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Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Marge Williams, Ella Hammac, Marilyn Hall, Iris Gallaher, Regina Lashley, Al Flesher, 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 Rhema Stancliff’s granddaughter), and Hazel Merry (Nellie Read’s sister).

Sympathy
Our deepest sympathy is extended to Harold Cozad in the death of his younger brother Carrol Cozad, who passed from this life on January 1, 2007. Please keep Harold and his family in your prayers.

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Honour to Whom Honor Is Due
Elders
Brother Bill and sister Iris Gallaher moved to Pensacola, Florida, and began to attend the Bellview Church of Christ in 1955. In December 1965 brother Bill Gallaher was one of the first two men to be appointed to the eldership of the Bellview Church of Christ. Brother Gallaher served from 1965 to 1973 when he resigned. Five years later he was reappointed and has served continuously from 1978 to December 2006.

It was with sad hearts that on December 24, 2006, we heard brother Bill Gallaher announce that he was resigning from the Bellview elder-ship effective December 31, 2006. He said that there were a number of reasons why he con-sidered it necessary for him to do so. He is now legally blind and can no longer read or drive a
car. Other physical problems, including a hearing loss, also hinder his effectiveness to serve as an elder. In Romans 13:7 the apostle Paul wrote to the Romans, “Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.” In the above verse, one of the things we are admonished to do is to give honor to whom honor is due. Surely faithfully dedicated service as an elder of the Lord’s church is worthy of the honor to which Paul referred in the above verse. Accordingly; at this time, the Bellview Church of Christ honors brother Bill Gallaher for his faithful service of 37 years as an elder of the church. We also want to honor sister Iris Gallaher for her faithful service as brother Bill’s helpmeet. Without her, brother Bill could not have qualified to be an elder, or to remain as an elder throughout his years of service.

When I hear all the reasons from people as to why they do not attend Bible classes and worship services, I think of these three people. I now realize that many of the reasons for their non-participation in the services are not reasons, but very poor excuses.

These reasons do not keep them from going shopping, or attending school activities, other events which require more time than Bible class and worship do, such as: going out to eat, work, getting one’s hair fixed, etc. In the words of an older preacher: “People do what they want to do, and that is all they will do.” If we want to attend services and activities of the Lord’s church, we will find a way. If we do not want to attend and participate, we will find an excuse.

Unforgettable Experiences

Albert Reeves

While doing some guest preaching and visiting on several occasions with the Southside congregation in Grand Rapids, Michigan, we were witnesses to an unusual experience. One member that came to services on a regular basis sat in a wheelchair near the podium in the center aisle. His condition was such that he had to be hand-fed the Lord’s Supper. The members took turns going to his home to pick him up. They would carry him in their arms, placing the folding wheelchair in the trunk of the car. Upon arrival at the church building, the procedure was simply reversed and then repeated when it was time to go home.

When I was with the M-21 congregation in Comma, Michigan, we had a similar experience. One of the members was brought to the church building for service, but was unable to rise off the bed! He was brought on a folding bed, carried to the car by one of the members, with the folding bed in the trunk taken out upon arrival at the church building. During class and worship services he would lie flat on his back. After services were over, the procedure was reversed and he was carried home.

Many years ago, in a Gospel meeting in Bowling Green, Kentucky, I was standing with many others who had filed out when services were over. While standing there, I saw a man come down the aisle (get this now) crawling on his hands! He had no lower body. He had on the bottom side of his torso what appeared to be welder’s gloves that reached all the way past his elbows. He briskly walked out of the building on his hands, dragging his torso, climbed into a specially equipped car and drove away. When I asked his identity, I was told that he was one of the elders of the congregation.

Old Paths in this New Year

Tom Wacaster

2006 is now history. Twelve months have passed, and we find ourselves standing at the threshold of yet another year. Looking in two directions, we reflect on the old year with its joys and sorrows, its successes and failures, and we look forward to the new year with its storehouse of opportunities and uncertainties. As we enter the new year, the words of Jeremiah come to mind: “Thus saith Jehovah, Stand ye in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way?” (6:16). The faithful adhered to the plea. But there were those in Jeremiah’s day, as there are in ours, who said, “We will not walk therein.” Rebellion is not peculiar to modern man. Someone once noted, “The age of the path does not assure its being good, for sin and error are almost as old as mankind. The old paths must not be confused with just any old path. As many mistakes are made by blindly following any old path as by blindly striking out on a new one.”

There is a great temptation with every generation to consider tradition as equivalent to the “old paths.” I have great admiration for the reformers and restorers of a bygone era, but they are not the authority, and they do not determine the path in which we are to walk. For those of us living this side of the cross, the “old paths” are those trod by our Lord and His apostles, and clearly defined and marked by the inspired writers of the New Testament. It is a proud and egotistical generation that says, “We will not walk therein.” On the other hand, it is faith which manifests itself in loyalty to God and Jesus that submits and obeys.

Walking in the old paths will not be easy. It never has been. The further society moves away from God, the more the old paths will be ridiculed. Intellectual snobbery will seek to dispense with the legalism of the ancient Gospel, and the old will be replaced with the new. Change in doctrine will give way to the collapse of moral absolutes, situation ethics, and relativism.

As we enter this new year, let us determine that we will walk in the “old paths.” More than twenty-five years ago, brother Morris Thurman wrote the following advice: “The old paths will continue to be difficult to travel. They are steep, ever leading toward God; they are thorny, hedged about with the cares, riches and pleasures of this life; and they are straight, narrow, and unpopular, traveled only by few that find them. But stand, see and ask, that the old paths, the good way, may be found and walked, ‘and ye shall find rest for your souls.’”

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From 1965 to the present, brother Gallaher and his fellow elders have fought against worldliness in its various forms both within and without the church. Specific brotherhood problems such as “Anti-ism” and “Liberalism” have at times had their divisive effect upon the congregation. In all of these, brother Gallaher and his fellow elders stood firm and united in accordance with the Scriptures to protect the souls of the congregation.

We are happy to honor brother Bill and sister Iris Gallaher for their godly lives and great influence for good as they have labored in the cause of Christ with the saints at Bellview throughout the years.

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Reading/Invitation
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Invitation: Bill Crowe
January 24, 2007
Reading: Ray Dodd
Invitation: Dale Cunningham

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January 24, 2007—Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.
January 31, 2007—Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.

Pantry Items Needed
Canned Meat

We Look at the Things Which Are Not Seen
Tim Smith

These familiar words are taken from Paul’s third letter to the church at Corinth, the second of which we have record, and the intent of the penman is to encourage the brethren to fidelity in the midst of what was for them (as us) a most difficult life. The context is important, and so we offer it now: (It is a lengthy reading, but well worth the time and effort needed to read it.)

“For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God. For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal. For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life” (2 Cor. 4:15-5:4).

What does he say? He is teaching that what awaits us over in heaven is far greater than what we have here—so much so as to make us long
for it. Notice: “not for that we would be unclothed”—what does this mean? Is he not saying that we desire to be in heaven, not to be dead? Of course, we cannot be in heaven until after we die (or experience something like it at the final coming, cf. 1 Cor. 15). So Paul is saying that we do wish for heaven while not necessarily desiring death itself. But why? Why is that we so wish to be in heaven?

He tells us this also. This world is a hard place for the faithful of God to live! There is groaning and earnest desire and pain and burden and difficulty and temptation and grief and—well, you get the point. It is not that we are ill-suited for this world, just that of the two worlds the other offers far better accommodations for us. Paul spoke herein of the “light affliction”—he said that it is “but for a moment”—that is, not long in duration. But, in comparison to what? Certainly not in comparison to the whole of life, because for many the life lived in the flesh is mostly spent in suffering. In comparison to what, then? Eternity. What we have awaiting us in the after awhile is so grand and glorious and great and good (and you get the point) that whatever we suffer in this life will then seem as but a moment. In comparison with forever, 80 years is not even a drop in the bucket. In comparison with forever, 8,000 years is as nothing.

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1272 Enon Road; Webb, AL 36376

Chastening of God is because of His love; It purifies and fits us for heaven above.

This is the way I feel about the trials of life. As I fight to overcome them, there is always in my mind the realization that I have had the good things of life as well as the bad. I also realize that if I had never had misfortune, I would not know how to fully appreciate and enjoy the beauty and wonder of God’s blessings.

Deceased

Are You a Hedonist?

Steve Higginbotham

After reading the question asked in the title, you may be saying, “Maybe, maybe not...tell me what a hedonist is first, then I’ll answer.” Hedonism is the philosophy of life that allows the principles of pleasure and pain to determine what is right and wrong. In other words, if an action brings pleasure, it is morally wrong. The philosophy of hedonism was well expressed in Debbie Boone’s hit song, “You Light Up My Life” of a generation ago. The song said in part, “It can’t be wrong when it feels so right...” This is hedonism.

Ah, well now that we’ve defined it, I’m sure you’re saying, “No, I’m not a hedonist.” But brethren, are you aware that we are living in a society that is filled with people who are living by this philosophy? And are you aware that there are even members of the Lord’s church who have adopted hedonism to some degree?

How can so many people blatantly do what is so immoral these days? How can people live with themselves? How can they lay their heads down on their pillows at night and get a good night’s sleep after the way they have behaved during the day. The answer is... they have done as being morally wrong. They live by a different standard. Instead of measuring one’s conduct by the absolute standard of God’s Word, many are measuring their conduct by whether the action gives them pleasure or pain.

It stealing from one’s neighbor or mugging a stranger on the street gives one pleasure, it is right. If cheating on a test at school brings one pleasure and helps him to avoid pain, then the hedonist thinks he did the right thing by cheating. If murdering a rival gang member brings one pleasure, then it is morally right to murder him. If lying will keep you from painful embarrassment, then it is right to lie. If having sexual relations prior to marriage, or beyond the bounds of marriage brings enjoyment, then there is no wrong committed. You see, the hedonist can engage in any, or for that matter, all of the above activities and pillow his head with a clear conscience.

But hedonists in the church? Is that not an overstatement? Well, how often have you heard someone say, “Well, I like it,” as a justification for an action? Why do you think mechanical instruments of music are more entertaining, more flippant, and frolicking than reverent and respectful? Again, the answer is, “It’s pleasurable.”

Friends, let’s be sure that we don’t inadvertently buy into a bankrupt philosophy or way of life. Pleasure and pain do not determine what is right or wrong. Right and wrong are determined by the objective Word of God, not by your subjective feelings. If you want to know whether something is right or wrong, put your feelings aside and open the Bible!

Copied

Three Others

Pauline Hatcher

At times it has been difficult to resist feeling sorry for myself. But one night when I was beginning to feel this way, I turned on my bedside lamp and wrote this poem:

Sometimes in the nighttime, when filled with pain,
When wondering if my life has been lived in vain,
Into my mind come thoughts of three Who had greater pain, and it strengthens me.
Job did not suffer because of wrong; He always his Lord obeyed; He vanquished Satan in every test,
But pain was the price he paid. The apostle Paul, though beaten with stripes, Rejoiced that he did no wrong; Pain did not defeat him; he cried in triumph, “For when I am weak, I am strong!”
The agony of Jesus upon the cross Put all other suffering to shame; Yet he willingly suffered for you and me; How precious is His name!
So my nights are not lonely when filled with pain,
As I think of three others who lived not in vain;

Chastening of God is because of His love; It purifies and fits us for heaven above.

This is the way I feel about the trials of life. As I fight to overcome them, there is always in my mind the realization that I have had the good things of life as well as the bad. I also realize that if I had never had misfortune, I would not know how to fully appreciate and enjoy the beauty and wonder of God’s blessings.

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How can so many people blatantly do what is so immoral these days? How can people live with themselves? How can they lay their heads down on their pillows at night and get a good night’s sleep after the way they have behaved during the day. The answer is “hedonism.” They don’t view what they have done as being morally wrong. They live by a different standard. Instead of measuring one’s conduct by the absolute standard of God’s Word, many are measuring their conduct by whether the action gives them pleasure or pain.

It stealing from one’s neighbor or mugging a stranger on the street gives one pleasure, it is right. If cheating on a test at school brings one pleasure and helps him to avoid pain, then the hedonist thinks he did the right thing by cheating. If murdering a rival gang member brings one pleasure, then it is morally right to murder him. If lying will keep you from painful embarrassment, then it suits your heart’s content. If having sexual relations prior to marriage, or beyond the bounds of marriage brings enjoyment, then there is no wrong committed. You see, the hedonist can engage in any, or for that matter, all of the above activities and pillow his head with a clear conscience.

But hedonists in the church? Is that not an overstatement? Well, how often have you heard someone say, “Well, I like it,” as a justification for an action? Why do you think mechanical instruments of music are more entertaining, more flippant, and frolicking than reverent and respectful? Again, the answer is, “It’s pleasurable.”

Friends, let’s be sure that we don’t inadvertently buy into a bankrupt philosophy or way of life. Pleasure and pain do not determine what is right or wrong. Right and wrong are determined by the objective Word of God, not by your subjective feelings. If you want to know whether something is right or wrong, put your feelings aside and open the Bible!

Copied
Sick

Please remember in your prayers:
Elaine Maxey, Marge Williams, Ella Hammac, Marilyn Hall, Iris Gallerher, Al Flesher, Thelma Dunavant (Susan McLaughlin’s mother), Wyatt Blancheri (Henry and Paulette Born’s grandson; check this web site for more information: www.caringbridge.org—in the site name type Wyatt), Nancy Travis (William Weckley’s daughter), Tiffany Wilkes (Fred and Rheba Stancliff’s granddaughter), and Hazel Merry (Nellie Read’s sister).

Reading/Invitation
January 17, 2007
Reading: Elward Brantley
Invitation: Bill Crowe
January 24, 2007
Reading: Ray Dodd
Invitation: Dale Cunningham

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January 31, 2007—Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.

Pantry Items Needed
Canned Meat

We Look at the Things Which Are Not Seen

Tim Smith

These familiar words are taken from Paul’s third letter to the church at Corinth, the second of which we have record, and the intent of the penman is to encourage the brethren to fidelity in the midst of what was for them (as us) a most difficult life. The context is important, and so we offer it now: (It is a lengthy reading, but well worth the time and effort needed to read it.)

“For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God. For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal. For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life” (2 Cor. 4:15-5:4).

What does he say? He is teaching that what awaits us over in heaven is far greater than what we have here—so much so as to make us long
Sick

Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Marge Williams, Ella Hammac, Marilyn Hall, Iris Gallaher, Dot Lambert, Thelma Dunavant (Susan McLaughlin’s mother), Wyatt Blancheri (Henry and Paulette Born’s grandson; check this web site for 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).

Reading/Invitation
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January 31, 2007
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Pantry Items
Canned Meat

Working for the Lord
Douglas Hoff

The Bible reveals God’s will so man can live in such a way so as to please the heavenly Father. Scripture teaches us how to conduct ourselves in various areas of life. For example, there is instruction on how to be a good father and a good husband. Wives and mothers can learn of their duties by studying the Book of books. Children are taught how they ought to respect and obey their parents (e.g., Eph. 6:1-4). When people conform their lives to the divine pattern society is blessed by the resulting righteous living (Pro. 14:34). Of course, each individual also receives blessings by obeying the Word of God (Jam. 1:25).

The Bible promises it provides mankind with all that is needed to live godly lives (2 Pet. 1:3-4; 2 Tim. 3:16-17). Therefore, it only makes sense that the employer-employee relationship would be covered within the sacred pages. I think we all recognize there are bosses and employees who do not act according to the “golden rule” which Jesus uttered long ago: “And just as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise” (Luke 6:31—NKJV).

While the words boss and employee do not occur in the Bible the concepts surely do. When Paul wrote to the Christians in the city of Colossae he penned these words by divine inspiration: Bondservants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God. And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord...
you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ. But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality (Col. 3:22-25—NKJV).

There are several things in this short passage worthy of our attention. First, the word eye-service is an interesting one. It is an almost literal translation of a compound Greek word. One word refers to the eye or sight (cf. ophthalmology) and the other refers to the work done by a servant. The word conveys the idea of one doing his work only when he is being watched. This attitude may be prevalent in many workplaces today but it certainly is not what God wants from those employed by others. Christians should always strive to do their best work whether the boss is present or absent. Other employees may get away with being lazy but there is a day of Judgment coming when the secrets of men will be revealed (Rom. 2:6; 2 Cor. 5:10-11).

Second, consider the word men-pleasers as used in this passage of Scripture. Some, perhaps many, in the workplace seek to advance themselves by pleasing the right people. Such employees make it their business to know who has the power to promote their careers. These people usually refrain from certain tasks they consider not being worthy of their time and effort since it will not earn them any favors. On the contrary, the follower of Christ does what is asked because the employer pays him to work. Faithful Christians subscribe to the old philosophy of “a day’s work for a day’s pay.”

Members of the Lord’s church ought to give their best efforts on the job whether the boss is seen to be watching or not. This applies even to the seemingly insignificant little tasks one may be assigned. Why? Because we are working to please One in the highest authority and He sees everything we do (Pro. 15:3; Heb. 4:13). Even when your employer is not present he still takes notice of your efforts over the long run. The short-sighted employee looks only for immediate gain and forgets about the long term benefits of seeking to please his employer in all things.

The Christian knows his work is ultimately done as an expression of his faith in the Lord who will reward him one day. The lazy person will also be repaid for his failure to do what he was employed for. Christians win by working well for man and God.

Kindness
Curtis L. E. Graves

And being in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious; and she brake the box, and poured it on his head. And there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said, Why was this waste of the ointment made? For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and she gave to the poor. And they murmured against her. And Jesus said, Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me. For ye have the poor with you always, and wheresoever ye will ye may do them good: but me ye have not always. She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying. Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her (Mark 14:3-9).

In a short time Jesus would be forsaken by His disciples and friends, betrayed, denied, and then crucified. However, on this occasion an act of kindness is done for Jesus. A woman gave her best and it was not forgotten. Kindness is commanded of Christians (Col. 3:12-13). Her act came of a pure motive. Do we do the same for Jesus and others? Bringing others to Bible study and worship, teaching and encouraging others are ways we can show kindness to Jesus today (Mat. 25:40). We should be encouraged also by the fact that this woman did a kind act even as others were complaining. Jesus on the other hand complimented the act and said it would never be forgotten (Mark 14:9). Are we kind to others for Jesus’ sake? Do an act of kindness for another.

Do You Want to Be There?
Kevin Patterson

Cal Ripkin, shortstop for the Baltimore Orioles, was honored not long ago as the first man in baseball history to play in 2,131 consecutive games. When asked why he was always there and never missed a game, he said it was because he wanted to be there. It was not that he never got mad at the coach, umpire, fans, or other players. It was not because he always felt perfect or never had any personal problems. It was not because the weather was never too hot, cold, rainy, or windy. He was always there simply because he wanted to be there.

There was a lady in Augusta, Georgia, who had not missed Bible class or worship for 44 years. That is 2,288 Sundays! Why do you think she was always there? Do you think she never had company that came in at the last minute? Do you think she never had a headache or a cold or indigestion or nervous spells? Do you think she never wanted to sleep late on Sunday mornings or never had her feelings hurt by the preacher, elders, or other members? Of course she did! But, she did not believe those were reasons important enough to “forsake the assembly” (Heb. 10:25). She came simply because she wanted to be there.

In the last of the 1950s there was a very popular prime time television show called “The Miss Patti Page Show.” It came on every Wednesday night. There was one couple during that time who never saw the show because they were always at Bible Study. They were Patti Page’s parents! Although they love Patti very much, they felt it was more important to keep the kingdom of God first (Mat. 6:33). Why were they always at a Bible study instead of at home watching their daughter’s show? It was simply because they wanted to be there!

Whether we realize it or not, 99% of all things we do in life are because we want to do them. We can generally always find time to do the things that are most important to us. Worshipping God and attending the services of the Lord are no different. If these things are important enough to us, then we will surely be able to find the time to do them.

Joshua gave both a command and his own position concerning the selection of our priorities. He said in Joshua 24:15: “choose you this day whom ye will serve...but as for me and my house, we will serve the L栅.” Who will you choose to serve this day, and how will you do it? One way is to faithfully attend the services of the Lord. It is simply a matter of whether you want to be there or not.
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P.O. Box 12; Flat Rock, MI 48134

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Sick

Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Marge Williams, Ella Hammac, Marilyn Hall, Iris Gallaher, Dot Lambert, Thelma Dunavant (Susan McLaughlin’s mother), Wyatt Blancheri (Henry and Paulette Born’s grandson; check this web site for 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).

Reading/Invitation
January 24, 2007
Reading: Ray Dodd
Invitation: Dale Cunningham

January 31, 2007
Reading: Andrew Hatcher
Invitation: Ray Foshee

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Pantry Items
Canned Meat

Working for the Lord
Douglas Hoff

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**Sick**

Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Marge Williams, Ella Hammac, Marilyn Hall, Iris Gallaher (West Florida Hospital, ICU), Dot Lambert, Thelma Dunavant (Susan McLaughlin’s mother), Wyatt Blancheri (Henry and Paulette Born’s grandson; check this web site for 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**

George Goodall was baptized into Christ on January 21. His address is 1004 Dominquez Street; Pensacola, FL 32505. Please keep him in your prayers and offer him encouragement.

**Reading/Invitation**

January 31, 2007
Reading: Andrew Hatcher
Invitation: Ray Foshee
February 7, 2007
Reading: Daniel Hatcher
Invitation: Johnny McLaughlin

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January 31, 2007—Fifth Wednesday
Singing at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.

February 11, 2007—Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.

**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, Fred Stancliff
**MINISTER:** Michael Hatcher
**DEACONS:** Henry Born, Elward Brantley, Bill Crowe, James Loy

**A Profile of Paul**

*Dub McClish*

In Acts 20 is the record of Paul’s journey to Jerusalem, concluding his third evangelistic tour among the Gentiles. While stopped at Miletus, he visited with the elders from nearby Ephesus. In his eloquent discourse to these men we receive a remarkable insight.

**Paul was consistent.** From the first day and all the time thereafter his manner of life was the same (v. 18). His consistency was manifest in his relations with others (v. 21), his morals (1 Cor. 9:27) and his doctrine (1 Cor. 4:17). Inconsistency in our lives is a blight on the church everywhere. Let us keep both our doctrine and our lives pure. Steadfastness, dependability, and faithfulness all flow from consistently serving the Lord as did Paul.

**Paul was humble (v. 19).** He had a record of service about which smaller men would have boasted. Even when it was necessary to mention this record to answer the lies of enemies, none could call it boasting. Perhaps his meekness explains one reason why he attracted so many to Christ and also why we fail to. We must remember that we are servants.

**Paul was sincere.** He served the Lord with tears and trials, night and day (vv. 19, 31). Men will weep and suffer only for those matters that genuinely concern them. Let us ask ourselves when we last shed a tear over a lost soul or when we last were willing to suffer for Christ’s sake.

**Paul was bold and courageous.** He declared everything that was profitable, the whole counsel
of God (vv. 20, 27). This is not only the task of Gospel preachers, but of all Christians. It will likely not cause us to win popularity contests and it may bring us trials, ridicule and abuse, but it must be done if the truth is advanced. Let us never confuse boldness with ugly spirit, but neither let us confuse humility with timidity. Paul was zealous. He taught both publicly and from house to house (v. 20). If some could not or would not come to hear him, he went to them. This same balance must be maintained in edification and evangelism. Paul was unselfish. He coveted no man’s possessions (vv. 31-35). Like him, we must consider material things only a means to the end of serving Christ and our fellow man. He had a right to say, “imitate me” (1 Cor. 11:1).

You Should Study the Old Testament

Lynn Parker

Sad but true, many brethren have a poor knowledge of the Bible in general, and the Old Testament in particular. Occasionally, we hear of someone who refuses to study the Old Testament, and preachers who refuse to use it in their sermons in deference to some listeners. Brothers and sisters, there are literally a multitude of reasons why you should study and know the content of the Old Testament! Here we will point to just a few.

1. The Old Testament, like the New, is God’s Word. The 39 books we refer to as the Old Testament are indeed Scriptures (2 Sam. 23:2; John 10:35; Acts 8:32, 35). They are “God breathed” or inspired (2 Tim. 3:16-17). The Old Testament is not a book of “fairy tales,” nor is it a curriculum just for children’s classes. It is an integral division of God’s revealed message to man; thus, it deserves the honor and respect accorded to Holy Writ.

2. The Old Testament provides insight to the New Covenant. Read Hebrews 9 and try to understand the message of the Holy Spirit without having at least some knowledge of God’s Old Law—hard to do! The Old Testament records the promises of God to Abraham that directly pertain to our salvation through Christ (compare Gen. 12:1-3 with Gal. 3).

3. The Old Testament contains examples, both good and bad, for us to avoid and imitate. It is not remarkable to note the frequency with which the New Testament points to passages and accounts in the Old Testament in order to drive home an important point?

Stephen’s message to a hostile crowd had its foundation in Old Testament history, even though he was preaching Christ Jesus (Acts 7:2-48)! Peter, on Pentecost, reached all the way back to Joel’s second chapter to explain to the crowd what was happening with the miraculous manifestation of the Spirit which they were witnessing. Paul started his sermon in Antioch of Pisidia with the Exodus account of God’s deliverance (Acts 13:16ff) and gave an Old Testament summary to lay the groundwork for preaching the resurrected Saviour (Acts 13:30).

An ignorance of the Old Testament will keep you from a fuller understanding of the New.

4. Finally, an ignorance of the Old Testament will hinder your efforts to “give answer” (1 Pet. 3:15) to those who demand answers to Bible questions, and further, will keep you from refuting false doctrines. Let us consider just two examples.

If you are unfamiliar with the Old Testament, you will not be best prepared to answer the Calvinist who alleges that sin is inherited from one generation to the next. But the student of the Old Covenant knows to turn to Ezekiel 18:18-20 to show that the “men shall not inherit sins of the father.”

Premillennial doctrine, with its many tentacles of error, calls for the Jews to finally inherit the land of Palestine in fulfillment of God’s promise to Abraham. If you read the Old Testament faithfully (as every Christian should), you will be able to refer your premillennial friends to Joshua 21:43, 45 and read with them, “So Jehovah gave unto Israel all the land which he sware to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein.... There failed not aught of any good thing which Jehovah had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass.” God kept his promise! Israel possessed (past tense) the land beyond the Jordan! And in connection with this point, this same system of error (premillennialism) teaches that Christ will one day physically set up His throne in Jerusalem and reign for 1,000 years. Not so friends, because concerning Coniah (Jeconiah), Jeremiah 22:30 says, “for no more shall a man of his seed prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling in Judah.” Jesus Christ was of Coniah’s seed (Mat. 1:11); thus, Christ will never set up an earthly kingdom as false teachers allege!

Yes the study of the Old Testament is in order for every age, every student of God’s Word. Why not begin a study of it today?

Christ Died for All Men

Muretus, a very learned yet poor man, on one occasion fell ill. He was taken to a place where the destitute were kept. The doctors, discussing his case in Latin, said, “Call no man worthless for whom Christ died.”

One of the reasons that we are not reaching more people with the Gospel is our failure to realize the value of a soul. Jesus died for all men (Heb. 2:9). The grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men (Tit. 2:11). The value of a soul, Jesus said, was worth more than the entire world (Mat. 16:26ff).

We would give ten thousand worlds at the judgment day for opportunities we allowed to pass us by; opportunities when we failed to reach those that are lost with the saving Gospel. I urge you—to do not wait, begin at once, teach your neighbor the truth.

Author Unknown
of God (vv. 20, 27). This is not only the task of Gospel preachers, but of all Christians. It will likely not cause us to win popularity contests and it may bring us trials, ridicule and abuse, but it must be done if the truth is advanced. Let us never confuse boldness with ugly spirit, but neither let us confuse humility with timidity. **Paul was zealous.** He taught both publicly and from house to house (v. 20). If some could not or would not come to hear him, he went to them. This same balance must be maintained in edification and evangelism.

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**You Should Study the Old Testament**

**Lynn Parker**

Sad but true, many brethren have a poor knowledge of the Bible in general, and the Old Testament in particular. Occasionally, we hear of someone who refuses to study the Old Testament, and preachers who refuse to use it in their sermons in deference to some listeners. Brothers and sisters, there are literally a multitude of reasons why you should study and know the content of the Old Testament! Here we will point to just a few.

1. The Old Testament, like the New, is God’s Word. The 39 books we refer to as the Old Testament are indeed Scriptures (2 Sam. 21:25; 10:13; Acts 8:32, 35). They are “God breathed” or inspired (2 Tim. 3:16-17). The Old Testament is not a book of “fairy tales,” nor is it a curriculum just for children’s classes. It is an integral division of God’s revealed message to man; thus, it deserves the honor and respect accorded to Holy Writ.

2. The Old Testament provides insight to the New Covenant. Read Hebrews 9 and try to understand the message of the Holy Spirit without at least some knowledge of the Old Testament in order to drive home an important point?

The Holy Spirit’s message recorded in 1 Corinthians 10:1-11 points to the fickle and faithless Israelites and their punishment, and in summary states, “Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusteth.... Now these things happened unto them by way of example; and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are come” (1 Cor. 10:6, 11).

The great discourse on faith—Hebrews 11—is almost solely devoted to a rehearsal of faithful Old Testament characters, whose lives inspire and prompt us to live faithfully for God, despite trials, afflictions, and opposition.

4. Finally, an ignorance of the Old Testament will hinder your efforts to “give answer” (1 Pet. 3:15) to those who demand answers to Bible questions, and further, will keep you from refuting false doctrines. Let us consider just two examples.

If you are unfamiliar with the Old Testament, you will not be best prepared to answer the Calvinist who alleges that sin is inherited from one generation to the next. But the student of the Old Testament knows to turn to Ezekiel 18:19-20 to show that the “men shall not inherit sins of the father.”

Premillennial doctrine, with its many tenacles of error, calls for the Jews to finally inherit the land of Palestine in fulfillment of God’s promise to Abraham. If you read the Old Testament faithfully (as every Christian should), you will be able to refer your premillennial friends to Joshua 21:43, 45 and read with them, “So Jehovah gave unto Israel all the land which he sware to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein.... There failed not ought of any good thing which Jehovah had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass.” God kept his promise! Israel possessed (past tense) the land beyond the Jordan! And in connection with this point, the same system of error (premillennialism) teaches that Christ will one day physically set up His throne in Jerusalem and reign for 1,000 years. Not so friends, because concerning Coniah (Jechoniah), Jeremiah 22:30 says, “for no more shall a man of his seed prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling in Judah.” Jesus Christ was of Coniah’s seed (Mat. 1:11); thus, Christ will never set up an earthly kingdom as false teachers allege!

Yes the study of the Old Testament is in order for every age, every student of God’s Word. Why not begin a study of it today?

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**Christ Died for All Men**

Muretus, a very learned yet poor man, on one occasion fell ill. He was taken to a place where the destitute were kept. The doctors, discussing his case in Latin, said, “Call no man worthless for whom Christ died.”

One of the reasons that we are not reaching more people with the Gospel is our failure to realize the value of a soul. Jesus died for all men (Heb. 2:9). The grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men (Tit. 2:11). The value of a soul, Jesus said, was worth more than the entire world (Mat. 16:26).

We would give ten thousand worlds at the judgment day for opportunities we allowed to pass us by; opportunities when we failed to reach those that are lost with the saving Gospel. I urge you—do not wait, begin at once, teach your neighbor the truth.

Author Unknown
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Marge Williams, Ella Hammac, Marilyn Hall, Iris Gallaher (West Florida Hospital, ICU), Dot Lambert, Thelma Dunavant (Susan McLaughlin’s mother), Wyatt Blancheri (Henry and Paulette Born’s grandson; check this web site for 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
George Goodall was baptized into Christ on January 21. His address is 1004 Dominicquez Street; Pensacola, FL 32505. Please keep him in your prayers and offer him encouragement.

Reading/Invitation
January 31, 2007
Reading: Andrew Hatcher
Invitation: Ray Foshee
February 7, 2007
Reading: Daniel Hatcher
Invitation: Johnny McLaughlin

Mark These Dates
Every Sunday—Ladies’ Bible Class will meet at 5:00 pm, in the zone room.
January 31, 2007—Fifth Wednesday
Singing at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.
February 11, 2007—Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.

A Profile of Paul

Dub McClish

In Acts 20 is the record of Paul’s journey to Jerusalem, concluding his third evangelistic tour among the Gentiles. While stopped at Miletus, he visited with the elders from nearby Ephesus. In his eloquent discourse to these men we receive a remarkable insight.

Paul was consistent. From the first day and all the time thereafter his manner of life was the same (v. 18). His consistency was manifest in his relations with others (v. 21), his morals (1 Cor. 9:27) and his doctrine (1 Cor. 4:17). Inconsistency in our lives is a blight on the church everywhere. Let us keep both our doctrine and our lives pure. Steadfastness, dependability, and faithfulness all flow from consistently serving the Lord as did Paul.

Paul was humble (v. 19). He had a record of service about which smaller men would have boasted. Even when it was necessary to mention this record to answer the lies of enemies, none could call it boasting. Perhaps his meekness explains one reason why he attracted so many to Christ and also why we fail to. We must remember that we are servants.

Paul was sincere. He served the Lord with tears and trials, night and day (vv. 19, 31). Men will weep and suffer only for those matters that genuinely concern them. Let us ask ourselves when we last shed a tear over a lost soul or when we last were willing to suffer for Christ’s sake.

Paul was bold and courageous. He declared everything that was profitable, the whole counsel
Sick
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Restored
Regina Lashley was restored to Christ on January 28. Please keep her in your prayers and offer her encouragement.

Reading/Invitation
February 7, 2007
Reading: Daniel Hatcher
Invitation: Johnny McLaughlin
February 14, 2007
Reading: Jim Loy
Invitation: Will McLaughlin

Mark These Dates
Every Sunday—Ladies’ Bible Class will meet at 5:00 pm, in the zone room.
February 11, 2007—Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
February 18, 2007—Elders/Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
February 28, 2007—Adult Bible Classes Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.

Went Too Far, Stayed Too Long, Came Back Too Late

Burt Jones
There’s the story of the social drinker. He ended up a drunk. He had three sons. They watched his example. When they grew up, they followed his footsteps to alcoholism. Finally, the father recognized the futility of his life, and “come out from among them, and be ye separate…and touch not the unclean thing” (2 Cor. 6:17), and through submission to the Gospel, he was received as a Christian into the body of Christ. In making this change, he gained the respect of many. He later talked to his sons and encouraged them to obey the Gospel. They would not listen to their father. Later, the father remarked to someone: “I went too far, stayed too long, and came back too late.”

This reminded me of the statement that so many of us have made: “If I could only go back and live my life again!” I wonder if Paul made this statement, and upon making it, realized that the only course open to him was in “forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before” (Phi. 3:13). There are so many “ifs,” that are simply wasted effort to consider. We cannot go back in our life and have another chance with our children, or anything else that our hearts cry out to change in our past. Years ago in Alabama, my father taught me to shoot an old “410 over-and-under” in the hills close to our home. He said, “Make your first shot count, because that may be
the only one you get.” Sometimes in hunting we get a second shot. But, very seldom in life do we. The first we do in raising our children is our last one. There are no second chances! What will be different for you this year?

Your Christian example to you children is worth more than trust funds, nice clothes, expensive homes, or even college degrees. No one in the world has more influence in determining your child’s future than you! If you do not influence them, someone or something will.

Take a lesson from the man in the story. Do not squander the one opportunity you have with your children. You may have gone too far, and stayed too long, but you just might be able to come back before it is too late. What a legacy to leave your children, and to all those looking to you as their example!

P.O. Box 531 Marietta, Ohio 45750

A Lectureship and Book that are greatly needed for our time.

2007 Bellview Lectureship
Theme:
A Time To Build
June 9-13, 2007

Twenty-nine faithful men will be speaking on various subjects concerning the building up of the Lord’s church. With all the problems we face in the church, we need to be constantly reminded that it is not only our duty to defend the Truth against all error, but to build up the bride of Christ. Thus, make your plans now to attend.

Come Ye Out...
Marvin L Weir

Christians are obligated to be “true to God” (Rom. 3:4). A follower of Christ must be the “salt of the earth” (Mat. 5:13). If a child of God does not possess the strength to be a preserving influence for the cause of Christ he is “good for nothing” (v. 13). A member of the Lord’s church is to be the “light of the world” (v. 14). It does absolutely no good to possess light and then place it “under a bushel” (v. 15) so that it cannot be seen. A light that is hidden is of no benefit to the Lord or man!

Christians must ever be on guard to resist Satan’s temptations to conform to this world (cf. Rom. 12:2). The devil will do his best to get you to follow the ways of the world. The cry that the faithful must take seriously is God calling, “Come ye out from among them, and be ye separate” (2 Cor. 6:17). Far too many times people want to go to Heaven without giving up evil and worldly influences. Many who profess to be in the Lord’s army have such an aversion to being labeled as “peculiar” that they have lost the distinction of being God’s people. Peter reminds those whose goal is heaven, “But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light” (1 Pet. 2:9).

We live in a world where both the young and old practice deception on a daily basis. Many members of the church have become far too comfortable with worldly habits. Some have become quite adept at pretending to be a “new creature” while refusing to give up the “old things” (2 Cor. 5:17). People need to take to heart the words of Paul that say, “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man sowereth, that shall he also reap. For he that sowereth unto his own flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that sowereth unto the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap eternal life” (Gal. 6:7-8).

Every day people who live sinful lives are laid to rest in cemeteries with an inscription on their tombstone reading: “Asleep In Jesus.” Some were more honest during the days of the Wild West. An inscription might read, “Here lies a horse thief who was hanged.” Another might read, “Cattle rustler—shot to death.” Why practice deception when both man and God know the truth?

If honesty were practiced, what would the inscription read on the monument erected in your memory? Would the epitaph read, “Here lies a thief?” What about one that says, “This woman was a liar!” One might say, “This man was an adulterer.” Another inscription might read, “Here lies a lover of pleasure instead of a lover of God.” Another epitaph might say, “This family loved the praise and approval of men more than the praise and approval of God.” There is no need to practice deception because God knows the truth.

As a Christian, you can choose how the epitaph in regard to your life will read. While we are alive, we choose how we will be remembered after we have departed this life. Our lives will either be an influence for the cause of Christ or an influence for the devil. It is an either/or choice that we make—there is no middle ground (Mat. 12:30). How will the epitaph read that God inscribes on your permanent record?

Consider these Bible examples of godly folks whose chose to live lives that continue to be an influence for good. Their epitaphs could read as follows: (1) Here lies Noah who found grace in the eyes of God (Gen. 6:8). (2) Abraham, a man who was willing to leave behind family and friends to do God’s bidding (Gen. 12:1). (3) Here lies Moses who chose God and His people over the Pharaoh and the world’s riches (Heb. 11:24-27). (4) Joshua, a man who chose to be a true soldier of the cross (Num. 14:7-9). (5) Joseph, a man who chose to flee from sin’s grasp when invited to commit adultery (Gen. 39:12). (6) Here lies Saul of Tarsus (Paul) who was willing to admit he was wrong (Gal. 1:13-14).

As a member of the Lord’s church we have an obligation to refuse unacceptable behavior, attitudes, dress, and relationships that undermine good influence. Can people tell that you are a Christian by your speech? Do you dress any differently than worldly people dress? Does your appearance depict one who has renounced the world and its worldly ways? All children of God should remember the apostle Paul’s words to Timothy. Paul said, “Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an ensample to them that believe, in word, in manner of life, in love, in faith, in purity” (1 Tim. 4:12).

The faithful child of God must resist the beckoning call of worldly temptations and be separate from them. Let us choose carefully the epitaph that will become our legacy after our death.

815 42nd Street SW; Paris, TX 75460
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Burt Jones

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Reading/Invitation
February 14, 2007
Reading: Jim Loy
Invitation: Will McLaughlin
February 21, 2007
Reading: Horace Myrick
Invitation: Ray Pierce

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March 11, 2007—Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.

Pantry Items
Canned Meat

I Must Be About My Father’s Business

Carl B. Garner

The second chapter of Luke is one of the best-known in the Bible. It includes the birth of Jesus and the first years of His life. At the end of this chapter we read of His being “lost” in the midst of the elders of Israel, asking and answering their questions. Confronted by His mother, Jesus asked this piercing question: “wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business?” (Luke 2:49). Even at His tender age He knew there was important business for Him to do. Do we not also have important business to accomplish? If I am to be His disciple, I must also be about “my Father’s business.” Do your neighbors and friends even know that you are a Christian? Can they see that you are about your heavenly Father’s business? Or, are you more concerned about your profession, your job, your relations with your “boss” than your Father in heaven?

Salt of the Earth

When a person is said to be the “salt of the earth” today, it often means they are good, dependable, honest people. Biblically, however, there is much more to this phrase. It means that you have an influence, an impact upon your surroundings, the community in which you live, the people you meet. Jesus said, “Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men” (Mat. 5:13). Salt can have a powerful effect upon every element it touches. But when it loses its “savor” when it...
it is borne in every part of our life, among our neighbors and friends, and even before our enemies. This is every day fruit-bearing, not just on Sunday in the church building. The people of the first century cut down trees that bore no fruit, for they merely took up space and did no good (Luke 13:6-9). Being about our Father’s business means bearing fruit, not just taking up space.

“Glorify Your Father in Heaven”

The mandate to “glorify God” in our life is hardly new; here we discover it again: “let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men’s matters. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf” (1 Pet. 4:15-16). If persecution be our lot in life, let us endure it without complaining. Others, observing the depth of our convictions, may be drawn to such a powerful faith. Early Christians were told, “know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?” For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Cor. 6:19-20). They lived in an environment hostile to everything Christ stood for, but even in their everyday encounters with those people, the skeptics, they were to glorify God in their body. Their actions, behavior, words and motives were to stand out in bold distinction from the licentious lives of their neighbors. Our “Father’s business” must be uppermost in our life. It takes effort, commitment, perseverance, and love to do so. Some will oppose us, as they did Christ. Some will ridicule us, as they did Christ (John 15:20). He did not flinch in His Father’s business. It is incumbent upon us to do the same. Have you been about your Father’s business lately? What about today?

For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (2 Cor. 4:17).

Our Affliction

Paul writing to the Corinthian brethren made the point that affliction, or suffering is something we all share: “our affliction.” It is so easy when suffering to feel, and falsely conclude that it is just me. When Jezebel had ordered that all the prophets of the Lord be slain (1 Kin. 18:4, 13), Elijah concluded that he alone was in trouble, fleeing for his life (1 Kin. 18:12; 19:14). But God said, “Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him” (1 Kin. 19:18). There is comfort and encouragement in knowing that others suffer faithfully the same afflictions that we do (1 Pet. 5:9; Acts 14:22; 2 Tim. 3:12). For if they with God’s help can overcome, so can we!

Our Affliction Is Light

Paul saying light, means suffering is not heavy. I know that you are asking what type of suffering is light? Understand, Paul is somewhat of an expert on the subject...through things faithfully makes us stronger, molding our character in the likeness of our Savior (1 Pet. 2:20-21; 4:16). “It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes” (Psa. 119:71). Suffering is the reason why many wayward brethren are restored. Was not suffering the fundamental reason why the prodigal son came to himself, and eventually back home? (Luke 15:11-24). Suffering also reminds us that this world is not our home and intensifies our longing for heaven! (2 Cor. 4:18-5:1: Heb. 13:14). Our affliction really is beneficial to us all!

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ceases to have that influence, it is of little value. So it is with a Christian; a person who has the capability and the opportunity to influence others for Christ but fails to do so is of little or no value to his neighbors, associates, family, or God. Yes, being part of the family of God demands your time, your talent, and your energy; but that is part of being “about my Father’s business.”

**Light of the World**

The ninth plague brought upon Egypt was a “darkness which may be felt” (Exo. 10:21). Darkness always seems to represent that which is sinister, fearful, hidden. It was so devastating to Pharaoh that he sought a compromise with God’s demands. The Christians at Philippi were told they must “shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life” (Phi. 2:15-16). Who better to dispel that darkness than those who have been “enlightened” by the Word of God (Heb. 6:4)? No hiding their light; no secret saints; no compromising with Satan. That is how you “Let your light so shine before men...glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Mat. 5:16). That is also what is meant to be about our “Father’s business.”

**Bear Much Fruit**

Palestine in the first century was a place that needed fruit-bearing trees, not just shade trees. Jesus spoke of His disciples’ influence, saying, “Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples” (John 15:8). This is but another indication that being a Christian involves more than merely occupying a pew at various times in a week. We must “bear fruit.” That means taking the Gospel message to the lost so they can be saved (Mark 16:15-16). It also applies to the fruit discussed in Galatians 5:22-23: “the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.” It is clear from the nature of this fruit that it is borne in every part of our life, among our neighbors and friends, and even before our enemies. This is every day fruit-bearing, not just on Sunday in the church building. The people of the first century cut down trees that bore no fruit, for they merely took up space and did no good (Luke 13:6-9). Being about our Father’s business means bearing fruit, not just taking up space.

