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?” (Mat. 3:7). While the motive for their presence was not right, the implication of John’s comment certainly was: divine indignation is something from which all should seek to escape. Hebrews 10:31 warns, “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” Similarly, after stating that “we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ” (2 Cor. 5:10), Paul concluded, “Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men” (2 Cor. 5:11). Since eternal separation from God will be an everlasting problem for the unregenerate and unfaithful, wise ones will flee from this wrath to come.

In running away from these and other problems, the faithful flee to God, the Person and Place of safety: “Deliver me, O LORD, from mine enemies: I flee unto thee to hide me” (Psa. 143:9). No wonder James 4:8 says, “Draw nigh to God.” In spite of the fact that we cannot run away from all of our problems, there are some from which we must run!

4006 Sunset Street; Muskogee, OK 74403

Works Cited


A Troubling Statement

Marvin L. Weir

What would one think of the Lord if He had said, “I don’t make decisions in public life based on religious belief.” Did the apostles refuse to take into consideration religious belief when confronted by public officials? Let us examine the Scriptures and see what God’s Word teaches regarding this matter.

Jesus was constantly at odds with the Jewish leaders for making public decisions based upon the teaching of God’s Word. He confronted the Pharisees with Scripture when they accused His disciples of breaking the Sabbath by eating grain from the cornfields (Mat. 12:1f). He confronted the ruler of the synagogue with Scripture when falsely charged with healing a woman of her infirmity on the Sabbath (Luke 13:10-17). In alluding to His healing of the infirm man at the pool of Bethesda (John 5) Jesus says to the Jewish leaders, “I did one work, and ye all marvel because thereof. Moses hath given you circumcision (not that it is of Moses, but of the fathers); and on the sabbath ye circumcise a man. If a man receiveth circumcision on the sabbath, that the law of Moses may not be broken; are ye wroth with me, because I made a man every whit whole on the sabbath?” (John 7:21-23). When asked by the Pharisees if a man could divorce his wife for any cause Jesus did not declare, “I don’t make decisions in public life based on religious belief.” The Lord unashamedly said,
And he answered and said, Have ye not read, that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh? So that they are no more two, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. They say unto him, Why then did Moses command to give a bill of divorcement, and to put her away? He saith unto them, Moses for your hardness of heart suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it hath not been so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and he that marrieth her when she is put away committeth adultery (Mat. 19:4-9).

The high priest told the apostles, “We strictly charged you not to teach in this name: and behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and intend to bring this man’s blood upon us” (Acts 5:28). The apostles were proclaiming God’s truths and did not consider them to be a private matter. In fact, the answer of Peter and the apostles was, “We must obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29).

One has no rights except those rights given to him by the Word of God. God’s Word is true (John 17:17) and it should be our guide as we make our journey through this life (Psa. 119:105). The Bible clearly states that some things are wrong and some things are right. Sin is always sin and wrong is always wrong whether done in public or private.

For the past few decades there has been a movement in our nation to approve and support sins and evils that God condemns. People have always longed to cast away the restraint of God’s Word. In the days of the judges it is said that “every man did that which was right in his own eyes” (Jud. 21:25). In Isaiah’s day the people said to the seers and prophets, “Prophesy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits, get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us” (Isa. 30:10-11). Nothing has changed today as many who claim to be our leaders do everything within their power to “cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us.”

The religious section of the Saturday, January 31, 2004 Dallas Morning News revealed that “Sen. John Kerry, D-Mass., a Catholic...has been criticized by some in his church for supporting abortion rights and civil unions for gays.” In fact, Mr. Kerry is the one who said, “I don’t make decisions in public life based on religious belief.” Is one’s private life to be regulated by God’s laws but not his public life? Can one condone murder and thievery in public life while condemning them in private life? Anyone who can see through a ladder can see the inconsistency.

The problem is that Mr. Kerry and those of his persuasion (whether Democrats or Republicans) desire to appease those who scoff at God’s laws. Abortion is murder and the shedding of “innocent blood”—one thing that God hates and calls an abomination (Pro. 6:17). Homosexuality is always condemned in the Scriptures (Gen. 19; Lev. 18:22; 20:13; Rom. 1:26-27; 1 Cor. 6:9). Whether private or public, abortion and homosexuality are always wrong and must be opposed by those who have moral convictions and are guided by the Holy Scriptures.

This troubling statement by Mr. Kerry is not about separation of church and state. It is about choosing humanism over God. Our nation does not need a president who refuses to make decisions in public life based on God’s Word.
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Harold and Elaine Maxey, Bill and Kay Hollowell, Ella Hammac, Marilyn Hall, George Herbert (Pam Busch’s father), and Doris Kelly (Carl Ayliffe’s grandmother).

Reading/Invitation
February 8, 2006
Reading: Jeremy Caine
Invitation: Carl Ayliffe
February 15, 2006
Reading: Ray Dodd
Invitation: Henry Born

Directory Update
Marge Williams’ new address is: 1700 North L Street, Apt. 306, Pensacola, FL 32501. Her telephone number is 432-9779. Please update your directory.

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Qualified Bible Class Teachers

Lynn Parker

Teaching God’s Word is the greatest work known to mankind; it is a work that has eternal ramifications. Teachers may study with their neighbors across a kitchen table or in a “cottage class.” Teaching may involve handling correspondence courses or an adult Bible class. In a great majority of congregations across the brotherhood, elders have deemed it proper and spiritually beneficial to engage in Bible classes either before or after periods of worship on Sundays and Wednesdays. Not to be taken lightly, teachers of Bible classes are certainly in a position to influence minds and help guide the direction of individual students and, indirectly, even entire congregations. There is a weighty responsibility placed on teachers of God’s Word.

“Be not many of you teachers, my brethren, knowing that we shall receive heavier judgment” (Jam. 3:1). The Bible sets forth the qualifications for elders and deacons (1 Tim. 3:1ff). Are there qualifications for teachers, or will “any warm body” suffice to teach young and old alike in a Bible class program? Let us address some erroneous concepts concerning Bible class teachers and set forth some Bible principles guiding the selection and qualification of teachers.

A teacher is not just a “good ol’ boy.” Yet, in some classes the teacher has been selected for no other reason than popularity and good will. When it comes to teaching the precious Word of God to men and women, boys and girls, it almost goes without saying that the teacher cannot instruct
what he or she does not know. We would never
dare set up such a high standard that good
teachers would be driven into extinction, yet
every teacher must be “well-versed” in the Bible.
Since the “things were written aforesaid were
written for our learning” (Rom. 15:4), the teacher
should know the great events, characters, and
time-line of the Bible. He or she must be able to
assist students in making relevant application of
these great lessons. After all, what study of faith
would be complete without a rehearsal of
Abraham’s call (Gen. 12:1ff) and offering of
Isaac (Gen. 22:1-14)? Surely a current generation
needs to hear the account of Nadab and Abihu
(Lev. 10:1-2), “strange fire,” and the urgent
timely lesson of doing only what is authorized.

Of course to know the book, one must study.
Teachers that excel in their work are quite
familiar with the principle of 2 Timothy 2:24:
“And the Lord’s servant must not strive, but be
gentle towards all, apt to teach, forbearing.” The
phrase, “apt to teach” means “apt and skillful in
teaching” (Thayer). The best teachers are great
Bible students; thus, the teacher is ever growing
in “grace and knowledge” (2 Pet. 3:18). This
demands time and effort. It is not something that
can be accomplished with hasty, haphazard pre-
paration while en route from home to the church
building.

God’s teacher has a deep and abiding respect
for the Bible. Questions can arise in Bible classes
(and they will) that serve as sources of debate and
disagreement. Faithful instructors point students
to God’s Word as the final word as they “speak as
the oracles of God” (1 Pet. 4:11—KJV). They
punctuate their answers with: “It is written.” They
are set for the defense of the Gospel (Phi. 1:16),
and able teachers are determined to faithfully
impart the truth to others (2 Tim. 2:2).

The teacher absolutely must be a faithful child
of God. Would you believe that in some con-
gregations there are those weak members who
have been given teaching positions to keep them
regular in attendance? Two teenaged girls, known
to frequent the dance floor, taught a children’s
class in a congregation. Brethren feared replacing
them lest they “quit coming to services.” That is
a case of the tail wagging the dog! And too, we
know of cases where Sunday morning Bible class
teachers never darkened the door on Sunday and
Wednesday evenings. There is a Bible principle
to consider here: “And let these also first be
proved; then let them serve as deacons, if they be
blameless” (1 Tim. 3:10). Teachers ought to be
selected on the basis of faithfulness first—not to
help make them faithful.

Paul commanded the young evangelist, and
those who teach would do well to: “Take heed to
thyself, and to thy teaching. Continue in these
things; for in doing this thou shalt save both
thyself and them that hear thee” (1 Tim. 4:16).
Conscientious and wise teachers will engrave this
admonition deep on their hearts.

“IT DOESN’T GET ANY BETTER THAN THIS”

Tom Wacaster

Last night I watched a portion of the Super
Bowl. A lot has changed in the forty years since
its inception, but one thing that has not changed
is the predominant role that beer commercials
play in this “national sporting event.” Many of
the commercials attempt to make alcohol con-
sumption look respectable, enjoyable, and so-
cially acceptable. The title of this week’s article
is a “catch phrase” for a popular beer commercial. You know the scene. After a day’s hard work, the “gang of good ol’ boys” gathers around for fun and frolic, topped off by a round (or rounds) of beer. The announcer then tells us, “It just doesn’t get any better than this.” I thought to myself, “What a bold faced lie!” But then it dawned upon me, “It doesn’t get any better than this. From here it is all downhill!” As the party progresses those imbibing their fair share of the brewer’s product begin to lose control of their speech. Their social drinking has actually made them unsocial. As they “tarry at the wine” (Pro. 23:29) they begin to stagger about, unable to control themselves. As the “good times” roll on, the next stage is one of sickness. “Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things” (Pro. 23:32-34). We might even find certain, otherwise respectable members of the gang grasping the base of a toilet stool and heaving with all their might. Then, as our friends make their way home they become a hazard to themselves and those they may pass along the highway. No, my friend, it “doesn’t get any better.” It gets worse. The carnage upon the highways tells the true story. The family abuse, lost work hours the day after, shoddy productivity, etc. all serve to remind us that once a person starts down the road of imbibing alcoholic beverages, “It just doesn’t get any better than this!”

P.O. Box 283; Talco, TX 75487

Humility
Marshall Keeble

Our Savior was born in humble surroundings, among the cattle, but He was the Savior of the world, and now the world must hear Him and obey Him, who once lay in a stable.

The Bible teaches us to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, and He will exalt us. I hope the day will come when we can possess the spirit of humility that every child of God must have in order to be a successful worker in the kingdom of our God.

Meekness and humility are the elements we need to fertilize our hearts, so the Word of God can grow in our hearts, and bring forth fruit to the glory and honor of our Lord.

Moses, who was reared in the king’s palace, humbled himself. Desiring to please God, rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, by being humble, he was permitted to lead the children of Israel out of Egyptian bondage. As long as he was humble and meek, God was pleased and blessed all of his work, but when he became exalted, he trusted in himself and struck the rock. This was because he lost control of himself and lost that meek and humble spirit, and for this cause he missed the Promised Land.

Many preachers are failing today, and hindering the cause of Christ because they do not have the spirit of humility and meekness.

Our Lord remained meek and humble until He finished His work on earth, and we must remain meek and humble until we complete our labors on earth. We should hunger and thirst after the spirit of humility, so we will be a living example to the world, and be able to lead many to Christ, and God’s kingdom will spread and Jesus be lifted up until to God be all praise, honor, and glory.

Deceased
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Harold and Elaine Maxey, Bill and Kay Hollowell, Ella Hammac, Marilyn Hall, Dick Cunningham, Marie Herbert (Pam Busch’s mother), and Doris Kelly (Carl Ayliffe’s grandmother).

Reading/Invitation
February 15, 2006
Reading: Ray Dodd
Invitation: Henry Born
February 22, 2006
Reading: Andrew Hatcher
Invitation: Paul Brantley

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Pantry Items Needed
Peanut Butter and Jelly
“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).

Few of us would have any real trouble understanding the implications inherent in the words examine and prove, as used by the apostle Paul above. If we really examined and proved ourselves, by the Holy Scriptures, we would be facing everything which constitutes us, whether good or bad. The composite findings would show whether we are “in the faith” or really just “reprobates.”

Does attending all worship services seem to be a “bit much” to you? Does participating in Bible study, work days, business meetings, and promoting Gospel meetings or other church activities seem to be more burdensome than joyous and desirable? If you compared your weekly contribution to your weekly outlay for hunting, fishing, sports, or other pleasurable pursuits, how would it stack up?

Remember! You are examining yourself, and remember also that “God is not mocked” (Gal. 6:7). Are your associations away from regular church functions mainly with people of the world, as opposed to being mainly with faithful Christians? Remember! “Evil communications corrupt good manners” (1 Cor. 15:33).

Does your “day to day” conversation indicate that Christ lives within you? Remember! “For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speak-
Do the places that you choose to go tend to prove your love for Christ? Or, do they conversely, show that you are not too much concerned? Remember! “Abstain from all appearance of evil” (1 Th. 5:22).

Do you spend as much time organizing and promoting Christian activities as you expend on planning and executing personal pleasures which take you away from God and His people? Remember! “Ye cannot serve God and mammon” (Mat. 6:24).

What takes the biggest bite out of your Sundays? Is it NASCAR, NBA, World Series, or Outdoor World activities, as opposed to things which would spiritually enrich you? Remember! “And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts” (Gal. 5:24).

What gets you out of bed on Sunday mornings? Is it—Joy of Worship, or—Compulsion?

Does it appear from your answers to these questions that you are “in the faith,” or does it seem that you are just fooling yourself? If not in the faith, “Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent” (Rev. 2:5).

No man has a right to lead such a life of contemplation as to forget in his own ease the service due to his neighbor; nor has any man a right to be so immersed in active life as to neglect the contemplation of God.

There is no Bible subject that is more misunderstood than repentance. Countless souls who believe they are saved will be lost because they have failed to “repent” of their sins. So many people think they have repented when they have not because they do not understand the demands of repentance. Solomon said it so well in saying, “There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, But the end thereof are the ways of death” (Pro. 16:25). Just because something seems right to man does not mean that it is right with God! Let us now turn to the Bible (God’s truth and guide) and see what it says regarding repentance (John 17:17; Psa. 119:105).

*Thayer’s Greek Lexicon* defines repentance to be “a change of mind.” What does a proper “change of mind” produce? The Bible is clear regarding the matter. God’s Word declares that “godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation” (2 Cor. 7:10). This is sorrow that has respect for God’s Word and His will and desires to make wrong matters right. One may be sorry that his sins have been exposed or sorry for the punishment received for his wrongdoing. This is not “godly sorrow” that produces proper repentance!

Matthew’s Gospel account gives a clear example of true repentance in saying:

But what think ye? A man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to-day in the vineyard. And he answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented himself, and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And
he answered and said, I go, sir: and went not. Which of the two did the will of his father? They say, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, that the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you (Mat. 21:28-31).

The first son flatly refused to go work in his father’s vineyard but later repents. Did he repent and stay home? Did he repent and go out on the town? No, he repented and then did what his father had commanded him to do. Thus, godly repentance is “godly sorrow” that produces a change of action that does the will of the Father. Luke affirms this truth in equating repentance with turning from one’s sins (Acts 3:19). One who “turns” from his sins does not continue to practice such sins.

Godly repentance precedes salvation. One who refuses to repent of his sins will never find himself in a saved relationship with God. Some people say, “If God wants to save me, He will just have to accept me as I am.” One cannot, however, continue to practice sin and be saved. God will not save one while that one remains in his sins. The Scriptures are clear as to what occurs when one truly repents and obeys the Gospel. The Bible notes, “Wherefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature: the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new” (2 Cor. 5:17). One cannot continue to be an old creature and be pleasing to the Heavenly Father.

Godly repentance precedes confession of sin. Many people convince themselves that confession of their sins is all that is necessary for God to forgive them. They base their belief upon verses like 1 John 1:9 that says, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” While it is true that one must be willing to confess his sins, this does not negate the fact that repentance is demanded (Luke 13:3). A confession or admittance of sin does not mean that one has repented of such sin!

Repentance precedes baptism for the remission of sins. Many people correctly note that the Bible teaches that baptism is for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). Some falsely conclude, however, that baptism makes a wrong or sinful act holy and right. If one first repents and turns from his sins, then it is true that scriptural baptism will wash away those sins.

If one is a liar, he must quit lying. If one is a drunkard, he must quit drinking. If one is a thief, he must quit stealing. If one is an adulterer, one must quit committing adultery. In each of these examples a person must turn from or cease to practice that which is ungodly. Lying, drunkenness, stealing, and adultery will never be sinless and right! An adulterous relationship will always be an adulterous relationship! Thus, one who genuinely repents or turns from his sins is only then a proper candidate to be baptized for remission of those sins.

Repentance precedes forgiveness of sins. Regarding those who demanded that He be crucified the Lord said, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34). Were these people forgiven the moment Jesus prayed His prayer? No! The ones who found forgiveness did so when they obeyed the Gospel Peter preached on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:14-41).

An alien sinner who will not repent is not a candidate to be baptized into Christ. An erring member of the Lord’s church who refuses to repent of his sins is out of fellowship with the Lord and faithful brethren.

Refusal to repent of sin is not walking in the light of God’s Word (1 John 1:7). It is repent or perish (Luke 13:3).
Sick

Please remember in your prayers: Harold and Elaine Maxey, Bill and Kay Hollowell, Ella Hammac, Marilyn Hall, Dick Cunningham, Nellie Read, Marie Herbert (Pam Busch’s mother), Doris Kelly (Carl Ayliffe’s grandmother), Thelma Donavant (Susan McLaughlin’s mother), and Shirley Hinds (Laura Swayne’s mother).

Reading/Invitation

February 22, 2006
Reading: Andrew Hatcher
Invitation: Paul Brantley
March, 2006
Reading: Daniel Hatcher
Invitation: Bill Busch

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Pantry Items Needed
Peanut Butter and Jelly
A Stark Contrast

Bob Patterson

Immediately as one turns to the Scriptures one becomes aware of the language that is used to describe the Christian’s manner of life which is so much different than those of the world. We think of the instruction of Paul to the brethren at Colossae that the Father “hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son” (Col. 1:13). Again, in 2 Corinthians 6:17-18: the brethren were instructed, “come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.” And again, Jesus said, “If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you” (John 15:18-19). Thus, we are truly in the world, but not of the world! As the children of God “our citizenship is in heaven; whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ” (Phi. 3:20). These are not all the passages that show the distinction which exist between those of the world and those in Christ, but it is very apparent that there is indeed a marked difference between the two! To make a simple comparison, let us just break it down into two major areas.

First of all, there is very obviously a difference in the area of The Priorities of Life. Those of the world are caught-up basically by what the world has to offer. In 1 John 2:16 the offerings of the world are presented in these
categories: “the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.” Those in the world will go to any extreme to satisfy their lusts in terms of time, money, morality, eternity itself—simply because those things have become their priority! They could be characterized as those who live for “the here and the now!” On the other hand, the child of God has a completely different set of priorities because his main priority is to put God first in every area of life! Truly, he is one who will “seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness” (Mat. 6:33), and in the areas of speech and conduct he will subject himself to divine authority, rather than his own will (Col. 3:17)!

The Christian also possesses **A Different Attitude Toward Life!** His happiness is not based upon things, but he has learned in whatever state he may find himself “therewith to be content” (Phi. 4:11). The child of God recognizes that he is only here temporarily, that truly he is a “stranger [sojourner] and pilgrim” that is just passing through this world (1 Pet. 2:11-12). Since that is so, our lives are not devastated at the loss of physical possessions, because they can in no way compare to the incomparable value of the soul (Mark 8:36-37). We know that “covetousness (which is idolatry)” is that which condemns, and we are not about to forfeit our soul by picking up any excess baggage that the world has to offer. After all, as a Christian, “the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world” (Gal. 6:14). That being the case, we will always take seriously the warning given to us in Luke 12:15: “Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.”

Let us determine that we are going to keep ourselves “unspotted from the world” (Jam. 1:27) and keep ourselves “in the love of God” (Jude 21), so that there will be that entrance provided unto us “into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Pet. 1:11). No better life can be lived than a life that glorifies God, presents a marvelous example to those in the world, and has heaven as its goal (1 Cor. 6:19-20; Mat. 5:14-16; 1 Pet. 2:11-12; Phi. 3:13-14). Not only is there a stark contrast concerning those of the world and those in Christ in this present world, but there will also be a contrast eternally—heaven and hell! The real question right now is: What is our priority and attitude toward life?

P. O. Box 1107; Goldwaite, TX 76844

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**Forgiveness—Without Repentance?**

**Guy N. Woods**

Children of God should love all men, even their enemies, and when they repent, forgive them. Occasionally, I am asked if it is our duty to forgive those who sin against us when they neither ask for nor desire forgiveness. It is not only not our duty to do so, were we so disposed, but it is an utter impossibility.

The question recurs because many people persist in disregarding what the Scriptures teach is involved in genuine repentance and by substituting their concept of what they feel forgiveness should include. Those who do this imply, whether they intend to or not, that forgiveness is simply the cancellation of all bitter, revengeful, and uncharitable feelings toward those who sin against us, and the substitution of a disposition of kindness, love, and warm regard for the offending one or ones—a disposition, they urge, which should always be characteristic of faithful Christians.
But many devoted and dedicated disciples of the Lord never experience bitter, revengeful, and uncharitable feelings toward those who sin against them, however cruel and heartless such actions may have been. This attitude of a kind disposition is not forgiveness, anyway. God never entertains “bitter, revengeful, and uncharitable” feelings toward even the most vile of sinners, but He forgives only those who repent.

Our Lord, in the shadows of Gethsemane, prayed for those who hated Him so much they sought and obtained His execution, but He did not forgive them until they repented. Amid the agonies of the cross, He said to His Father, “forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34), a petition not unconditional in nature, since by His own words first uttered in the Great Commission (Mark 16:15-16) and later applied by Peter it was intent that pardon be bestowed only on the basis of repentance and obedience to the commandments He gave (Acts 2:36-38).

The words “remission” and “forgiveness” often translate to the same Greek word *aphesis*, the meaning of which is “release,” and “sending of sins away” and the consequent restoration of the peaceful, cordial, and friendly relationship formerly existing. Unless the offender wants this “peaceful, cordial, friendly” relationship, it is impossible for the offended to affect it, however much he may desire and seek it.

It is this point people often say, “Yes, but we must be ready to forgive always,” as indeed we ought, but it should be recognized that such readiness is not forgiveness. Our Lord made crystal clear our obligation in all such cases when He said, “Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times...turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him” (Luke 17:3-4). Thus, the divine edict is, if one sins against us, we are to rebuke him; and when he repents, we are to forgive him.

It is the duty of all children of God to love all men, even their enemies, actively to seek their good, and pray for their well-being; and, when they repent, to forgive them. It should ever be borne in mind that reconciliation is an integral and essential element of the relationship resulting from penitence on the part of the offender and forgiveness on the offended, and that is occasionally by an adjustment and settlement of all differences that led to the alienation. We must be sure that no action or attitude of ours deters the proper response of others to us because our fellowship here on Earth and our salvation in Heaven are matters intimately involved.

*Deceased*

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**A Few Notes on Soul Winning**

Every saint this side of heaven ought to be interested in every sinner this side of hell.

A soul-winning congregation is not discouraged by failure nor satisfied with success.

A soul-winning congregation is one that realizes that the only ships to come in while it sits and groans about its problems are hardships.

A soul-winning congregation is one in which all members are involved in the operation and function of the work of the church.

A soul-winning congregation is made up of optimistic people; the grumblers are too busy in their field to win souls.

A soul-winning congregation is one which seeks, and saves, then satisfies the needs of the souls of men.

*Author Unknown*
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Harold and Elaine Maxey, Bill and Kay Hollowell, Ella Hammac, Marilyn Hall, Dick Cunningham (cards only), Nellie Read, Ray, Dodd, Marie Herbert (Pam Busch’s mother), Doris Kelly (Carl Ayliffe’s grandmother), Thelma Dunavant (Susan McLaughlin’s mother), and Shirley Hinds (Laura Swayne’s mother).

Placed Membership
Jessie and Tiffany Janes placed membership with the Bellview congregation on February 15, 2006. Their address is 205 Wegner Avenue; Cantonment, FL 32533. The telephone number is 968-0573. Tiffany was restored to Christ on February 15 and Jessie was restored to Christ on February 19. Please keep them in your prayers.

Reading/Invitation
March 1, 2006
Reading: Daniel Hatcher
Invitation: Bill Busch
March 8, 2006
Reading: Bryan Loy
Invitation: Bill Crowe

Mark These Dates
Every Sunday--Ladies’ Bible Class will meet at 5:00 pm, in the zone room.
March 5, 2006--Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
March 12, 2006--Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.

Pantry Items Needed
Peanut Butter and Jelly
Satisfied
Tim Smith

What does it take to satisfy you? I mean, think about it: Are you satisfied with doing things His way, or do you need some of your own way mixed in for flavor? Are you satisfied with the five God-authorized acts of worship in the God-authorized assembly? Are you satisfied with the God-authorized work of the church? Are you satisfied with a sound sermon, or do you require some “good words and fair speeches” mixed in? What does it take to satisfy you?

And he said unto me, Son of man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak unto thee. And the spirit entered into me when he spake unto me, and set me upon my feet, that I heard him that spake unto me. And he said unto me, Son of man, I send thee

to the children of Israel, to a rebellious nation that hath rebelled against me: they and their fathers have transgressed against me, even unto this very day. For they are impudent children and stiff-hearted. I do send thee unto them; and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD. And they, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, (for they are a rebellious house,) yet shall know that there hath been a prophet among them. And thou, son of man, be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words, though briers and thorns be with thee, and thou dost dwell among scorpions: be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks, though
Think About It...

Happy is the man that walks so close to God that he allows no room for Satan to come between.

Author Unknown

And He Answered Not a Word

Marvin L Weir

Silence is not always golden. There are unique obligations and responsibilities that come with obeying the Gospel. The secret, non-vocal Christian stands condemned by Jesus in His Sermon on the Mount. Christ charges those who will be His followers with these words: “Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a lamp, and put it under the bushel, but on the stand; and it shineth unto all that are in the house. Even so let your light shine before men; that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven” (Mat. 5:13-16). The purpose of light is to dispel darkness, and salt with savor affects and influences with its ability to preserve. The cause of Christ is hindered today by those who should be faithful soldiers, but are instead silent cowards.

Can you imagine Christ coming upon the moneychangers in the temple and reasoning that their unscrupulous behavior was none of His business? One must remember to always “judge not, that ye be not judged”—right (Mat. 7:1)? Wrong! “Righteous judgment” (John 7:24) is demanded of those who follow the Lord. Do
you get the impression that Christ came upon the money-changers in the temple and was sorely tempted to answer them not a word? No, the Bible says, “And he entered into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold, saying unto them, It is written, And my house shall be a house of prayer: but ye have made it a den of robbers” (Luke 19:45-46).

Do you recall the devil’s temptation of Christ in the wilderness? Satan first said to the Lord, “If thou art the Son of God, command that these stones become bread” (Mat. 4:3). Do the Scriptures say, “And He answered him not a word?” No, the Lord said, “It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that procecdeth out of the mouth of God” (Mat. 4:4).

On the occasion of the second temptation Satan took Christ to the pinnacle of the temple and said, “If thou art the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and, On their hands they shall bear thee up, lest haply thou dash thy foot against a stone” (Mat. 4:6). Did Christ just sit there knowing that this was a highly charged situation, and thus He answers not a word? No, the Lord quickly replied, “Again it is written, Thou shalt not make trial of the Lord thy God” (Mat. 4:7).

The devil tempting Christ for the third time “taketh him unto an exceeding high mountain, and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and he said unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me” (Mat. 4:8-9). Do the Scriptures declare, that because the Lord does not want to be perceived as a troublemaker that He answered not a word? No, Jesus boldly said, “Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve” (Mat. 4:10).

Christ teaches His followers to count the cost of discipleship. So many times today the only concern of church leaders is that they say or do nothing that will offend one. The words of the Master must be remembered, “So therefore whosoever he be of you that renounceth not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:33).

The silence of brethren who should know better is killing many congregations. Max Lucado has said that the decision to remove “Church of Christ” from “Oak Hills” was not a difficult one. Lucado boasts that only three families left over the decision, and touts the fact that in their place over 1,100 have “joined the church.” Surely out of what is now 4,600 people some were concerned and upset who answered not a word.

Gospel preachers are to proclaim the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27) and “reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching” (2 Tim. 4:2). Many are guilty of not being willing to rock the boat, and thus when it is past time to speak up for the cause of Christ they answer not a word.

Elders are to be “apt to teach” (1 Tim. 3:2) God’s Word, “exhort in the sound doctrine, and to convict the gainsayers” (Tit. 1:9). Liberalism would not have the death grip it has on many congregations today if elders would stand up and speak out in defense of God truths. Regrettably, however, when false teaching rears its ugly and destructive head, many who should be feeding and protecting the flock answer not a word.

Older members who should know better many times complain about the liberalism in the congregation they are attending. Surely some want to gag at what surrounds them, but they answer not a word. Brethren, it is a pathetic epitaph for the Christian that reads, “And he answered not a word.”
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Harold and Elaine Maxey, Bill and Kay Hollowell, Ella Hammac, Marilyn Hall, Dick Cunningham (cards only), Nellie Read, Ray Dodd, Thelma Dunavant (Susan McLaughlin’s mother), Marie Herbert (Pam Busch’s mother), Doris Kelly (Carl Ayliffe’s grandmother), and Shirley Hinds (Laura Swayne’s mother).

Reading/Invitation
March 8, 2006
Reading: Bryan Loy
Invitation: Bill Crowe
March 15, 2006
Reading: Jim Loy
Invitation: Dale Cunningham

Mark These Dates
Every Sunday–Ladies’ Bible Class will meet at 5:00 pm, in the zone room.
March 5, 2006–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
March 19, 2006–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
March 19, 2006–Elders/Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
March 22, 2006–Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.
March 29, 2006–Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.
April 2, 2006–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.

Pantry Items Needed
Peanut Butter and Jelly
Some Things I Don’t Understand

Danny Box

I don’t understand how men who were once faithful Gospel preachers can preach a perverted Gospel based on fantasy instead of fact (2 Tim. 4:2; Gal. 1:6-9).

I don’t understand why congregations put up with or fellowship those preachers who have left the faith (1 John 1:6-10; 2 John 9-11).

I don’t understand how anyone can take a TV comedy and call it a good tool for preaching and teaching the Word (Acts 20:7; 2 Tim. 4:1-8).

I don’t understand how anyone can think that instrumental music in worship is any prettier than singing and making melody in our heart (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16).

I don’t understand how anyone can think that God’s Word changes just because of their or a family member’s situation in life (Mat. 19:3-9; Mat. 5:32).

I don’t understand how anyone can believe that the Spirit works directly on the heart of some unless they believe that God is a respecter of persons (Pro. 24:23; John 7:24).

I don’t understand why brethren will continue to forsake the assembly when they know that if they do there will be no more sacrifice for their sin (Heb. 10:25-26).

I don’t understand why faithful preachers of the Gospel are ridiculed, abused, and even fired for doing what God has instructed them to do (1 Cor. 1:23; 2 Tim. 4:2).

I don’t understand how anyone can love the things of this world and expect to be loved by the Father (1 John 2:15-17).

I don’t understand how God could love such
I don’t understand pain, suffering, and death, but I do know that one day there will not be any (Rev. 21:3).

These are just a few of the things that I don’t understand but I do know that if I endure to the end, living that faithful Christian life, God the Father will explain it all to me on that Day!

Deceased

Decisions Are Costly

Marvin L. Weir

It is a lesson that one learns early in life—decisions are costly! One who chooses unwisely and incorrectly will likely pay dearly for his foolish decision, and the one who decides to stand firm for what is godly and right may also pay a high price for such a decision. Since a price is involved whether right or wrong, one may elect to play it safe and make no decision. This person does not understand that failing or refusing to make a decision is a decision. Such can have disastrous consequences regarding spiritual matters. The Lord made it very clear: “He that is not with me is against me” (Mat. 12:30). This means that every time one fails to make a decision for God he has just made a decision against God.

Let us consider what it cost Moses to make the monumental decision to serve God and his people and flee the land of Egypt.

Moses refuses to be called the son of the Pharaoh’s daughter (Heb. 11:24). It is difficult to imagine what it cost Moses materially to turn his back on the Pharaoh and his family. The earthly riches that would have belonged to Moses had he remained in Egypt as a son of the Pharaoh’s daughter cannot be adequately described. Robert Boyd in World’s Bible Handbook states:

When archaeologists opened the tomb of Tutankhamen (King “Tut” to us) in 1922, their eyes gazed upon an untold wealth of personal belongings for his future life. His solid gold coffin has a current value of $2,750,000. The jewelry is priceless and his throne and furniture were overlaid with gold. Such “burial” wealth gives us an idea of the personal wealth of a single Pharaoh. Moses decides to give up the social status that he will enjoy in Egypt. As the son of an Egyptian princess, Moses received an education that was second to none. He was qualified to serve in any facet of Egyptian government, and could have become a Pharaoh himself. No other nation surpassed Egypt with knowledge in science, law, and architecture (cf. Acts 7:22). This wisdom was not restricted to just pyramids and temples as Boyd again notes:

Scientists have discovered how Egyptian craftsmen produced brilliant colors—paintings for their Temple walls and ceilings. We are fortunate if we can find paint produced by today’s technologists which lasts more than twenty years on our houses! Yes, Egyptian paint has lasted more than 3,500 years. The blues and reds and yellows of ancient Egypt, whether on stone or metal, have remained vivid. Scientists (1970) of the Egyptian Department of Antiquity, worked over three years and spent more than two million dollars to “break the historic formula.” The formula includes one molecule each of copper oxide and four molecules of silicone oxide.
The resulting compound is heated to 1,050 degrees centigrade, and then ground and mixed with egg yolk and gum. This compound resists heat as high as 1,700 degrees C. and is insoluble in the most potent acids known to modern science. The ancients obtained the stable color by trapping copper oxide atoms in a ring of hydrogen, produced by the ions of the egg yoke and acid from the gum.

**Moses decides to identify with godly people instead of ungodly people.** A person cannot have it both ways. Moses, in reminding his people of God’s laws, says, “See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil” (Deu. 30:15). Christ teaches that people must choose to travel either the broad way that leads to destruction or the straitened way that leads to eternal life (Mat. 7:13-14). People today must understand that they cannot successfully walk with God while holding hands with the world (cf. 2 Cor. 6:14-18). Joshua is another man who realizes that costly decisions must be made. To his friends and his people he says, “And if it seem evil unto you to serve Jehovah, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve Jehovah” (Jos. 24:15).

**Moses decides to forego the temporary pleasures of sin and chooses instead to “share ill treatment with the people of God” (Heb. 11:24-25).** Moses knew the outcome of his decision when he made it. The Scriptures say that he accounts “the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt” (Heb. 11:26). Moses knew that faithfully serving God would produce a life of suffering and hardship. The high price of this decision Moses made is seen in what he was willing to forego and what he was willing to endure.

Moses decides to go to Heaven and is willing to pay the price. He understands that sin’s glitter is not as advertised by Satan. He understands “the wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23). Moses looks “unto the recompense of reward” (Heb. 11:26). So should we! Keep your mind on firmly focused on things above (Col. 3:2), and remember that decisions are costly.

815 42nd Street SW; Paris, TX 75460

**Four Brief Rules for Bible Study**

1. **Read it Through**—Read a passage of Scripture, look up the meaning of words that are unfamiliar, search for other verses which contain similar key words.
2. **Write it Down**—Take a sheet of notebook paper and write the book, chapter, and verse numbers at the top, then make a list of those words you looked up or write out phrases you would like to study further. Write down your notes from your study next to the words or phrases. Keep your notes in a notebook or folder and you will eventually have a nice set of study notes that you will go back to with further study to add to them.
3. **Live it Out**—Put the principles you are learning from your study into practice.
4. **Pass it On**—Tell others about what you have learned. Ask them what their ideas are about some of the words and phrases you have been studying. This is a great way to increase your own understanding.

*Author Unknown*

via “The Cedar Bayou Beacon”
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Harold and Elaine Maxey, Bill and Kay Hollowell, Ella Hammac, Marilyn Hall, and Dick Cunningham (cards only).

Restored/Placed Membership
Terri Myrick was restored to Christ on March 5. Please keep her in your prayers and offer her encouragement. She has also placed membership with the Bellview congregation. Her address is: 5251 Barri-neau Park School Road; Molino, FL 32577. Her telephone number is 587-5726.

Reading/Invitation
March 15, 2006
Reading: Jim Loy
Invitation: Dale Cunningham
March 22, 2006
Reading: Horace Myrick
Invitation: Ray Foshee

Mark These Dates
Every Sunday—Ladies’ Bible Class will meet at 5:00 pm, in the zone room.
March 19, 2006—Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
March 19, 2006—Elders/Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
March 22, 2006—Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.
March 29, 2006—Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.

Pantry Items Needed
Peanut Butter and Jelly
Noah Was Saved by Grace
Jess Whitlock

Noah Was Saved by Grace
Grace is defined: “favor, or mercy.” Genesis 6:8 states, “But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.” “But Noah found favor in the eyes of Jehovah” (ASV-1901).

We Are Saved by Grace
Ephesians 2:8 says, “For by grace are ye saved through faith.”

Noah Was Saved by Faith
Hebrews 11:7 reads, “By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house.”

We Are Saved by Faith
Hebrews 11:6 specifies, “But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.” As noted earlier, “For by grace are ye saved through faith” (Eph. 2:8).

Noah Was Saved by Obedience
Compare Hebrews 11:7 (again) with Genesis 6:22: “Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he.”

We Are Saved by Obedience
Jesus said in Matthew 7:21: “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.” The Hebrews author penned, “Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him” (Heb. 5:8-9).
Noah Was Saved by Water

“What 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. 3:20).

We Are Saved by Water

1 Peter 3:21 states, “The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.”

A faith that will not obey is a faith that will not save!