**Glorify Your Father in Heaven**

The mandate to “glorify God” in our life is hardly new; here we discover it again: “let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men’s matters. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf” (1 Pet. 4:15-16). If persecution be our lot in life, let us endure it without complaining. Others, observing the depth of our convictions, may be drawn to such a powerful faith. Early Christians were told, “know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s’” (1 Cor. 6:19-20). They lived in an environment hostile to everything Christ stood for, but even in their everyday encounters with those people, the skeptics, they were to glorify God in their body. Their actions, behavior, words and motives were to stand out in bold distinction from the licentious lives of their neighbors. Our “Father’s business” must be uppermost in our life. It takes effort, commitment, perseverance, and love to do so. Some will oppose us, as they did Christ. Some will ridicule us, as they did Christ (John 15:20). He did not flinch in His Father’s business. It is incumbent upon us to do the same. Have you been about your Father’s business lately? What about today? 187 Ira Hill Rd; Dripping Springs, TX 78620

“For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (2 Cor. 4:17).

**Our Affliction**

Paul writing to the Corinthian brethren made the point that affliction, or suffering is something we all share: “our affliction.” It is so easy when suffering to feel, and falsely conclude that it is just me. When Jezebel had ordered that all the prophets of the Lord be slain (1 Kin. 18:4, 13), Elijah concluded that he alone was in trouble, fleeing for his life (1 Kin. 18:12; 19:14). But God said, “Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him” (1 Kin. 19:18). There is comfort and encouragement in knowing that others suffer faithfully the same afflictions that we do (1 Pet. 5:9; Acts 14:22; 2 Tim. 3:12). For if they with God’s help can overcome, so can we!

**Our Affliction Is Light**

Paul says suffering is not heavy. I know that you are asking what type of suffering is light? Understand, Paul is somewhat of an expert on the subject of suffering (2 Cor. 4:8-12; 11:23-28), and he not only calls his suffering light, but ours also. The late Thomas B. Warren, faithful Gospel preacher, writer, debater, and defender of the Truth once made a few inspiring observations under this point: He said suffering is light compared to what Jesus endured, suffering is light compared to what we really deserve, and suffering is light compared to the glories of heaven. So true, suffering really is light if we give it spiritual thought. Never forget that suffering has the inclination of driving us in the direction of our Lord (2 Cor. 12:7-10). That benefit alone minimizes our affliction as a “light thing.”

**Our Affliction Is Just for a Moment**

All suffering seems like an eternity, like it just drags on forever and ever. But all suffering is just for a moment, or a very short time. Job said, “Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble” (14:1). Even though life is full of affliction, it is just for a little while. For “what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away” (Jam. 4:14). As a result, if we live for 250 years and suffer every single day, our suffering would have only been for a short time, because life on earth is only for a short time. What is a lifetime in the realm of eternity? Just a moment. What is the length of our suffering during our lifetime to gain eternity? Just a moment.

**Our Affliction Works for Us an Eternal Weight of Glory**

It is so hard to see the bright side of suffering, and I doubt if anyone could without the Word of God. But through God’s Word we see the importance, necessity, and benefits of suffering. Our Lord suffered faithfully (Heb. 5:8; 1 Pet. 2:21), and its important for us to also learn how. Suffering through things faithfully makes us stronger, molding our character in the likeness of our Savior (1 Pet. 2:20-21; 4:16). “It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes” (Psa. 119:71). Suffering is the reason why many wayward brethren are restored. Was not suffering the fundamental reason why the prodigal son came to himself, and eventually back home? (Luke 15:11-24). Suffering also reminds us that this world is not our home and intensifies our longing for heaven! (2 Cor. 4:18-5:1; Heb. 13:14). Our affliction really is beneficial to us all! 1201 Americana Lane, Apt. 6200 Mesquite, TX 75150
Sick
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Reading/Invitation
February 14, 2007
Reading: Jim Loy
Invitation: Will McLaughlin
February 21, 2007
Reading: Horace Myrick
Invitation: Ray Pierce

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Pantry Items
Canned Meat

I Must Be About My Father’s Business
Carl B. Garner

The second chapter of Luke is one of the best-known in the Bible. It includes the birth of Jesus and the first years of His life. At the end of this chapter we read of His being “lost” in the midst of the elders of Israel, asking and answering their questions. Confronted by His mother, Jesus asked this piercing question: “wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business?” (Luke 2:49). Even at His tender age He knew there was important business for Him to do. Do we not also have important business to accomplish? If I am to be His disciple, I must also be about “my Father’s business.” Do your neighbors and friends even know that you are a Christian? Can they see that you are about your heavenly Father’s business? Or, are you more concerned about your profession, your job, your relations with your “boss” than your Father in heaven?

Salt of the Earth

When a person is said to be the “salt of the earth” today, it often means they are good, dependable, honest people. Biblically, however, there is much more to this phrase. It means that you have an influence, an impact upon your surroundings, the community in which you live, the people you meet. Jesus said, “Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men” (Mat. 5:13). Salt can have a powerful effect upon every element it touches. But when it loses its “savor” when it
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What Do We Value in Times of Distress?
Tom Wacaster

Seventy-two hours before Hurricane Rita hit the Texas coast the warning was given to evacuate the Galveston-Houston area. Not a few residents of Harris County had begun the evacuation several days earlier; others began packing bags and belongings as soon as the warning was given; still others delayed their departure for another 24 hours. Those of us living miles removed from the threatened areas watched the media coverage, witnessing lines of automobiles attempting to move northward on Interstate 45, west on Interstate 10, or north on Highway 59—major evacuation routes in times of disaster. After Katrina devastated the southern half of Louisiana and Mississippi a few weeks earlier, leaving in its wake massive flooding in New Orleans, the residents of Texas wanted nothing to do with what the victims of Katrina went through. And so began the _exodus_. Major highways were clogged with more than two and a half million citizens fleeing the impending doom. It turned into a monumental traffic jam, stretching more than 100 miles from Houston to Huntsville. The pictures we saw on TV were astonishing, to say the least.

What would you take with you if you were forced to flee your residence? With short notice, limited space, and even less time, cars were packed and trailers loaded. We learned that our massive evacuation plans in large metropolitan areas such as Houston needs some work. But we also learned that people put stock in some of the strangest of things when it comes right down to saving what is really important to us.
Accoring to a number of eye-witnesses, here are some of the things that Houstonians loaded into their cars, vans, and trucks, as they began their evacuation: One man in a cowboy hat was seen with, what one witness called, “the biggest, ugliest recliner in the back of his pickup—nothing else—just this phenomenally ugly chair!” A number of folks loaded up their trucks, attached second cars, boats, campers, and trailers—attempting to save as many of their material possessions as possible. Many people brought their pets. But what pets! One man had a goat in a rather luxurious sport utility vehicle, chewing away at the seats and other items within its reach. One woman actually was seen on the side of the road feeding her pet rat! Why would anyone bring a rat? Photo albums, ragged old quilts, the kids favorite blanket or toy—yes, these were the things people clung to in their time of distress.

What did you notice about those things?

Maybe I am missing something here, but most of the items that were reported as “top priority” in the list of things to carry were of no monetary value. Most of that stuff was sentimental stuff. One lady was reported to have gone through every room in her house, eventually picking out those things most important to her: dishes, flatware, chipped and cracked old plates, bent spoons—things that described her own little world. But you know what? All those things brought no comfort to that vast multitude of people caught up in the horror of the moment! Some got fed up with the long lines at stations as they attempted to fill their automobile with gasoline. Others became frustrated with the slow movement away from the impending face of danger. It was what one writer described as “helplessness distilled to purity.” In the face of fear people reacted in different ways. Some became heroes; some acted like nothing more than animals. If I could venture a guess, I would say that those who put their trust in the things they carried with them were among those who turned on others in desperation, while those who valued life itself above all their material possessions were the same ones who helped others in need.

The Bible has much to say about riches, wealth, and material possessions. First, these are things that come from God, for He is the source of all our blessings. Second, you can lose your wealth without losing your soul. If it is stolen by a thief, or destroyed by fire. Many a man on the Titanic would have traded all he possessed for a simple life raft or boat. Finally, those who are “minded to be rich fall into a temptation and a snare and many foolish and hurtful lusts, such as drown men in destruction and perdition” (1 Tim. 6:9).

What if you and I had to depart with great haste from some impending danger? What would we carry with us? Our computers? Televisions? Cash boxes, stocks and bonds, jewelry? Or would we get our Bible, or some favorite commentary for reading and study? It is a sobering question that comes to each of us: “What do we value in times of distress?”

An Abomination to God

Dub McClish

On one occasion when Jesus was warning His disciples about the peril of riches and materialism, the money-loving Pharisees heard His teaching and ridiculed Him: “And he said unto them, Ye are they that justify yourselves in the sight of men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God” (Luke 16:15).

It is obvious that the Lord referred to their love of money when He spoke of that which was “highly esteemed among men.” Perhaps more souls (both worldlings and God’s people) will be sentenced to Hell because of the love of money than any other sin. No wonder the Bible warns of dishonesty, materialism, and greed, and exalts benevolence, generosity, and honesty on almost every page. No wonder Paul wrote, “For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil” (1 Tim. 6:10). We are not to understand that materialism is an abomination to God merely on the ground that men highly esteem it (some things highly esteemed of men are pleasing to God—Gal. 5:22-23). It is abomination because it damns the soul. We must ever guard against the abomination of “covetousness, which is idolatry” (Col. 3:5).

Notice now the broader application of the Lord’s statement: Just because a thing is highly esteemed by men does not mean God favors it. In fact, throughout history, it is almost axiomatic that if most men esteem something highly, God does not. (At present, we should not be surprised at this, since the vast majority of men are atheists and/or agnostics, and even among professed believers, most give only lip service to His law.) Let us make some applications.

1. The Muslim religion is highly esteemed by teeming millions, but it is an abomination unto Jehovah because it represents error, sin, and blasphemy. The Christ alone (not Christ and Mohammed) is the only way to God and salvation (John 14:6).

2. The doctrine of salvation by faith alone is “highly esteemed” by the millions in the Protestant denominations, but it is an abomination to God. Men are saved by faith and cannot be saved without it (Rom. 10:9-10), but not by faith only. One’s sins are not forgiven and one is not saved before baptism (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; 1 Pet. 3:21; et al.).

A list of highly esteemed items would include fornication, drinking, abortion, using instruments of music in worship, elevating a man to be a “pope,” and such like. Will men never learn that the only way to please God is to do what He authorizes in His Word, rather than doing something because they like it? The only things God “highly esteems” are those things which He authorizes in His Word.
According to a number of eye-witnesses, here are some of the things that Houstonians loaded into their cars, vans, and trucks, as they began their evacuation: One man in a cowboy hat was seen with a mustache. He had one kid clinging to him. The child’s blanket was a ragged old quilt, the kids’ favorite toy. Yes, these were the things people clung to in their time of distress.

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Reading: Shelby Nall
Invitation: Fred Stancliff
March 7, 2007
Reading: Elward Brantley
Invitation: Carl Ayliffe

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Phylacteries: You Really Can Have Too Much of a Good Thing
Ashley Kizer

Recently, I was part of a Bible study that ventured into the subject of phylacteries. What are they, and why did the Pharisees choose to “broaden” them (Mat. 23:5)? We had been involved in a study of the Proverbs and more particularly chapter 3 verse 3, which says of kindness and truth, “bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart.” Naturally, we began to discuss the commandments found in the Old Testament that instructed Jewish people to display God’s Word in conspicuous places. We read in Deuteronomy 6:8: “And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes.” This verse was most likely the greatest influence that led to the practice of wearing phylacteries. It is a repetition of a prior commandment given in Exodus 13:9 and 16, and is repeated again in Deuteronomy 11:18.

Phylactery literally refers to any type of safeguard. Throughout history, it came to be used more and more to denote an amulet worn for protection (Vine 854). Many devout Jews still wear these phylacteries or tephillin during prayer time every day, excluding the Sabbath and special holy days (Barclay 286). Though many respected scholars, such as Barclay, Barnes, and Vine describe the phylacteries as being small pieces of parchment, modern dictionaries define the items by describing their containers. For example, The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language states that a phylactery is:
“Either of two small leather boxes, each containing strips of parchment inscribed with quotations from the Hebrew Scriptures, one of which is strapped to the forehead and the other to the left arm; traditionally worn by Jewish men during morning worship...” (http://dictionary.reference.com/search?q=Phylactery).

Of these small rolls of parchment, Barnes wrote in his commentary on Matthew:

They were...enclosed in a sort of case of black calf-skin. They were put upon a square bit of the same leather, whence hung a thong of the same, of about a finger in breadth, and about 2 feet long. These rolls were placed at the bending of the left arm, and after one end of the thong had been made into a little knot in the form of the Hebrew letter yod, y it was wound about the arm in a spiral line, which ended at the top of the middle finger (241). This would have been an obvious outward expression of one’s devotion to God’s written commandments. Phylacteries served as constant reminders of God’s message to His people, lest they forget the Lord who brought them out of the land of Egypt (cf. Deu. 6:12).

However, in Jesus’ day phylactery were being misused by a self-righteous sect of the Jews known as the Pharisees. Knowing their hearts, He spoke of them to a multitude of people saying, “But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments” (Mat. 23:5). This may have meant that they wore especially big leather boxes on their heads and arms (Barclay 286), or they made their strips of parchment wider with larger letters (Barnes). Whatever the case may have been, it was displeasing to God because it was done with the improper attitude.

Even if we are doing good deeds, we cannot expect to be pleasing to God without proper attitudes. Concerning the giving of alms and prayer, Jesus told His disciples, “Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven” (Mat. 6:1). Can you ever have too much of a good thing? In this case, you can! Let us humble ourselves in the presence of the Lord, and have the attitude which was in Christ Jesus (cf. Jam. 4:10; Phi. 2:5). Our “phylacteries” may shrink, but our rewards in heaven will grow larger.

We “have been called unto liberty” (Gal. 5:13), from “bondage” to “glorious liberty” (Rom. 8:21)—we must “stand fast” therein (Gal. 5:1), nor fail to recognize the bounds of this freedom (1 Cor. 8:9; 1 Pet. 2:16). We are “called...unto holiness” (1 The. 4:7)—and this demands being “holy in all manner of conversation,” or behavior (1 Pet. 1:15-16), or “holy” in sacrificing self (Rom. 12:1). More can be cited, but these show that the “called out” must remain out, and bear “fruit unto holiness” (Rom. 6:22), not again becoming entangled with worldly things (2 Pet. 2:20).

The kingdom

Kingdom is another term that describes God’s children (Mat. 16:18-19)—it denotes the kind of government; not a democracy, aristocracy, or oligarchy, but a monarchy, or king rule, and the church must not forget nor violate this universal arrangement. We are “delivered...from the power of darkness, and...translated...into the kingdom of God’s dear Son” (Col. 1:13)—hence, Christ is the “King of kings” (Rev. 17:14) and “our citizenship is in heaven” (Phi. 3:10-11); we must “honor the king” (1 Pet. 2:17), pay “tribute to whom tribute is due” (Rom. 13:7), “Render...unto God the things that are God’s” (Mat. 22:21), and “lay up...treasures in heaven” (Mat. 6:20). It is the individual and combined duty to honor, be in subjection and make contribution to Christ’s cause as ordained.

The family

We are “born again” to enter the kingdom (John 3:3,5), and by the same process we become “children of God” (Gal. 3:26-27). We are the “household of God” (Gal. 6:10), “the household of God” (Eph. 2:19), and, as a family, we bear the name of Christ (Eph. 3:15). We are, as children “heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ” (Rom. 8:17). This affiliation demands that we must “obey” the Father (Col. 3:20), ye “obey” and “honor” (Eph. 6:1-2). It is right; it pleases God; and is a command with promise (Eph. 6:3). The church, then, must obey the Lord in everything, and so live as to honor his name. The relationship demands it!

The building

“I will build,” said Christ (Mat. 16:18), indicating church as a building; hence, “ye are God’s building” (1 Cor. 3:9), based on Christ (3:11), “in whom” we must be “fzily framed” (Eph. 2:21), to be “an holy temple” and God’s “habitation” (2:20-22), Christ being “over his own house” (Heb. 3:6). Our obligations? To “behave” (1 Tim. 3:15), to “hold fast” (Heb. 3:6), to grow “unto an holy temple” (Eph. 2:21). In God’s house there are many vessels (2 Tim. 2:20)—each must bear a part and serve well: there are bricks, boards, shingles, laths, nails, screws, mortar, etc., and minus either, the house is to that extent weakened. There must be unity and cooperation if progress and stability become reality. We have obligations to make the house as God would have it.

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“The body, the church” (Col. 1:18), “for his body’s sake, which is the church” (v. 24). Christ is the head (Eph. 1:22-23); and there is only one “body” (Eph. 4:4; Rom. 12:4-5; 1 Cor. 12:20). Christians are “members” of this “body” (Eph. 5:30; 1 Cor. 12:27)—and Paul parallels the spiritual body (1 Cor. 12:12-27). There is a place, need, and service for each part, whether weak or strong, honorable or less honorable, and the failure of any part saps the strength of the whole. There is “the same care one for another,” and each strives for unity and growth. Obligation rests on each member.

Conclusion

Like comparisons can be made on the flock, the bride, God’s husbandry, pillar and ground; the results are the same: where there is a relationship, there is a definite responsibility. We must perform the duty demanded or be lost eternally! May His church ever please the Lord!

Deceased
“Either of two small leather boxes, each containing strips of parchment inscribed with quotations from the Hebrew Scriptures, one of which is strapped to the forehead and the other to the left arm; traditionally worn by Jewish men during morning worship...” (http://dictionary.reference.com/search?q=Phylactery). Of these small rolls of parchment, Barnes wrote in his commentary on Matthew: They were...enclosed in a sort of case of black calf-skin. They were put upon a square bit of the same leather, whence hung a thong of the same, of about a finger in breadth, and about 2 feet long. These rolls were placed at the bending of the left arm, and after one end of the thong had been made into a little knot in the form of the Hebrew letter yod, y it was wound about the arm in a spiral line, which ended at the top of the middle finger (241). This would have been an obvious outward expression of one’s devotion to God’s written commandments. Phylacteries served as constant reminders of God’s message to His people, lest they forget the Lord who brought them out of the land of Egypt (cf. Deu. 6:12).

However, in Jesus’ day phylacteries were being misused by a self-righteous sect of the Jews known as the Pharisees. Knowing their hearts, He spoke of them to a multitude of people saying, “But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments” (Mat. 23:5). This may have meant that they wore especially big leather boxes on their heads and arms (Barclay 286), or they made their strips of parchment wider with larger letters (Barnes). Whatever the case may have been, it was displeasing to God because it was done with the improper attitude. Even if we are doing good deeds, we cannot expect to be pleasing to God without proper attitudes. Concerning the giving of alms and prayer, Jesus told His disciples, “Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven” (Mat. 6:1). Can you ever have too much of a good thing? In this case, you can! Let us humble ourselves in the presence of the Lord, and have the attitude which was in Christ Jesus (cf. Jam. 4:10; Phi. 2:5). Our “phylacteries” may shrink, but our rewards in heaven will grow larger.

We have been called unto liberty” (Gal. 5:13), from “bondage” to “glorious liberty” (Rom. 8:21)—we must “stand fast” therein (Gal. 5:1), nor fail to recognize the bounds of this freedom (1 Cor. 8:9; 1 Pet. 2:16). We are “called...unto holiness” (1 The. 4:7)— and this demands being “holy in all manner of conversation,” or behavior (1 Pet. 1:15-16), or “holy” in sacrificing self (Rom. 12:1). More can be cited, but these show that the “called out” must remain out, and bear “fruit unto holiness” (Rom. 6:22), not again becoming entangled with worldly things (2 Pet. 2:20).

The kingdom
Kingdom is another term that describes God’s children (Mat. 16:18-19)—it denotes the kind of government; not a democracy, aristocracy, or oligarchy, but a monarchy, or king rule, and the church must not forget nor violate this universal arrangement. We are “delivered...from the power of darkness, and...translated...into the kingdom of God’s dear Son” (Col. 1:13)—hence, Christ is the “King of kings” (Rev. 17:14) and “our citizenship is in heaven” (Phi. 3:10-11); we must “honor the king” (1 Pet. 2:17), pay “tribute to whom tribute is due” (Rom. 13:7), “Render...unto God the things that are God’s” (Mat. 22:21), and “lay up...treasures in heaven” (Mat. 6:20). It is the individual and combined duty to honor, be in subjection and make contribution to Christ’s cause as ordained.

Copied

Relationships and Responsibilities

L. O. Sanderson

Life is filled with relationships, each of which commands, yeas demands, particular responsibilities—a child is born into a family and this union requires obedience and honor to parents; this same child will soon enter school, and this new affiliation entails duties to teachers and fellow-students; after school days, he or she finds employment, and this compact demands service and loyalty to employer; then this same person marries, establishing an affinity that commands love, care, submission, cooperation, and faithfulness; and now, by using terms by which Christians are known (in the aggregate) let us take note of this principle in the religious fellowship and obligations. The church

“Church” is from ekklesia, meaning called out. Now note: We are “called...out of darkness into...light” (1 Pet. 2:9), and we are obligated to “walk as children of light” (Eph. 5:8) and let our “light so shine before men” (Mat. 5:16) as a “light that shineth in a dark place” (2 Pet. 1:19). The family

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Sick

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February 28, 2007
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Pantry Items
Canned Meat

Phylacteries: You Really Can Have Too Much of a Good Thing

Ashley Kizer

Recently, I was part of a Bible study that ventured into the subject of phylacteries. What are they, and why did the Pharisees choose to “broaden” them (Mat. 23:5)? We had been involved in a study of the Proverbs and more particularly chapter 3 verse 3, which says of kindness and truth, “bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart.” Naturally, we began to discuss the commandments found in the Old Testament that instructed Jew- ish people to display God’s Word in conspicuous places. We read in Deuteronomy 6:8: “And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes.” This verse was most likely the greatest influence that led to the practice of wearing phylacteries. It is a repetition of a prior commandment given in Exodus 13:9 and 16, and is repeated again in Deuteronomy 11:18.

Phylactery literally refers to any type of safeguard. Throughout history, it came to be used more and more to denote an amulet worn for protection (Vine 854). Many devout Jews still wear these phylacteries or tephillin during prayer time every day, excluding the Sabbath and special holy days (Barclay 286). Though many respected scholars, such as Barclay, Barnes, and Vine describe the phylacteries as being small pieces of parchment, modern dictionaries define the items by describing their containers. For example, The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language states that a phylactery is:
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The Bible
Curtis L. E. Graves

About forty men were engaged in writing the Bible, over a period of some 1600 years, yet not one writer contradicts the other. Prophecies were made hundreds of years before they were fulfilled. Scientific facts are stated by the ancient prophets of God long before modem science discovered them (Job 26:7; Isa. 40:22; Psa. 8:8). Only the fact that the Bible is the inspired Word of God can account for this. The Bible cannot be partially rejected. We must either accept it or reject it altogether, as it is!

As we think about how the Bible came to us, one important fact to consider is the fact that writing was being practiced long before the time of Moses, who wrote the first five books of the Bible. The Bible gradually grew until its completion near the close of the first century. The writings of the early religious teachers are of great value because of the references they make to the New Testament letters. The New Testament books have been handed down to us by means of thousands of copies. While those who did the copying were not miraculously guided, we can know by the sound science of Textual Criticism and I believe by the providence of God that we have the inspired Word of God. Any differences seen between manuscripts have only been slight and made up of miniature details and are of no significance to our text.

Canon refers to the list of inspired books found in the Bible. Evidence of these inspired books include references made to Old Testament books in the New Testament, early Christian and non-Christian sources, and the fact that the New
Testament books were being read in the early church assemblies. No Church, through its councils, made the canon of Scripture, in particular, the Roman Catholic Church. The Bible owes it authority to no individual or group. There are fourteen or fifteen books known as “The Apocrypha,” which are rightfully rejected from our Bible because they do not meet essential parts of inspiration. Also, Jesus, the apostles, early Jewish and Christian writers did not accept these books as inspired. We shall continue to be a people of one book, and that book is the Bible.

1021 Mt. Pleasant Rd; Chesapeake, VA 23322

“Commitment”
Tom Wacaster

Lafayette, the Frenchman, is remembered in the history books as a bold, courageous individual. During the French Revolution he was dismissed from the army. He tried to escape to America, but was captured and imprisoned in Germany. It is reported that he was offered freedom on the condition that he join the conspiracy against France. Even though he was threatened with long confinement in prison should he refuse to cooperate. Lafayette replied: “Never! I am still Lafayette.”

History is replete with examples of courage, heroism, and determination on the part of men and women who were willing to give their lives for a cause. The framers of our Declaration of Independence were men of such character and determination. They knew that if they won the battle for freedom that the best they could expect would be years of hardship in a struggling nation. If they lost, the best they could look forward to was the end of a hangman’s rope. But because of commitment and sheer determination for a cause they considered worth more than life itself, they engaged the battle, and won for our nation its desired freedom.

Such commitment is lacking in our society. Rare is the man or woman who can be depended upon to follow through with their promise. For example, a baseball player might make a commitment to honor a contract for some specified salary, only to “renegotiate” that contract after one year of service. Marriage ceremonies, in many instances, have removed the phrase “for better or for worse, till death do us part” because of a lack of commitment on the part of either party. Financial indebtedness finds an easy out through chapter eleven bankruptcy, and companies usher out the 20 or 30-year employee with an early retirement. The problem lies in a lack of commitment.

Heaven’s call for commitment on the part of the child of God is best stated by our Lord in Matthew 5:33-37. Yes, there were some who would swear with an oath that they would do thus and so. Some swore by heaven, but in their mind the oath was not binding. Others would swear by the throne of God, but that too was like playing games with one’s fellow man. It was sort of like the little game that we played when we were children where we would cross our fingers behind our back while making a promise—we were so immature that we thought that crossing the fingers relieved us of any obligation to keep the promise. These were the games that dishonest men and women played with God. But the Son of God tells us, “let your speech be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: and whatsoever is more than these is of the evil one” (Mat. 5:37). It seems to me that there are entirely too many Christians who play this silly game of making promises with little or no intention of following through on our commitment. “Yes God, I give my life to you! I surrender to You and Your cause!” Out front we make promises, and put on a great show with our oaths of dedication and determination, but all the while, we have our spiritual fingers crossed knowing full well that if something should “come up” that interferes with my service to God, then the promise is not really that binding. The problem lies in a lack of commitment.

When our Lord returns to gather us into the eternal abode that is reserved for those who have followed through on their commitment, there will be a great host on that Day who will be somewhat surprised that the reward will not be their’s to enjoy (Mat. 7:13-14, 20-21). The thorns will have choked out their faith, and the lack of determination to follow through with their once-made promise to serve the Master with all diligence will echo throughout eternity with the tragic words: “Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity; I never knew you.” The problem lies in a lack of commitment.

806 West Broadway St; Clarksville, TX 75426

Teachers! Teachers! Teachers!
My, How God Loves Them!
Andrew Connally

Teachers mold the hearts of little children. Whenever little children study the Bible, wonderful women and men mold their hearts and lives. Such is a work of God, to teach and train little minds the grand and glorious truths of God, to prepare them for life’s great adventure. Concepts are formed and opinions strengthened for life, quite often takes place.

Teachers uphold the Truth of God always; at least they should, and when they do, wonderful things happen. Darkness is banished, light is brought to bear, the great things of life are illuminated, and error is exposed. Little minds and hearts are touched for good, and lives are changed for the better. Error is put to rout and bedrock faith emerges!

Teachers deal with the great issues falling every generation. If not, then the practical application of these great Truths is lacking and much is left undone. Without direction and application, people often go away untaught and left to wonder as to what God expects of them.

Teachers change our communities and lives. Their example and training often spill over from the classroom into our families, communities, and lives. God wills it so. This is an expression of our lights shining and our salt influencing those about us.

Some of our dearest memories are of teachers we have had in our lives. They have made a difference. They always will. Man is a teachable, learning being, and great and good teachers influences us. One of their rewards is found in seeing the change in their students’ lives, and just once in a while the student then becomes a teacher himself. What attribute and honor to those who taught them. This is a great reward.

So, dear teacher, please continue to forget the thankless hours of preparation and sacrifice, the pain and anguish of teaching. Just keep on doing your wonderful thing, for God loves you—and so do we!

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Invitation: Henry Born
March 21, 2007
Reading: Andrew Hatcher
Invitation: Paul Brantley

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Pantry Items
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A Little Treasure
Ken Chumbley

In the an issue of Junior Scholastic (Vol. 109, No. 6), a magazine distributed in Junior High and Middle Schools, dated October 30, 2006, an article appeared under the above title. A sub title is included that states, “The skeleton of the world’s oldest child is found.”

The first paragraph of the article states, “Researchers call her Selam or ‘peace.’ The skull and skeletal remains of the 3-year old were found in an area of Ethiopia called Dikika. The oldest child ever found. Selam is thought to have drowned in a flash flood 3.3 million years ago.” Right at the outset of the article we see the spin being put on this find by many in the scientific community and also being thrust into the minds of our young people to have them believe that human beings have been around for over three million years. The tragedy of this is that many of these youngsters will accept such without question, which is what many want them to do because no scientist can prove through accepted scientific procedures that such is factual. Indeed, there are numerous scientific facts that are available that, if acknowledged, would at least cast doubt on the accuracy of such concepts as human beings having been around for millions of years.

Once the writer of the article has “set the scene,” he then states in the third paragraph of the article, “The find is important because it allows scientists to study the nearly complete remains of an ancient ancestor of humans for the first time.” “An ancient ancestor of humans.” If it is an “ancient ancestor of humans,” it is not...
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Brethren, we must, for the sake of our children, stay on top of this and teach them the truth regarding human origins. Granted that one can no more scientifically prove flat creation by God than organic evolution and a timetable of millions or billions of years of earth’s history or human history. However, it can be clearly shown by factual scientific information that is available that the concept of creation, as taught in the Bible, is more feasible that the theory of evolution that many scientists hold as “fact.” Furthermore, we can show that not all scientists hold to the evolutionary concept but there are scientists who hold to creation based, not solely on their belief in the Word of God but because of the evidence that they have seen in the scientific realm that supports the creator’s position.

Furthermore, for a Christian to accept the idea of organic evolution, he has to relegate the first eleven chapters of the book of Genesis to the realm of “myth,” and thus they cannot hold to the scriptural doctrine concerning the Scriptures as being “God-breathed” or inspired (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

535 Belvedere Clearwater Rd
Belvedere, SC 29841

Apollos Watered
Tom Wacaster

In years gone by, when the opportunity afforded itself, I would plant a garden in my backyard. Between the planting of the seed, and the reaping of the crop there are certain things that I had to do, like tilling the soil, keeping the weeds out along the way, and applying water in the absence of sufficient rain. When Paul wrote to the Corinthians he too made a distinction between the planting and the watering: “I planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase” (1 Cor. 3:6). Think about what is involved in spiritual watering.

A good example must be provided by the teacher, as well as those who claim any association to the message of that teacher. If brother Jones takes the time to teach some lost soul, it is imperative that he set a proper example. Teaching coupled with action is the golden key that unlocks the vault of influence, but it is also important that each member live a life that is exemplary to the message and hope to which they have been called. Hypocrites in a congregation most certainly render a negative influence upon those contemplating attendance or obedience. Yes, a good example is important. Then there is the need for additional teaching and instruction once the seed has been planted. Paul introduced the Corinthians to the Gospel; Apollos did the follow up work. Seldom does a soul obey the Gospel after just one lesson (though there are exceptions). Sometimes it takes weeks, months, or even years of encouragement and instruction. As long as a man is willing to learn, let us provide him with the “sincere milk of the word,” and pray for his obedience.

Third, let us realize that planters and waterers share in responsibility and reward. The planting is of no greater or lesser importance than the watering. It takes both. The planter may include those who visit and set up studies, conduct cottage classes, teach and preach the Word publicly and/or privately. The waterer may follow up with encouragement, a visit or call on the phone, or a prayer in behalf of those who have heard yet not obeyed. The planters do their job well, and the waterers contribute to the completion of the work, and both share in the reward. Let us not forget, “for as his share is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his share be that tarryth by the baggage: they shall share alike” (1 Sam. 30:24).

Fourth, it is important that both the planter and the waterer be versed in the Scripture. A successful gardener must have a knowledge of gardening. On occasions I have actually pulled out precious flower plants because I thought they were weeds. Someone might accidentally poison a plant if he is ignorant of what chemicals are good and/or bad for the care of his garden. And so it is with planting and watering. In Matthew 5:16, Jesus commanded us, “Even so let your light shine before men; that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.” What constitutes a “shining light”? Is my example beneficial or detrimental to the well-being of those who are watching me? Am I using Scripture properly in the exhortation and encouragement that I lend to others? How can you be certain if you know not God’s Word?

Finally, we must share the bounty with others. My first local work was in a farming community. Summer’s harvest, though planted by others, was shared by the many. It was not uncommon for us to receive so many potatoes, tomatoes, and onions that we simply could not eat it all. Waste is wrong and one’s bounty was passed along to others. God’s bountiful harvest is to be shared with others. The Gospel is for all. The Great Commission is not the Great Permission. Those who refuse to share what they enjoy with others are guilty of selfishness. Like the lepers who discovered the goods in the abandoned camp of the Syrians: “Then they said one to another, We do not well; this day is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace: if we tarry till the morning light, punishment will overtake us; now therefore come, let us go and tell the king’s household” (2 Kin. 7:9). Brother, do not horde your blessings. Give to others that they too might live.

As we labor together may we recognize the fact that, although some are planters, and others are waterers, our goal is the salvation of the souls of men to the glory of God the Father, through Jesus Christ His Son.

806 W Broadway St; Clarksville, TX 75426
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First, there is the sheer importance of watering. God, in His marvelous design, arranged the natural order of things so a seed planted in the ground must receive water to sprout and grow. Deprive the seed, and/or the plant of water, and it will die. So it is with God’s spiritual seed, the Word of God (Luke 8:11). The soil may determine the amount of care required to bring the seed to full fruition. But without water, there simply can be no growth.

Second, there are the specifics of watering. A good example is essential to nurturing the seed. A good example must be provided by the teacher, as well as those who claim any association to the message of that teacher. If brother Jones takes the time to teach some lost soul, it is imperative that he set a proper example. Teaching coupled with action is the golden key that unlocks the vault of influence, but it is also important that each member live a life that is exemplary to the message and hope to which they have been called. Hypocrites in a congregation most certainly render a negative influence upon those contemplating attendance or obedience. Yes, a good example is important. Then there is the need for additional teaching and instruction once the seed has been planted. Paul introduced the Corinthians to the Gospel; Apollos did the follow up work. Seldom does a soul obey the Gospel after just one lesson (though there are exceptions). Sometimes it takes weeks, months, or even years of encouragement and instruction. As long as a man is willing to learn, let us provide him with the “sincere milk of the word,” and pray for his obedience.

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806 W Broadway St; Clarksville, TX 75426
Sick
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Reading/Invitation
March 14, 2007
Reading: Ray Dodd
Invitation: Henry Born
March 21, 2007
Reading: Andrew Hatcher
Invitation: Paul Brantley

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Pantry Items
Canned Meat

A Little Treasure
Ken Chumbley

In the an issue of Junior Scholastic (Vol. 109, No.6), a magazine distributed in Junior High and Middle Schools, dated October 30, 2006, an article appeared under the above title. A sub title is included that states, “The skeleton of the world’s oldest child is found.”

The first paragraph of the article states, “Researchers call her Selam or ‘peace.’ The skull and skeletal remains of the 3-year old were found in an area of Ethiopia called Dikika. The oldest child ever found. Selam is thought to have drowned in a flash flood 3.3 million years ago.” Right at the outset of the article we see the spin being put on this find by many in the scientific community and also being thrust into the minds of our young people to have them believe that human beings have been around for over three million years. The tragedy of this is that many of these youngsters will accept such without question, which is what many want them to do because no scientist can prove through accepted scientific procedures that such is factual. Indeed, there are numerous scientific facts that are available that, if acknowledged, would at least cast doubt on the accuracy of such concepts as human beings having been around for millions of years.

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Overseers of the Flock or Rubber Stamps of the Congregation?

Marvin L. Weir

A faithful child of God realizes that he must do battle with those within the kingdom as well as with those outside the kingdom. It is sad that one’s energies and efforts must be expended on exposing those who “will not endure the sound doctrine; but, having itching ears, will heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts; and will turn away their ears from the truth, and turn aside unto fables” (2 Tim. 4:3-4). A faithful soldier of the cross must always be willing to “speak...the things which befit the sound doctrine” (Tit. 2:1). So many today who consider themselves to be faithful to the Lord speak the truth only when it is convenient. They do not want to “make waves,” “cause a squabble,” or “run anyone off.”

The thinking that has permeated many congregations of the Lord’s people is that to experience growth and “fill the building” they must become more “tolerant” and less “legalistic” in their views. This translates to allowing everyone to believe what they want to believe and refusing to stand upon a “thus saith the Lord.”

Many churches of Christ today have elders who no longer shepherd the flock but are instead mere pawns of the congregation. Brethren, either the tail will wag the dog or the dog will wag the tail. Which is it? Does the Bible teach that godly elders are to submit to the members or the members are to submit to godly elders? Instead
A Lectureship and Book that is greatly needed for our time. 2007 Bellview Lectureship Theme: A Time To Build June 9-13, 2007

Twenty-nine faithful men will be speaking on various subjects concerning the building up of the Lord’s church. With all the problems we face in the church, we need to be constantly reminded that it is not only our duty to defend the Truth against all error, but to build up the bride of Christ. Building up the church includes spreading the Gospel of Christ, but also building up those who are members so they will be stronger. As we grow spiritually, it should help us to grow numerically. This lectureship is intended to help in both of these areas. Make your plans now to attend.

of polling the congregation to see what it believes about the matter, let us consult the Word of God.

First, elders are commanded to “tend the flock of God” (1 Pet. 5:2). This one verse proves that not only are elders to be examples, but they are also to act with authority. They are to “exercise the oversight” of the congregation. Robert R. Taylor, Jr., in his excellent book entitled The Elder And His Work has rightly said regarding those who resist Bible authority:

“Persistently, they contend that elders have no more authority than do others and should never make decisions except as authorized by the congregation. This flagrant falsehood places the congregation into the driver’s seat and the elders become the OVERSEEN and not the OVERSEEERS! This popular, but poisonous contention makes of them a rubber stamp of congregational desires. Such CANNOT be right” (103).

Second, elders are to “feed the church of the Lord” (Acts 20:28). In many congregations today the members tell the elders what they are willing to graze upon. They also make it clear that only certain studies will be engaged in, and only certain teachers will be tolerated. The threat is clear—either the elders will acquiesce to their demands or mutiny will be set into motion. How can elders with a conscience live with themselves knowing that the flock that they are commanded to oversee is telling them what they will eat. Such a perversion of His Word must make the Lord sick to His stomach!

Third, the Lord’s people are warned: “Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit to them: for they watch in behalf of your souls, as they that shall give account; that they may do this with joy, and not with grief: for this was unprofitable for you” (Heb. 13:17). A faithful member of the Lord’s church will always obey godly elders and submit to them in matters of judgment and expediency. Godly elders do not make laws, but they do stand foursquare behind the law of Christ! Not only do they stand behind the Lord’s commandments, but they also insist that His laws be believed and obeyed.

Elders who stand in awe of God “watch in behalf of...[members] souls, as they that shall give account” (Heb. 13:17). Evidently, many so-called elders have forgotten that the Bible teaches there will be a day of reckoning. All Christians are accountable, but especially will elders give an account for failure to feed and shepherd the flock in the way God would have the flock to be fed and shepherded.

Brethren, a preacher’s selection committee who routinely blackballs and culls capable, godly preachers and instead rubber stamps three spineless candidates to the elders for them to choose from is wrong! Some seeking to pacify the ladies are including a woman on the preacher selection committee. It is no wonder that some elders moan about the congregation not listening to them. Elders must do the job the Holy Spirit has given them to do.

Some elders lament the fact that they cannot do their God-given work for soothing ruffled feathers and putting out brush fires. How do you think such an excuse will sound to the Lord? Here is what some elders would find to be a novel ideal: “Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them that are causing the divisions and occasions of stumbling, contrary to the doctrine which ye learned: and turn away from them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Christ, but their own belly; and by their smooth and fair speech they beguile the hearts of the innocent” (Rom. 16:17-18).

Bellview Lectures


If you are planning on attending the Bellview Lectures be sure to make your motel reservations now. Days Inn (6501 Pensacola Boulevard; Pensacola, FL 32505) offers the following price (tax not included) $55—1 to 2 people per room. Their phone number is 850-476-7200. When calling for reservations be sure to tell them you will be attending the Bellview Lectures.

Pensacola is a great place to take your summer vacation and at the same time attend the Bellview Lectures. For further information please contact the office by phone, mail, or at our e-mail address (bellviewcoc@gmail.com).
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815 42nd Street SW; Paris, TX 75460
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April 4, 2007
Reading: Jim Loy
Invitation: Bill Crowe

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Pantry Items
Canned Meat

They Won’t Miss Me!
Toney Smith

Someone made a comment the other day concerning the attendance on Sunday and Wednesday evenings. It is true that many seats did not have bodies sitting in them. But they were not empty. In the seats where no one was sitting, sat Satan smiling smugly at his victory over that person’s Christian commitment. If it is the case that you have been absent on these nights your seat has been filled nonetheless.

Perhaps we have grown accustomed and have come to accept the fact that a certain number of those in attendance on Sunday morning will not return on Sunday evening. It may be true that some just do not attend, but it is surely a hard pill to swallow. We realize that there is sickness and other reasons for some to be absent. But when Christians consistently absent themselves from worship and Bible study for selfish, pleasure seeking reasons, there is a need for great alarm.

We would never think of letting our children miss over 50% of school classes just because they determined that they would not go. Most of us would never consider missing over 50% of our club activities and meetings. We certainly know that we could not miss over 50% of our employment and still be employed. But, somehow we allow ourselves to rationalize away our attendance and Bible study with Christians which will have a far greater impact on our lives here and in the hereafter.

“They won’t miss me,” said the mother as she repeatedly left her children for her rounds of teas, parties, jobs, and social functions. And you can be assured that the devil did not miss her
“They won’t miss me,” said the man on the assembly line as he slipped away without permission or did not show up for his part of the work. But the airplane crashed and people died because it lacked one little part.

“They won’t miss me,” said the church member as he omitted worship one Sunday, and then another, and another for trivial reasons. Then he began to wonder why he did not enjoy the presence of his brethren. He forgot that Hebrews 10:25 is the result of observing Hebrews 10:24.

The above material has been adapted from an article by Colquitt Nash. The message is well worth consideration. Each and every service is important to us. It affords an opportunity to assemble together, provoking one another to love and good works. The opposite is also true. If we do not assemble together we cannot accomplish what God desires of us.

May I encourage each and everyone to start making plans to be in the assembly at each and every service. You will be making a difference. It would be so good to see every family member in his/her place. I do not want to think of Satan occupying your place and representing you.

Empty seats cannot produce the warmth and good will needed in the church.

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Not Given to (Much) Wine

Douglas Hoff

The Sunday adult Bible class is studying the work of the church by going through the books of Timothy and Titus. There is much written in them about elders, deacons, preachers, and how every Christian ought to behave. As we consider the qualifications for elders and deacons in 1 Timothy 3 it is likely a perennial question will come up. That is, why does it say elders must not be given to wine (3:3) while deacons are not to be given to much wine (3:8)?

A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach; not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous” (3:2-3—NKJV). Likewise deacons must be reverent, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy for money (3:8—NKJV).

Does this mean that elders cannot touch alcohol but deacons may drink a little? Any serious student of the Bible knows that drunkenness is condemned as a work of the flesh that will keep souls out of heaven (Gal. 5:19-21). God’s Word clearly says “do not be drunk with wine” (Eph. 5:18). Most people admit drunkenness is wrong while some think consuming a little alcohol is permissible. What does the Bible teach on this important subject?

The qualification given for an elder comes from a word that literally means “at, beside or near wine.” The idea conveyed in the phrase “given to wine” is that of being addicted to wine. It can also indicate the behavior of one who is influenced by strong drink. Interestingly, this sense is seen in the American Standard Version’s translation of 1 Timothy 3:8 where it says “no brawler.” As such, elders must not consume intoxicating beverages. Usually, there is no disagreement on this point. Since elders are the spiritual shepherds (leaders) of the flock their reputation and example must be one worthy of following (1 Tim. 3:7; Heb. 13:7). Drunken shepherds came under God’s condemnation in the Old Testament (Isa. 56:10-12). The qualification listed for deacons (“not given to much wine”) basically teaches the same thing as was noticed about the elders. Again, given is of great significance in 1 Timothy 3:8. It conveys the idea of being occupied with, devoted to, or applying oneself to. Thus, it sounds a similar warning of not being addicted to wine. One who is addicted to something does not engage in moderation. Instead of teaching that deacons may imbibe in small amounts of wine, the verse is actually warning against the addictive nature of alcohol. Once a person begins to consume booze it is easy to keep on drinking.

God warned man a long time ago regarding the deceptive nature of wine. The Bible says, “Wine is a mocker, Strong drink is a brawler, And whoever is led astray by it is not wise” (Pro. 20:1).

It should also be pointed out that the condemnation of much wine does not mean a little wine is acceptable. If we were to switch the word sin for wine this would be undeniable. Christians should not be given (i.e., addicted) to much sin. Neither should they be given to sin in any amount! A little sin wars against the soul, but so does a lot of sin (1 Pet. 2:11). The wise Christian will seek to avoid anything that destroys souls and encourages others to commit sin as well.