P.O. Box 127; Cheyenne, OK 73628

“It Has to Do with Character”

Tom Wacaster

Your greatest opportunity and responsibility is not so much the making of a living as it is the making of a life. Whatever else one may accomplish in life, you have failed if you do not make your’s an honorable, useful, trustworthy life. Horace Greeley is reported to have exclaimed, “Fame is a vapor, popularity an accident, riches take wings, those who cheer today will curse tomorrow. Only one thing endures. Character.” In commenting on Mr. Greeley’s statement, the late Dr. Newell Dwight Hillis wrote, “These weighty words bid us all remember that Life’s one task is the making of manhood. Our world is a College, events are teachers, happiness is the graduating point, and character is the diploma which God gives man.”

It would be grand to live in a world in which all men recognize the importance of character and then make an honest pursuit of the same, beginning with our leaders and flowing down to the common man on the street. Unfortunately this honorable trait called character has fallen upon hard times. Apathy with respect to such things as integrity, honesty, and character has infected a rather large percentage of the nation. When we add to this the abysmal ignorance with regard to its essential contribution to a stable society, we begin to understand why the call for honesty and integrity on the part of those who would lead us into the next century falls largely on deaf ears. If polls come anywhere near reflecting this nation’s attitude toward the importance of character in her leaders, then it is much later than we think. A CNN poll some years ago revealed that 70% of Americans do not think that character should be an issue in political elections.

I submit to you that character is important. It is important for our very existence, yea our survival. If history teaches us anything it is this: absence of character among any people spells disaster and ruin. When a people throw off moral character and integrity there is nothing left to hold them together. Try to imagine a society in which lies were accepted, where promises meant nothing, and where dishonest and unethical business dealings were the norm. No man, not even the liar and the thief, would want to live in such a place. The problem of crime and violence in our society are not economic. It is a problem of an absence of character and moral integrity. Washington continues to crank out anti-crime bills, each one tougher than the previous, and yet our crime rate (with the exception of an occasional drop) continues to escalate.
A number of years ago producer Norman Lear made this observation: “At no time in my life has our culture been so estranged from spiritual values. Our problems lie beyond the reach of politics alone.” Perhaps it is time for every single American to pay closer attention to the words of the Psalmist: “Blessed is the nation whose God is Jehovah, The people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance” (Psa. 33:12). Let us dust off our Bibles and read again the words of Solomon: “Righteousness exalteth a nation; But sin is a reproach to any people” (Pro. 14:34). It has been said that no institution can rise any higher than its leaders. The same is true with regard to nations.

If our leaders are not willing to exercise moral restraint, how can we expect any less from the citizens? It would seem, as per the poll previously mentioned, that we no longer expect our leaders to demonstrate genuine character, and worse yet, we do not care.

Perhaps the most frightening aspect about our present lack of concern with regard to character on the part of our leaders is the fact that such is actually a reflection of what we expect of ourselves. Charles Colson, close associate of President Richard Nixon, pinpointed the problem a number of years ago when he wrote that the most terrifying thing that can happen to a society is the death of conscience in its young people. The new century is just beginning. The future depends largely upon the present. Where we want to be in future years will be determined by the choices we make today. And, yes, much more than we think, or perhaps care to admit, “it has to do with character.”

(The above article was originally written during the heat of one of the Presidential races a few years ago. The sentiments expressed by a number of citizens was that... upon the thinking of our society. Why is it that the common man cannot realize that character in the leaders has a direct bearing upon the behavior of those whom they lead? If ever there was a generation that needed this Gospel of Christ, certainly ours is that age. It is unfortunate that at the very time when this nation needs the pure, straightforward, unadulterated Word of God, those who are filling the pulpits of our land are squeamish in preaching the whole counsel of God.)

P.O. Box 283; Talco, TX 75487

Who Is Your Real Friend?

Would a doctor be your friend if he knew of a deadly disease within your body and did not tell you?
Would your banker be your friend if he allowed you to invest in a failing enterprise and did not warn you?
Would a lawyer be your friend if he knew of a flaw in a title, but permitted you to buy the property?
Would a preacher be your friend if he knew of an error in your life or religion and did not bring it to your attention?

He is your friend who warns you concerning bodily ills, poor investments, and faulty titles. He is also your friend who tells you of any religious errors, and how to correct them!

“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. 5:20).

“Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful” (Pro. 27:6).

Author Unknown
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Harold and Elaine Maxey, Bill and Kay Hollowell, Ella Hammac, Marilyn Hall, Dot Lambert, Dick Cunningham (cards only), and Nancy Travis (William Weekley’s daughter).

Reading/Invitation
March 22, 2006
Reading: Horace Myrick
Invitation: Ray Foshee
March 29, 2006
Reading: Shelby Nall
Invitation: Johnny McLaughlin

Mark These Dates
Every Sunday–Ladies’ Bible Class will meet at 5:00 pm, in the zone room.
March 19, 2006–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
March 19, 2006–Elders/Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
March 22, 2006–Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.
March 29, 2006–Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.
April 2, 2006–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
April 9, 2006–Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
April 16, 2006–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
April 16, 2006–Elders/Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.

Pantry Items Needed
Peanut Butter and Jelly
How Can Parents Best Help Their Children to Love and Worship God?

David P. Brown

Much time and hard work is required to properly train children. For this reason many parents are failing in their duty to help children love and worship God. For several generations, parents have not trained their children. Selfish and lazy parents who are not willing to put forth the effort and make the sacrifices necessary to train children are the primary reasons for the sad state of affairs children find themselves in today. Parents want their children “out of their hair” at all costs. Play and entertainment have replaced a responsible attitude in the lives of parents. Lazy parents do not want to face the conflicts that arise when proper training procedures of children take place. An incorrect definition of grace and love on the part of parents has also conditioned and propagated permissiveness.

Reproductive power is a glorious gift from God (Gen. 1:27-28), but it does not automatically make good parents and ensure good children. To help children love and worship God is one of the greatest challenges parents face. With this in mind and with the limited space to answer the question posed by the title, I will affirm that the greatest help parents can provide for their children in loving and worshiping God is to teach them the proper attitude toward and response to spiritual authority (Col. 3:17).

God is the ultimate in love and authority (1 John 4:8; Psa. 47:2; 83:18; 115:31). Parents
must first therefore, be willing to respond to God’s love and commandments in their own lives before they can be the proper help to their children in doing the same. There must first be the proper standard to guide the home (Rom. 13:1; 2 Tim. 3:15; Deu. 6:6-7; Pro. 22:6). Again the parents must live by this standard before they can expect their children to. Twenty times in 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles, when kings are mentioned it is recorded “and his mother was” or “he walked in the ways of his father.” Parents must, therefore, train, nurture, and admonish their children by the infallible standard, the Scriptures (Pro. 1:8; Eph. 6:4; 1 Tim. 1:5). This is a much neglected principle. Does the child see his parents studying the Bible? Do they know the joy of having their parents talk with them about what the Bible teaches?

Children must be taught to respect authority. This begins with children learning to obey their parents (Eph. 6:1). Nothing is much more unbecoming and sinful than children left to their own way. The child not taught to obey his parents will be a problem in every facet of society. Parents are to see their children comply with correct rules and principles. Training has not taken place unless children are caused to submit to parental authority (1 Sam. 3:13; Gen. 18:10; Jos. 24:15).

Discipline, both preventive and corrective, must be practiced if godly parents are to have the respect they deserve. A part of this discipline is chastisement. The following verses should be diligently studied and obeyed: 1 Samuel 7:14, Proverbs 13:24, 49:48, 22:15, Hebrews 12:6-7.

If children are to grow up into responsible, God-fearing adults, it will be when parents have helped by training their children to respond correctly to properly constituted and scriptural authority (Psa. 47:2; 83:18; 115:3; Dan. 4:34-35; Rom. 9:20-21). Paul commanded, “Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God” (Rom. 13:1).

Parents must note Exodus 20:11, Deuteronomy 27:16, Proverbs 30:17, Matthew 15:4, 20:11, Ephesians 6:2-3. Why should parents expect their children to love and submit to the authority of Christ when they were not trained to love and submit to the authority of their parents?

The Mennonites

Royce Williamson

The Mennonites were originally known as the “Anabaptists” and followed the teachings of their leader Menno Simmons. Menno Simmons was born in 1492, and in 1515 was ordained as a Catholic priest in the Roman Catholic church where he served as a “vicar,” or associate priest. Secretly, Menno was questioning the teachings of the Catholic church on baptism of infants and transubstantiation (the belief that when consumed, the fruit of the vine and the bread used in the Lord’s Supper turns into the literal blood and body of Jesus). He finally turned to the Bible for answers to these problems, and after preaching on these subjects he was removed as vicar of a local Catholic church in 1531. Five years later he left Catholicism all together.

The Mennonites came to this country when William Penn acquired what is now known as Pennsylvania, and offered land to anyone under religious persecution. Like many other religions who opposed the Catholic church in the 1500s and 1600s, the Mennonites were severely persecuted as rebels and heretics. But in the new land, these simple living, hard working people
were warmly welcomed.

With this brief history behind us, let us examine some of their teachings. **First**, they have both a *Manual of Bible Doctrine*, and eighteen articles of faith to which they must adhere. Just like those who have creed books and catechisms, the Mennonites add to and take away from God’s inspired Word.

If these books say exactly what the Bible says, then they are pointless duplications of the Bible. If they teach other than what the Bible teaches, then they are sinful. If the mere fact that they live by a manual rather than God’s Word is not bad enough, their own manual contradicts itself. It states that hearing, believing, and repentance is all that is involved in conversion (*Manual of Bible Doctrine*, Mennonite Publishing Co., Elkhart, IN, 1898, 42). Later, on pages 58 and 64, they add that “Faith, love, and obedience are inseparably connected” to conversion as well. Such is common to all man-made religions. When we leave God’s all sufficient Word for the doctrines of men, contradictions will follow. The Mennonites fail to understand that obedience means **complete obedience**, and that baptism is essential conversion (1 Pet. 3:20-21; Acts 2:38; 22:16).

**Second**, the Mennonites observe the Lord’s Supper but twice a year. Again, the Bible is clear. When the church met every first day of the week in the first century, they partook of the Lord’s Supper each and every time (Acts 20:7). Consider for a moment Exodus 20:8. God commanded the Israelite nation to “Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.” By the reasoning of the Mennonites (as well as most other Christian groups) the Israelites could have remembered the Sabbath day just two times a year, and could have disregarded the other 50 Sabbaths without violating God’s law. However, the Israelite people knew better and kept each Sabbath Day.

**Third**, they teach that pouring, not immersion, is the “only mode mentioned in the New Testament that is called baptism” (*Manual of Bible Doctrine*, 50). However, there is a problem with this—it is as wrong as wrong can be. The words for “pour” and “baptize” in the Koine Greek language are as different as night and day. “Baptize” comes from the Greek word *baptizo* and means to immerse or submerge. “Pour” comes from *ekkeo* which means to pour out. The Greek word *ekkeo* never appears in a text that involves the baptism of a penitent believer in Christ! In every instance the word that is translated “baptize” is *baptizo*. If pouring is what the New Testament prescribes for baptism, why did Philip and the eunuch both go “down both into the water” (Acts 8:38). If pouring was the mode of baptism, why did Philip not simply scoop up some water in his hand and pour it on the eunuch? The Mennonites have not “searched the Scriptures”!

**Finally**, they believe that there are two baptisms, water and Holy Spirit, and that the “Water baptism is not conversion, or any part of it.” But Paul said that there is “one baptism” (Eph. 4:5), and Jesus spoke of one baptism with two elements, water and spirit (John 3:5). If water baptism is not a part of conversion, Acts 3:19, a parallel to Acts 2:38, means nothing at all. This would mean that we could have those who were converted to Christianity, and yet never be in a saved relationship since it is baptism that saves us (1 Pet. 3:20-21). Curious indeed, conversion without salvation. Why then be converted? Additionally, if water baptism is not a part of conversion, why would Peter command it of Cornelius and his household (Acts 10:48)?

The Mennonite church is not what you read about in the New Testament! Why be a part of any church that is not the New Testament church?

P.O. Box 1255; Taylor, TX 76574
Sick

Please remember in your prayers: Harold and Elaine Maxey, Bill and Kay Hollowell, Ella Hammac, Marilyn Hall, Dick Cunningham (cards only), Nancy Travis (William Weekley’s daughter), and Doris Kelly (Carl Ayliffe’s grandmother).

Reading/Invitation
March 29, 2006
Reading: Shelby Nall
Invitation: Johnny McLaughlin
April 5, 2006
Reading: Elward Brantley
Invitation: Will McLaughlin

Mark These Dates
Every Sunday–Ladies’ Bible Class will meet at 5:00 pm, in the zone room.
March 29, 2006–Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.
April 2, 2006–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
April 9, 2006–Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
April 16, 2006–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
April 16, 2006–Elders/Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
April 23, 2006–Dinner on the Grounds and Singing.
April 26, 2006–Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.
May 7, 2006–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.

Pantry Items Needed
Peanut Butter and Jelly
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, James Loy

Try Beginning Again

Gus Nichols

Perhaps some reader has tried to be a Christian, but failed. If so, why not try again? Great success does not always come from a single effort. Worthwhile things are always worth trying and striving for, even if we must try again and again. In the year 1917, a tornado destroyed our home, blew it away and ruined our crops on a farm before it tore up Carbon Hill, Alabama, and left the dead and homeless in its wake. But we did not give up and quit. The next spring we found ourselves planting again, and soon we were growing a crop.

Life is much like that. Wars are not usually won by a single battle. But battle after battle must be fought before the victory is won. In a way some of these battles are lost, but victory belongs to those who win the last battle.

One young man started in to fight the cigarette habit but soon felt that the weed had conquered him. However, he decided that no man is licked who will keep on trying again and again. So he summoned all his forces and marshaled them against this dangerous habit. A day at a time he vowed to his friends and to God that he would not smoke that day, regardless of what happened. Soon he had conquered the habit which is the master of millions in our land.

Very few spend a long life in the service of Christ without ever getting discouraged, and for the moment, giving up in despair. But those who overcome the world are they who (if need be) try again and again—who refuse to surrender to the evil one. If they fail, they go down fighting—soon to rise again.
It is easy to give up and quit when the going gets rough, as it most certainly will—sooner or later. Long roads usually have some detours and rough places over which one must travel in order to reach the desired destiny.

The Christian life is like running a race (Heb. 12:1f; 1 Cor. 9:25f). If one fails he should get up and try again. The new birth is a sort of “land of beginning again” (John 3:5). So is a restoration of an erring child of God (Gal. 6:1; Jam. 5:19-20).

Is Pope John Paul Qualified for Sainthood?

Tom Wacaster

In an article appearing on Reuters website, Phillip Pullella wrote, “The Vatican may have found the ‘miracle’ they need to put the late Pope John Paul one step closer to sainthood.” According to the article, Pope John Paul allegedly healed a French nun who suffered from the same Parkinson’s disease that afflicted him. But the details of that healing are quite revealing, as are the “conditions” for the Pope’s sainthood. Let us take a closer look.

First, it is claimed that the “nun” prayed to Pope John Paul after he had died, and was then inexplicably cured of her Parkinson’s disease. It should be noted that the New Testament never authorizes anyone to pray to a man for any reason whatsoever. Jesus taught us that we are to pray thus: “Our Father who art in heaven” (Mat. 6:9). In addition, if this woman was “inexplicably cured” of her Parkinson, how does she know that it was Pope John Paul who somehow healed her? At best it is pure subjectivism. The Hindus in India claim they were healed when they prayed to their Hindu god, but that does not make it so.

Second, the alleged healing is being “investigated” by the church authorities. Why is it necessary to “investigate” any healing if indeed it is a true healing? In the New Testament times the miracles of the apostles were so powerful and convincing that even the enemies could not deny that a notable miracle had taken place. Nor could they question who it was that performed the miracle. And how, we might ask, are “church authorities” to go about investigating the matter? Do they call the late Pope John Paul to the witness stand and ask him if he were the active party in the healing?

Third, even if it could be confirmed that the nun was healed as a result of her praying to the deceased Pope (something we affirm cannot be proven), how does that put the Pope “one step closer to sainthood”? I read of nothing in the New Testament that suggests that sainthood is something achieved in increments. Quite the contrary! When a person becomes a Christian he at one and the same time becomes a saint. That is because a saint is one who has been “sanctified.” Here is what the inspired apostle Paul wrote on the matter:

Or know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with men, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall
inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye were washed, but ye were sanctified, but ye were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God (1 Cor. 6:9-11).

Note that these Christians in Corinth were sanctified when they were "washed" and "justified." The same is true with regard to all Christians. That is why you read of the "saints in Rome," the "saints in Philippi," the "saints in Ephesus," and the "saints in Colossae," to name just a few.

Fourth, according to the article "another miracle would be necessary between beatification and eventual sainthood." Another miracle? How many miracles does it take to convince someone that the message has been authenticated? And if it takes yet "another miracle" to move the late Pope closer to sainthood, then why not a third, fourth, fifth miracle, ad infinitum? Oh reader, do you not see the futility and foolishness of such a doctrine?

Fifth, "only those 'miracles' which occurred after the Pope’s death can be investigated and eventually used as proof of holiness." Wait a minute. I thought all faithful Catholics considered the Pope as holy prior to his death! They called him "Holy Father" prior to his death (something that is without authority in and of itself)! They bowed the knee and kissed his hand and ring! In the eyes of every Catholic the Pope is the epitome of holiness. Now we are told that it will take another miracle from somewhere beyond the realms of the earthly to prove the man’s holiness!

Sixth, the month after John Paul died, Pope Benedict dispensed with the "Church rules and put him on the fast track to sainthood." That speaks volumes of the present Pope (as well as all past Popes). The man presently reigning over the Catholic church is not concerned with rules. The end justifies the means.

Why is it that men cannot be satisfied with doing Bible things in Bible ways? Of course history tells us that the Catholic church has never had much concern about doing things as the Bible directs, for if they did, the Catholic church would not exist. In the final analysis, if Pope John (or any man for that matter) was not a "saint" when he died, he cannot be "made a saint" sometime thereafter. If I read my Bible correctly, the state in which a man dies "spiritually speaking" is the state in which he is going to spend all eternity, time without end.

Perhaps the world would be better off if they were not so concerned about some make believe process that can make their deceased heroes saints, and were a little more concerned about what it means to live a saintly life in the sight of God now, while there is still time.

P.O. Box 283; Talco, TX 75487

Personal Application

The preacher sure did pour it on, but he just let me be.
He took the starch right out of him that sat right next to me.
You should have heard the things he said, as true as it could be,
It burned the seat under him, that sat right next to me.
He hit the nail square on the head.

with him I did agree,
He trimmed the dead limbs off him that sat right next to me.
How he was taking all this truth, embarrassed he might be,
But when I looked ‘round...

...Weren’t No One Next To Me!!!

Author Unknown
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Harold and Elaine Maxey, Bill (Baptist Hospital) and Kay Hollowell, Ella Hammac, Dick Cunningham (cards only), Marilyn Hall, Bill Busch, Ray Dodd, Nancy Travis (William Weekley’s daughter), and Doris Kelly (Carl Ayliffe’s grandmother).

Restored/Placed Membership
Regina Lashley was restored to Christ and placed membership with the Bellview congregation on March 22. Her address is 5251 Barrineau Park School Road; Molino, FL 32577. The telephone number is 587-5726.
Dale Cunningham was restored to Christ on March 26. Please keep Regina and Dale in your prayers and offer them encouragement.

Reading/Invitation
April 5, 2006
Reading: Elward Brantley
Invitation: Will McLaughlin
April 12, 2006
Reading: Jerry Caine
Invitation: Ray Pierce

Mark These Dates
Every Sunday–Ladies’ Bible Class will meet at 5:00 pm, in the zone room.
April 2, 2006–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
April 9, 2006–Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.

Directory Change
Marilyn Hall’s new e-mail address is: mardha2002@netzero.net.
Why Study the Bible?

Marty Edwards

Many people are simply not knowledgeable with regard to the Bible. We expect those outside the church to be weak regarding Bible knowledge, but so often those who have been members of the Lord’s body for many years have only basic Bible knowledge. If we are going to defend from external and internal dangers, we need to be well armed with the truth. Why study the Bible?

1. **It is commanded.** Paul told Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:15: “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” The 1901 American Standard Version translates this verse, “Give diligence to present thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, handling aright the word of truth.” Even though the original Greek word for study (spoudason) goes beyond our standard definition of “study,” and indicates diligence and endeavoring, studying in the traditional academic sense is certainly part of that.

2. **Destruction comes from not studying.** The Lord warned in Hosea 4:6: “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.” As we see so many problems threatening our society and shaking its very foundation, we can trace such actions back to the fact that most have no inkling of what the Bible truly says. Many who have some knowledge have had it distorted and warped by years of false teaching.
3. **It is wise.** We would not trust our money in just any bank or the care of our children to just anyone off the street. Even more so, how careful should we be about what we believe to be the truth? Do we simply accept what the minister or Bible class teacher presents? We need to be like those at Berea. We are told in Acts 17:11 that they “were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.”

4. **We will grow properly.** All of us expect a newborn child to grow. At the first sign of failure to grow, medical assistance will be sought. We need to be as quick to react when the lack of spiritual growth is noted. The writer of Hebrews 5:12-14 stated:

   For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a

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31<sup>st</sup> Annual Bellview Lectures

**The Home**

June 9-11, 2006

**Friday, June 9**

7:00 pm  God’s Word the Standard for the Home  Wayne Coats

8:00 pm  Man’s Role in the Home  John West

**Saturday, June 10**

9:00 am  God’s Law on Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage  Paul Vaughn

10:00 am  Woman’s Role in the Home  Hal Smith

11:00 am  Evolution’s Effect on the Home  John West

**Saturday Luncheon**

1:00 pm  Dating  Jerry Murrell

2:00 pm  Selecting a Mate  Michael Shepherd

**Sunday, June 11**

9:00 am  Children Are to Obey Their Parents  Jerry Murrell

10:00 am  What Does it Mean to Love  Paul Vaughn

**Sunday Luncheon**

1:00 pm  Parents Are to Train Their Children  Hal Smith

2:00 pm  Liberalism’s Effect on the Home  Wayne Coats
babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

Have we been Christians for many years, maybe even decades, and yet know very little beyond what we did when we first became Christians? If that is the case, then we are not properly growing and developing.

5. We can teach others. In 1 Peter 3:15 we are told, “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.” Can we explain with confidence the plan of salvation to someone while showing Bible references? Can we show why we are not just another religious group, but the “one body?” This is the way the Gospel spreads. Paul told Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:2: “And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.”

6. We will be judged by the words of the Bible. When you were in school, did you every take an “open-book” test? The teacher permitted you to use a textbook and maybe other sources while testing. Though such tests were easier than the normal examinations, you still had to be familiar with the material and know where to look for the answers. The same principle applies in Christianity. We have all the information available to us by which we will be judged. There will be no surprises at the Judgment. We are told by Jesus in John 12:48: “He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.”

When we sign an important contract regarding property transfers, a will, or other legal documents, we would be well advised to read and understand every word and phrase. If necessary, we should obtain assistance. How much more then should we examine every word of the Bible? Yet, many Christians do not know what is contained in much of the Bible. There are probably many chapters, and even entire books, that are completely foreign to some children of God.

Make a sincere investigation of God’s Word a top priority every day.

“A Great Difference

An English writer has said, “The early Christians did not go around saying, ‘Look what the world is come to.’ Rather they went out with great joy and said to all men, ‘Look what has come to the world!’”

There is a great difference between these two attitudes. Yes, the world is in bad shape—but read the second chapter of Romans and you will find that the world was in an awful condition in Paul’s time. Nearly all thoughtful men agree that man is in a terrible predicament, but the unique Gospel of Jesus Christ offers the solution to man’s problems.

Look! See what has come into the world—God’s revelation of Himself in all His power, wisdom, and love through Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son. This is indeed glorious news! This is a message which we cannot keep to ourselves, but we must tell everybody about it.

No wonder Christians are radiant with joy. They have found the treasure all men are seeking. They have seen what has come into the world in the advent of Jesus Christ, and they are working for the advancement of His kingdom until He comes again.

Author Unknown; “Contending For The Faith”
Sick

Please remember in your prayers: Harold and Elaine Maxey, Bill (Baptist Hospital) and Kay Hollowell, Ella Hammac, Dick Cunningham (cards only), Marilyn Hall, Bill Busch, Ray Dodd, Jennette Nall, Nancy Travis (William Weekley’s daughter), Doris Kelly (Carl Ayliffe’s grandmother), Faye Little (Dot Dodd’s mother), and Arthur Mathews (Rheba Stancliff’s brother).

Reading/Invitation

April 12, 2006
Reading: Jerry Caine
Invitation: Ray Pierce

April 19, 2006
Reading: Jeremy Caine
Invitation: Fred Stancliff

Mark These Dates

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April 26, 2006–Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.
May 7, 2006–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
May 21, 2006–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.

Pantry Items Needed
Peanut Butter and Jelly
Will You Marry Me This Saturday?

Douglas Hoff

Recently, I received a call on a Tuesday from a woman I did not know. She quickly blurted out, “Will you marry me this Saturday?” Being a perceptive minister I realized this was not a proposal but rather an inquiry if I would conduct a marriage ceremony. Would I do it? No way! Could I perform a wedding on such short notice? I am sure I could. So what stopped me from complying with the request? First, I did not know either party. Obviously, I could not know if they even had the right to be married. Also, I could not know if they were sufficiently prepared for the life-long commitment called marriage. Long ago I determined within myself that I would try to make sure that those whose weddings I performed had the best possible chance of staying happily married “as long as they both shall live.” Someone who waits until just a few days before her wedding day to find someone to perform the ceremony does not strike me as having given sufficient forethought to this important day. Granted, some may be very mature and ready to accept the responsibilities of married life but do not want an elaborate wedding ceremony. Perhaps they only want a small family gathering that would not take much preparation. In this case I would probably be willing to assist the couple after I was sure they were ready. The woman who called definitely did not fit this category though!

Marriage is a very serious commitment. While some Justice of the Peace may be willing to hitch such a couple, I believe both parties need to make adequate preparation for this life-
changing action. A minister of the Gospel should urge people, both young and old, to reflect upon God’s will for marriage. After all, it was God who ordained the institution. His laws govern marriage for everyone (yes, non-Christians too). Unfortunately, in today’s world far too many are totally unaware that such laws even exist. Even if the couple realize God has laws regulating marriage, they may not respect them. This preacher has had to turn down some who want to be married because they did not have the scriptural right to enter into their desired union. This problem is not limited just to those outside the church. Some that have been “in the church” for many years apparently have not been studying their Bibles. For example, when a Christian man who has been married but unscripturally divorced asks the preacher if he will perform his wedding service, it reveals either ignorance of the Scriptures or a willful rebellion to the divine will.

To help the prospective bride and groom have the best chance for a happy marriage, I insist that the two have a few sessions of pre-marital counseling with me. In an attempt to cut down on the divorce rate some states even require pre-marital counseling. The number of sessions and length depends on the parties involved. As a general rule, I would probably want to have three or four sessions with young people and less with older people. Sadly, some want to “skip all that stuff.” Perhaps they think they already have all the answers. However, I will not perform a wedding unless both parties agree to the counseling. One of the first questions I ask is: “Why do you want to get married?” The answers can be most revealing! I also ask other questions such as: “Can you define biblical love?” and “What do you think are the God-given roles for a husband and wife?” If incorrect or no answers are forthcoming it is definitely time to open the Bible and start studying with the two. During the sessions we also cover some very practical aspects of married life including finances, careers, kids, religion, and dealing with relatives (especially the in-laws!). Based on the various books I have read on this topic, most couples have trouble with at least a few of these areas in their first year together. It is best to be prepared before the trouble arises.

1019 E Gordon Ave; Effingham, IL 62401

The Book of Revelation

Curtis L. E. Graves

Revelation 14:6-7 says: “And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.” Several years ago a so-called religious broadcast network put out a brochure trying to sell subscriptions to their programming. An interesting part of that brochure was the bold headline, which read: “A Fulfillment of Biblical Prophecy.” The brochure claimed that what John saw in the above passage was not an angel but his best description of a modern communication satellite with huge outstretched solar wings. Is this really an example of serious Bible scholarship from these televangelists? Revelation is certainly one of the most misunderstood and misused books of the Bible. Would the persecuted Christians of John’s day...
really be comforted by the fact that one day there would be satellites in space so that so-called preachers could tell fanciful tales such as this one? Halsay and others talk about finding helicopters out of locust, tire rationing, and nuclear weapons in the book of Revelation. Again, I ask what comfort would that be to those persecuted Christians? Revelation must be looked at through first-century glasses. What did it mean to the people of John’s day? What message did Jesus have for those persecuted Christians? It was not satellites and tire rationing. It was relief soon (Rev. 1:1); and ultimate, final victory for the faithful, obedient Christian. (Rev. 2:10). Do not be lead astray by false teachers. The angel is symbolic of God’s messengers, His saints, preaching the Gospel to the world. The message is: “fear God,” “give Him glory,” and “worship Him.” This is the message we bring to you. We are not trying to sell subscriptions or tell you fanciful tales just the simple message above as presented in the Bible.

1021 Mt. Pleasant Rd; Chesapeake, VA 23322

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31st Annual Bellview Lectures

**The Home**

**June 9-11, 2006**

**Friday, June 9**

7:00 pm  God’s Word the Standard for the Home  Wayne Coats

8:00 pm  Man’s Role in the Home  John West

**Saturday, June 10**

9:00 am  God’s Law on Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage  Paul Vaughn

10:00 am  Woman’s Role in the Home  Hal Smith

11:00 am  Evolution’s Effect on the Home  John West

*Saturday Luncheon*

1:00 pm  Dating  Jerry Murrell

2:00 pm  Selecting a Mate  Michael Shepherd

**Sunday, June 11**

9:00 am  Children Are to Obey Their Parents  Jerry Murrell

10:00 am  What Does it Mean to Love  Paul Vaughn

*Sunday Luncheon*

1:00 pm  Parents Are to Train Their Children  Hal Smith

2:00 pm  Liberalism’s Effect on the Home  Wayne Coats
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Harold and Elaine Maxey, Bill (Baptist Hospital) and Kay Hollowell, Ella Hammac, Dick Cunningham (cards only), Marilyn Hall, Bill Busch, Ray Dodd, Jennette Nall, Faye Little (Dot Dodd’s mother), Nancy Travis (William Weekley’s daughter), Doris Kelly (Carl Ayliffe’s grandmother), and Arthur Mathews (Rheba Stancliff’s brother).

Reading/Invitation
April 19, 2006
Reading: Jeremy Caine
Invitation: Fred Stancliff
April 26, 2006
Reading: Ray Dodd
Invitation: Carl Ayliffe

Mark These Dates
Every Sunday–Ladies’ Bible Class will meet at 5:00 pm, in the zone room.
April 16, 2006–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
April 16, 2006–Elders/Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
April 23, 2006–Dinner on the Grounds and Singing. A covered-dish meal will be held after the morning service. Singing will be held afterwards in the auditorium.
April 26, 2006–Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.

Pantry Items Needed
Canned Meat
What If You Die Tonight?

*Tim Smith*

Have you ever considered death? Your very own death? How about in terms of when you will die? What if you die tonight? You could, you know. I do not know anything about your situation, you may be as healthy as can be, but you may not be. You may be sick and never even know it. You could have a heart attack or a stroke at any moment. You could fall victim to an accident—a storm blowing a tree over your bedroom in your sleep, an automobile accident, a fire—anything. It could happen. I hope it does not happen to you, but it could. One thing we know for sure—you will die someday. Maybe in fifty years. Maybe in one hundred years. Maybe tomorrow. Maybe tonight. Maybe before then...

What would happen to you if you died tonight? Would you go to a better place? Perhaps you would be rubbing elbows with Lazarus (cf. Luke 16). But: Isn’t there always a “but”? Would you go to a worse place? Perhaps you would be rubbing elbows with the Rich Man (cf. Luke 16). One thing is certain—should you die tonight you would go someplace—either far better or far worse. Which would it be?

Lest you object “We cannot know,” consider the following: If you have not believed the truth (cf. Heb. 11:6; John 8:24) you may be assured that the place to which you will go is worse than the worst of this world. If you have not confessed your faith in Christ (cf. Mat. 10:32-33; Rom. 10:10) you may be assured that...
Immodesty

Jimmy Ferguson

There is a serious problem plaguing us today. It is a problem that exists not just with our own home congregation but with many other congregations today. I know this to be true because this writer has talked with members elsewhere who are distressed over this problem and ask, “What can we do?” The problem: many church members seem to have divided hearts; that is, they seem to want to be Christians, but they are also worldly. This disturbing problem is especially seen in the area of immodest dress.

We are seeing it with more and more of our young people. It is greatly disturbing when we meet a “Christian” somewhere and there is more skin showing than clothes. We would expect such from a worldly person, but not a child of God! It is equally disturbing, if not more so, when we see members (young or older) come to worship wearing tight clothes, short dresses, or blouses so short that part of their mid-section is showing. Shame, shame!

We desperately need to teach our members (from the pulpit and in classes) what God’s Word has to say about modesty. Modesty is a good work. Paul wrote that dressing modestly is included in the good deeds that women professing godliness must practice (1 Tim. 2:9). The implied opposite must also be true. Immodesty is a sinful work. Please think seriously and soberly on the following.

Immodesty mars reputations. Paul tied the issue of immodesty to the inward person. Even many in the world understand this. When a worldly man is desiring to commit fornication, does he seek a modest or immodest-dressed woman? When a woman or young girl dresses immodestly she is establishing or has already established a reputation of being loose morally whether she actually is or not! Think about it. One of the ways we show our love and reverential respect for God is in the way we dress...and the way we dress does have an effect upon others. We have our influence to think about. If you see one professing to be a Christian dressed immodestly (whether at worship or elsewhere), you are not able to think of that individual in the same way. Why? Because they have marred their reputation.

Immodesty is an advertisement that one’s body has not been purchased by Christ. Christ purchased our bodies (1 Cor. 6:18-20). Christians were bought by the most costly price ever—the blood of Christ. Immodesty speaks of cheapness in its worst sense. You are worth more than all the world to Christ, but by dressing immodestly you have sided with the world (Jam. 4:4).
Immodesty is a **mark of worldliness** and John writes, “Love not the world” (1 John 2:15). One cannot be worldly and at the same time be a faithful child of God. It is either or.

Please keep these three things in mind: (1) **Recognize that you must be modest and sensible in your dress to have the favor of God.** As one’s dress is a mirror of her heart, show that you have a pure heart by modest attire. (2) “Abstain from every form of evil” even in your attire (1 The. 5:22). Do not be conformed to the world. (3) **Realize that your life is to exalt Christ.** Dress to the glory of God (cf. 1 Cor. 10:31).

*Parents, be concerned* with your child’s attire and *act accordingly.* Those who dress immodestly (whether at worship or elsewhere) are showing that they are of the world and they disgrace themselves, their families, and bring reproach upon the church and Christ whose name they wear.

Sin will cause the soul to be lost including the sin of immodesty. Those guilty must repent just as with any other sin. May God help His people to exhibit His holiness through modest dress.

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**31st Annual Bellview Lectures**

**The Home**

June 9-11, 2006

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8:00 pm  Man’s Role in the Home  John Wes

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*Saturday Luncheon*

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Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Harold and Elaine Maxey, Ella Hammac, Dick Cunningham (cards only), Marilyn Hall, Bill Busch, Ray Dodd, Jennette Nall, Faye Little (Dot Dodd’s mother), Nancy Travis (William Weekley’s daughter), Doris Kelly (Carl Ayliffe’s grandmother), Arthur Mathews (Rheba Stancliff’s brother), and Chip Crowe (Bill and Peggy Crowe’s son).

Sympathy
Our deepest sympathy is extended to the Hollowell family in the death of Bill Hollowell on April 14. Please keep Kay and her family in your prayers.

Reading/Invitation
April 26, 2006
Reading: Ray Dodd
Invitation: Carl Ayliffe
May 3, 2006
Reading: Andrew Hatcher
Invitation: Henry Born

Mark These Dates
Every Sunday–Ladies’ Bible Class will meet at 5:00 pm, in the zone room.
April 23, 2006–Dinner on the Grounds and Singing.

Moved
Floy Dell Lindesmith’s new address is: 1023 Stonehollow Way; Mount Juliet, TN 37122-4569. Please keep her in your prayers and write to her.

Pantry Items Needed
Canned Meat
Do You Get Religion?

Dub Mowery

Some people talk about getting religion as if it could be obtained in a similar fashion as one might get a contagious disease such as chickenpox. Religion is what a person does or does not do rather than something caught. James, by inspiration, declared, “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world” (Jam. 1:27). By that passage, we learn that the individual is responsible to keep his or her religious endeavors pure and undefiled. This is accomplished by what we do and do not do. The Bible teaches both positive and negatively concerning the Christian religion. Titus 2:11-14 is a good example of this type of teaching. That passage is as follows:

For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

In defining the word religion; the main body of the word, “ligion” means to bind together. The prefix “re” carries the concept of repetition. Hence, the word religion means to bind back.
Using that word in reference to God and man, it means to bring man back to God. The human race, in the persons of Adam and Eve, was in fellowship with God until sin separated man from God. Every human being, who has reached the mental state of accountability before God, does not enter into a lost state until he or she sins. It is at that time that an individual’s own sins separate him or her from God (Isa. 59:1-2). When a person sins, that person is out of harmony with the will of the Heavenly Father. The progress of bringing anyone into harmony with God is called reconciliation. Our Lord does not need to be brought into harmony with us, but rather we need to be reconciled unto Him. Consider the following words of the apostle Paul:

And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made

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him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him (2 Cor. 5:18-21).

Phraseology such as “to get religion,” “to profess religion,” and “to experience religion” depicts a misunderstanding of God’s means of bringing a soul back into harmony with His will. As already brought out, the religion of the Heavenly Father requires involvement on our part. It is not a mystical act of the Holy Spirit upon our spiritual heart to convert us. The inspired Word was given unto mankind for that purpose. James urges us to “receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves” (Jam. 1:21-22).

Three Suggestions...

Tim Smith

“Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you” (1 Thes. 5:16-18).