Elders and deacons are entrusted with great works in the kingdom. They cannot afford to hinder their efforts by engaging in practices that keep souls out of heaven.

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Lesson from a Baboon

Tom Wacaster

I recently read an interesting article about the antics of a baboon. Someone living in Bagoda Mountains of Africa observed an old baboon running through a row of corn and literally cleaning every single ear off each of the stalks. The baboon would grab an ear of corn and tuck it under his arm, then another, putting it under the same arm. He must have been pretty stupid, because when he would raise his arm to put the second ear of corn under it, the first would always drop to the ground. He would go all the way down the row, however, putting one ear after another under the same arm and dropping the previous one. When he reached the end of the row, he would have only one ear of corn. The baboon would then sit down with a worried expression on his face, wondering where the rest of the corn had gone. This dumb animal was so anxious to have all that he could see that he ended up losing all that he had. Someone has pointed out that “God never promised to give us everything we want; he just promised to supply our need. We must be able to forego today’s wants in view of tomorrow’s needs.” Living in a land of plenty, we have grown accustomed to getting what we want right now! Many a life has suffered disappointment because they, like the old baboon, sought to hoard the things of life in an effort to possess more. Jesus reminds us that a man’s life does not consist in the abundance of the things which he may possess. Unfortunately our Western world has not yet come to grips with the fact that when one is minded to be rich he is inviting trouble into his life, and in the process he often makes a monkey of himself.
Not Given to (Much) Wine

Douglas Hoff

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March 28, 2007
Reading: Daniel Hatcher
Invitation: Bill Busch
April 4, 2007
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Pantry Items
Canned Meat

They Won’t Miss Me!

Toney Smith

Someone made a comment the other day concerning the attendance on Sunday and Wednesday evenings. It is true that many seats did not have bodies sitting in them. But they were not empty. In the seats where no one was sitting, sat Satan smiling smugly at his victory over that person’s Christian commitment. If it is the case that you have been absent on these nights your seat has been filled nonetheless.

Perhaps we have grown accustomed and have come to accept the fact that a certain number of those in attendance on Sunday morning will not return on Sunday evening. It may be true that some just do not attend, but it is surely a hard pill to swallow. We realize that there is sickness and other reasons for some to be absent. But when Christians consistently absent themselves from worship and Bible study for selfish, pleasure seeking reasons, there is a need for great alarm. We would never think of letting our children miss over 50% of school classes just because they determined that they would not go. Most of us would never consider missing over 50% of our club activities and meetings. We certainly know that we could not miss over 50% of our employment and still be employed. But, somehow we allow ourselves to rationalize away our attendance and Bible study with Christians which will have a far greater impact on our lives here and in the hereafter.

“They won’t miss me,” said the mother as she repeatedly left her children for her rounds of teas, parties, jobs, and social functions. And you can be assured that the devil did not miss her...
Playing Church
Johnny Burkhart

Everybody wants the church to grow. The past few years there have been numerous church growth seminars and books on this subject. However, the church in many places is not growing. But this concern should not prompt us to employ techniques that are at best questionable or totally without Bible authority. There is a line that must be drawn between that which is expedient and that which is foolish. There must be a line drawn between that which is authorized by Scripture and that which is not.

Someone has said with regard to church growth: “What we do to draw them in will be that which we must do to keep them.” Thus, those drawn by manipulation must be held by manipulation. Some in the religious world have used musical concerts and all forms of entertainment to attract people, and they are trapped. They must continue all sorts of entertainment in order to keep that crowd.

The same could apply to the Lord’s church. If we constantly must have “fellowship meals,” chartered bus trips, softball games, and are forever trying to please the fun and thrill seekers, spiritually will take a backseat.

In 2 Timothy, there were some who seemed to love pleasure more than they loved God (3:4). Do we love God more than pleasure? Do we love God rather than pleasure? There is the possibility that entertainment could become so dominant in a person’s life that they could replace the dedication and allegiance one should have for God.

Moreover, the most noble of benevolent service cannot be depended upon to grow a church.
When we try to use benevolence as a manipulative tool to attract folks to the church, we will soon find ourselves holding an empty bag. When the “loaves and fishes” play out, the crowd moves on. In some places the membership list is padded with names of people who never attend. They were converted with the “fun and games syndrome” which they conceived to be the doctrine of Christ. A constant appeal to games and the sensationalism will not bring one to the Christ who purchased the church with His own blood (Acts 20:28).

To be sure, we will be loved and respected for our benevolent deeds, but that is not the priority in drawing others to Christ. Furthermore, we ought to practice Christian fellowship, and there is a time for “having fun,” but Jesus preached and Jesus lived—that is the drawing power for the church.

We should be very careful about pulling people into the church by means other than how God has directed. The Gospel is the power to save. “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation” (Rom. 1:16). We need to be sure we are converting people to the Lord Jesus, and that the Gospel is what draws them in and keeps them. 1152 County Rd 39; New Albany, MS 38652

It is a Strange World!

Marvin Weir

I am sure that the above article title is absolutely true! Doubt it? Then read the AP wire story under the headline, “Jail Sentence for Killing Wife’s Pets,” that was dated Friday, April 14, 2000.

WEST BEND, Wis. (AP) - A man who killed eight of his wife’s pets to punish her for having an abortion was sentenced to seven months in jail. Leonard J. Kritz, 22, stabbed or cut the heads off his wife’s pets - including birds, snakes and a chinchilla - in April 1999, saying it was necessary to teach her a lesson about the importance of life. He pleaded no contest to reduced charges of three misdemeanor counts of cruelty to animals. Washington County Circuit Judge Leo Schlaefer said Thursday he was not sure the defendant’s actions were in response to the abortion. “Regardless of the philosophical or religious position one takes on abortion, there’s absolutely no reason to be violent,” Schlaefer said. ...Kritz, who called the killings a mistake, is scheduled to begin his sentence June 12, after the birth of a child the couple is now expecting.

Before anyone gets the wrong idea, let me say upfront that I am in no way advocating the senseless slaughter and torturing of animals. No one should deliberately try to torment any of God’s creatures for sport or to prove a point. But there are some questions that beg to be asked here.

Where is the doctor who performed the abortion? Was he dragged before the bar of justice for tormenting a human life? Was he given a jail sentence for “getting violent?” We all know the answer. He/She was likely working that day, grinding out more murder, pocketing more blood money, enjoying the good life at the expense of unborn babies, euphemistically called fetuses. He/She is a respected part of the community.

Where were the owners of the abortion clinic where Mrs. Kritz had her abortion? Were they before the bar of justice, answering for their blood stained hands? Were they answering for participating in genocide, every bit as horrible as the Nazi genocide of the 30s and 40s? We all know the answer.

They were collecting thousands from women like Mrs. Kritz, who had been deluded into believing the lie that the child she was carrying was just a piece of tissue which she was free to cut loose, instead of a human life.

What about the judge in this case? He likened Mrs. Kritz’ abortion to a “philosophical or religious position” and turned around and put Mr. Kritz in jail for seven months. Who stood as an advocate before justice for the unborn child? Why would a judge equate murder to a philosophical or religious position? Strange indeed!

Seven months in jail for killing birds and snakes, and honors and money for those responsible for the killing of unborn children! A strange world indeed! What is wrong with our country? It is later than we think when people are sent to jail for killing snakes and rewarded for killing babies. We, both individually and as a nation, need to repent of our sins and turn back to God. “And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil” (Joel 2:13).

815 42nd Street SW; Paris, TX 75460

Easter

Curtis L. E. Graves

Easter is a mixture of three particular events: the Hebrew Passover, the resurrection of Christ, and a pagan festival of Spring. It was not until the 4th to 7th century that the rule was finally set and adopted as to when it should be observed. This tells me then that Easter, as a special holy day to be observed, is not authorized by Christ. It is a manmade observance that came about three to six hundred years after Christ’s death. The observance of Easter Sunday as a special holy day cannot be found in the Bible. The use of Easter in Acts 12:4 in the King James Version is a mistranslation of the Greek word pascha which should be translated “passover.” W. E. Vine says in his lexicon that: “The term Easter is not of Christian origin.”

New Testament Christians commemorate the death of Christ each (every) Lord’s day, (Sunday, first day of the week) in the partaking of the Lord’s supper (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:23-26). Colossians 3:17 tells us: “And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.” That is, do all by the authority of Jesus. Since there is no authority to celebrate Easter in a religious way (Col. 2:16), then it cannot be done “by faith.” Romans 14:23 says, “for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.” Faith comes by hearing God’s Word (Rom. 10:17), yet God’s Word does not instruct us to observe this day. Therefore, it cannot be done in faith. Let us go back to the Bible and not what men would have us do!

P.O. Box 975; Paris, KY 40362

32nd Annual Bellview Lectureship
A Time To Build
June 9-13, 2007
When we try to use benevolence as a manipulative tool to attract folks to the church, we will soon find ourselves holding an empty bag. When the “loaves and fishes” play out, the crowd moves on. In some places the membership list is padded with names of people who never attend. They were converted with the “fun and games syndrome” which they conceived to be the doctrine of Christ. A constant appeal to games and the sensationalism will not bring one to the Christ who purchased the church with His own blood (Acts 20:28).

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New Testament Christians commemorate the
Sick

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The Religion of “I’m OK, You’re OK”
Roelf L. Ruffner

We live in an age of ecumenism in which everyone tries to find moral and religious equivalence between the one true religion of New Testament Christianity and flawed systems of belief. It reminds me of the title of a pop-psychology book of a few years ago: I’m OK, You’re OK.

Using this flawed philosophy, some today ascertain that “one church is as good as another,” or “one religion is as good as another since they all lead to God.” This religious nonsense has led many, concerned by the war on Southwest Asia, to exclaim that “Islam believes in the same God as Christianity does.”

Yet, almost 2,000 years ago, Jesus Christ laid this argument to rest in His conversation with the Samaritan woman recorded in John 4. To this thirsty woman, Jesus offered “living water.” He then caused her to recognize that she was living in sin. She tried to change the conversation to a religious one, but the Master quickly corrected her misconceptions regarding religion and God.

Jesus was no relativist. “Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews” (John 4:22). In other words, at the moment Jesus spoke, the Samaritan religion was incorrect and inferior to Judaism.

Today’s modern ecumenist would notice the many similarities between the Samaritan religion and Judaism:

(1) Both claimed to worship one God—the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
(2) Both revered the first five books of the Bible—the Pentateuch.
Both worshiped God by using animal sacrifice. But Modern ecumenists only look at the surface, and not the problems in the religion of Samaria. Notice the differences:

(1) The Samaritans did not accept the entire Old Testament—as did most of the Jews.
(2) The Samaritans' concept of God was corrupted by Paganism.
(3) The Samaritans worshiped God in the wrong place, and not according to God’s Word (“the truth”—John 17:17).
(4) Salvation (the Messiah) was of the Jews, not the Samaritans.

Today, the Law of Moses, or the Old Covenant, has been done away (Col. 2:14-17). Now, the New Testament, or Covenant of Jesus Christ, is God’s standard for judging people. New Testament Christianity is vastly superior to Judaism, Islam, or any other religion, in the following ways:

(1) It worships the one true God of the Bible—not Allah.
(2) It accepts the completed revelation of God—the Bible.
(3) It proclaims Jesus as the Son of God, the Christ—not Mohammed.
(4) It preaches forgiveness of sins and removal of guilt by the blood of Christ.
(5) It preaches justification by faith—not by works of merit.
(6) It worships God “in spirit and truth” (John 4:24).

The idea that all religions are equal with Christianity is foreign to the Gospel of Christ. There is no such thing “another gospel” (Gal. 1:6-7) or another way to God and salvation. Christianity is a “narrow way” and a “strait” or confining gate which leads to everlasting life (Mat. 7:13-14). To delude oneself into the pollyannaish idea that God is some affectionate grandfather figure who accepts anyone and everyone—even those who are in rebellion to Him—is heresy.

Does this mean that we are to take up arms against the infidel? No! Our fight is against the devil and his hell-bound kingdom (Eph. 6:12). We are to love our enemies and do good (Mat. 5:44). Yet, neither are we to be spiritual pacifists. We must “earnestly contend for the faith” (Jude 3) in the marketplace of ideas. We must strive to bring those to freedom who are bound to false religion and philosophies. They are the lost offspring of God (Acts 17:28-29) and deserve our concern. They deserve the light of Christ, rather than the darkness of ignorance (Acts 26:18).

1520 East 52nd Street; Odessa, TX 79762

An old gentleman states that when he was a small boy, he lived on the coast. One morning after a great storm he saw an old ship stranded. The storm had blown her in, and she was badly damaged and deserted by her crew. He said that often, when the tide would come in strongly and surround the old ship, she would almost be loosed from her moorings and go out. He stated that often he would go and stand by her and hope she would go out. He would say, “Go out, old ship; go out with the tide.” But she never did. Finally, one morning after a severe storm he went down to look at the old ship, but the storm had blown her to pieces. Only the floating pieces of the old wreck were to be seen. She had many an opportunity, but she never went out.

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Both worshiped God by using animal sacrifice. Both looked forward to the coming Messiah. But Modern ecumenists only look at the surface, and not the problems in the religion of Samaria. Notice the differences:

1. The Samaritans did not accept the entire Old Testament—as did most of the Jews.
2. The Samaritans' concept of God was corrupted by Paganism.
3. The Samaritans worshiped God in the wrong place, and not according to God’s Word (“the truth”—John 17:17).
4. Salvation (the Messiah) was of the Jews, not the Samaritans.

Today, the Law of Moses, or the Old Covenant, has been done away (Col. 2:14-17). The New Testament, or Covenant of Jesus Christ, is God’s standard for judging people. It is “the way” (Acts 24:14; Pro. 14:12) and the only way to God (John 14:6).

New Testament Christianity is vastly superior to Judaism, Islam, or any other religion, in the following ways:

1. It worships the one true God of the Bible—not Allah.
2. It accepts the completed revelation of God—the Bible.
3. It proclaims Jesus as the Son of God, the Christ—not Mohammed.
4. It preaches forgiveness of sins and removal of guilt by the blood of Christ.
5. It preaches justification by faith—not by works of merit.

The idea that all religions are equal with Christianity is foreign to the Gospel of Christ. There is no such thing as “another gospel” (Gal. 1:6-7) or another way to God and salvation. Christianity is a “narrow way” and a “strait” or confining gate which leads to everlasting life (Mat. 7:13-14). To delude oneself into the pollyannaish idea that God is some affectionate grandfather figure who accepts anyone and everyone—even those who are in rebellion to Him—is heresy.

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Author Unknown
The Religion of “I’m OK, You’re OK”

Roel L. Ruffner

We live in an age of ecumenism in which everyone tries to find moral and religious equivalence between the one true religion of New Testament Christianity and flawed systems of belief. It reminds me of the title of a pop-psychology book of a few years ago: I’m OK, You’re OK.

Using this flawed philosophy, some today ascertain that “one church is as good as another,” or “one religion is as good as another since they all lead to God.” This religious nonsense has led many, concerned by the war on Southwest Asia, to exclaim that “Islam believes in the same God as Christianity does.”

Yet, almost 2,000 years ago, Jesus Christ laid this argument to rest in His conversation with the Samaritan woman recorded in John 4. To this thirsty woman, Jesus offered “living water.” He then caused her to recognize that she was living in sin. She tried to change the conversation to a religious one, but the Master quickly corrected her misconceptions regarding religion and God.

Jesus was no relativist. “Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews” (John 4:22). In other words, at the moment Jesus spoke, the Samaritan religion was incorrect and inferior to Judaism.

Today’s modern ecumenist would notice the many similarities between the Samaritan religion and Judaism:

(1) Both claimed to worship one God—the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
(2) Both revered the first five books of the Bible—the Pentateuch.
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Marge Williams, Ella Hammac, Marilyn Hall, Iris Gallaher, Al Flesher, Nellie Read, William Weekley, Ray Dodd, Thelma Dunavant (Susan McLaughlin’s mother), Wyatt Blancheri (Henry and Paulette Born’s grandson; for more information: www.caringbridge.org — in the site name type Wyatt), Nancy Travis (William Weekley’s daughter), Hazel Merry (Nellie Read’s sister), and Tiffany Wilkes (Fred and Rhheba Stancliff’s granddaughter).

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MARVIN L. WEIR
Blind and Deaf But Not Physically Impaired

The name Christian is either abused or misused by most people today. According to man’s wisdom, there are many different types or kinds of Christians. Years ago Leroy Brownlow made reference to what he called “hyphenated Christians.” In his excellent book titled Why I Am A Members Of The Church Of Christ is this statement:

I am sure that method and system should be used in the Lord’s work, but I am not a Methodist; that we should have bishops (the Greek word being episcopos) to oversee the work in a congregation, but I am not Episcopalian; that we should have elders (the Greek word being presbuteros) who are bishops to rule and oversee in the congregation, but I am not a Presbyterian; that each congregation is independent, but I am not a Congregationalist; that it takes immersion to constitute the act of baptism, but I am not a Baptist; that Christians should be holy, but I am not a Holiness; that Christ will come again, but I am not an Adventist; that the church is universal or catholic, but I am not a Catholic. According to some good folk—since I believe in the above facts—I should call myself a Methodist—Episcopalian—Presbyterian—Congregationalist—Baptist—Holiness—Catholic—Christian. A monstrous hyphenation and a rather long name! It is unnecessary, too. We find in the Bible that the disciples were called Christians, but we never read of any
person being called some hyphenated Christian. Regardless of what names others wear, I prefer to stick to the Bible and be a Christian only (32-33).

Is it not amazing that some folks will become “fighting mad” when you explain to them that denominational names are man-made and unscriptural? They have no God-given right to exist and thus cannot be found in the Bible (John the Baptist will not do as he did not die for the church). On the other hand, Christ promised to build His church (Mat. 16:18), purchased it with His blood (Acts 20:28), promises to save it (the one body—Eph. 4:4; 5:23), and through an inspired writer mentions “churches of Christ”

The Case of B.S. Skipper

(The story you are about to hear is true; only the names have been changed to protect the guilty.) My name is Bible Study Skipper. I am a lazy Christian.

The time was about 8:25 a.m. Lord’s Day morning. I was sleeping soundly after getting to bed late Saturday night.

8:30 a.m.—The alarm rang. I reached over, reset the clock for 10:00 a.m. I then lay back and began to doze off.

9:15 a.m.—I woke up, something keeps me from really getting back to sleep. I decided to get up and get a glass of milk. I drank the milk, went back to bed and dozed off again.

10:00 a.m.—The alarm rang. I leaped up and rushed to get ready. After all I did not want to be late; and church services do start at 10:30 a.m.

10:15 a.m.—By this time I was almost ready. All I had to do was brush my teeth, comb my hair, and put on my shoes.

10:20 a.m.—I opened the back door and left the house. It was nice to live near the church building.

10:36 a.m.—I reached the church building, took off my coat, went in and found a seat on the end of my row. There I was, and only six minutes late. They were singing the second song. It did not take me long to quit panting. Then I felt good.

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Is it not amazing that some folks will become “fighting mad” when you explain to them that denominational names are man-made and unscriptural? They have no God-given right to exist and thus cannot be found in the Bible (John the Baptist will not do as he did not die for the church). On the other hand, Christ promised to build His church (Mat. 16:18), purchased it with His blood (Acts 20:28), promises to save it (the one body— Eph. 4:4; 5:23), and through an inspired writer mentions “churches of Christ” there will not be a Baptist living. I hope they will soon be gone. I hope the Baptist name will soon perish; but let Christ’s name endure forever (Spurgeon Memorial Library, Vol. 1, 168 as noted by Brownlow).

Can you imagine the outcry against me if I were to say today that I look forward to the day when there would not be a Baptist living? Well, Spurgeon’s sentiments are mine, but do not hold your breath waiting on Baptist churches to inform their members of Spurgeon’s comments!

Now hear the words of Martin Luther who was a most influential reformer and scholar of his day:

I pray you to leave my name alone, and call not yourselves Lutherans, but Christians. Who is Luther? My doctrine is not mine. I have not been crucified for anyone. St. Paul would not let any call themselves after Paul, nor of Peter, but of Christ. How then, does it befit me, a miserable bag of dust and ashes, to give my name to the children of God? Cease, my dear friends, to cling to these party names and distinctions: away with all; and let us call ourselves only Christians after him from who our doctrine comes (The Life of Luther, 289 as quoted by Brownlow).

The majority of the above statement Luther made is correct, but Luther fell far short of fully aligning himself with Bible doctrine. Let all Baptists, Lutherans, and members of other denominational churches hear the words that give them no right to exist. The Bible says:

Now I beseech you, brethren, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing and that there be no divisions among you: but that ye be perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment.... Now this I mean, that each one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos: and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized into the name of Paul? (1 Cor. 1.10, 12-13). Christ spoke of those who “seeing they see not, and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand” (Mat. 13:13-15). Yes, different types of Christians exist in the mind of men today, but people must be spiritually deaf and blind to believe such is true. Study the Word of God, and do not allow yourself to be blinded to God’s glorious truths that are clearly set forth in Holy Writ.

32nd Annual Bellview Lectures
A Time To Build
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(Rom. 16:16). Such simply shows ownership, and rightly so since Christ is the head of the body which is the church (Eph. 1:22-23).

It will surprise some to learn that certain individuals in the past had no desire for a church to be named in their honor. These men knew that man-made names made mockery of Christ and His Word, and their comments will forever haunt those who choose to give churches man-made names. Listen to the words of Charles Spurgeon, the most famous and talented Baptist preacher ever:

I say of the Baptist name, let it perish, but let Christ’s name last forever. I look forward with pleasure, to the day when

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Sympathy
Our deepest sympathy is extended to Fred Stancliff, in the deaths of his brother, Leon Stancliff, on April 10, 2007, and his sister, Melva Stancliff, on April 11, 2007. Please keep Fred and his family in your prayers.

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Unbelief and Disobedience
Jess Whitlock

The Hebrews author penned: “And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not [that were disobedient—ASV, 1901]? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief” (Heb. 3:18-19). If ever a people should have had a faithful obedience to God and His will, it ought to have been the Israelites of old. They had seen the power of God in His 10-Lesson Correspondence Course to Pharaoh (Exo. 8-11).

The Israelites had to cross the Red Sea, on dry ground (Exo. 14:3-31), and in a single night! There were in excess of three million souls. If they crossed in a narrow part of the sea, double file, the line would have been 800 miles long, and it would have taken 35 days and nights to cross. Hence, they had to have an area at least three miles in width so they could walk over 5,000 abreast. Each time the Israelites made camp they needed 750 square miles (2/3 the size of the state of Rhode Island). Yet, they “could not enter because of unbelief”!

For 40 years they had to have food and water while in the desert. If they had only enough water for drinking and dishes it would have required 1,000,000 gallons per day. That would have required 5,152,000 railroad cars to carry. A train of that size would stretch back and forth across the
continental USA 14 times! And they still murmured and complained (Exo. 15:22ff).

What a sad commentary on the people of God. They had seen the salvation of the Lord (Exo. 14:13); yet, in Numbers 14:4 they said, “Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt.” It is not the hearing of the Good News only that brings salvation; but its appropriation through faith. “Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed [united—ASV, 1901] with faith in them that heard it” (Heb. 4:1-2).

P. O. Box 127; Cheyenne, OK 73628

Dysfunctional Elders
Lynn Parker

“Faithful is the saying, If a man seeketh the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work” (1 Tim. 3:1). Implied in the inspired statement is the fact that elders have work to do. More than being merely the “Chairmen of the Board” or congregational nickel counters, there are weighty obligations and responsibilities laid upon bishops. What if the job goes undone? The work neglected? What if the elders at any congregation are primarily known for having their names on the bulletin masthead or signing the preacher’s paycheck? The consequences of having elders that do not do the work assigned them by God will be measured in souls.

In the wisdom of Almighty God, there are to be those men in the congregations who see to the work as shepherds, as overseers. God’s elders are both qualified and vigilant. Paul wrote Titus:

For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that were wanting, and appoint elders in every city, as I gave thee charge; if any man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having children that believe, who are not accused of riot or unruly. For the bishop must be blameless, as God’s steward; not self-willed, not soon angry, no brawler, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but given to hospitality, a lover of good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled; holding to the faithful word which is according to the teaching, that he may be able to exhort in the sound doctrine, and to convict the gainsayers (Tit. 1:5-9).

You do not find “good ol’ boy” listed as a qualification for elders in the New Testament, yet some men are chosen to be elders based on popularity. Choose men to serve as bishops based on man-made qualifications and you have a man-made eldership. Select a man to pastor the congregation who, by virtue of ignorance or timidity, cannot stop the mouths of false teachers and the congregation can expect to reap a bitter harvest. Once again, souls are at stake. When God wrote the qualifications for the elder, He really did not need or seek the input and advice of man. He knew what He wanted in those men who serve as shepherds, and it is non-negotiable!

Problems, however, can also arise from men who otherwise are qualified for the work but simply do not get the job done. I would not for a moment suggest that elders must sleep in the church building and memorize the address and phone number of every sheep in the flock. On the other hand, realize that the work of an elder is more—much more—than a hobby or casual pursuit.

To be an effective, faithful elder will require time. Ah, there is a sensitive subject! Time may be the most precious commodity of a new millennium. Still, God has set priorities for the child of God (Mat. 6:33). Busy schedules are no excuse for neglecting the spiritual work God demands of elders. Every page of the calendar punctuates the brevity of life and urgency of elders’ work.

Our Lord has given more than an adequate picture of the elder and his work:

The elders among you I exhort, who am a fellow-elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, who am also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Tend [feed—KJV] the flock of God which is among you, exercising the oversight, not of constraint, but willingly, according to the will of God; nor yet for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as lording it over the charge allotted to you, but making yourselves ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall be manifested, ye shall receive the crown of glory that fadeth not away (1 Pet. 5:1-4).

One reference tells us that tend in verse two “denotes all that is included in the office of a shepherd-guiding, guarding, folding, no less than feeding” (Vine’s Word Studies of the New Testament). Note that the elder is to do this willingly (v. 2). You do not have to twist the elders’ arms to get them to perform their work. Then also, consider also this pertinent verse: “Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit to them: for they watch in behalf of your souls, as they that shall give account; that they may do this with joy, and not with grief: for this were unprofitable for you” (Heb. 13:17).

Vine tells us that watch in Hebrews 13:17 means, “to be sleepless” and further, “the word expresses not mere wakefulness, but the ‘watchfulness’ of those who are intent upon a thing” (Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words). Brother elder: are you sleepless in your care for the church, or just sleepy? Lethargy and laziness can afflict elders as well as any other member of the Lord’s body.

It will not do for elders to put off visiting the wayward until a more convenient season. A blind eye cannot be turned toward pressing spiritual obligations. Hoping the sheep will find their own way home in a few months is not an option (Jam. 5:19f; Gal. 6:1; Heb. 13:17). Fear of fallout cannot stifle church discipline at any stage, and faithful elders will not be intimidated by the weak or the rebellious. Faithful elders are men with more than good intentions—they do the work!

1650 Gander Slough Rd; Kingsbury, TX 78638

Correction
In the article titled, “There’s a Striking Contrast” (Beacon, Vol. XXXVI, No. 14, April 2, 2007) under the column New Testament Christianity a Bible truth was misstated. The correct statement should be: “Faith without works is dead” (Jam. 2:14-26). We apologize for this error.

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continental USA 14 times! And they still murmured and complained (Exo. 15:22ff).

What a sad commentary on the people of God. They had seen the salvation of the Lord (Exo. 14:13); yet, in Numbers 14:4 they said, “Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt.” It is not the hearing of the Good News only that brings salvation; but its appropriation through faith. “Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed [united—ASV, 1901] with faith in them that heard it” (Heb. 4:1-2).

Dysfunctional Elders

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Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Marge Williams, Ella Hammac, Marilyn Hall, Iris Gallaher, Al Flesher, Nellie Read, William Weekley, Ray Dodd, Thelma Dunavant (Susan McLaughlin’s mother), Wyatt Blancheri (Henry and Paulette Born’s grandson; for more information: www.caringbridge.org — in the site name type Wyatt), Nancy Travis (William Weekley’s daughter), and Hazel Merry (Nellie Read’s sister).

Sympathy
Our deepest sympathy is extended to Fred Stancliff, in the deaths of his brother, Leon Stancliff, on April 10, 2007, and his sister, Melva Stancliff, on April 11, 2007. Please keep Fred and his family in your prayers.

Reading/Invitation
April 25, 2007
Reading: Elward Brantley
Invitation: Johnny McLaughlin
May 2, 2007
Reading: Ray Dodd
Invitation: Will McLaughlin

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May 13, 2007–Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
May 20, 2007–Elders/Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.

Unbelief and Disobedience
Jess Whitlock

The Hebrews author penned: “And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not [that were disobedient—ASV, 1901]? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief” (Heb. 3:18-19).

If ever a people should have had a faithful obedience to God and His will, it ought to have been the Israelites of old. They had seen the power of God in His 10-Lesson Correspondence Course to Pharaoh (Exo. 8-11).

The Israelites had to cross the Red Sea, on dry ground (Exo. 14:13-31), and in a single night! There were in excess of three million souls. If they crossed in a narrow part of the sea, double file, the line would have been 800 miles long, and it would have taken 35 days and nights to cross. Hence, they had to have an area at least three miles in width so they could walk over 5,000 abreast. Each time the Israelites made camp they needed 750 square miles (2/3 the size of the state of Rhode Island). Yet, they “could not enter because of unbelief”!

For 40 years they had to have food and water while in the desert. If they had only enough water for drinking and dishes it would have required 1,000,000 gallons per day. That would have required 5,152,000 railroad cars to carry. A train of that size would stretch back and forth across the
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May 30, 2007–Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.
June 3, 2007–Pre-lectureship meeting after the evening service, in room 1.

Pantry Items
Canned Meat

“The Ultimate Deception”
Tom Wacaster

On a hot August day in 1950, a con man visited a small Oklahoma town, telling the people that he was an advance man for a circus that would soon arrive in three days. He put up handbills and sold tickets to a circus that did not exist. It was a “scam,” and after collecting the money the man skipped town. It seems that we still have those little scams that come to us with increasing regularity. I recently read of a widow who squandered over $28,000 attempting to win the prize offered through one of these scams. Con men and con schemes are as old as man himself. In times of financial crisis, as well as times of plenty, the con artist is on the street, in the store, and on the phone seeking whom he may deceive to his own advantage. They prey on the indigent, dupe the innocent, and deceive the ignorant. Reports of dishonest tactics make us angry; so much so that we find ourselves saying under our breath, “Something ought to be done.” And though we vow that we will not allow ourselves to be “taken in” by the cunning craftiness of the con man, we fail to realize that most men and women are the victims of the ultimate “con” game that any being has ever devised and perpetrated upon the human race. It is a con game offered by the Devil under the guise of religion.

That old Serpent has produced a number of religious “scams” from the inception of Christianity to our present day. He has offered man-made look-alikes, perverted the soul saving message, offered a lie for the truth, and pulled the wool over the eyes of the majority with the philosophy that it makes no difference what one
believes so long as he is sincere. He has been so successful that Christianity has been made to look foolish. And it seems the more outlandish the religious system that he offers to men in exchange for the truth, the more apt men are to embrace that system and apply it to their life. Amazingly, God has provided a fool proof safe guard to keep us from being taken in by this most subtle of all con artists. That safe guard is the Bible. We are admonished to “prove the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1). Do not be duped by the oldest “con Artist” in history. Make sure that the things you do in religion have a thus saith the Lord, turning neither to the left nor the right. Scam artists may take you for your hard earned dollar, but those scammed by the devil stand to lose a whole lot more.


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Meals
The women of the Bellview Church of Christ will be providing a free lunch Monday through Wednesday. For all other meals, a list of restaurants and a map will be available at the registration table in the foyer.

Books
The lectureship book, A Time To Build will be available to those attending the Bellview Lectures at a reduced rate of $10. Others may purchase the book at the pre-publication price of $12 prior to June 30, 2007, or afterwards at the regular price of $15. It will contain 30 chapters and approximately 440 pages. Everyone will want to purchase a personal copy and perhaps additional copies for gifts.

Audio, Video Tapes, and DVD
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7:00 PM It Is Time To Build
7:45 PM A Mind To Build

Sunday, June 10

9:00 AM Building Better Young People
10:00 AM Building Better Worship

Lunch Break
2:00 PM Building Better Love One For Another
3:00 PM Building Peace Among Brethren

Dinner Break
7:00 PM Building Better Preachers
7:45 PM Building While Battling

Monday, June 11

9:00 AM Building Better Homes
10:00 AM Principles of Building
11:00 AM Building Better Elders

Lunch Break
1:30 PM Building Better Deacons
2:30 PM Building Better Bible Schools
3:30 PM Open Forum

Dinner Break
7:00 PM Building Tomorrow’s Leaders
7:45 PM Building On The Proper Foundation

Tuesday, June 12

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10:00 AM Tearing Down To Build
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Lunch Break
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Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Marge Williams, Ella Hammac, Marilyn Hall, Iris Gallagher, Al Flesher, Nellie Read, William Weekley, Ray Dodd, Thelma Dunavant (Susan McLaughlin’s mother), Wyatt Blancheri (Henry and Paulette Born’s grandson; for more information: www.caringbridge.org — in the site name type Wyatt), Nancy Travis (William Weekley’s daughter), and Hazel Merry (Nellie Read’s sister).

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Pantry Item
Canned Meat

Simple Things
Curtis L. E. Graves

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It seems that many are that way when it comes to the Bible and religion as well. There are so many things about the Bible and the plan of salvation and how to live as we should and so many other topics that are overlooked or ignored or just not believed, but yet they are so simple to understand. For example, there are over 3000 denominational groups today, yet, Jesus said: “I will build my church.” He said simply that He would build His one church—church—singular, but man has devised over 3000 different groups. That which is simple has been turned into something confusing. The Bible says we must be baptized to be saved—“baptism doth also now save us” (1 Pet. 3:21). Again, that which is simple has become something which many now make fun of. Baptism is said to be a burial in Romans 6:1-4, however, some today say that just to sprinkle a little water on someone is baptism. So, again the simple definition of baptism as given by the Bible is made difficult by man.

There are so many other examples that we could give; using the name pastor for the
preacher when it is really another name for an elder. Looking for signs for the end of the world instead of doing simply what the Bible says; namely watching and praying and living right because we do not know when the end will come.

Why not today decide to read the Bible and just believe what it simply says and then obey it.

Jesus, in simple words, said: “if ye love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15). The confused world will say “that’s just your opinion” about this and many other religious matters. What are you going to follow, the simple statements of the Bible or a confused world?

904 Kristen Lane; Paris, KY 40361

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7:45 PM A Mind To Build

Sunday, June 10

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10:00 AM Building Better Worship
Lunch Break
2:00 PM Building Better Love One For Another
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Dinner Break
7:00 PM Building Better Preachers
7:45 PM Building While Battling

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10:00 AM Principles of Building
11:00 AM Building Better Elders
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2:30 PM Building Better Bible Schools
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Dinner Break
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7:45 PM Building The Church (Spiritually And Numerically)

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Temptation

Richard Carlson

Temptation is being enticed to do evil. God does not tempt man to do evil, because evil comes from Satan, not God. James wrote: “Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God” (Jam. 1:13). Some blame God for all evil and suffering. But these things come from Satan, and not God. Recall what Job said in Job 2:10: “shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil.”

God will deliver from temptation and sin those who obey His will. Peter states: “The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations” (2 Pet. 2:9). The church at Philadelphia were told by the Lord: “Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation” (Rev. 3:10). We also need to remember our “High Priest” “was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Heb. 4:15). In Matthew 4 and Luke 4 we read of Jesus being tempted by Satan. He tried to get Jesus to turn stones into bread, jump down from the high place (pinnacle) of the temple, and to fall down and worship him. With each temptation Jesus replied “it is written.” Jesus Himself used the “sword of the Spirit” to combat the enemy, and so must we!

The devil will do all he can to keep the lost from obeying, those in error from repenting, and will work to get the saved back in the world. Jesus told Peter, “Satan hath desired to have you” (Luke 22:31-32). This is how it is with every member of the church; Satan wants all of
us back into what we came out of when we obeyed the Gospel, but do not let him get the upper hand. He uses things of the world to tempt us, the lust of the flesh, lust of the eye, and the pride of life (1 John 2:15-17). He used this with Eve in the garden of Eden. He still uses these, and will unto the end. He uses cares and riches of this world to allure (Mat. 13:22).

Hear the Gospel, believe it, repent of your sins, confess Christ, be baptized for the remission of your sins, and live faithful, just as the Eunuch did in Acts 8:26-39. If you are a child of God in error, repent, lest you lose your soul (Luke 13:3, 5).

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Temptation

Richard Carlson

Temptation is being enticed to do evil. God does not tempt man to do evil, because evil comes from Satan, not God. James wrote: “Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God” (Jam. 1:13). Some blame God for all evil and suffering. But these things come from Satan, and not God. Recall what Job said in Job 2:10: “shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil.”

God will deliver from temptation and sin those who obey His will. Peter states: “The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations” (2 Pet. 2:9). The church at Philadelphia were told by the Lord: “Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation” (Rev. 3:10). We also need to remember our “High Priest” “was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Heb. 4:15). In Matthew 4 and Luke 4 we read of Jesus being tempted by Satan. He tried to get Jesus to turn stones into bread, jump down from the high place (pinnacle) of the temple, and to fall down and worship him. With each temptation Jesus replied “it is written.” Jesus Himself used the “sword of the Spirit” to combat the enemy, and so must we!

The devil will do all he can to keep the lost from obeying, those in error from repenting, and will work to get the saved back in the world. Jesus told Peter, “Satan hath desired to have you” (Luke 22:31-32). This is how it is with every member of the church; Satan wants all of
Sick

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Dress Code?

Jimmy Simmons

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**A Time To Build**

*June 9 - 13, 2007*

**Saturday, June 9**

7:00 PM It Is Time To Build

Jess Whitlock

7:45 PM A Mind To Build

Geoff Litke

**Sunday, June 10**

9:00 AM Building Better Young People

Brad Green

10:00 AM Building Better Worship

Michael Hatcher

**Lunch Break**

2:00 PM Building Better Love One For Another

Tim Cozad

3:00 PM Building Peace Among Brethren

Tim Smith

**Dinner Break**

7:00 PM Building Better Preachers

Darrell Broking

7:45 PM Building While Battling

David Brown

**Monday, June 11**

9:00 AM Building Better Homes

Wayne Blake

10:00 AM Principles of Building

Gary Summers

11:00 AM Building Better Elders

Terry York

**Lunch Break**

1:30 PM Building Better Deacons

Gary Summers

2:30 PM Building Better Bible Schools

3:30 PM Open Forum

**Dinner Break**

7:00 PM Building Tomorrow’s Leaders

Hal Smith

7:45 PM Building On The Proper Foundation

John West

**Tuesday, June 12**

9:00 AM Building Better Givers

Terry Hightower

10:00 AM Tearing Down To Build

Danny Douglas

11:00 AM Building Better Singing

Dub McClish

**Lunch Break**

1:30 PM Building World Evangelism

Paul Vaughn

2:30 PM Building Unity In The Church

Bruce Stulting

3:30 PM Open Forum

**Dinner Break**

7:00 PM Building All Things According To The Pattern

Ken Chumbley

7:45 PM Building The Church (Spiritually And Numerically)

Kend Bailey

**Wednesday, June 13**

9:00 AM Building Better Prayer Life

Lester Kamp

10:00 AM Building Churches That Are Concerned About Preachers

Wayne Blake

11:00 AM Building Better Students

Daniel Denham

**Lunch Break**

1:30 PM Building Better Attitudes

Greg Lewis

2:30 PM Building Better Members

Stacey Grant

3:30 PM Open Forum

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7:00 PM Building Better Discipline

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How Shall We Escape If We Neglect So Great a Salvation?

Lynn Parker

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Sickness is here. Death is ever before our eyes. You confront nothing that is original or unique. If you have been through it, someone else has as well. There is nothing new under the sun.

In the Scriptures we see the writer of Hebrews exhorting, cautioning, and warning brethren against falling away. Leave Christ and you leave any and all hope for eternity (Eph. 2:12). There is no new way of salvation. No new source of spiritual truth (John 14:6). No other Savior but Jesus Christ (Acts 4:12).

If, in the first century, you renounced the Savior to save your physical life, Jesus would have no part of you on Judgement Day: “But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I
also deny before my Father which is in heaven” (Mat. 10:33). Nothing has changed. Despite the truth to the contrary, men and women are still trusting other sources for salvation. Some may think that goodness and morality will save. Yet, not a single person is sinless, and no soul good enough to merit salvation (Rom. 3:23; 6:23). Others may be neglecting the salvation freely offered in Jesus Christ while they wallow and revel in lives of sin. Some people enjoy sin. It is no secret that sin has pleasures—but only for a season (Heb. 11:25). The longer one stays in sin, the more comfortable he finds it. The Bible warns repeatedly that the heart may become hardened to truth and unresponsive to the Gospel. Carefully consider these passages:

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Yet, the end of sinful lives, hard hearts, and seared consciences (1 Tim. 4:2) is still eternal damnation. The meaning of our text is clearly seen by looking at the verse preceding: “If the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward” (Heb. 2:2).

Think about it. If the Word of God has proven stedfast (and it has), and if neglect of God’s will resulted in punishment (it did), then “how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?” We will not!

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9. Which is more important to you? The number of people who show an interest in you or the number of people in whom you show an interest?

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*Lunch Break*

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Invitation: Paul Brantley
June 13, 2007
Bellview Lectures

Address Change
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“The Point of No Return”
Tom Wacaster
A plane, flying across the ocean, will eventually reach the “point of no return.” It is a real and definite point, beyond which it is better, in case of mechanical problems, to proceed than to attempt a return to the origination point. In the mind of the pilot, it is impossible to turn back.

There are a number of passages which seem to indicate that it is possible for someone to reach a point in his plunge into apostasy and/or sin, so that it is impossible to be brought to repentance. Consider the following sobering words: “But these, as creatures without reason, born mere animals to be taken and destroyed, railing in matters whereof they are ignorant, shall in their destroying surely be destroyed, suffering wrong as the hire of wrong-doing; men that count it pleasure to revel in the day-time, spots and blemishes, revelling in their deceivings while they feast with you; having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; enticing unstedfast souls; having a heart exercised in covetousness; children of cursing” (2 Pet. 2:12-14). “For as touching those who were once enlightened and tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the age to come, and then fell away, it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame” (Heb. 6:4-6).

How do we reconcile such passages with those that express God’s wonderful longsuffering and patience? For example, “The Lord is not
slack concerning his promise, as some count slackness; but is longsuffering to you-ward, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Pet. 3:9). “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). Let me make three observations, which I hope will clear up the difficulty, while at the same time, serve as a serious warning to each and every one of us with regard to living faithfully in our service to God.

First, there is along the pathway that leads away from God, a point, which once passed, that spells final doom for the hardened and impenitent heart. It is a real point. Once this point is reached, it is virtually impossible to reverse the direction one is traveling spiritually. Is this because God will not forgive? No. It is because the heart becomes so hardened that it can no longer be touched with the Gospel. The problem lies not in the power or willingness of God to forgive, but in the inability of the heart to turn away from sin.

Second, realization of such a point ought to motivate us to turn away from sin while it is still within our power to do so. I have had occasion over the last two or three decades, of attempting to persuade individuals to turn away from sin and obey God, whether to become a Christian or to be restored to their first love. Some have obeyed. But a far greater number have convinced themselves that there is plenty of time, and that “someday” they would come to God. I have also witnessed a number of souls delay their return so long that eventually they simply no longer have the desire to give the least bit of consideration to their spiritual plight. They have, spiritually speaking, passed the point of no return.

Third, if you are outside the safety fold of God’s gracious love and salvation, and if you, at this very moment, are giving consideration to a return to your Lord, I would strongly encourage you to act on that desire, even while it is called today. Your delay moves you ever closer to the point of no return.

I cannot think of anything more tragic, or that will bring more remorse to the lost when, having entered into eternity, they remember the numerous opportunities that was theirs to come home to the Lord, but neglected that open door provided by their gracious God. If you would be saved, delay not till the morrow, for tomorrow may be too late!

806 West Broadway St; Clarksville, TX 75426

A Time To Build
June 9 - 13, 2007

Saturday, June 9
7:00 PM It Is Time To Build
7:45 PM A Mind To Build

Sunday, June 10
9:00 AM Building Better Young People
10:00 AM Building Better Worship
Lunch Break
2:00 PM Building Better Love One For Another
3:00 PM Building Peace Among Brethren
Dinner Break
7:00 PM Building Better Preachers
7:45 PM Building While Battling

Monday, June 11
9:00 AM Building Better Homes
10:00 AM Principles of Building
11:00 AM Building Better Prayer Life
Lunch Break
1:30 PM Building Better Deacons
2:30 PM Building Better Bible Schools
3:30 PM Open Forum
Dinner Break
7:00 PM Building Tomorrow’s Leaders
7:45 PM Building On The Proper Foundation

Tuesday, June 12
9:00 AM Building Better Givers
10:00 AM Tearing Down To Build
11:00 AM Building Better Elders
Lunch Break
1:30 PM Building World Evangelism
2:30 PM Building Unity In The Church
3:30 PM Open Forum
Dinner Break
7:00 PM Building All Things According To The Pattern
7:45 PM Building The Church (Spiritually And Numerically)

Wednesday, June 13
9:00 AM Building Better Singing
10:00 AM Building Churches That Are Concerned About Preachers
11:00 AM Building Better Students
Lunch Break
1:30 PM Building Better Attitudes
2:30 PM Building Better Members
3:30 PM Open Forum
Dinner Break
7:00 PM Building Better Discipline
7:45 PM Building Courage

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**Sick**

Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Marge Williams, Ella Hammac, Marilyn Hall, Iris Gallaher, Al Flesher, Alice Williams, Lucille Staples, Thelma Dunavant (Susan McLaughlin’s mother), Wyatt Blancheri (Henry and Paulette Born’s grandson); for more information: www.caringbridge.org — in the site name type Wyatt), Nancy Travis (William Weekley’s daughter), and Hazel Merry (Nelvia Read’s sister).

**Reading/Invitation**

June 6, 2007
Reading: Shelby Nall
Invitation: Paul Brantley

June 13, 2007
Bellview Lectures

**Address Change**

Regina Lashley’s new address is: Home of Grace for Women, Inc.; 394 Aldock Road; Eight Mile, AL 36613. Please continue to send Regina cards and letters and keep her in your prayers.

**Mark These Dates**

Every Sunday–Ladies’ Bible Class will meet at 5:00 pm, in the zone room.
June 3, 2007–Pre-lectureship meeting after the evening service, in room 1.
June 9-13, 2007–32nd Annual Bellview Lectures. Theme: *A Time To Build*.
June 17, 2007–Lectureship critique after the evening service, in room 1.

**Pantry Items**

Vegetable, Chicken, or Tomato Soups

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**MEETING TIMES**

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

**WEDNESDAY:** 7:00 P.M.

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**BISHOPS:** Paul Brantley, Fred Stancliff
**MINISTER:** Michael Hatcher
**DEACONS:** Henry Born, Edward Brantley, Bill Crowe, James Loy

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**“The Point of No Return”**

*Tom Wacaster*

A plane, flying across the ocean, will eventually reach the “point of no return.” It is a real and definite point, beyond which it is better, in case of mechanical problems, to proceed than to attempt a return to the origination point. In the mind of the pilot, it is *impossible* to turn back.

There are a number of passages which seem to indicate that it is possible for someone to reach a point in his plunge into apostasy and/or sin, so that it is impossible to be brought to repentance. Consider the following sobering words: “But these, as creatures without reason, born mere animals to be taken and destroyed, railing in matters wherein they are ignorant, shall in their destroying surely be destroyed, suffering wrong as the hire of wrong-doing; men that count it pleasure to revel in the day-time, spots and blemishes, revelling in their deceivings while they feast with you; having eyes full of adultery, and that *cannot cease from sin*; enticing unstedfast souls; having a heart exercised in covetousness; children of cursing” (2 Pet. 2:12-14). “For as touching those who were once enlightened and tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the age to come, and then fell away, it is *impossible to renew them* again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame” (Heb. 6:4-6).

How do we reconcile such passages with those that express God’s wonderful longsuffering and patience? For example, “The Lord is not...”
Sick

Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Marge Williams, Ella Hammac, Marilyn Hall, Iris Gallacher, Al Flesher, Alice Williams, Lucille Staples, Thelma Dunavant (Susan McLaughlin’s mother), Wyatt Blancheri (Henry and Paulette Born’s grandson; for more information: www.caringbridge.org — in the site name type Wyatt), Kenny Dawson (Linda Parks’ brother), Bette Podgurski (Bill and Peggy Crowe’s daughter), Nancy Travis (William Weekley’s daughter), and Hazel Merry (Nellie Read’s sister).

Reading/Invitation
June 13, 2007
Bellview Lectures
June 20, 2007
Reading: Elward Brantley
Invitation: Bill Busch

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June 9-13, 2007—32nd Annual Bellview Lectures. Theme: *A Time To Build.*
June 17, 2007—Lectureship critique after the evening service, in room 1.
June 27, 2007—Sermons Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.
July 2, 2007—Visitations Groups Get-together at 6:00 pm, in the general purpose building
July 8, 2007—Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
July 15, 2007—Elders/Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.

Pantry Items
Vegetable, Chicken, or Tomato Soups

Obedience
*Curtis L. E. Graves*

But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you. But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in the counsels and in the imagination of their evil heart, and went backward, and not forward. Since the day that your fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt unto this day I have even sent unto you all my servants the prophets, daily rising up early and sending them: Yet they hearkened not unto me, nor inclined their ear, but hardened their neck: they did worse than their fathers. Therefore thou shalt speak all these words unto them; but they will not hearken to thee: thou shalt also call unto them; but they will not answer thee. But thou shalt say unto them, This is a nation that obeyeth not the voice of the L ORD their God, nor receiveth correction: truth is perished, and is cut off from their mouth (Jer. 7:23-28).

As in Jeremiah’s day people would rather hear false “good news” than the truth. Truth is labeled by the false teacher as “bad news.” False teachers cry “Peace, peace; when there is no peace” (Jer. 6:15). “Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein” (Jer. 6:16).

This command is just as relevant today as in
Jeremiah’s day. The point is simple: “Stand in the old paths.” “Speak as the oracles of God” (1 Pet. 4:11). Keep His commandments (John 14:15). “Contend for the faith” (Jude 3). Obedience is important (1 Sam. 15:22). God has always desired that we seek Him, and if we are not obedient to Him we will have no excuse on the day of judgment (2 The. 1:7-9). In Jeremiah’s time the people said no and were punished. Learn from their mistake and be obedient to all the truth today.

Modesty Quote...

Kim Alexis is top world super model. She has appeared on the covers of more than 500 magazines around the world. “My roles of wife and mother are way more important than my career,” she says. “They come first. I think of them before I accept any job.” Alexis encourages young people to resist the pop culture appeals to promiscuity and sensuality that promise fulfillment but only lead to tragedy and unhappiness. “My strong marriage, and my walk with the Lord, are the basis for my happiness,” she says. Abortion is always wrong in her book. “All life is valuable and a gift from God,” Alexis insists. The fashion world is inherently risky, she notes, because “you are constantly asked to compromise your moral standards.” Alexis regrets her own compromises. “There are pictures I look back on today and think, Oh, why did I let them talk me into that? I made some choices I’m not proud of.” Alexis then risks the wrath of the reigning cult of lust by extolling the forbidden “M” word modesty. She warns that “many women are playing with fire in the way they dress.” She continues: “Dressing like a floozy tells the world: ‘Look at me, want me, lust after me. I’m easy and you can have me. Displaying intimate parts of the body is a form of advertising for sex—so if you dress to attract sexual attention, you can hardly blame anyone else if that kind of attention comes your way.’ Dressing modestly tells the world, ‘I respect myself and I insist on being treated with respect,’” says the mother of five. “It’s possible to be stylish and attractive without wearing something that is too short, low-cut, or see-through.” (The New American, June 16, 2003, p. 28).

A Time To Build
June 9 - 13, 2007

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7:45 PM A Mind To Build

Sunday, June 10
9:00 AM Building Better Young People
10:00 AM Building Better Worship
   Lunch Break
2:00 PM Building Better Love One For Another
3:00 PM Building Peace Among Brethren
   Dinner Break
7:00 PM Building Better Preachers
7:45 PM Building While Battling

Monday, June 11
9:00 AM Building Better Homes
10:00 AM Principles of Building
11:00 AM Building Better Prayer Life
   Lunch Break
1:30 PM Building Better Deacons
2:30 PM Building Better Bible Schools
3:30 PM Open Forum
   Dinner Break
7:00 PM Building Tomorrow’s Leaders
7:45 PM Building On The Proper Foundation

Tuesday, June 12
9:00 AM Building Better Givers
10:00 AM Tearing Down To Build
11:00 AM Building Better Elders
   Lunch Break
1:30 PM Building World Evangelism
2:30 PM Building Unity In The Church
3:30 PM Open Forum
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7:00 PM Building All Things According To The Pattern
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Wednesday, June 13
9:00 AM Building Better Singing
10:00 AM Building Churches That Are Concerned About Preachers
11:00 AM Building Better Students
   Lunch Break
1:30 PM Building Better Attitudes
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P.O. Box 975; Paris, KY 40362

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Jess Whitlock
7:45 PM A Mind To Build
Geoff Litke

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Brad Green
10:00 AM Building Better Worship
Michael Hatcher
Lunch Break
Tim Cozad
Tim Smith
2:00 PM Building Better Love One For Another
Darrell Brooking
3:00 PM Building Peace Among Brethren
David Brown
7:00 PM Building Better Preachers
7:45 PM Building While Battling

Monday, June 11
9:00 AM Building Better Homes
Wayne Blake
10:00 AM Principles of Building
Gary Summers
Lester Kamp
11:00 AM Building Better Prayer Life
David Brown
Gary Summers
Lunch Break
Tim Cozad
Tim Smith
2:30 PM Building Better Bible Schools
3:30 PM Open Forum

Dinner Break
7:00 PM Building Tomorrow’s Leaders
Hal Smith
7:45 PM Building On The Proper Foundation
John West

Tuesday, June 12
9:00 AM Building Better Givers
Terry Hightower
10:00 AM Tearing Down To Build
Danny Douglas
Kent Bailey
11:00 AM Building Better Elders
Lunch Break
Paul Vaughn
Bruce Stulting
1:30 PM Building World Evangelism
2:30 PM Building Unity In The Church
3:30 PM Open Forum

Dinner Break
7:00 PM Building All Things According To The Pattern
Ken Chumbley

7:45 PM Building The Church (Spiritually And Numerically)
Kent Bailey

Wednesday, June 13
9:00 AM Building Better Singing
Dub McClish
10:00 AM Building Churches That Are Concerned About Preachers
Wayne Blake
11:00 AM Building Better Students
Daniel Denham
Lunch Break
Lester Kamp
Stacey Grant
1:30 PM Building Better Attitudes
2:30 PM Building Better Members
3:30 PM Open Forum

Dinner Break
7:00 PM Building Better Discipline
Bruce Stulting
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Bellview Lectures
June 20, 2007
Reading: Elward Brantley
Invitation: Bill Busch

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Obedience
Curtis L. E. Graves

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Obey my voice, and I will be your God,
and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you,
that it may be well unto you. But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in the counsels and imagination of their evil heart, and went backward, and not forward.

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Placed Membership
Malcolm and Emma Wooton have placed membership with the Bellview congregation. Their address is: 2600 West Michigan Avenue Lot 20A; Pensacola, FL 32526.

Reading/Invitation
June 20, 2007
Bible Reading: Elward Brantley
Invitation: Bill Busch
June 27, 2007
Bible Reading: Ray Dodd
Invitation: Bill Crowe

Mark These Dates
June 17, 2007—Lectureship critique after the evening service, in room 1.
June 27, 2007—Sermons Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.
July 2, 2007—Visitations Groups Get-together at 6:00 pm, in the general purpose building.

The Fight Is on
Tom Wacaster

The battle rages, and the Captain of our army encourages us to stand in the gap, to “put on the whole armor of God...and, having done all, to stand” (Eph. 6:11-13). A recent bulletin reported that the Episcopal church is on the verge of allowing homosexuals into their pulpits. Another bulletin reports that the Catholic church is about to capitulate on this same moral issue. Meanwhile, toleration is in, opposition is out, and it is apparent that our brethren are about to succumb to the same kind of “pluralistic” thinking that is sweeping our society. “Judge not that ye be not judged” has become the battle cry for those weak of spirit. Controversy is no longer politically correct, whether it be in the political or the religious realm. I, for one, am grateful that neither Jesus, nor His apostles, ever adapted such a philosophy in order to promote and promulgate the “faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3). Had the restorational pioneers held to the same attitude toward religious division and error as some of our brethren do today, they would never have gotten to first base in bringing about a restoration of the ancient order of things. J. S. Lamar wrote the following approximately 30 years after the death of Alexander Campbell. I share it with our readers for no other reason than to show that firm conviction and a stalwart stand for the truth is the only way by which the citadels of error will ever be torn down and the truth of God exalted. Here is what brother Lamar wrote:

Every party had made its own creed, and set forth its conception of Christianity in a
form chosen by itself. Every builder had erected a structure in accordance with his own architectural ideas and designs; and the results were satisfactory to the builders and really, for human structures, very good. It was while resting in fancied security in these corrupted and beautiful temples, the product of their skill and the pride of their hearts, that Alexander Campbell, as with the voice of God’s thunder and the sword of God’s Spirit, broke upon them, and aroused them to a sense of their danger. Now, if instead of thus assailing them, he had been content to accept their gauge, and to meet them on their own chosen ground, both the conflict and the result had been different. They were fully prepared to contest the question of comparative merit; and if the issue had been, for example, whether the English church was better or worse than the German; whether the Methodists had more or less truth than the Presbyterian; whether the creed, the doctrines, the practices, of any given sect, approximated in more respects than those of some others to the apostolic model and teaching—in such case the conflict would have been most welcome. But Mr. Campbell did not condescend to engage in any such useless strife. The peculiarities of sects and their varying degrees of excellency were treated only as side-issues and incidents, while with ponderous and pounding logic he battered upon the very basis of sectarianism—contending that, whether they had more of the truth or less, they were still wrong, fundamentally wrong, wrong in being sects, wrong in not being what Christ had founded, while yet assuming to occupy the place, to command respect, and to wield the authority of the divine institution. And now the fight was on. It was Alexander Campbell against the whole sectarian world—and all this world combining to resist him. Thank God for such men as Mr. Campbell, “Raccoon” John Smith, Barton W. Stone, and a host of courageous men who refused to yield to the “pluralistic” mind set that so dominates our world, yea even our own brotherhood, at this very hour. It is readily admitted that when we take a stand on the side of truth, that we will be criticized. But at least we know we stand with good company, “for so persecuted they the prophets that were before you” (Mat. 5:12b). And should it be our lot to stand alone, or at best with the minority, and should the host of the armies of darkness assail us, we can be assured that in the final analysis, when all has been said and done, and we stand before the Captain of our army, we will hear the sweet words, “Enter thou into the joys prepared for you.” It will have been a well fought battle, and the victory shall be ours to enjoy for all eternity. “Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not vain in the Lord” (1 Cor. 15:58).

801 West 11th Street; Clarksville, TX 76426

Adult Delinquency
Jess Whitlock

According to a recent study conducted by Sheldon & Eleanor Glueck, of Harvard University, a test was designed to predict whether or not children would become delinquent (What the Bible Says About Parenting by John MacArthur). The test was designed for the five through six-year-old range and has been found to be better than 90% accurate. It lists four essentials in preventing juvenile delinquency in children. Consider this:
1. The father’s discipline must be fair, firm, and consistent.
2. The mother must know where her children are and what they are doing at all times, and be with them as much as possible.

3. The children need to see affection demonstrated between their parents and from their parents to them.
4. The family must spend time together as a unit.

The apostle Paul put it this way: “Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise) That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Eph. 6:1-4).

P.O. Box 127; Cheyenne, OK 73628

Being Gullible

A freshman at Eagle Rock Junior High won first prize at the Greater Idaho Falls Science Fair, April 26, 2006. In his project he urged people to sign a petition demanding strict control or total elimination of the chemical “dihydrogen monoxide.” And for plenty of good reasons, since:
1. It can cause excessive sweating and vomiting.
2. It is a major component in acid rain.
3. It can cause sever burns in its gaseous state.
4. Accidental inhalation can kill you.
5. It contributes to erosion.
6. It decreases effectiveness of automobile brakes.
7. It has been found in tumors of terminal cancer patients.

He asked 50 people if they supported a ban of the chemical.
Forty-three (43) said yes, six (6) were undecided, and the last one? Well, only one knew that the chemical, dihydrogen monoxide, was water (H₂O).

The title of his prize winning project: “How Gullible Are We?”

There are many in religious world who are just a gullible. Millions always believe, without ever investigating, what their preacher espouses from the pulpit. Many would not know the difference between truth and error if it slapped them in the face. Friends, that is why we need to be like those noble Bereans, where of them it is said, “These 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” (Acts 17:11). Being gullible is what leads to religious error that will damn one’s souls. Think About It!

Author Unknown
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Bellview Lectures
A Time To Build
To view the video archives of this year’s lectures go to:
http://bellviewcoc.com/lectures.php
If you wish to order the lectureship book please contact us. The pre-publication price of $12 (plus $2.75 for postage) is good until June 30, 2007. After that the price is $15 (plus $2.75 for postage).

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Author Unknown
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Marge Williams, Ella Hammac, Marilyn Hall, Iris Gallaher, Al Flesher, Alice Williams, Lucille Staples, Emma Wooten, Thelma Dunavant (Susan McLaughlin’s mother), Wyatt Blancheri (Henry and Paulette Born’s grandson; for more information: www.caringbridge.org — in the site name type Wyatt), Kenny Dawson (Linda Parks’ brother), Bette Podgurski (Bill and Peggy Crowe’s daughter), Nancy Travis (William Weekley’s daughter), and Hazel Merry (Nellie Read’s sister).

Placed Membership
Malcolm and Emma Wooten have placed membership with the Bellview congregation. Their address is: 2600 West Michigan Avenue Lot 20A, Pensacola, FL 32526.

Reading/Invitation
June 20, 2007
Bible Reading: Elward Brantley
Invitation: Bill Busch
June 27, 2007
Bible Reading: Ray Dodd
Invitation: Bill Crowe

Mark These Dates
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Tom Wacaster

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Every party had made its own creed, and set forth its conception of Christianity in a...
Facing Life’s Difficulties

Marvin L. Weir

The Bible does not promise that living our lives in this world will be easy. In fact, God’s Word makes it very clear that a Christian’s citizenship that matters most is not of this world. Paul says, “For our citizenship is in heaven: whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ” (Phil. 3:20). Even though a child of God realizes where his citizenship lies, it does not keep him from fretting over enemies and evil doing. No one in his or her proper mind desires to be used, abused, or treated badly. Such unwanted and undeserved treatment, however, does occur on a regular basis to those who are striving to live godly lives. As a result of such “undeserved” treatment, a child of God may begin to question God’s love for him. One may ask, “What have I done to deserve this treatment?” or “why does God not care for me anymore?” Another may observe, “The harder I try to do what is right—the more persecution and ridicule I receive.” Let us think for a moment about our enemies, evil doing, and why we many times receive treatment we do not deserve.

God makes it very clear that Christians will face opposition and have enemies! As a member of the body of Christ, I must accept this truth. Paul reminds young Timothy: “Yea, and all that would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2 Tim. 3:12). One will note that the Bible does not say might, could, or possibly—but shall.” The Lord Himself taught His followers: “And ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake: but he that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved” (Matt. 10:22). Again, in
the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus declared, “Blessed are ye when men shall reproach you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets that were before you” (Mat. 5:11-12). Christ, the Master teacher and perfect One, had enemies. As His followers, we must not think it strange that we also will have enemies. Jesus gives an explanation in John 15:18-19: “If the world hateth you, ye know that it hath hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love its own: but because ye are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.”

Coffman, commenting on John 15:19, observes:

Inherent in the world’s hatred of Christ was also the undying hatred of the apostles and the divine message they delivered to men. In this lies the reason why unregenerated men have authored whole libraries of rejection and hatred against the Gospel of John. Given the two facts, (1) of what unregenerates are in themselves, and (2) of what the glorious Gospel of John is, and the hatred of this Gospel becomes absolutely inevitable. Can anyone believe for a minute that the word of Christ through the apostles is treated with any less bias and hatred than that which marked the world’s treatment of Christ and the apostles themselves?

Christians are in opposition to the world! If one is not going to be a friend of the world, the world will not be a friend to him. James warns those who will listen 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). The most remembered verses are probably these verses penned by John: “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the vain glory of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever” (1 John 2:15-17).

Paul makes it absolutely clear that a Christian cannot be a friend of the world, but is chosen out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.”

Come Back, Brother/Sister

H. L. Gradowith

Remember where you once took your stand, brother/sister, Remember when you would bow to no other, Remember who you once knew, Remember the blood of the cross, Remember the price that He paid, Remember who suffered the loss, Remember back when you obeyed... Remember, remember, remember, brother/sister.

Can’t you remember all the truth you once taught? And can’t you remember the battles you fought? Now why will you throw it away? Tell me, what do you hope to gain? Remember the price you must pay! Oh, why did your faithfulness want? Come back, my brother/sister, and teach what you once taught. What prize did the devil use to convert you? You, who at one time, were so faithful and true? Did you leave for glory and fame? Or the riches this world can give?

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Things You Will Never See at a Pentecostal “Healing” Service

- One raised from the dead, like Jesus did (John 11:38-44).
- The blind made to see, like Jesus did (John 9:1-12).
- The deaf made to hear, like Jesus did (Mark 7:31-37).
- A leper cleansed, like Jesus did (Mat. 8:1-4).
- Restoration of a withered hand, like Jesus did (Mat. 12:9-13).
- Order maintained, like Paul commanded (1 Cor. 14:26-40).

“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1).

Author Unknown
Inherent in the world's hatred of Christ was also the undying hatred of the apostles and the divine message they delivered and the kingdom of God. For the world was not friendly with God, neither were the things that are in the world, and the love of Christ was not the world's love, but the following of Christ was. Paul himself, as Peter and his apostles, had enemies. As he explained in John 15:18-19: "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own: but because ye are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." Coffman, commenting on John 15:19, observed: "The world hates you."

Christians can have the strength to do the Lord's will (Phil. 4:13). God will not allow us to bear more than we are able to bear (1 Cor. 10:13). As we face Satan and this world, remembering: "If God is for us, who is against us?" (Rom. 8:31).
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The Bible does not promise that living our lives in this world will be easy. In fact, God’s Word makes it very clear that a Christian’s citizenship that matters most is not of this world. Paul says, “For our citizenship is in heaven; whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ” (Phi. 3:20). Even though a child of God realizes where his citizenship lies, it does not keep him from fretting over enemies and evil doing. No one in his or her proper mind desires to be used, abused, or treated badly. Such unwanted and undeserved treatment, however, does occur on a regular basis to those who are striving to live godly lives. As a result of such “undeserved” treatment, a child of God may begin to question God’s love for him. One may ask, “What have I done to deserve this treatment?” or “why does God not care for me anymore?” Another may observe, “The harder I try to do what is right—the more persecution and ridicule I receive.” Let us think for a moment about our enemies, evil doing, and why we many times receive treatment we do not deserve.

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Placed Membership

Dorothy Kempton has placed membership with the Bellview congregation. Her address is: 6208 Forest Pines Drive; Pensacola, FL 32526. The telephone number is 944-2127.

Malcolm and Emma Wooton’s telephone number is 549-3443. They placed membership earlier in the month.

Reading/Invitation

July 4, 2007
Bible Reading: Andrew Hatcher
Invitation: Dale Cunningham
July 11, 2007
Bible Reading: Daniel Hatcher
Invitation: Ray Foshee

Mark These Dates

July 2, 2007–Visitations Groups Get-together at 6:00 pm, in the general purpose building
July 8, 2007–Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.

The Uniform

Bobby Duncan

In our efforts to teach against wearing of immodest apparel we meet a great deal of opposition from members of the church. We are told that the cheerleader who stands on the sidelines before thousands of people in her short little skirt is not immodest. That it is just the normal cheerleader uniform. That is what she is expected to wear, and nobody should frown upon it. The majorette who dances and prances in front of the band in her tights before the eyes of thousands of people is not immodest, we are told. This is just the normal majorette uniform, and she is expected to wear it. Nobody thinks anything about it.

I am told, according to a newspaper article, a young lady who attended one of our Christian schools and who was a member of the church of Christ in an Alabama town, recently appeared as the centerfold of Playboy magazine. According to the article, she was wearing the standard uniform which readers of Playboy magazine have come to expect their centerfold girls to wear; she was nude. Now, according to the reasoning of some of my brethren, nobody should be critical of this young lady. She was not being immodest; she was attired in the normal uniform for centerfold girls.

Now, would you say this young lady who was photographed in the nude was guilty of wearing immodest apparel? You could hardly say that, for how could it be immodest...
other words, one might have on some apparel and still be immodest. One might be immodest without being completely nude like the young lady in the centerfold. First Timothy 2:10 refers to that “which becometh women professing godliness.” These words should serve as a key to understanding what modest apparel is. It would be quite a stretch of the imagination to imagine that one who is completely nude is adorned as is becoming a woman professing godliness. But the same could also be said about those who wear the standard cheerleader and majorette uniforms. These latter uniforms are designed to appeal to the same base desires to which an apparel is made by the Playboy magazine centerfold. Every mature person should know this is true, even though many will not admit it.

One other observation is in order. In all of the years of Playboy’s publication, is this the first young lady who has ever made its pages who was a member of a church? Have no Catholics, Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, nor Pentecostals ever appeared? I cannot believe they have not. But the news media seems not to have picked up on any of them. Why? I can only guess. My first guess would be that some news reporter enjoys embarrassing the church of Christ, but would find no joy in embarrassing one of the denominations. A second guess would be that about the only ones who have strong convictions about modest apparel are some Gospel preachers and some members of the church. So it is especially newsworthy when one of our own “jumps the tracks.” At any rate, I suppose we should feel complemented that people in general who know us also know that at least some of us have convictions with reference to nudity, and we do not mind letting the world know where we stand.

Deceased

Trust in the Lord

Tom Wacaster

“Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths” (Prov. 3:5-6). It has been almost three decades since I obtained my pilot’s license (and more than two full decades since I last flew an airplane). There are a lot of things which I was taught about flying, dead reckoning, and navigation that have long since been forgotten. But I suppose every student pilot never forgets the incessant warning and admonition from their instructor to “trust your instruments.” I never really appreciated that admonition until it came time for me to use it. It was the early 80s, and Thanksgiving Day was drawing near. Our family had rented a Piper Warrior to fly home for the Thanksgiving holiday. Well into the flight I noticed that the lights in the distance seemed to disappear, and after what seemed only time to make a passing comment about the darkness, we were immediately surrounded by a cloud. Strobe lights have a way of disorienting you in a cloud, and your sense of direction and equilibrium get all out of whack. I thought I was flying straight and level, but when I checked my instruments I noticed that I was in a slow and descending bank to my left. No, this could not be! I knew I was flying level. The instruments must be malfunctioning! Then I remembered, “Trust your instruments.” Application of this simple rule may very well have saved my life. And so it is with God’s Word, His promises, and His guidance. Our Father will not abandon us. “He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee” (Heb. 13:5).

God will not fail us, suggesting His power to keep every single promise. Nor will He forsake us, suggesting His faithfulness in fulfilling those promises. He has done His part; now we must do ours. And therein lies the great challenge. Acceptance and compliance to God’s commands often entails trusting in that which is not seen. “Now faith is assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen” (Heb. 11:1). Commenting on this passage, one brother wrote: “Does one trust in the Lord with all his heart if he feels secure only when he is able to see the end result? What about when he does not know the outcome?” The very mark of the men and women of faith catalogued in Hebrews chapter eleven is this admirable trait of fixing their eyes on the unseen. “By faith we understand that the worlds have been framed by the word of God, so that what is seen hath not been made out of things which appear” (11:3). Abraham “looked for the city which hath the foundations, whose builder and maker is God” (11:10). Moses “looked unto the recompense of reward” instead of the riches of Egypt (11:26). The widow, when casting in her last two mites, manifested complete trust in God. Where would the next meal come from? How would she pay her rent? Her faith was commended because she exemplified complete trust in God. She trusted that God would supply. And so we come to Matthew 6:33 wherein our Lord unequivocally pronounced, “But seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.” Do we trust in His promise? Do we walk by faith? Dare we “trust the instruments”? Or, do we neglect our giving because of some unexpected expense that comes along? Do we accept that promotion at work, even though it means that my service to God will be severely curtailed, so as to have that little bit of extra income to provide for the family? God will not accept divided allegiance. “No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to one, and despise the other” (Matt. 6:24). When it comes to this matter of trusting in God to keep His promises, we can either fly by the seat of our pants, or we can trust the instruments. Which will it be?

Please Pardon Me...

Toney L. Smith

When you come to the Lord’s table;
To be there with you I’m not able.
I have worked hard all week you see,
I need just one day, so please pardon me.

When you sing the songs of praise,
With you my voice I cannot raise.
I stayed up late and am tired as can be.
I beg you, please pardon me.

I will not join you when the Bible is read,
I just cannot drag myself from my bed.
I remember that truth will make me free,
other words, one might have on some apparel and still be immodest. One might be immodest without being completely nude like the young lady in the centerfold. First Timothy 2:10 refers to that “which becometh women professing godliness.” These words should serve as a key to understanding what modest apparel is. It would be quite a stretch of the imagination to imagine that one who is completely nude is adorned as is becoming a woman professing godliness. But the same could also be said about those who wear the standard cheerleader and majorette uniforms. These latter uniforms are designed to appeal to the same basic desires to which an apparel is made by the Playboy magazine centerfold. Every mature person should know this is true, even though many will not admit it.

One other observation is in order. In all of the years of Playboy’s publication, is this the first young lady who has ever made its pages who was a member of a church? Have no Catholics, Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, nor Pentecostals ever appeared? I cannot believe they have not. But the news media seems not to have picked up on any of them. Why? I can only guess. My first guess would be that some news reporter enjoys embarrassing the church of Christ, but would find no joy in embarrassing one of the denominations. A second guess would be that about the only ones who have strong convictions about modest apparel are some Gospel preachers and some members of the church. So it is especially newsworthy when one of our own “jumps the tracks.” At any rate, I suppose we should feel complemented that people in general who know us also know that at least some of us have convictions with reference to nudity, and we do not mind letting the world know where we stand.

Trust in the Lord

Tom Wacaster

“Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths” (Pro. 3:5-6). It has been almost three decades since I obtained my pilot’s license (and more than two full decades since I last flew an airplane). There are a lot of things which I was taught about flying, dead reckoning, and navigation that have long since been forgotten. But I suppose every student pilot never forgets the incessant warning and admonition from their instructor to “trust your instruments.” I never really appreciated that admonition until it came time for me to use it. It was the early 80s, and Thanksgiving Day was drawing near. Our family had rented a Piper Warrior to fly home for the Thanksgiving holiday. Well into the flight I noticed that the lights in the distance seemed to disappear, and after what seemed only time to make a passing comment about the darkness, we were immediately surrounded by a cloud. Strobe lights have a way of disorienting you in a cloud, and your sense of direction and equilibrium get all out of whack. I thought I was flying straight and level, but when I checked my instruments I noticed that I was in a slow and descending bank to my left. No, this could not be! I knew I was flying level. The instruments must be malfunctioning! Then I remembered, “Trust your instruments.” Application of this simple rule may very well have saved my life. And so it is with God’s Word, His promises, and His guidance. Our Father will not abandon us. “He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee” (Heb. 13:5).

God will not fail us, suggesting His power to keep every single promise. Nor will He forsake us, suggesting His faithfulness in fulfilling those promises. He has done His part; now we must do ours. And therein lies the great challenge. Acceptance and compliance to God’s commands often entails trusting in that which is not seen. “Now faith is assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen” (Heb. 11:1). Commenting on this passage, one brother wrote: “Does one trust in the Lord with all his heart if he feels secure only when he is able to see the end result? What about when he does not know the outcome?” The very mark of the men and women of faith catalogued in Hebrews chapter eleven is this admirable trait of fixing their eyes on the unseen. “By faith we understand that the worlds have been framed by the word of God, so that what is seen hath not been made out of things which appear” (11:3). Abraham “looked for the city which hath the foundations, whose builder and maker is God” (11:10). Moses “looked unto the recompense of reward” instead of the riches of Egypt (11:26). The widow, when casting in her last two mites, manifested complete trust in God.

When you come to the Lord’s table; To be there with you I’m not able. I have worked hard all week you see, I need just one day, so please pardon me.

When you sing the songs of praise, With you my voice I cannot raise. I stayed up late and am tired as can be. I beg you, please pardon me.

When you all lay by in store, I made no plans for giving back to Thee. So as for now, please pardon me.

And when you bow down to pray Say a word for me today. I will someday bow on bended knee, But for this time again, please pardon me.

Please Pardon Me...

Toney L. Smith

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And when you bow down to pray Say a word for me today. I will someday bow on bended knee, But for this time again, please pardon me.

801 W 11th Street; Clarksville, TX 76426

517 Gaylord Road; Dresden, TN 38225
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Marge Williams, Ella Hammac, Marilyn Hall, Iris Gallaher, Al Flesher, Alice Williams, Lucille Staples, Ray Dodd, Emma Wooton, Thelma Dunavant (Susan McLaughlin’s mother), Wyatt Blancheri (Henry and Paulette Born’s grandson; for more information: www.caringbridge.org — in the site name type Wyatt), Kenny Dawson (Linda Parks’ brother), Nancy Travis (William Weekley’s daughter), Hazel Merry (Nellie Read’s sister), and Guss Eoff.

Placed Membership
Dorothy Kempton has placed membership with the Bellview congregation. Her address is: 6208 Forest Pines Drive; Pensacola, FL 32526. The telephone number is 944-2127.
Malcolm and Emma Wooton’s telephone number is 549-3443. They placed membership earlier in the month.

Reading/Invitation
July 4, 2007
Bible Reading: Andrew Hatcher
Invitation: Dale Cunningham

July 11, 2007
Bible Reading: Daniel Hatcher
Invitation: Ray Foshee

Mark These Dates
July 2, 2007–Visitations Groups Get-together at 6:00 pm, in the general purpose building
July 8, 2007–Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.

The Uniform
Bobby Duncan

In our efforts to teach against wearing of immodest apparel we meet a great deal of opposition from members of the church. We are told that the cheerleader who stands on the sidelines before thousands of people in her short little skirt is not immodest. That it is just the normal cheerleader uniform. That is what she is expected to wear, and nobody should frown upon it. The majorette who dances and prances in front of the band in her tightst before the eyes of thousands of people is not immodest, we are told. This is just the normal majorette uniform, and she is expected to wear it. Nobody thinks anything about it.

I am told, according to a newspaper article, a young lady who attended one of our Christian schools and who was a member of the church of Christ in an Alabama town, recently appeared as the centerfold of Playboy magazine. According to the article, she was wearing the standard uniform which readers of Playboy magazine have come to expect their centerfold girls to wear; she was nude. Now, according to the reasoning of some of my brethren, nobody should be critical of this young lady. She was not being immodest; she was attired in the normal uniform for centerfold girls.

Now, would you say this young lady who was photographed in the nude was guilty of wearing immodest apparel? You could hardly say that, for how could it be immodest ... speaks of women adorning themselves in “modest apparel” (1 Tim. 2:9). If there is such a thing as modest apparel. In
Sick

Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Marge Williams, Ella Hammac, Marilyn Hall, Iris Gallaher, Al Flesher, Alice Williams, Lucille Staples, Ray Dodd, Emma Wooton, Thelma Dunavant (Susan McLaughlin’s mother), Wyatt Blancheri (Henry and Paulette Born’s grandson; for more information: www.caringbridge.org — in the site name type Wyatt), Kenny Dawson (Linda Parks’ brother), Nancy Travis (William Weekley’s daughter), and Hazel Merry (Nellie Read’s sister).

Reading/Invitation
July 11, 2007
Bible Reading: Daniel Hatcher
Invitation: Ray Foshee
July 18, 2007
Bible Reading: Jim Loy
Invitation: Johnny McLaughlin

Mark These Dates
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July 25, 2007—Sermons Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.
August 19, 2007—Attendance Drive and Dinner on the Grounds after the morning service.

Pantry Items Needed
Vegetable, Chicken, Tomato Soups

Ye Are the Salt of the Earth
Tom Wacaster

Our Lord often taught in parables, using illustrations from everyday life to teach important spiritual truths. The parable of the sower impresses upon our minds the need to propagate the seed, which is the Word of God. The parable of the prodigal son, the lost coin, and the lost sheep speak of God’s longsuffering and love for lost humanity. The parable of the leaven reminds us that the power of Christianity lies in its slow but certain leavening of society. The parable of the Good Samaritan shows human kindness to those in need. Perhaps one of the most powerful, pointed, and picturesque illustrations the Lord ever used is when He said, “Ye are the salt of the earth” (Mat. 5:13). In seven simple words Jesus captured the essence of what it means to be a Christian so far as the influence the child of God is to have on the world: “Ye are the salt of the earth.”

Salt has a number of uses. It renders food pleasant and, in some cases, palatable. It provides medicinal aid in treating infection, and preserves from putrefaction. When Jesus said “Ye are the salt of the earth,” He may have had all of these characteristics in mind. Who would doubt the influence that Christianity has had in making the world a more pleasant place to live? Kindness, courtesy, honesty, integrity, and trust, to whatever degree they might exist in any community, are the fruits of Christian influence. Nor would we question the power of Christianity to heal the sin-sick soul. The Great Physician has provided spiritual healing for millions. In addition, the principles of Christianity have provided...
sobriety to the drunkard, purity to men and women taken in adultery, and moral integrity to those whose lives have been ravaged by the infectious plague of sin. Finally, who can question the influence that Christianity has had in protecting and preserving the society as a whole. It is not the armament, nor the education or technology that keeps our country from complete destruction. It is the righteous element, however small that may be, that keeps this country from God’s wrath. Righteousness exalteth a nation—not its stock market, military might, satellites, or technology. Would that our government leaders would recognize and acknowledge this important truth.

Yes, we are the salt of the earth. It is a blessing to know that we play such an important role in providing hope for a dying world. But with the blessing comes a tremendous responsibility. For Jesus warned, “but if the salt have lost its savor, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men” (Mat. 5:13). If we cease to live a life of “sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord” (Heb. 12:14), what shall become of the “salt” that has become no better than the corrupting agents that plague our present generation? Jesus warned that it is “good for nothing!” Brethren, it is what some of the great preachers of the last century would call “a square issue.” We cannot straddle the line; we cannot give way to the devil, “no not for an hour.” For only eternity will tell what lasting good might come from the lives we live. On the other hand, only eternity will tell what lasting harm will come upon others, and upon ourselves, if we fail to be “the salt of the earth.”

We will close with the following from Philip Schaff’s, *History Of The Christian Church*: Who can measure the depth and breadth of all those blessed experiences of forgiveness, peace, gratitude, trust in God, love for God and love for man, humility and meekness, patience and resignation, which have bloomed as eternal flowers on the soil of the renewed heart since the first Christian Pentecost? Who can tell the number and the fervor of Christian prayers and intercessions which have gone up from lonely chambers, caves, deserts, and martyrs’ graves in the silent night and the open day, for friends and foes, for all classes of mankind, even for cruel persecutors, to the throne of the exalted Saviour? But where this Christian life has taken root in the depths of the soul it must show itself in the outward conduct, and exert an elevating influence on every calling and sphere of action. The Christian morality surpassed all that the noblest philosophers of heathendom had ever taught or labored for as the highest aim of man. The masterly picture of it in the anonymous Epistle to Diognetus is no mere fancy sketch, but a faithful copy from real life. The humble and painful condition of the church under civil oppression made hypocrisy more rare than in times of peace, and favored the development of the heroic virtues. The Christians delighted to regard themselves as soldiers of Christ, enlisted under the victorious standard of the cross against sin, the world, and the devil. The baptismal vow was their oath of perpetual allegiance; the Apostles’ creed their parable; the sign of the cross upon the forehead, their mark of service; temperance, courage, and faithfulness unto death, their cardinal virtues; the blessedness of heaven, their promised reward.

39x31 West 11th Street; Clarksville, TX 76426

A Biblical Study of Faith

1. In order to please God, we must believe or have faith (Heb. 11:6).
2. The object of our faith is Christ (2 Tim. 1:12).
3. The Bible is designed to be a faith-producing book (John 20:30-31).
4. Yet the Bible builds faith only in those who hear it (Rom. 10:17).
5. Jesus blessed those who had great faith (Mat. 8:8-11).
6. Jesus rebuked the unbelieving (Mat. 17:17).
7. Faith is a condition of salvation (John 8:24).
8. We are justified by faith in Christ instead of works of the law or merit (Rom. 3:28).
9. Faith that does not express itself in obedience to Christ does not save (John 12:42).
10. God has designed that faith be perfected by obedience (Jam. 2:20-23).
11. Acceptable faith brings peace (Rom. 5:1).
13. By faith a Christian stands (1 Cor. 16:13).
14. By faith a Christian walks (2 Cor. 5:7).
15. By faith a Christian lives (Gal. 2:20).
16. By obedient faith one is sanctified (Acts 26:18).
17. With faith as his shield a Christian overcomes the world (Eph. 6:16).
18. An evil heart of unbelief will separate one from the Heavenly Father (Heb. 3:12).
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801 West 11th Street; Clarksville, TX 76426

Mending Pants

The wives of two preachers, Had a friendship that was unending. Were sitting together as they worked — Their husband’s clothes they were mending. One said to the other, “My poor John Is so discouraged with preaching. He’s about ready to give it up — There are no souls that he’s reaching.” “He said nothing is going right — No new faces does he ever see. I expect that soon he’ll really resign — But this is between you and me.” After waiting a moment the other said, “It’s different with my Bill. He seems so enthusiastic, just to watch him gives me a thrill. He’s praying about the building program— He wants some more pews put in. He’ll have to move a wall to do it, And make a class room where a junk room had been. He’s looking for Bible Class teachers To teach the classes that are growing. Offers are up, souls are being saved— The members’ faces are glowing. A hushed silence fell as they continued Their work, making each stitch so neat. One was patching trouser knees, The other her husband’s pants seat.

Author Unknown

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Sick

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Invitation: Ray Foshee
July 18, 2007
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Invitation: Johnny McLaughlin

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Tom Wacaster

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Beadon
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MEETING TIMES
SUNDAY:
9:00 A.M. BIBLE CLASSES
10:00 A.M., 6:00 P.M. WORSHIP
WEDNESDAY: 7:00 P.M.

HOW AN OLD TIME PREDACHER
HANDED MISCHIEF

One of the best known preachers of the first half of last century was J. D. Tant (1861-1941).
My Dad knew brother Tant and heard him preach. A few months before Dad died, he was telling me about some of the preachers he had known and some of the things that had transpired in former days. Among those events was the following story of brother Tant that Dad said took place about 1912.

Brother Tant was preaching in a Gospel meeting somewhere in south Texas and was baptizing a goodly number of people as they heard the message of truth so powerfully taught. Some ruffians decided to disrupt the meeting, and offered the "town clown" a side of ham and a bushel of corn if he would go forward at the meeting to be baptized, and come up from the water cursing. The brethren "got wind" of what was going to take place and anxiously warned brother Tant. He assured them that he would take care of it if it did occur and for them not to worry about it.

Sure enough, the suborned man came forward amidst several other respondents. Closing the service under the old "brush arbor," by lantern-light all made their way to the creek for the baptizings. Brother Tant baptized all the genuine folks first in a very meaningful way, saying something similar to what all Gospel preachers say when baptizing. After all the legitimate baptisms, he then said, "one more man has come tonight and if he'll now join me here in the creek..."
The Gospel According to Uninspired Men

Douglas Hoff

What are the first four books of the New Testament called? Normally, we would say Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Those are the familiar and short titles we use. However, the full titles include the phrase “The gospel according to...” Evidence strongly suggests the titles were added after the inspired writer had completed his writing. The original documents were copied many times and some uninspired scribe probably saw the value in assigning titles. Since the labels are not from God, there is no real issue beyond what to call these important volumes. Some early manuscripts have the full title “The gospel according to...” while others have the abbreviated title “According to...” with the implied subject of the Gospel being understood. The nature of man is to employ short cuts so after a while of writing or saying the full title, it became natural to shorten it. Today, we rarely hear the full title and understand the reference when only the name of the writer is given.

It is important to distinguish what is actually from God and what uninspired men supplied. This point can also be made about study notes and cross references in Bibles... For most people this reminder is almost academic.

However, in recent years there have been a number of claims made about (and against) the Bible’s credibility. Most deal with so-called lost books of the Bible or recently “re-discovered” books. Some authors claim these sources were intentionally suppressed by the church in antiquity. This smacks of a conspiracy and such sensationalism draws attention. Most of the documents fall into the category of false gospels. One that has come to attention of late is the gospel according to Judas. What some people may not realize about such documents is that they were written at least a hundred years after the apostles died. They are the work of uninspired men. Often, their religious beliefs did not depend solely on the Bible but included their fanciful imaginations. Dan Brown’s The Da Vinci Code reportedly draws heavily from sources like this whose accuracy have been shown to be lacking. Such documents were rejected long ago because they did not possess evidence of inspiration. When a document tells wild tales that do not harmonize with the gist of the Scriptures or contains factual errors (details that serve to point out their uninspired status), then it is only reasonable to reject them from being included in the Holy Bible. So, yes, these documents were intentionally suppressed and for good reasons!

While most (if not all) who are reading this article would have no problem rejecting uninspired “gospels,” it may be easy to fall into a dangerous trap without being aware of it. We may find ourselves believing the gospel according to uninspired men who have lived in our time. By this I refer to the books that men have written about the Bible. When reading an article or book written by a respected author whose knowledge and faithfulness is well known, it can be easy to accept their views as the truth of the Gospel. Such authors are not trying to deceive or mislead souls. On the contrary, they are trying to teach subjects that are of eternal importance and they try to teach accurately. However, they are still fallible men. As such, we ought to read what they have written remembering this. If we question their point of view it is not a rejection of God’s Word. It is simply following in the steps of those noble Bereans who searched the Scriptures (Old Testament) to see if what Paul was teaching (New Testament) aligned with God’s will (Acts 17:10-11).