Rejoice evermore—a pretty tall task, would you not say? I mean, where is the joy in the death of a loved one? An automobile wreck? A financial loss? A serious illness? Literally speaking, there is no joy in such things. That is, there is no temporal happiness in them. I have experienced many things in life that brought sadness, hurt, and pain. But through them all I continued to rejoice in those things that brought joy and did not allow those things which brought temporary sadness or pain to overshadow the roots of my joy. I rejoice in salvation, in the Word, in the Lord, in the church, and in hope of eternal life. Nothing this world does to me can take that joy away.

Pray without ceasing—what does that mean? Does it mean that I am to have an ongoing prayer at all times? When I am working, driving, watching TV, reading a book, and etc.? No. Do not be misled—this means that I am to pray at regular set intervals. That is, prayer is to be a regimented part of my daily life. It is to be my routine. Now, the prayers are not routine, but the practice of praying is. I have times when I pray.

When I do certain things I regularly pray. It is as much a part of my life as eating, dressing, or working. I have found that it really helps with those things we talked about in the previous paragraph, also.

In every thing give thanks—does this mean that I am to thank God for the tragedies in life? No. When I cut my finger off at a factory in Northeast Arkansas a dozen or so years ago I did not bow my head and say, “I thank Thee, Lord, for the loss of this finger...” I may well have thanked Him that it was no more serious than it was, but I was not at all thankful for leaving a part of myself at work that evening. When a woman ran a stop sign at a high rate of speed and “totaled” my car and injured herself and me I did not thank God for the privilege of wrecking. While certain things in themselves are not thank worthy, that I live, hope, and love, along with innumerable other things are thank worthy. And no matter what happens to me, I always have something for which to be thankful.

These three things are my suggestions to you for a happier life. They are Paul’s inspired message. That makes them God’s commands. Will you heed them? May God bless you as you study and obey His Word.

1272 Enon Road Webb, AL 36376
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Harold and Elaine Maxey, Ella Hammac, Dick Cunningham (cards only), Marilyn Hall, Bill Busch, Faye Little (Dot Dodd’s mother), Nancy Travis (William Weekley’s daughter), Doris Kelly (Carl Ayliffe’s grandmother), Arthur Mathews (Rheba Stancliff’s brother), and Thelma Dunavant (Susan McLaughlin’s mother).

Reading/Invitation
May 3, 2006
Reading: Andrew Hatcher
Invitation: Henry Born
May 10, 2006
Reading: Daniel Hatcher
Invitation: Paul Brantley

Mark These Dates
Every Sunday—Ladies’ Bible Class will meet at 5:00 pm, in the zone room.
May 7, 2006—Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
May 21, 2006—Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
May 21, 2006—Elders/Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
May 24, 2006—Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.
May 31, 2006—Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.
June 4, 2006—Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.

Pantry Items Needed
Canned Meat
Letting Martha Teach Us

Marvin Weir

The stories that are recorded in the Bible are for our learning. The “cares of this life” (Luke 21:34) can trouble one to the point of despair. That which is normally considered to be a privilege and duty can become a burden and mere drudgery. Half-hearted Christianity will not enable one to overcome the temptations that Satan will scatter in his path.

The Scriptures say:
Now as they went on their way, he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at the Lord’s feet, and heard his word. But Martha was cumbered about much serving; and she came up to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister did leave me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me. But the Lord answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art anxious and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful: for Mary hath chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her (Luke 10:38-42).

First, we learn that Martha received Jesus into her house. By receiving Christ into her home, Martha revealed the depth of her belief, faith and trust in the Savior. Many of her contemporaries had witnessed the miracles worked by Jesus, and yet they refused to believe in the Christ.

Jesus had earlier proclaimed, “Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which were done in you, they would have
repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes” (Luke 10:13). It is vain and presumptuous for one to talk about his faith in Christ and not be willing to receive His Word with all readiness of mind (cf. Acts 17:11). As Martha readily received Christ into her house, all today must readily “receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save” one’s soul (Jam. 1:21).

Second, Martha was willing to sit at Jesus’ feet. Both Martha and Mary were willing to sit and listen to the teaching of the Savior. The faith that truly believes in Christ will have a burning desire to know His will. It is only by knowing the truth that one can be freed from his sins (John 8:32).

No one can literally sit at the feet of the Master today, but all can be taught by the inspired Scriptures (cf. 2 Tim. 3:15). Many today profess their faith in Christ while refusing to be guided by His words. They have desire to tell of their experiences, but no desire to sit and learn from the Holy Scriptures (Psa. 119:105). Without a burning desire to learn of the will of God, one will remain hopelessly shackled to the damning doctrines of men.

Third, Martha was an active worker. She was willing to do whatever needed to be done, and proved such by her “much serving.” Martha was not like those who followed Christ only for the loaves and fishes (John 6:26). She was not a hearer only, but also a doer of the Lord’s bidding

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[cf. Jam. 1:22]. Martha had listened to the words of the Christ and was more than willing to be an active servant.

However, Martha was *cumbered* (distracted—NKJV) by her much service. The lesson to be learned is that even though something is a good work, there may be a greater priority that needs to be put first. It was gracious of Martha to want to show outstanding hospitality to Christ, but a greater need was for her to be taught by Him. May we never become so busy doing what we consider to be good to not have time to be taught by the Word of God.

**Fourth,** Martha’s distraction with physical things contributed to her complaining spirit. Please do not forget that Martha’s giant task of much serving was self imposed, and she, like many today, soon became burdened and wearied. The physical things can sometimes be overwhelming, and far too many times willing servants bite off more than they can easily chew!

On this occasion, Martha did not need the help from Mary that she was requesting. Mary had “chosen the good part” which could never be taken from her (Luke 10:42). There would be many more opportunities for Mary and Martha to be hospitable by providing meals for others, but very few opportunities to be taught by the Master. Truly, Mary chose the part that would not vanish as the smell of food, but that which would serve her well on into eternity.

May this story about Martha serve to remind us that even among the good things of life there are those things that are more important than others. We need to choose wisely as we travel through this life. Many a member of the Lord’s church has forgotten the plea of Christ in saying, “But seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Mat. 6:33).

Satan will sidetrack us any way he can. As the apostle Paul said, “If then ye were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth” (Col. 3:1-2).

**Some Things Bible Class Teachers Like in Parents**

1. Parents who themselves attend all Bible classes regularly.
2. Parents who encourage their children to attend all Bible classes regularly.
3. Parents who encourage their children to be in Bible class on time.
4. Parents who speak well of the classes.
5. Parents who are fair minded, agreeable, and unselfishly helpful to the teacher with all classroom problems.
6. Parents who appreciate, and express their appreciation for their efforts to help their children.
7. Parents who are real partners with class teachers in the greatest work in the world.
8. Parents who set a time to help their children get their Bible lessons done.
9. Parents who maintain discipline at home so the teacher will have no discipline problems in the classroom.
10. Parents who teach their children proper attitudes of worship, in the classroom and public worship services.

Author Unknown
**Sick**

Please remember in your prayers: Harold and Elaine Maxey, Ella Hammac, Dick Cunningham (cards only), Marilyn Hall, Bill Busch, Faye Little (Dot Dodd’s mother), Thelma Dunavant (Susan McLaughlin’s mother), Nancy Travis (William Weekley’s daughter), Doris Kelly (Carl Ayliffe’s grandmother), and Arthur Mathews (Rheba Stancliff’s brother).

**Sympathy**

Our deepest sympathy is extended to Rubye Bailey in the death of her sister, Mary Nell Rankin, on April 27. Please keep Rubye and her family in your prayers.

**Reading/Invitation**

May 10, 2006
Reading: Daniel Hatcher
Invitation: Paul Brantley

May 17, 2006
Reading: Jim Loy
Invitation: Bill Busch

**Mark These Dates**

Every Sunday—Ladies’ Bible Class will meet at 5:00 pm, in the zone room.

May 7, 2006—Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.

May 21, 2006—Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.

May 21, 2006—Elders/Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.

May 24, 2006—Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.

**Pantry Items Needed**

Canned Meat
The Three Bears

Curtis Graves

Two things that I have always liked to do with my children are to read and tell them stories. One such story that I have told and will tell again is a familiar one to many of us. It is the story of the three bears. Many children have enjoyed this story through the years. In this article I want to tell a story of three bears. This story is found in Galatians 6:1-10, 17-18. These three bears are not animals but mean to carry, help, or support.

Have you ever heard someone say that they are in a state that is “unbearable”? However, God promised in 1 Corinthians 10:13 that He will “not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.” Notice that we will be able “to bear it.” What are we supposed to be able to bear? Well, let us notice three things we all must bear—hence, the three bears!

First, we are to bear one another’s burdens (Gal. 6:2). The importance of this command is shown in the phrase “and so fulfil the law of Christ.” In John 15:14, Jesus said that we are His friends if we do what He has commanded us to do. Verse one of Galatians 6 is the best commentary on what verse two is talking about. We find out that a burden, here is a fault and that in helping others to bear these faults we should do so in meekness. We “ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves” Paul says in Romans 15:1. Stories are told that in one tribe in Africa, when a child is three years old, parents reject it, refuse to feed it, and the child
has to fend for itself or die. We think how horrible this is, and it is. However, we have often done the same thing with new converts, babes in Christ. We have baptized them (the birth process) and then left them to the world to struggle alone. Do we do the same thing when we do not visit the sick or those in nursing homes, etc., or do not pray for them? What about those with physical, mental or financial problems, or the needy? If we do not pray for them and help them are we again leaving them to fend for themselves? Do we immediately begin to nit-pick at everything about the new convert or do we help them to grow in their faith? The first time we meet David he is carrying the head of a giant in his hand and is a hero to the people. However, some time later David is a fugitive from the king and all of the “great job David” and “I knew you could do it David” compliments are gone and his encouragers have diminished when he really needed them. On the other hand, we see the greatness of Jonathan when we read of him that he went into the wood and strengthened the hand of David “in God.” It is no surprise then that later David wanted to show kindness to the house of Jonathan. Not only must we bear the burdens of others, but we must, of course, be careful not to cause burdens.

The second bear is to bear our own burdens (Gal. 6:5). We must do our own work according to verse four of Galatians 6. There are works that only you can do. We are all part of the body (the

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### 31st Annual Bellview Lectures

#### The Home

**June 9-11, 2006**

**Friday, June 9**

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<th>Speaker</th>
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<tr>
<td>9:00 am</td>
<td>Children Are to Obey Their Parents</td>
<td>Jerry Murrell</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:00 am</td>
<td>What Does it Mean to Love</td>
<td>Paul Vaughn</td>
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**Sunday Luncheon**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Speaker</th>
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<tr>
<td>1:00 pm</td>
<td>Parents Are to Train Their Children</td>
<td>Hal Smith</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:00 pm</td>
<td>Liberalism’s Effect on the Home</td>
<td>Wayne Coats</td>
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church) and some functions cannot be done by other parts. There are people that you know that only you can help them be converted. We cannot pass on burdens that are meant for us to bear. No one else can do what the Lord has laid out for you. With these burdens we need to remember the promise of the Lord in verse nine: Do not be “weary in well doing: for in a due season we shall reap, if we faint not.” We must prepare ourselves for death, we must worship for ourselves, we must have faith of our own, and we must bear our own burdens of responsibility.

The third bear is to bear the marks of Jesus (Gal. 6:17). This can be done in two ways. One way is to bear physical marks as Paul did (2 Cor. 11:23-27). The second way is to bear the resemblance of Christ. We are to be followers of Him (1 Cor. 4:16). The things “which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen” (Phi. 4:9) we must do. Paul looked like, talked like, and acted like Jesus. We must do the same. Paul bore the marks of Jesus. We may some day be called upon to do the same.

How can I bear the burdens of others, bear my own burdens, and bear the marks of Jesus all at the same time? By keeping the great commandment that we read about in Matthew 22:37-40. We must love God with our all and love our neighbors as ourselves. Love bears all things (1 Cor. 13:7). If I love God, I will love His children and want to help bear their burdens. I will not want to put my burdens on others and I will bear the marks of Jesus. How many burdens of others have you shared? How many of your own burdens have you fulfilled? Can the marks of Jesus be found on you? “And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God” (Gal. 6:16).

1021 Mt. Pleasant Rd; Chesapeake, VA 23322

Why Don’t I Read My Bible?

Bill Jackson

Some time back, we began the procedure that once was a “standard” thing in most congregations: counting the number of daily Bible readers. It is one of the matters fixed firmly in my mind from childhood, as then a good brother, after the classes, would give announcement regarding the attendance and the number of daily Bible readers. More than anything else, I was impressed with the fact that spiritual men thought the matter most important, and the best people I knew—members of the body—were participating in the daily reading.

As we take that count, it is still alarming to see the number of saints who do not read the Word daily. They do not read that which is given to the sustaining and nourishing of their souls! (1 Pet. 2:2; Mat. 4:4). And, we wonder why? It certainly is not due to illness and/or bereavement, for many certainly turn to the Bible during those times. It is not that too much work has been done in other spiritual matters, is it? Let us face it, folks. I do not read my Bible because I value the world, its things, its connections, its activities, etc., as being more important! For shame!

Deceased
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Harold and Elaine Maxey, Ella Hammac, Dick Cunningham (cards only), Marilyn Hall, Bill Busch, Faye Little (Dot Dodd’s mother), Thelma Dunavant (Susan McLaughlin’s mother), Nancy Travis (William Weekley’s daughter), Doris Kelly (Carl Ayliffe’s grandmother), Arthur Mathews (Rheba Stancliff’s brother), and Reva Grando (Harold Cozad’s sister).

Reading/Invitation
May 17, 2006
Reading: Jim Loy
Invitation: Bill Busch
May 24, 2006
Reading: Bryan Loy
Invitation: Bill Crowe

Mark These Dates
Every Sunday–Ladies’ Bible Class will meet at 5:00 pm, in the zone room.
May 21, 2006–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
May 21, 2006–Elders/Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
May 24, 2006–Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.
May 31, 2006–Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.
June 4, 2006–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
June 4, 2006–Pre-lectureship meeting after the evening service, in room 1.

Pantry Items Needed
Canned Meat
Be At Peace Among Yourselves

Lynn Parker

To a vibrant, faithful congregation, Paul wrote, “Be at peace among yourselves” (1 Thes. 5:13). The command here, “be at peace,” is a present tense imperative. Practically speaking, that simply means that we are to be at peace and keep on being at peace. Further, it is a command and not an option.

Peacemakers are desperately needed in the church. There is enough hurt, harm, bickering, and bitterness. We do not need the self-willed attitude which is determined to have its way. Jesus said, “Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called sons of God” (Mat. 5:9). If you want happy days that conclude with blessed rest, “seek peace, and pursue it” (1 Pet. 3:11).

On the contrary, needless division will send souls to hell (Gal. 5:20-21). The book of Proverbs gives us God’s view of the war-mongers among brethren:

There are six things which Jehovah hateth; Yea, seven which are an abomination unto him: Haughty eyes, a lying tongue, And hands that shed innocent blood; A heart that deviseth wicked purposes, Feet that are swift in running to mischief, A false witness that uttereth lies,

And he that soweth discord among brethren (Pro. 6:16-19).

It takes only a little baseless slander, or a little taking sides, a smidgen of compromise, and you can have the recipe for needless division.

While we admonish brethren to be lovers of peace, we must also sound a warning. Beware of those that seek peace at any price. “If it be
possible, as much as in you lieth, be at peace with all men” (Rom. 12:18). But it is not possible for peace to reign where some are determined to support error, hold hands with false teachers, and subsequently compromise truth (1 Cor. 11:18f). Some folks just will not let true Christian peace prevail. I try to teach my children to seek peace but I surely do not want them to grow up to be compromisers who ignore soul-damning error. Some brethren have, over the years advocated fellowship with denominations, fellowship with adulterers, and fellowship with false teachers. They chide us for not going along and promoting peace when, in fact, the peace-party invitation they offer is written on a one-way ticket to hell.

Peace and humility go hand in hand. Some have gotten too big for their brotherhood britches. They cannot be questioned. They refuse to answer unless they can do so secretly so as to have some kind of sick “plausible deniability.” They cannot bear even the hint of an idea that they could be wrong. Nor will they engage in honest, open Bible study and exchange. Such an attitude does not make for peace in the brotherhood. Rather, pride hampers peace and nurtures division.

It is possible to have peace when all parties desire scriptural peace, love peace, and pursue peace.

The Sneeze

They walked in tandem, each of the ninety-three students filing into the already crowded auditorium. With rich maroon gowns flowing and the traditional caps, they looked almost as grown up as they felt. Dads swallowed hard behind broad smiles, and moms freely brushed away tears.

This class would not pray during the commencements—not by choice but because of a recent court ruling prohibiting it. The principal and several students were careful to stay within the guidelines allowed by the ruling.

They gave inspirational and challenging speeches, but no one mentioned divine guidance and no one asked for blessings on the graduates or their families. The speeches were nice, but they were routine...until the final speech received a standing ovation.

A solitary student walked proudly to the microphone. He stood still and silent for just a moment, and then he delivered his speech...an astounding sneeze.

The rest of the students rose immediately to their feet, and in unison they said, “God Bless You.”

The audience exploded into applause. The graduating class found a unique way to invoke God’s blessing on their future...with or without the court’s approval.

Author Unknown
What is Love?

Love may be the most misused word in the English language. We use it to describe cars, boats, games, and other material things. The word should be used as a way to express the emotion of the heart. The biblical word love has great and strong meaning. Just read 1 Corinthians 13 and you will see what Paul wrote, by inspiration, concerning love. Let us see just what love is.

1. Love is silent when your words would hurt.
2. It is patience when your brother is hurt.
3. It is deafness when some scandal flows.
4. It is thoughtfulness for another woes.
5. It is courage if misfortune comes along.
6. It is hurting as others hurt.
7. It is rejoicing when others have reason to rejoice.
8. It is correction when one has done wrong.
9. It is going the extra mile for those in need.

There certainly are other things that define what love is, but we all know that nothing takes the place of love!  

Author Unknown

31st Annual Bellview Lectures
The Home
June 9-11, 2006

Friday, June 9
7:00 pm God’s Word the Standard for the Home
8:00 pm Man’s Role in the Home

Saturday, June 10
9:00 am God’s Law on Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage
10:00 am Woman’s Role in the Home
11:00 am Evolution’s Effect on the Home
Saturday Luncheon

Sunday, June 11
9:00 am Children Are to Obey Their Parents
10:00 am What Does it Mean to Love
Sunday Luncheon
1:00 pm Parents Are to Train Their Children
2:00 pm Liberalism’s Effect on the Home

Wayne Coats
John West
Paul Vaughn
Hal Smith
John West

Jerry Murrell
Michael Shepherd

Jerry Murrell
Paul Vaughn
Hal Smith
Wayne Coats
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Harold and Elaine Maxey, Ella Hammac, Dick Cunningham (cards only), Marilyn Hall, Faye Little (Dot Dodd’s mother), Thelma Dunavant (Susan McLaughlin’s mother), Nancy Travis (William Weekley’s daughter), Doris Kelly (Carl Ayliffe’s grandmother), Arthur Mathews (Rheba Stancliff’s brother), Reva Grando (Harold Cozad’s sister), and Bobby Savage (Karen Hatcher’s uncle).

Placed Membership
Harold Cozad has placed membership with the Bellview congregation. His address is: Leisure Lake RV Park; 5565 West Nine Mile Road; Pensacola, FL 32526.

Reading/Invitation
May 24, 2006
Reading: Bryan Loy
Invitation: Bill Crowe

May 31, 2006
Reading: Horace Myrick
Invitation: Dale Cunningham

Mark These Dates
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Pantry Items Needed
Canned Meat
Things That Are Precious to the Christian

Marvin L. Weir

One can think of many things that are precious to the Christian, but this article will focus only on the six things we are studying this week in Family Bible School.

First, God’s love is precious to the Christian! Without God’s love there would be no hope for fallen mankind. All accountable people sin (Rom. 3:10, 23), and “the wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23). When one sins he is separated from God (Isa. 59:1-2). One cannot simply pardon himself from the sin he has committed. Without the love of God providing a plan for reconciliation and redemption, sinners would have no hope. To the Ephesian brethren Paul said, “that ye were at that time separate from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of the promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus ye that once were far off are made nigh in the blood of Christ” (Eph. 2:12-13).

That often referred to golden text says, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life” (John 3:16). Think about that little word so. God so loved that He purposed, planned, and provided a way by which man can be forgiven of his sins and reconciled to God. Man would be hopelessly lost were it not for the love of God!

God’s Word is precious to the Christian!

Spiritually speaking, man is not capable of directing his steps; “the way of man is not in himself” (Jer. 10:23). A trustworthy guide is needed...
and one’s emotions, feelings, and opinions do not measure up to the challenge. The Psalmist knew the answer and was right in saying, “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, And light unto my path” (Psa. 119:105). The Word of God is “right” (Psa. 33:4), “pure” (Psa. 119:140), “true” (Psa. 119:160), and “settled in heaven” (Psa. 119:89).

God’s complete will for mankind is revealed only through His inspired Word (2 Tim. 3:16-17). “For the word of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us who are saved it is the power of God” (1 Cor. 1:18). Paul reminds one that “belief cometh of hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ” (Rom. 10:17). For one to be saved, he must “hold fast” to God’s Word (1 Cor. 15:2). Only the “word of his grace” can build us up and give us “the inheritance among all them that are sanctified” (Acts 20:32). The “seed” to be sown before a lost and dying world is the Word of God (Luke 8:11). God’s Word “liveth and abideth...for ever” (1 Pet. 1:23, 25), and will judge all mankind in that Day (John 12:48). Put your trust in “the sword of the Spirit” (Eph. 6:17).

Heaven is precious to the Christian! There are only two roads one can travel through this life—one leads to eternal life and the other to eternal destruction (Mat. 7:13-14). Hell is to be avoided at all costs (Mat. 10:34-38) and has been “prepared for the devil and his angels” (Mat.
(25:41), and for those who “know not God...and...obey not the gospel” (2 The. 1:8).

What a joy it will be for the faithful to get to Heaven as God will “wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more; neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, any more” (Rev. 21:4). All of those “written in the Lamb’s book of life” shall be in heaven but those who “maketh an abomination and a lie” shall never enter this precious place (Rev. 21:27).

Grace and mercy are precious to the Christian! The apostle Paul says it best, “for by grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, that no man should glory” (Eph. 2:8-9). Salvation is God’s wonderful gift, but salvation is not unconditional. God’s wonderful grace covers only those who love Him and submit to His will. As Jesus said, “If a man love me, he will keep my word: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him” (John 14:23). One cannot continue in a life of sin and expect God’s grace to abound (Rom. 6:1).

Salvation is precious to the Christian! Paul describes it like this: “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day; and not to me only, but also to all them that have loved his appearing” (2 Tim. 4:7-8).

Fellowship is precious to the Christian! How wonderful it is to associate with those of “like precious faith” (2 Pet. 1:1)! We dare not, however, fellowship those walking in darkness (Eph. 5:11). To aid, support in any way, participate with, or encourage those who are enemies of the cross is wrong.

Let us be thankful for the fellowship that is our in Christ Jesus. How wonderful it is to be in the company of those who love God!

Never forget the many things precious to a Christian.

815 42nd Street SW; Paris, TX 75460

Dancing Is Sinful

Robert Dodson

Dancing is sinful because dancing appeals to the lust of the flesh. If you do not think so, just try having a dance and invite males only. Unless it is a homosexual party it is not going to last very long.

In Galatians 5:19-21, Paul lists “the works of the flesh” saying, “those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God” (NKJV). Two of them involve dancing: “lewdness” and “revelries.”

Lewdness refers to many things which provoke evil desires, specifically “indecent bodily movements, unchaste handling of males and females” (Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon). Revelries almost always include dancing.

Dancing is associated with the world, but the Christian is not to be of the world (Rom. 12:1-2). Rather, Peter writes, “abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, having your conduct honorable” (1 Pet 2:11-12).

By refusing to dance, the Christian preserves his own soul and sets an example for others (1 Tim. 4:12, 16).

Honestly now, if Jesus were here would you take Him dancing? Would He go dancing with you?
Sick

Please remember in your prayers: Harold and Elaine Maxey, Ella Hammac, Dick Cunningham (cards only), Marilyn Hall, Faye Little (Dot Dodd’s mother), Thelma Dunavant (Susan McLaughlin’s mother), Nancy Travis (William Weekley’s daughter), Doris Kelly (Carl Ayliffe’s grandmother), Arthur Mathews (Rheba Stancliff’s brother), and Tiffany Wilkes (Fred and Rheba Stancliff’s granddaughter).

Reading/Invitation
May 31, 2006
Reading: Horace Myrick
Invitation: Dale Cunningham
June 7, 2006
Reading: Shelby Nall
Invitation: Ray Foshee

Mark These Dates
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June 4, 2006–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
June 4, 2006–Pre-lectureship meeting after the evening service, in room 1.
June 18, 2006–Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
June 25, 2006–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.

Pantry Items Needed
Canned Meat
Is There a Famine in the Land

J. Moores

We read of the great depression and the poverty that many endured through the years following. Many of us grew up during that period of time and remember the lack of the luxuries of today’s society. Many of us grew up on the farm. I grew up on the farm in middle Tennessee, and I remember well the toil that was put forth in order to eke out a living. We depended so much on the right conditions of the weather. Good planting seasons and the right amount of rainfall at the right time would be somewhat assuring of a good crop. I do not believe that any of us in America have ever experienced a real famine in the land. Look at 2 Kings 6:25-29:

And there was a great famine in Samaria: and, behold, they besieged it, until an ass’s head was sold for fourscore pieces of silver, and the fourth part of a cab of dove’s dung for five pieces of silver. And as the king of Israel was passing by upon the wall, there cried a woman unto him, saying, Help, my lord, O king. And he said, If the Lord do not help thee, whence shall I help thee? out of the barnfloor, or out of the winepress? And the king said unto her, What aileth thee? And she answered, This woman said unto me, Give thy son, that we may eat him to day, and we will eat my son to morrow. So we boiled my son, and did eat him: and I said unto her on the next day, Give thy son, that we may eat him: and she hath hid her son.
This was a real famine in the land. I believe one can see the extreme effects of a famine of this magnitude. Even cannibalism is exhibited.

Amos predicts a famine in the land that will have even more devastating effects. Amos 8:11-13 states: “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord: And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it. In that day shall the fair virgins and young men faint for thirst.” What could possibly be more devastating than a famine of the Word of God? That is what Amos is predicting. My question to the American people today is: Is there a famine in the land?

In Kentucky, a student kills three and wounds several others while the group is engaged in a prayer session. In Mississippi, a young man kills his mother, goes to school ... church to perform same sex marriages. In the state of Massachusetts homosexual marriages are indeed being performed legally according to their constitution. In California recently homosexuals from all over the USA flocked there to obtain marriage licenses. The ACLU is constantly bringing suits against any organization that displays a relationship to Christianity in any form. TV programs are laced with foul language, sexual innuendoes, violence, corruption, and we cry all is well. Is there a famine in the land?

Consider the tragedy of not having the Word of God. Oh how sad it would be if we were without the Word of God. But, is it any less tragic to have it and not believe it? Is it less tragic to have it and not appreciate it? Is it less tragic to have it and not read it and be faithful to it? Many trends we see in the world are people having little or no time to read and study the Bible. Philosophy and entertainment have replaced Truth. Secular influence is making strong efforts to remove the influence of the Bible. Jesus said Matthew 5:6: “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.” Any church, nation or individual who has no craving for Divine Truth will find the offering of truth taken away. They will die of spiritual starvation. May we all make an appeal to God for help in creating a spiritual awakening less there be a famine in the land.

Copied

What Is a Sinner?

Curtis L. E. Graves

Does anyone know what a sinner is? Has anyone ever seen a sinner? What is a sin? Does anyone ever commit a sin? Are these silly questions? Some may say so. Some may say we are all sinners because we do commit sin, which is a transgression of God’s law. They would be correct. Yet, many others would say that the things, which the Bible calls sin, are not really sins. For instance if the prodigal son were alive today would he be called a sinner or would the world say, no, he is just a “juvenile delinquent” or just a “mischievous young man”? Many in the world would also lay the blame for his behavior on his parents. There are no “bad boys” you...
know. He must be allowed to sow his wild oats. He must be free to “adjust positively.” There is no such thing as liars anymore, just outgoing people with a great deal of imagination. They must be free and uninhibited in their thoughts. A drunkard is not a sinner anymore. He is someone with any number of complexes who has just made some mechanical (liquid) adjustments to the problems of today. However, if he beats his wife or starves his children then he becomes a scourge to society; but still not a sinner who needs to make corrections in his life. The adulterer, the homosexual, the drug addict and many others are just the fault of biology or society rather than sinners who need to repent. What about the murderer? Are they sinners or just someone who had an over-protective mother or were inhibited in some way by their up bringing or suffered some traumatic experience? Do we need more psychiatry or do we need for people to recognize that sin is just that: sin. Jesus is the Great Physician who can take away the sins of the world and bring about a real cleansing. The world, like the prodigal son, just needs to be humble enough to say, “I have sinned,” and then make it right. Let us help you do just that.

1021 Mt. Pleasant Rd; Chesapeake, VA 23322

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31st Annual Bellview Lectures

The Home

June 9-11, 2006

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7:00 pm  God’s Word the Standard for the Home
Wayne Coats

8:00 pm  Man’s Role in the Home
John West

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Paul Vaughn

10:00 am Woman’s Role in the Home
Hal Smith

11:00 am Evolution’s Effect on the Home
John West

Saturday Luncheon

1:00 pm  Dating
Jerry Murrell

2:00 pm  Selecting a Mate
Michael Shepherd

Sunday, June 11

9:00 am  Children Are to Obey Their Parents
Jerry Murrell

10:00 am What Does it Mean to Love
Paul Vaughn

Sunday Luncheon

1:00 pm  Parents Are to Train Their Children
Hal Smith

2:00 pm  Liberalism’s Effect on the Home
Wayne Coats
Sick
Please remember in your prayers:
Harold and Elaine Maxey, Ella Hammac,
Marilyn Hall, Faye Little (Dot Dodd’s mother), Thelma Dunavant (Susan McLaughlin’s mother), Nancy Travis (William Weekley’s daughter), Arthur Mathews (Rheba Stancliff’s brother), Tiffany Wilkes (Fred and Rheba Stancliff’s granddaughter), and Lavonne McNeal (Al Flesher’s friend).

Reading/Invitation
June 7, 2006
Reading: Shelby Nall
Invitation: Ray Foshee
June 14, 2006
Reading: Edward Brantley
Invitation: Johnny McLaughlin

Sympathy
Our deepest sympathy is extended to
the family of Dick Cunningham who
passed away on May 23. Please keep
Mary and her family in your prayers.
Our deepest sympathy is extended to
Carl Ayliffe in the death of his grand-
mother, Doris Kelly, on May 25. Please
keep Carl and his family in your prayers.
Our deepest sympathy is extended to
Fred Stancliff in the death of his brother,
Richard Stancliff, on May 29. Please keep
Fred and his family in your prayers.

Mark These Dates
June 4, 2006–Visitation Group 1 assign-
ment cards handed out.
June 4, 2006–Pre-lectureship meeting
after the evening service, in room 1.
Can He Depend on You?

Marvin L. Weir

The above is the title of a song written by Wilken (Big Chief) Bacon, and the chorus reminds those who would enter into Heaven of several truths. The words of the chorus are as follows:

Can He depend on you,  
His blessed will to do?  
Will you be crowned with  
the faithful and true,  
Can He depend on you?

The very first line of the chorus should demand the full attention of one who is a child of God. “Can He depend on you?” Webster defines depend as follows: “to rely; to rest with confidence; to trust; to confide; to have full confidence or belief.” Can God rely upon us to carry on the work of the church? Can He be confident that we will continue to “walk in the light, as he is in the light” (1 John 1:7)? We depend on God to keep His promises because He cannot lie (Tit. 1:2; Heb. 6:18). His divine attributes never change (Mal. 3:6). The apostle Peter declared that “the word of the Lord abideth forever” (1 Pet. 1:25). The Psalmist says, “the sum of thy word is truth; And every one of thy righteous ordinances endureth for ever” (Psa. 119:160). God has always been and will always be “faithful and true” (Rev. 3:14). You and I can depend on God, but can He depend on us?

The second line of the chorus makes us aware that one must obey the Father’s will. The Lord admonishes: “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 who is in heaven” (Mat. 7:21). Jesus is our example in all areas and “though he was a Son, yet
learned obedience by the things which he suf-
fered” (Heb. 5:8). The Son of God does not hesi-
tate in stating that His “meat is to do the will of
him that sent me, and to accomplish his work”
(John 4:34). The Lord also said, “I can of myself
do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment
is righteous; because I seek not mine own will,
but the will of him that sent me” (John 5:30).
Shortly before His death Jesus said, “Abba,
Father, all things are possible unto thee; remove
this cup from me: howbeit not what I will, but
what thou wilt” (Mark 14:36).
One cannot claim that he does not know what
the will of the Lord is. The apostle Paul ad-
monishes, “Wherefore be ye not foolish, but
understand what the will of the Lord is” (Eph.
5:17). When we petition the Father we are to
“ask anything according to his will” (1 John
5:14). The big question—can He depend on you
and me to know and do His will?

The third line of the chorus asks a soul-
searching question—will you be crowned with
the faithful and true? The majority of folks today
say it is no big deal and it really does not matter.
But the Holy Scriptures beg to differ—it does
indeed matter as to the destiny of one’s soul. Did
the rich man’s eternal destiny matter to him?
Absolutely! The Bible says, “And in Hades he
lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth
Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.
And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have
mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip
the tip of his finger in water, and cool my
tongue; for I am in anguish in this flame. But
Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy
lifetime receivedst thy good things, and Lazarus
in like manner evil things: but now here he is comforted and thou art in anguish. And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, that they that would pass from hence to you may not be able, and that none may cross over from thence to us. And he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father’s house; for I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment” (Luke 16:23-28).

If you and I are to avoid eternal torment and be crowned with the faithful and true we must:

- Have the proper priorities (Mat. 6:33).
- Love God with all our being (Mat. 22:37).
- Worship in spirit and truth (John 4:24).
- Love not the world (1 John 2:15).
- Believe not every teacher (1 John 4:1).

- Be a faithful steward (1 Cor. 4:2).
- Always speak the truth in love (Eph. 4:15).
- Be doers, not just hearers (Jam. 1:22).
- Keep God’s commandments (1 John 5:3).
- Sow bountifully (2 Cor. 9:6).
- Give cheerfully (2 Cor. 9:7).
- Watch (be prepared) (Mat. 24:42).
- Sow to the Spirit (Gal. 6:8).
- Never grow weary in well doing (Gal. 6:9).
- Seek the things above (Col. 3:1).
- Be faithful even unto death (Rev. 2:10).

The above list is not exhaustive but it reminds us we must labor in the kingdom. Can He depend on you?

815 42nd Street SW; Paris, TX 75460

“Have You Forgotten?”

Tom Wacaster

I recently read of a soldier who enlisted in the Confederate army during the Civil War. He was a watchmaker by trade, and upon enlisting he took with him his watchmaker’s tools. While in camp, he had considerable business. When the order came for battle, the watchmaker looked about his tent in dismay and said, “Why, I can’t possibly go now, for I have twelve watches to repair and I’ve promised them for Saturday.” This soldier had forgotten the purpose for which he had been enlisted in the army. His task was not to make watches, but to serve the leader under which he had enlisted.

Unfortunately, this man is a fitting representation of a great number who are enlisted in the Lord’s army, called to do battle against the spiritual hosts of darkness and wickedness, and yet they have allowed a great number of distractions to keep them from their purpose. Many a Christian has simply failed to realize that there is a battle going on. They have become wrapped up in the affairs of the world and forgotten the purpose for which they have been called. Friend, are you so busy that you have not the time to help those about you? Are you so busy that you neglect your family? Are you so busy that you do not have time to seek the Lord’s will in your life through a daily reading and study of His Word?

If so, then I would suggest that, indeed, you are too busy. “Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier on service entangleth himself in the affairs of this life; that he may please him who enrolled him as a soldier” (2 Tim. 2:3-4). “Wherefore take up the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand” (Eph. 6:13).

P.O. Box 283; Talco, TX 75487
Sick

Please remember in your prayers: Harold and Elaine Maxey, Ella Hammac, Marilyn Hall, Faye Little (Dot Dodd’s mother), Thelma Dunavant (Susan McLaughlin’s mother), Nancy Travis (William Weekley’s daughter), Arthur Mathews (Rheba Stancliff’s brother), Tiffany Wilkes (Fred and Rheba Stancliff’s granddaughter), and Lavonne McNeal (Al Flesher’s friend).

Reading/Invitation

June 14, 2006
Reading: Elward Brantley
Invitation: Johnny McLaughlin

June 21, 2006
Reading: Jerry Caine
Invitation: Will McLaughlin

Mark These Dates

June 18, 2006–Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
June 18, 2006–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
June 18, 2006–Lectureship critique after the evening service, in room 1.
June 25, 2006–Elders/Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
June 28, 2006–Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.
July 2, 2006–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
July 16, 2006–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
July 16, 2006–Elders/Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.

Pantry Items Needed

Canned Meat
I have a very clear memory from my youth concerning a brief conversation that occurred during a Sunday worship service. It just so happens that this conversation took place on one of the Sundays in which the elders publicly led the congregation in withdrawing fellowship from several unfaithful Christians (1 Cor. 5:4-5; 2 Th. 3:6). What made this Sunday particularly noteworthy for me is not merely that congregational discipline was practiced, because that happened periodically; what made this day stand out in my memory is the comment by the young man sitting in the pew next to me. As one of our elders was reading off the names of the individuals who were being disciplined, my friend leaned over and whispered in my ear and said, “One day, they will be reading my name up there.”

What a chilling comment. What a sad outlook for one’s own future, and in this particular case, what a sad reality that was foretold that day! This young man’s comment has made me wonder what will become of us ten years from now. Will there be people with whom I just worshiped this past Sunday, who ten years from now, will have turned their backs on the Lord? It is a sobering thought, and judging from old church pictorial directories, the answer to that question is “Yes.” Just go back and pick up an old directory and see how many people have abandoned the Lord and His church. It is disconcerting.