Sadly, some have not exercised their minds adequately to discern between what is right and what sounds right (Heb. 5:14). Let us read brotherhood material with appreciation for the work they have done, but let us never quote the gospel according to uninspired men (“thus says brother X”) as authoritative. Only God’s Word is.

Author Unknown

42 Years in the 1st Grade

We live in an age of education. Even retired people go to college. With all the emphasis on education, we need to re-emphasize Bible study. People spend a great portion of life preparing for a profession in this world, which at best will be used for less than a century, and then spend little time preparing to live for eternity.

It would take twenty-four years to complete the first grade if public schools met only as often as Sunday Bible School (if no classes were missed). Suppose one came to class only half of the time—48 years in the first grade.

The same time, if a person spends twenty minutes a day on a given subject for a period of twenty years, he can become an authority in that field. Think what twenty minutes a day over twenty years would mean in Bible knowledge. Are you a spiritual first grader? See you in Bible class!

Author Unknown
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What are the first four books of the New Testament called? Normally, we would say Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Those are the familiar and short titles we use. However, the full titles include the phrase “The gospel according to...” Evidence strongly suggests the titles were added after the inspired writer had completed his writing. The original documents were copied many times and some uninspired scribe probably saw the value in assigning titles. Since the labels are not from God, there is no real issue beyond what to call these important volumes. Some early manuscripts have the full title “The gospel according to...” while others have the abbreviated title “According to...” with the implied subject of the Gospel being understood. The nature of man is to employ short cuts so after a while of writing or saying the full title, it became natural to shorten it. Today, we rarely hear the full title and understand the reference when only the name of the writer is given.

It is important to distinguish what is actually from God and what uninspired men supplied. This point can also be made about study notes and cross references in Bibles. While we may disagree with them, it is important to recognize that these sources are secondary and do not have the same authority as the Bible itself.

We live in an age of education. Even retired people go to college. With all the emphasis on education, we need to re-emphasize Bible study. People spend a great portion of their lives learning new information, but we do not typically spend as much time learning about God. In fact, many people do not even know what the Bible is about. They have heard of it, but they do not understand what it says.

We need to spend more time studying the Bible. This is not just a matter of reading the text, but also of thinking about what it means and how it applies to our lives. We should be able to answer the question, “What is the Bible about?” with confidence. If we cannot answer this question, then we are not truly understanding the Bible.

The Bible is a book about God’s love for us. It is a book about salvation and forgiveness. It is a book about eternal life and the promise of a better world. We need to study the Bible so that we can understand what it says and how it applies to our lives.

In conclusion, we need to spend more time studying the Bible. We need to think about what it says and how it applies to our lives. We need to understand the Bible so that we can live a life that is pleasing to God.
Sick
Please remember in your prayers:
Elaine Maxey, Marge Williams, Ella Hammac, Marilyn Hall, Iris Gallaher, Al Flesher, Alice Williams, Lucille Staples, Ray Dodd, Emma Wooton, Shelby Nall, Thelma Dunavant (Susan McLaughlin’s mother), Wyatt Blancheri (Henry and Paulette Born’s grandson; for more information: www.caringbridge.org — in the site name type Wyatt), Kenny Dawson (Linda Parks’ brother), Nancy Travis (William Weekley’s daughter), and Hazel Merry (Nellie Read’s sister).

Reading/Invitation
July 18, 2007
Bible Reading: Jim Loy
Invitation: Johnny McLaughlin

July 25, 2007
Bible Reading: Horace Myrick
Invitation: Will McLaughlin

Mark These Dates
July 15, 2007—Elders/Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
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Pantry Items Needed
Vegetable, Chicken, Tomato Soups

How an Old Time Preacher Handled Mischief

One of the best known preachers of the first half of last century was J. D. Tant (1861-1941). My Dad knew brother Tant and heard him preach. A few months before Dad died, he was telling me about some of the preachers he had known and some of the things that had transpired in former days. Among these events was the following story of brother Tant that Dad said took place about 1912.

Brother Tant was preaching in a Gospel meeting somewhere in south Texas and was baptizing a goodly number of people as they heard the message of truth so powerfully taught. Some ruffians decided to disrupt the meeting, and offered the “town clown” a side of ham and a bushel of corn if he would go forward at the meeting to be baptized, and come up from the water cursing. The brethren “got wind” of what was going to take place and anxiously warned brother Tant. He assured them that he would take care of it if it did occur and for them not to worry about it.

Sure enough, the suborned man came forward amidst several other respondents. Closing the service under the old “brush arbor,” by lantern-light all made their way to the creek for the baptizings. Brother Tant baptized all the genuine folks first in a very meaningful way, saying something similar to what all Gospel preachers say when baptizing. After all the legitimate baptisms, he then said, “one more man has come tonight and if he’ll now join me here in the creek
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Sympathy
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August 1, 2007
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The Mission of the Church
B. C. Goodpasture

Everything which God has made in creation and redemption has a mission. Nothing walks with aimless feet in the economy of God. The church is a divine institution—it is of divine origin. It, therefore, has a mission.

The building of the church was an expensive undertaking. The Lord could create the heavens and the earth without the shedding of a single drop of blood, but without shedding of His own blood He could not establish the church. “Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it” (Eph. 5:25). He purchased the church with His own blood (Acts 20:28). Even before His death, Jesus sacrificed for the church. “For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich” (2 Cor. 8:9). He was rich in terms of heavenly and eternal values, yet He became poor, “emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross” (Phi. 2:7-8). Surely Christ would not have made such sacrifices for the church unless it was to have a mission in some measure worthy of its cost. What, then, is the mission of the church?

The question can be answered both negatively and positively. It is not the mission of the church to furnish amusement for the world or even for its own members. Innocent amusement in proper proportion has its place in the life of all normal persons, but it is not the business of the church to furnish it. The church would come off a poor
second if it undertook to compete with institutions established for the express purpose of entertaining people. It would make itself ridiculous if it entered into such competition. Again, it is not the responsibility of the church as such to furnish recreation for its members. A certain amount of recreation is necessary to the health and happiness of the individual. All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy, it is said, and rightly said; but it is not the function of the church to furnish the play. The church was not established to feature athletics. Rather, it emphasizes the principle that "bodily exercise is profitable for a little; but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life which now is, and of that which is to come" (1 Tim. 4:8). Sometimes one would conclude, from the emphasis given to recreation, that godliness is profitable for a little, and that bodily exercise is profitable for all things.

For the church to turn aside from its divine work to furnish amusement and recreation is to pervert its mission. It is to degrade its mission. Amusement and recreation should stem from the home rather than the church. The church, like Nehemiah, has a great work to do; and it should not come down on the plains of Ono to amuse and entertain. As the church turns its attention to amusement and recreation, it will be shorn of its power as Samson was when his hair was cut. Only as the church becomes worldly, as it pillows its head on the lap of Delilah, will it want to turn from its wonted course to relatively unimportant matters. Imagine Paul selecting and training a group of brethren to compete in the Isthmian games! Of his work at Corinth, he said: "For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2). What then, is the work of the church?

On the day of Pentecost, the birthday of the church, we find it preaching the Gospel. It is reasonable to expect the church, under the leadership of the apostles, to be engaged in its divinely assigned work. Christ, before His ascension, had laid upon His disciples, His church, the grave and momentous responsibility of preaching the Gospel to every creature in every age of the world (Mark 16:15-16). During the lifetime of the apostles the church was busily engaged in preaching the Gospel to the remote ends of the earth. In his first epistle to Timothy, Paul said, "These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly; but if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how men ought to behave themselves in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (3:14-15). The church is the "pillar and ground of the truth"—not truth in general, but rather truth in particular. The church must support and preach the Gospel always as a part of its divine mission.

Further, the church in Jerusalem "continued stedfastly in the apostles' teaching." In addition to preaching the Gospel to alien sinners, the church taught and built up its own members that they might "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 3:18). The Lord has made ample provisions for the edification of His people, the church. "And he gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ: till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a fullgrown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: that we 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. 4:11-14). It is, therefore, the work of the church to promote the growth and development of its members.

Finally, the church in Jerusalem ministered to the material needs of its worthy poor (Acts 4:32-37; 6:1-6). The Gentile churches sent help to the brethren in Judea (Acts 11:29-30; Rom. 15:25-26). Paul said that he was always ready to help those in need (Gal. 2:10). It is a part of the work of the church to help those who are in need, but the church is under no obligation to help those who will not help themselves. "If any will not work," said Paul, "neither let him eat" (2 The. 3:10).

If the church will discharge its duty in preaching the Gospel, in edifying its members, and in helping the worthy poor, it will not have desire or time merely to amuse and entertain.

Deceased
(Gospel Advocate, May 20, 1948)

Making God Second Best

I’m always prompt to punch the clock;
I never miss a date;
But when I go to worship God,
I’m usually always late.

I wouldn’t think of leaving work,
to visit brother Fred;
I just wait until Sunday comes,
And forsake the church instead.

I spend extra on my family,
For things I can’t afford;
But I don’t remember, ever,
Giving extra to the Lord.

When your life on earth is over,
And they lay you down to rest,
How can He say to you, “Well done,”
If you’ve made Him second best?

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I just wait until Sunday comes,  
And forsake the church instead.

I never miss a day at work,  
Perfection’s what I seek,  
But I miss the worship of my God,  
Once or twice a week.

I talk with people daily,  
Of many subjects rife,  
But I never mention Jesus,  
Nor show Him in my life.

I spend extra on my family,  
For things I can’t afford;  
But I don’t remember, ever,  
Giving extra to the Lord.

When your life on earth is over,  
And they lay you down to rest,  
How can He say to you, “Well done,”  
If you’ve made Him second best?

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The death of Jesus teaches us about the seriousness of sin and the universality of sin. “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). This is not predetermination of sin as many advance today ... It is a choice made by man to disobey God. Because man sins, he will receive the wages of his action. “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 6:23). The fact that man is unable to deal with sin, it took Jesus’ death to provide atonement, so man can be at-one-ment with God. There is no need of any more sacrifices because Jesus offered His blood for man, once for all. “Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption” (Heb. 9:12).

The only way to receive the blessing of atonement is to be in Christ. Only those in Christ Jesus are saved. There is no salvation without being in Christ. How does one get into Christ? What does the Bible teach on the subject? The apostle Paul said, “For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ” (Gal. 3:27). Being baptized into Christ for the remission of sins is the only way to be at-one-ment with God the Father. Yes, baptism saves! It is not a work of man, but God. “Buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead” (Col. 2:12). Jesus died to provide atonement for the sins of mankind, so man can have a new life in unity with God. It is through baptism that man can enjoy this new life. The atonement that God has provided for all mankind is a wonderful blessing. Let us all celebrate God’s forgiveness by humbling ourselves in obedience to His Word!

1415 Lincoln Road; Lewisport, KY 42351

Every Christian Is a Member of the Church of Christ

Thomas B. Warren

There are those today who claim that the Bible teaches that there are Christians who are not members of the church of Christ. But I have no hesitation in affirming that the Bible teaches that every person who is a Christian is a member of the church of Christ. This means, obviously; that I am affirming that the Bible teaches that there are no Christians who are not members of the church of Christ. The church of Christ is the body of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18). The saved are those who have been reconciled unto God, and those who have been reconciled unto God are members of the body (church) of Christ (Eph. 2:13-18). The matter is really just that simple, but in the light of the importance of the matter, let us say a bit more about it.

The Bible teaches that salvation is in Christ (2 Tim. 2:10). To be in Christ is to be in His church (Gal. 3:26-27; 1 Cor. 12:13; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 20:28; 2:38; Eph. 1:7). The Bible teaches that it is impossible for one to “cross the line” into salvation without “crossing the line” into Christ. The Bible also teaches that it is impossible for one to “cross the line” into Christ without “crossing the line” into the church.

The crucial relation of the church to salvation is seen in the statement, “And the Lord added [Greek imperfect “was adding”] to the church daily such as should be saved” (Acts 2:47). The English Revised Version, in an excellent treatment, translates Acts 2:47 in this way: “And the Lord added to them day by day those that were being saved” (Greek present participle).

In short, the Bible teaches that there are no Christians outside of the church for which Jesus died. When one obeys the Gospel, being baptized (as a penitent believer) in the name of Christ (that is, by His authority), the Lord adds him to the church. He never fails to do this (cf. Acts 2:41, 47; 1 Cor. 12:13).

Deceased

“Are You Sure?”

Tom Wacaster

A number of years ago I made arrangements for the funeral of an older member in the congregation where I worked. The problem was, she was not dead, simply away on vacation in California. Read on. Our sister Winnie Myers was visiting relatives in Bakersville, California. I received a telephone call from a Miss Margie Myers (from some small town in California), who had just arrived in town along with the body of her deceased mother, informing me of her mother Winnie’s death, and requesting permission to hold a service at the congregation where I presently worked. Of course I reacted with surprise and asked, “Winnie Myers passed away?” Now the Winnie who died did not have the last name of Myers, but her daughter (who did have the last name of Myers) in her distraught condition merely responded, “Yes.” I expressed my sorrow, hung up the phone and told our secretary that Winnie Myers had passed away in California. “Are you sure?” came the response. Well, all the facts were in! Of course I was sure. So we began making arrangements for the funeral of our sister Myers. It was not until later that afternoon when I stopped at the funeral home that my mistake became apparent. Talk about backtracking! While the consequences were more embarrassing than harmful, it impressed upon me the importance of getting facts straight before acting. By the way, there was no kinship between the two Myers families, and our sister Winnie Myers found the incident somewhat amusing.

801 West 11th Street; Clarksville, TX 76426

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Gospel Meeting

with

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Pantry Items

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Atonement

Paul Vaughn

The forgiveness of sin should be on the mind of every person in the world. Without forgiveness there is no hope, no safety for the soul, no future, no salvation, and no happiness. Because of sin, man is separated from God, for God has nothing to do with wickedness. “Behold, the LORD’s hand is not shortened, That it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, That it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear” (Isa. 59:1-2—NKJV). It is through the act of atonement that mankind can receive the forgiveness of sins.

What is atonement? It is the process of bringing those who are alienated into unity. It is the offering for sin that brings about reconciliation to God. “The act by which God restores a relationship of harmony and unity between Himself and human beings. The word can be broken into three parts which express this great truth in simple but profound terms: ‘at-one-ment.’ Through God’s atoning grace and forgiveness, we are reinstated to a relationship of at-one-ment with God” (Nelson’s Illustrated Bible Dictionary, 1986, Thomas Nelson Publishers). What can be learned about this wonderful word, atonement?

Atonement reveals the love of God for mankind. “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). Man is reconciled to God by the death of Jesus. The perfect justice of God demands satisfaction for sin. It is brought about by the perfect gift of the sinless Lamb of God, Christ Jesus (John 1:29). The death of Jesus shows the full measure of God’s love for
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Man’s basic problem has been and still is materialism. The physical and temporal takes precedence over the spiritual.

This was Eve’s problem. “And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat” (Gen. 3:6). When she saw. What she could see with the eye lead away from God.

Esau failed for the same reason. Something to eat and to satisfy the physical was more important than the birth right (Gen. 25:29-34; Heb. 12:16). The first generation that came out of Egyptian bondage made the same mistake. Fellowship with God was not as important to it as food, ease, and comfort. They did not realize that man does not live by bread alone but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God (Deu. 8:3). The results were tragic. Only two knew where the values of life were found.

The first temptation of Christ was to satisfy the physical at the expense of the spiritual (Mat. 4:4). Satan knew where man was most vulnerable and therefore his first approach was an appeal to Christ to place the physical above the spiritual. I am convinced that this is my prime problem. I belong to the human family and it is folly for me to think that the problem of human-
ity is not my problem. Ignoring it only makes it easier to get caught up in it without being conscious of it. Let me mention some of the fruits and show the prevalence of the problem.

Things

How many Christian lives are centered around things? There is more unrest anxiety and disturbed lives of Christians today than any time I have ever known. But why is this so? Is it because the Gospel no longer provides peace and contentment? Are the promises of peace and contentment empty words? Surely not. “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (John 14:27). When life turns around things, there is always anxious care and a lack of contentment. Jesus points out the face that divided hearts are disturbed and anxious (Mat. 6:24-34). The price one pays for allowing things to dominate life is far greater than any sacrifice that one must make to place the kingdom of God with its spiritual values first (Mat. 6:33).

Convenience and Ease

The tragic results of a materialistic attitude in the church today may be seen in the desire of the Christians for ease and convenience. Many have the idea that they have no responsibility in anything that is not convenient or easy. Hardship is a rejected principle of the Gospel. Many have the idea that if they are confronted with any hardship it is an indication that God’s blessings are being withheld from them.

Indifference

Materialism is manifest in the prevalence of indifference in the church. Many could care less if error, denominationalism, and liberalism consume the church. Materialistic Christians do not want to be bothered. Big buildings are to be paid for so the truth must be softened so it looses its cutting edge.

Pleasure

Materialism is seen in the pleasure syndrome of our day. Christians spend more on pleasure than they give to the Lord. Churches are being turned into recreational centers because of the prominence of pleasure today. Can anyone conceive of Paul urging the church at Antioch or Philippi to build a race track or a wrestling arena for its members (1 Cor. 9:24; Heb. 12:1)? It would have been as appropriate for Paul to have told these churches to build their recreational places as it is for churches today to have their family life centers. How tragic to build playhouses while the world dies without the Gospel of Christ.

Commercializing Religion

Religious people of Christ’s day turned the temple into a house of merchandise. He cleansed it early in His ministry (John 2:13-16). But the power of materialism does not die easily. In less than three years they were back in business (Mat. 21:12-13). While the blessings of God are conditional and are not without cost they are not for sale. When Jesus sent the twelve out on the limited commission, He said “freely ye have received, freely give” (Mat. 10:8). While this was a reference to miracles of confirmation the principle is true in every realm (Isa. 55:1). We must be careful lest we turn the church into a den of thieves. The craving of the body for the things to satisfy it can push aside the prominence, the need and the values that really count in life unless one is continually aware of what the problem is.

Author Unknown

Via The Word of Life, Jan 1982

Heaven’s Uncertainty

A sick man turned to his doctor, as he was preparing to leave the examination room and said, “Doctor, I am afraid to die. Tell me what lies on the other side.”

Very quietly, the doctor said, “I don’t know.”

“You don’t know? You, a Christian man, do not know what is on the other side?”

The doctor was holding the handle of the door; on the other side of which came a sound of scratching and whining, and as he opened the door, a dog sprang into the room and leaped on him with an eager show of gladness.

Turning to the patient, the doctor said, “Did you notice my dog? He’s never been in this room before. He didn’t know what was inside. He knew nothing, except that his master was here, and when the door opened, he sprang in without fear. I know little of what is on the other side. I know my Master Jesus Christ is there, and that is enough.”

The Bible does give us some figurative descriptions to help us long for heaven (e.g. Rev. 21:10ff), but we really cannot know fully what heaven will be like. The Father, the Son, and the Spirit being there is more than enough reason for us wanting to be in heaven for eternity. 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).

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Reading/Invitation
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August 22, 2007
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Pantry Items Needed
Vegetable, Chicken, Tomato Soups

A Great Paradox
Dub McClish

I once read that a bird can go nine days without food, a dog ten days, a turtle five hundred days, a snake eight hundred days, a fish one thousand days, some insects twelve thousand days (almost thirty-three years). For most human beings, the limit is about fourteen days. However, one may go without food, eventually, all of God’s creatures must have food or they will perish. Each of us has probably been hungry enough at some time that we could think of nothing else but eating. Although a person may be honest to the core, if one becomes hungry enough, he will steal his food if he cannot get it otherwise. Hunger is one of the most compelling instincts in man and beast.

One might think that the soul that is shrieking and dying from spiritual starvation would experience a yearning for nourishment, but here is a great paradox: The soul that is stunted for lack of the necessary nourishment of the “solid food” of the Word of God (Heb. 5:14) is least likely to be hungering and thirsting after righteousness (Mat. 5:6). The Christian who has remained a spiritual infant over the years has the least inclination toward maintaining a hearty diet of spiritual delicacies—which is why he remains a spiritual infant. Those who need them the most could hardly care less whether the church even continues its program of Bible classes on Sundays and Wednesdays. They count a four-day Gospel meeting or a Bible lectureship a great “weariness” (Mal. 1:13) and have no problem virtually ignoring such opportunities for spiritual growth and enrichment.
Such saints seem to see themselves as having no need of such activities, when in reality they are most in need of them. Some even seem to have the attitude that they are so spiritually mature they could not even profit from continued studies in the Word of God. One would certainly be surprised to learn that these folk were feeding themselves on God’s Word daily in their homes. Such brethren may be identified with various life forms. Some, like the turtle, may have taken little or no spiritual nourishment for five hundred days. Others may be like the snake, the fish, or even the insect. May we never miss our Bible class and worship periods on Sunday morning or Wednesday night by choice. May we faithfully read and study our Bibles on a daily basis.

The world, our nation, and the church are all suffering some grievous crises at present, many of which relate directly to self-inflicted spiritual starvation and malnutrition. God’s people have a dual responsibility: (1) To feed on God’s Word so that it controls our very thoughts (2 Cor. 10:5), and (2) with the knowledge we gain, to spread God’s Word to as many others as we can (Mark 16:15-16).

908 Imperial Drive; Denton, TX 76201

Christian

Curtis L. E. Graves

“Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf” (1 Pet. 4:16). Followers of Christ are to glorify God as Christians. The name “Christian” was divinely given. “Even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off” (Isa. 56:5). “And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD shall name” (Isa. 62:2).

“Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem: And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name” (Acts 9:13-14). Now notice what the Lord replied; “But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel” (Acts 9:15). Those are the same three classes found in Isaiah 62:2. Paul was the one chosen to bear the name of the Lord before these classes. Later, through the preaching of Paul, we find this new name given by the Lord. “And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch” (Acts 11:25-26). In view of this, would the Lord be pleased if those who claim to serve Him were called by the name of a man, for example, Lutheran? Would He have the world know His disciples by some man-made name such as Mormon, Methodist, Pentecostal? Would God be glorified by the blood-bought believers wearing the name Baptist or Presbyterian?

In the name Christian, those in Christ glorify God. One may as well seek a “man-made” Savior and a “man-made” way to Heaven as to seek to wear a “man-made” name and be pleasing to God. What name do you wear religiously? Is it a name you can find in your New Testament being worn by those who obeyed the Lord? If not, can you glorify God in it? Why not become simply a Christian? That is the name which cannot be wrong!

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Visitation Groups 1 & 3 will provide the meal—Monday and Wednesday; Visitation Groups 2 & 4 will provide the meal—Tuesday and Thursday.

Visitors are invited to every meal.
Come and enjoy Christian fellowship and Gospel preaching.
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August 15, 2007
Bible Reading: Ray Dodd
Invitation: Carl Ayliffe
August 22, 2007
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September 9, 2007—Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
September 16, 2007—Elders/Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
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August 29, 2007
Bible Reading: Andrew Hatcher
Invitation: Henry Born

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August 19, 2007–Attendance Drive and Dinner on the Grounds.
August 29, 2007–Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.
September 9, 2007–Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
September 16, 2007–Elders/Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.

Gospel Meeting
On Sunday, August 19, we will not have a 7:30 pm service. Instead of the evening service we will have an afternoon service at 1:00 pm, after the dinner on the grounds.

The Church Ain’t Doing Nothing
Raymond Elliott

How often have we heard that statement from a brother in Christ? And it is to be admitted that we often fail in fulfilling the many obligations that God has given us. But there are some pertinent observations that need to be made relative to this broad statement.

First of all, we could say that the brother who makes such an accusation has taken to himself some of the attributes that are considered belonging only to God. In Psalms 139 we learn that God is omnipresent and omniscient. Thus, for a brother to be absolutely correct in saying that “The church ain’t doing nothing” (a double negative which means that the church is doing something) he would have to have all the knowledge of what all the brethren may or may not be doing. Otherwise, where he could not be and what he could not know, some brethren could be doing some work for the Lord. It is completely impossible for a mortal man to have a complete knowledge of every good deed done by Christians. One may not know of a marriage saved because an elder or a preacher counseled with a husband and wife in private. A letter of encouragement written to a friend. A family providing transportation to worship for an elderly person. A sister caring for a loved one who is an invalid. Members visiting those who are shut ins and/or sick. A young person carrying a gift to an aged Christian. Another young person reading the Bible for one whose eye sight is dimmed. A concerned Christian providing food for someone’s parents who are destitute, needy, and poor. A member of the church contributing money for the care of orphans. A mother teaching her daughter to become a good homemaker. A Christian en-
couraging a brother who has become weak in the faith. A father instructing his son in the way of the Lord. Parents providing opportunities for a Christian education for their children, and countless other acts of love and loyalty performed by faithful brothers and sisters in Christ.

Second, the brother who says that the church is not doing anything may, in fact, be projecting his own lack of involvement in the local congregation. William Thackery, an English novelist, wrote, “The world is a looking glass and gives back to every man the reflection of his own.” But more importantly than what this uninspired man wrote, an inspired man named James wrote in James 1:23 about the “man beholding his natural face in a glass [mirror].” This is so often true with the critic who beholds the church as being complacent and inactive. The truth of the matter is that the brother who is complaining seldom responds to the various work programs and periods of fellowship. On the other hand, inquire of the brother and or sister who participates in the suggested areas of service and you will discover a more positive attitude. Jesus condemns the rash judgment of the church by such a hypocritical brother (Mat. 7:1-5). The writer of the book of Hebrews informs us that “God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister” (Heb. 6:10).

Fourth, we need to cease from comparing one congregation with another congregation. It is common to assume that one local church is very active when visited one time. But the truth is, that a small, struggling congregation can often be more positive in purpose and attitude than larger congregations in mission work. One congregation should not be condemned because of another congregation’s achievement. Each congregation has a distinct personality of its own and varied opportunities to serve. Zeal is contagious. When we work it inspires others to do the same. When we are busy we will have the feeling that the church is active.
couraging a brother who has become weak in the faith. A father instructing his son in the way of the Lord. Parents providing opportunities for a Christian education for their children in the home and in Bible class. Teenagers standing firm on their convictions not to engage in acts of worldliness. Prayers to God both private and public for the spiritual welfare of loved ones, friends, and brethren. Meditation on the grace of God and His Word. Faithful attendance by brethren to the various periods of Bible study and worship. The teaching of the Bible to seekers of truth in the privacy of their homes, and countless other acts of love and loyalty performed by faithful brothers and sisters in Christ.

Second, the brother who says that the church is not doing anything may, in fact, be projecting his own lack of involvement in the local congregation. William Thackery, an English novelist, wrote, “The world is a looking glass and gives back to every man the reflection of his own.” But more importantly than what this uninspired man wrote, an inspired man named James wrote in James 1:23 about the “man beholding his natural face in a glass [mirror].” This is so often true with the critic who beholds the church as being complacent and inactive. The truth of the matter is that the brother who is complaining seldom responds to the various work programs and periods of fellowship. On the other hand, inquire of the brother and or sister who participates in the suggested areas of service and you will discover a more positive attitude. Jesus condemns the rash judgment of the church by such a hypocritical brother (Mat. 7:1-5).

Third, what the brother usually means when he says, “The church ain’t doing nothing” is that the church collectively, in a highly organized manner is not doing anything. Most of our larger congregations are geared to organized machinery. Organized work programs can be productive and expedient in the local congregation. However, organization for organizations’ sake is worthless. That is not to say that some amount of organization should not be had in reference to general visitation and personal evangelism. What we must understand is that each Christian is a living stone and a priest in the house or family of God (1 Pet. 2:5). This means that a member does not have to be told when and what to do for the Lord. Furthermore, when individual Christians are faithful and active, so is the church collectively. The Christian life is practical in every respect and consists of living and doing for others (Mat. 25:31-46). Since the Christian is not to shine his light, but rather radiate a glow by one’s life of service many deeds will go unheeded by the majority of people (Mat. 5:13-16). Jesus also taught that when a disciple does a charitable deed in secret that God will bless him or her (Mat. 6:4). The writer of the book of Hebrews informs us that “God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister” (Heb. 6:10).

Fourth, we need to cease from comparing one congregation with another congregation. It is common to assume that one local church is very active when visited one time. It is wiser, than larger congregations in mission work. One congregation should not be condemned because of another congregation’s achievement. Each congregation has a distinct personality of its own and varied opportunities to serve (Gal. 6:10). Zeal is contagious. When we work it inspires others to do the same. When we are busy we will have the feeling that the church is active.

Copied
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Marge Williams, Ella Hammac, Marilyn Hall, Iris Gallaher, Al Flesher, Alice Williams, Lucille Staples, Ray Dodd, William Weekley, Emma Wooton, Wyatt Blancheri (Henry and Paulette Born’s grandson; for more information: www.caringbridge.org — in the site name type Wyatt), Nancy Travis (William Weekley’s daughter), and Hazel Merry (Nellie Read’s sister).

Reading/Invitation
August 22, 2007
Gospel Meeting with Harrell Davidson
August 29, 2007
Bible Reading: Andrew Hatcher  
Invitation: Henry Born

Mark These Dates
August 19, 2007—Attendance Drive and Dinner on the Grounds.
August 29, 2007—Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.
September 9, 2007—Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
September 16, 2007—Elders/Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.

Gospel Meeting
On Sunday, August 19, we will not have a 7:30 pm service. Instead of the evening service we will have an afternoon service at 1:00 pm, after the dinner on the grounds.

The Church Ain’t Doing Nothing
Raymond Elliott
How often have we heard that statement from a brother in Christ? And it is to be admitted that we often fail in fulfilling the many obligations that God has given us. But there are some pertinent observations that need to be made relative to this broad statement.

First of all, we could say that the brother who makes such an accusation has taken to himself some of the attributes that are considered belonging only to God. In Psalms 139 we learn that God is omnipresent and omniscient. Thus, for a brother to be absolutely correct in saying that “The church ain’t doing nothing” (a double negative which means that the church is doing something) he would have to have all the knowledge of what all the brethren may or may not be doing. Otherwise, where he could not be and what he could not know, some brethren could be doing some work for the Lord. It is completely impossible for a mortal man to have a complete knowledge of every good deed done by Christians. One may not know of a marriage saved because an elder or a preacher counseled with a husband and wife in private. A letter of encouragement written to a friend. A family providing transportation to worship for an elderly person. A sister caring for a loved one who is an invalid. Members visiting those who are shut ins and/or sick. A young person carrying a gift to an aged Christian. Another young person reading the Bible for one whose eye sight is dimmed. A concerned Christian providing food for someone’s parents who are destitute, needy, and poor. A member of the church contributing money for the care of orphans. A mother teaching her daughter to become a good homemaker. A Christian en-
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Reading/Invitation
August 29, 2007
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Invitation: Henry Born
September 5, 2007
Bible Reading: Daniel Hatcher
Invitation: Paul Brantley

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October 14, 2007—Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.

Address Change
Harold Cozad’s new address is: 5140 Cocoa Drive; Pensacola, FL 32526. He doesn’t have a telephone yet. Please update your directory.

Who Should Teach Our Children?
Danny L. Box

We as Christians have a grave responsibility to bring our children up “in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” Most of us recognize this responsibility, and at home do our best to fulfill God’s command. But what about at our local congregations? Are the people we have as Bible School teachers doing their best to teach our children? Do they want to teach, or were they coerced into it? Do they have as their primary concern our children’s spiritual growth, or are they just trying to kill time until the worship service starts? Is the teacher actually qualified to teach, not with a Ph.D. from higher education, but as a faithful child of God? As we think about our children and their formative years, we need to ask ourselves, Who Should Teach Our Children, and once we have asked the question we need to seek an answer. Let us look at Who Should be Teaching Our Children.

The teacher should be one that is faithful in attendance. The Lord gives us the command to not forsake the assembly (Heb. 10:25). How can one be an effective teacher when they only attend one, and at most, two services a week? Our children are looking to the teacher, and when they see them “forsaking the assembly,” they get the idea that it is okay to come to church only when you want to. Also, how can someone teach effectively about attending the services when they themselves do not bother to attend the greater portion of the services? Paul told us that faithful brethren were to teach others (2 Tim. 2:2), not someone that has been given a class, trying to get them to be faithful!
The teacher should be one that diligently studies their Bible. All of us are to be diligent students of God's Word (2 Tim. 2:15), but the teacher has an even greater responsibility. As a teacher you are imparting God’s Word to others. If you teach error, you will be held accountable for that error. If over the years someone continues in that error and loses their soul, God will not hold you guiltless. But if we take God’s Word and rightly divide it, then what we teach will be pleasing to the Lord, and will strengthen and encourage our young people and may save their soul.

The teacher should set a good example. Paul told the young man Timothy to be an example of the believers “in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity” (1 Tim. 4:12). This entreaty applies to all of us today, but I believe that it applies even more so to those who stand before us and teach from God’s Word. Teachers must be an example in their speech, in the way they live, in their love, in their attitude, in their faith, and in their clean and pure life. Anyone following a worldly lifestyle, with ways and habits fashioned after the world, should not be teaching our children!

The teacher should love the souls of children. A lot of teachers never give any thought to the ground work that they are laying. Children begin to accumulate information in their classes that form the basis of their faith. If a teacher loves the souls of children, they will teach them about Jesus, and tell them about the Gospel, about the Lord’s church, and what they must do to be saved, and about all the blessings of living a Christian life. But, if they have little interest in the souls of children, they will continue to baby-sit, and tell about the flood, and the ark, and stories such as this, without mentioning the Savior.

Finally, the teacher must love the Lord. If we have teachers that love the Lord with all their heart, soul, and mind (Mat. 22:37), then all of these other things will fall into place. If the teacher loves the Lord, they will want the children in their class to know about Him. They will make Him real in their eyes, just like He is to them. They will be like the prophets of old and not be able to contain themselves when talking about the precious Savior.

What really counts? If you want to enjoy life, then check:

Your Attitude:
“The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity; but a wounded spirit who can bear?” (Pro. 18:14). Your spirit or attitude can bless you or break you.

Use of your time:
“See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil” (Eph. 5:15-16).

Your belief:
“Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man” (Ecc. 12:13). Jesus said, “Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Mat. 6:33).

Center in on the things that really count. If these are right, then you can overcome any other obstacles that may be in your way.

Author Unknown

Thought on Business Meetings and Elderships

Bill Jackson

In any situation involving men laboring together, some decisions are going to have to be made and some course of action must be decided upon by someone if any good product is obtained. In the congregations of God, the thousand-and-one details wherein the work of the congregations goes forward must be decided upon by someone. We shudder to think of a business meeting called, and a vote by democratic processes being used to determine every single item of business from establishing the times for the services to purchasing erasers for the classrooms! Many of us remember an earlier time when many places had no elders, and every move the congregation made had to go through the business-meeting process. In so many instances, the work of the congregation was hardly expedited by this method! And there is yet another factor in this: Sin and Satan being as they are, in the business-meeting endeavor there is encouragement built in for the most non-spiritual and inactive man to have one of the strongest voices in the work of the church! It is often the case of men not in the leadership then seizing the leadership of the church and thus a congregation can find itself without elders but with a rule by either a non-spiritual man or a non-spiritual clique of the same type men. Thankfully, God has provided for us the better and more spiritual way of conducting the business of the kingdom.

“For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee” (Tit. 1:5).

Author Unknown

Deceased
The teacher should be one that diligently studies their Bible. All of us are to be diligent students of God’s Word (2 Tim. 2:15), but the teacher has an even greater responsibility. As a teacher you are imparting God’s Word to others. If you teach error, you will be held accountable for that error. If over the years someone continues in that error and loses their soul, God will not hold you guiltless. But if we take God’s Word and rightly divide it, then what we teach will be pleasing to the Lord, and will strengthen and encourage our young people and may save their soul.

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Center in on the things that really count. If these are right, then you can overcome any other obstacles that may be in your way.

Author Unknown

Gospel Meeting on the Internet
Lessons from our recent Gospel meeting with Harrell Davidson can be viewed on the Internet at:
http://bellviewcoc.com/meeting.php/

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Bill Jackson

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Invitation: Henry Born
September 5, 2007
Bible Reading: Daniel Hatcher
Invitation: Paul Brantley

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room 7.
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Danny L. Box

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trying to get them to be faithful!

MEETING TIMES
SUNDAY:
9:00 A.M. BIBLE CLASSES
10:00 A.M., 6:00 P.M. WORSHIP
WEDNESDAY: 7:00 P.M.
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Marge Williams, Ella Hammac, Marilyn Hall, Iris Gallaher, Al Flesher, Alice Williams, Lucille Staples, William Weekley, Malcolm and Emma Wooton, Wyatt Blancheri (Henry and Paulette Born’s grandson; for more information: www.caringbridge.org — in the site name type Wyatt), and Nancy Travis (William Weekley’s daughter).

Restored
Dick Lambert was restored to Christ on August 26. Please keep Dick in your prayers and offer him encouragement.

Reading/Invitation
September 5, 2007
Bible Reading: Daniel Hatcher
Invitation: Paul Brantley
September 12, 2007
Bible Reading: Jim Loy
Invitation: Bill Busch

Ladies’ Bible Class
The Ladies’ Bible Class will start on September 9 at 5:00 pm, in the zone room. Make plans now to attend.

Mark These Dates
September 9, 2007—Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
September 16, 2007—Elders/Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
September 26, 2007—Sermons Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.

On a Hill Far Away
Tom Wacaster
What is it about the cross of Christ that draws men to Jesus? Surely it is not the fact that it was some instrument of death, for other means of execution remain to this day as symbols of only infamy and disgrace. Who has ever written a song about the electric chair, or what poet has ever glorified the gas chamber or the hangman’s noose? But let men erect a cross in their yard, or display it upon a billboard, and immediately the attention of those who see that cross is drawn to one figure in history Who made that cruel instrument famous. Let someone display an electric chair in the front of their yard and the onlooker might wonder why such a display. But his attention would not be drawn to any particular figure in history. But let a man put a cross in his yard and immediately those who pass by think of Christ and Christianity.

As I write these lines, the ACLU is seeking to remove a war memorial in the state of California for no other reason than the fact that it is in the shape of a cross. From the fields of Arlington Memorial Cemetery in Washington, D.C., to the beaches of Normandy, and around the world, graveyards have been graced with small crosses at the head of each tomb declaring the hope that men have in a resurrection—a resurrection found only in Christ, and made possible because of His death upon the cross.

Oh yes, “On a hill far away, Stood and old rugged cross, The emblem of suffering and shame...” For 2,000 years the cross of Christ has
cast its beacon of hope across the tumultuous seas of human misery and sin, and the message of the Gospel is so closely associated with that cross that to speak of the one is to bring to mind the other. It has been nine centuries since Abbot Rupert wrote the following tribute to the cross of Christ:

We venerate the cross as a safeguard of faith, as the strengthening of hope and the throne of love. It is the sign of mercy, the proof of forgiveness, the vehicle of grace and the banner of peace. We venerate the cross, because it has broken down our pride, shattered our envy, redeemed our sin and atoned for our punishment. The cross of Christ is the door to heaven, the key to paradise, the downfall of the devil, the uplifting of mankind, the consolation of our imprisonment, the prize for our freedom. The cross was the hope of the patriarchs, the promise of the prophets, the triumph of kings and the ministry of priests. Tyrants are convicted by the cross and the mighty ones defeated, it lifts up the miserable and honors the poor. The cross is the end of darkness, the spreading of light, the flight of death, the ship of life and the kingdom of salvation.

(http://www.rc.net/wcc/throne1.htm)

Dear friend, that cross, and all that it stands for demands some kind of response. Men can ignore it, ridicule it, mock it, and seek to eliminate its presence, but in so doing they stumble over the One Who Himself said, “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me” (John 12:32). It has been more than twenty years since Lois Cheney wrote the following lines:

I once saw a cross so big It was as high as the church In front of which it stood. It was made of railroad steel And it was very dramatic, And I was moved And I was impressed As I walked by and away from it. I once saw a cross so lovely, It was a work of art, Carved and polished It was made to look Both strong and delicate, And I was moved And I was impressed As I walked by and away from it. There once was a cross Not so high; not so lovely It was not a work of art. Rough, full of splinters Uneven, unsymmetrical Its simple mystery Unfathomable. And I cannot walk by it And I cannot walk away from it. 801 West 11th St; Clarksville, TX 76426

Your Son for a Quarter

Several years ago, a new preacher moved to Houston, Texas. Some weeks after he arrived, he had occasion to ride the bus from his home to the downtown area. When he sat down, he discovered that the driver had accidentally given him a quarter too much change. As he considered what to do, he thought to himself, “You’d better give the quarter back. It would be wrong to keep it.” Then he thought, “Oh, forget it, it’s only a quarter. Who would worry about this little amount. Anyway, the bus company gets too much fare; they will never miss it. Accept it as a ‘gift from God’ and keep quiet.”

When his stop came, he paused momentarily at the door, then he handed the quarter to the driver and said, “Here, you gave me too much change.” The driver with a smile replied, “Aren’t you the new preacher in town? I have been thinking lately about going to worship somewhere. I just wanted to see what you would do if I gave you too much change. I’ll see you at church on Sunday.”

When the preacher stepped off the bus, he literally grabbed the nearest light pole, held on, and said, “Oh, God, I almost sold your Son for a quarter.” Our lives are light and farther in between.

What should we not do about them? Do not become discouraged. Do not blame God. Do not do anything foolish. If it is clinical depression, you need not even blame yourself. Do not ignore the feelings, because they will most probably not go away by themselves.

If you know someone who is going through dark days, try to help them. But know this: they may not, at the time, appreciate your efforts. The pain they are feeling is such as to distort their entire thought process and while you have only good intentions they may not see it that way. Do not grow impatient with them. Pray for them and with them. Listen to them. Urge them, if need be, to seek help. Be there for them and love them.

As Christians, we look for a time free from dark days—indeed: free from all darkness. Until then, we seek the light. May God bless you as you study and obey His Word.

171 Radford Circle; Dothan, AL 36301

Dark Days

Tim Smith

Do you ever have dark days? Not cloudy days, or rainy days, or stormy days—dark days? You are not alone; many people have such days, and they are hard. A feeling in the pit of the stomach, a general weariness, a sadness, a feeling of foreboding, basic unrest—dark days. Why do such days come our way? Who knows…. Sometimes some of us get them and when we do we find that there is nothing that we can do but struggle through them. The feelings are real—whether justified or not, real no less. The pain is real. We pray, we think, we try to forget them, we hope they will go away never to return—but still, they are there. They are real.

What should we do about them? Understand them—if we can. Seek the source—the root-cause. If it is something that can be resolved, resolve it. Often, however, we find that either we cannot find the cause or that there is no solution to the cause we find. What? Do the best you can. Talk to someone close to you who may be able to help you. You may need professional help—if you do, seek it out and profit from it. Do not hesitate. Do not be ashamed. Talk to your elders or preacher. The medical profession calls it depression and they have some treatments that can help some people. If you need that help, get it. It just might be that you can escape your dark days, or at the least that the day days will be lighter and fewer and farther in between.

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If you know someone who is going through dark days, try to help them. But know this: they may not, at the time, appreciate your efforts. The pain they are feeling is such as to distort their entire thought process and while you have only good intentions they may not see it that way. Do not grow impatient with them. Pray for them and with them. Listen to them. Urge them, if need be, to seek help. Be there for them and love them.

As Christians, we look for a time free from dark days—indeed: free from all darkness. Until then, we seek the light. May God bless you as you study and obey His Word.

171 Radford Circle; Dothan, AL 36301

Your Son for a Quarter

Several years ago, a new preacher moved to Houston, Texas. Some weeks after he arrived, he had occasion to ride the bus from his home to the downtown area. When he sat down, he discovered that the driver had accidentally given him a quarter too much change. As he considered what to do, he thought to himself, “You’d better give the quarter back. It would be wrong to keep it.” Then he thought, “Oh, forget it, it’s only a quarter. Who would worry about this little amount. Anyway, the bus company gets too much fare; they will never miss it. Accept it as a ‘gift from God’ and keep quiet.”

When his stop came, he paused momentarily at the door, then he handed the quarter to the driver and said, “Here, you gave me too much change.” The driver with a smile replied, “Aren’t you the new preacher in town? I have been thinking lately about going to worship somewhere. I just wanted to see what you would do if I gave you too much change. I’ll see you at church on Sunday.”

When the preacher stepped off the bus, he literally grabbed the nearest light pole, held on, and said, “Oh, God, I almost sold your Son for a quarter.” Our lives are the only Bible some people will ever read. This is a really, almost scary example of how much people watch us as Christians and will put us to the test! Always be on guard and remember (as I try to remember) that you carry the name of Christ on your shoulders when you are a “Christian.”