So what can be done about this problem? How can we remain faithful over the next ten years? Well, here are a few suggestions.
1. **Realize that mediocrity does not work.** You cannot simply be a normal Christian and expect to weather the storms of life. Christianity must be at the core of your life and not a peripheral. Attend all the worship services and Bible classes. Study the Bible at home. Plan service projects for your family. Allow nothing to distract from your commitment. Compromise and mediocrity has already been tried, and we see that it has been, and will continue to be, a miserable failure.

2. **Realize that today’s actions determine tomorrow’s destiny.** Likes and dislikes, preferences, and attitudes, are all developed early in life, and to a great extent, they are shaped by the company we keep. Understand that if you want to be faithful ten years from now, you are going to have to choose a path today that will take you there. You cannot travel the wrong road and arrive at the proper destination.

3. **Develop your own faith.** Get into God’s Word. Study it daily. Make it a priority, a daily routine. Faith comes by hearing the Word of God (Rom. 10:17). “I’ve always heard,” or “The preacher said,” or “That’s the way I was raised,” just will not cut it when called upon to make moral ethical and biblical decisions. God has no grandchildren, He only has children. You cannot sustain a relationship with God through the faith of your parents.

Oh, there are many more things that can be done, for sure, but, if you leave these three things undone, I can just about guarantee you that ten years from now—you will not be faithful. Take a minute and think about it. Will you be faithful ten years from now? What do you predict for yourself? If you do not like your answer, get off the road you are presently traveling, and with urgency make the changes that need to be made so that your prediction does not come true.

*via “The Handley Herald”*

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**The Goodness and Severity of God**

*Dean Beard*

“Behold then the goodness and severity of God: toward them that fell, severity; but toward thee, God’s goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off” (Rom. 11:22).

The popular picture of God in these days is one of a loving God who always seeks nothing but to smile benevolently upon mankind and to shower him with all His love. How times change. During the age of enlightenment, in the early years of this country, a common scene might be of a minister leaning over the pulpit warning people of the terrors of a sinner caught in the grasp of an angry and vengeful, God.

Can it be that both views would be accurate? Surprisingly enough, yes, although no one should over emphasize one aspect of God to the neglect of the other.

**The Goodness of God**

From the very beginning of time, we see the goodness of God, even in the creation. It was from God’s goodness that He created man in His own image and gave Him dominion over all the earth (Gen. 1:26-27). Even when Adam and Eve sinned the goodness of God is exhibited. The first glimpse and the first prediction of God’s saving grace is referred to in Genesis 3:15: “and I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: he shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.” In the ages to come, this was fulfilled in God sending His Son.
But it was not just in sending His Son, but in the fact that He did this while we were sinners that makes it such an amazing act. Romans 5:8 shows us: “But God commendeth his own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” The view of God mentioned above of the vengeful judge eager to punish sin is not entirely true then. God is good even to those who sin.

The goodness of God is further shown in the fact that God has provided a way that we can learn and respond to His will. “For I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek” (Rom. 1:16). Had God been petulant toward those who sinned, He might have kept the means of salvation from us, but that is not the nature of God. God is love and God is good.

The desire of God for man’s salvation is brilliantly demonstrated in Ezekiel 33:11: “Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?” Paul also declares the willingness of God to save: “who [God] would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim. 2:4).

As God is shown to be such a loving and good God it should motivate us to respond in loving, penitent obedience. Paul said, “Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?” (Rom. 2:4). The goodness of God calls us out of our selfishness, wilfulness, and wickedness.

The Severity of God

The other side of the coin is that even though God is a merciful and loving God eager to save, He is also a God with a sense of moral justice.

When Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden, it resulted in the promise of a Savior (as seen above). It also resulted in their being driven out of the garden (Gen. 3:3, 19, 22-24). For those men who sinned in the days of Noah, God sent the curse of a great flood (Gen. 6:5-6, 17). Against those men of Sodom and Gomorrah who persisted in perversion, God brought fire down from heaven to destroy their cities (Gen. 19:24-25). God is a God of retribution.

In the New Testament, we have the shocking story of Ananias and Sapphira who claimed to have sold a parcel of ground and to have donated the entirety of it to share with the saints in the early church (Acts 5:1-11). Both of them were stricken dead as a lesson to the church, and great fear came upon all. Herod, in Acts 12:21-23, gave a great oration before the people who credited him as speaking with the voice of a god and not of a man. When he accepted the adoration of the people and failed to give God the glory, God made a lesson of him. “But the word of God grew and multiplied” (Acts 12:24).

The wrath of God is spoken of several times in the Romans 2: “the judgment of God?” (2), “wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God” (5), “wrath and indignation, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that worketh evil” (8-9). We also see the severity of God mentioned in regard to those who refuse to obey the Gospel in 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9 when Jesus comes “with the angels of his power in flaming fire, rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus: who shall suffer punishment, even eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his might.”

It would do well for us to keep the whole picture of God’s goodness and severity in view.

Copied
Sick

Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Ella Hammac, Marilyn Hall, Faye Little (Dot Dodd’s mother), Thelma Dunavant (Susan McLaughlin’s mother), Nancy Travis (William Weekley’s daughter), Arthur Mathews (Rheba Stancliff’s brother), Tiffany Wilkes (Fred and Rheba Stancliff’s granddaughter), and Lavonne McNeal (Al Flesher’s friend).

Sympathy

Our deepest sympathy is extended to the family of Harold Maxey who passed away on June 9. Harold was a deacon of the Bellview congregation for eleven years and was also responsible for the Bible Correspondence Course program for over eight years. Please keep Elaine and her family in your prayers.

Restored

Dale Cunningham was restored to Christ on June 11. Please keep him in your prayers.

Reading/Invitation

June 21, 2006
Reading: Jerry Caine
Invitation: Will McLaughlin

June 28, 2006
Reading: Jeremy Caine
Invitation: Ray Pierce

Mark These Dates

June 18, 2006–Lectureship critique after the evening service, in room 1.
June 25, 2006–Elders/Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
How many hairs do you have on your head? I do not know how many hairs I have on my head, and I doubt that you know how many hairs you have on yours, but someone does. It is not your spouse or your barber/hair dresser or doctor or parents or children—it is God. He knows how many hairs are on your head (Mat. 10:30). And He knows many more important things about you too.

He knows how you feel when you are lonely. He was all by Himself (in more ways than one) in Gethsemane. He was often all by Himself in prayer to His Father—even spending the entire night praying alone. He faced His accusers and judge all alone. He knows.

He knows how you feel when a close friend betrays you. It was Judas, one of His twelve closest associates, whose kiss delivered Him into the hands of His enemies. It was the remainder of that special twelve that deserted Him in His hour of greatest need. Three of them, having been taken a little farther along than the others in Gethsemane, failed even to remain awake while He was praying and sweating drops like blood. He knows.

He knows how you feel when you are tired and weary. Having been up all night being falsely accused and beaten, He was made to carry a
It Is “Inevitable”

Tom Wacaster

Since the death of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, former head of terrorist operations in Iraq, there have been a series of suicide bombings in that country that have killed dozens and left hundreds wounded and suffering. We read of the insane acts of those who would strap explosives to their body, or hide them in their shoes, and walk into a crowded restaurant or climb onto a bus, and blow themselves up along with as many as might be within their immediate proximity. The repeated, almost daily barrage of suicide bombers in Israel, Afghanistan, and Iraq seem so far away. It is as if we are isolated from such insane acts.

But the consensus among politicians and public leaders is that it is inevitable that we, too, will experience such violence in our country. Former FBI director Robert Mueller has gone on record (5-21-02) as stating that suicide bombers are inevitable. According to Mr. Mueller, “It is inevitable that suicide bombers like those who have attacked Israeli restaurants and buses will strike the United States [and] we will not be able to stop it.” Such language, to say the least, is a little unsettling. With the exception of the Civil War, American citizens, since the founding of this nation, have been exempt from war on our home soil. Unlike Europe, Africa, Japan, China, and other nations, we have not experienced an invasion of the enemy, occupation by another nation, or the threat of physical harm as a result of warfare on our homeland. Those sentiments are no longer true. Dan Rather, shortly after the attack on the World Trade Centers on September 11, 2001 observed that the words in the fourth stanza of “America, The Beautiful” reads:

O Beautiful for patriot dream,  
That sees beyond the years.  
Thine alabaster cities gleam  
Undimmed by human tears.  
America, America! God shed His  
grace on thee.  
And crown thy good with brotherhood,  
From sea to shining sea.

But now our cities have been dimmed by human tears. We have experienced first hand the invasion of an enemy. And we are afraid! That fear is heightened by the uncertainty of time and place. As former FBI Director Robert Mueller noted, “I believe it is going to come...Now, is it going to happen today, to morrow or two years?
We’re not certain.” Of course Mueller can only guess at what lies down the road. We need not become unsettled because of one man’s opinion, nor should we live in fear that some mad man is going to walk into the local Piggly Wiggly and “pull the string.” Why is it that folks can become so unsettled over something that may or may not ever happen, yet totally ignore the warnings of something that really is inevitable? Let me explain.

There is an event, the precise date unknown to men, to the angels in heaven, and even the Son of God Himself, that awaits the whole of mankind. Of course you know of what I speak. “Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation” (John 5:28-29). “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). “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment” (Heb. 9:27). “But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only” (Mat. 24:36). Why is it that men think they see the signs of the Lord’s return in judgment? The precise moment of the judgment cannot be determined, and men manifest their arrogance and foolishness when they attempt to pre-guess or circumvent God.

Third, there is the purpose factor. Why does the FBI, CIA and other intelligent agencies think it important to provide advance notice of an inevitable attack by terrorists? The answer is obvious. So that we can be alert, prepared and ready for such an event and thereby minimize the loss of life. God has warned us of the judgment. He has even told us that He is not willing that any should perish (2 Pet. 3:9). Additionally, He has provided a “way of escape” (1 Cor. 10:13). He has promised to see us through if we will but trust and obey. How grateful we are that God has warned us of that inevitable event.

I am puzzled, however, that so few give serious consideration to the Divine warnings concerning that coming day of Judgment. The only conclusion I can come to is that they must not really believe that the Judgment day is inevitable.
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Ella Hammac, Marilyn Hall, Faye Little (Dot Dodd’s mother), Thelma Dunavant (Susan McLaughlin’s mother), Nancy Travis (William Weekley’s daughter), Arthur Mathews (Rheba Stancliff’s brother), Tiffany Wilkes (Fred and Rheba Stancliff’s granddaughter), Lavonne McNeal (Al Flesher’s friend), Hazel Merry (Nellie Read’s sister), and Pattie Agbunag (Jodi Hendrix’s friend).

Reading/Invitation
June 28, 2006
Reading: Jeremy Caine
Invitation: Ray Pierce
July 5, 2006
Reading: Ray Dodd
Invitation: Fred Stancliff

Mark These Dates
June 25, 2006–Elders/Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
June 28, 2006–Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.
July 2, 2006–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
July 16, 2006–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
July 16, 2006–Elders/Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
July 26, 2006–Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.
August 6, 2006–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.

Pantry Items Needed
Canned Meat
Ramses and Egypt vs. Moses and God

Jess Whitlock

Ramses the Great: The Man and the Myth—so the treasures and belongings of this man were billed about 20 years ago when “Ramses” came to Dallas. I was there and it was most impressive! But, there was—Myth! It was claimed (for promotion purposes, I am certain), that Ramses was divine, being born of the sun-God, Ra and earthly mother, Tuya. We now know that Seti I was the earthly father of Ramses.

In Exodus 12:12 we read, “against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD.” Some Egyptologists think that Ramses was Pharaoh at the time of the exodus. We can never be certain of that claim, but we do know that every plague God sent to Egypt was an assault to some Egyptian god.

1. Water of the Nile became blood, undrinkable (Exo. 7:14-24). Nile was considered a god, Khnum. The spirit of the Nile was Hapi. The Nile was the bloodstream of Osiris.

2. The plague of frogs, covered the whole land (Exo. 8:1-15). Hapi and Heqt were frog-goddesses, i.e., fertility.

3. Then the lice came upon man and beast alike (Exo. 8:16-19). Seb was their earth-god. Recall lice came from dust.

4. Next came the swarms of flies on Egypt only (Exo. 8:20-32). The fly-God was Uatchit. No flies entered Goshen!

Israelite animals unaffected.

6. The plague of boils affected Egyptians only (Exo. 9:8-12). Sekhmet was the goddess of epidemics. Their gods of healing were Serapis and Imhotep. Remember that Egypt’s magicians could not come to Pharaoh because of boils!

7. The plague of hail and fire came next (Exo. 9:13-35). Egypt’s sky-goddess was appropriately named Nut. Isis and Seth were agricultural deities. Shu was the god of atmosphere. (His name was heard during the fourth plague!)

8. Then came the plague of locusts into Egypt (Exo. 10:1-20). Serapis was Egypt’s protector from locusts; the crop loss in Egypt was 100%!!!

9. This plague involved three days of darkness (Exo. 10:21-29). The sun-gods of Egypt were numerous; Ra, Aten, Atum, Horus, Harakh, Amon-Ra, etc. Thoth was the moon-god. There was neither light of sun nor moon for three days!

10. The final plague, death of first-born (Exo. 12:29-36). I remind you that Pharaoh considered a god, deity, himself. There are over 80 gods in Egypt’s antiquity and the death of the first-born, including Pharaoh’s own son was an affront to all of Egypt’s gods!!!

Rameses was great, with great wealth and 15 wives. He built one-half of all the Egyptian monuments which still stand today. Pharaoh was great, but God is the greatest!!!

P. O. Box 127; Cheyenne, OK 73628

Greatest Deal Ever!

Richard Stevens III

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation…” (Rom. 1:16a). If anyone were to ask, “Are you sometimes embarrassed by that gospel stuff?” Would you answer, “God’s invitation of salvation is only through the Gospel of Christ, therefore I am not, nor will I ever be ashamed!” (2 The. 2:14; 2 Tim. 1:10). Since there is nothing else in this world that has the ability to save our souls, this makes the Gospel of Christ the most precious, most desirable gift ever to be obtained. How dare a Christian be ashamed of God’s goodness! The only thing that a Christian should be ashamed of is a disobedient past! (Rom. 6:21; Psa. 25:3).

Therefore, God’s people are joyful (Psa. 19:8), happy (Psa. 146:5), thankful (Psa. 100:4), bold (Pro. 28:1), but never ashamed. How could we be, we have the greatest deal ever. In exchange for our allegiance, love, and obedience, God gives us eternal life instead of what we have earned and deserve—eternal punishment (Rom. 3:9-10, 23; 5:8; 6:23). Regardless of our past, God’s offer is on the table to all. What a great deal, and who does not want a great deal? We go out looking to buy a car. We search and search, and if we find a great deal we cannot wait to tell everyone about it. The details are rehearsed over and over in every ear we can grab hold of. “It has only this many miles, it’s in great shape. I only paid this much for it!” And if it is a place that has a lot of great deals, we begin to persuade others, “You better get up there now, they won’t last, you don’t want to miss out!”

Recognizing that others could also benefit from the “great deal,” we become the ultimate spokesperson. This is true of every great deal we encounter, except sometimes the greatest deal in human history, the Gospel of Christ! When we ignore daily opportunities to tell others about Christ, could it be that we are ashamed? Surely this is not the case, since we are not ashamed of
going to heaven, or of the Lord blessing us, or praying to the Lord in time of need. Then we ought to stop acting ashamed of heaven’s message. “Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord” (2 Tim. 1:8a). No longer remaining quiet when we have opportunity to speak (1 Pet. 3:15). No longer acting as though Christianity is unable to make a difference in the lives of all. No longer concealing God’s goodness as though it is some type of raw deal.

Let us start screaming from the rooftops and hilltops an echo that will carry all across the city. “God has the greatest deal ever, God has eternal life!” We should tirelessly seek out every ear that will listen and run down the details of soul-salvation, always including, “You don’t want to miss out!” “Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation” (2 Cor. 6:2). People tie us up all the time in useless conversation. The weather looks good, they traded so and so, did you see the awards, and on and on. It is about time we did the tying up! “What a beautiful day we’re blessed to see (Jam. 4:24)!” “Did I tell you I traded my old life for a new one (2 Cor. 5:17)!” “I didn’t see the awards, but I read about the reward of heaven (Rev. 21-22)!” Regardless of what the days hold, or where they lead, we should always be minded to boldly tell others about the greatest deal ever! “I will speak of thy testimonies also before kings, and will not be ashamed” (Psa. 119:46).

Doing Nothing

Curtis L. E. Graves

He made no mistakes; he took no wrong turns,
He never fumbled the ball.
He never went down ‘neath the weight of the load,
He simply did nothing at all.

He lost no hard fight in defense of the right,
He never bled with his back to the wall,
He never felt faint in his climb to the light,
He simply did nothing at all.

So death came nigh, life had slipped by,
He feared for the judgment hall.
And when asked why, he said with a sigh,
“I’ve done nothing at all.”

O, God will pardon your blunders, my friends,
or regard with pity your fall,
But the one great sell, that surely means hell,
Is simply to do nothing at all.

I do not know who the author of this poem is, but it certainly is thought provoking is it not? We may not be thieves or murderers. We may not harm or abuse others. We may not be adulterers or fornicators. However, what if we leave undone the things we are supposed to do. James 4:17 says, “Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.” We know it is good to study God’s Word, and to obey it. Is it not good to worship God and is it not good to come together to study His Word? Is it good to help those who are in need? If it is, why are we not doing it or why are some complaining about doing it? If we break God’s laws we are guilty of sin! If we omit or leave undone what He wants us to do we have also sinned! It is the sin of omission. Have you obeyed the Gospel plan of salvation in hearing God’s Word, believing it, repented of your sins, confessed that Jesus is the Christ, and been baptized. If not, why have you left it undone? Those who have taken these steps should already know what to do. Are you doing it, or are you “doing nothing at all.”

1021 Mt. Pleasant Rd; Chesapeake, VA 23322
Sick

Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Ella Hammac, Marilyn Hall, Faye Little (Dot Dodd’s mother), Thelma Dunavant (Susan McLaughlin’s mother), Nancy Travis (William Weekley’s daughter), Arthur Mathews (Rheba Stancliff’s brother), Tiffany Wilkes (Fred and Rheba Stancliff’s granddaughter), Lavonne McNeal (Al Flesher’s friend), Hazel Merry (Nellie Read’s sister), and Pattie Agbunag (Jodi Hendrix’s friend).

Reading/Invitation

July 5, 2006
Reading: Ray Dodd
Invitation: Fred Stancliff

July 12, 2006
Reading: Andrew Hatcher
Invitation: Carl Ayliffe

New Arrival

Marilyn Hall is pleased to announce the birth on June 21 of a grand daughter, Marissa Hall. She weighed 6 pounds 3 ounces and was 18 inches long. The parents are Sydney and Lisa Hall. Our congratulations is extended to all.

New Address

Bryan Loy will be moving in the next few weeks. His new address will be: 123 Brewer Drive; Waynesboro, TN 38485-2410.

Mark These Dates

July 2, 2006–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
July 16, 2006–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
Mahershalalhashbaz:
God’s Sign to a Sinful Nation

Tom Wacaster

Do not let the name scare you. Punctuation marks help us get the right pronunciation: “Mahershalalhashbaz.” But the name meant something: “Hastens to the prey.” Here is the setting. When Tiglath-pileser III took control of Assyria, he immediately made his bid for world domination. His westward movement struck fear in Syria and Israel (keep in mind that this was during the time of the divided kingdom, hence Israel, the Northern Kingdom). With a common enemy in mind, Israel and Syria sought alliance, and then sought to bring Judah into that alliance. Ahaz is on the throne in Judah and Pekah in Israel. Ahaz feigns piety and loyalty to God, but despite the warning from the prophet Isaiah, this weak and wavering king sets his sight, not on God, but on worldly alliance with the apostate Israel and the heathen nation of Syria.

Apparently the people loved Ahaz’s intentions, and so Isaiah gives the people a sign in two parts. Before his son is ever born, the prophet posts the words in a public location, leaving the people to read and study for themselves. When Isaiah’s son is born, he is instructed to give him this most significant name: “Mahershalalhashbaz,” the very words publicly posted months before the child was ever born. Syria and Israel would be destroyed, and Assyria would turn...
toward Judah, and the people of God would suffer utter defeat.

Assyria was “hastening to the prey.” This brings us to Isaiah 8:11 where God speaks to the prophet with a “strong hand,” and warns the prophet not to walk in the way of the people. Do not make a confederacy (8:12), do not be afraid of their fear, sanctify God, and let Him be your fear and dread (8:13).

Herein lay the fault of the people and their king. They would not listen to the prophets. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Elijah (faithful proclaimers of God’s Word) were treated as traitors and trouble makers. Some of these faithful prophets of old paid dearly for their faithful proclamation of God’s Word. But alas, their message fell on deaf ears. Rather than fear God, they feared the nation of Assyria. Rather than trust God, they placed their trust in a heathen nation, and followed in the footsteps of their apostate brethren in the Northern Kingdom.

Is there a lesson for us here? Oh, indeed there is. The Lord’s kingdom is splintered and divided. Rather than trust in God and His Word, some have abandoned the old paths for an alliance with the denominations. Hand in hand with spiritual heathens, they march forward toward a presumed victory that shall only end in utter defeat. Those who still preach the old Jerusalem Gospel are pressured on every side to join them in their unholy alliance with other religious groups to defeat the onslaught of Satan. Sadly some, under the leadership of weak and wavering elders, capitulate. Thanks be to our God, there are still faithful preachers and proclaimers of God’s Word. But as in the days of old, the divine instructions have not been heeded, and God’s people once again find themselves in the throws of a major apostasy. Rather than listen to the Word, too many capitulate. Those who call for the old paths, are despised and labeled as traitors and trouble makers. Edward Young has noted, “Throughout the history of the church, those who have sought to call the church back to her God-given mission and away from her man-made ‘programs’ have been treated as troublemakers.”

But the message is still: “Mahershalalhashbaz”!! There is a judgment coming, and God’s wrath is “hastening to the prey.”

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Has Anyone Seen Miss Modesty Lately?

I miss her charm and winsome ways very much. I wonder where she is. I seldom see her on the streets, and her visits to our church are becoming more infrequent. I know that others miss her, too. Just the other day Hal Wholesome and Calvin Cleanmind were asking about her. They liked Miss Modesty’s company because she always put them at ease. That certainly is not the case with Evelyn Exposed and Hilary Highhem who constantly embarrass them. These girls do not seem to care though, because they are quite popular with Larry Lear, Frank Foul, and Sam Smut. I understand that they are dating these fellows quite frequently now. Someone said that they felt that one of the reasons why Miss Modesty is staying away is because many of our young ladies offended her by just ignoring her. When I make an inquiry, I was told by Mr. Naive and Mrs. Indifferent that they just assumed that their daughters would get to know her. It never occurred to them that you should have to introduce anyone to Miss Modesty.

There is someone in our church who frankly told me that she is glad that Miss Modesty does not come around much anymore. Apparently she never did care for her. I speak of Felicia Fashion.
She considers Miss Modesty to be entirely too conservative and old fashioned. “After all,” she said, “how are we going to attract the world to the church if we have unfashionable members like Miss Modesty around?” I have heard that there are others, such as Beverly Brazen and Francine Flirtation, who feel the same way.

One thing that does concern me greatly is that two of Miss Modesty’s close friends, Pauline Purity and Virginia Virtue, are thinking of leaving our church also. What a loss that would be!

Well, if you see Miss Modesty, will you please tell her that many of us miss her? And will you help bring her back to our fellowship? She is our friend and oh how we need her!

Author Unknown

Two Different Types of Attitudes

How important it is that Christians have the right attitude? Attitude greatly affects one’s relationship with God. A proper attitude is demonstrated through proper obedience and service to God. Examine the following attitudes and see which ones you possess:

**It will not work.** If it is scriptural, it does work—if we will use ourselves in God’s vineyard. There is no stronger positive plan than God’s plan. Those who try to belittle God’s ways of doing things belittle God (Col. 3:17).

**We tried that before.** If it is scriptural, keep trying. Just because something has been tried once or twice does not mean the plan fails, it means we have not worked the plan diligently.

**It cannot be done.** This is brother or sister pessimist! They can give five to ten excuses that tend to discourage and hold back the Lord’s work. With God on our side it can and will be done (Rom. 8:31; Phi. 4:13).

**Let us do it later.** How this must please old Satan. If we put spiritual matters off long enough, the devil knows we will have eternity to spend with him! (Pro. 27:1; Mat. 25:46).

**You do it.** This is the attitude of brother/sister scapegoat. He tries to “pass the buck.” He does his/her best to push of his/her responsibility onto someone else (Gen. 2—Eve tried this!).

**I will do what I can.** This attitude is expressed and demonstrated by Christians who are willing to use their talents. They gladly do what they can when they can (1 Cor. 15:58).

**I have faith we can do it.** That is great! This rubs off on others and causes others to see that their faith can grow also. After all, diligent faith pleases God (Heb. 11:6).

**I want to help.** How God must love to hear this positive attitude expressed. Wanting to serve God is the key foundation to rendering proper service.

**It will be all right.** This attitude means those who believe this pray and labor to see that things do work out to God’s glory. How we need more brethren that think this way (1 The. 1:2-3).

**We will be successful.** Brethren who feel this way will not allow the devil, trials, or heartaches to stop them. They will (with God’s help) press onward and upward (Phi. 3:13-14).

Which attitudes do you express by your mouth and influence? May God help us to remove negative thinking from our lives. May we be more involved—more dedicated, because after all we do not want to possess any attitude that would hinder the work and worship of the Lord’s church.

Author Unknown
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Ella Hammac, Marilyn Hall, Faye Little (Dot Dodd’s mother), Thelma Dunavant (Susan McLaughlin’s mother), Nancy Travis (William Weekley’s daughter), Arthur Mathews (Rheba Stancliff’s brother), Tiffany Wilkes (Fred and Rheba Stancliff’s granddaughter), Lavonne McNeal (Al Flesher’s friend), Hazel Merry (Nellie Read’s sister), Pattie Agbunanq (Jodi Hendrix’s friend), and Sharon Lambert (Dot Lambert’s daughter-in-law).

Sympathy
Our deepest sympathy is extended to Jessie Janes in the death of his two-year-old nephew, Kyler Janes, who passed away on June 27. Please keep Jessie and his family in your prayers.

Reading/Invitation
July 12, 2006
Reading: Andrew Hatcher
Invitation: Carl Ayliffe
July 19, 2006
Reading: Daniel Hatcher
Invitation: Henry Born

Mark These Dates
July 16, 2006—Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
July 16, 2006—Elders/Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
July 26, 2006—Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.

Pantry Items Needed
Canned Meat
The Rule and the Exception

Bob Howton

Through the years I have met some very colorful characters. One of them was a truck driver on the University of Alabama campus. It was my first day of work on campus, and this man walked up, sat down, and began an endless tirade of conversation. I asked if he thought the University’s football team would go undefeated that year (1959), and his answer was quick and to the point. “It’s plumb unpossible!” he blurted. (And I thought this was a place of higher education!)

Then, there was the simple minded fellow who was burning some trash beside his mobile home and he got the fire to close to the trailer and set the vinyl siding on fire. His wife, who was a large, domineering individual, screamed at him to go inside and call 911. “I will, he yelled, but what is the number?” Of course we can recall and enjoy such incidents over and over, without suffering any harm from them, but there have also been people who seemed bent on causing disturbances, no matter what the cost. These latter, of course, sometimes disrupt the peace and tranquility of everyday life.

Take for instance, an individual who totally disrupted a Bible Study class with loudmouthed insistence that “I don’t care what anyone says, God never did want anyone to marry and later get a divorce. Anyone who did this could never marry again, no matter what!” Her only reference to the Sacred Texts was the passage in Malachi which says: “For the LORD, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away” (Mal. 2:16). Of a truth, God never wanted man and woman to divorce.

The lady was right as far as that principle...
She failed, however, to apply other relevant and imperative Scriptures which related to the idea under consideration. In the Gospel of Mark, the Pharisees came before Christ and tempted Him with the question: “Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? tempting him. And he answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you? And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away. And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept. But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder” (Mark 10:2-9).

What does all this mean? Simply what we have known from the start: One man for one woman, for life, and let no man put them asunder. Of course, anyone with even a sprinkling of biblical knowledge is aware that God made this law, and He also made an exception.

Witness the following: “He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery” (Mat. 19:8-9).

To Summarize: God ordained marriage because: “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him” (Gen. 2:18). And, “Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband” (1 Cor. 7:2). They are no more “twain” but one flesh (Mat. 19:5). No man should sever this bond (Mat. 19:6)!

The one exception to this hard fast rule is fornication (Mat. 19:9)! The words “except it be for fornication” mean only one thing! Unless there is fornication, or only if there is fornication. Incompatibility may be in your dictionary, but it is not in your Bible. Let us beware!

Attitudes

The Holy Scriptures teach us that God has always been concerned with the attitude of man. Cain’s attitude toward God and Abel led to his infamous sin of murdering his brother (Gen. 4:6, 8). A biblical attitude will keep us from committing sinful acts and horrible deeds.

Cain has many relatives today who desire to worship God according to their own whims and wishes. This is the downfall of those who give their allegiance to denominational churches. They believe that as long as they are pleased with their religion that God will likewise be pleased. Jesus addressed this very matter in saying, “Ye hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying. This people honoreth me with their lips; But their heart is far from me. But in vain do they worship me, Teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men” (Mat. 15:7-9).

A proper attitude will always seek to do those things that glorify the Heavenly Father. Christians are to possess the mind of Christ. There is an urgent need to remind members of the Lord’s body throughout the land of this truth. Paul admonished, “Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus” (Phi. 2:5).

Those who have the attitude that they can
glorify God by following man-made doctrine are wrong. They are so consumed with how “they feel” and what “they think” that their attitude will not allow them to submit to and follow God’s glorious truths. The Lord warns of this danger in answering the question of the offended religious leaders of His day. “Then came the disciples, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, when they heard this saying? But he answered and said, Every plant which my heavenly Father planted not, shall be rooted up. Let them alone: they are blind guides. And if the blind guide the blind, both shall fall into a pit” (Mat. 15:12-14).

A bad attitude toward God and the Scriptures keeps people from obeying the Gospel. If one truly loves, honors, and respects God as he should, then he is motivated to become an obedient son or daughter. One with a proper attitude toward God will not quibble with the Father’s commandments.

But what about those in the body of Christ who do not possess the mind of Christ? In other words, can a member of the Lord’s church bring shame and reproach upon the cause of Christ by possessing the wrong attitude? Since the answer is a resounding “yes,” we need to exercise great care that our attitude as a Christian is always that which promotes a Christ-like image of the Lord’s church.

Why do members of the Lord’s church want to act and live like those who are lost? Are the Lord’s people not to be different from the world? Do Christians not have the obligation to come out from among worldly people and be separate (2 Cor. 6:17)? Do Christians please the Father when they try to mimic those of worldly persuasion? Are we to try and dress like, look like, and act like those who refuse to follow the Master? Surely not! Brethren are to be peculiar, distinct, different, pure, and holy in all they do. Children of God are to be exclamation points and not question marks!

Christians are to do “nothing through faction or through vainglory, but in lowliness of mind each counting other better than himself” (Phi. 2:3). This attitude would strike dead in their tracks many needless contentions among men. The faith must be defended and earnestly contended for (Jude 3), but matters not of the faith must not be allowed to cause harm to the Lord’s church.

Pride has always been the chief culprit in corrupting the attitude of man. Solomon reminds us of several great truths we would do well to remember regarding pride. “By pride cometh only contention; But with the well-advised is wisdom” (Pro. 13:10). And again, “A man’s pride shall bring him low; But he that is of a lowly spirit shall obtain honor” (Pro. 29:23). Perhaps the most remembered and least heeded warning is this: “Pride goeth before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall” (Pro. 16:18).

Pride keeps brethren who know better from admitting they are in error. Pride keeps brethren from admitting they made a mistake. Pride causes brethren to continue fanning the flames of a fire that should not be fanned. Pride causes brethren to be inconsistent as they condemn some brethren for sin and then refuse to call the hand of certain brethren for sin. Pride is a spiritual killer!

Doctrine must be defended and false teachers marked. That which falls wholly into the area of judgment and expediency should never be allowed to divide the body of Christ. One can stand on solid ground when it comes to the Truth but possess the wrong attitude and lose his soul. Attitude matters, it shows, and it is contagious.

Brethren are to worship “in spirit and truth” (John 4:24). At judgment, both attitude and Truth will matter. Let us make sure we always strive to do the right thing in the right way for the right reason!
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Marge Williams, Ella Hammac, Marilyn Hall, Faye Little (Dot Dodd’s mother), Thelma Dunavant (Susan McLaughlin’s mother), Nancy Travis (William Weekley’s daughter), Arthur Mathews (Rheba Stancliff’s brother), Tiffany Wilkes (Fred and Rheba Stancliff’s granddaughter), Lavonne McNeal (Al Flesher’s friend), Hazel Merry (Nellie Read’s sister), Pattie Agbunag (Jodi Hendrix’s friend), and Sharon Lambert (Dot Lambert’s daughter-in-law).

Reading/Invitation
July 19, 2006
Reading: Daniel Hatcher
Invitation: Henry Born
July 26, 2006
Reading: Jim Loy
Invitation: Paul Brantley

Mark These Dates
July 16, 2006–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
July 16, 2006–Elders/Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
July 26, 2006–Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.
August 6, 2006–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
August 13, 2006–Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
August 20, 2006–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.

Pantry Items Needed
Canned Meat
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, Bill Crowe, James Loy

The Value of Obedience

Gary W. Summers

Where would the world be today if we could not read: “Thus Noah did; according to all that God commanded him, so he did” (Gen. 6:22—NKJ)? For starters, we would not be discussing the question. If some modern-day theologians and writers had been around then, they would have whined, “Does it have to be exactly 300 cubits? How about two decks instead of three? Two of every kind?” The Calvinists would chime in, “Don’t build it, Noah, God’s already determined whether or not He will save the world. It doesn’t depend on what you do.”

Perhaps the current laxity in religious thinking is a reflection upon the looseness in society. Most of society’s heroes are those who break the rules in order to get their mission accomplished. Commandments are perceived as archaic nuisances of the past.

But the commandments of God are never wrong or out of date. Peter’s inspired teaching regarding salvation proclaims two commands: (1) Repent; (2) be baptized (Acts 2:38). These are the same two things we tell those who have faith today. God has not somehow changed what obedience He requires just because 2,000 years have elapsed.

Actually, it is not so much the commands that make the difference in someone’s obedience—or lack of it; it is the heart. Notice: “Then those who gladly received his word were baptized” (Acts 2:41). The question is: “Do we gladly receive the Word of God on all subjects?” Or is there some reason we are holding back?

When God calls us to holiness, do we say,
“That sounds good, but I need an exemption or two”? Yes, obedience requires effort. Saying, “I am imperfect, and I have learned to live with my imperfections and God’s forgiveness” is a cop-out. “Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect” (Mat. 5:48).

Could it be that God knows that we need challenges? Being obedient to His will is much harder than just pleasing ourselves. Is it not a matter of comfort versus struggle? We should never become self-satisfied.

Do we not love others when they accomplish great things, as Noah did? Do we not admire our Lord for enduring the cross, knowing that He could have taken the easy way out at any time (at our expense)? Are we not most happy with ourselves when we achieve our God-given goals?

Obedience has much to commend it.

The Lukewarm Disease

From all sources that I can find, the “lukewarm disease” is by far the most fatal that man can contract, including such diseases as tuberculosis, leukemia, or cancer.

All diseases seem to have certain symptoms. The “lukewarm disease” seems to affect most parts of the body. It is also highly contagious. It passes from one person to another and soon there are whole groups that are affected. If the disease is not stopped, its effects are not just external but also eternal.

Listed below are a few of the known symptoms of “lukewarm disease”:

- It affects the mind in that a person stops seeking to learn and teach.
- If affects the ears in that a person only hears what he wants to hear, thus destroying faith.
- It affects the eyes in that a person no longer sees or follows the “strait and narrow.”
- It affects the mouth in that a person no longer speaks the Word of God, or offers up singing and prayer on a regular basis.
- It affects the neck in that a person cannot bow his head in prayer.
- It affects the arms and hands in that a person no longer does the physical labors that are essential in a Christian’s life.
- It affects the heart in that a person’s love for God grows cold.
- It affects the legs and feet in that a person no longer gets to services or visits those needing encouragement.
- It also affects the stomach in that a person is not able to digest the stronger meat of the Word but lives only on milk.
- The infected mind, heart, and hands together affect a person’s giving, whether it be of money, physical help, or spiritual love.

Do you know of anyone that has the “lukewarm disease”? Not all have every symptom. Not all the symptoms need to be present to affirm that you or someone else has the disease. The “lukewarm” person is a most undependable human being. He faces separation from God. We might hate all earthly diseases, but the “Great Physician” dislikes the “lukewarm disease” most of all.

As bad as the “lukewarm disease” is, it can be cured. The “Great Physician” can cure you of this disease. The prescribed cure would be a big dose of Faith and a shovel-full of Work.

If you have the “lukewarm disease,” now is the time to take the cure. Have faith in the Lord.
and His Word for the day is coming when man shall work no more. See Revelation 3:16 for what will happen to the lukewarm: “So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.”

Author Unknown

The New Birth

Richard Carlson

In John 3:1-5 Jesus teaches the importance of baptism for the remission of sins. Nicodemus was told to be “born again.” He did not understand this at first. He believed Christ was speaking of a physical birth. In verse four “Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born?” Our Lord is teaching the necessity of the spiritual birth, which is immersion so that our sins can be forgiven. But still in light of the Master’s teaching, many do not understand the new birth, being born again, because they do not study. Many still deny baptism is essential to salvation even though Peter affirms that “baptism doth also now save us” (1 Pet. 3:21). So many still try to seek salvation their own way when the Scripture teaches “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).

Do we think the Saviour taught something that was not to be understood? Absolutely not! All things Christ taught can be understood. The new birth is not a mystery that we experience. It is practical action that all must be familiar with. There are four important things that are to happen that are connected with the new birth.

(1) There must be a seed. (2) There must be a bed to sow the seed. (3) There must be a sower. (4) There must be a reception, and the seed must germinate.

The seed we must sow is the Word of God. In Luke 8:11 Jesus said, “The seed is the word of God.” The bed in which it is to be sown is the heart of man (Luke 8:12-15). The sower is the Christian. We have a serious duty to take the Word of God to the lost. By doing so we fulfill the Great Commission (Mat. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:47). The Word has been received and the germination has taken place when one gives a favorable response to the Redeemer’s plan by obeying (Rom. 6:17-18).

In baptism, one obeys the Gospel (Acts 22:16). One who enters, and then comes up out of the waters of baptism is to walk in newness of life. But a person can sin and die spiritually (Eze. 18:20; Isa. 59:1-2). Sin separates from God. Man must be reconciled to Him. Jesus came to bring about reconciliation (John 10:10; Eph. 2:1-5). The new life occurs when one comes to Christ in full confession and obedience to God, and not before!

The new birth and salvation are the same. Things Jesus requires for salvation are the same things required for the new birth (John 6:44-45). Being born again comes only by baptism for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). It does not come by sprinkling. If you have not been baptized for the remission of sins, listen to the Gospel, believe it, repent of your sins, confess Jesus, and be immersed in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost (Mat. 28:19). This is what Saul of Tarsus did in Acts 22:16. If you are an unfaithful member of the church of Christ, repent of your sins, and be restored back to the Truth, to God, and to the church of His Son while you still have opportunity.
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Marge Williams, Ella Hammac, Marilyn Hall, Faye Little (Dot Dodd’s mother), Thelma Dunavant (Susan McLaughlin’s mother), Nancy Travis (William Weekley’s daughter), Arthur Mathews (Rheba Stancliff’s brother), Tiffany Wilkes (Fred and Rheba Stancliff’s granddaughter), Lavonne McNeal (Al Flesher’s friend), Hazel Merry (Nellie Read’s sister), Pattie Agbunag (Jodi Hendrix’s friend), and Sharon Lambert (Dot Lambert’s daughter-in-law).

Reading/Invitation
July 26, 2006
Reading: Jim Loy
Invitation: Paul Brantley
August 2, 2006
Reading: Horace Myrick
Invitation: Bill Busch

Mark These Dates
July 26, 2006–Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.
August 6, 2006–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
August 13, 2006–Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
August 20, 2006–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
August 20, 2006–Elders/Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.

Pantry Items Needed
Canned Meat
What We Need in the Church Today

Leroy Brownlow

**More knocking on doors and less knocking on each other.** The great commission demands that we busy ourselves in taking the Gospel to others (Mark 16:15). The Bible says, “Speak not evil one of another” (Jam. 4:11). It is so much better to be busy doing good rather than evil.

**More sound heads and fewer sore heads.** Perhaps there has never been a time in the history of the church in which we have had a greater need for men sound in the faith and wise in judgment. Sometimes the voice of the wise goes unheeded and the voice of the foolish takes over (cf. 1 Kin. 12:6-8).

**More open hearts and fewer open mouths.** All conduct proceeds from the heart. Prejudice closes the heart to a true consideration of the facts. If the heart was made right before the mouth was opened, most church problems locally and universally would cease to exist (Jam. 3:5-6; Pro. 26:20).

**More seed-slinging and less mud-slinging.** The task of sowing the seed of the kingdom is so great that it should leave no time for the slingling of mud at a brother. The fact that we have the whole world as our foes should draw us closer together (Pro. 18:24). There should be no division in the Lord’s camp (1 Cor. 1:10). One can never whitewash himself by slingling mud at another. He who tries gets his own hands dirty.

**More sacrifice of self and less sacrifice of others.** There are plenty of members of the church who are willing to sacrifice the other fellow—his talent, his time, his money, and even perhaps his reputation. Sacrifice should begin at
More concern over direction than speed.
This is the jet and missile age. Speed is being enthroned and multitudes bow before it. But in the Lord’s work, the greater question is not: “How fast are we traveling?” but rather, “Which way are we going?” (John 14:6; Mat. 7:13-14).
All speed is not progress. On the other hand, neither is standing still.

Cut ’em Down
Bob Howton

In a recent Bible study class, someone mentioned their having had a strong confrontation with someone on a spiritual matter, only to realize later that they had themselves been under a false concept on the subject. Immediately, another class member spoke up to say, “That’s the very reason I think it is wrong for us to cut other members or other congregations down. We might not have all the facts, or know all about the situation.” There was noticeable silence, before I made the following comments:

Certainly, there is never a time when a child of God should attempt to “cut someone down,” but the idea of never confronting wrong doing cannot possibly stand the test of biblical instruction. Conversely, Christians are told to “Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment” (John 7:24). That is, forget what you might have thought, what others are saying, or what the crowds are clamoring for, but do not forget what Paul wrote to the Corinthian brethren.

“Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?” (1 Cor. 6:2). Like everything else, our judgments must be based upon a “thus sayeth the Lord.”

If one means we should not speak out against family life centers, gymnasiums, or the fun and games foolishness, when relating to “cutting ’em down” then we can forget about it! 2 John 9 has already “cut ’em down”! If it is thought that we should not speak out against women preachers (?) or women taking active roles during public worship services, then forget it! 2 Timothy 2:12 has already “cut ’em down”!! If we are considering hand clapping, humming during the Lord’s Supper, or men serving at the Table while wearing tee shirts and shorts, you can forget it! 1 Timothy 5:15 and 1 Thessalonians 5:22 have already “cut ’em down”! If one should decry a faithful Christian’s loving rebuke for willfully forsaking the assembly, as “cutting ’em down,” then, just forget it! Hebrews 10:25-26 has already “cut ’em down.”

In fact, there is a fundamental flaw in the idea that wrong doing should not be called into account. Admittedly, there is a vast difference in someone lovingly attempting to instruct another in righteousness, as opposed to their “cutting ’em down” to put them in their place! The former would be concerned with trying to bring them into a proper relationship with the Master, while the latter would be a selfish and personal attempt to “cut ’em down” for not conforming to our expectations. The Pharisee who stood on the street corner and prayed hypocritically would in no wise be worse off than one with such an attitude.

The Bible plainly teaches, “Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted” (Gal. 6:1). The apostle Paul directed: “reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine” (2 Tim. 4:2). Biblical instruction must be tempered with love.

Someone has noted that “You’ll never get
A Spiritual Self-examination
as Suggested by Paul
2 Corinthians 13:5

“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?”

There are times when a spirit of discontent, unrest, unhappiness, disinterest, even boredom, may overtake the heart of some Christians. In such times, we may be wise to follow the above injunction of the apostle to see just who has changed or moved—us or God. In view of these considerations, let each one do some honest personal soul-searching and self-evaluation. There are many other areas of thought than those below.

T F

☐ ☐ I see to it that the Lord always comes first in my life and in my family’s life—always (Mat. 6:33).

☐ ☐ I and my family are faithful in assembling to worship God at all worship services, including Sunday night and Wednesday night worship (Heb. 10:25; 13:17).

☐ ☐ I am very involved every week in some aspect of the mission/evangelism work of the church (Mark 16:15).

☐ ☐ Whenever I learn of a need for some kind of work or help needed in the church, I always volunteer to cooperate according to my ability (Mat. 25:14-30).

☐ ☐ I see to it that I and my family are fed a full and steady diet of God’s Word that we may grow thereby as we worship faithfully in the public gatherings and take time at home to study His Word (1 Pet. 2:2; Heb. 5:12-14; 2 Tim. 2:15).

☐ ☐ I spend time visiting those who are mentioned at church as being in the hospitals (Mat. 25:31-46).

☐ ☐ I can honestly say that I am doing more now for the cause of Christ than I was a year ago. I am more involved than ever in the Lord’s work and in bringing glory to God (1 Cor. 15:57; 2 Cor. 11:23; Rev. 3:1, 16).

☐ ☐ The example that I am now setting is a source of encouragement to others to serve God, and if others followed my example of Christianity, they would assuredly go to heaven (Mat. 5:14-16; Phil. 1:27; 2:14-16; 1 Tim. 4:12).

☐ ☐ When I become unhappy with something or someone in the church, rather than run away, I find that my unhappiness disappears when I start doing something for others, speaking positively for the Lord, and devoting more time to prayer (Eph. 6:18).

☐ ☐ When I disagree with a brother or sister, or when one has sinned against me, rather than tell everyone else about it. I go first, in a humble manner, to the other party in order to solve the problem, disagreement, or misunderstanding (Mat. 18:16-18; 5:21-26).

Author Unknown
Sick

Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Marge Williams, Ella Hammac, Marilyn Hall, Faye Little (Dot Dodd’s mother), Thelma Dunavant (Susan McLaughlin’s mother), Nancy Travis (William Weekley’s daughter), Arthur Mathews (Rheba Stancliff’s brother), Tiffany Wilkes (Fred and Rheba Stancliff’s granddaughter), Lavonne McNeal (Al Flesher’s friend), Hazel Merry (Nellie Read’s sister), Pattie Agbunan (Jodi Hendrix’s friend), Sharon Lambert (Dot Lambert’s daughter-in-law), and Rita Pontier (member where Tim Cozad preaches).

Sympathy

Our deepest sympathy is extended to Dick and Dot Lambert in the death of their grandson, Johnny Mack Lambert, Jr., on July 19. Please keep Dick, Dot, and their family in your prayers.

New Arrival

Dick and Dot Lambert announce the birth of a new great-granddaughter, Jaelynn Elisabeth Lambert, born on July 18. She weighed 7 lbs. 7 oz. and was 20 inches long. She is in ICU in Panama City, but doing well. Our congratulations is extended to all.

Reading/Invitation

August 2, 2006
Reading: Horace Myrick
Invitation: Bill Busch

August 9, 2006
Reading: Shelby Nall
Invitation: Bill Crowe
Abiding in the Love of Christ  
_Curtis L. E. Graves_

“As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love” (John 15:9). We learn several things from this short verse. First of all is the well-known and obvious fact of the love of God for His only begotten Son. God is love we are told in 1 John 4:8, 16. As the Father loves Him, so He loves His disciples.

In these few words we have a _pledge_. A pledge of fellowship with Christ and God or oneness is what Christ prayed for in John 17:20-21: “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.”

We also see in these words a _promise_. When we abide in Christ, then we will abide in His Word. In His Word is the promise of strength when we are weary, the promise of peace no matter what our surroundings may be, and many other promises.

The words can also be a _warning_. We see this warning in Peter failing to abide in the love of Christ resulting in his denial of Jesus. We also observe this when we look at Judas and his failure to abide in the love of Christ and, thus, denying Him. “If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned” (John 15:6).

Finally, we see in these words a _command_. “Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal...”
The only Gospel that saves is the Gospel of Christ (cf., Rom. 15:19; 1 Cor. 9:12; 2 Cor. 10:14; Gal. 1:7). A man-made gospel will save no one and serves only the devil’s purpose to deceive souls of men. One who refuses to believe the Truth will be allowed to believe a lie (2 The. 2:11-12). The apostle Paul sounded forth a warning that all would do well to heed today. To the Galatian brethren he said: “I marvel that ye are so quickly removing from him that called you in the grace of Christ unto a different gospel; which is not another gospel only there are some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema. As we have said before, so say I now again, if any man preacheth unto you any gospel other than that which ye received, let him be anathema” (Gal. 1:6-9). The Gospel of Christ is the “power of God unto salvation” (Rom. 1:16). Another gospel need not be proclaimed because another gospel cannot save!

The Gospel of Christ must be heard (Rom. 10:14). One cannot obey what he does not know. God’s truth can be known and obedience to such truth will free one of his sins (John 8:32). It is incumbent upon each individual to “study to shew [himself]...approved unto God” (2 Tim. 2:15). In the Day of Judgment, every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord (Phi. 2:11). It is on this Day that “God shall judge the secrets of men” according to the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 2:16).

The Gospel of Christ must also be believed. One can hear the Word of God and not believe it. On Pentecost, people heard the Gospel and asked, “What shall we do?” (Acts 2:37) Peter answered, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:38). Some still, however, declare they do not believe baptism is necessary for one to be saved. The Lord Himself said, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:16). Ananias told Saul of Tarsus, “And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (Acts 22:16).

How can one claim to believe the inspired Scriptures and then declare: “I just don’t believe that baptism has anything to do with one’s salvation?” If one refuses to believe the Word of God, he will certainly not be motivated to act upon the demands of the Word.

The Gospel of Christ must be obeyed. It is an idle boast for one to claim to have Bible faith while refusing to act upon such faith. A faith that will not act is a dead faith. James got to the heart of the matter in saying:

What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them,
Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one God; thou dost well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way? For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also (Jam. 2:14-26).

It is ludicrous for one to claim to have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and then steadfastly refuse to comply with the demands of the Gospel. Such is mere foolishness, but not even a distant cousin to Bible faith!

The Gospel of Christ must be lived. Obeying the Gospel is only the beginning. One must live the life of a Christian. John states that only “if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 John 1:7). There are fourteen epistles that instruct the child of God in running the Christian race. It is to no avail for one to obey the Gospel plan of salvation and then when the urge strikes live like the devil.

One who is genuine, sincere, and obedient to God’s Word will refuse to conform to the ways of the world. Instead, he will be transformed by renewing his mind and proving “what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Rom. 12:2).

Make sure you have obeyed the Gospel that saves!

Don’t Stay Away from Church...

...Because you are poor. There is no admission charge.
...Because you are rich. Money is not everything.
...Because it rains. You go to work in the rain.
...Because it is cold. It is warm and friendly inside.
...Because it is hot. So is fishing and the golf course.
...Because no one invited you. People go to a lot of places uninvited, and even pay to get in.
...Because of hypocrites. You associate with them every day.
...Because of company. Bring them along; they will admire you.
...Because you have little children. Jesus says, “Permit the little children to come to me”
...Because your clothes are not nice enough. God looks on the heart.
...Because you do not like the preacher. He is human, as we all are.
...Because the church always wants money. That is not true here.
...Because you have plenty of time in the future. Are you sure?

Author Unknown
Sick

Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Marge Williams, Ella Hammac, Ruby Bailey, Marilyn Hall, Faye Little (Dot Dodd’s mother), Thelma Dunavant (Susan McLaughlin’s mother), Nancy Travis (William Weekley’s daughter), Arthur Mathews (Rheba Stancliff’s brother), Tiffany Wilkes (Fred and Rheba Stancliff’s granddaughter), Lavonne McNeal (Al Flesher’s friend), Hazel Merry (Nellie Read’s sister), Pattie Agbunanag (Jodi Hendrix’s friend), Sharon Lambert (Dot Lambert’s daughter-in-law), and Rita Pontier (member where Tim Cozad preaches).

Restored

Dot Lambert was restored to Christ on July 30. Please keep Dot in your prayers and offer her encouragement.

Reading/Invitation

August 9, 2006
Reading: Shelby Nall
Invitation: Bill Crowe

August 16, 2006
Reading: Elward Brantley
Invitation: Dale Cunningham

Mark These Dates

August 6, 2006–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
August 13, 2006–Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
August 20, 2006–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.

Pantry Items Needed
Canned Meat
Modern Enemies of the Christian Character

Carl G. Hecker

A look at pitfalls common to us all:

1. Modesty. This character trait expresses a respect for all mankind. It indicates deep esteem of oneself and those with whom he may have contact. Clothing is a mark of civilization. Clothing and how it is worn reflects the degree of modesty or lack of it in the individual. The first step away from modesty is the attitude that clothing does not matter. The Holy Spirit commands the child of God to be modest, godly, wearing his clothing with shamefacedness and sobriety. Women have great influence over men for either good or bad. The way they dress, walk, talk, and conduct themselves is covered by the word, modesty. That is one reason many men lack proper respect for women. Worldly women show no self-respect. Thus they do not receive any from others.

2. Television and entertainment in general. Though not popular to say so, much (most) of the entertainment today is filled with immodesty, unbecoming of the godliness required of the Christian character. Good people know this but if they tolerate it for a spell, it becomes less and less offensive.
Most of our readers will not remember this. When the classic, Gone With the Wind, was filmed by Hollywood in the late thirties, Clarke Gable was allowed to say with emphasis what today is considered a very mild curse word “damn”! What a roar of protest went up. Preachers condemned the producers for corrupting our whole society. Compare that standard with the public language of today’s programming. We all warned that Hollywood would corrupt our Christian nation. We were right!

(Unwed mothers, unwed couples living together, divorced parents, homosexual relationship, situation comedies, guests on family talk shows, all unabashedly present such as acceptable, even desirable.)

How long since you looked up the meaning of adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envying, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such like? Well, that is too long!

The so-called performing arts are at the very core of the problem. Face it, my dear Christian friend, our public schools, our institutions of higher learning, including those founded by godly men of three or four generations ago are now saturated with low, very low, standards of moral conduct. They want it so!

We are in a spiritual war on moral terrorism! If you do not think so, then you are already lost to the enemy. The Christian should not despair! The Roman society was evil, the Jewish nation was corrupt. The apostle Paul presented the way of the Lord as a spiritual, never-ending battle. It is personal, an individual struggle with very much at stake. Not only our soul, but the souls of those whom we dearly love are in great jeopardy. Take heart! The battle can be won!

Copied

The Ant, an Example for Church Growth

Richard Stevens III

“Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise” (Pro. 6:6). No matter what they face, or we do to them, ants continue to grow in numbers. Our primary objective is spiritual growth, but we also want to grow numerically. I believe there are a few things we can learn from our neighbor the ant that will help us to grow in numbers too.

Ants Work Hard. You never see an idle ant! Ants are always busy, always working, always doing something. And not just anything, they work for the betterment of the colony. It is because ants have a mind to work. The people of Nehemiah’s day were able to rebuild the wall in 52 days under the threat of attack because, “the people had a mind to work” (Neh. 4:6; 6:15). Our Lord had this mind, “I must work the works of him that sent me” and “wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business?” (John 9:4; Luke 2:49). A mind to work hard in the Father’s vineyard must also be in us: “always abounding in the work of the Lord” (1 Cor. 15:58).

Ants Work Together. There is not one ant in the colony that refuses to work with all the rest. They will not fight each other, or oppose each other. Even though one can do quite a bit, they all can do a lot. If you kick over their mound, they will rebuild it before you know it. Ants work well together. We too, must get involved in the Lord’s work together. Yes, we all have a collective responsibility. We are a team, where every member is important and needed (1 Cor. 12:13-27). We are a “colony” of Christians with the same beliefs, who strive for the same goals.
Ants Reproduce. No matter how many ants are killed in a day the colony continues to grow. That is because all the causalities are less than the births. We, too, if we are going to grow, must have births in Christ. We lose some members to physical death, and some to spiritual death (in the sense they fall away). And, though, we gain some members from other congregations the right way to grow is through spiritual births. Jesus said there were/are people who could be born again: “Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest” (John 4:35). We reproduce when the Gospel is obeyed (Mark 16:15-16; 1 Cor. 3:6).

Ants Do Not Let the Babies Stay Babies. Ants have around-the-clock attendants meeting the needs of the young. If the babies stay babies the colony will not grow. When our spiritual babes stay babes, we are not growing either. Proof of this is that they are unable in joining us with the work. The only way to grow spiritually is through the Word of God (Mat. 4:4; 1 Pet. 2:2). We must design classes on the fundamentals (milk of the Word) from which they can grow. We must encourage them to come and participate in worship and other services. They must be taught how to practice Christianity at home and in their daily lives (Acts 17:11).

Ants Are Faithful unto and Through Death. Ants never quit, or give up on the work just because they had a bad day. Unlike people, ants never say, “I don’t want to be an ant (Christian) anymore, from now on, I’ll just be a doodle bug.” No, ants are in it for the long haul, until the very end. And if you mess with one, you mess with all. Stop them from their mission, and they will attack putting their very lives on the line. They are committed to each other and to the work! We, too, should be as committed to the work and to each other (1 John 3:16; Rev. 2:10)!

Who Is Boss at Your House?

Tim Smith

Often we see husbands and wives vying for power in their house—who will be boss? Biblically, between the two of them, the husband is the head and the wife is to submit to him (cf. Eph. 5:23ff). But does this really answer the question posed above?

I have seen houses in which the wife is the boss—and it is most uncomfortable even to visit there. She bosses her husband around, tells him what to do, treats him as if he was a child—and she seems to take great pleasure in humiliating him. Such is wrong.

I have seen houses in which the children are the boss. They tell the parents what will be and what will not be; they take great pleasure in embarrassing the parents and exerting their will over that of the ones to whom God gave the authority of decision-making. It is embarrassing to visit such houses as well.

I have seen houses in which the husband is the boss—and he is most incompetent at it! He makes decisions based on the whims of his preference; he does what is wrong; he loves sin and flees righteousness. He proves himself everything but a man.

Who should be the boss at your house and mine? Simple: “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (Jesus—John 14:15). Love Him—let Him be boss not only at home, but at work and at play and at rest and...well, you get the point.
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Marge Williams, Ella Hammac, Ruby Bailey, Marilyn Hall, Ray Dodd, Faye Little (Dot Dodd’s mother), Thelma Dunavant (Susan McLaughlin’s mother), Nancy Travis (William Weekley’s daughter), Arthur Mathews (Rheba Stancliff’s brother), Tiffany Wilkes (Fred and Rheba Stancliff’s granddaughter), Lavonne McNeal (Al Flesher’s friend), Hazel Merry (Nellie Read’s sister), Pattie Agbunag (Jodi Hendrix’s friend), Sharon Lambert (Dot Lambert’s daughter-in-law), and Rita Pontier (member where Tim Cozad preaches).

Reading/Invitation
August 16, 2006
Reading: Elward Brantley
Invitation: Dale Cunningham
August 23, 2006
Reading: Ray Dodd
Invitation: Ray Foshee

Mark These Dates
August 13, 2006–Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
August 20, 2006–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
August 20, 2006–Elders/Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.

Address Change
Harold Cozad’s new address is: 7830 Pine Forest Road, Apt. V1; Pensacola, FL 32526. His telephone number is 944.8953.
Figurative Versus Literal

Gary Summers

Many problems have originated with people who do not understand language. The Greek epics, *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*, both employed a number of figures of speech. Vergil uses a tremendous amount of figurative language in *The Aeneid*. It seems that, according to some, only the Bible must be taken literally at all times. A few legalistic souls insist that the Bible cannot use metaphors, personification, synecdoche, and other normal manners of communication.

Consider what Jesus said: “Take, eat; this is my body” (Mat. 26:26). The Roman Catholic Church decided that the word “is” meant that Jesus’ presence is in the bread—that, when they eat of it, it becomes and is the literal body of Jesus. Yech! Such is grotesque. Even worse would be the fruit of the vine becoming Christ’s blood. If it were somehow mystically transformed into His actual blood, then we could not drink it, for the apostles forbade drinking blood (Acts 15:29).

When Jesus said, “I am the light of the world,” “He did not mean that He was a literal ball, of burning gases. When He referred to Himself as the “door of the sheepfold” no one insisted upon a non-figurative interpretation. The unleavened bread represents His broken body. He is not in the bread. Jesus used something symbolic of Him. Likewise, the fruit of the vine represents His blood; its very appearance reminds us of the color of the blood that came forth from His side. But it is not His blood. The presence of Christ is not in these elements; His presence is in our minds, as we remember the sacrifice in the way
He specified. Metonymy is a figure of speech in which one thing often stands for another. The cup, which Jesus blessed, stands for the contents in it, the fruit of the vine (Mat. 26:26-30). This is easily seen in Paul’s statement: “For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till he come” (1 Cor. 11:26). We all know how one drinks the contents of a cup, but—how does one drink the cup? To literally do so would require heating it to its boiling point and swallowing it before it cooled—an absurdity. The purpose of these elements is to focus our attention on the sacrifice Jesus offered for our sins. Every one of us needed His body to be broken and His blood to be shed for us. Let us lay aside insistence upon literal applications and honor Him as He intended.

Ten Suggestions for Improving the Public Assemblies of the Church

1. Make church assemblies a priority. It is the most important commitment of each week. It is nothing less than a “meeting with God.”
2. Do not bring God left-overs. God has always demanded the “firstfruits.” He cannot be satisfied with scraps. Get plenty of sleep on Saturday night and come to worship with an alert and refreshed mind.
4. Be on time. Rushing in late makes it difficult for you to settle into meditation and disturbs other worshipers. Get up a little earlier if necessary.
5. Bring your Bible. Coming to worship without your Bible is like going out to drive without your keys.
6. Open your mouth and sing. Singing is not an option. It is a command. Those who violate this command are just as guilty as if they neglected the assembly in the first place.
7. Sit close to the front. Experience has shown that some marginal church members would rather switch congregations than change pews. Research indicates that the level of emotion and mental participation decreases as one moves closer to the back.
8. Before and after the service, be friendly. Worship is enhanced when we are closer as a family. Family members should know and love each other.
9. Listen carefully to the sermon. Taking notes may help. Follow along in your Bible. Take the message seriously. It will help you. It will encourage the speaker. It will show non-

Attendance Drive and Dinner on the Grounds
August 27
Bring someone with you to Bible class and services. A covered-dish meal will follow the morning service in the general purpose building. Make plans now!
Christians that we are serious.

10. Make your worship God-centered, not man-centered. Worship is primarily a giving situation. Those who say, “I don’t get much out of worship,” are wrongly focused.

“Banner of Truth,” Alkire Rd Church of Christ

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**Genetics, DNA and God**

*Tom Wacaster*

The mapping of DNA is one of those little mysteries of life that astound even the most scholarly. DNA, which stands for “deoxyribonucleic acid,” is a sort of genetic code that determines not only the color of your hair, but the very physical traits that separate you from lower animals. Every living thing, whether plant, animal, or human, contains a storehouse of genetic information, and therefore a potential “laboratory” full of scientific knowledge.

Everything about you, including life itself, is regulated by the information contained within this DNA code. This is why the recent mapping of this code is so valuable to scientists. One of the most astonishing things about our DNA (as well as that of animals and plants) is its uncanny ability to copy the information contained therein from one generation to the next, and that faithfully, time after time. The Bible calls this reproduction after “kind” (Gen. 1:11-12). Why do sparrows produce only sparrows? Or dogs, dogs? The answer is simple: all organisms reproduce after their own kind! The inevitable conclusion is that this code or “information library” had to derive from some source. Darrel Kautz, in his book *The Origin of Living Things* correctly concluded that “the DNA molecule is something utterly unique and had to have an unnatural or supernatural origin.... The information in the DNA molecule had to have been imposed upon it by some outside source just as music is imposed on a cassette tape.” He then adds, “The information in DNA is presented in coded form as explained previously, and codes are not known to arise spontaneously.” Folks, do you understand the implications of these statements? There is absolutely no way that evolution and/or random chance can provide an adequate explanation for this marvelous feature of our make up. Here is something else. We human beings have learned to store information on paper, in databases, on film, cassettes, and even microchips. But human technology has yet to discover how to store information chemically, as is the case with the DNA molecule. We can only agree with Dr. E. H. Andrews: “It is not possible for a code, of any kind, to arise by chance or accident. Even a dog or chimpanzee could not work out a code of any kind. It is obvious then that chance cannot do it. This could no more have been the work of chance or accident than could the ‘Moonlight Sonata’ be played by mice running up and down the keyboard of my piano! Codes do not arise from chaos” (“From Nothing to Nature,” *Evangelical Press*, 28-29). But interestingly, this discovery of DNA, its “coded information,” and how to map this new found information, was set in motion, and even referred to when God told us that everything produces “after its kind.” I wonder why it is that the smarter our world gets, the dumber it acts by denying the existence of God and attributing origins to chance rather than the God Who made it all?!

806 W Broadway St; Clarksville, TX 75426
Sick

Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Marge Williams, Ella Hammac, Rubye Bailey, Marilyn Hall, Ray Dodd, Alice Williams, Faye Little (Dot Dodd’s mother), Thelma Dunavant (Susan McLaughlin’s mother), Nancy Travis (William Weekley’s daughter), Arthur Mathews (Rheba Stancliff’s brother), Tiffany Wilkes (Fred and Rheba Stancliff’s granddaughter), Hazel Merry (Nellie Read’s sister), Pattie Agbunag (Jodi Hendrix’s friend), Sharon Lambert (Dot Lambert’s daughter-in-law), and Rita Pontier (member where Tim Cozad preaches).

Reading/Invitation
August 23, 2006
Reading: Ray Dodd
Invitation: Ray Foshee
August 30, 2006
Reading: Andrew Hatcher
Invitation: Johnny McLaughlin

Mark These Dates
Every Sunday—Ladies’ Bible Class will meet at 5:00 pm, in the zone room.
August 20, 2006—Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
August 20, 2006—Elders/Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
August 23, 2006—Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.
August 27, 2006—Attendance Drive and Dinner on the Grounds.

Pantry Items Needed
Canned Meat
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, Bill Crowe, James Loy

Characteristics of Good Teachers

A good Bible teacher carefully examines the Master Teacher’s life and methods. Here is a partial list:

- **Consecration**: A teacher must be consecrated to the task of teaching and also to the Christian life. He must be able to say, “it is no longer I that live, but Christ living in me” (Gal. 2:20).

- **Love**: A faithful teacher has a strong love for God and for His Word. Study and prayer are not burdens to be endured. He loves serving God and loves other people (1 Cor. 13:4-8).

- **Devotion**: Good teachers feel devoted to the task of teaching and to those whom they teach (2 Cor. 12:15).

- **Prayer**: All Christians pray; teachers just have some extra names and activities on her/his list. We should pray that the work done will fulfill God’s purposes (2 Thes. 1:11).

- **Faith**: Teachers cannot lead where they have not gone. If we want others to grow in faith, we must have a “good case” of it ourselves (1 Tim. 4:15). We must have faith in men as God’s creatures who can be led to become more like God.

- **Purpose**: No one can faithfully discharge the responsibility of teaching without having a thought-out purpose. Teaching is not aimless babysitting or time-passing, but it is the attempt to teach God’s Will to God’s children or to those we hope will become God’s children (Pro. 11:30).

- **Faithfulness**: The teacher must be faithful to attend all church services (Heb. 10:25). Children must not look for their Sunday teacher on Wednesday night and not be able to find him/her. Faithfulness extends beyond attendance; we must discharge every responsibility assigned (Tit. 2:11-12).
Vision: Good teachers see what students can become—and begin to lead them there. Long before a child believes in himself/herself, a teacher believes in him/her (John. 1:42).

Patience: It takes time to mold, shape, grow, and develop (cf. 2 Tim. 4:1-2).

Cheerfulness: Stresses and strains come along the way, but good teachers are able to maintain an atmosphere of joy, humor, and peace. A faithful Christian is a happy Christian (Phi. 4:4).

Energy: A teacher’s task is not easy. Plan ahead to have enough energy to match or exceed your students. Get plenty of sleep (cf. Mark 6:31), eat before coming to class, and be well-enough prepared that you have overcome any dread of the unknown. Well-prepared teachers are excited teachers.

Cooperation: With so many people working in the educational department of the church, considerable cooperation is needed. Be patient if someone has the projector checked out (2 Cor. 3:6-9).

Perfectionism: Good teachers do not feel they have ever taught their best class. They always have a new idea, a different approach, and a better way (cf. Mat. 5:48).

Planning: If a problem came up last week, this week a good teacher has figured out how to avoid it (1 Cor. 14:40).

Author Unknown

The New Birth

Toney Smith

In John 3:1-5, Jesus places emphasis on the need for one to be born again. When Jesus made this statement, Nicodemus was confused as to the meaning of such a statement. Today many are still confused concerning this statement, especially in the way in which to achieve the New Birth.

Do we really think that Jesus was trying to say something that was not to be understood? Was this ever the case in the teachings of our Lord? And especially so concerning the way to achieve the new birth which He said was a necessity for one’s entering into the kingdom.

Surely we cannot think that this would be something that He would shroud with an unsolvable mystery. No it can be said with certainty that whatever Christ meant, it was a thing that you and I can know.

The new birth is not some mystical experience. It is a practical action that all must become familiar with. When we discuss the new birth there are at least four things which are to take place in connection with birth: (1) there must be a seed, (2) there must be a seedbed (3) there must be one that sows the seed, and (4) there must be a reception and germination. This is true in the
physical realm as well as with the spiritual. In the spiritual area we find these things present in this manner:

1. The seed to be sown is God’s Word (Jam. 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:23; Luke 8:11).
2. The seedbed into which the seed is sown is the heart of man (Luke 8:12-15).
3. The sower is the one that will take that Word and take it to those who are lost. He is the individual which fulfills the Great Commission (Mat. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16).
4. The reception and germination is achieved when one is responsive to the Gospel by obedience to it (Luke 8:9-15; Rom. 10:17; Acts 2:38, 41; Rom. 6:17-18).

Baptism in water is the action expressed by one who believes and is willing to obey the simple teaching of the Gospel (Rom. 1:16; Acts 2:38).

Consider the Lilies

H. L. Gradowith

Consider, my friend, the lilies of the field,
How that year after year they prosper and grow;
Yet even Solomon was not arrayed so!

Then behold, if you will, the fowls of the air,
They neither sow nor reap; yet God feeds them well;
Can you not see that you’re much better than they?
What the Father would do for you, who can tell?

Too many fret too much about the fashion:
What they will listen to and what they will wear;
They think they must be like those with whom they run
And thus show Him Who matters too little care...

Life’s more than meat, the body than raiment,
For when the body dies the spirit lives on;
Be more concerned with what will outlive the flesh—
What will stand before Jesus when life is done!

Be careful to seek first the kingdom of God,
All that matters is whether you’re living right!
Put your faith in Him and then obey His Will—
His blood will cleanse you if you’ll walk in the Light!

In all things remember: Put the kingdom first!
Living so He’ll bless you and meet all your needs.
You will not be judged by what you meant to do
In the Judgment He will examine your deeds!

As you go, take no thought for the morrow, friends,
It will have its own troubles, you live today;
And the troubles of today are sufficient
To require our full attention on the way...

1036 Inwood Drive; Hurst, TX 76053

Copied
Sick
Please remember in your prayers:
Elaine Maxey, Marge Williams, Ella Hammac, Ruby ease Bailey, Marilyn Hall, 
Ray Dodd, Alice Williams, Faye Little (Dot Dodd’s mother), Thelma Dunavant 
(Susan McLaughlin’s mother), Nancy Travis (William Weekley’s daughter), 
Arthur Mathews (Rheba Stancliff’s brother), Tiffany Wilkes (Fred and Rheba 
Stancliff’s granddaughter), Hazel Merry (Nellie Read’s sister), Pattie Agbunan 
(Jodi Hendrix’s friend), Sharon Lambert (Dot Lambert’s daughter-in-law), and Pat 
Kelly (Pam Busch’s uncle).

Reading/Invitation
August 30, 2006
Reading: Andrew Hatcher
Invitation: Johnny McLaughlin

September 6, 2006
Reading: Daniel Hatcher
Invitation: Will McLaughlin

Mark These Dates
Every Sunday–Ladies’ Bible Class will
meet at 5:00 pm, in the zone room.
August 27, 2006–Attendance Drive and 
Dinner on the Grounds.
August 30, 2006–Fifth Wednesday 
Singing at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.
September 3, 2006–Visitation Group 1 
assignment cards handed out.
September 20, 2006–Visitation Group 2 
assignment cards handed out.
September 24-29, 2006–Gospel Meeting 
with Bob Hawkins.

Pantry Items Needed
Canned Meat
Lessons Learned from a Jury Summons

Tom Wacaster

Some years back I have received a summons to appear for Jury Duty in Harris County. Included with that summons, I received a leaflet describing duties, expectations, and certain regulations that must be followed throughout the process of being selected and/or serving on a jury. Someone once suggested that all of life is a learning process. Here are some lessons learned from my jury summons.

First, a civilized people still recognize the value of properly administered justice. Life is not always fair. The innocent are often wronged, and the guilty too often go free. In his book, *A Nation of Victims*, Charles Sykes related the following: An FBI agent embezzled two thousand dollars from the government, and then lost the whole amount in one afternoon of gambling in Atlantic City. He was fired but won reinstatement after a court ruled that his affinity for gambling with other people’s money was a “handicap.” He was protected under the federal law. In another incident, a young man in Framingham, Massachusetts steals a car from a parking lot and is killed while driving it. His family sues the proprietor of the parking lot for failing to take steps to prevent such thefts. Admittedly there are injustices in our society. But I am thankful that we still have a system that says the accused are innocent until proven guilty. Occasionally justice is not properly administered. In that case, we can rest assured that there is a day coming in which absolute and impartial justice will be administered to everyone who has ever lived. In the words of Samuel Johnson: “Since the common
Gospel Meeting with
Bob Hawkins

September 24 - 29
Sunday: 9:00 and 10:00 am; Sunday-Friday Evenings: 7:30 pm

Theme: *Our Journey in Life*

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

A covered-dish meal will be provided
Monday-Thursday at 6:00 pm in the general purpose building.
Visitation Group 1 will provide the meals on Monday & Wednesday
Visitation Group 2 will provide the meals on Tuesday & Thursday

Make plans to attend the Gospel meeting.

Events of the present life happen alike to the good and the bad, it follows from the justice of the Supreme Being that there must be another state of existence in which a just retribution shall be made.”

Second, those summoned to jury duty are not excused except on a limited basis. There are, in fact, only four reasons for being excused from service. (1) You are not a citizen of the U.S.; (2) You do not reside in Harris County; (3) You are under 18 years of age; and (4) You have been convicted of a felony or any type of theft. Interestingly, the summons says that “job-related excuses are not accepted.” Someone has said that excuses are nothing more than a lie in devil’s clothing. Throughout my three decades of preaching I have heard a number of excuses for failure to serve in the Master’s Kingdom. Like
our civil counterpart, service is expected, excuses notwithstanding.

Third, punctuality is a must when you are summoned to jury service. Failure to appear “on time” can result “in criminal penalties.” Once selected to serve on a jury, you must be present for the proceedings. You cannot come and go as you wish. Why do you suppose there are such demands on you as a juror? It is because of the seriousness of the business at hand. Can we not see the same need when it comes to meeting our spiritual obligations. In every congregation there are the proverbial “late-comers” to Bible classes and worship services. Tardiness, in most cases, is due to laziness and/or lack of consideration for others. The same could be said for the constant commotion that exists in our worship service when we shuffle in and out of the auditorium for the most trivial of reasons. Could it be that we have not yet come to grasp the seriousness of what we are doing when we are called to Bible class and worship?