Author Unknown
cast its beacon of hope across the tumultuous seas of human misery and sin, and the message of the Gospel is so closely associated with that cross that to speak of the one is to bring to mind the other. It has been nine centuries since Abbot Rupert wrote the following tribute to the cross of Christ:

We venerate the cross as a safeguard of faith, as the strengthening of hope and the throne of love. It is the sign of mercy, the proof of forgiveness, the vehicle of grace and the banner of peace. We venerate the cross, because it has broken down our pride, shattered our envy, redeemed our sin and atoned for our punishment. The cross of Christ is the door to heaven, the key to paradise, the downfall of the devil, the uplifting of mankind, the consolation of our imprisonment, the prize for our freedom. The cross was the hope of the patriarchs, the promise of the prophets, the triumph of kings and the ministry of priests. Tyrants are convicted by the cross and the mighty ones defeated, it lifts up the miserable and honors the poor. The cross is the end of darkness, the spreading of light, the flight of death, the ship of life and the kingdom of salvation. (http://www.rc.net/wcc/throne1.htm)

Dear friend, that cross, and all that it stands for demands some kind of response. Men can ignore it, ridicule it, mock it, and seek to eliminate its presence, but in so doing they stumble over the One Who Himself said, “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me” (John 12:32). It has been more than twenty years since Lois Cheney wrote the following lines:

I once saw a cross so big
It was as high as the church
In front of which it stood.
It was made of railroad steel
And it was very dramatic,
And I was moved
And I was impressed
As I walked by and away from it.
I once saw a cross so lovely,
It was a work of art,
Carved and polished
It was made to look
Both strong and delicate,
And I was moved
And I was impressed
As I walked by and away from it.
There once was a cross
Not so high; not so lovely
It was not a work of art.
Rough, full of splinters
Uneven, unsymmetrical
Its simple mystery
Unfathomable.
And I cannot walk by it
And I cannot walk away from it.
801 West 11th St; Clarksville, TX 76426

Dark Days
Tim Smith

Do you ever have dark days? Not cloudy days, or rainy days, or stormy days—dark days? You are not alone; many people have such days, and they are hard. A feeling in the pit of the stomach, a general weariness, a sadness, a feeling of foreboding, basic unrest—dark days. Why do such days come our way? Who knows... Sometimes some of us get them and when we do we find that there is nothing that we can do but struggle through them. The feelings are real—whether justified or not, real no less. The pain is real. We pray, we think, we try to forget them, we hope they will go away never to return—but still, they are there. They are real.

What should we do about them? Understand them—if we can. Seek the source—the root-cause. If it is something that can be resolved, resolve it. Often, however, we find that either we cannot find the cause or that there is no solution to the cause we find. What do the best you can. Talk to someone close to you who may be able to help you. You may need professional help—if you do, seek it out and profit from it. Do not hesitate. Do not be ashamed. Talk to your elders or preacher. The medical profession calls it depression and they have some treatments that can help some people. If you need that help, get it. It just might be that you can escape your dark days, or at least that the day days will be lighter and fewer and farther in between.

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Author Unknown
Sick
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Marge Williams, Ella Hammac, Marilyn Hall, Iris Gallagher, Al Flesher, Alice Williams, Lucille Staples, William Weekley, Malcolm and Emma Wooton, Wyatt Blancheri (Henry and Paulette Born’s grandson; for more information: www.caringbridge.org — in the site name type Wyatt), and Nancy Travis (William Weekley’s daughter).

Restored
Dick Lambert was restored to Christ on August 26. Please keep Dick in your prayers and offer him encouragement.

Reading/Invitation
September 5, 2007
Bible Reading: Daniel Hatcher
Invitation: Paul Brantley
September 12, 2007
Bible Reading: Jim Loy
Invitation: Bill Busch

Ladies’ Bible Class
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On a Hill Far Away
Tom Wacaster
What is it about the cross of Christ that draws men to Jesus? Surely it is not the fact that it was some instrument of death, for other means of execution remain to this day as symbols of only infamy and disgrace. Who has ever written a song about the electric chair, or what poet has ever glorified the gas chamber or the hangman’s noose? But let men erect a cross in their yard, or display it upon a billboard, and immediately the attention of those who see that cross is drawn to one figure in history Who made that cruel instrument famous. Let someone display an electric chair in the front of their yard and the onlooker might wonder why such a display. But his attention would not be drawn to any particular figure in history. But let a man put a cross in his yard and immediately those who pass by think of Christ and Christianity.

As I write these lines, the ACLU is seeking to remove a war memorial in the state of California for no other reason than the fact that it is in the shape of a cross. From the fields of Arlington Memorial Cemetery in Washington, D.C., to the beaches of Normandy, and around the world, graveyards have been graced with small crosses at the head of each tomb declaring the hope that men have in a resurrection—a resurrection found only in Christ, and made possible because of His death upon the cross.

Oh yes, “On a hill far away, Stood and old rugged cross, The emblem of suffering and shame...” For 2,000 years the cross of Christ has
Sick

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It Will Make a Difference

Marvin L. Weir

The attitude that a child of God pos-
sesses is important. Jesus admonished
those who would worship Him accept-
ably to “worship in spirit and truth”
(John 4:24). The apostle Paul urged the
Philippian brethren, “Have this mind
in you, which was also in Christ Jesus”
(Phi. 2:5). The classic sermon regard-
ing actions and attitudes is found in the
sermon on the Mount (Mat. 5-7). Our
attitude will make a difference in this
world and the world to come. Let us
ask some questions that will get to the
heart of the matter.

First, what is your attitude toward
the Word of God? Many are they who
say they believe God’s Word, but of
what value is belief only? Belief must
be accompanied by sufficient faith to
put the belief into action. Paul makes
it clear that the gospel will save one un-
less he believes in vain (1 Cor. 15:2).
James declares:

But be ye doers of the word, and not
hearers only, deluding your own selves.
For if any one is a hearer of the word
and not a doer, he is like unto a man
beholding his natural face in a mirror:
for he beholdeth himself, and goeth
away, and straightway forgetteth what
manner of man he was. But he that
looketh into the perfect law, the
law
of
liberty
and
so
continueth, being not a
hearer that forgetteth but a doer that
worketh, this man shall be blessed in
his doing (Jam. 1:22-25).

One really does not believe who will not
act upon what God has told him to do
to be saved.

A great number of people give lip
service to the fact that God’s Word is
important. How important is the Word of God to one that seldom attends Bible class and does not support Gospel Meetings or family Bible schools? If God’s Word is so very important, how do some get enough of it so quickly? It simply does not make good sense for a member of the body of Christ to support the services of the church as little as possible! The Master told the lawyer, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind” (Mat. 22:37). The kingdom or church is to come first if we really want to go to Heaven. How dedicated are you and I to the cause of Christ? At the Day of Judgment it will indeed make a difference!

Second, how grateful are you for what God has done on your behalf so that your soul might be saved? God so loved mankind that He “gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life” (John 3:16). Divine love continues to be manifested as “while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8). While on this earth and as a member of the Lord’s kingdom, will you and I be grateful enough to faithfully serve God? Paul pleaded with the brethren at Rome in saying, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service. And be not fashioned according to this world: but ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, and ye may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God” (Rom. 12:1-2). Luke emphasizes our service and obedience to God in a way that no one can misunderstand: “Even so ye also, when ye shall have done all the things that are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which it was our duty to do” (Luke 17:10). If you and I are truly grateful for divine blessings we will be delighted to faithfully serve and worship God at every opportunity. There is coming a day in which it will make a difference.

Third, is there a price for which you will sell your soul? Jesus asked pointed questions that will haunt many people throughout eternity. He inquired: “For what shall a man be profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and forfeit his life? or what shall a man give in exchange for his life?” (Mat. 16:26). It would be well for all to remember the high price Esau paid for a mess of potage (bowl of soup) (Gen. 25:29-34)! He willingly sold his birthright and later despised himself for selling such a rich heritage. If you and I sell our soul for the love of the world or whatever pleasures Satan dangles before us, we will also despise ourselves throughout eternity. There is a great day coming in which the destiny of our soul will matter. Once we cross to the other side it will make a difference. May we purpose as members of the body of Christ to be the “salt of the earth” and “light of the world” (Mat. 5:13-14). It will matter one day whether or not we choose to glorify the Heavenly Father (Mat. 5:16). Our hearts must be inclined to act differently from those consumed with worldly matters. Thus, Paul records: 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. For ye died, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall be manifested, then shall ye also with him be manifested in glory (Col. 3:1-4).

Our attitudes and actions toward God’s commands will one day make a difference!

Remember the Duck

There was a little boy visiting his grandparents on their farm. He was given a slingshot to play with out in the woods. He practiced in the woods, but he could never hit the target. Getting discouraged, he headed back inside for dinner. As he was walking back, he saw his grandmother’s pet duck. It just so happened that he hit the duck square in the head and killed it. He was shocked and grieved. In a panic, he hid the dead duck in the woodpile only to see his sister watching. Sally had seen it all, but she said nothing. After lunch that day the grandmother said, “Sally, let’s wash the dishes.” But Sally said, “Grandma. Johnny told me he wanted to help in the kitchen today, didn’t you Johnny?” And then she whispered to him. “Remember the duck!” So Johnny did the dishes. Later Grandpa asked if the children wanted to go fishing, and Grandma said, “I’m sorry, but I need Sally to help me make supper.” But, Sally smiled and said, “Well, that’s all right because Johnny told me he wanted to help.” And she whispered again, “Remember the duck!” Sally went fishing and Johnny stayed at the house! After several days of Johnny doing both his chores and Sally’s, he finally could not stand it any longer. He came up to his grandmother and confessed that he killed the duck. She knelt down, gave him a hug and said, “Sweetheart, I know. You see, I was standing at the window and I saw the whole thing. But because I love you, I forgave you. I was just wondering how long you would let Sally make a slave of you.”

There are a lot of Christians today that are just like the little boy in the illustration in that they try to hide their sins or deny their faults. However, we cannot deny it nor hide it because we all have sinned and have fallen short of God’s glory (Rom. 3:23). The Bible tells us that God will forgive those who have sinned. We can be forgiven today because of the sacrifice that Jesus made on the cross of Calvary (Rom. 5:8). Do not become Satan’s slave! Accept God’s forgiveness by trusting and obeying Him. The Bible says that if we believe on the name of Jesus, repent of past sins, confess the name of Christ, and are baptized into Christ, then God will forgive our sins.

Gospel Meeting on the Internet

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A great number of people give lip
service to the fact that God’s Word is
The Lord’s Supper

Toney Smith

The Lord’s Supper is often misunderstood and abused by those who do not understand its significance and importance. In Matthew 26:17-29 we read of the institution of this divinely ordained memorial feast. It was instituted as Christ and His disciples were observing the Feast of the Passover (Matt. 26:17; Mark 14:12). The Lord’s Supper was not just an after thought of God it was set in place for some very important reasons. When one observes this solemn feast each should remember that it is God ordained and should be observed as such.

The Lord’s Supper was to be a memorial of the sacrifice given by God for our salvation. This was to be a reminder of the covenant between God and “all flesh that is upon the earth” (Gen. 9:17). The feast of the Passover was also a memorial set in place by God (Exo. 12:12-30). It was to bring the Israelites to remembrance of how God had delivered them from Egyptian bondage. Notice Exodus 12:27: “It is the sacrifice of the Lord’s passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses.” Thus, we see that a memorial is designed for our good.

God saw the need for this memorial. He has often used memorials in times past to help others bring to mind particular events. In Genesis 9:8-17 He set a rainbow in the heavens and in verse 13 we read, “I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth.”

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The Lord’s Supper was to be a memorial of the sacrifice given by God for our salvation. God gave instructions as to how it was to be observed.

1. The bread is to represent the body of Christ which was nailed to the cross. Matthew 26:26 states: “And as they were eating, Jesus...
took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body." They were to eat the unleavened bread. The unleavened bread was used to observe the Passover (Exo. 13:6-7). This bread is free of leavening denoting purity.

2. The fruit of the vine which represents the blood of Christ. In Matthew 26:28 we read, “For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.” This fruit of the vine is also to be free of leavening (as per the observance of the Passover). This juice is to be taken in a manner which is pleasing to God (1 Cor. 11:26-34). This means the observance is to be in a quiet and reverential way. It is not to be a casual thing, not carelessly taken without thought of the Savior who died for our sins.

The Lord’s Supper is to be taken in the assembly of the saints (1 Cor. 11:33). It is to be observed along with our other acts of worship. It is not enough to take the Lord’s Supper and observe no other part of worship.

645 Tena Court; Burleson, TX 76028

Three Desires of the Devil
Richard Carlson

The devil hates you and wants to destroy you. We are aware of what he can do, for Paul said: “We are not ignorant of his devices” (2 Cor. 2:11). We must not give in to him. Paul also said in Ephesians 4:27: “Neither give place to the devil.” In James 4:7 we are instructed to submit to God and resist the devil. But notice how the majority of the people have this in reverse. Instead of submitting to God and resisting the devil, they submit to the devil and resist God! We learn from 1 Peter 5:8-9 that the devil is our adversary. Peter tells us he is as "a roaring lion." He walks about seeking whom he may devour. But we have farther instruction to “resist” him in verse 9. I question at times whether some really believe the devil exists. I fear some believe he is just an imaginary being. But friends, he is not imaginary. He is real, and is the evil one.

Satan desires to keep you ignorant of God’s Word, and to keep you out of the church. We are told “all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2 Tim. 3:12). Before obeying the Gospel, Paul did the devil’s will, for he was ignorant and did harm to the church. The Athenians worshiped in ignorance (Acts 17:23). If Satan can keep one ignorant, he can keep one lost. He knows the importance of the church (Acts 20:28-31; 1 Tim. 4:16). He knows Christ is the Saviour of the body (Eph. 5:23). Therefore, he knows if he can keep you out of the church, that you are lost.

The devil also desires to get Christians back into the world. Christians are in the world, but not of the world. We must not love the world, and be its friend (1 John 2:15-16; Jam. 4:4). The reason is we cannot serve “two masters” (Mat. 6:24). We serve either God or the devil, but it cannot be both! So again, therefore, Satan knows if he can get a Christian to come back to the world and keep him there, that he will be lost.

The devil desires to render Christians worthless to the church. Satan does not bother those who are already his. His focus is on those who are determined to remain faithful. We can know this is his desire also for Paul speaks of those “that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil” (2 Tim. 2:26). Satan would be pleased if you would listen to his advice which is this: You are a member and that is enough, just live a good moral life, you are too busy to give much time to the church, you have too many expenses to give much to the church, and why be so concerned for the lost and weak, they have a Bible, and they know where the church meets.

Do not allow the devil to fulfill his desires. Each Christian must work for the Lord. Christians must remain faithful to the Lord and His cause (Phi. 2:12). I pray you not to allow Satan to get you. If you have—repent! If you are faithful, stay faithful! The devil never gives up. The only way to stay ahead of him and escape is to serve God! God loves you (John 3:16), and the devil hates you (1 Pet. 5:8-9). If you disappoint anyone, let it be the devil!

Hear and believe the Gospel, repent of sin, confess Christ, be baptized for the remission of sins, and live faithful (Rev. 2:10). Do as the Eunuch did in Acts 8. If you are an unfaithful member of the church of Christ, repent and be restored (Mark 1:15).

501 Evergreen St; Dresden, TN 38225

Unity
Curtis L. E. Graves

We sometimes hear statements like: “ Attend the church of your choice” or “we are all headed for the same place using different roads.” Those statements do not come from the Bible. The Bible says: “Can two walk together, except they be agreed?” (Amos 3:3). Unity is based upon agreement. In the area of religion, where there exists disagreement in matters of faith there also exists division. That problem is complicated when there exists disagreement as to what exactly is a matter of faith. None should bind opinion, neither should there be a break of fellowship based upon differences in the realm of opinion.

Brother A’s opinion is just as good as brother B’s and congregation A’s opinion is just as good as congregation B’s. As long as: it is a matter of opinion and neither seeks to bind opinion upon the other as a matter of faith and as a test of fellowship. Differences in the realm of faith result, however, in breaks of fellowship. Does a brother (or a congregation) sin when he (it) refuses to have fellowship with that which is plainly condemned by the Bible, God’s Word, the authority in all matters religious?

Paul said: “And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them” (Eph. 5:11). John said: “Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds” (2 John 9-11). Agreement should be sought by all who seek to serve Christ. None can claim to be a follower of Jesus who does not fervently seek unity. Let us all return to the way of light and life and fellowship will result.

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2. The fruit of the vine which represents the blood of Christ. In Matthew 26:28 we read, “For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.” This fruit of the vine is also to be free of leavening (as per the observance of the Passover). This juice is to be taken in a manner which is pleasing to God (1 Cor. 11:26-34). This means the observance is to be in a quiet and reverential way. It is not to be a casual thing, not carelessly taken without thought of the Savior who died for our sins.

The Lord’s Supper is to be taken in the assembly of the saints (1 Cor. 11:33). It is to be observed along with our other acts of worship. It is not enough to take the Lord’s Supper and observe no other part of worship.

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The Lord’s Supper is often misunderstood and abused by those who do not understand its significance and importance. In Matthew 26:17-29 we read of the institution of this divinely ordained memorial feast. It was instituted as Christ and His disciples were observing the Feast of the Passover (Mat. 26:17; Mark 14:12). The Lord’s Supper was not just an after thought of God it was set in place for some very important reasons. When one observes this solemn feast each should remember that it is God ordained and should be observed as such.

God saw the need for this memorial. He has often used memorials in times past to help others bring to mind particular events. In Genesis 9:8-17 He set a rainbow in the heavens and in verse 13 we read, “I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth.”

This was to be a reminder of the covenant between God and “all flesh that is upon the earth” (Gen. 9:17). The feast of the Passover was also a memorial set in place by God (Exo. 12:12-30). It was to bring the Israelites to remembrance of how God had delivered them from Egyptian bondage. Notice Exodus 12:27: “It is the sacrifice of the Lord’s passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses.” Thus, we see that a memorial is designed for our good.

The Lord’s Supper was to be a memorial of the sacrifice given by God for our salvation. God gave instructions as to how it was to be observed. This was to be a reminder of the covenant between God and “all flesh that is upon the earth” (Gen. 9:17). The feast of the Passover was also a memorial set in place by God (Exo. 12:12-30). It was to bring the Israelites to remembrance of how God had delivered them from Egyptian bondage. Notice Exodus 12:27: “It is the sacrifice of the Lord’s passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses.” Thus, we see that a memorial is designed for our good.

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1. The bread is to represent the body of Christ which was nailed to the cross. Matthew 26:26 states: “And as they were eating, Jesus
No doubt many people have heard the expression “forgive and forget.” It sounds biblical doesn’t it? It is also comforting to one who has been forgiven. After all, who wants his forgiven sins to be thrown back in his face? However, is the concept of “forgive and forget” in strict harmony with God’s Word?

The answer depends on what a person means by “forgive and forget.” If he means that once a sin has been scripturally forgiven, it should no longer be brought up against a person, then, yes, the expression accurately represents biblical teaching. However, if the person means once a transgression has been forgiven he must forget it ever occurred, then, no, it is not consistent with scriptural teaching or even common sense and everyday experience.

Where did the phrase “forgive and forget” originate? While this author does not have all knowledge, it is quite possible it is based on the gist of the Bible’s teaching on forgiveness. There are two passages in Hebrews that are worthy of closer examination though. The first is Hebrews 8:12 and the second is Hebrews 10:17. Both of them are partial quotations from Jeremiah 31:34 with the latter being even briefer. Consequently, only the first shall be reproduced: “For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more” (Heb. 8:12—NKJV).
Compare this with the last sentence of Jeremiah 31:34: “For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.”

From this comparison it can be seen that the Lord shows mercy by forgiving our iniquity (unrighteousness or sin). Please notice that neither Jeremiah nor the author of Hebrews uses forget. Instead, it uses the phrase “remember no more” which is the translation of the Greek word ἀφιεμι which means “to bear in mind, recollect; be mindful of.”

Forgiveness in the Greek language is translated as ἀφίημι (aphiemi). This word literally means to send away. When applied to forgiveness it conveys the idea that the offense will be sent away. When applied to forgiveness it conveys the idea that the offense will be sent away and thus no longer a hindrance to fellowship (either brother to brother or man to God). This is how the Bible speaks about forgiveness in Psalm 103:12: “As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.”

We have the obligation to forgive a person who has repented and asks us to forgive. “Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. And if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day returns to you, saying, ‘I repent,’ you shall forgive him” (Luke 17:3-4).

Love does not “keep score” of offenses. The American Standard Version says that love “taketh not account of evil” (1 Cor. 13:5). Stated literally, love does not take inventory of all the evil that has been done. When sins have been dealt with properly, they are canceled out (forgiven) and no longer used in judgment against a person.

Hebrews does employ forget’ in the sense we normally associate with it. “Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels” (Heb. 13:2). Here, the Greek word translated forget (epilanthanomai) means to lose out of (one’s) mind. There is an important distinction between losing something from one’s mind (forgetfulness) and choosing not to call up some bit of knowledge that the mind has retained (remembering no more).

God does not suffer from amnesia. “For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister” (Heb. 6:10). Here it is affirmed that God does not lose from His mind the knowledge of the good deeds the Hebrew Christians had performed in their obedience to the Gospel. For God to fairly judge the world, He must retain all knowledge. If He forgot even one good work or one unforgiven sin, then He could not judge righteously. Thankfully, our God also knows perfectly every forgiven sin. In His justice He will not hold those against faithful Christians. “But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin” (1 John 1:7).

In conclusion, man has the duty to forgive sins of which one has repented. Will we ever forget sins that were committed against us? Generally speaking, slight offenses will soon slip from our minds. However, sins that greatly grieved us may never leave our minds. While it may not be possible to “Forgive and Forget” these things it is our responsibility to consider Matthew 19:9 along with Hebrews 13:4.

Appreciate one another. When you stop to count your blessings, do not forget to count your spouse. An attitude of ingratitude will eventually manifest itself in selfish and disrespectful behavior toward one another. “Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing” (Pro. 18:22).

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How to Have a Great Marriage
Rod Halliburton

Your marriage does not have to be “just good,” it can be great. But what separates the great marriages from the good ones? Consider the following based on the word “G-R-E-A-T.”

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Remember your vows. Husbands, did you promise to love, honor, cherish, and protect your spouse, forsaking all others? Wives, did you promise to love, honor, cherish, and obey your spouse, forsaking all others?

Something to Think About...
Cleon Lyles

“The Bible definitely teaches that each Christian should wholeheartedly support the elders in the work of the church program. These men spend exhaustive hours of tireless efforts for our benefit, as well as for growth of the church. They are willing to lead us along the pathway that we should follow in our work for the Lord. Common sense knowledge dictates that our elders cannot lead unless we will be led; there is no strength of leadership, regardless of its qualifications, unless people are willing to follow. Each member has his own work obligations, measured according to his personal ability, and if left undone a gapping hole is left in the church program. Our elders fulfill their sacred trust by planning and leading the various aspects of our work. We must fulfill our duty to God by our willing and cheerful support of their program plans. Elders are not infallible and there are some instances when the best intended plans are not successfully attained, but each member’s liability is whether or not this failure was dependent upon his support.”

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Jesus likened forgiveness to the cancellation of a debt (Mat. 6:12-15; 18:21-35). The Greek word most commonly translated forgive, forgave, forgiven, or forgiveness is aphiemi. This word literally means to send forth. It is also translated as forsake, lay aside, leave, omit, and put (that is, send) away. When applied to forgiveness it conveys the idea that the offense will be sent far away and thus no longer a hindrance to fellowship (either brother to brother or man to God). This is how the Bible speaks about forgiveness in Psalm 103:12: “As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us.”

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Something to Think About...
Cleon Lyles

“The Bible definitely teaches that each Christian should wholeheartedly support the elders in the work of the church program. These men spend exhaustive hours of tireless efforts for our benefit, as well as for growth of the church. They are willing to lead us along the pathway that we should follow in our work for the Lord. Common sense knowledge dictates that our elders cannot lead unless we will be led; there is no strength of leadership, regardless of its qualifications, unless people are willing to follow. Each member has his own work obligations, measured according to his personal ability, and if left undone a gaping hole is left in the church program. Our elders fulfill their sacred trust by planning and leading the various aspects of our work. We must fulfill our duty to God by our willing and cheerful support of their program plans. Elders are not infallible and there are some instances when the best intended plans are not successfully attained, but each member’s liability is whether or not this failure was dependent upon his support.”

Quoted from his book, “Bigger Men For Better Churches”

P.O. Box 12; Flat Rock, MI 48134

“Forgive and Remember Them No More.”
No doubt many people have heard the expression “forgive and forget.” It sounds biblical doesn’t it? It is also comforting to one who has been forgiven. After all, who wants his forgiven sins to be thrown back in his face? However, is the concept of “forgive and forget” in strict harmony with God’s Word?

The answer depends on what a person means by “forgive and forget.” If he means that once a sin has been scripturally forgiven, it should no longer be brought up against a person, then, yes, the expression accurately represents biblical teaching. However, if the person means once a transgression has been forgiven he must forget it ever occurred, then, no, it is not consistent with scriptural teaching or even common sense and everyday experience.

Where did the phrase “forgive and forget” originate? While this author does not have all knowledge, it is quite possible it is based on the gist of the Bible’s teaching on forgiveness. There are two passages in Hebrews that are worthy of closer examination though. The first is Hebrews 8:12 and the second is Hebrews 10:17. Both of them are partial quotations from Jeremiah 31:34 with the latter being even briefer. Consequently, only the first shall be reproduced: “For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more” (Heb. 8:12—NKJV).
Do you have an accurate view of life as a Christian? There are some that are surprised—maybe even shocked—when difficulties arise. Some brethren expect that the world and the brotherhood will always applaud them for doing right. They believe that for the Christian, problems are history and the rest of life is tantamount to a walk through a rose garden while the soft breeze blows to cool the brow. They believe the congregation, when faithful to God, will never have to face adversity or criticism. Because of inaccurate or unreal expectations of the Christian life, they are woefully unprepared when storm clouds blow and trials arise. Their faith is shaken, their commitment compromised, and they surrender. These hearts are either unaware of what our Lord teaches on the subject or worse, they did not believe what the Lord said!

You should know that God never promised His followers a life free from adversity and challenge. On the contrary, He tells all who would follow Him to expect opposition. You will be hated by some. Tribulation will come. Difficult moments will try the soul and test your faith. When problems arise, you seek out wisdom and consolation from above. Here are lessons our Lord would have us grasp for difficult times.

1. Jesus met opposition, and He taught the truth! Jesus loved the souls of men yet He was rejected. He said His followers would have opposition. If the world hateth you, ye know that it hath hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love its own: but because ye are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, A servant is not greater than his lord. If they persecuted me, they will also...
By the way, patience in James 1:2-4 can be translated by our English word “endurance.” So then, will you falter in times of adversity, or will you learn from them and grow stronger?

3. Problems will come up in the church. Even the first century church, with leadership of apostles, had problems to face and error to oppose. Peter and the church in Jerusalem had Ananias and Sapphira and the problem of lying (Acts 5:1-11). The church in Pergamum had a problem with false teachers in the church as did the church in Thyatira. Both were sharply rebuked and warned to clean up the church! (Rev. 2:2-12). Corinth had fornication, strife, and needless division. An inspired letter gave command to put away the wicked and be spiritual rather than carnal (1 Cor. 1-5). As distasteful as such problems are to us, sometimes a congregation is made stronger by division. Paul stated that some division was necessary so that the faith might be made manifest (1 Cor. 11:18-19). The apostle said that he was in “perils among false brethren” (2 Cor. 11:26). Finally, what should we do in the face of such difficult situations? Place your faith in God, put your hands to the plow, and like the faithful of yesterday, “run with patience the race that is set before us” (Heb. 12:1). Those in heaven will be those who refused to give up.

A Lamp Unto My Feet
Tom Wacaster

In 1815 a young lawyer walked through the beautiful fields near Plainfield, Massachusetts. At that time in his life he was depressed and uncertain as to whether or not he wanted to practice law. William Cullen Bryant was a romantic and loved poetry, a characteristic somewhat out of sink with the cold practicality of the legal profession. As he walked he noticed a solitary waterfowl flying into the crimson New England sunset. It was the time of year the bird should have been migrating with others of its kind, yet it was all alone. Could this bird be lost? Bryant noticed the bird was unwavering in its flight. It seemed to know its destination. It was alone, but it was not lost. Some “power,” Bryant concluded, was guiding this bird to its destination. The youthful Bryant was so moved that he returned home, picked up his pen, and wrote the beautiful poem, “Ode To A Waterfowl.” The last few lines of that poem go like this:

“He who from zone to zone
Guides through the boundless sky thy certain flight,
In the long way that I must tread alone,
Will lead my steps aright.”

Men may abandon us, but not so our God.

Be Watchful and Resist
Dub McClish

The New Testament frequently urges vigilance toward things that would spiritually hinder us. One of the clearest of these warnings is from Peter: Be sober, be watchful: your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour, whom withstand steadfast in your faith, knowing that the same sufferings are accomplished in your brethren who are in the world (1 Pet. 5:8-9). The word translated sober is a compound word, which means “do not drink or swallow down.” It literally refers to a mind unclouded by strong drink, then metaphorically, to a mind un-influenced by anything that would prevent clear thinking. When one thinks clearly he does not ignore danger, but is alert toward it. These actions are necessary because of the devil, our “adversary” (literally, a lawyer who argues the case against one in court). Devil means “false accuser.” Thus, the Bible depicts the devil, by definition, as a lying lawyer who has prepared a false case against us. The book of Job so describes him (Job 1:6-12). As Peter described him above, he is also compared to a lion that ferociously roars because of a voracious appetite. He is seeking prey to devour (literally to “swallow down”).

Although he can be loud, the devil sometimes subtly and quietly lays temptation before us or introduces false doctrines and practices, “slipping up” on the gullible, ignorant, and immature (Eph. 4:14). However, Peter’s warning seems to refer particularly to the frontal attacks of increasing persecution the brethren were suffering (1 Pet. 4:12). Again, the devil was doing this back in the days of Job (Job 1:7)—and he still is.

What were they to do concerning their foe? They were to resist his attacks by the only means at their disposal—steadfastness in the faith. Brethren, we must not compromise when we face ridicule and opposition, or even fiery trials and death (Rev. 2:10). Satan cannot ultimately devour us by physical harm or even death (Matt. 10:28). He will swallow us up only if we yield to fleshly lusts, compromise the Truth, or deny the Christ. We live in a day in which the pressures of Atheism, Humanism, immorality, sectarianism, theological liberalism, and even legislation are increasingly making the lot of faithful saints uncomfortable.

O so sadly, many preachers, elders, school administrators, and editors—and thousands in the pews—have refused to withstand the devil and have been devoured by him. What a short-range view of things such compromises represent. As long as we remain faithful to Christ, we are secure regardless of what the devil does to us. Let us also remember, when tried, that we are not by ourselves. Brethren all over the world are likewise persecuted, and always have been (2 Tim. 3:12).
persecute you; if they kept my word, they will keep yours also (John 15:18-20).
2. Our God teaches us that there will be difficulties in this life, and they can serve to strengthen your soul.
Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, ye have been put to grief in manifold trials, that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold that perisheth though it is proved by fire, may be found unto praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ (1 Pet. 1:6-7).
Paul and Barnabas went through first century cities and visited congregations of the Lord's people. The purpose? 
confirming the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God (Acts 14:22).
Brethren, we are told that there will be days in which trials seem overwhelming. But they are not.
My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing (Jam. 1:2-4—KJV).

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Dedication Page
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Do you have an accurate view of life as a Christian? There are some that are surprised—maybe even shocked—when difficulties arise. Some brethren expect that the world and the brotherhood will always applaud them for doing right. They believe that for the Christian, problems are history and the rest of life is tantamount to a walk through a rose garden while the soft breeze blows to cool the brow. They believe the congregation, when faithful to God, will never have to face adversity or criticism. Because of inaccurate or unreal expectations of the Christian life, they are woefully unprepared when storm clouds blow and trials arise. Their faith is shaken, their commitment compromised, and they surrender. These hearts are either unaware of what our Lord teaches on the subject or worse, they did not believe what the Lord said!

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Some people choose not to see the obvious. It was this people to whom Jesus referred when He said, “For this people’s heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them” (Mat. 13:15).

It becomes more and more alarming that many in the church who should be well informed have chosen to close their eyes to the Truth with reference to a movement among us which denies the distinctive nature of the church and spreads an umbrella of fellowship over those in the denominational world. I refer here, not to those who have forsaken the Truth with reference to Bible doctrine, but to those who know the Truth, yet who are not at all hesitant to announce, promote, and attend meetings featuring those who have forsaken the Truth.

Do you believe, for example, that the prayer of the Lord in John 17 proves that we are to include in our fellowship all of those in denominational churches who just believe in Jesus? Do you believe that the Holy Spirit provides direct leadership to the Christian separate and apart from the Bible? Do you believe the denominational bodies are filled with faithful Christians? If brethren do not believe these things, then why do they invite men who are on record as teaching these things to be featured speakers on various programs? If brethren do not believe these things, then why do their church bulletins carry announcements about programs featuring those who teach such? Why do they announce such from their pulpits or urge their people to attend?

The answer, in many cases would be: “We just do not believe these preachers stand for these things.” In other words, “Their eyes they have closed.” It is not that evidence of their positions on various things is not available, or that they have kept their
Faithful preachers need to read often the words of those who are courageous enough to speak out against these false teachers. Some become intimidated by such accusations and decide to remain silent. In many cases, recordings of their speeches have been made available publicly and faithful brethren have called attention to the dangerous errors they espouse. Tape them in no wise perceive: For this people's heart is blinded, and is deaf to Bible truth. Let us notice that people can hear the Word of God without really hearing what the Word has to say?

We have no intention of closing our eyes to the things taking place in the church. We would urge others to “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Pet. 5:8). Sober according to Thayer, means, “of sound mind, sane, in one’s senses.” It is insane to try to promote the cause of Truth by promoting and encouraging those who teach error. Refusing to face the fact that certain ones are false teachers does not make them any less false teachers. Neither does it set one at liberty to promote and encourage false teachers as if they were teaching the Truth. Those who promote and encourage false teachers become guilty of teaching false doctrine themselves (see 2 John 9-11).

Some will accuse us of interfering with congregational autonomy when we warn against the shepherds of the flock. Qualifications for “pastors” (elders or bishops) are given in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. Pastor thus refers to the elders who oversee the flock.

Plan of salvation. One can proclaim the Gospel plan of salvation and people will often hear but not hear! It is not uncommon for a Gospel preacher to stress that people must believe (Heb. 1:16), repent of their sins (Luke 13:3), make the good confession (Rom. 10:9-10), and be baptized (immersed) for the remission of their sins (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16), and then have one of denominational persuasion to note how wonderful it is that a person can believe in and accept Jesus as their Savior and be saved.

Those who reject immersion as part of the Gospel plan of salvation do not hear what the Scriptures have to say. One who is baptized into Christ puts on Christ (Gal. 3:27). Does this mean one can be saved simply by believing and without putting on Christ? Peter says that baptism saves one (Pet. 3:21) while members of denominations say that one is saved before being baptized. Is it not amazing that people can hear the Word of God without really hearing what the Word has to say?

The truth about the Lord’s church. One can teach on the uniqueness of the blood bought church of Christ (Acts 20:28) and still have plenty of folks who hearing hear not. Christ promised to build His church (Mat. 16:18), and not some church or a church. How can people read verses such as those just mentioned and still believe that it is great for one to attend the church of his choice? Some people are quick to say: “The church doesn’t save one anyway—Christ does the saving.” Does it matter if one sewers the head from the body? The Scriptures declare that God gave “him [Christ] to be head over all things to the church, which is his body” (Eph. 1:22-23). Instead of attempting to defend multiple man-made churches, one should seek out the only body (church) that Christ has promised to save (Eph. 5:23).

The truth about worship. Is anyone listening to what the Lord has to say about worship? He says that one must worship God “in spirit and truth” (John 4:24). Worship is not something that is done to one, but something that one does. Entertainment is not worship. Drama is not worship. What someone else can do for you is not worship.

The Lord says, “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). He also said, “And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?” (Luke 6:46). Most people, however, prefer the word of man to the Word of God.

Those who hear but hear not will not be pleased with the sentence they receive at the Day of Judgment.

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positions secret. They have declared their positions very publicly and faithful brethren have called attention to the dangerous errors they espouse. Tape recordings of their speeches have been made available. But some choose not to see. In many cases those who are courageous enough to speak out against these false teachers are accused of bitterness, or even jealousy. Some become intimidated by such accusations and decide to remain silent. Faithful preachers need to read often the words of Ezekiel 3:17-19

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.

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Some will accuse us of interfering with congregational autonomy when we warn against the dangers of engaging false teachers. We are not interfering with congregational autonomy, we are practicing it.

Deceased

Hearing They Hear Not
Marvin L. Weir

The Lord and Savior says:

Therefore speak I to them in parables; because they hear, but really do not hear! They close their eyes lest they see, and their ears they have closed; lest haply they should perceive with their eyes, And hear with their ears, And understand with their heart, And seeing ye shall see, and shall understand; And hearing ye shall hear, and shall in no wise understand the prophecy of Isaiah, which saith, Waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, And their eyes they have closed; Lest haply they should perceive with their eyes, And hear with their ears, And understand with their heart, And seeing they shall see, and hearing they shall hear! (Isa. 6:9-10).

The Word of God becomes a stumbling-block to those who steadfastly refuse to believe in the power and wisdom of God. Man’s way has never been God’s way. The apostle Paul reminds those who will hear: “it was God’s good pleasure for the remission of their sins (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16), and then have one of denominational persuasion to note how wonderful it is that a person can believe in and accept Jesus as their Savior and be saved.

Those who reject immersion as part of the Gospel plan of salvation do not hear what the Scriptures have to say. One who is baptized into Christ is saved (Eph. 5:23). Does this mean one can hear the Word of God without being baptized? Is it not amazing that today so many claim to be religious, but are instead deaf to Bible truth. Let us notice some areas where people hear but do not hear.

Religious titles. Funeral home directors often ask me if I want to be listed as the pastor or a minister. I tell them that I am not a pastor, and that they can use the word “preacher” or “minister.” I understand that these words are descriptive and are not used as a title. It never fails that they list me as being a “minister,” and then call me “pastor.” They hear but they do not hear!

Denominations have so influenced people that they can think only in denominational terms. Pastor (poimen) refers not to preachers but to elders—the shepherds of the flock (1 Pet. 5:2). Qualifications for “pastors” (elders or bishops) are given in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. Pastor thus refers to the elders who oversee the flock.

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February 13th I will board a Northwest/KLM flight bound for Amsterdam, and then on to Bombay, India. Having some experience in flying, I am aware that a pre-planned route is essential to reaching a desired destination. But I am also aware that when flying it is necessary to make small corrections in one’s heading all along the route from point A to point B. This is because the plane is affected by wind drift. Once a course has been plotted, a pilot realizes that flying a plane is not like driving a car. An automobile contacts the road and is not affected by wind drift as is an airplane. Consequently, a pilot knows that small adjustments are necessary along the route to his final destination. That Boeing 747 in which I will be flying is equipped with modern computers and technology that will automatically make those small but necessary corrections, but whether made by machines or man, those adjustments and corrections along the path will result in reaching the planned point of arrival. Getting from where you are to where you want to be cannot be achieved by hit-and-miss guess work. But that is the way some folks approach their religion. They rely on feelings, better-felt-than-told experiences, rather than carefully plotting their course. Such an approach will no sooner get them to heaven than a pilot who relies on his feelings to get him to his destination.

The key word here is correction. This is an interesting word in that it describes precisely the role that the Word of God plays in our journey through life. Along the trip of life, slight adjustments are made from time to time so as to keep us on course. A good working knowledge of the Bible and the application of its truths to our life, will adjust our course when we start to drift. It keeps affecting the way we think, the way we draw conclusions, and the way we make our daily life decisions. The key
You Can’t Fool God

You can fool the hapless public.
You can be a subtle fraud.
You can hide your little meanness,
But you can’t fool God.
You can advertise your virtues.
You can self-achievement laud.
You can load yourself with riches,
But you can’t fool God.
You can criticize the Bible.
You can be a selfish clod.
You can lie, swear, drink, and gamble,
But you can’t fool God.
You can magnify your talent.
You can hear the world applaud.
You can boast yourself as somebody,
But you can’t fool God.

is that we are to lay the Word of God up in our heart so that those corrections are automatic. This is why the Psalmist acknowledged, “Thy word have I laid up in my heart, That I might not sin against thee” (Psa. 119:11).

The Fountain of Youth

Paul Vaughn

In the 12th century many believed that there was a fountain flowing with magical waters that could enable a person to remain young, never growing old. The Spanish explorer, Ponce De Leon searched diligently for the “Fountain of Youth.” In 1521, on his last expedition, Ponce De Leon was severely wounded by Indians and died.

Today, there are many still looking for the “Fountain of Youth.” They are not seeking a magical fountain flowing with supernatural waters, but spending millions of dollars every year to make one appear young and youthful. Despite all the efforts people go through to remain young, they still grow old and die. It is written, “And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment” (Heb. 9:27—NKJV).

If a pilot fails to make the necessary corrections in the early stages of his journey, he will find that the small error will multiply in proportion to the distance he flies. The first few miles he may find that he is not far off course. But let him fly hundreds, or thousands of miles, and he will be so far off course that drastic measures would be needed to reach the destination, if he can reach it at all. Likewise, if we fail to make corrections immediately and concisely along the road of life, we will look up one day and wonder how in the world we got where we are. This is why the Hebrews author warned: “Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things that were heard, lest haply we drift away from them” (Heb. 2:1). If we wait until we are so far off course to make the necessary correction we may find that getting back on course is difficult at best, and impossible at worst.

Apostasy is seldom something that occurs over night. It is the consequence of one’s failure to make those small corrections along the way. Like the wise pilot, the child of God will make those course corrections along the pathway of life frequently and faithfully.

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The source of this fountain is Jesus Christ. He is the One who gives hope. He is the One to follow. It is through Him that immortality is brought to light in the Gospel. The apostle Paul said, “but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” (2 Tim. 1:10).

What is the most important thing to mankind?

Thoughts on Marriage

The divorce rate in America is now around 50%.

"Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?" (Mat. 19:3), “Not so,” said the Lord. What happens that changes those moments of starry-eyed splendor into unconcern and apathetic feelings? Consider these observations:

- He married her because, among other things, her hair looked so beautiful.
- He divorced her because she spent too much time fixing her hair.
- He married her because she was such an adept conversationalist.
- He divorced her because she talked all the time.
- She married him because he enjoyed her home cooking.
- She divorced him because he never took her out to eat.

Preaching the Truth in Love

R. L. Whiteside

Much is said about preaching the truth in love, and so it should be preached. But in love of what? The preacher should so love the truth that he will not sacrifice any of it nor pervert it, and he should so love people that he will not withhold from them even an unpleasant truth. He that does either of these things loves neither the church nor the people. We frequently fool ourselves, thinking we do thus and so to spare the feelings of others when it is our own feelings that prompt us. “Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For 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. 4:2-4).

Deceased
You Can’t Fool God

You can fool the helpless public.
You can be a subtle fraud.
You can hide your little meanness,
But you can’t fool God.
You can advertise your virtues.
You can self-achievement laud.
You can load yourself with riches,
But you can’t fool God.
You can criticize the Bible.
You can be a selfish clod.
You can lie, swear, drink, and gamble,
But you can’t fool God.
You can magnify your talent.
You can hear the world applaud.
You can boast yourself as somebody,
But you can’t fool God.  

is that we are to lay the Word of God up in our heart so that those corrections are automatic. This is why the Psalmist acknowledged, “Thy word have I laid so that those corrections are automatic. This is why we are to lay the Word of God up in our heart and faithfully. If a pilot fails to make the necessary corrections in the early stages of his journey, he will find that the small error will multiply in proportion to the distance he flies. The first few miles he may find that he is not far off course. But let him fly hundreds, or thousands of miles, and he will be so far off course that drastic measures would be needed to reach the destination, if he can reach it at all. Likewise, if we fail to make corrections immediately and concisely along the road of life, we will look up one day and wonder how in the world we got where we are. This is why the Hebrews author warned: “Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things that were heard, lest haply we drift away from them” (Heb. 2:1). If we wait until we are so far off course to make the necessary correction we may find that getting back on course is difficult at best, and impossible at worst.

Apostasy is seldom something that occurs over night. It is the consequence of one’s failure to make those small corrections along the way. Like the wise pilot, the child of God will make those course corrections along the pathway of life frequently and faithfully.

801 West 11th St; Clarksville, TX 6426

The Fountain of Youth
Paul Vaughn

In the 12th century many believed that there was a fountain flowing with magical waters that could enable a person to remain young, never growing old. The Spanish explorer, Ponce De Leon searched diligently for the “Fountain of Youth.” In 1521, on his last expedition, Ponce De Leon was severely wounded by Indians and died.

Today, there are many still looking for the “Fountain of Youth.” They are not seeking a magical fountain flowing with supernatural waters, but spending millions of dollars every year to make one appear young and youthful. Despite all the efforts people go through to remain young, they still grow old and die. It is written, “And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment” (Heb. 9:27—NKJV).

There is a fountain that will keep one young, spiritually. Jesus taught about drinking from a fountain of living water that never fails and is eternally rewarding. It is a fountain that brings eternal life. It is written: “but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life” (John 4:14). The source of this fountain is Jesus Christ. He is the One who gives hope. He is the One to follow. It is through Him that immortality is brought to light in the Gospel. The apostle Paul said, “but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” (2 Tim. 1:10).

What is the most important thing to mankind?

The divorce rate in America is now around 50%.

Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?” (Mat. 19:3). “Not so,” said the Lord. What happens that changes those moments of starry-eyed splendor into unconcern and apathetic feelings? Consider these observations:

- He married her because, among other things, her hair looked so beautiful.
- He divorced her because she spent too much time fixing her hair.
- He married her because she was such an adept conversationalist.
- He divorced her because she talked all the time.
- She married him because he enjoyed her home cooking.
- She divorced him because he never took her out to eat.

Thoughts on Marriage

R. L. Whiteside

Much is said about preaching the truth in love, and so it should be preached. But in love of what? The preacher should so love the truth that he will not sacrifice any of it nor pervert it, and he should so love people that he will not withhold from them even an unpleasant truth. He that does either of these things loves neither the church nor the people. We frequently fool ourselves, thinking we do thus and so to spare the feelings of others when it is Seeking to remain young physically or spiritually? Those who are attempting to remain physically young are fighting a losing battle. They are growing old and will die. Jesus has made it possible for all to drink of His fountain, the Gospel.

Today, let us all drink of His wonderful Words by living each day following them. His Words are a “Fountain of Youth” to keep one young spiritually.

1415 Lincoln Rd; Lewisport, KY 42351

Preaching the Truth in Love

R. L. Whiteside

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1415 Lincoln Rd; Lewisport, KY 42351

Deceased

Author Unknown

Author Unknown

Author Unknown

Author Unknown
February 13th I will board a Northwest/KLM flight bound for Amsterdam, and then on to Bombay, India. Having some experience in flying, I am aware that a pre-planned route is essential to reaching a desired destination. But I am also aware that when flying it is necessary to make small corrections in one’s heading all along the route from point A to point B. This is because the plane is affected by wind drift. Once a course has been plotted, a pilot realizes that flying a plane is not like driving a car. An automobile contacts the road and is not affected by wind drift as is an airplane. Consequently, a pilot knows that small adjustments are necessary along the route to his final destination. That Boeing 747 in which I will be flying is equipped with modern computers and technology that will automatically make those small but necessary corrections, but whether made by machines or man, those adjustments and corrections along the path will result in reaching the planned point of arrival. Getting from where you are to where you want to be cannot be achieved by hit-and-miss guess work. But that is the way some folks approach their religion. They rely on feelings, better-felt-than-told experiences, rather than carefully plotting their course. Such an approach will no sooner get them to heaven than a pilot who relies on his feelings to get him to his destination.

The key word here is correction. This is an interesting word in that it describes precisely the role that the Word of God plays in our journey through life. Along the trip of life, slight adjustments are made from time to time so as to keep us on course. A good working knowledge of the Bible and the application of its truths to our life, will adjust our course when we start to drift. It keeps affecting the way we think, the way we draw conclusions, and the way we make our daily life decisions. The key
Sick

Remember in your prayers:
Elaine Maxey  Malcolm Wooton
Al Flesher  Marilyn Hall
Marge Williams  William Weekley
Alice Williams  Lucille Staples
Bill & Iris Gallaher  Fred Stancliff
Ella Hammac

Thomas Hammac (Ella Hammac’s son),
Nancy Travis (William Weekley’s daughter),
Wyatt Blancheri (Henry and Paulette Born’s grandson; for more information: www.caringbridge.org — in the site name type Wyatt), and Kay Hollowell.

Restored/Placed Membership
Keith Totty was restored to Christ on October 14. He has placed membership with the Bellview congregation. Keith and his wife Elizabeth live at 64 Belleau Wood Court, Pensacola, FL 32506. Their telephone number is 723-3354. Please keep Keith and Elizabeth in your prayers.

Brian Gresham was restored to Christ on October 14. Please keep Brian in your prayers.

Reading/Invitation
October 24, 2007
Bible Reading: Jim Loy
Invitation: Fred Stancliff

October 31, 2007
Bible Reading: Horace Myrick
Invitation: Carl Ayliffe

Mark This Date
October 21, 2007
Elders/Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.

Some Thoughts About Your Preacher  
Tim Smith

Your preacher is not perfect. He makes mistakes just like everyone else does—even like you. He tries—true, some try harder than others, but as a rule I would like to think that every preacher tries to be as good as he can be. But at his very best he is still not perfect. He will make mistakes along the way. Every preacher does. Get one and watch him closely for a while and you will see he make mistakes. Get rid of that one if you wish, but the one you get to take his place will make mistakes too.

Your preacher forgets things. Even if everyone wrote everything down and gave it to him, he would still forget something along the way. Every preacher does. Get rid of him and bring another one in if you wish, but that one will forget things also.

Your preacher gets his feelings hurt. He may try not to show it, but he has feelings just like everyone else. People say hurtful things and he tries to smile and shake their hands and act like everything is OK, but in his heart he hurts just as anyone else would if they were in his shoes. Unlike some, he is not at liberty to take his hurt feelings and stay away from the assembly for a few weeks to “make a point”—but he is sometimes just as hurt as those who do. He deals with it by prayer, study, and meditation. All preachers are basically this way. There are some worse than others, but none are above hurt feelings.
Your preacher has personal issues with which he must contend. He sometimes has trouble with his children, his wife, or his neighbors. Sometimes he is sick. Sometimes he is tired. Sometimes these issues work to put him in a “bad mood.” He tries not to show it. He does his very best to do his job despite such obstacles. But the fact remains that he faces obstacles. The obstacles that potentially prevent you from being happy and carefree are the same for him. Again, he is not at liberty to allow these obstacles to keep him from his duties, but they are there nonetheless. This is true of all preachers.

Your preacher is not out to “make your life miserable.” You may be miserable and the message he delivers may call specific attention to that misery, but that is a by-product of the message—not the messenger. Preachers—who are worthy of the name—think long and hard before confronting an issue or an individual, and they will only “make waves” if such is the necessary course. I have known some trouble-making preachers in my life, but I have found that usually they would be trouble-makers irrespective of what they did for a living. The fact that they preach makes matters worse, but it does not make them troublemakers. A Gospel preacher will oppose what God opposes and demand what God demands and leave the rest of it alone.

I Can’t

Curtis L. E. Graves

“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Phil. 4:13). This passage of Scripture was written long before Norman Vincent Peale ever thought of writing a self-help book. Today there are so many books to help us know how to reach our goals, to be a success in the world, to follow the Lord. Work with him—he wants exactly what you want, to see the work of the Lord flourish in your congregation. May God bless you as you study and obey His Word.

171 Radford Circle; Dothan, AL 36301

Your preacher is not a fortune-teller. He does not know how things will work out beforehand. He only knows what he has to do now and for that he contends. He will sometimes make a bad move. He will sometimes start down a road that he finds is not what he thought or hoped, and he will then have to back up and start down another. It happens to all preachers, just as it happens to elders, deacons, members and even those out in the world. Our hindsight is usually better than our foresight. It is just part of being human.

Well, I suppose I should say that your preacher is basically about like you and most everyone else in the world. Does this disappoint you? Probably not—not if you have given it any serious thought, anyway. He probably does his best, and he very much hopes that his best is enough. Help him. Support him. Respect him—at least as much as is due him. Talk to him—not at him or about him. Try to understand what he says. Check the message against the Bible and try to benefit from his study and experience. Correct him (in Christian love) when he is wrong. Only follow him inasmuch as he follows the Lord. Work with him—he wants exactly what you want, to see the work of the Lord flourish in your congregation. May God bless you as you study and obey His Word.

What about Armageddon?

Dub McClish

The principal publication of the Jehovah’s Witness cult is Awake. In 1968, it boldly set a new date for the “Battle of Armageddon,” which allegedly will both bring an end to the world and signal their warped version of the return of the Lord. It said, “Today we have the evidence required, all of it. And it is overwhelming! All the many, many parts of the great sign of the ‘last days’ are here, together with verifying Bible chronology.” The piece further explained that it was certain that Armageddon would come in late 1975. News reports say that this miserable failure has cost them tens of thousands of members, as it should have. To be fair, they are not by themselves in such wild speculations.

For many years, every time an international political crisis has arisen (especially if it involves the modern nation of Israel), the cry has gone up, “Armageddon is imminent!” “The end of the world is near!” “Christ is about to come!” The Persian Gulf War of 1991 stirred a volley of such claims. The beginning of the War in Iraq provoked a new round of them. What shall we say?

Armageddon (literally, “Har-Magedon”) appears only once in the Bible (Rev. 16:16). It means “mountain or hill of Megiddo” and refers to a man-made hill in central Palestine. For centuries it was fortified and served as a fortress, giving its occupants a commanding view and control of the Valley of Jezreel. This valley is the most ancient and frequently-used of all battlefields. The “Battle of Armageddon” that the speculators so much dote on will supposedly involve the military forces of all nations (200 million Orientals alone, according to Hal Lindsey, author of The Late, Great Planet, Earth). Lindsey and others, on the basis of their misinterpretation of Revelation 14:20, declare that the blood from this war will be horse-bridle deep (cir. 4 ft.) for two hundred miles north and south of Jerusalem. These pitiful prognosticators also mistake Jesus’ warnings about “wars and rumors of wars” and like statements (Mat. 24:6-7) as “signs of the times” for the Lord’s coming. (Actually, they apply only to the A.D. 70 destruction of Jerusalem.)

Jesus said in the same chapter that neither He nor the angels can know when He would return (vv. 36, 42, 44).

I have stood on the mound of Megiddo on two separate occasions and surveyed its ancient battlefield-plain below. It measures about fourteen by twenty miles, hardly enough area for a world war or an all-nation conflict. Armageddon is a symbolic term referring to the coming of Christ in final judgment. It does not refer to literal warfare or physical armies. Do not be disturbed by the time-guessers. They know no more about when Christ will come than does our dog, “Trixie.” They may all be sincere, but they are all false prophets.

904 Kristen Lane; Paris, KY 40361

908 Imperial Drive; Denton, TX 76201
Your preacher has personal issues with which he must contend. He sometimes has trouble with his children, his wife, or his neighbors. Sometimes he is sick. Sometimes he is tired. Sometimes these issues work to put him in a “bad mood.” He tries not to show it. He does his very best to do his job despite such obstacles. But the fact remains that he faces obstacles. The obstacles that potentially prevent you from being happy and carefree are the same for him. Again, he is not at liberty to allow these obstacles to keep him from his duties, but they are there nonetheless. This is true of all preachers.

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“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Phi. 4:13). This passage of Scripture was written long before Norman Vincent Peale ever thought of writing a self-help book. Today there are so many books to help us know how to reach our goals, to be a success in the world, to develop the right attitudes. There are books that tell us not to let anything stand in our way; or turn us aside from our goals. Books such as these have great sale value. If there is such an interest in these matters of a worldly nature (and apparently there is); then why can we not use the same concept in spiritual matters. One of my least favorite phrases to hear is “I Can’t” or “We Can’t.” There are many good works that the church can be a part of but too many times “I” or “We can’t” stops them from being done. However, I want to think more in this article about those who never become a New Testament Christian because of the “I can’t” attitude. “I can’t leave the religion of my parents.” “I don’t think I can live the Christian life.” “I am not good enough.” God did not accept the excuses of Moses and neither will He accept ours. Let us have the attitude of Paul as stated above in Philippians 4:13. Whether it is in becoming a New Testament Christian or fulfilling our Christian duty. Do not delay; let us assist you today in obeying the Gospel of Christ.

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Your preacher forgets things. Even if everyone wrote everything down and gave it to him, he would still forget something along the way. Not everyone does write everything down and hand it to him. Sometimes he will hear about three or four things that he needs to remember right before delivering a forty or fifty-minute lesson—when his thoughts are focused on the material to be discussed and not on remembering something else (unrelated to the business at hand). Sometimes immediately after delivering such a lesson three or four people will tell him things to be remembered—not written down—when he is tired and mentally drained. He will forget. Get rid of him and bring another one in if you wish, but that one will forget things also.

Your preacher gets his feelings hurt. He may try not to show it, but he has feelings just like everyone else. People say hurtful things and he tries to smile and shake their hands and act like everything is OK, but in his heart he hurts just as anyone else would if they were in his shoes. Unlike some, he is not at liberty to take his hurt feelings and stay away from the assembly for a few weeks to “make a point”—but he is sometimes just as hurt as those who do. He deals with it by prayer, study, and meditation. All preachers are basically this way. There are some worse than others, but none are above hurt feelings.
Instrumental Music in Worship

Ken Chumbley

With some apostate congregations introducing instrumental music into their worship and the move among others to fellowship those in the Independent Christian Church (Churches of Christ Instrumental), there has been renewed discussion concerning the matter. Some have suggested that one of the strongest arguments in opposition to the use of instrumental music in worship is good acappella singing.

I strongly disagree with that idea. It is not one of the strongest arguments against the use of instrumental music in worship. In reality, it is not an argument at all. While singing acappella can be beautiful, and we should do our very best as we worship God in song, it does nothing to show that such is the only form of praise in worship that is approved by God. Indeed, it does not even show that such is an acceptable means of praise to God.

The strongest argument—in reality, the sole argument—is that singing, without instrumental accompaniment is the only form of acceptable praise to God. It is the only one that is authorized by God. Everything that we do is to be done by the authority of God (Col. 3:17). Thus, since singing is what is authorized, that is what we must do. The use of instrumental music in addition to, or apart from singing does not have the authority of God. Those who choose to use instrumental music violate the will of God, and their worship becomes vain (Mat. 15:9)—because its use is of the doctrine and commandments of men.

Let us go back to the argument that “good acappella singing” proves that it is acceptable to God. Does that prove, then, that poor acappella singing is not acceptable to God? If that were true, then those who cannot sing well should be silent in our worship in song, and only those with excellent voices who can flawlessly maintain the right pitch should
The Missing Lamps

In a certain mountain village in Europe several centuries ago, a nobleman wondered what legacy he would leave to his townspeople. At last he decided to build them a church building. No one saw the completed plans for the building until it was finished. When the people gathered, they marveled at its beauty and completeness. Then someone asked, “But where are the lamps? How will they be lighted?”

The nobleman pointed to some brackets in the walls. Then he gave to each family a lamp that they were to bring with them each time they came to worship. “Each time you are here, the area where you will be seated will be lighted,” the nobleman said. “Each time you are not here, that area will be dark. This is to remind you that whenever you fail to come to the assembly, some part of God’s house will be dark.” Is your area often dark?

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Author Unknown

Trifling with the name of God! Speaking of God, the Bible says, “Holy and reverend is his name” (Psa. 111:9). God’s name is not to be used as an expression in an exclamation or as an utterance in time of excitement. More respect is demanded by scoffing at Christians and the church of Christ! Christ shed His blood for His church (Acts 20:28), and yet many today scoff at the church of Christ while exalting man-made denominations. How is it that most people are convinced that the name Baptist, Presbyterian, Methodist, or Lutheran is scriptural (where is the Scripture) and the name church of Christ is man-made (Rom. 16:16)? A child of God is called a Christian in the Bible (Acts 11:26; cf. Acts 26:28; 1 Pet. 4:16) and not a Catholic, Mormon, Quaker, Nazarene, Episcopalian, Pentecostal, or such like!

The Bible does not reveal that God approves of many churches, and that God is happy when man becomes a member of any church. God does promise to uphold religious groups He has not authorized (Mat. 15:13). The Bible also declares there is but one church of which Jesus Christ is the head and Savior of the body (Eph. 4:4; 1:22-23; 5:23). One who obeys the Gospel plan of salvation (Rom. 10:17; Heb. 11:6; Luke 13:3; Rom. 10:10; Acts 2:38) instead of man’s unscriptural plan of faith only (Jam. 2:24) is added to the church of Christ by the Lord (Acts 2:47).

Neglecting the Word of God! God’s Word is likened unto “a lamp unto my feet, And light unto my path” (Psa. 119:105). Man does not “live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Mat. 4:4). The Word of God has the power to save the soul (Jam. 1:21). The Word of God sanctifies (1 Tim. 4:5) and builds up the child of God (Acts 20:32). To accomplish such, however, the Word of God must be studied (2 Tim. 2:15—KJV). So many today either reject or desire to avoid Bible truths, so they purposely do not study the Holy Scriptures! The Word of God is to be loved and not hated or despised. Neglect of Christ and His Word will cost one his soul (John 12:48).

By scoffing at Christians and the church of Christ! Christ shed His blood for His church (Acts 20:28), and yet many today scoff at the church of Christ while exalting man-made denominations. How is it that most people are convinced that the name Baptist, Presbyterian, Methodist, or Lutheran is scriptural (where is the Scripture) and the name church of Christ is man-made (Rom. 16:16)? A child of God is called a Christian in the Bible (Acts 11:26; cf. Acts 26:28; 1 Pet. 4:16) and not a Catholic, Mormon, Quaker, Nazarene, Episcopalian, Pentecostal, or such like!

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Paris, TX 75460

Antipathy Against God

Marvin Weir

The apostle Paul through the Holy Spirit describes so well the condition of so many minds today in saying, “the mind of the flesh is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be: and they that are in the flesh cannot please God” (Rom. 8:7-8). A mind such as Paul describes is concerned only with the material pleasures of this life and has no regard for spiritual matters. Enmity means “hatred or ill will.” A synonym for enmity is antipathy, and this word conveys the idea of repugnance, aversion, dislike, and “a desire to avoid or reject.” Paul does not, however, teach in Romans 8:7 the false doctrine and “a desire to avoid or reject.” Paul does not, however, teach in Romans 8:7 the false doctrine of “hereditary total depravity” subscribed to by most denominations today. The “mind of the flesh” should not be twisted to teach that one is born with a depraved mind (cf. Eze. 18:20; Mat. 19:14). Paul refers to one whose mind submits to the carnal and fleshly rather than the fruit of the Spirit and the spiritual. Denominations today are more faithful to follow the erroneous teachings of men than the truthful teaching of God. Coffman proves this to be the case. He says: “The effects of man’s unscriptural plan of faith only is that man becomes a member of any church. God does promise to uphold religious groups He has not authorized (Mat. 15:13). The Bible also declares there is but one church of which Jesus Christ is the head and Savior of the body (Eph. 4:4; 1:22-23; 5:23). One who obeys the Gospel plan of salvation (Rom. 10:17; Heb. 11:6; Luke 13:3; Rom. 10:10; Acts 2:38) instead of man’s unscriptural plan of faith only (Jam. 2:24) is added to the church of Christ by the Lord (Acts 2:47).

Neglecting the Word of God! God’s Word is likened unto “a lamp unto my feet, And light unto my path” (Psa. 119:105). Man does not “live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Mat. 4:4). The Word of God has the power to save the soul (Jam. 1:21). The Word of God sanctifies (1 Tim. 4:5) and builds up the child of God (Acts 20:32). To accomplish such, however, the Word of God must be studied (2 Tim. 2:15—KJV). So many today either reject or desire to avoid Bible truths, so they purposely do not study the Holy Scriptures! The Word of God is to be loved and not hated or despised. Neglect of Christ and His Word will cost one his soul (John 12:48).

By scoffing at Christians and the church of Christ! Christ shed His blood for His church (Acts 20:28), and yet many today scoff at the church of Christ while exalting man-made denominations. How is it that most people are convinced that the name Baptist, Presbyterian, Methodist, or Lutheran is scriptural (where is the Scripture) and the name church of Christ is man-made (Rom. 16:16)? A child of God is called a Christian in the Bible (Acts 11:26; cf. Acts 26:28; 1 Pet. 4:16) and not a Catholic, Mormon, Quaker, Nazarene, Episcopalian, Pentecostal, or such like!

The Bible does not reveal that God approves of many churches, and that God is happy when man becomes a member of any church. God does promise to uphold religious groups He has not authorized (Mat. 15:13). The Bible also declares there is but one church of which Jesus Christ is the head and Savior of the body (Eph. 4:4; 1:22-23; 5:23). One who obeys the Gospel plan of salvation (Rom. 10:17; Heb. 11:6; Luke 13:3; Rom. 10:10; Acts 2:38) instead of man’s unscriptural plan of faith only (Jam. 2:24) is added to the church of Christ by the Lord (Acts 2:47).

815 42nd Street SW
Paris, TX 75460
Antipathy Against God

Marvin Weir

The apostle Paul through the Holy Spirit describes so well the condition of so many minds today in saying, “the mind of the flesh is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be: and they that are in the flesh cannot please God” (Rom. 8:7-8). A mind (in spirit).

Let us worship God in spirit and in truth. Let us sing, for that is what God has authorized; let us also do so with the right attitude of heart and mind.

The Missing Lamps

In a certain mountain village in Europe several centuries ago, a nobleman wondered what legacy he would leave to his townspeople. At last he decided to build them a church building. No one saw the completed plans for the building until it was finished. When the people gathered, they marveled at its beauty and completeness. Then someone asked, “But where are the lamps? How will it be lighted?”

The nobleman pointed to some brackets in the walls. Then he gave to each family a lamp that they were to bring with them each time they came to worship. “Each time you are here the area where you are seated will be lighted,” the nobleman said. “Each time you are not here, that area will be dark. This is to remind you that whenever you fail to come to the assembly, some part of God’s house will be dark.” Is your area often dark?

The nobleman’s answer to this question is correct. The impos-
Instrumental Music in Worship

Ken Chumbley

With some apostate congregations introducing instrumental music into their worship and the move among others to fellowship those in the Independent Christian Church (Churches of Christ Instrumental), there has been renewed discussion concerning the matter. Some have suggested that one of the strongest arguments in opposition to the use of instrumental music in worship is good acappella singing.

I strongly disagree with that idea. It is not one of the strongest arguments against the use of instrumental music in worship. In reality, it is not an argument at all. While singing acappella can be beautiful, and we should do our very best as we worship God in song, it does nothing to show that such is the only form of praise in worship that is approved by God. Indeed, it does not even show that such is an acceptable means of praise to God.

The strongest argument—in reality, the sole argument—is that singing, without instrumental accompaniment is the only form of acceptable praise to God. It is the only one that is authorized by God. Everything that we do is to be done by the authority of God (Col. 3:17). Thus, since singing is what is authorized, that is what we must do. The use of instrumental music in addition to, or apart from singing does not have the authority of God. Those who choose to use instrumental music violate the will of God, and their worship becomes vain (Mat. 15:9)—because its use is of the doctrine and commandments of men.

Let us go back to the argument that “good acappella singing” proves that it is acceptable to God. Does that prove, then, that poor acappella singing is not acceptable to God? If that were true, then those who cannot sing well should be silent in our worship in song, and only those with excellent voices who can flawlessly maintain the right pitch should...
Defense by Flight
G. K. Wallace

Dunkirk now stands for victory in defeat. By retreating, Churchill was able to save the British Empire. It is not necessarily a mark of cowardice to flee. The wise general in the army calls it retreat. When Paul wrote to Timothy, he said, “But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness” (1 Tim. 6:11). There can be no safety from some sins except in flight. Youthful lusts are not to be wrestled with but fled from. Peter was weak when he was unafraid. When Jesus told His apostles, “it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad...” Peter answered and said unto him, “And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him: But their laying await was known of Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him. Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket” (Acts 9:23-25). A man will not flee if he is not afraid. There must be an apprehension of danger or there will be no flight. Oftentimes people perish because they have no sense of danger. Destruction is inevitable if we have no fear of what lies ahead. Jesus repeatedly raised the red flag by saying: “Take heed.” Paul carefully pointed out the works of the flesh and the consequences thereof in Galatians 6. In the Colossian letter, chapter three, Paul said, “Put to death [or crucify] your members which are upon the earth” (v. 5). Paul further warns by saying “Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall” (1 Cor. 10:12). It is not a mean motive to escape through fear. Fear sometimes is admirable prudence. Noah

Remember in your prayers:
Elaine Maxey          Malcolm Wooton
Al Flesher            Marilyn Hall
Marge Williams        William Weekley
Alice Williams        Lucille Staples
Bill & Iris Gaiaher   Fred Stancliff
Ella Hammac
Thomas Hammac (Ella Hammac’s son),
Nancy Travis (William Weekley’s daughter),
Wyatt Blancher (Henry and Paulette Born’s grandson; for more information: www.caringbridge.org — in the site name type Wyatt), and Kay Hollowell.

Reading/Invitation
November 7, 2007
Bible Reading: Elward Brantley
Invitation: Henry Born
November 14, 2007
Bible Reading: Ray Dodd
Invitation: Paul Brantley

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Beacon
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due to the secretary being on vacation.
Repent for the Remission of Sins? Who Sins Today?
Everyone Is Ok: I’m Ok, You’re OK...
Johnny Oxendine

There are a lot of people, maybe some of our own friends, who say they love God, believe in Jesus, and are alright the way they are right now. What, however, does the Bible say about such thinking? The Bible is filled with the command to repent. The basic task of the prophets, God's spokesmen in times past, was to get the people to repent. Over and over again in their writings is the command to “repent.” The message of Jesus, while He was on the earth, was one of repentance. Jesus, while He was on the earth, was one of repentance. When He was on the earth, He was one of repentance. When He was on the earth, He was one of repentance. When He was on the earth, He was one of repentance.

Repentance was part of the fundamental message that after the death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus was to be sounded out to Jews and Gentiles in every nation.

Then He said to them, “These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.” And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. Then He said to them, “Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem (Luke 24:44-47).

The apostle Paul, while standing on Mars Hill and preaching to the Athenians, said, “Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead” (Acts 17:30-31). The apostle Peter, writing in 2 Peter 3:9, said, “The Lord is not slack concerning its own “seed” of doctrine. These seeds contain its own “seed” of doctrine. These seeds contain its own “seed” of doctrine. These seeds contain its own “seed” of doctrine. These seeds contain.

Grapes of Thorns?
Dub McClish

In the process of warning about false prophets, Jesus said, “By their fruits ye shall know them. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?” (Mat. 7:15-16). Jesus made a spiritual application of a general, axiomatic principle, effective from the creation: Each form of life reproduces its own kind and only its own kind. Paul stated it succinctly: “for whatsoever is sown in thorns, that shall also reap thorns” (Gal. 6:7), again applying the principle to a spiritual issue. As just as briars do not produce grapes, nor thistles figs, monkeys do not come from snake “seeds,” and men do not come from monkey “seeds.” God placed the power of life in the seed of each kind and species.

As plant, animal, and human seeds reproduce only after their kind, so do “seeds” in religion. Jesus identified the “seed” of His kingdom, the church, as “the word of God” (Luke 8:11). This seed (variously called in the New Testament: “the faith,” “the truth,” “the doctrine of Christ,” “the law of Christ,” et al.) contains the power to reproduce the spiritual life and the characteristics that reside in it—and only those same spiritual traits.

Each religious order and system of men has its own “seed” of doctrine. These seeds contain the distinctive qualities peculiar to their respective systems, which will reproduce only after their own kind. The Law-of-Moses “seed” produces only Judaism, never Islam. The Koran “seed” produces only Muslims, never Buddhists or Jews. Hindu “seeds” cannot produce Confucians. Surely, the foregoing statements are incontrovertible.

Likewise, it is not possible for one to become a Christian by obeying the Law of Moses. It is part of the Bible and points toward the Christ and Christianity in hundreds of prophetic types and symbols, but its “seed” is distinct from the New Testament. Only the New Testament “seed” produces Christians—and that is all it produces.

The “seed principle” explains the innumerable divisions in “Christendom.” Baptist “seed” does not produce Roman Catholics or Episcopalians. Presbyterian “seed” does not produce Nazarenes, Methodists, or Disciples of Christ.

Should we be surprised at the relentless emphasis in the Word of God on keeping the “seed” (i.e., doctrine) pure (e.g., John 14:15; Gal. 1:6-9; 2 Tim. 2:2; 4:1-4; Rev. 22:18-19)?

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“moved with godly fear, prepared an ark” (Heb. 11:7). We are slow to perceive some dangers. Dangers connected with what men call “sweet sin” are most destructive. A sin that is born of a boastful mind or which is countenanced by the example of others is very dangerous. The most dangerous and poisonous serpents in our land are less likely to be seen. In fleeing we are simply moving toward God, our strength for protection. Let us flee unto God, and like David who said, “O God; attend unto my prayer. From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I. For thou hast been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy. I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever: I will trust in the covert of thy wings” (Psa. 61:1-4).

Deceased

Repent for the Remission of Sins? Who Sins Today? Everyone Is Ok: I’m Ok, You’re OK...

Johnny Oxendine

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Repentance was part of the fundamental message that after the death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus was to be sounded out to Jews and Gentiles in every nation.

Then He said to them, “These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.” And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. Then He said to them, “Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem (Luke 24:44-47).

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As we have said many times, repentance is “the change of mind of those who have begun to abide their errors and misdeeds, and have determined to enter upon a better course of life, so that it embraces both a recognition of sin and sorrow for it and hearty amendment, the tokens and effects of which are good deeds” (J. H. Thayer, Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, p. 406). W. E. Vine defines it by stating: “In the New Testament the subject chiefly has reference to repentance from sin, and this change of mind involves both a turning from sin and a turning to God” (Vine’s Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, p. 963).

Repentance is a turning. Spiritually, it is turning from sin and the pursuit of sin and turning to God and the pursuit of righteousness. It is the change of mind that causes one to forsake living in and for sin and to desire to live for God and in accordance with His will. All people need to realize that the opportunity to repent is a blessing (Acts 11:18). Every person must heed God’s call to repent by reading and hearing His Word, allowing it to produce godly sorrow in their heart, and by living their life in obedience to the will of God. If you need to repent, though it may be difficult to do so, do it today.

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Grapes of Thorns? Dub McClish

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G. K. Wallace

Dunkirk now stands for victory in defeat. By retreating, Churchill was able to save the British Empire. It is not necessarily a mark of cowardice to flee. The wise general in the army calls it retreat. When Paul wrote to Timothy, he said, “But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness” (1 Tim. 6:11). There can be no safety from some sins except in flight. Youthful lusts are not to be wrestled with but fled from. Peter was weak when he was unafraid. When Jesus told His apostles, “it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad... Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended” (Mat. 26:31-34). The apostle Paul was a brave man, but he knew when it was time to run away. “And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him: But their laying wait was known of Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him. Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket” (Acts 9:23-25). A man will not flee if he is not afraid. There must be an apprehension of danger or there will be no flight. Oftentimes people perish because they have no sense of danger. Destruction is inevitable if we have no fear of what lies ahead. Jesus repeated-

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Beacon
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Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Elaine Maxey
Al Flesher
Marge Williams
Alice Williams
Bill & Iris Gallacher
Theresa Hamma
Ella Hamma
Thomas Hamma
Nancy Travis
Wyatt Blancher
Bill & Iris Gallacher
Henry and Paulette Born’s grandson; for more information: www.caringbridge.org — in the site name type Wyatt, and Kay Hollowell.

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Bible Reading: Ray Dodd
Invitation: Paul Brantley

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Paul Brantley, Fred Stancliff
MINISTER:
Henry Born, Edward Brantley, Michael Hatcher
DEACONS:
Bill Crowe, James Loy

MEETING TIMES
SUNDAY:
9:00 A.M. BIBLE CLASSES
10:00 A.M., 6:00 P.M. WORSHIP
WEDNESDAY: 7:00 P.M.
Urgency in Forsaking Sin
Douglas Hoff

The Bible is full of many valuable lessons. A study of God's Word shows sin is dangerous, deceptive, and destructive. That is why it is important to quickly leave Satan's snare (1 Tim. 3:7; 2 Tim. 2:26). The longer a soul remains trapped in sin, the harder it is to get free of its hold. Wise people will recognize this and do their best to avoid sin in the first place. When a person has sinned, he should exercise urgency in forsaking it for his soul's sake.

The generation of Israelites that forsook Egypt and followed Moses through the wilderness reveals the true nature of sin. They had heard the voice of God at Mt. Sinai and promised to obey (Exo. 19:8; Deu. 5:22-29). However, with few exceptions, they did not. The writer of Hebrews said this about them:

"Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: "Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, In the day of trial in the wilderness. Where your fathers tested Me, tried Me, And saw My works forty years. Therefore I was angry with that generation, And said, 'They always go astray in their heart, And they have not known My ways.' So I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest.' " Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; but exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin (Heb. 3:7-13—NKJV).

Notice that unbelief is called evil. It leads one to depart from God. The cure for unbelief is exhortation using God's Word. The exhortations need to be frequent (even daily). The time for such reminders and encouragement is now—not tomorrow or the next day. Tomorrow may not come (Pro. 27:1). When listening to God's Word one must choose to
We Cannot Understand the Bible Alike

Marvin L. Weir

How many times have you heard someone make a statement similar to the one above? Think about it! The Bible is God’s revelation to all people. God did not intend for some people to understand the Bible and other people to misunderstand it. The apostle Paul identifies one of man’s greatest problems in saying: “And for this cause we also thank God, that, when ye came to us, we might have the word of consolation, not of confusion” (2 Cor. 12:17). It is the inspired Word, upon condemning religious division among believers, states that brethren are to ‘“contend earnestly for the faith which was once delivered unto all the saints”’ (Jude 3). Our Lord delivered but “one faith,” also called “the gospel,” which He commanded to be preached to every person in the world (Rom. 1:16; 10:14; 15:13). What an indictment against God it is if one does not believe that all who so desire can understand the Bible alike! Think about it! If an all wise, all loving, and all powerful God does not give us a Book that we can all understand alike it means that He did not want to do so, and such a view of God casts doubt on His goodness and mercy.

2 Peter 1:19-21

“We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (2 Pet. 1:19-21).
obey or he will disobey and harden his heart.

Sin is deceptive and hardens one’s heart to the outcome. Sin says, “There’s no hurry!” However, staying in sin makes it harder to leave (Pro. 28:14; 29:1). It is truly amazing how often man will justify his sin. At first, he may admit it is wrong but thinks it is not too bad. In fact, the sinner often thinks he can “manage” his sin. What a lie! At that point, one has engaged in self deception and is on the way to being thoroughly ensnared by Satan. Choosing to remain in sin can dull the senses to the soul’s destruction. When the heart becomes hardened, it no longer feels the pangs of a tender conscience. This is why it is so dangerous to play with sin. Even longer feels the pangs of a tender conscience. This has engaged in self deception and is on the way to be “treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.” Indeed, this is a terrible condition to be in.

Not surprisingly, Jesus had a lot to say about hardness of heart. On one occasion the Lord was both angered and grieved by the hardness of hearts among the people (Mark 3:5). Even the disciples suffered from this problem. This, in turn, led them not to understand a spiritual point Jesus was making (Mark 6:52; 8:17). After the resurrection the Lord rebuked the eleven for their hardness of heart because they did not believe those who had seen him after he had risen (Mark 16:14).

Sadly, the hard hearted will not enter God’s promised rest (heaven) because of sin and unbelief (Heb. 4:7-9).Brethren, take heed to yourselves. If you are in sin right now, get out while you still have time.

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We Cannot Understand the Bible Alike

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People can improve their understanding in biblical matters if they so desire. In fact, a burning desire to know the will of God is the key that will unlock the Bible’s spiritual treasure chest. One’s attitude must be that he desires to submit to the Father’s will in all areas. So many people today seek to please God only if it pleases them! If it pleases them to sing religious songs in praise to God with the accompaniment of an instrument, they do so. If it pleases them to have choirs and “praise teams” sing for them, they do so. If it pleases them to de-emphasize the Bible and emphasize man’s social problems, they do so. If it pleases them to ignore God’s criteria for worship and poll man to see what type of worship pleases him, they do so. An attitude that exchanges “a thus saith the Lord” for “this is what makes me happy” is what keeps people from understanding the Bible alike.

The Bible is God’s revelation, not man’s (2 Pet. 1:21), and it contains His “perfect will” (Rom. 12:2). All who have “the perfect law, the law of liberty” (Jam. 1:25) can understand the Bible alike. Jesus prayed “that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee” (John 17:21). Paul reminds all to “speak the same thing” and to be “per-fected together in the same mind and in the same judgment” (1 Cor. 1:10). Paul also commands the brethren at Rome to “mark them that are causing the divisions and occasions of stumbling, contrary to the doctrine which ye learned: and turn away from them” (Rom. 16:17). Is it not true that one would have to understand that one is acting and teaching differently from what the Bibles teaches in order to carry out this command?

The inspired Word, upon condemning religious division among believers, states that brethren are to “contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3). Our Lord delivered but “one faith,” also called “the gospel,” which He commanded to be preached to every person in the world (Heb. 1:1-2; Eph. 4:5; Mark 16:15-16). These truths no one can rightly deny!

What an indictment against God it is if one does not believe that all who so desire can understand the Bible alike! Think about it! If an all wise, all loving, and all powerful God does not give us a Book that we can all understand alike it means that He did not want to do so, and such a view of God casts doubt on His goodness and mercy.

The Bible does not leave one wondering what God expects of him. To the Ephesians brethren Paul said, “Wherefore be ye not foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is” (Eph. 5:17). Moses says to God’s people long ago regarding statutes and ordinances, “Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples, that shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people” (Deu. 4:6; 8:1). Solomon said, “The wisdom of the prudent is to understand his way; But the folly of fools is deceit” (Pro. 14:8). It is no wonder that God commands us to “buy the truth, and sell it not” as “wisdom, and instruction, and understanding” (Pro. 23:23) come from the truth! The God that we are to worship and serve is “not a God of confusion” (1 Cor. 14:33). It is the doctrines and commandments of men that cause division and confusion—not the inspired Word of God!

To understand the Bible alike people must not “bind” or “loose” where God has not “bound” or “loosed” (Mat. 16:19). One cannot “add to” or “take from” the commandments that God has given to His people (Deu. 4:2; Rev. 22:18-19). One must teach and accept the “whole counsel” of God on every subject (Acts 20:27). Partial obedience to the will of God will not suffice. King Saul is a case in point as he boldly declares to Samuel, “I have performed the commandment of Jehovah” (1 Sam. 15:13). God’s prophet replies, “What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?” (1 Sam. 15:14). God had said, “Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass” (1 Sam. 15:3). Samuel understood God, and so did King Saul—Saul simply elected to do his own thing, and many people today choose to do as did Saul.

815 42nd Street SW; Paris, TX 75460
Urgency in Forsaking Sin
Douglas Hoff

The Bible is full of many valuable lessons. A study of God’s Word shows sin is dangerous, deceptively destructive. That is why it is important to quickly leave Satan’s snare (1 Tim. 3:7; 2 Tim. 2:26). The longer a soul remains trapped in sin, the harder it is to get free of its hold. Wise people will recognize this and do their best to avoid sin in the first place. When a person has sinned, he should exercise urgency in forsaking it for his soul’s sake. The generation of Israelites that forsook Egypt and followed Moses through the wilderness reveals the true nature of sin. They had heard the voice of God at Mt. Sinai and promised to obey (Exo. 19:8; Deu. 5:22-29). However, with few exceptions, they did not. The writer of Hebrews said this about them:

Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: “Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, In the day of trial in the wilderness. Where your fathers tested Me, tried Me, And saw My works forty years. Therefore I was angry with that generation, And said, ‘They always go astray in their heart, And they have not known My ways.’ So I swore in My wrath, ‘They shall not enter My rest.’ ” Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; but exhort one another daily, while it is called “Today,” lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin (Heb. 3:7-13—NKJV).

Notice that unbelief is called evil. It leads one to depart from God. The cure for unbelief is exhortation using God’s Word. The exhortations need to be frequent (even daily). The time for such reminders and encouragement is now—not tomorrow or the next day. Tomorrow may not come (Pro. 27:1). When listening to God’s Word one must choose to
Once Saved, Always Saved

Jess Whitlock

Years ago I met P. D. Ballard in public debate. He affirmed the proposition: “The Scriptures teach that a born again child of God, one redeemed by the blood of Christ, cannot sin and be lost in hell.” Of course, I had signed to deny his Baptist doctrine. The Bible account of Acts 8 related that Simon the sorcerer was a child of God’s who so sinned that he was in a lost state. “Then Simon himself believe also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done” (v. 13). However, Peter, a Holy Spirit inspired apostle, said that Simon had a heart “not right in the sight of God” (v. 21), and that Simon was “in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity” (v. 23). Recall that between these two statements (about Simon) Peter warned, “Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee” (v. 22).

My opponent argued that Simon was never really saved. Advocates of the “once saved, always saved” error, contend that Simon really did not believe. They contend that if he had been saved, he could not have been in a lost state again! This is a good time to have them explain the language of 2 Peter 2:20-22. But, they never succeed against Peter in either instance, for Peter’s argument is to this day unanswered and unanswerable.

Christ stated: “He that believeth in Greek] and is baptized in Greek] shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:16). Jesus Christ stated the one who believes and is baptized shall be “saved.” Now, turn to Acts 8:13 and note that Simon the sorcerer “believed” and was “baptized.” While there is a difference in the tense of the Greek verb “believe” the words are identical. The Holy Spirit used the words of Jesus in Acts 8:13 to tell us what Simon did. He
does not tell us that Simon “pretended to believe.” What did Jesus say the condition of a man would be who “believed” and was “baptized”? Jesus said that person would be saved! After having been saved by his obedience to the teaching of Christ, Simon so sinned as to be in a lost condition. Peter, inspired of the Holy Spirit, so affirmed in Acts 8:21ff.

Majority or Minority Rule?
Ken Chumbley

A number of years ago I received a magazine that contained a cartoon depicting a supposed business meeting of some denominational group. The cartoon had one of the men at the meeting making this statement: “Our by-laws specifically state that the will of God cannot be overturned without a two-thirds majority.” This was meant to be amusing, and in a way it was. However, as I pondered the cartoon, I realized that there was a serious message there.

Many denominational churches have by-laws that govern the functioning of the congregation within the confines of their denominational hierarchies. These by-laws often uphold things that are in direct conflict with the teaching of the Bible, as do their denominational creeds. Thus, it appears that many have had the necessary two-thirds majority to change God’s will! The authority of God’s Word, in those circumstances, is based upon the agreement of the majority of the members. Thus, it appears that the will of God cannot be overturned without a two-thirds majority. The Bible clearly denounces those who add to or take away from the word of God (Deu. 4:2, 12:32; Pro. 30:6; Rev. 22:18). It also makes clear that those who would teach as doctrines the commandments of men make their worship vain (Mat. 15:9). Let us be sure that the Word alone is preached at each congregation (2 Tim. 1:13) and that the will of God is never overturned, by a two-thirds majority, or by a minority, or in any other way.

Confusing Messages
Lee Moses

There are a number of confusing messages being widely propagated through the world today. Many of these promoted by very well-meaning people who apparently have not considered the logical consequences of their messages. Let the reader consider some of these messages.

1. Drink responsibly. Is this possible? One loses his sense of responsibility when he drinks. Yet, this is the message given in advertisements regularly seen on television. Recommending that one drink moderately, or responsibly, is still a recommendation for him to drink. A far wiser counsel is found in the book of Proverbs: “Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright” (Pro. 23:31). One should make every effort to avoid alcoholic beverages in any amount.

How can one be demonstrating responsibility when he is purposely consuming a beverage specifically designed to rob him of his good sense?

2. Don’t drink and drive. This is a slogan widely heard during times of pervasive imbibing, such as the holiday season and the high school prom season. However, is it acceptable for one to drink as long as he does not take the wheel of an automobile? By this slogan the idea is given that as long as someone has a “designated driver,” he then has license to designate himself to drive himself and others. However, drinking without driving can be just as injurious to one’s health, not to mention one’s spiritual being. First Corinthians 6:9-10 still teaches that drunkards shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

3. Don’t drink or smoke if you are underage. There are activities in which adults may acceptably take part, but are unacceptable for children—for example, driving an automobile. There are activities which are particularly unsafe for children, but drinking and smoking are neither safe for children nor adults. What kind of message is an adult sending to a child when the adult who drinks or smokes tries to correct the child engaging in the same harmful activities? “Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother’s eye” (Mat. 7:5).

4. Practice safe sex. This slogan truly came into its own when AIDS first became a widespread problem in the 1980s. Parents and schools alike are teaching children to practice “safe sex.” However, the only true way to remain safe from sexually transmitted diseases is to abstain from sexual immorality. Strange, but this is exactly what God teaches mankind to do: “Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body” (1 Cor. 6:18).

One does not have to accept confusing messages as truth. If one does become distracted by these messages he can turn to God’s message of absolute truth: “For God is not the author of confusion” (1 Cor. 14:33).

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Deuteronomy 4:2

“Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you.”

Who has given any individual or group of individuals the right to tamper with God’s Word? Indeed, the Bible clearly denounces those who add to or take away from the word of God (Deu. 4:2, 12:32; Pro. 30:6; Rev. 22:18). It also makes clear that those who would teach as doctrines the commandments of men make their worship vain (Mat. 15:9). Let us be sure that the Word alone is preached at each congregation (2 Tim. 1:13) and that the will of God is never overturned, by a two-thirds majority, or by a minority, or in any other way.

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Does the Bible teach that a person can so sin, after having been saved, to then be lost in God’s sight? It certainly does. Simon is only one example of many. Therefore, the manmade doctrine of the eternal security of the believer is seen to be false. The Bible does not teach the impossibility of apostasy, but the possibility of apostasy.

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**Death, Be Not Proud**

**Lavonne McClish**

The above title is that of a book by John Gunther chronicling the illness (a brain tumor) and death of his young son. I like to hope that death will not conquer me, as this quotation suggests, but it is unwise to boast of what I will do when I have not yet been tried (as Ahab said to Benhadad, “Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off”—1 Kin. 20:11). Peter learned this lesson the hard way (Mat. 26:33-35, 69-75), and I hope I have learned and continue to learn from him.