Fourth, jurors are expected to “dress the part.” The leaflet states in no uncertain terms: “Jury service is serious business and you should dress accordingly.” Most folks that appear in court are dressed in some of their finest clothes. T-shirts, tank-tops, sloppy clothing that is tattered and torn are not appropriate. Why is it, brethren, that we seem to think that we can appear before God Almighty in casual, sloppy attire, when such is neither appropriate nor acceptable in the courtrooms of our land? Why is it that common sense dictates a certain type of clothing when it comes to courtroom service, funerals, etc., but we seem to think that any-old-rag will do for worship services unto the Almighty? Again, could it be that we do not perceive of our summons to worship the Almighty as something that is as serious as appearing before a judge in a civil courtroom?

Finally, all prospective jurors are encouraged to “come prepared.” Careful consideration should be given to bringing those things necessary to the task at hand. The clear message of the Bible is precisely the same: “Come prepared.” When it comes our time to appear before the Great “I Am,” nothing less will do. You and I are given a lifetime to properly prepare for the greatest summons we will ever receive: that of appearing at the judgment bar of Jehovah God.

806 W Broadway St; Clarksville, TX 75426

The Material of the Heart

Take a piece of wax, a piece of meat, some sand, some clay, and some wood shavings, put them on the fire and see how they react.

Each of them is being acted upon by the same agent, yet...the wax melts, the meat fries, the sand dries up, the clay hardens, the wood shavings blaze.

Just so, under identical influence of circumstances and environment one man is made better, and he becomes stronger, and another becomes weaker, while another withers away.

This explains why one hears the Word of God and is made better. Still another hears the same thing and is made angry. Therefore, we realize that it is the make up of the heart that makes the difference. We need the attitude of the Psalmist, “O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day” (Psa. 119:97). Friends, take heed how you hear and then obey. Remember, “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).

via the Preacher’s PC
Sick

Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Marge Williams, Ella Hammac (W. FL Hospital, room 409), Marilyn Hall, Alice Williams, Faye Little (Dot Dodd’s mother), Thelma Dunavant (Susan McLaughlin’s mother), Nancy Travis (William Weekley’s daughter), Arthur Mathews (Rheba Stancliff’s brother), Tiffany Wilkes (Fred and Rheba Stancliff’s granddaughter), Hazel Merry (Nellie Read’s sister), Pattie Agbunag (Jodi Hendrix’s friend), Sharon Lambert (Dot Lambert’s daughter-in-law), and Pat Kelly (Pam Busch’s uncle).

Reading/Invitation
September 6, 2006
Reading: Daniel Hatcher
Invitation: Will McLaughlin

September 13, 2006
Reading: Jim Loy
Invitation: Ray Pierce

Mark These Dates
Every Sunday—Ladies’ Bible Class will meet at 5:00 pm, in the zone room.
September 3, 2006—Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
September 20, 2006—Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.

New Address
Debra and Denise Mowery’s new address is: 5025 Cocoa Drive; Pensacola, FL 32526. Their telephone number is 944-4626.

Pantry Items Needed
Canned Meat
Who Is Jesus in the Bible?

In Genesis—He is the Creator.
In Exodus—He is the Redeemer.
In Leviticus—He is your sanctification.
In Numbers—He is your guide.
In Deuteronomy—He is your teacher.
In Joshua—He is the almighty conqueror.
In Judges—He gives victory over His enemies.
In Ruth—He is your kinsman and redeemer.
In 1 Samuel—He is the root of Jesse.
In 2 Samuel—He is the Son of David.
In 1 and 2 Kings—He is the King of kings and Lord of lords.
In 1 and 2 Chronicles—He is the intercessor and high priest.
In Ezra—He is your temple and house of worship.
In Nehemiah—He is your might wall.
In Esther—He stands in the gap to deliver you from your enemies.
In Job—He is the arbitrator who not only understands your struggles but is able to deliver you from them.
In Psalms—He is your song and your reason to sing.
In Proverbs—He is your wisdom, helping you make sense of life and live it successfully.
In Ecclesiastes—He is your purpose, delivering you from vanity.
In the Song of Solomon—He is your love.
In Isaiah—He is the mighty counselor, the prince of peace and the everlasting Father.
In Jeremiah—He is your balm of Gilead, the soothing salve for the sin-sick soul.
In Lamentations—He is the ever faithful one upon whom you can depend.
In Ezekiel—He is the One who assures you that dry dead bones will come to life again.
In Daniel—He is the ancient of days.
It Starts in the Parking Lot

Bruce McLarty

I recently read an interview with Andy Stanley, a minister in North Atlanta, Georgia, who preaches to about 5,000 people each Sunday. At one point the interviewer asked him, “Is your sermon the pivotal event in the service?” Stanley’s response was very perceptive. He said, “I often tell our people, the sermon starts in the parking lot. You are the introduction.” He believes that if the congregation has not made a positive impression on the visitor before he stands up to speak, the visitor is probably not going to hear a thing the preacher says. Stanley’s observation reminds us how important those minutes are between the time we park our cars and we pick up our songbooks. Though our minds may be consumed with the hassle of getting ready for church (this is multiplied by 10,000 if you have children), the way we meet and greet our visitors is actually part of the message (a big part) that they will hear that day. With this in mind, the following are a few ways we can work together to improve our sermon introductions:

1. Starting in the parking lot, be on the lookout for unfamiliar faces.
2. Take the initiative to speak to people you
Gospel Meeting with Bob Hawkins

September 24 - 29

Sunday: 9:00 and 10:00 am; Sunday-Friday Evenings: 7:30 pm

Theme: Our Journey in Life

Sunday Bible Class: Following the Advice of the Multitude and Seeking Smooth Seas

Sunday Morning Worship: Uselessness of Trying to Save Self by Self

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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

A covered-dish meal will be provided Monday-Thursday at 6:00 pm in the general purpose building.

Visitation Group 1 will provide the meals on Monday & Wednesday

Visitation Group 2 will provide the meals on Tuesday & Thursday

Make plans to attend the Gospel meeting.
Sick
Please remember in your prayers:
Elaine Maxey, Marge Williams, Ella Hammac, Marilyn Hall, Alice Williams, Faye Little (Dot Dodd’s mother), Thelma Dunavant (Susan McLaughlin’s mother), Nancy Travis (William Weekley’s daughter), Arthur Mathews (Rheba Stancliff’s brother), Tiffany Wilkes (Fred and Rheba Stancliff’s granddaughter), Hazel Merry (Nellie Read’s sister), Pattie Agbunag (Jodi Hendrix’s friend), Sharon Lambert (Dot Lambert’s daughter-in-law), and Pat Kelly (Pam Busch’s uncle).

Reading/Invitation
September 13, 2006
Reading: Jim Loy
Invitation: Ray Pierce
September 20, 2006
Reading: Horace Myrick
Invitation: Fred Stancliff

New Arrival
Our congratulations is extended to Marilyn Hall in the birth of her great-grandson, Chase Robert LaSasso, born on August 29. He weighed 7 pounds 6 ounces and was 20 inches long.

Mark These Dates
Every Sunday—Ladies’ Bible Class will meet at 5:00 pm, in the zone room.
September 17, 2006—Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
September 20, 2006—Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.

Pantry Items Needed
Canned Meat
“And they received of Moses all the offering which the children of Israel had brought for the work of the service of the sanctuary, wherewith to make it. And they brought yet unto him freewill-offerings every morning. And all the wise men, that wrought all the work of the sanctuary, came every man from his work which they wrought. And they spake unto Moses, saying, The people bring much more than enough for the service of the work which Jehovah commanded to make. And Moses gave commandment, and they caused it to be proclaimed throughout the camp, saying, Let neither man nor woman make any more work for the offering of the sanctuary. So the people were restrained from bringing. For the stuff they had was sufficient for all the work to make it, and too much” (Exo. 36:3-7).

Sufficient and Too Much! This incident in the Old Testament is a wonderfully beautiful moment in the history of God’s people. This people responded in such a tremendous way as to provide more than enough to accomplish the task at hand. Questions come to our minds as we contemplate the beauty of this occasion: Was it because of the exceptional leadership of Moses? Was it due to the greatness of the cause? Or perhaps the material prosperity of the people of God at that particular time? Hard to say. No doubt a combination of many things.

However, there is a statement made earlier in the account that seems highly significant to us. “And they came, every one whose heart stirred him up, and every one whom his spirit made willing, and brought Jehovah’s offering, for the work of the tent of meeting, and for all the ser-
A Heart Stirred Up and a willing spirit... herein lies the beauty. A devoted, consecrated Christian seeking self-improvement and God’s approval. A group of these working together in any area is quite simply, a church of Christ.

Does the New Testament Instruct Us in Giving? Giving is an act designed by God to develop Christ-like characteristics in His people. Our Heavenly Father gave His Son. The Lord gave Himself for His people—the church. To give is so admirable that the devil can hardly speak effectively against it. He can, though, afford to encourage the practice if at the same time he is able to corrupt the motives.

The following plan of New Testament giving is simple, appealing, and especially effective when put into practice. 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; 2 Corinthians 9:6-8; Matthew 6:2-3; Matthew 6:33. Read these carefully.

Periodic—“Upon the first day of the week” (every week)
Personal—“let each one of you” (individual)
Provident—“lay by...in store” (treasury)
Proportionate—“as he may prosper” (percentage)
Preventive—“than no collections be made when I come”

Purposeful—“Let each man do according as he hath purposed in his heart”
Voluntary—“not grudgingly, or of necessity”
Confidently—“God is able to make all grace abound unto you”
Confidentially—“that they may have glory of men”

If every member of the church of our Lord conscientiously followed this simple plan, the church would perhaps be found in much the same dilemma as Moses!

The gimmicks used today among even our own brethren indicate a lack of confidence, or perhaps even a lack of knowledge, of these Scriptures. Giving is a spiritual exercise, an act of worship, not to be taken lightly. It must be done and it must be done right.

To him and for what we give, thus becomes important. It would appear that many are willing to give huge sums to the church if the church is to spend it upon them. Thus, churches are apt to become entertainment and health spas. It may be a pleasant and tax-free way to arrange for these activities, but surely this not what the Lord gave Himself on the cross to accomplish!

For What Will this Congregation Be Known?

1. Will we be known for our love for lost souls? “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15).
2. Will we be known for having strong elders who watch for souls? “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).
3. Will we be known for having deacons who serve? “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).
4. Will we be known for our generous giving? “God loveth a cheerful giver” (2 Cor. 9:7).
5. Will we be known for our brotherly love? “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:35).
6. Will we be known for our friendliness and hospitality? “I am a companion of all them that
fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts” (Psa. 119:63).

7. **Will we be known for speaking the truth boldly but lovingly?** “Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John,...they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus” (Acts 4:13).

8. **Will we be known for defending the truth when it is under attack?** “I am set for the defence of the gospel” (Phi. 1:17).

9. **Will we be known for Christian living on the part of every member?** “Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ” (Phi. 1:27).

10. **Will we be known for helping the needy?** “Let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith” (Gal. 6:10).

While our primary desire is to glorify God, others will see us and be brought nearer to Him through our efforts (Mat. 5:13-16). If we fail to exhibit the qualities just mentioned, the very real possibility exists that God will not “know” us on the day of judgment (Mat. 25:31-46).

*Author Unknown*

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**Gospel Meeting with Bob Hawkins**

**September 24 - 29**

Sunday: 9:00 and 10:00 am; Sunday-Friday Evenings: 7:30 pm

**Theme: Our Journey in Life**

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

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Friday Evening: Preaching the Kingdom

A covered-dish meal will be provided Monday-Thursday at 6:00 pm in the general purpose building. Visitation Group 1 will provide the meals on Monday & Wednesday Visitation Group 2 will provide the meals on Tuesday & Thursday

Make plans to attend the Gospel meeting.
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Marge Williams, Ella Hammac, Marilyn Hall, Harold Cozad, Faye Little (Dot Dodd’s mother), Thelma Dunavant (Susan McLaughlin’s mother), Nancy Travis (William Weekley’s daughter), Tiffany Wilkes (Fred and Rheba Stancliff’s granddaughter), Hazel Merry (Nellie Read’s sister), Pattie Agbunag (Jodi Hendrix’s friend), Sharon Lambert (Dot Lambert’s daughter-in-law), and Pat Kelly (Pam Busch’s uncle).

Sympathy
Our deepest sympathy is extended to Bill Busch and his family in the death of his sister-in-law, Marguerite Busch, who passed away on September 7. Please keep Bill and his family in your prayers.

Our deepest sympathy is extended to Rheba Stancliff in the death of her brother, Arthur Mathews, on September 11. Please keep Rheba and her family in your prayers.

Reading/Invitation
September 20, 2006
Reading: Horace Myrick
Invitation: Fred Stancliff
September 27, 2006
Gospel Meeting with Bob Hawkins

Mark These Dates
Every Sunday–Ladies’ Bible Class will meet at 5:00 pm, in the zone room.
October 1, 2006–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
October 15, 2006–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
What Has Become of America?

Tom Wacaster

History has taught us emphatically that nations who turn their back on God are doomed to destruction. But history is not authoritative, and in this case history is not the only thing that teaches us the importance of moral and holy living on the part of her citizens. "Righteousness exalteth a nation; But sin is a reproach to any people" (Pro. 14:34). Our nation was born from the womb of a deep respect for the Bible, and nurtured and reared on godly principles set forth in the pages of Sacred Writ. The first century, while still in her youth, she rose to great strength. But that strength was not because of her armies, or her ingenuity. Her strength lie in her spiritual values and moral integrity. Our leaders respected God. Justice was meted out fairly. Common sense thinking was coupled with a knowledge of the Bible. "America the Beautiful" described more than her purple mountain majesty, her amber waves of grain, or the bountiful fruited plains. America was beautiful on the inside. But prosperity that was earned by the early settlers came to be expected by the "me" generation that followed World War II, and the bountiful blessings providentially given to us by God came to be viewed as the product of our own ingenuity and education. The Bible that once sat on the desks of her noble leaders now sits on a shelf gathering dust, or in a drawer tucked away with relics that no longer belong to an "enlightened" generation. Honesty, integrity, and responsibility have given way to greed, gain, and gusto. Corporate America consists of her World Com companies and her Enron entities who know no
limits when it comes to building financial empires off the backs of those who helped them in their climb to the top. “One nation under God” is now offensive and unconstitutional, according to the West Coast liberal judges. Prayer that once graced the lips of children in public schools, has been replaced by pornographic access via the internet at the local library under the guise of freedom of speech. Meanwhile pedophiles are following in the steps of the homosexual community in demanding their right of access to young boys and girls for their own sexual gratification and our Supreme Court has ruled that virtual pornography (that pornography generated by computer images rather than real people) is permissible under the 1st amendment of our constitution. What has become of America? To ask is to answer. A couple of years ago Judge Roy Moore, who was sued by the ACLU for displaying the Ten Commandments in his courtroom, penned the following poem:

America the Beautiful
Judge Roy Moore

America the Beautiful, or so you used to be.
Land of the Pilgrims’ pride, I’m glad they’ll never see
Babies piled in dumpsters, Abortion on demand,
Oh, sweet land of liberty, your house is built on sand.
Our children wander aimlessly, poisoned by cocaine,
Choosing to indulge their lusts, when God has said abstain.
From sea to shining sea, our Nation turns away
From the teaching of God’s love and a need to always pray.
So many worldly pastors tell lies about our Rock,
Saying God is going broke so they can fleece the flock.
We’ve kept God in our temples, how callous we have grown,
When earth is but His footstool and Heaven is His throne.
We’ve voted in a government that’s rotting at the core,
Appointing Godless Judges who throw reason out the door,
Too soft to place a killer in a well deserved tomb,
But brave enough to kill a baby before he leaves the womb.
You think that God’s not angry that our land’s a moral slum?
How much longer will He wait before His judgment comes?
How are we to face our God from Whom we cannot hide?
What then is left for us to do, but stem this evil tide?
If we who are His children will humbly turn and pray,
Seek His holy face and mend our evil way,
Then God will hear from Heaven and forgive us of our sins,
He’ll heal our sickly land and those who live within.
But America the Beautiful if you don’t, then you will see,
A sad but Holy God withdraw His hand from thee.

Was John Wesley a Campbellite?
James W. Boyd

Denominationalists like to ridicule members of the Lord’s church by calling them Campbellites. (One once answered, he had rather be a Campbellight than no light at all.) Those who believe water baptism is God’s means of the new birth are scorned by the nickname of derision.

Of course, we do not believe or practice anything by the authority of Campbell or any other man. We get what we believe from Scripture.

But was John Wesley a Campbellite? Those who know the dates of the two men will think the question foolish (Wesley, 1703-1791; Campbell, 1788-1866). But if believing that water baptism is the means of being born again makes one a Campbellite, Wesley must be one.

“By baptism we enter into covenant with God, an everlasting covenant, are admitted into the church, made members of Christ, made children of God. By water as the means, the water of baptism, we are regenerated or born again” (John Wesley).

Neither Wesley, Campbell, nor we made this true. The Scriptures teach it. Those who follow it follow truth. What do you say?

806 W Broadway St; Clarksville, TX 75426
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Marge Williams, Ella Hammac, Marilyn Hall, Alice Williams, Faye Little (Dot Dodd’s mother), Thelma Dunavant (Susan McLaughlin’s mother), Travis Busch (Bill and Pam Busch’s son), Nancy Travis (William Weekley’s daughter), Tiffany Wilkes (Fred and Rheba Stancliff’s granddaughter), Hazel Merry (Nellie Read’s sister), Pattie Agbunag (Jodi Hendrix’s friend), Sharon Lambert (Dot Lambert’s daughter-in-law), Pat Kelly (Pam Busch’s uncle), and Norman Dodd (Ray Dodd’s brother).

Reading/Invitation
September 27, 2006
Gospel Meeting with Bob Hawkins
October 4, 2006
Reading: Shelby Nall
Invitation: Carl Ayliffe

Mark These Dates
Every Sunday–Ladies’ Bible Class will meet at 5:00 pm, in the zone room.
October 1, 2006–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
October 15, 2006–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
October 15, 2006–Elders/Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
October 25, 2006–Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.
November 5, 2006–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.

Pantry Items Needed
Canned Meat
Seeing Good Days

Jerry Joseph

“For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile” (1 Pet. 3:10).

Life is a precious gift from God. As such, we must live it each day in accordance with His Will. This is the only way that truly our days can be described as good even when there are disappointments and disagreements. To have such days, we must:

**Apologize** when we do wrong. The three words, “I am sorry,” are difficult to say for those filled with pride. Think of the relationships, homes, and even congregations that have been destroyed because one who has committed sin will not humbly himself to repent (Mat. 5:23-24; 18:15-17; Luke 17:3-4).

**Accept** good advice. “Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly,...But his delight is in the law of the LORD” (Psa. 1:1-2). “The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise” (Pro. 12:15). Certainly we must be able to distinguish between foolish and wise counsel.

**Avoid** conforming to the world. “And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed” (Rom. 12:2). The world is out to mold and shape us into that which the Lord does not want. When one begins to “love” the world and “live” like the world there will not be “good days” spiritually (1 John 2:15-17).

**Act** only after thinking. Some of the problems we have in this life we have brought upon ourselves because we do not stop and think before we act or speak. We need to “taste” our words
and “weigh” the consequences of our actions before we speak and respond in some way (Phi. 4:8; Eph. 4:29; Gal. 5:19-21).

Adhere to the Word of God. God has given us, through His Word, that which we need in this life (2 Pet. 1:3). It is the Scripture that provides for and is profitable for our spiritual well-being (2 Tim. 3:16-17). As we apply daily the Word of God to our lives then we are providing the means by which we can have “good days” and ultimately a home in Heaven.

Appreciate God. Without God in our lives it is impossible to “love life, and see good days” (1 Pet. 3:10) as He desires and demands. If we do appreciate and reverence God as we should then it will be seen in our life (Ecc. 12:13). Yes, we will be “seeing good days.”

If He Repent, Forgive Him

Jerry Brewer

“If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him” (Luke 17:3-4).

Two of the most misunderstood, misused and abused words in the English language are found in the above passage. They are repent and forgive. Most of the religious world, and the secular world as well, believe repentance is simply saying, “I am sorry,” and that forgiveness must be extended to the non-repentant.

Repent

Repentance is required of all who desire God’s forgiveness (Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38). God will never forgive an unrepentant soul, nor does God expect us to. The Bible is clear about what constitutes repentance. Repentance is a change of mind, preceded by godly sorrow, and resulting in a change of life. “For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death” (2 Cor. 7:10).

This passage speaks of two kinds of sorrow—godly sorrow and the sorrow of the world. Godly sorrow brings a man to repentance, but the sorrow of the world does not. A man may be sorry he got caught in sin, but continue therein. That’s the sorrow of the world. No change of life issues from that kind of sorrow and that was demonstrated in the suicide of Judas Iscariot after he betrayed Christ. On the other hand, godly sorrow is sorrow that sees the wrongness of one’s actions in the light of God’s Word and determines to quit practicing those things. That kind of sorrow was evinced in the life of Paul who murdered Christians, but turned from that evil and obeyed Christ.

When godly sorrow takes hold of a man, he then wills to cease his sin and follow Christ. Repentance, then, is simply a change of mind that issues in a changed life. Jesus demonstrated that in His parable of the two sons. “But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to day in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went” (Mat. 21:28-29). The fact that the son later “went” was not repentance. His going to work in the vineyard was the fruit of his repentance. The difference between his going or not going is the difference between will and will not. At first, he said, “I will not.” But he later repented and went. What did he do? He changed his mind. He willed to go work in the vineyard, and when he so willed, his action demonstrated his change of will because “he repented and went.”

He could have told his father he was “sorry,”
but if he had not “went,” he would not have repented. Being sorry for sin is not repentance. Repentance is changing one’s mind, determining to quit his sin. Having done that, one’s life must then demonstrate that change of mind. That is repentance according to the Word of God.

**Forgive**

When God forgives a person, He erases that person’s guilt from His mind and no longer holds it against him. But God does not forgive anyone who will not repent, and neither does He expect man to forgive one who will not repent.

What passes for forgiveness in today’s world is more akin to toleration of sin and actually enables the sinner to continue on his downward course. To say the sinner is forgiven when he will not repent is to do what God will not do. When Jesus taught us to forgive, He placed a condition on that forgiveness “if he repent, forgive him.” God does not unconditionally forgive anyone and Christ said our forgiveness of others is conditioned upon their repentance.

To tell a sinner he is forgiven before he repents and brings forth “fruits meet for repentance” is simply toleration of sin and enables the sinner. The man who is a drunk will never be brought to repentance so long as family members tell him he is forgiven without his repentance, and provide the means for him to continue in that sin. Such toleration of sin actually sends a signal to the sinner that he can continue in his sinful ways without consequences. But though he may escape consequences in this life, he will still face eternal punishment in the world to come. To forgive one who has not repented not only endangers his soul, but places the soul of the one who forgives in jeopardy.

Jesus said one who sins must be rebuked. If he repents and changes his will toward sin and demonstrates such in a changed life—then we not only can, but must forgive him. But if, after he is rebuked, he simply says, “I’m sorry,” and continues in his practice of sin, he has not repented. In that case, man not only cannot, but must not tell that sinner he is forgiven. To do so, makes the one who “forgives” a partaker of his evil deed (2 John 9-11).

Those of us who are members of churches of Christ have been accused of being unforgiving. That is not so. Not only can we forgive the penitent soul, but God requires us to forgive him. But those who so accuse us generally have no idea that in order for anyone to scripturally forgive a sinner, the sinner must first repent. If he does not, he can neither be forgiven by God nor man. If he repent, forgive him.

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**About That Outfit...**

**Tim Smith**

“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” (1 Tim. 2:9-10). Christians: please remember that God did not set the temperature in Southeast Alabama to encourage you to wear immodest clothing. No matter the mercury, His faithful people will dress in a way that is proper and never in a way that is improper. If the outfit you wear is improper, it says something about your dedication to the Lord and your commitment to right living. Think about it...may God bless you as you study and obey His Word.

308 South Oklahoma Ave; Elk City, OK 73644

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1272 Enon Road Webb, AL 36376
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Marge Williams, Ella Hammac, Marilyn Hall, Alice Williams, Iris Gallaher (W. Florida Hospital), Faye Little (Dot Dodd’s mother), Thelma Dunavant (Susan McLaughlin’s mother), Travis Busch (Bill and Pam Busch’s son), Nancy Travis (William Weekley’s daughter), Tiffany Wilkes (Fred and Rheba Stancliff’s granddaughter), Hazel Merry (Nellie Read’s sister), Pattie Agbunag (Jodi Hendrix’s friend), Pat Kelly (Pam Busch’s uncle), and Norman Dodd (Ray Dodd’s cousin).

Baptized
Glen Brower was baptized into Christ on September 23. He has placed membership with the Bellview congregation. His address is: 4425 Lillian Highway; Pensacola, FL 32506. His telephone number is 456-6474. Please keep Glen in your prayers.

Reading/Invitation
October 4, 2006
Reading: Shelby Nall
Invitation: Carl Ayliffe
October 11, 2006
Reading: Elward Brantley
Invitation: Henry Born

Mark These Dates
Every Sunday—Ladies’ Bible Class will meet at 5:00 pm, in the zone room.
October 15, 2006—Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
Those words, often uttered in prayer, make up a proper request. We all should desire to be stronger spiritually (2 Pet. 3:18). We should indeed long for growth (1 Pet. 2:1ff). Let us examine this prayer request, as well as our attitude and efforts toward spiritual growth.

What would you think of a man who prayed, “God, please help me not to lose my job,” and then that same man slept in and was late to work every day? I have heard both men and women who say they want to be stronger spiritually. I have heard some say they want to know the Bible better. I have heard some folks piously sing, “More, More About Jesus.” And then I have seen the very same souls skip Bible classes on Sunday and Wednesday. Any wonder why there is no growth???

When one’s attendance at worship assemblies is “hit and miss,” then that person will exhibit spiritual stagnation. When a tree in the orchard does not grow, we give it extra attention. When a Christian does not grow, we try to give some extra attention as concerned brethren. After all, we have an obligation to build up each other. “So then let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another” (Rom. 14:19).

Your brethren cannot help you grow if you do not engage in really challenging, serious Bible study. Some brothers and sisters have been in the church for 10 years or more and never yet made 10 pages of study notes. Folks, casual reading of the Bible is not Bible study. We cannot edify you if you are not in the

“And Dear God, Please Help Me to Grow...”

Lynn Parker
assembly of the saints on a regular basis. If students at public school attended like some of my brethren attend the worship assembly, they would be charged with truancy!

We cannot help you grow if you persist in saying, “This is not a convenient time” or employing similar excuses. Everyone is busy. Everyone has more to do than week to get it done. Still, if heaven is really important to you, you will make time to sit down and study. We have the teachers. We have a strong desire to see you grow. We can come to your house and spend an hour a week in diligent study with you. We are ready. Still, we cannot help you grow if you never make an effort or lift a finger. We will make the time—will you?

You cannot grow to be like Christ if you still wallow in sinful company and activities. One brother went to “Hooters” restaurant for years (not a place known for wholesome company but rather known for its party-like atmosphere and scantily-clad waitresses). After his “conversion” (?), he continued the same practice. Need I say that he continues to this day to be lukewarm and useless in the kingdom? One family in the church (the father was a deacon in the congregation) regularly rented “R” rated, trashy movies for “family entertainment.” It should not surprise anyone that families are not growing to be more like the Savior when they dine on immorality. If you are serious about growth, clean up your life, throw out the debris, and keep company with spiritually strong folks who will help you go to heaven.

It is impossible for you to grow if you will not do the things that make for growth. Enough with wasted months and years. No more excuses. Are you ready to grow? Do you hunger for spiritual nourishment? It is here for you. We love you. We will help. God has provided the plan to make growth a reality. All that is lacking is you. Do not ask God to help you grow if you will not do your part. Are you willing? Let us grow!

1650 Gander Slough Rd; Kingsbury, TX 78638

Who Is on the Lord’s Side?

Marvin L. Weir

Last Lord’s Day morning I preached as sermon by the above title. It is a challenging and soul-searching question that every person needs to seriously consider. There is coming a day of reckoning—a day of judgment—when every knee will bow and every tongue will confess “that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phi. 2:10-11). We are commanded to love God with all our heart, soul, and mind (Mat. 22:37). We are required to “seek...first his kingdom, and his righteousness” (Mat. 6:33). We must possess the attitude of the Savior and always worship and serve only the true and living God (Mat. 4:10; John 4:24). One is not able to divide his loyalties between “two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to one, and despise the other” (Mat. 6:24).

It is, therefore, of utmost importance as to who is on the Lord’s side. You will remember that when Moses did not return from the mount when the people thought he should (cf. Isa. 55:8-9), they asked Aaron to make them gods to go before them (Exo. 32:1). Aaron complied with the people’s request (Exo. 32:2-6) and then in attempting to defend his willful sin seeks to place the blame on the people and the fire (Exo. 32:22-24). A tremendous lesson that all need to learn is that each person is responsible for his own deeds (2 Cor. 5:10). No one inherits the sins
of someone else, but the soul that chooses to sin will die unless he repents (turns from) that sin (Eze. 18:20; Luke 13:3).

We live in a society today where the majority of folks refuse to accept the responsibility for their actions. Most people want to pin the blame for their sins on someone else. So many always see their sins and shortcomings as the fault of something or someone else. Some are convinced the government owes them a living and thus blame the government for all their troubles. Children blame their parents, parents blame their children, a wife blames her husband, and a husband blames his wife. Juries play the game by blaming the gun instead of the one who commits the murder. The cry is then heard by those who refuse to think or reason either logically or correctly, “Ban firearms; outlaw guns.” Do these same people take the position that it is not the fault of the arsonist but the fault of the match? Is gasoline at fault that arsonists use? Do we hear demands that we ban matches and gasoline? Surely one can see the truth that those guilty of sin cannot successfully pin the blame for their wickedness on something or someone else. One can overcome his environment, but one’s environment cannot overcome a person who is determined to make right choices!

Some today claim to be on the Lord’s side without having any knowledge of what the Bible teaches. How can one claim to be a follower of the Lord and not know the Lord’s teachings? Time and time again when trying to teach others a doctrinal truth they say, “I did not know that was in the Bible.” One must “give diligence [study—KJV] to present...[himself] approved unto God” (2 Tim. 2:15). How can one be one the Lord’s side and not even know what the Bible has to say about a religious or spiritual matter?

How can one be on the Lord’s side without doing what the Lord said do to be saved? Most people today believe they are saved because they claim they have had some “religious experience.” Have you tried searching the Scriptures to see if they say that having a “religious experience” is the way that one puts on Christ (cf. Gal. 3:27)? Does salvation come by a “religious experience,” or is it true that “he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” (Mark 16:16)? Does “belief or faith only” justify one who so believes even though James writes “that by works a man is justified, and not only by faith” (Jam. 2:24)? One can believe on Christ, but refuse to confess it because he thinks more of man’s teaching than he does of God’s teaching (John 12:42-43). One is not on the Lord’s side who claims to have faith but steadfastly refuses to do what the Lord says one must do (Jam. 1:22).

One can be on the Lord’s side only if he submits to and obeys the Lord’s will. After the golden calf incident Moses said, “Whoso is on Jehovah’s side, let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him” (Exo. 32:26). It does no good to claim to be on the Lord’s side and then refuse to answer His call. The Lord calls all today through the Gospel (2 Thes. 2:14). There is only one Gospel; all other so-called gospels are perversions (Gal. 1:6-7). There is only “one body” (Eph. 4:4), and the Holy Scripture declares that “the church” is “his body” (Eph. 1:22-23). How can one claim to be on the Lord’s side while a member of a man-made Church that the Savior did not build and thus is not His body (Mat. 16:18)?

One is not on the Lord’s side who calls Him “Lord” and then refuses to do what He says to do (Luke 6:46). If one is not for Christ he is against Him (Mat. 12:30). Are you on the Lord’s side? Are you sure?

815 42nd Street SW; Paris, TX 75460
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Marge Williams, Ella Hammac, Marilyn Hall, Alice Williams, Iris Gallaher (W. Florida Hospital, cards only), Faye Little (Dot Dodd’s mother), Thelma Dunavant (Susan McLaughlin’s mother), Travis Busch (Bill and Pam Busch’s son), Nancy Travis (William Weekley’s daughter), Tiffany Wilkes (Fred and Rheba Stancliff’s granddaughter), Hazel Merry (Nellie Read’s sister), Patie Agbunag (Jodi Hendrix’s friend), Pat Kelly (Pam Busch’s uncle), and Norman Dodd (Ray Dodd’s cousin).

Reading/Invitation
October 11, 2006
Reading: Elward Brantley
Invitation: Henry Born
October 18, 2006
Reading: Ray Dodd
Invitation: Paul Brantley

Mark These Dates
Every Sunday—Ladies’ Bible Class will meet at 5:00 pm, in the zone room.
October 8, 2006—Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
October 15, 2006—Visitiation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
October 15, 2006—Elders/Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
October 25, 2006—Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.

Pantry Items Needed
Canned Meat
The Three Bears

Carl B. Garner

Once upon a time...oops. No, that is not the material we want to study today. The story of the mama bear and papa bear and the girl who slept in the wrong bed is entertaining, but Paul’s inspired instruction in Galatians 6 has eternal ramifications. Three times in that chapter Paul used the word bear. Each time it was to provide the guidance for life so needed by Christians.

*Bear Ye One Another’s Burdens*

Life on this old earth often brings obstacles and burdens that are almost too great for us to bear. All of us face this problem from time to time, but we must not allow our burdens to blind us to the needs of others. Christians are told to be ready to help shoulder the load that is too heavy for another. One of the saddest verses in the Bible is Psalm 142:4: “I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul.” In danger of death at the hands of Saul, David despaired, writing these words. Of course David knew that God cared for him as well as others. When we reach this point of despair, it is wise to remember the words of Moses in Deuteronomy 31:6: “Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, he is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.” Remembering God cares for us motivates us to “bear one another’s burdens.” Galatians 6:1 shows one way in which we may do this: “Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.”
What greater burden can we help others bear than to take away their sin?

**Every Man Shall Bear His Own Burden**

This may sound contradictory, but it admonishes us to realize that each person has responsibilities that no one else can carry for him. The word translated *burden* here is not the same as in verse two. Here it is *phortion*, the word used to describe the soldier’s pack, the load that must be each person’s own responsibility. While we need and should seek help in times of tragedy or loss, there are some burdens we alone must bear.

Jesus told a parable in Matthew 25 about five young maidens who went to a wedding feast. They were not properly prepared, however, and when the bridegroom came with the bride, they were excluded from the celebration. They had attempted to borrow from others, but there are some things no one can borrow.

When that time of accounting comes, each person must answer for his own life and his own actions (2 Cor. 5:10). We will not be judged collectively, as in a family or congregation. Each individual will be judged, and no one can bear the burden of our responsibility. Note the words of Revelation 20:12-15:

> And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. ...and they were judged every man according to their works.... And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

Jesus Christ bore our sins on the cross, but that does not relieve us of our own individual responsibility. Each of us must bear his own burden.

**Bear...the Marks of the Lord Jesus**

Being a Christian is not without its price. That’s why Jesus said we must count the “cost” (Luke 14:15-33). Paul said, “I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus” (Gal. 6:17). We also must bear the mark of being His disciple, of following in His steps (1 Pet. 2:21-22). What other marks must we bear as a Christian?

1. **Concern for lost souls.** Not only by evangelism, but by encouraging and even correcting Christians who stray from the pathway to life.
2. **Compassion for those with heavy burdens.** The parable of the Sheep and Goats of Matthew 25 reveals the imperative of giving assistance to those in need.
3. **Humility.** A trait common to those who bear their cross is that of humility, recognizing and regretting their own weakness and sin. Boasting and pride are hardly compatible with this quality.
4. **Responsibility, Maturity.** Paul encouraged Christians to grow, be mature in their attitudes and acts. When a duty is given, the mature person will do whatever it takes to accomplish that task.
5. **Doing good to all men.** Luke said Jesus “went about doing good” (Acts 10:38), and in Galatians 6:10 we read, “As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.” This trait must abound in Christians.

### What Does it Mean to Be “Issue Oriented”?

**Tom Wacaster**

Occasionally I will hear someone make the comment that those who are adamant regarding issues that face the Lord’s church are “issue oriented.” *Funk and Wagnalls* defines “issue” as “a matter of importance to be resolved.”

*Webster* says it is “the point or matter depending in a suit on which two parties join and put their cause to trial.” Oriented means “the determining of one’s position with reference to circumstances, ideals, etc” (*Funk and Wagnalls*).

Hence, to be “issue oriented” is to “determine one’s position and put that cause to trial or to the test.” Since the Christian has the obligation to “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good” (1 Thes. 5:21), it stands to reason that there will always be issues facing the Lord’s church.

And, since we have the obligation to “sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you” (1 Pet. 3:15), that we are therefore *oriented* in giving a defense for the faith once for all delivered to the saints (Jude 3).

While it is possible to become so imbalanced that we are cynical about the Lord’s church and its future, we must face the fact that so long as the church exists that we are going to have to face the issues that come our way. To do otherwise is to abdicate our responsibility.

A negative connotation has been attached to the words “issue oriented.” This *label* is used by critics to hush the mouths of those who still love the truth while making the unsuspecting believe that there is something inherently evil in dealing with issues. None would be so bold as to suggest that all issues should be ignored, since even the most liberal change agent will take us to task on the issue of being issue oriented. The question arises, then, as to when our dealing with issues becomes imbalanced. I suggest to you that any issue, and every issue that comes down the pike is an issue that cannot be ignored and must be dealt with forthrightly. If the truth is at stake we cannot and will not remain silent. The only alternative is to ignore the issues and allow the church to be swept into apostasy.

It is my studied conviction that at least one reason why the Lord’s church is so troubled today is that too many brethren have simply grown weary of fighting the battle. Consequently false teachers have crossed the threshold, and are in the midst of the flock having a heyday. Meanwhile too many elderships and preachers sit back and do nothing for fear that they might be perceived as being “issue oriented.” Yes, it is possible to become so consumed with the issues that face the Lord’s church that we become cynical and never hold out any hope to God’s people. But the desire to provide hope and peace cannot drive us to ignore the issues that would in fact rob us of that hope and peace by leading us into error.

806 W Broadway St; Clarksville, TX 75426
Sick

Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Marge Williams, Ella Hammac, Marilyn Hall, Alice Williams, Iris Gallaher (West Florida Hospital CCU, cards only), Nellie Read (Tandem Rehab), Rubye Bailey, Faye Little (Dot Dodd’s mother), Thelma Dunavant (Susan McLaughlin’s mother), Nancy Travis (William Weekley’s daughter), Tiffany Wilkes (Fred and Rheba Stancliff’s granddaughter), Hazel Merry (Nellie Read’s sister), and Pattie Agbunag (Jodi Hendrix’s friend).

Sympathy

Our deepest sympathy is extended to Ray Dodd in the death of his sister Millie and his cousin Norman. Please keep Ray and his family in your prayers.

Reading/Invitation

October 18, 2006
Reading: Ray Dodd
Invitation: Paul Brantley

October 25, 2006
Reading: Andrew Hatcher
Invitation: Bill Busch

Mark These Dates

Every Sunday–Ladies’ Bible Class will meet at 5:00 pm, in the zone room.
October 15, 2006–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
October 15, 2006–Elders/Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
October 25, 2006–Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.
Every so often something happens in the church that catches attention and makes an indelible mark on hearts. That happened several years ago while I was working with the Lord’s church in Spring, TX. I have purposely withheld the names involved although the Spring congregation will recognize the letter.

Here is what happened. A father and mother allowed their teenage Christian daughter to leave home on a school-related trip for the weekend. The trip required that the teen absent herself from the worship assembly on Sunday morning. In retrospect, not one of these three family members felt altogether comfortable with the decision. Sunday morning came and went. The church assembled—the daughter did not. When she returned home Sunday afternoon, the three discussed the decision in light of Bible teachings. After careful thought, a letter was presented to the elders and later read to the church. Here is that letter:

To the elders and the Spring congregation:

The book of Hebrews teaches us that the sum of all is that in Christ there is a better covenant and far better sacrifice. Our joyful confidence in Christ is that we can now enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus. Hence, the brethren are encouraged strongly to hold to the blessings available in Christ to the saving of the soul. And this includes, “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” (Hebrews 10:25). Concerning these matters, (father’s name), (mother’s name) and (daughter’s name) would like to confess a fault. (Father) and (Mother) allowed (daughter) to attend a school function in San Antonio over the weekend that caused (daughter) to miss Sunday morning services. We realize that our decision to do so was not in keeping with God’s will concerning the assembling of ourselves together. For this we ask forgiveness and your prayers on our behalf. We also wish to express our gratitude for the exhortation received from those who love our souls.

I asked the family involved if they would let me use this letter as a teaching tool. Their attitude was: “Use it in any way that will help others.” They were humble and gracious enough to tell me to use their names if I chose to do so.

During more than a few years of preaching now I have seen a number of parents who allowed or even encouraged their children to put anything and everything before the Lord and His church. Some get very defensive about their misplaced priorities. These same parents are convinced that their children can do no wrong—even when, in fact, they do.

What was so remarkable about this particular family? Several things. This family is known for being faithful. They will not again let school trips take priority over the Lord. These people are lovers of truth. They are tender-hearted, not rebellious and willful. When they did the wrong thing, they were penitent and humble. There was no effort to point fingers or shift blame. They did not try to evade the problem or justify sin. When they realized their wrong, they did everything in their power to make things right. They did not jump up in a huff, take their marbles (move their membership) and run down the road to the Church of the Disgruntled Malecontents. Their response was of a nobler and higher kind. It spoke of spiritual maturity. It swallowed pride and preached a powerful lesson for all to hear and see. God bless this fine family! Every congregation needs families like this one. I will not forget their fine example.

1650 Gander Slough Rd; Kingsbury, TX 78638

The Judgment

Curtis L. E. Graves

In this article I want to look at a few points on the judgment and give Scripture reference for those points. The fact that there will be a judgment is sure. “Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead” (Acts 17:31). Everyone will stand before the Righteous Judge and hear His pronouncements of condemnation or salvation. Because of this fact it is necessary that we prepare ourselves for this great day. The judgment of God has been given unto His Son. “For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son:... And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man” (John 5:22, 27). “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” (Rom. 8:3). God has chosen the perfect Judge. The judgment of Christ will be a righteous judgment. “Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all
For judgment to be righteous there must be a standard by which judgment is made. That standard is the truth of God’s Word, the Bible. “Before the LORD: for he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth” (Psa. 96:13). “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth” (John 17:17; also read Rom. 2:2, 8-9, 16). The righteous judgment of God will be according to each person’s work. “And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man’s work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear” (1 Pet. 1:17). “And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works” (Rev. 20:12-13). The judgment is not something to fear if we have prepared ourselves by living each day according to God’s standard, the Bible (Heb. 5:8-9). Have you?

Helping Your Song Leader

Tim Smith

What can I do to help my song leader? Most song leaders are not paid by the congregation for which they lead singing, and indeed, most congregations of the Lord’s people have more than one man who will lead. While they are performing their duties to the Lord by using their talents in His service and to His glory, we still should appreciate the service they provide Him and us enough to wish to help them in every way we can. Let us notice a few of the ways in which we can help him.

First, I can sing! Silence is not singing. When the song is being led, participate fully! Raise your voice to His glory and to the edification of those around you (cf., Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). You need not worry about tone or tune, the primary concern in congregational singing is the message. Read the book and sing the words.

Second, I can follow the leader! The leader is the man standing before the crowd—follow him. When he starts, you start. When he speeds up, you speed up. When he slows down, you slow down. Follow him.

Third, I can encourage him! Tell him of his good work. Tell him that you appreciate him and his efforts. Even though not everyone is perfect in tone and tune, those who are willing to lead are worthy of our encouragement.
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Marge Williams, Ella Hammac, Marilyn Hall, Alice Williams, Iris Gallaher (West Florida Hospital), Nellie Read, Rubye Bailey, Faye Little (Dot Dodd’s mother), Thelma Dunavant (Susan McLaughlin’s mother), Nancy Travis (William Weekley’s daughter), Tiffany Wilkes (Fred and Rheba Stancliff’s granddaughter), Hazel Merry (Nellie Read’s sister), and Pattie Agbunag (Jodi Hendrix’s friend).

Reading/Invitation
October 25, 2006
Reading: Andrew Hatcher
Invitation: Bill Busch
November 1, 2006
Reading: Daniel Hatcher
Invitation: Bill Crowe

Mark These Dates
Every Sunday–Ladies’ Bible Class will meet at 5:00 pm, in the zone room.
October 25, 2006–Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.
November 5, 2006–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
November 19, 2006–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
November 19, 2006–Elders/Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
November 22, 2006–Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.

Pantry Items Needed
Canned Meat
Recently I read of an entry found in an old church record of a business meeting. It stated: “A committee was appointed to investigate the squeak in the pulpit.” Upon reading this, I could not help but think that today’s world, even today’s church, desperately needs more than a squeak coming from the pulpit. Now, as much as ever, we need the clear tones of the Gospel resounding from our pulpits.

We are hearing far too much about churches who are selling out to the culture. The distinctive preaching of New Testament Christianity is seldom if ever heard in some pulpits. Sermons that challenge our morals, expound our doctrine, question our ethics, and rebuke our mediocrity are exchanged for sermons that have an air of religiosity, but are lacking in substance.

In 1 Chronicles 12:32 it was said of some of God’s children that they “understood the times.” There remains a multitude of God’s children who understand the times. They understand that now is not the time for a squeak in the pulpit. There are many godly elders and godly Christians who are demanding to hear more than a squeak from the pulpit. They have not bought into the idea that distinctive preaching has harmed the church. They want substance over style and flair. They want truth over entertainment. They want biblical authority over pragmatism. And they would rather have the sometimes bitter truth over a watered-down Gospel. To put it in the words of John MacArthur, they realize that the weakness of the pulpit today does not stem from frantic cranks who harangue about hell; it is the result of
men who compromise and who fear to speak God’s Word powerfully, with conviction.

There are many challenges that face the church today. If we are to rise up to the occasion and defeat our adversary, we must have strong pulpts—pulpits that will speak the truth in season and out of season, with all the love they can muster; pulpts that will not compromise the truth; pulpts that do more than just squeak!

Copied

The Lord’s Supper Is Not to Be Mixed with Social Events

Marvin L. Weir

It is amazing to observe the steps man will take to please himself. It is even more amazing to note the steps man will not take to please the Lord! We now have a generation of young folks who are members of the church of Christ that neither know nor care about sacred matters. Such is true because their parents have failed to teach them the way of the Lord (Deu. 6:6-9; Eph. 6:3; 2 Tim. 3:15). The congregations they attend specialize in the felt needs approach and ridicule respect for a “thus saith the Lord.”

One must ever be careful not to make vain a spiritual act. Guy N. Woods makes this noteworthy statement: “The phrase ‘in vain,’ translates a Hebrew term signifying that which is done in a flippant, frivolous fashion, without due regard for, or attention to, the sacred nature of the same.” Thus, an act of worship to be engaged in on the Lord’s Day as a memorial of our Lord and His sufferings in death for our sins is not to be implemented at will as dramatic appeal at social events!

The Lord’s Supper is a memorial of the death of Christ for our sins. Jesus instituted the Lord’s Supper saying, “And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it; and he gave to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took a cup, and gave thanks, and gave to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many unto remission of sins. But I say unto you, I shall not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom” (Mat. 26:26-29). The kingdom of God came with power (Mark 9:1) on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4). The day of Pentecost was always the next day after a certain Sabbath (Lev. 23:15-16), and the Sabbath was the seventh day (Exo. 20:10). In Acts 20:7 the apostle Paul waited to “break bread” (a reference to the Lord’s Supper) on the first day of the week. Paul warned the Corinthians who had assembled on the Lord’s Day: “Wherefore whosoever shall eat the bread or drink the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. But let a man prove himself, and so let him eat of the bread, and drink of the cup. For he that eateth and drinketh, eateth and drinketh judgment unto himself, if he discern not the body” (1 Cor. 11:27-29).

The Lord’s Supper is a memorial of the Lord’s death (1 Cor. 11:26—not His burial and resurrection) and we are told in the Holy Scriptures when, where, why, and how we are to partake. It is now becoming quite common to hear that young married couples are partaking of the Lord’s Supper at their wedding ceremony. Many congregations wearing the name church of Christ evidently think this blatant abuse of the Lord’s
Supper is a wonderful thing. A wedding ceremony is a social event and not a part of our worship to the Lord on the first day of the week. Brethren, we dare not mix the two together as there is absolutely no scriptural authority to do so! A wedding ceremony may include a feast (John 2), but not the Lord’s Supper.

In a marriage ceremony, those who have a God-given right to marry become “one flesh” (Mat. 19:5-6). Oneness in Christ, however, can be possible only if both the man and woman have obeyed the precious Gospel. It cannot be made more clear than did Paul when he said, “For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ. There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female; for ye all are one man in Christ Jesus. And if ye are Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, heirs according to promise” (Gal. 3:26-29).

As has already been mentioned, it now seems to be rather stylish for those professing to be Christians to celebrate the Lord’s supper after being united in marriage. The truth of the matter is that there is absolutely no biblical authority for partaking of the Lord’s Supper at a wedding ceremony. One is authorized by God’s Word to partake of the Lord’s supper only on the first day of the week (Sunday) at a Lord’s Day worship assembly of the saints. To do otherwise, is to take a sacred act of worship and treat it in a selfish, flippant, frivolous fashion to satisfy a human whim. In 1 Corinthians 11:20 the entire congregation of the Lord’s people had assembled together to worship God. Each member would partake of the Lord’s Supper. The Lord’s Supper is to be observed only on Sunday and is never to be incorporated into a wedding ceremony (or any other social event) whether observed by many people or by only two people.

May we carefully consider the seriousness of making mockery of sacred acts of worship. The Lord will not hold him guiltless who does such. When people once again desire to glorify God instead of man, foolish acts such as serving communion (Lord’s Supper) at a wedding ceremony will cease to be practiced.

May we never treat sacred matters in flippant fashion!

815 42nd Street SW; Paris, TX 75460

Going to Church or to Worship?

Paul Epps

There can be a difference between going “church” and going to “worship.” The one who is just going to “church” is indifferent and careless in spiritual matters; he is lukewarm, not concerned too much about the worship and work of the church—the greatest institution upon the face of the earth. He may often come late for the services, not entering whole-heartedly into the worship. He is more or less a spectator, sitting on the sideline looking on. Yes, he says that he is a member of the church, but his heart is really not in the worship.

One who is just going to “church” may have to be pushed into attending the services. He may have to be visited quite often to induce him to come to the Bible study hour or the regular worship service.

The one who loves the Lord will be found at the church services at the usual time, unless providentially hindered. He will be living a Christian life outside of the services too. It might be well right now to ask yourself, “Do I go to worship, or do I just go to church?”

Copied
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Marge Williams, Ella Hammac, Marilyn Hall, Alice Williams, Iris Gallaher, Nellie Read, Ruby Bailey, Faye Little (Dot Dodd’s mother), Thelma Dunavant (Susan McLaughlin’s mother), Nancy Travis (William Weekley’s daughter), Hazel Merry (Nellie Read’s sister), Tiffany Wilkes (Fred and Rheba Staneliff’s granddaughter), Gloria Mitchem (Glen Brower’s mother), and Pattie Agbunag (Jodi Hendrix’s friend).

Reading/Invitation
November 1, 2006
Reading: Daniel Hatcher
Invitation: Bill Crowe
November 8, 2006
Reading: Jim Loy
Invitation: Dale Cunningham

Directory Changes
Jessie and Tiffany Janes’ new address is: 1680 Molino Road; Molino, FL 32577. Their telephone number is 587-5747. Dale Cunningham’s telephone number is 516-0518. Please update your directory.

Mark These Dates
Every Sunday–Ladies’ Bible Class will meet at 5:00 pm, in the zone room.
November 19, 2006–Elders/Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
November 22, 2006–Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.
November 29, 2006–Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.
The life span of the world’s population has increased dramatically in the last three decades. The number of centenarians in our country continues to grow at an incredible rate. The world’s oldest living person is French, with verifiable documentation of her birth in 1875; that makes her 125 years old! Without question, most of us will live longer lives than the majority of the people born in this past millennium (i.e., A.D. 1000-1999). Michael Eyquem De Montaigne, who is the author of the famous World’s Classics and who lived during the 1500s tells in his renowned essays that he “hardly met a man as old as fifty.” In our day, fifty is considered “middle age!”

This phenomenon has brought with it some rather interesting implications. For example, the age of the work force is growing older. In years gone by, most everything was done by people at an earlier time in their life because their lives were much shorter. Typically, we now enter the work force as adults, instead of children, and then continue to remain productive for many years. Many professionals are realizing the benefits of having an older and more experienced work force. A recent study conducted among 400 of the world’s outstanding achievers has determined that 35% of the world’s greatest achievements have been accomplished by people who were 60-70 years old! Those who were 70-80 years of age were responsible for 23% of the world’s achievements; and those over 80 years of age accomplished 6% of the world’s greatest achievements. This means that 64% of the
world’s greatest achievements were accomplished by those who are over 60 years of age! Imagine if these same statistics were true of Christ’s greatest achievers today!

In the light of this alarming information, we can clearly see that our productive years should well surpass the age of retirement. If we have retired from our secular professions, are we remaining productive members of society? If you are a Christian, this recent trend of longer lives and productivity is also coupled with added responsibility! King Hezekiah learned this the hard way. In Isaiah 38 and 2 Kings 20, the Holy Prophets record that King Hezekiah was afflicted with a terminal illness; and in response to his cries and prayers unto Jehovah he was given an additional fifteen years to live. During these extra fifteen years Hezekiah delved into sin and made an alliance with the King of Babylon. Let it never be so, “Senior Saint,” that in your “twilight years” you make the unfortunate mistake of forging an alliance with the world. Brethren, we would be wise to learn from the Holy Writ regarding events in the lives of our scriptural ancestors, as Paul admonished in 1 Corinthians 10:11 and Romans 15:4!

“Senior Saints,” most of you have been released from the rigors of a grueling secular work week and have time to spare! Our younger members do not have this luxury; yet many still find time to do the Lord’s work while raising a family and trying to keep food on the table. You are free to do what you want to do, and can do it whenever you please! You deserve to enjoy your retirement years; you have worked hard for many years, and now you are free to do whatever you desire. The real question is, what does you heart desire? Naturally, you need more rest than when you were younger, and you should rest. But you should also work for the Lord with renewed commitment, because you have the time and are the most qualified for the work! You are not a neophyte Christian; you are a “Senior Saint!”

The Bible says in Hebrews 4:9-11: “There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.” Personally, I am thankful that one “Senior Saint” understood this admonition well; I was taught the truth and skillfully encouraged by a Christian who had 60 years of this world’s experiences to his account. This faithful “Senior Saint” is still very active in leading lost souls to the Savior!

Brethren, let us all give God our best, and labor “to enter into our rest!”

3802 Andrea Lane; Corpus Christi, TX 78414

It Is Time to Stop Pretending

Richard Stevens III

It is time to stop pretending, stop playing church. Stop pretending to be faithful and spiritual and become so! Now is the time to be what God wants us to be and what we profess. For some of us, the time when we were real about the Lord has escaped us, when sincerity, commitment, and dedication prevailed, and our souls were “on fire” for our God. When God had the preeminence in our lives and our godliness was elevated to an all-time high. Let us re-raise our level of commitment to our Savior so that all people might see! But, we must stop pretending!

Pretenders Are Like Children. Children have imaginary friends which we cannot see. When questioned, they respond, “They’re only
pretend.” Have you ever thought boys were fighting when they were only playing (slap boxing—a form of play)? Girls play house, pretending to be the mama and the dolls are the children, while boys pretend to be Batman and Robin, or some other super hero—it is all pretend. Paul stated, “When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things” (1 Cor. 13:11). We as accountable, mature people of God are no longer guilty of playing pretend, except in the realm of God, when we pretend to be righteous when we are not.

Pretenders Are Never Respected. When we pretend to be righteous, others most certainly will see through it. No matter how well the part is played, you will not be able to fool everyone. Just go on your job and invite everyone to church and you will soon find out what others think of you. If you are living what you profess, though some might not agree with you, they will respect you for your commitment. When you are only pretending to be spiritual, someone will confront you, and the rest will talk about you. “How dare he talk to me about commitment to a God he’s not committed to himself!” No one respects a hypocrite; oops, did I say that? I mean someone who pretends.

Pretenders Provoke The Lord. I understand hypocrite is a word that no one likes, so for the record I did not say it, Jesus Christ did. Our Lord gives the name Hypocrite to spiritual pretenders in Matthew 6:2, 5, 16. In context, they do righteous acts so that people will think they are righteous (to be seen of men). If we live unfaithfully and will not repent, but come to church on Sunday, is it not for men? So they will think we are righteous when we are not (Gal. 1:10)? In Matthew 15:7-8 hypocrites draw nigh unto God with their mouth and lips, but their hearts are far from him. They say one thing and do another (Tit. 1:16). They willfully sin daily, refuse to repent, but have the nerve to say, “He’s a mighty good God—He has brought me from a long way!” Finally, in Matthew 22:15-18 some Pharisees and Herodians were sent to “entangle him [Jesus] in his talk.” So they came pretending like they wanted to be taught by Him. How many of God’s people also pretend to want “spiritual food”? The Bible is never opened at home. They come to Bible classes late, not at all, or without a Bible. Refuse to follow along in the Bible during the sermon, or take notes. Remain obstinate and unfaithful to most of the services, even though the Word of God is opened, taught, and reasoned from. Refuse and reject sound scriptural advice and counsel from good godly brethren (Hos. 4:6; Mat. 4:4). Hey! Stop pretending and get real!!

Pretenders Never Fool God. God cannot be fooled (Ecc. 12:14; Num. 32:23; 1 Chr. 16:9; Heb. 4:13; Pro. 15:3). Do not “Play Yourself” right out of heaven! (2 Cor. 5:10; Rom. 14:12).

The Best Gifts to Give

To your friend — loyalty;
To your enemy — forgiveness;
To your boss — service;
To a child — a good example;
To your parents — gratitude and devotion;
To your mate — love and faithfulness;
To all men and women — charity;
To your God — your life.

Author Unknown
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Marge Williams, Ella Hammac, Marilyn Hall, Alice Williams, Iris Gallaher (West Florida Hospital Rehab), Nellie Read, Bill Busch, Faye Little (Dot Dodd’s mother), Thelma Dunavant (Susan McLaughlin’s mother), Nancy Travis (William Weekley’s daughter), Tiffany Wilkes (Fred and Rheta Stancliff’s granddaughter), Hazel Merry (Nellie Read’s sister), Pattie Agbunag (Jodi Hendrix’s friend), and Gloria Mitchem (Glen Brower’s mother).

Reading/Invitation
November 8, 2006
Reading: Jim Loy
Invitation: Dale Cunningham
November 15, 2006
Reading: Horace Myrick
Invitation: Ray Foshee

Mark These Dates
Every Sunday–Ladies’ Bible Class will meet at 5:00 pm, in the zone room.
November 12, 2006–Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
November 19, 2006–Elders/Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
November 22, 2006–Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.
November 29, 2006–Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.
December 10, 2006–Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.

Pantry Items Needed
Canned Meat
“Thanksgiving Day”

Tom Wacaster

It has been recorded in the pages of history, and the annals of Congress, that this nation of ours should set aside and recognize one day a year as “Thanksgiving Day.” I cannot remember a single year that has ever passed wherein I was denied the opportunity to observe this national holiday, and most of the time those days of celebration were spent with family. This month will be my 60th such occasion, even though the first dozen years are not as vivid in my memory as the past dozen. “Thanksgiving Day”! What do those words mean to you? What thoughts and memories do they conjure up in your mind?

To some, this day is one of back-to-back football games, early morning Macy’s Thanksgiving Day parade on television, and the smell of turkey cooking in the oven, and left overs at days end. To others it is nothing more than an extended weekend, an extra day at the office, or an opportunity to spend some time in a lease waiting for that deer to drop by your way so you can bag a six pointer, or tell about the one that got away. But wherever you happen to find yourself this year when our national Thanksgiving Day arrives, why not stop and think for a moment or two about the very words used to describe this fourth Thursday of November.

Thanksgiving! Permit me to divide the single word into two words: “thanks” and “giving.” And what shall we say about thanks? Thanks is the expression of gratitude to another; a recognition that blessings received derive from some greater source than ourselves. The very existence of this special day on our calendar
implies that we, the citizens of the United States, were once cognizant of a higher source of blessing than our own initiative or ingenuity. The original Thanksgiving Day proclamation saw fit to express gratitude “with grateful hearts the many and signal favors of almighty God, especially by affording them an opportunity peacefully to establish a form of government for their safety and happiness.” The God of heaven has been replaced with the god of humanism, and thanks once offered to the Almighty has been replaced with self-exaltation for our great American know-how and efficiency.

Consider next the word giving. Thanks held to oneself is not gratitude; it is ingratitude. Though I may be grateful to another for some good deed done for me, unless expressed, the giver knows not if you are grateful. I would like to know how many tables will be spread, admired, eaten and digested this Thanksgiving Day without one word of thanks being given to the God of heaven Who blessed us with such abundance? On the other hand, maybe I really do not want to know.

Finally, there is day. It is singular, not plural. Though one day has been set aside in that original Thanksgiving Day Proclamation “to be devoted by the people of these states to the service of that great and glorious Being who is the beneficent author of all the good that was, that is, or that will be,” we do not think it was the intention of President Washington, nor the Congress that approved the holiday, to limit our thanksgiving to one day in the year. Beloved, God has not set aside only one day to bless His creatures, nor should we set aside only one day out of the year to offer thanks unto Him from whom all blessings flow. The dawn of every morning should find us in reverent prayer, expressing our gratitude for the opportunity to witness yet another sunrise, to get out of bed and enjoy the day’s activities, for our health and freedoms we enjoy, and the fact that He in Whom we live, and move, and have our very being, has granted unto us this day, one in 365, to experience the beauties of life about us.

Thanks-Giving-Day! May we be grateful for all it entails, and give rise to a deeper appreciation for what we have, not only today, but every day of the year.

806 West Broadway St; Clarksville, TX 75426

A Christian Is a New Creation

Marvin L. Weir

The Ephesian brethren needed to understand that as new creatures in Christ Jesus they were to have buried the old man and his former way of life (cf. Eph. 4:22). A lack of spiritual growth and maturity will allow one to be influenced by false teachers and conquered by false doctrine. Thus, the warning by the apostle Paul to the Ephesians was that they “may be no longer children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, in craftiness, after the wiles of error” (Eph. 4:14).

Let us learn from Paul’s admonitions to the Ephesian brethren.

A new life demands a new lifestyle! One who obeys the Gospel and becomes a child of God should be raised up from the waters of baptism to walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:4). Paul taught the Corinthian brethren the same thing, saying, “Wherefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature: the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new” (2 Cor. 5:17). The Bible makes it very clear that a true change in
relationship necessitates a change in the way one lives his life. If one claims citizenship in heaven (Phi. 3:20), he cannot conduct himself according to the ways of the world. The apostle Paul drives home his point that a new life requires a new lifestyle.

The unsaved are described as having:

- **Vanity of mind**—those who are foolish and seek to live their lives without true wisdom and knowledge that comes from God (Eph. 4:17).
- **Their understanding darkened**—without true knowledge and understanding of God’s Word this becomes man’s degraded state (Eph. 4:18).
- **Hardened hearts**—repeated acts of sin renders one’s heart callused and hardened so as to be insensible (Eph. 4:18).
- **Closed minds**—a hardened heart will lead to a mind that is closed to God’s Truth.
- **Impure and greedy thoughts**—debauchery of every kind flourishes without any sign of restraint (Eph. 4:19).

Christians are to avoid those things that smack of immorality and ungodliness. Children of God must be willing to die to worldly ways and develop a spiritual lifestyle. Paul makes such clear in saying to the brethren at Rome, “knowing this, that our old man was crucified with him, that the body of sin might be done away, that we should no longer be in bondage to sin” (Rom. 6:6). Thus, members of the Lord’s church are to always cast aside the old self which includes:

- **Lying** (Eph. 4:24)—which is the opposite of truth. A “white lie” or “small lie” is unacceptable as a Christian is obligated to always speak the truth.
- **Uncontrolled anger** that leads to sin (Eph. 4:26)—one must not let anger contribute to him committing sin. There is also worldly anger and righteous anger (Mark 3:5). Righteous anger has its place, but it must not be used as an excuse to commit sin.
- **Stealing** (Eph. 4:28)—theft, swindle, and fraud are things the Christian will not participate in.
- **Corrupt communication** (Eph. 4:29)—Adam Clarke notes that this means “any word or thing obscene, anything that injures virtue, countenances vice, or scoffs at religion.”
- **Grieve not the Holy Spirit**—one grieves the Holy Spirit when he rejects or refuses to abide by the Spirit’s teaching.

Paul next reminds Christians of what the new self they should have put on will include:

- **Building up of one another** (Eph. 4:29)—encouragement and edification is necessary to help members withstand the devil’s attacks. A servant of God should not care who gets the praise. If something is accomplished for the cause of Christ, then let everyone rejoice.
- **Kindness and compassion** (Eph. 4:32)—consideration of another’s needs and a willingness to empathize and do that which is in their best spiritual interest (cf. Phi. 4:2-3). The parable of the Good Samaritan reminds us that we are to avoid the attitude of the priest and the Levite while imitating the actions of the one who had compassion for his fellow man.
- **Forgiveness** (4:32)—a spirit of forgiveness must always be manifested. Some are unwilling to forgive and this is wrong! Jesus makes this very clear in saying, “For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses” (Mat. 6:14-15). On the other hand, one cannot forgive one who does not seek forgiveness. We cannot do what God cannot do! Repentance and confession are mandatory if forgiveness is to be obtained.

Let us remember that a new life demands a new lifestyle. May we as God’s children truly die to self and the world and set our hearts on that which is above!

815 42nd Street SW; Paris, TX 75460
Sick
Please remember in your prayers:
Elaine Maxey, Marge Williams, Ella Hammac, Marilyn Hall, Alice Williams, Iris Gallaher, Rubye Bailey, Nellie Read, Faye Little (Dot Dodd’s mother), Tiffany Wilkes (Fred and Rheba Stancliff’s granddaughter), Nancy Travis (William Weekley’s daughter), Thelma Dunavant (Susan McLaughlin’s mother), Hazel Merry (Nellie Read’s sister), Pattie Agbunag (Jodi Hendrix’s friend), and Gloria Mitchem (Glen Brower’s mother).

Reading/Invitation
November 15, 2006
Reading: Horace Myrick
Invitation: Ray Foshee
November 22, 2006
Reading: Shelby Nall
Invitation: Johnny McLaughlin

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Beacon
The next several issues of the Beacon will be printed early due to the secretary recuperating from shoulder surgery.
Gifts of the Holy Spirit

Curts L. E. Graves

There is a lot of confusion about the biblical topic of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. We cannot fully discuss all of the issues of this topic in this short article, but I think that a simple, biblical study of this topic can be beneficial. The nine, individual, gifts are listed in 1 Corinthians 12:8-11. The purpose of the gifts were to qualify certain men to perform certain roles so that the development of the church could continue. These gifts were not for the purpose of personal gain for the receiver of that gift or for his friends. The gifts were imparted directly to the apostles (Acts 1:8), and only the apostles were able to impart spiritual gifts to others. Philip, the evangelist, had received gifts which helped him to preach the Word of God (Acts 8:5-25). Because of this preaching many were baptized (v. 12). However, we see that Philip, not being an apostle, was not able to impart gifts to others. This was accomplished only when Peter and John (apostles) came to Samaria.

Not every instance where we read about “laying on of hands” is an instance where spiritual gifts are given. For instance, when the church at Antioch “laid their hands” on Paul and Barnabas it was not for the purpose of giving spiritual gifts. Paul as an apostle already had those. It was for the purpose of bestowing blessings upon them and good wishes for a successful mission (see also 1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6).

A study of Ephesians 4:8-13 will show that the impartation of spiritual gifts were not to go on unendingly. When the teachings or doctrine of Christ (the New Testament) had been completed,
then the gifts of the Spirit would cease. The revelation of the faith was confirmed by the gifts of healing, working of miracles, and discerning of spirits (Heb. 2:14; 1 Cor. 13:10). When the whole (the New Testament doctrine of Christ) came; the part (the gifts of the Spirit) would be done away. “The faith” has been once for all delivered (Jude 3). We need nothing else but the Bible. To rely on other books or to seek for signs or miracles today is to lack faith in God. Yes, God could do miracles and signs today as well as He did in Paul’s day, but His Word says He has chosen another way today: “For we walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Cor. 5:7).

Clothing

Tracy Dugger

The money and time spent on fashion and clothing in our society is amazing! Of course, clothing and raiment are important needs for man’s physical welfare, and, thus, we should expect a certain amount of attention given to it. Clothing is one of the necessities of life about which faithful Christians have no reason to worry—God will provide (Mat. 6:25-30).

Thus, it should come as no surprise to us that God provided clothing for the first couple. Following the creation of Adam and Eve, before sin ever entered the picture, Moses records, “And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed” (Gen. 2:25). Consider the statement, “and were not ashamed.” They were purely spiritual in mind; in a state of innocence. Sin had not occurred. But when it entered the picture in chapter three, things changed: “And 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). Adam and Eve lost their innocence which knows nothing of nakedness, just as a child before they reach the age of awareness. The discovery of their nakedness brought on shame, which they sought to conceal by an outward covering. As a result, they sewed fig leaves together and made aprons. The word apron refers to that which girds about the loins. Verses eight through eleven reveal they were shamed to such an extent that they hid themselves from God.

Were these fig leaves sufficient for a covering? Not exactly! In verse 10, Adam stated to God, “I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.” After they had made them aprons of fig leaves, they hid themselves because they still thought they were naked. Then notice verse 21 of chapter three: “Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.” Their attire of fig leaves was evidently an inadequate covering for them. God saw that men and women needed more than a piece of cloth around the hips for a covering. They had covered the loin area, but they were still naked. God, then, covered them more fully.

In verse twenty-one of chapter three, inspiration indicates that the upper body is to be covered. Women must be extremely cautious in this. It is an established fact that the upper torso of a woman is a particularly stirring attraction to a man. Women who wear low-cut, see-through, or tight blouses are indecent and contribute to the lust of the men who covet them. Likewise, men who are proud of their physique and parade around without a shirt need to be clothed. Recall that God also made a covering for Adam’s upper body (Gen. 3:21).
Our society needs this teaching today. The immodesty of our pleasure-loving nation is shameful. One cannot even go to a restaurant without having to be subjected to the nakedness of some. But what is of greater concern is the dress of some members of the Lord’s church, not only out among those of the world but in our Bible classes and worship. Simple godly purity dictates these people reexamine their dress (or should I say, “lack of”?). The second and third chapters of Genesis provide significant information on the topic of nakedness and dress. God has not left us without a standard (2 Pet. 1:3)! We wish to make another point on the subject of clothing. Just as God has provided for the proper attire of man’s physical body that we might live pure and godly, He has also provided the proper clothing for man’s sin-tainted soul. Paul explained, “For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ” (Gal. 3:27). Just as one is clothed with a garment, one clothes himself with Christ in baptism. Obviously, to “put on Christ” is synonymous with being saved. This spiritual idea of being *clothed* with salvation is not exclusively a New Testament theme. In Isaiah 61:10, inspiration states, “I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.”

The one clothed with salvation goes through a transformation and refuses to conform to the way of the world (Rom. 12:1-2). Attitudes and values change. The inner person is emphasized. Peter has this in mind when he says, “Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price” (1 Pet. 3:3-4). The person described here gives strict attention to both her physical and spiritual dress, making sure the inner person is pure and holy but at the same time portraying a pure and holy outer image. Let us resolve to dress in a manner well-pleasing to our holy God, especially when we have put on the clothing of salvation by being baptized into Christ (Gal. 3:27).

### Watch out for Song Leaders

A preacher and a song leader in a certain church were not getting along. This began to spill over into the worship service. One week the preacher preached on commitment, and how we should dedicate ourselves to service. The song leader then led the song, “I Shall Not Be Moved.”

The next Sunday, he preached on giving and how we should gladly give to God. The song leader then led the song, “Jesus Paid It All.”

The next Sunday, he preached on gossip and how we should watch our tongues. The song leader led, “I Love to Tell The Story.”

The preacher became disgusted over the situation, and the next Sunday told the congregation he was considering resigning. The song leader led the song, “Oh, Why Not Tonight.”

The preacher resigned the next week and informed the church that it was Jesus that brought him there and it was Jesus that was taking him away. The song leader led, “What A Friend We Have in Jesus.”
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Marge Williams, Ella Hammac, Marilyn Hall, Alice Williams, Iris Gallaher, Rubye Bailey, Nellie Read, Faye Little (Dot Dodd’s mother), Tiffany Wilkes (Fred and Rheda Stancliff’s granddaughter), Nancy Travis (William Weekley’s daughter), Thelma Dunavant (Susan McLaughlin’s mother), Hazel Merry (Nellie Read’s sister), Pattie Agbunag (Jodi Hendrix’s friend), and Gloria Mitchem (Glen Brower’s mother).

Reading/Invitation
November 22, 2006
Reading: Shelby Nall
Invitation: Johnny McLaughlin
November 29, 2006
Reading: Elward Brantley
Invitation: Will McLaughlin

Mark These Dates
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Beacon
The next several issues of the *Beacon* will be printed early due to the secretary recuperating from shoulder surgery.
“An Empty Wagon Going Nowhere”

Tom Wacaster

This past week (when this was penned) has been a week of festivity in honor of the Hindu God. Worship services to that idol occur daily, extending into the late hours of the night during this week long festivity. It is sad to see such devotion to a false god. In contrast it is rewarding to see those who hear the truth and turn away from that false system of worship to serve the true and living God.

There is one interesting feature of this week long festivity that caught my interest. During the week gifts are given to this false Hindu god, and at the end of the week’s festivity, the idol is placed on a wagon, and taken to the river and thrown in the river, along with the treasures and gifts that were given by the devotees of the idol. Many people die attempting to recover some of the treasures that are cast into the river with the idol. Every town has a number of these idols, and so when these false gods are put on the wagons, the procession can be quite lengthy.

We were returning from a late night preaching appointment and passed one of those wagons that had evidently made its way to the river and was now returning to town. The decorations still draped the wagon, but the idol was gone. Gone too were the merrymaking, singing and dancing, and loud musical procession that accompanied the wagon on its way to the river. And I thought to myself, “An empty wagon going nowhere.” That adequately describes the essence of the Hindu religion. While it may carry a colorful idol, and be draped with ribbons, and surrounded with singing and dancing, it is really an empty...
wagon going nowhere. It is empty, vain, and futile, whether it is going to or coming from the river.

Many a life can be described with the same words. All of us are on the road to eternity. Some travel the narrow way; while others march with the multitudes down that broad path that leads to eternal ruin. Some, like the Hindu idol, are surrounded with wealth, merriment, and pleasure. Some are devotees to false religion; others to no religion at all. Multitudes are marching in the long dark night of spiritual darkness to eternal separation from God. With no awareness of their lost condition, they march on. Like that idolatrous procession going to the river, the masses of humanity are marching toward the river that will forever separate them from the God Who created them and loves them. And so many of them could easily have the epitaph engraved upon their tombstone: “An empty wagon going nowhere.” How sad!

806 W Broadway St; Clarksville, TX 75426

The Lord’s Supper Under Attack

Johnny O. Trail

Problems that plague the New Testament church continue to grow like kudzu. Over the last few months, much has been said and written about communion, which has caused the faithful to pause in disbelief toward those who twist the true meaning of the Lord’s supper.

Recently I participated in an email discussion with a man who was arguing that the unleavened bread of the Lord’s supper is really symbolic of the church. This argument may seem incredible, but this is the very position that some professors in our Christian universities are taking. They argue from 1 Corinthians 11:29 that “discerning of the Lord’s body” refers to partaking of the Lord’s supper in a manner that dishonors the members of the church. They try to maintain this position by arguing that the verses preceding this (1 Cor. 11:18-22) refer to the members of the church at Corinth who dishonored one another by, among other things, not coming together at the same time to partake of the Lord’s supper (v. 18). This is a gigantic leap for one to take in determining what the meaning of the body is in verse 24.

To what does the unleavened bread in verse 24 refer? As Jesus and His apostles partook of the Lord’s supper in the upper room, he explained what the emblems represented. In Luke 22:19, the Lord gave the apostles the unleavened bread and said, “This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.” The body “which is given for you” cannot possibly refer to the church. Did the church die for itself? Jesus died for the church according to Acts 20:28.

Moreover, in three of the accounts of Jesus’ life, He made reference to the bread as His body (Mat. 26:26; Mark 14:22; Luke 22:19). He told them to take and eat the bread, which He gave to them. Were they eating the bread as a symbol of Christ’s body or as the church? The answer is obvious—the bread of which they partook was symbolic of the Lord’s physical body.

The effort to re-interpret what the term body means in 1 Corinthians 11:29 is an attempt to redefine the manner in which one observes the Lord’s supper. Many are arguing for a more “communal” observation.

This communal observation would include a common meal in which the participants partake of the bread (leavened or unleavened), fruit of the vine, and, possibly, dessert. Where does one find authority to make the Lord’s supper a common meal let alone having dessert at the end?"
This discussion merely touches the hem of the garment concerning the error that many are teaching about the Lord’s supper. Some have started to argue that one must partake of the Lord’s supper on Sunday, but it would also be acceptable to partake of it on any other day of the week. Still, others have started to offer the Lord’s supper at weddings.

We need to weep about such problems in the church, and we must stand firm to defend what God’s Word teaches about communion and other topics that are currently under attack.

Endnotes

1 John Mark Hicks, Come To The Table: Revisioning the Lord’s Supper. “However, there is another, and more preferable, understanding. To ‘discern the body’ means to discern the church as a community. It is a directive regarding the communal meaning of the Lord’s supper. To discern the body is to partake of the supper in a way that bears witness to not only the unity of the body of Christ (church) but also to the koinonia (fellowship) of that body which transcends all social and economic barriers” (p. 123).

2 Hicks argues that the discernment of the body means that the church needs to restore the “table as a meal.”

In latter chapters, Hicks discusses the manner in which some would like to “revision the Lord’s supper.” He avers, “The Woodmont Hills Family of God in Nashville, Tennessee organized a home-based hospitality experience in order to eat the Lord’s supper in the context of a meal. The hospitality groups were formed for the purpose of sharing the Lord’s supper as a meal with four to eight families (10-20 people, including children) on a Sunday evening” (Ibid., p. 126).

At the end of the Lord’s supper, Hicks suggests that those partaking of the communion finish by serving “dessert” (p. 165). Hicks ends up suggesting what Paul strictly forbids. The Corinthians were condemned for turning the Lord’s supper into a common meal. 1 Corinthians 11:10-22 says, “When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord’s supper. For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken. What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not.”

Progress

R. L. Whiteside

Recently I heard a man, a Baptist preacher, make a short talk over the radio on progress. He spoke of what some people called progress—always going on, advancing. But he said that to make real progress we sometimes had to go back; and he used the prodigal son as an illustration. He did not say so, but he could have said that all the time the boy was away from home he was slipping—losing his money, worse than wasting his time, and destroying his self-respect and his manhood. Yes, to make any progress he had to go back.

Some years ago some brethren decided to be “progressive.” When they went out from us they soon spent what Christianity they started off with in riotous indulgences in all sorts of innovations. Now some no longer believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. With them the religion of Christ is just one of the religions of the world. They are now in the condition of the prodigal son when he hired himself out to feed hogs; but they are not as wise as that boy—they are feeding on husks and think it is good eating. Progressive? They will never make any real progress till they return to the Father’s house.

via “Doctrinal Discourses”
Sick

Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Marge Williams, Ella Hammac, Marilyn Hall, Alice Williams, Iris Gallaher, Rubye Bailey, Thelma Dunavant (Susan McLaughlin’s mother), Nancy Travis (William Weekley’s daughter), Tiffany Wilkes (Fred and Rheba Stancil’s granddaughter), Hazel Merry (Nellie Read’s sister), and Gloria Mitchem (Glen Brower’s mother).

Reading/Invitation
November 29, 2006
Reading: Elward Brantley
Invitation: Will McLaughlin

December 6, 2006
Reading: Ray Dodd
Invitation: Ray Pierce

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December 17, 2006—Elders/Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
December 27, 2006—Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.
January 14, 2007—Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
January 21, 2007—Elders/Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.

Pantry Items Needed
Canned Meat
Paul’s Good Method

Luke recorded Paul’s entrance into Thessalonica “where was a synagogue of the Jews” (Acts 17:1). Luke also provides us an insight into Paul’s methodology: “And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures, Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ” (Acts 17:2-3). There are four helpful things for us to notice in these two verses.

First, Luke said of Paul, “as his manner was.” This indicates that Paul did his work according to a thought-out plan. He was not haphazard in his approach to evangelism. There was a synagogue in Thessalonica and the apostle took advantage of it. The Jews there were reasonable prospects for the Gospel of Christ (Rom. 1:16 says that the Gospel was “to the Jew first”), so “he went in unto them.” If we want to reach people for Christ today we must be like Paul and think about what we are going to do ahead of time.

Second, the text says that he “reasoned with them out of the scriptures.” There are two necessarily interlocking things here: Scripture and reason. One cannot learn what the Scriptures teach without the use of reason, and reason left on its own without the guidance of Scripture will denigrate into infidelity. So Paul used them both. His method was not new. Isaiah appealed to God’s rebellious children when he said, “Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool” (Isa. 1:18). Our appeal to people today must be based on this Divinely sanctioned combinations of reason and revelation.
Third, notice that the first word of Acts 17:3 is the KJV is open. This word can be rendered “explaining.” Paul explained the texts from what we know as the Old Testament which supported the truth that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God. Remember that Paul had been uniquely prepared for his apostleship. He had intimate knowledge of Greek and Roman philosophical tradition (as is seen later in Acts 17 and in the letter to the Colossians), knowledge that he may have gained from his life in Tarsus. He also sat at the feet of Gamaliel and thus had been taught by one of the best minds in Judaism (Acts 22:3). He had studied his Bible, its context and culture as well as his own culture. He was equipped to explain the Scriptures to his hearers. Our lesson here is to prepare ourselves so that we can be the best teachers of the text that we possibly can. God expects it of us and therefore we can do it (2 Tim. 2:15).

Fourth, we see that Paul was alleging two important things. The word allege can be rendered “prove.” One was that Christ “must needs have suffered.” This was an important consideration for first century Jews. They had come to believe that the Messiah would be a powerful

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**Baptism Stands Between!**

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*Author Unknown*
military and political figure who would rid Judah of Roman domination. They rejected the picture of the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53. I would not be a bit surprised to learn that Paul used that very passage to show the sacrificial nature of God’s Christ.

The second thing Paul proved was Jesus of Nazareth is indeed this Christ. We are not told which Scriptures he used but one can surmise that he would refer to the many Old Testament passages that fit His birth, life, death, and resurrection. He would also have the opportunity to appeal to history. There was ample proof that Jesus was raised from the dead. There had been witnesses and some of them skeptics (e.g., Thomas). Many people were still available to verify the truth that He arose (cf. 1 Cor. 15:1-8) including Paul himself.

This passage tells us a very great deal about religion, both the truth and the counterfeit. Counterfeit religion asks people to believe based on their feelings and even in spite of reason. The truth relies on good planning, good preparation, reason, explanation, proof, and most of all, the Scriptures. It is the truth, after all, that makes men free (John 8:32).  

Author Unknown

Quitters
Curtis L. E. Graves

Not many people would consider themselves quitters. Not many people would want to be called a quitter. However, many people do quit each and every day. Some things are good to quit! Some quit smoking, drinking, or any number of other vices. People quit their jobs. Some man trying to put together a toy for his child or a piece of equipment for his wife or himself (probably without the instructions) gets frustrated with it and quits. A spouse quits loving their mate. One thing that is very hard for me to understand is a member of the church quitting and going back to the world or going to denominationalism. Like the vices above, if you find from studying your Bible that you are doing something wrong, religiously, you should quit. So, while not all quitting is bad, quitting on our Lord’s church or quitting on God is bad.

What are some of the reasons people give for quitting? “The people were not friendly.” Proverbs 18:24 says: “A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.” “I was mistreated by some.” Was Jesus ever mistreated? Did He quit? Luke 23:34 says, “Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.” “My parents made me go now I quit.” Have you quit taking baths and brushing your teeth also? Your parents probably made you do those things. “There are too many hypocrites.” People will answer for themselves on the judgment day. Romans 14:12 says, “So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.” You must do right yourself or you will join the hypocrites for all eternity in hell. “The preacher said something I did not like.” Was it the truth? He should not be around just to tickle your ears.

I believe that people really quit on the church or God just because they want to. However, it is not too late to do right. If you have quit on the church: come back. The church needs you and you need the church. It you have quit on God come and talk with us. God wants you to be saved. Let us help you see that. If you have quit because you do not see the things of the Bible being practiced then come worship with us. The Bible is our only guidebook. Please, quit following the world and come follow the truth.

1021 Mt. Pleasant Rd; Chesapeake, VA 23322
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Marge Williams, Ella Hammac, Marilyn Hall, Alice Williams, Iris Gallaber, Nellie Read, Thelma Dunavant (Susan McLaughlin’s mother), Nancy Travis (William Weekley’s daughter), Tiffany Wilkes (Fred and Rheba Stancliff’s granddaughter), Hazel Merry (Nellie Read’s sister), and Gloria Mitchem (Glen Brower’s mother).

Reading/Invitation
December 6, 2006
Reading: Ray Dodd
Invitation: Ray Pierce
December 13, 2006
Reading: Andrew Hatcher
Invitation: Fred Stancliff

Mark These Dates
Every Sunday–Ladies’ Bible Class will meet at 5:00 pm, in the zone room.
December 10, 2006–Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
December 17, 2006–Elders/Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
December 27, 2006–Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.
January 14, 2007–Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
January 21, 2007–Elders/Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.

Pantry Items Needed
Canned Meat
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, Bill Crowe, James Loy

The Preacher, the Pewster, and Sound Doctrine

Wayne Price

Preachers have never been a popular people, at least not if they are the kind who preach what is needed instead of what is wanted by the pewsters. As churches grow larger and larger, and gradually become more interested in numbers than in truth, pressure is applied to preach what the people want to hear.

The problem is not a new one. Some 650 years before Christ, Jeremiah moaned: “The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so” (Jer. 5:31). Earlier it was a rebellious people who would not hear the law of the Lord that begged the prophets: “Prophesy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits” (Isa. 30:10). Can you imagine such a request? “We do not want to hear the truth—prophesy falsely.”

Amos was told by Amaziah, “go, flee thee away into the land of Judah, and there eat bread, and prophesy there” (Amos 7:12). Why must Amos leave Israel? The land was not able to bear his words (7:10), or, put another way, to face the truth! Since Amos did not preach what the people wanted to hear, he was told to get out!

John the Baptist spoke to Herod about his adulterous relationship with Herodias, his brother Philip’s wife; and for all of his concern, he was rewarded by being thrown into prison (Mat. 14:3-4).
Preachers must resist the temptation to conform and give the people what they want by preaching smooth things, even though the people would love to have it so, and even though it may mean the preacher will have to go elsewhere if he is to preach the truth! Paul said that men-pleasers cannot be Christ pleasers (Gal. 1:10). He charged Timothy to “preach the word” and then warned that the “time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables” (2 Tim. 4:1-4). Needless to mention the obvious, but that time has long since arrived!

P.O. Box 760; Mcloud, OK 74851

Needed: More Common Sense

Marvin L Weir

Perhaps you have heard someone say, “There goes a brilliant person, but he does not have one ounce of common sense.” What such a statement generally means is that although the individual has a high IQ and has excelled in numerous fields of higher education, he fails to grasp what those with only “common ability” easily and immediately comprehend. I have often said that some folks have been educated far beyond their intelligence. The common sense that many people possess is quickly cast aside and forgotten after they achieve various degrees from institutions of higher learning. Let us notice some areas where less emphasis on worldly education and more emphasis on the Bible and common sense would surely profit.

• Can one be convinced that so very much meticulous planning must be done by the designers of our space program to successfully transport man to the moon and back, but then fail to comprehend that this grand universe had a Designer? What happens to common sense?

• Can one see the truth that even though all parts to a wristwatch are placed into a box and the box is shaken on a regular basis (“big shake theory”), the wristwatch will never be correctly assembled without someone fitting the pieces together? This universe is far more complex than a wristwatch and yet many believe that by chance the universe has slowly evolved to its present status without the help of a Creator or Maker. Where is common sense?

• Will one argue that there is an all-wise, all-knowing, and all-powerful God but that mankind has been left with God’s inspired revelation (the Bible) which cannot be correctly understood? Can God in His infinite wisdom not clearly communicate with man? What happens to common sense when people accuse the Bible (God’s book) of being too difficult to understand?

• Can one claim to be a member of the Lord’s body of which Christ is the Head (Eph. 1:22-23) and yet belong to and be serving and worshiping in a man-made body that has only existed for three or four hundred years and cannot be identified in the Bible? What happens to common sense?

• Will one contend that an eternal, infinite God cannot provide man with an infallible, inspired, relevant, and permanent “pattern” or “blueprint” for the church, but that mortal, finite, non-inspired men do a better job by meeting each year and changing what was binding the previous year? Whatever happened to common sense?

• Will one argue that “sprinkling” is an acceptable mode of baptism while not one
command or example for such can be found in the Bible? Is this common sense? Is it common sense to reject the Bible definition of baptism as a “burial” (Rom. 6:4), or to ignore the fact that Philip and the eunuch “went down into the water” and “came up out of the water” (Acts 8:38-39). John “was baptizing in Enon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized” (John 3:23). A little common sense reveals that one does not need much water for sprinkling.

• Will one argue that baptism has nothing to do with one’s salvation when the Bible clearly and forcefully states that just as Noah and his family “were saved through water: which also after a true likeness doth now save you, even baptism” (1 Pet. 3:20-21). If one claims to believe the Bible, why reject the true teaching of an inspired man saying that baptism saves, and accept the uninspired teaching of some man who says baptism does not save. Whatever happened to common sense?

• Can elders in the Lord’s church convince themselves that the flock is spiritually stronger than it was fifty years ago because they have decided to minister to the “whole man” and his “felt needs” while failing to seek and to save that which was lost (Luke 19:10) with the pure, unadulterated, precious Gospel (Gal. 1:6-9)? What happens to common sense?

• Do elders believe that a congregation is better off than it was fifty years ago because they now have a preacher with a perverted degree in Bible from some so-called Christian University to relate to the adults and a “youth minister” to entertain the young folks? Where is common sense when it is needed?

• To claim to believe in the Bible and then refuse to worship God “in spirit and truth” (John 4:24) is dishonest. God’s Word is truth (John 17:17)—not what man thinks or feels! What happens to common sense?

One really needs help to misunderstand the teaching of the Bible. I am persuaded that ordinary “common sense” and studying nothing but the Bible is the answer to learning God’s glorious truths.

Yes, we need the Bible and more common sense!

815 42nd Street SW; Paris, TX 75460

Obedience
Gary W. Summers

The New Living Translation of the Bible is a re-working of Kenneth Taylor’s The Living Bible. While we could not recommend either version, there is an interesting rendering in Numbers 26:61. Whereas the NKJ has: “And Nadab and Abihu died when they offered profane fire before the Lord,” the NLT has: “But Nadab and Abihu died when they burned before the Lord a different kind of fire than he had commanded.”

Obviously, these words are not literal but a paraphrase; however, the idea is correct! What makes it even more interesting is that Taylor is a “faith only” believer, yet here is a rendering that highlights precisely the problem that these two sons of Aaron had: They offered a different kind of fire from what God had commanded. We can properly do only what God has authorized us to do, as it pertains to worship. While we lament that so many follow Nadab’s and Abihu’s rebellious ways, let us rejoice that some still choose to obey God’s commands.

3671 Oak Vista Lane; Winter Park, FL 32792
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Marge Williams, Ella Hammac, Marilyn Hall, Alice Williams, Iris Gallaber, Nellie Read, Thehma Dunavant (Susan McLaughlin’s mother), Nancy Travis (William Weekley’s daughter), Tiffany Wilkes (Fred and Rheba Stancliff’s granddaughter), Hazel Merry (Nellie Read’s sister), and Gloria Mitchem (Glen Brower’s mother).

Reading/Invitation
December 13, 2006
Reading: Andrew Hatcher
Invitation: Fred Stancliff
December 20, 2006
Reading: Daniel Hatcher
Invitation: Carl Ayliffe

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Pantry Items Needed
Canned Meat
The Responsibilities of the Watchman

Tim Smith

God told Ezekiel, “Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul. Again, When a righteous man doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, and I lay a stumblingblock before him, he shall die: because thou hast not given him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he hath done shall not be remembered; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless if thou warn the righteous man, that the righteous sin not, and he doth not sin, he shall surely live, because he is warned; also thou hast delivered thy soul” (Eze. 3:17-21).

The prophet was first to hear the Word from the Lord. If the man of God is to preach the Word that comes from the mouth of God, he must be a student of the Word of God. It is necessary that the teacher understand the message he is to herald. Every person who holds himself out as a teacher of truth and righteous-
ness must be intimately acquainted with the Bible.

The prophet is then to “give them warning from me.” The Gospel preacher is to “Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort” (2 Tim. 4:2).

Often the message people need to hear, they do not want to hear. It is difficult, and unpopular to teach on controversial subjects, but it is necessary. Paul was free from the blood of all men because he had declared the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:26-27). “Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee” (1 Tim. 4:16).

Men need guidance from outside themselves. Jeremiah said, “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). The Word from the Lord brings us to the Lord. “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6).

The responsibility of the watchman is to take the Word from the mouth of the Lord to those who need it—even if they do not want it. Ezekiel had the tough task of preaching to people who did not want to hear what he had to say, and were certain to reject it.

“But the house of Israel will not hearken unto thee; for they will not hearken unto me: for all the house of Israel are impudent and hard-hearted. Behold, I have made thy face strong against their faces, and thy forehead strong against their foreheads. As an adamant harder than flint have I made thy forehead: fear them not, neither be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house” (Eze. 3:7-9).

Ezekiel’s message was to the chosen people of God. Even the elect may need to be corrected. Ezekiel had to be more headstrong than the people he was sent to rebuke. The need in our generation is for hardheaded preachers, bringing a tough message to hardheaded saints!

Three Hours at O’Hare

Tom Wacaster

My first experience of flying commercially was in 1966. I was sworn into the United States Coast Guard in downtown Dallas, Texas, and whisked away to Dallas Love Field for the fight to Oakland, California, and nine weeks of boot camp. Four decades ago you could have someone drop you off at the curb, walk to the ticket counter, check in your luggage with no questions asked, and walk straight to your gate. There were no X-ray machines, drug-sniffing dogs, or someone asking you to “remove your shoes,” “hold out your hands,” “empty your pockets,” or “take your laptop out of your briefcase” (of course, there were no laptops back then either). Thirty minutes (or less) from the time you arrived at the airport till you were seated on the plane was the norm.

Since 9/11 passengers are advised to arrive at the airport two hours before departure for domestic flights, and three hours for international flights. The discovery of a plot to blow up American bound planes several months ago motivated airport authorities to recommend arrival at the airport three hours in advance of domestic flights, and four hours for international flights. So I followed their advice, and arrived at DFW airport three hours ahead of departure time. With the advent of electronic check in’s, I was
through the line, past security, and at my gate within 20 minutes after walking through the door of terminal B at DFW. Surely that was a quirk! I must have caught a lull in passenger influx.

Five days later it was time to make my return trip out of Chicago O’Hare. I caught the 6:20 AM bus out of Michigan City that would get me to the airport a full three hours before departure time. Right on schedule, I climbed off the bus at 8:45 AM to fight the crowds at O’Hare for a flight that was not scheduled to leave until 12:30 PM. In less than 20 minutes I had arrived at my gate, along with a small handful of “early bird” passengers who were determined to abide by the new FAA’s three-hour advance arrival notice.

With three hours to spare I strolled down the corridor to the various shops, and passed a bookstore of considerable size. It was packed with passengers seeking for something that might help them pass the time—and what better way to pass the time than to read! After all, notable men have always recognized the value of reading: “Reading maketh a full man” (Bacon). “If we encountered a man of rare intellect, we should ask him what books he reads” (Emerson). “If time is precious, no book that will not improve me by repeated readings deserves to be read at all” (Thomas Carlyle). Indeed, as one put it: “Reading is to the mind, what exercise is to the body. As by the one, health is preserved, strengthened, and invigorated, by the other, virtue (which is the health of the mind) is kept alive, cherished, and confirmed.”

Unfortunately, much of what is read falls into the category of non-essential and unprofitable reading. If what is sold in airport book stores is any representation of what modern-day travelers are reading, there is much to be desired. Solomon manifested his God-given wisdom when he declared that “of making many books there is no end.” And, we might add, many of those books are not fit for human consumption. Some books should carry a warning label: “Reading of the material contained herein is hazardous to your soul.” There is a book, however, that stands head and shoulders above all books. Its message is heavenly, its contents significant, its Author all-knowing and all-powerful, and its benefit for you personally is beyond all description. We are speaking, of course, about the Bible. Here is a book that is inspired, provides nourishment for the soul, a compass for life, and hope for the hereafter. This is why we are instructed to study and read this Book of books. I do not know how much time you may spend in reading, or what kinds of material you read. But if you are not reading the Bible on a daily basis, then you are either not reading enough, or you are reading the wrong kind of material.

Now, here is the truly disappointing thing about my three hours at O’Hare. I did not see a single Bible on the shelves of that store, or any other store in that terminal. There were books on the occult, mystic magic, the new age movement, and even the Koran. But not one single copy of a Bible could be found. There were magazines to tempt the sensual pleasures, newspapers that will give you the truth on extraterrestrial beings in New Mexico, and “how to” books on desert survival or how to become a contestant on a game show, but no Bible.

After less than five minutes perusing the shelves, I decided that my time could be used more profitably by going to my gate and reading from my Bible. For the next two hours I feasted upon the Word of God, reminded myself of His great love for me, and read of that heavenly home that awaits the faithful when this life is over. Truly, I cannot think of a better way to have spent three hours at O’Hare.

806 W Broadway St; Clarksville, TX 75426
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Marge Williams, Ella Hammac, Marilyn Hall, Iris Gallaher, Thelma Dunavant (Susan McLaughlin’s mother), Wyatt Blancheri (Henry and Paulette Born’s grandson; there is a web site if you would like more information—www.caringbridge.org—in the site name type Wyatt), Nancy Travis (William Weekley’s daughter), Tiffany Wilkes (Fred and Rheba Stancliff’s granddaughter), and Hazel Merry (Nellie Read’s sister).

Baptized/Placed Membership
Cary and Linda Parks were baptized into Christ on December 10. They have placed membership with the Bellview congregation. Their address is: 2302 Silversides Loop; Pensacola, FL 32526. The telephone number is 549-3789. Please keep them in your prayers and offer them encouragement.

Reading/Invitation
December 20, 2006
Reading: Daniel Hatcher
Invitation: Carl Ayliffe
December 27, 2006
Reading: Andrew Hatcher
Invitation: Fred Stancliff

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Urgent Need in the Church Today

Leroy Brownlow

1. More Open Hearts and Fewer Open Mouths. All conduct proceeds from the heart. Prejudice closes the heart for a true consideration of the facts. If the heart was made right before the mouth was opened, most church problems locally and universally would cease to exist.

2. More Knocking on Doors and less Knocking on Each Other. The Great Commission demands that we busy ourselves in taking the Gospel to others. The Bible says, “Speak not evil one of another” (Jam. 4:11). It is much better to be busy doing the good rather than the evil.

3. More Sound Heads and Fewer Sore Heads. Perhaps there has never been a time in the history of the church in which we have a greater need for men sound in the faith and wise in judgment. Sometimes the voice of the wise goes unheeded and the voice of the foolish takes over. If this is done, it always brings division and destruction, as it did in the days of Rehoboam.

4. More Seed-slinging and less Mud-slinging. The task of sowing the seed of the kingdom is so great that it should leave no time for the mud-slinging among brethren. The fact that we have the whole world as our foe should draw us close together. There should be no division in the Lord’s camp. One can never white-wash himself by slinging mud at another. He who tries gets his hands dirty.

5. More Sacrifice of Self and less Sacrificing of Others. There are plenty of members who are willing to sacrifice the other fellow—his talent, his time, his money, and even his reputation. Sacrifice should begin at home.
6. More Standing for the Faith and less Falling for the Fanciful. The church has always been hurt by those who desire for that which was new and different and fanciful. They have been blinded by the glamour of such newness. Truth never changes. It is fixed, unalterable, and everlasting.

7. More Concern for the “What” of the Teaching and less Concern for the “Who” of the Teacher. Many determine what they believe by who is teaching, rather than by the scripturalness of what is being taught. They are governed by personality instead of Scriptures. This is the thing we have warned our denominational friends against for so long. Error is still error no matter who teaches it!

8. More Desire to Promote Christ and less Desire to Promote Personal Recognition. Personal ambition should never interfere with the principles of Christ. If we fail to teach these principles to just one generation, the church will go astray.

Selfishness Leads to Worldliness

Marvin L. Weir

In the third chapter of James, it is evident that worldliness is the result of earthly wisdom. This wisdom does not come from Jehovah! “But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without variance, without hypocrisy” (Jam. 3:17). One’s faith is surely tested by his attitude toward God and his attitude toward his fellow man.

Some brethren make a habit of declaring war upon the precious body of Christ (Jam. 4), and the Bible stresses that such conflicts do not come from God. Those who cause strife and faction in the body of Christ do so because of their own evil desires and lusts. Far too many times brethren are determined to have their own way regardless of the cost. This is the same type of spirit that possessed Diotrephes and Ahab. Diotrephes wanted preeminence (3 John 9), and Ahab desired Naboth’s vineyard (1 Kin. 21). One who has succumbed to evil desires will always attempt to justify doing things in the wrong way for the wrong reason.

James 4:2 vividly describes the vain attempt to satisfy the lusts of pleasure and the world. It seems that the flesh is always coveting something. Hungering and thirsting after material matters is dangerous. The Lord admonishes, “Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled” (Mat. 5:6). If we heed the Lord’s admonition we will not selfishly “ask amiss” (Jam. 4:3) in our prayers. The Father is to be petitioned in prayer (Mat. 7:7-8), but we are to always “ask according to his will” (1 John 5:14).

An ever-present danger and constant temptation is for one to become friends with the world. Committing spiritual adultery is just as sinful as committing physical adultery. James points out this truth in saying, “Ye adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore would be a friend of the world maketh himself an enemy of God” (Jam. 4:4). It is a serious matter when one is called the enemy of God.

To conquer selfishness, envy, jealousy, and a lustful disposition, one must humbly submit to God’s will. The proud, haughty, and arrogant will never bow to God’s will. Only those who are truly “poor in spirit” (Mat. 5:3) will strive to obey the Lord’s commands.

There is a divine formula given by James in verses 7-10 of chapter four that will cure the attitude that produces conflicts, strife, and self-
ishness in the Lord’s church. **First**, one must submit himself to God. Christ makes this clear in saying, “If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me” (Mat. 16:24). Self-denial is something that many people will adamantly refuse to do!

**Second**, the devil must be resisted. To successfully resist the devil it is imperative that one recognize that Satan is a real and formidable foe (1 Pet. 5:8), that there is always a way of escape from temptations (1 Cor. 10:13), that evil must be abstained from (1 The. 5:22), and that things pure and holy are to control our thinking (Phi. 4:8).

**Third**, one must make a sincere effort to “draw nigh” to God (Jam. 4:8). God will not force His will on any person. The Father desires “all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim. 2:4). One will not, however, accidentally go to Heaven. The process of drawing nigh unto God takes effort, sacrifice, and a determination to be “single-minded” in a world filled with the devil’s distractions. Do not forget that the person who puts his hand to the plow and then turns back is not worthy of God’s kingdom (Luke 9:62).

**Fourth**, one’s hands must be clean. This surely involves repentance (Luke 13:3; 1 John 1:9) as the Father will forgive and cleanse only those sins that one confesses and turns from. Far too many pretend to serve and worship God while having unclean hands. God will not accept such hypocrisy.

**Fifth**, it is essential that one have a pure heart. The Savior said, “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God” (Mat. 5:8). Worldly thinking will not produce pure and godly lives.

**Sixth**, James notes the affliction, mourning, and weeping that accompanies true repentance. This is simply a way of saying that genuine repentance will be noticed. A change of mind will always produce a change of action. If repentance is genuine, one will not have to wonder whether or not one has turned from his evil and worldly ways.

**Seventh**, one must humble and surrender himself before God. Jehovah will resist the proud and arrogant, but He lovingly gives grace to the humble (1 Pet. 5:5-6). Paul shows his great humility as he willingly crucifies self (Gal. 2:20) for the cause of Christ.

May we be persuaded that succumbing to worldliness will make us an enemy of God and cost us a home in Heaven! Beware of the sin of selfishness!

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**Fault Finding**

“Do all things without murmurings and disputings” (Phi. 2:14).

Fault finding is not difficult. Isaac Murray illustrates this in his story on how a dog, hitched to a lawn mower, stopped pulling to bark at someone passing by. The boy who was guiding the mower said, “Don’t mind the dog. He is just barking for an excuse to rest. It is easier to bark than to pull the mower.”

It is easier to be critical than correct.

It is easier to bark than to work, easier to hinder than to help, easier to destroy a reputation than to construct character.

Fault finding is as dangerous as it is easy. Anyone, like the Pharisees, can grumble, criticize, or censure, but it takes a great individual to go on working faithfully and lovingly and rise superior to it all as did Jesus.

*Author Unknown*
Sick

Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Marge Williams, Ella Hammac, Marilyn Hall, Iris Gallaher (West Florida Hospital), Wyatt Blancheri (Henry and Paulette Born’s grandson; check this web site for more information: www.caringbridge.org—in the site name type Wyatt), Thelma Dunavant (Susan McLaughlin’s mother), Nancy Travis (William Weekley’s daughter), Tiffany Wilkes (Fred and Rhea Stancliff’s granddaughter), and Hazel Merry (Nellie Read’s sister).

Reading/Invitation
December 27, 2006
Reading: Jim Loy
Invitation: Henry Born
January 3, 2007
Reading: Horace Myrick
Invitation: Paul Brantley

Mark These Dates
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December 27, 2006—Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.

January 14, 2007—Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.

Congratulations
Our congratulations is extended to Andrew Hatcher in his graduation from the University of West Florida with a BS degree in Computer Information.

Pantry Items Needed
Canned Meat
Ignorance

Bob Howton

I was thumbing through brother E. C. McKenzie’s delightful book, 14,000 Quips & Quotes for Writers and Speakers, when I ran across the following: “It’s remarkable how big a part ignorance plays in making a man satisfied with himself.” Aside from the idea of “self satisfaction,” the word ignorance plays a very prominent part in the makeup of the quotation. Webster defines the word ignorant as: (1) Destitute of knowledge or education. (2) Lacking knowledge or comprehension of the thing under consideration. In plowboy terminology that equates to: Don’t know nothing about it!

I would submit that one may be totally ignorant of the advanced technological gimmicks which now flood the world markets, and one may have little, or no comprehension of Einstein’s theory of relativity, and still go to his grave with little consequence from such ignorance. There is, however, a single imperative facing every soul which is born onto this earth! That imperative is learning and becoming obedient to the Gospel plan of salvation. Ignorance of God’s “unspeakable gift” (2 Cor. 9:15) of Christ as a propitiation for man’s sins (1 John 4:10) will render one without hope at judgment. Such ignorance is of eternal consequence! “The soul that sinneth, it shall die” (Eze. 18:4).

Conversely, John says, “if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 John 1:7). Why would one choose to walk in darkness (sin) when walking in the light (truth) will remove all sin
from his life? Generally speaking, one word will sum it all up: Ignorance! That failing, there remains only one reasonable explanation for such, and it is willful disobedience. Willful disobedience will guarantee one a front row, center seat in a devil’s hell! That is a terrible price to pay for ignorance! Is there anything which will help to eradicate biblical ignorance? Most assuredly! God’s remedy for that is: “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15). Those with only minimal knowledge of God’s Word should realize that only the truth will set one free from sin (John 8:32).

Ignorance will cause one to blindly follow some preacher (Mat. 15:14). Ignorance will keep one hanging onto what “Mamma thought” (2 Tim. 4:4). Ignorance will blind the eyes of those who do not wish to see the truth (Mat. 13:15; Acts 28:26-27). During his discourse in Athens, Paul forever settled the questions as to whether ignorance will excuse one at judgment. “And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent” (Acts 17:30). Before the death of Christ on the cross, and the giving of the great commission, with the subsequent command to preach the Gospel to all the world, there was in the merciful and longsuffering love of Almighty God, a patient and fatherly affinity for mankind, which prompted God to “wink at,” or “overlook” former transgressions, but that time and that consideration are past. Those who wish to be in a covenant relationship with God must now hear the Word (Rom. 10:17), believe that He is (Heb. 11:6), repent of all sins (Acts 17:30), confess Christ as God’s Son (Phi. 2:11), and be baptized for remission of sins (Acts 2:38). Those who have done these things were added to the church by God (Acts 2:38). These things and faithful obedience will eradicate spiritual ignorance.

10990 Country Haven; Cottondale, AL 35453

God’s Plan for Saving Man

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Two Brotherhoods...

Brock Hartwigsen

A fellow minister told me a few years ago that it was obvious to him that we had two distinct brotherhoods within the church today. It is sad, but what he said is true.

One brotherhood is made up of “uneducated Pharisees” who believe that when Jesus said we will be judged by His Words that He meant what He said (John 12:48). They believe that when God in Hebrews 5:9 said that Jesus will save all who obey Him, that is what He meant. These

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“uneducated Pharisees” then try to bind Jesus’ words by teaching the necessity of obeying Jesus.

The other brotherhood is made up of “educated and enlightened” brethren who believe that we will be judged only to the degree of our sincere and honest understanding of Jesus’ words. They believe that Jesus will save all who obey their personal understanding of Jesus’ teachings. It does not matter what people believe Jesus taught or how many different opinions there might be so long as a person is true to their personal understanding. They believe that truth is variable, that it is whatever you believe it to be.

I had a brother of the “educated and enlightened” persuasion tell me that he believed that baptism is necessary for forgiveness of sins. He then went on and said if someone has not been baptized and honestly does not believe that he needs to be baptized, he could not tell him he is wrong.

A fellow minister told me that if he was working with a local congregation of the Lord’s church and the brethren there decided to add a piano to the worship of the Lord, he would try to talk them out of it. If he could not, he would still worship and work with them. He went on and added that it would be wrong for anyone to judge or condemn then for their use of a mechanical instrument of music in the worship of God.

Another minister stated in a meeting that I attended that he personally believes that abortion is wrong. If it came to his attention that a sister in the congregation, where he works, was thinking about having an abortion, he would try to talk her out of it. If he could not and she went ahead and had the abortion, he not only could not say she was wrong, but would also support her.

It was reported to me by a friend about a conversation he had with a minister of the “educated and enlightened” brotherhood. This minister said that he feels that homosexual relations are wrong. If a homosexual couple was baptized and honestly believed that their relationship was acceptable to God, then they were not sinning and he could not say they were wrong.

This second brotherhood has one absolute, firm belief. Whatever a person honestly believes is the will of God, is the will of God for them and they must be true to it. No one should be condemned who honestly follows their understanding of God’s Word.

This second brotherhood does not practice what they preach. They are quick to condemn those who honestly believe that truth is not variable, that sincerity and honesty is not enough, and that you must be correct in your understanding of Jesus’ teaching.

Why is it loving and kind to bind that truth is variable, but pharisaical to bind that truth is not variable? Why is any and every opinion correct except the opinion that says that every opinion is not correct? You cannot have it both ways. Either every opinion is correct or every opinion is not correct.

Call me “uneducated,” “unloving,” “judgmental,” a “Pharisee,” but I cannot help but believe that when God said Jesus will save those who obey him, that he did not mean those who obey their understanding of Jesus’ teaching but Jesus’ understanding of His teaching.

It is sad but true that we do have two distinct brotherhoods in the church today. First, those who want to be true and teach the necessity of being true to Jesus and His teaching. Second, those who want to be true to their feelings, views and understanding of what they or anyone else might believe Jesus said.

Which brotherhood are you in? To paraphrase Joshua’s statement in Joshua 24:15: “Choose you this day whom ye will serve, whether your own truth, understanding, and beliefs: but as for me and my house we will serve the Lord’s truth.”

Copied
I was thumbing through brother E. C. McKenzie’s delightful book, 14,000 Quips & Quotes for Writers and Speakers, when I ran across the following: “It’s remarkable how big a part ignorance plays in making a man satisfied with himself.” Aside from the idea of “self-satisfaction,” the word ignorance plays a very prominent part in the makeup of the quotation. Webster defines the word ignorant as: (1) Des-titute of knowledge or education. (2) Lacking knowledge or comprehension of the thing under consideration. In plowboy terminology that equates to: Don’t know nothing about it!

I would submit that one may be totally ignorant of the advanced technological gimmicks which now flood the world markets, and one may have little, or no comprehension of Einstein’s theory of relativity, and still go to his grave with little consequence from such ignorance. There is, however, a single imperative facing every soul which is born onto this earth! That imperative is learning and becoming obedient to the Gospel plan of salvation. Ignorance of God’s “unspeakable gift” (2 Cor. 9:15) of Christ as a propitiation for man’s sins (1 John 4:10) will render one without hope at judgment. Such ignorance is of eternal consequence! “The soul that sinneth, it shall die” (Eze. 18:4).

Conversely, John says, “if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 John 4:10). Why would one choose to walk in darkness (sin) when walking in the light (truth) will remove all sin