I also remember a preacher who, during my childhood and teen years, was much in demand for Gospel meetings. He had a talent for arousing people’s emotions and always had many responses. He constantly preached that we should never fear death, that death is a release from the troubles of this world, that death for the faithful means entry into Heaven—not the end, but the beginning. He admonished others, even gently rebuking them for their fear; but then when he was diagnosed with terminal cancer, he was absolutely terrified. I felt sorry for him for more than one reason. First, the fact that his life was cut short and that he had to suffer was sad. Second, such unconcealed fear must have been most humiliating after he had so boldly preached to others.

Having said that, we know that pain, sorrow, discouragement, and death are part of this life. These are not a punishment for our sins, but they happen because we are human beings (Rom. 5:12). As God allowed Job to be tried and tested, He will allow us to be tried, tested, and proved also (Job 5:6-7; 13:15; 14:1). Since this is without a doubt true, let us study some ways to deal with this pain and sorrow and with the knowledge that death is not far away.

In July of 2004, I was diagnosed with Mantle Cell Lymphoma, a very rare and very aggressive form of non-Hodgkins Lymphoma. From one viewpoint, it was almost a relief, because I had felt
I have been blessed to have the prayers of Christians literally all over the world. I have been mentioned in countless church bulletins and oral announcements; some still include me regularly, after all this time. I have lost count of the cards, e-mails, letters, and phone calls I have received and still receive. Whenever I start feeling sorry for myself, I try to remember those who care about me. I also know there are many who are much worse off than I am. I keep a list, and I try to send cards, e-mails, and notes often to encourage others who are sick, suffering, or in despair. When my mind is on other people, it is more difficult to think about myself (Rom. 12:10; 1 Cor. 13:4-5; Jam. 2:8).

I have also been blessed with a husband who loves me and who has cared for me faithfully and uncomplainingly throughout this ordeal. I realize many are not so blessed. We have so much for which to be thankful in that he is in excellent health. When I was undergoing chemotherapy, he would take his laptop computer and work while my treatments were going on. He does the same whenever I have my semi-annual PET scans. He has had to take over more of the chores than he was accustomed to doing, since my strength will not stretch to cover very much. Our children’s love and care have been a source of strength, as well. I include Paige, our granddaughter who lived with us for many years, who was here to help me in so many ways, and was unflaggingly kind, generous, and patient.

One of the most valuable lessons I have learned from my illness is the necessity of determining what is important and what is less so. I try to use my strength and my time to do things that will matter for my family and others, both now and for eternity. I remind myself not to worry about things that are insignificant (some would say I carry that political to extremes when it comes to housekeeping!). I am very conscious of the example I am setting, and continually monitor my speech accordingly.

God has promised that He would be with me in all aspects of my life (Psa. 23:4). He did not promise that I would not have to suffer or that I would not die prematurely. I have been surprised at the people who have assured me that God will answer my prayers, meaning He will spare me if I pray fervently. “Prayer works,” they tell me. Yes, God will answer my prayers; I do not doubt that God is able to deliver me, but why should I seek special treatment? If God could allow His own Son to suffer a horrible death and not intervene, even when that Son cried and begged for deliverance (Mat. 26:39; Heb. 5:7), why should I think I am better than Jesus Christ? God told Paul, when he asked that his “thorn” be removed, “My grace is sufficient for thee” (2 Cor. 12:7-9). I think of the three young Hebrews who told the king, “our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us... But if not...we will not serve thy gods” (Dan. 3:16-18).

Two verses of a beautiful folk song, “Wayfaring Stranger,” express our longing for a better place and our hope of the comfort it will provide (I quote from memory):

I am a poor wayfaring stranger, while trav’ling through this world of woe.
Yet there’s no sickness, toil, nor danger
In that bright land to which I go.
I know dark clouds will gather o’er me,
I know my way is rough and steep.
Yet beauteous fields lie just before me,
Where God’s redeemed their vigil keep.

As Abraham looked, so I am looking for a city whose builder and maker is God (Heb. 11:10). “And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away” (Rev. 21:4). What a beautiful description of what awaits the faithful! These things help me to be confident and unafraid, and encourage me when I am weak.

I hope these thoughts will be of help to others who are, like me, struggling with fear and discouragement.

The Thief in the Church

Someone has said, “The greatest challenge to faith is not intellectual at all, but rather shallow indifference.” As I see it, the greatest threat from within the church is not false doctrine, vile sins, or even the loss of faith, but rather simple indifference.

Indifference is “the thief in the church.” It robs the church of its time, our talents, and our support. Indifference kidnaps the members out of Bible school and worship, sans the enthusiasm of members, sabotages all kinds of good programs, and takes the pleasure out of serving Jesus. Indifference is the most difficult of all problems in the church to deal with. Many in the church are not against what we are trying to do, nor are they really for it. They and People change their minds. A man’s right to hold a certain view does not mean that view is right. One can be led to a fuller knowledge and understanding of the Scriptures. Christians can be “equipped” for fuller service and guided in fruitful ministries for the Lord. We can grow and mature and become more like Jesus. But not if we are indifferent!

Author Unknown
so bad for so long and no cause could be found. My relief, however, was short-lived when I began to research this disease. Because it was so newly isolated (from the other Lymphomas) and so rare, little research had been done on it and, consequently, few treatments were available. The survival rate was two to four years, according to the Internet information I found. I began to experience that sinking feeling!

I was sent to Baylor Hospital, Dallas, Texas. The oncologist/blood/bone marrow transplant specialist assigned to me outlined the basics of the disease with my husband Dub and me and then the proposed treatment, step by step. He said that, without treatment, I would be dead in six months; with treatment, maybe I would live two to four years. He felt very confident that we could beat the odds. He has always said “Don’t say it comes back, say when it will come back.” When I asked what we would do when it comes back, he replied, “We’ll hit it again!”

So I am truly thankful for Sammons Cancer Center, the staff, and my oncologist. The care—of every kind—that they have given me cannot be bought with money, and I know it has made all the difference in my attitude. They have inspired confidence.

There is some advantage in knowing that my death is likely to come sooner rather than later. It forces me to think about my life, changes I need to make, things I need to say and do, people whose forgiveness I may need to seek. We should be conscious at all times that death is certain: “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment” (Heb. 9:27), but there is nothing like a terminal illness to make one face the fact that death is not somewhere out there in the nebulous, distant future, but is before me in the here and now. Compared with a lifetime, it is imminent.

I have been blessed to have the prayers of Christians literally all over the world. I have been mentioned in countless church bulletins and oral announcements; some still include me regularly, after all this time. I have lost count of the cards, e-mails, letters, and phone calls I have received and still receive. Whenever I start feeling sorry for myself, I try to remember those who care about me. I also know there are many who are much worse off than I am. I keep a list, and I try to send cards, e-mails, and notes often to encourage others who are sick, suffering, or in despair. When my mind is on other people, it is more difficult to think about myself (Rom. 12:10; 1 Cor. 13:4-5; Jam. 2:8).

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Death, Be Not Proud
Lavonne McClish

The above title is that of a book by John Gunther chronicling the illness (a brain tumor) and death of his young son. I like to hope that death will not conquer me, as this quotation suggests, but it is unwise to boast of what I will do when I have not yet been tried (as Ahab said to Benhadad, “Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off”—1 Kin. 20:11). Peter learned this lesson the hard way (Mat. 26:33-35, 69-75), and I hope I have learned and continue to learn from him. I also remember a preacher who, during my childhood and teen years, was much in demand for Gospel meetings. He had a talent for arousing people’s emotions and always had many responses. He constantly preached that we should never fear death, that death is a release from the troubles of this world, that death for the faithful means entry into Heaven—not the end, but the beginning. He admonished others, even gently rebuking them for their fear; but then when he was diagnosed with terminal cancer, he was absolutely terrified. I felt sorry for him for more than one reason. First, the fact that his life was cut short and that he had to suffer was sad. Second, such unconcealed fear must have been most humiliating after he had so boldly preached to others.

Having said that, we know that pain, sorrow, discouragement, and death are part of this life. These are not a punishment for our sins, but they happen because we are human beings (Rom. 5:12). As God allowed Job to be tried and tested, He will allow us to be tried, tested, and proved also (Job 5:6-7; 13:15; 14:1). Since this is without a doubt true, let us study some ways to deal with this pain and sorrow and with the knowledge that death is not far away.

In July of 2004, I was diagnosed with Mantle Cell Lymphoma, a very rare and very aggressive form of non-Hodgkins Lymphoma. From one viewpoint, it was almost a relief, because I had felt
Some time ago CBS aired a movie titled “The Soul Collector.” It was about a heavenly being who collected souls. He was punished by being a human for 30 days. Then he was to go back to being a spirit. He falls in love with a woman. At the end of the movie he states he would give up eternity to live with the woman and her child. His wish was granted.

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the sight of Hollywood it is just one more example of the farce some individuals make of God and anything God related.

There is a lot about our souls we do not know. There is much about what happens after death and

Make plans to attend:
33rd Annual Bellview Lectureship
June 7-11, 2008
Preaching From
The Major Prophets

Wanted: Christians Who Can “Keep Rank”
Bill Jackson

In the book of 1 Chronicles a good portion of Scripture is given to the listing of David’s mighty men. Among those listed from the various tribes were men of Zebulun and Asher, etc., men expert in war and who “could keep rank.” Here is an early reference to discipline and such discipline as would insure success in combat (1 Chr. 12:33-38). Keeping rank—keeping order—was essential, for failure to do so not only reflected upon the individual soldier’s fidelity but also had an adverse effect upon others, to say nothing of providing the backbone—of the church: the members themselves. We need men and women of all ages who will “keep rank.” Members who rally behind Him Who is the head of the church (Col. 1:18), members who will seek first the Kingdom of God and the righteousness of God (Mat. 6:33), members who will present themselves as living sacrifices before God and who will prove in their lives what is well-pleasing to Him (Rom. 12:1-2), and members who will see themselves as lights in a dark and sinful world and do their utmost to reflect the Christ (Mat. 5:16) are those who “keep rank.” How much we need members who will “keep rank!”

Drawing again on the military background of our expression, an army either has those who “keep rank,” or it is not really an army; it is a mob! Discipline is the key. Whatever our place and our work in the kingdom, let us all do all we can in every way that we can to insure that we “keep rank” behind our Savior. Then, and only then, will we be pleasing to Him Who will one day judge us. How thankful we are for those, in this time of apostasy, who have not yet bowed the knee to Baal. Yea, bless those, Father, who “keep rank!”

Deceased

Narrow or Broad
Curtis L. E. Graves

Like many others I have a fondness for toy train sets. I like to visit places where these sets are on display. I have had various sets of my own through the years, but never of a very high quality. I found out quickly as a boy that you could not mix and match these various sets together very well. If the track is too wide or too narrow the train will not run. Therefore, it is very important that the track is just right for the train. Nothing more and nothing less. Sometimes we hear people say that we are too narrow in our teaching. Was Noah too narrow when he taught that unless you were in the ark you would not be saved? Was Samuel too narrow when he commanded Saul for sparing a few animals for sacrifices? Was God too narrow in His dealings with Nadab and Abihu or when He disallowed Moses from entering the Promised Land?

Our love on the other hand should be broad enough for all men. We should be broad in preaching the Gospel to every creature, “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15).

The truth of the matter is, we need to be as narrow or as broad as the Scripture allows us to be. In other words we are as narrow as Jesus is. Jesus was narrow in His view of truth (Mat. 15:6-9; John 8:32; 17:17), in His view of false teachers (Mat. 7:15-16; 13:22-23; 23), in His view of salvation (Mat. 7:13-14), in His view of worship (John 4:6-8, 21-24), and in His view about who He is and His authority (Mat. 7:28-29; 26:55-56, 63-64; 28:18). When we stand for the truth we are like the train where the wheels and the tracks are the same; they work together for good. Jesus is our perfect example and we should be as narrow minded as He is.

904 Kristen Lane; Paris, KY 40361
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(2) Preachers who will “keep rank” and recognize a loyalty to God and to the Word resulting in the charge ever before them: “preach the word!” (2 Tim. 4:2). We must admit that in so many places today preachers have broken rank and no longer give that certain biblical sound—backing up their points with a “thus saith the Lord.” In stating that the Word is the basis of judgment (John 12:48) and that the Word furnishes us completely unto every good work (2 Tim. 3:16-17), God has prescribed the area of work for His preachers. There is only one authoritative message. Men who value souls—their own and those of their hearers—“will keep rank,” being faithful to their Lord by faithfully proclaiming that message only! There will be no interest in gimmickry, sectarian ideas, and sectarian doctrine, when preachers put forth effort to keep rank!

(3) Bible class teachers who will “keep rank” in making their classes real Bible study classes rather than playtime! Elders are charged with feeding the flock of God (Acts 20:28), and the teachers selected for the classes must be those who expedite that feeding. Sadly, church history bears out that in several crises we have faced error came into our midst through the Bible classes. We did not have teachers who were “keeping rank.”

(4) Finally, those who are the heart and core—the backbone—of the church: the members themselves. We need men and women of all ages who will “keep rank.” Members who rally behind Him Who is the head of the church (Col. 1:18), members who will seek first the Kingdom of God and the righteousness of God (Mat. 6:33), members who will present themselves as living sacrifices before God and who will prove in their lives what is well-pleasing to Him (Rom. 12:1-2), and members who will see themselves as lights in a dark and sinful world and do their utmost to reflect the Christ (Mat. 5:16) are those who “keep rank.”

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The Soul Collector

Bill Brandstatter

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Alice Williams  William Weekley
Bill & Iris Gallaher  Lucille Staples
Ray Dodd (Sacred Heart Hospital, PCU), Thomas Hammac (Ella Hammac’s son), Nancy Travis (William Weekley’s daughter), Wyatt Blancheri (Henry and Paulette Born’s grandson; for more information: www.caringbridge.org — in the site name type Wyatt), and Caroline Williams (Charles and Alice Williams’ granddaughter).

New Telephone Number
Charles and Alice Williams have a new telephone number: 944-2551.

Placed Membership
Brian Gresham placed membership with the Bellview congregation on December 2. His address is: 383 East Royce Street; 32503. Please keep Brian in your prayers and offer him encouragement.

Reading/Invitation
December 12, 2007
Bible Reading: Horace Myrick
Invitation: Ray Foshee

December 19, 2007
Bible Reading: Elward Brantley
Invitation: Cary Parks

Mark This Date
December 9, 2007
Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.

America Gets an “F” in Religion
Tom Wacaster

A recent article in the U.S. News (April 9, 2007) reported that in America, we get an “F” in religion. Jay Tolson reported that “roughly 9 in 10” of our citizens believe in God, or a Supreme Being. In fact, America is widely acknowledged to be the “most religious of modern industrialized nations.” Yet, when it comes to knowledge about religion, it ranks among the most ill-informed in the Western world. Mr. Tolson pointed out, that “while close to two thirds of Americans regard the Bible as a source of answers to life’s questions, only half can name even one of the New Testament Gospels.”

The present generation has simply lost its connection to the Word of God. History will attest to the fact that the Bible was the first “reader” of the colonists and early Americans, so much so that when they learned to read, they read from the Bible. Early American’s conducted many of their most important civic debates, including the debate over slavery, in biblical terms evoking biblical principles for decisions in matters of right and wrong on such issues. Churches, schools, households, colleges, and tract societies linked social life to the principles of morality set forth in the Bible. Like a giant chain that holds the ship to the anchor, the Word of God provided a link to social stability and moral direction. But that chain was broken in the 1960s by secularists, and since that time the ship has drifted further and further from its moorings. Like so many falling dominoes, we began to see the destabilization of the world in which we live.

Supreme Court rulings outlawed Bible reading and prayers in our public schools. The Bible slowly became what Tolson called “a kind of ornament and a source of authority rather than a book that you actually read.” Over the past four decades sermons have become more about ordinary life and less about biblical narratives, and Sunday schools
focused more on morality than on the book that taught that morality. The great paradox is that, while we were becoming less knowledgeable about the basic facts of the Gospel, our nation was becoming more evangelical. The "Puritanism" of the 18th and 19th centuries gave way to evangelical impulse in the 20th century. The mind set where we focused not only upon the heart, but upon the head and emotion became the predominant force in our religion. Slowly, ever so slowly, Americans turned away from learning the facts of the Bible to expressing themselves in terms of subjective and emotional feelings. The consequence has taught us that we do, indeed, reap what we sow.

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The fruit of our failing grade in religion is now coming to harvest. Abortion, homosexuality, gambling, drunkenness, rebellious children, filthy language, failed marriages, pornography, increased crime rates, ungodly and immoral leaders (and citizens) all combine to show that America is no longer a "Christian nation." She shed that honorable designation at least four decades ago, if not in terminology, at least in practice.

I am not so pessimistic as to think that the direction cannot be reversed, but history is against us. Unless God's people let their voices be heard and their lives be exemplary, this nation of 50 United States will continue to receive a failing grade in religion; and the consequences are too horrible to even imagine.

801 West 11th Street; Clarksville, TX 76426

Daily Battles for the Christian: Reminding Ourselves of Often Unguarded Things...

Johnny Oxendine

How does it feel to constantly be in a fight? The Christian soldier fights battles on a daily basis. While the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but spiritual (2 Cor. 10:4), we must still keep an eye open on all avenues through which Satan would seek to take advantage of us through his devices (2 Cor. 2:11). If we leave any approach unguarded, Satan will surely use that to devour us (1 Pet. 5:8). The beginning of the fools returneth to his folly (Pro. 1:7). The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God (Psa. 14:1). Satan expects to conquer us through these unguarded approaches. So remember to arm ourselves with the whole armor of God (Eph. 6), being prepared to work. We get home, eat dinner, plop down in front of the television and the day is over before we have even had a chance to read our Bibles, spend some time in prayer, or talk to a friend about the Lord. This process repeats itself for many of us six days out of the week until Sunday when we have to take the day off because we do not have any time for self.

Satan expects to conquer us through these unguarded approaches. So remember to arm ourselves with the whole armor of God (Eph. 6), being aware of the wiles of Satan.

P.O. Box 5026; San Mateo, CA 94402

Bible Fools

Dave Leonard

The Bible clearly teaches that it is a sin to refer to one as a fool in a contemptible manner (Mat. 5:32). The Bible, also, teaches that it is proper to refer to one who is not wise as foolish or a fool (1 Cor. 3:19-20). It would be bad enough to be called a fool by another human, but even more so by God! Just who is a fool according to God?

1. The one who will not listen to advice—"fools despise wisdom and instruction" (Pro. 1:7).
2. The one who pays no attention to warning—"A wise man heareth, and departeth from evil: but the fool rageth, and is confident" (Pro. 14:16).
3. One who persists in evil—"As a dog returneth to his vomit, so a fool returneth to his folly" (Pro. 26:11). One who believes everything he hears—"The simple believeth every word: but the prudent man looketh well to his going" (Pro. 14:15).
4. One who mocks at sin—"Fools make a mock at sin" (Pro. 14:9).
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6. The one who gets mad easily—"A fool’s wrath is presently known: but a prudent man covereth shame" (Pro. 12:16).
7. Those who talk too much—"the lips of a fool will swallow up himself. The beginning of the reverting shame" (Pro. 12:16).
8. The one who drinks alcoholic beverages—"Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise" (Pro. 20:1).
9. The one who says there is no God—"The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God" (Psa. 14:1).
10. The one who does not prepare for the judgment (Mat. 25). The one who is not prepared is like a man trying to sleep on a bed too short with cover too narrow (Isa. 28:20). Unprepared means unacceptable before God!

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What are some of these unguarded approaches that Satan may use? Here are a few ideas for consideration.

One often unguarded approach utilized by Satan is the television set. Hollywood loves to influence the nation toward its liberal philosophy by means of broadcast media. Television allows the liberal media to control the information that American households receive, thus being able to influence them toward the desired perspective. Homosexuality has made favorable inroads into the American consciousness largely through television programs that desensitize the subject through humor and sympathetic characters. Television has also undermined the place and authority of the husband and father in the home by casting husbands and fathers as ridiculous and unnecessary relics of the past. Television also has a great effect upon our personal speech; those who are numbly spellbound by the mesmerizing tube often imitate what is said on television. Satan has slowly and insidiously flanked us through this unguarded approach.

Another often unguarded approach is personal modesty. When the warming sun comes out in the summer, the temptation for many is to disregard decency and reveal as much of one’s body as possible by exposing breasts, buttocks, and bellies for the world to gawk over. Is it any wonder that our country has problems with unwanted pregnancy, venereal disease, and unwed mothers given our lost sense of modesty? According to some recent studies, the average age for a girl losing her virginity is 14.9 years old. And if you ask the average teenage boy what is most attractive to him in a girl, he is likely going to mention some protruding body part. Again, Satan has outwitted many of our youth (and allowing parents) through this unguarded approach.

Finally, how many of us are so consumed with managing the details of our own personal lives that we never find the time to do any work for the Lord? We wake up, eat a quick breakfast and then are off to work. We get home, eat dinner, plop down in front of the television and the day is over before we have even had a chance to read our Bibles, spend some time in prayer, or talk to a friend about the Lord. This process repeats itself for many of us six days out of the week until Sunday when we have to take the day off because we do not have any time “for self.”

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7. Those who talk too much—“the lips of a fool will swallow up himself. The beginning of the words of his mouth is foolishness: and the end of his talk is mischievous madness. A fool also is full of words” (Ecc. 10:12-14).

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Nancy Travis (William Weekley’s daughter),
Wyatt Blancheri (Harry and Paulette Born’s
grandson; for more information: www. caringbridge.org — in the site name type Wyatt), and Caroline Williams (Charles and
Alice Williams’ granddaughter).

Birth Announcement
Our congratulations are extended to Jim
and Nancy Loy and Rubye Bailey in the birth
of their new grandson and great-grandson,
Bailey James Brazell, born on December 7.
He weighed 11 pounds 3 ounces and was 21
inches long. Bailey is the son of Jamie and
Scot Brazell.

Reading/Invitation
December 19, 2007
Bible Reading: Elward Brantley
Invitation: Cary Parks
December 26, 2007
Bible Reading: Jim Loy
Invitation: Ray Pierce

Mark These Dates
December 16, 2007
Elders/Deacons’ meeting will be
held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
December 26, 2007
Sermons Video Series at 7:00 pm, in
the auditorium.

Dedication to Bible Study and Worship
Denny Wilson

In an article written by J. D. Tant, in Firm Foundation, on March 23, 1909, a compliment was paid
to Carroll Kendrick, a fellow Texas Gospel preach
er. Brother Tant wrote:
Kendrick was the most incessant worker and
most thorough Bible teacher I ever worked with.
Seven hours a day was his limit to work in a pro
tracted meeting, and no day fell below that.
Can you imagine seven hours a day of Bible
study for many days or weeks? The further ex
planation of the meeting was listed as one hour of
Bible reading followed by one hour of preaching
explaining the passage, twice a day, then thirty min
utes in song, thirty minutes of reading and prayer,
and one hour of preaching explaining the reading.
Brother Tant then went on to explain how people
of that day had started to reject what had once been
the norm. He wrote:
But brethren have grown so busy of late years,
and have so much to care about that none have
time to camp at a meeting, and at few places
do they have time to have a service in the day
time. So the preacher, instead of getting in sev
en hours a day in his meeting, is compelled to
waste his time and put only thirty minutes each
ight, as few can stand to hear a preacher longer
than that.
Brother Tant, and preachers of that day, would
weep over the condition of the Gospel meeting in
our day. Today we have cars to carry us quickly
from work or home to a meeting location. We sit in
air conditioned buildings on cushioned pews while
in that day they might walk, ride in a buckboard, or
ride a horse 20 miles or more to hear the preaching
of the Gospel and to stand up during the time, or
sit on hard pews if they were lucky. There were
no cold water fountains or indoor plumbed bath
rooms. It was not a comfortable environment, but
they came not because they “had to” or because
they felt an obligation. They came because they
wished to learn more about Jesus Christ and His church.

What is our attitude about Gospel meeting, worship services, Bible classes, and other opportunities for study? Do we make every effort to attend and participate in the studies? Will we drive to far away places to hear the Gospel being preached? Or have we become so much like the world and denominational patterns that we expect to come and be entertained with words of human wisdom, pep rally type atmosphere, and programs such as drama, singing groups, dance, etc.? Have our jobs, our activities, our possessions and our hobbies become our “gods”? I am mindful of the words of 1 John 2:15-17: “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever” (NKJV). Our love for the world is standing in the way of spiritual growth.

We have vacations, travel, sporting events, trips to the lake, family reunions, school reunions, athletic camps, and more. Keep this in mind as you participate in these many activities. God must be first in our lives. This means that while we travel, taking time off from work, we cannot take time off from God. Oh, we will not be having a seven-hour a day Gospel meeting, but we will still be meeting every Lord’s day for Bible class and two hours of worship. We will continue to meet on Wednesday nights, conducting Vacation Bible School during the month of June. We are only meeting four hours a week, a far cry from seven hours per day. And yet, many will choose to miss these opportunities for worship and study. Brethren, let us be dedicated to God every day of our lives (Mat. 6:33).

1200 Bowie St; Wellington, TX 79095

Un-Sinning

Gary Summers

Often, when people are on trial for things such as drunk driving, they are earnestly sorrowful and lament that they cannot take back their actions. One such individual recently said, “I cannot bring back your two sons.” This admission serves to highlight the problem we all face—once we have made a decision and performed deeds in harmony with that determination, we cannot undo it. What can we do about it? Nothing! No matter how much agony this woman experiences, the two children will remain dead. The guilty person might vow to never touch another drop of alcohol again— and keep that promise, but it will not change the situation one iota.

How many men or women have cheated on a spouse? Some have almost immediately been filled with remorse and chided themselves on their foolishness, but what was done could not be altered.

The consequences always come upon the one who made the poor choice, whether it be pregnancy, disease, or divorce. All the devout wishes that we could somehow un-sin will be vain.

Does this seem like a bleak portrayal of life? Rather, it is realistic. Is there no recourse at all? Yes, the first one is preventive. Think about what you are doing. The words that you speak, for example, pray wound so severely that on Wednesday nights, the admission of the problem.

Second, pray for forgiveness, once the repentance has been inaugurated. Both John the baptizer and Paul the apostle spoke of bringing forth “fruits worthy of repentance” (Mat. 3:8; Acts 26:20). In other words, a positive course of conduct replaces those who covet wealth are pursuing that which is equally worthless. Those who desire power and control over others are ruled by Satan now and will be together with him and all his followers forever. Those who allow their pride to prevent them from seeing or admitting the sins they have committed will also be lost, since the first step to recovery is the admission of the problem.

Fourth, help others who may have the same weakness to overcome it. In some instances, the help may prevent others from being hurt. If a good friend had insisted on discussing with a potential drunk driver the dangers of her actions, perhaps those two children would still be alive. If an older brother or sister had taken aside a younger member in the church to caution him about adultery or covetousness, some families might have been spared much heartache.

Sins cannot be undone. Others are affected by our actions—perhaps permanently so. All that we can do is to try to prevent them from occurring. If they have already happened, then all we can do is to make the best of the situation by repenting, praying for forgiveness, changing our behavior, and trying to help others overcome the same sin by setting the right example and encouraging them along the paths of righteousness.

3671 Oak Vista Ln; Winter Park, FL 32792
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First, whenever temptation presents itself, the foremost thing to do is to repent. The contents of the whiskey bottle (or some equivalent) must be poured down the drain. Profanity must be immediately terminated. Adultery must cease—not taper off—cease! Manure. "Be not bad because of what their actions have wrought, but they continue to practice the same sin—only to a lesser (perhaps, safer) degree. Genuine repentance is a turning away altogether from evil.

Second, pray for forgiveness, once the repentance has been inaugurated. Both John the baptizer and Paul the apostle spoke of bringing forth "fruits worthy of repentance" (Mat. 3:8; Acts 26:20). In other words, a positive course of conduct replaces that which damaged people's lives. The grumbler begins to reorient his thinking by finding something to praise instead of something to complain about. God is willing to forgive when He sees repentance in action.

Third, work on overcoming whatever weakness brought about the problem in the first place. Many of these sins stem from a lust of the flesh. We must remind ourselves that the flesh is only a temporary abode for the spirit. Fleshly appetites will be irrelevant in eternity; surely we will wonder why we ever were willing to risk our salvation for something this temporary and inferior.

Those who covet wealth are pursuing that which is equally worthless. Those who desire power and control over others are ruled by Satan now and will be together with him and all his followers forever. Those who allow their pride to prevent them from seeing or admitting the sins they have committed will also be lost, since the first step to recovery is the admission of the problem.

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Elaine Maxey       Ella Hammac
Al Fleshner        Malcolm Wooten
Marge Williams     Marilyn Hall
Alice Williams     William Weekley
Bill & Iris Gallaher Lucille Staples

Ray Dodd (Sacred Heart Hospital, PCU),
Thomas Hammac (Ella Hammac’s son),
Nancy Travis (William Weekley’s daughter),
Wyatt Blancheri (Henry and Paulette Born’s grandson; for more information: www.caringbridge.org — in the site name type Wyatt), and Caroline Williams (Charles and Alice Williams’ granddaughter).

Birth Announcement
Our congratulations are extended to Jim and Nancy Loy and Rubye Bailey in the birth of their new grandson and great-grandson, Bailey James Brazell, born on December 7. He weighed 11 pounds 3 ounces and was 21 inches long. Bailey is the son of Jamie and Scot Brazell.

Reading/Invitation
December 19, 2007
Bible Reading: Elward Brantley
Invitation: Cary Parks

December 26, 2007
Bible Reading: Jim Loy
Invitation: Ray Pierce

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But brethren have grown so busy of late years, and have so much to care about that none have time to camp at a meeting, and at few places do they have time to have a service in the day time. So the preacher, instead of getting in seven hours a day in his meeting, is compelled to waste his time and put only thirty minutes each night, as few can stand to hear a preacher longer than that.

Brother Tant, and preachers of that day, would weep over the condition of the Gospel meeting in our day. Today we have cars to carry us quickly from work or home to a meeting location. We sit in air conditioned buildings on cushioned pews while in that day they might walk, ride in a buckboard, or ride a horse 20 miles or more to hear the preaching of the Gospel and to stand up during the time, or sit on hard pews if they were lucky. There were no cold water fountains or indoor plumbed bathrooms. It was not a comfortable environment, but they came not because they “had to” or because they felt an obligation. They came because they
Thoughts on Attendance

Dub McClish

There is more to being faithful to God than “church attendance.” However, does faithfulness require it (to please God, to grow spiritually, to be saved)? I am not asking if merely the preacher and/or elders and other members care, but does God care? Scripture gives a resounding affirmative answer. Consider the following:

**The Lord’s day assembly**:
Saints are commanded to partake of the Lord’s supper to remember the death of Christ (1 Cor. 11:24). Both apostolic example (Acts 20:7) and uninspired early church history confirm that the assembled church ate the Lord’s supper each first day of the week. To provide money for the work of church, the assembled church was commanded to give on the first day of the week (1 Cor. 16:1–2). These things were taught and practiced “everywhere in every church” (1 Cor. 4:17). To willfully miss the Lord’s day assembly is to disregard these apostolic examples and commands.

**Other assemblies**:
Are other meetings (e.g., Sunday evening, Sunday morning Bible school, Wednesday evening, Gospel meetings, Bible lectureships, et al.) scriptural or unscriptural? Various meetings besides those on Sunday were held with apostolic approval in the early church (Acts 2:46; 4:23; 12:12; et al.). Meetings for study, worship, and fellowship strengthen us and thus serve a scriptural function (Heb. 5:12ff; 2 Pet. 3:18). In spite of the scriptural precedent and practical need for these meetings, some still irresponsibly cling to the “Lord’s supper only” attendance habit.

**A direct command**:
The New Testament explicitly prohibits fornication, theft, murder, and “forsaking our own assembling together” (Heb. 10:25). Positively stated, this verse commands us to attend the assemblies of the church. It neither specifies nor limits these either to the Lord’s day or the Lord’s supper assemblies. To be absent is not the same as to “forsake.” The sick person

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**Reading/Invitation**

**December 26, 2007**

Bible Reading: Jim Loy
Invitation: Ray Pierce

**January 2, 2008**

Bible Reading: Andrew Hatcher
Invitation: Fred Stancliff

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Sermons Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.
who is thereby prevented from attending is absent from but does not forsake the assembly. To forsake means to choose not to attend when one is able to do so. Whenever there is a gathering at which we can be taught and exhorted and at which we can praise God, we are obligated to be present. Why would any of God’s children not want to be present?

**Miscellaneous principles:** True lovers of God have always cherished worship and study opportunities (Ps. 42:1-4; 84:1-2, 10; Mat. 5:6; et al.). Can one seriously claim to “seek ye first his kingdom” (Mat. 6:33) while he carelessly forsakes its assemblies? What do you think? Does God care where you are when the saints meet?

908 Imperial Drive; Denton, TX 76201

**At the End**

Lynn Parker

Life is a journey—a short, challenging journey. It is filled with difficulties and it has its bright moments of pleasure. One thing all lives have in common is: “The End.”

If you are not a Christian, at the end of life, you will not regret a low income. You will have no regrets for failing to be famous. It will not bother you that you failed in sports or politics. You will not worry over losing a race, or being denied your “dream” job. But if you miss heaven, you will regret it for eternity.

Does the New Testament Authorize Money from the Church Treasury to Fund the Recreational Activities of Christians?

David Brown

There will always be a scriptural need to remind brethren (with certain brethren it will be new information) what the church is and is not and what it was set up to do and not to do. And, in such studies the proper use of the Lord’s money will be investigated. In this study we intend to focus on and examine the unauthorized use of church funds. Because certain brethren have not been taught the Truth of God on such matters, sincere people sometimes abuse or misuse the Lord’s money in doing what they consider to be “good works.”

Some First Principles That must be Kept in Mind

1. We must know that only the saved make up the church (Acts 2:38, 41-42, 47). Therefore, God chose the church to uphold Gospel Truth (1 Tim. 3:15; Jude 3). Thus, Jesus commissioned the church to preach the Gospel to all (Mark 16:15; Rom. 1:16).

2. We must understand the Christ’s church is authorized by the New Testament to take care of man’s spiritual needs (Luke 19:10).

3. Furthermore, in demonstrating the benevolent nature of the church, Christ has authorized it to provide for the material needs of people (Gal. 2:10). This is the arm of the Lord’s church that takes care of needy persons.

4. However, 1 Timothy 5:16 stipulates that the church is to be involved in providing physical needs to certain widows when family members cannot, or will not, provide for those widows in need of physical assistance.

In the preceding point four Paul made clear to Timothy in 1 Timothy 5:16 that caring for widows is the responsibility of the family members. The inspired apostle Paul did not intend for the church to use its funds in such matters unless there were no family members who would or could take care of their widows. Thus, a principle surfaces from Paul’s directions regarding the care of widows, and it is this: there are obligations that God expects the home to discharge that the church be not charged. In this specific case it had to do with the spiritual responsibility of family members to provide for their widows. Therefore, elders (or where the church is not fully organized, the men) are acting under the authority of the New Testament of Jesus Christ when they limit the use of the Lord’s money to preaching the Gospel, edifying the church, and benevolent activities as previously set out in this article.

Is There a Place for Recreational Activities and Entertainment among Christians?

All other things being scripturally equal, who would oppose honoring high school or college graduates with a party? Furthermore, who would object to the young people (or the young at heart) playing ball games, going on outings, and the like? Moreover, who would desire to prohibit baby showers? Who would object to refreshments being offered at a children’s or adults’ gathering? We certainly would not object to these things being done. But, scripturally, from where does the money come to fund the previous activities?

The Funding of Such Activities

None of the things noted in the preceding paragraph necessarily fall into the area of preaching the Gospel to the alien sinner, edifying the church, or the area of benevolence. Thus, the principle set out by Paul in 1 Timothy 5:16 must be applied to ball games, outings, parties, baby showers, and such like. (Of course if an expectant mother is in need of help and has no family members to provide for her, then a “shower”—in view of what such “showers” are to accomplish—would be in the area of benevolence and would become a “church shower” and, therefore, funded with church funds if necessary, but otherwise not.) There are, therefore, no church of Christ ball teams, no church of Christ camping trips, no church of Christ parties, no church of Christ baby or wedding showers, or such like. On the other hand, there is New Testament authority for such gatherings of Christians as noted in this article. That being said, since the preceding matters do not necessarily have anything to do with preaching the Gospel to the alien sinner, edifying the church, or benevolence (except as we stipulated), we say with Paul “let not the church be charged” (1 Tim. 5:16; Col. 3:17).
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Mark These Dates
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Statistics: Symptoms of a Deeper Problem
Tom Wacaster

Statistics are a means by which we measure certain trends. Our government can guess the direction the economy is going by examining the “leading economic indicators.” These are nothing more than statistics from retail sales, national gross product, etc., gathered and studied by “experts” (the definition of which is still under question). But you see, statistics are but symptoms of some cause. Retail sales are not the cause of economic trends, but are the effect of some trend as it is reflected in the purchase power and practice of the people. In the first chapter of Romans, Paul describes a morally degenerate Gentile world. Verses 24-32 catalogue the sins of a godless society. But the sins were only symptoms of a deeper problem. These people knew God, but chose not to have God in their knowledge (vv. 21-23). They willfully and purposely turned their back on the Creator. The cause, rejection of God, led to the symptom, moral degeneration. As it was in the first century, so it is now.

Now, let us bring this matter closer to home. Beginning in the 1850s and extending into the early 1900s there was a division in the body of Christ of major proportions. The mechanical instrument of music and the missionary society drove a wedge between brethren, splintering the church of our Lord. The cause in this unfortunate circumstance was statistically manifested in the introduction of innovations, divided churches, etc., but these were only symptoms of a deeper problem, mainly a lack of respect for authority of the Scriptures.

It would seem that the “cycle” has run full circle and once again we are facing the issue of authority, manifested in varying symptoms. Instrumental music, institutionalism, and unauthorized innovations are rearing their ugly heads once again; some old, some new. But these are only symptoms of the age old issue of establishing biblical authority. Either some do not know how to determine authority for some action, or they do not care. The end result,
if allowed to go unchecked, will lead to unauthor-
ized actions, vain worship, and tragic division.
And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in
the name of the Lord Jesus’ (Col. 3:17). There is
another danger closely attached to the subject un-
der consideration. That danger is the willingness to
avoid confrontation. The late David Lip-
scornb once noted:
Those most hurtful in drawing evil into
the churches, that divide and weaken and
destroy the innocent, are the noncommit-
tal that agree with all and oppose none.
The most effective worker to bring in
evil is one who does not favor it, but can
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ous that he does not desire it, but sees no
harm in the evil...The man who does not
vigorously and actively oppose an evil
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Once such a state is reached wherein one can
conscientiously work with error it will not be long
before he not only tolerates that error, but becomes
a participant therein. This is why godly elders,
preachers, teachers, and faithful members will op-
pose error at its early stages of development.
It is not that we are cantankerous. It is, rather, that we
realize that early symptoms, if properly treated,
will keep the body pure and healthy. We realize that
to be true when it comes to treating physical illness.
Why is it that we so often fail to realize this simple
truth when it comes to the spiritual body of Christ,
the church? Think about it.
801 West 11th Street; Clarksville, TX 76426

Children Do Not Be Conformed to this World!

1. A new couple visits our services. A few peo-

ple speak to them. We send a letter expressing our
appreciation for their visit, but will they return?
2. A lonely person is in a nursing home. The

home? We are usually prompt to visit at the time of the
3. A member of the church loses a loved one.

7. A member of the church begins to miss ser-

vice. We tell them how happy we are to have
8. A new convert is baptized and added to the

church. We tell them how happy we are to have
5. A new family moves into town. They are un

6. A member of the church begins to miss ser-

vice. The occasional miss becomes a pattern, and
he is seldom seen anymore. What might have hap-
penned if concerned Christians had made visits into
that home?
7. A member of the church loses a loved one.
We are usually prompt to visit at the time of the
bereavement and before the funeral, but what
about the long hours of loneliness and adjustment
after the funeral, when all the relatives have gone
home?
8. A new convert is baptized and added to the
church. We tell them how happy we are to have
them as a new brother or sister, but do we continue
to encourage them, teach them that this is a new
beginning, not the end? Do we help them to remain
faithful in living the life of a Christian?
Is there a visit you need to make? Do not put it
off! Do it today!

Author Unknown

“And Be Not Conformed to this World...”

Richard Stevens III

“And be not conformed to this world:
but be ye transformed by the renewing of your
mind, that ye may prove what is that
good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of
God” (Rom. 12:2).
Not being conformed to this world is a constant,
on going struggle. Satan (the god of this world), on
his quest to destroy lives has blinded the minds of
many (2 Cor. 4:4). On his journey to devour and
deceive, he prevails against the intents of most
bringing them into agreement with his. This “roar-
ing lion” (1 Pet. 5:8), with an insatiable appetite for
the souls of men, is subtle in his approach and is
transparent with his methods. Even though count-
less thousands have unwittingly allowed Satan and
this world unrestricted access in shaping their char-
acter and values, we are not ignorant of his devices
(2 Cor. 2:11). It is God that warns, “Be not con-
formed to this world!”

Adults Do Not Be Conformed to this World!

Many adults are on the road to ruin as the day
starts. Instead of God first (Mat. 6:33; Col. 3:1),
with prayer and Bible study, the morning starts out
with affirmation of this world. “I gotta have my pa-
per.” “I gotta have my coffee.” “I gotta do my exer-
cise.” “I gotta see the news/weather.” “I gotta hur-
y and get the kids off to school.” In all the “gotta,”
where is the gotta get started with God? All too of-
ten, the day starts and ends without any thought of
God whatsoever. You can search your Bible for the
rest of your life and never be able to prove that this
is good and acceptable to Him. In the hustle and
hurry of everyday life we must ever ask: “Where
is God?” Not being conformed to this world is
achieved by striving for that world. Commitment
to glorify of God and to the life that it involves will
ensure we are in the world but not of it, as we con-
form our minds to realms above!

Will You Make a Visit?

1. A new couple visits our services. A few peo-

ple speak to them. We send a letter expressing our
appreciation for their visit, but will they return?
2. A lonely person is in a nursing home. The

long days grow into weeks, and the weeks into
months. Occasionally someone stops to visit, but
often they feel that they have been forgotten.
3. An elderly member is home. Because of

health and advanced age, he or she cannot attend
worship. In past years they never missed a service,
but now no one remembers to visit them.
4. A new family moves into town. They are un-

acquainted with the town and have no friends or
relatives here. They have no church preference. If
we visit them, perhaps they will come to services
and learn the truth.
5. A new family places membership. Perhaps

the preacher will visit them. But it would mean a
lot if several members of the church would stop by
and get acquainted.

Residence: 1201 Americana Lane, Apt. 6200
Mesquite, TX 75150

Author Unknown

Homes Do Not Be Conformed to this World!

Homes are forming in the sins of adultery, forni-
cation, and homosexuality, and children are being
born out of wedlock. No one goes to church, or
reads the Bible, or sees a need to pray. Absolute
truth (the Bible) is laughed at, while God’s people
are viewed as fanatics. Problems in these homes;
teen pregnancy, suicide, incarceration, alcohol-
ism, gambling, abuses/physical/sexual/verbal/sub-
stance, disrespect, etc. is a result of being con-
formed to this world. It’s influence is all around,
however, God’s plea remains, “Be not conformed
to this world!” Through Bible learning and com-
pliance (2 Tim. 2:15; Mat. 7:21), we teach our
homes how to conform to the world above (Col.
3:18-21; Eph. 5:22-6:4)!
if allowed to go unchecked, will lead to unauthor-
ized actions, vain worship, and tragic division.

And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in
the name of the Lord Jesus” (Col. 3:17). There is
another danger closely attached to the subject un-
der consideration. That danger is the willingness
to compromise a principle for the sake of unity. It is,
in essence, a willingness to forego a stand for Truth
in order to avoid confrontation. The late David Lip-
scornb once noted:

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churches, that divide and weaken and
destroy the innocent, are the noncommit-
tal that agree with all and oppose none.
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Why is it that we so often fail to realize this simple
truth when it comes to the spiritual body of Christ,
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Author Unknown
Sick

Remember in your prayers:
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Al Flesher  Malcolm Wooton
Marge Williams  Marilyn Hall
Alice Williams  William Weekley
Bill & Iris Gallaher  Lucille Staples
Ray Dodd (Sacred Heart Hospital, critical care), Thomas Hammac (Ella Hammac’s son), Nancy Travis (William Weekley’s daughter), Wyatt Blancheri (Henry and Paulette Born’s grandson); for more information: www.caringbridge.org—in the site name type Wyatt), and Caroline Williams (Charles and Alice Williams’ granddaughter).

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The Bible
Paul Vaughn

What is your most prized possession? It may be your house, clothing, automobile, or a computer. That which is most important to us speaks volumes about our priorities. I was asked by a Gospel preacher about all the books in my library. If the building was on fire which ones would I save? Of all the books I have, the only one I would save is my Bible! Why? It is the only book I need to help me go to Heaven.

The Bible has the power to penetrate and search the heart. It is written: “For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Heb. 4:12—NKJV). God’s Word has the power to lay open the secret parts of our lives. It will direct one on the path of righteousness, enabling all to have forgiveness of sin.

The Bible produces faith. “So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17). There is no belief or complete knowledge of God, Jesus, Holy Spirit, Christianity, and the church without the Bible. If God worked by direct operation of the Holy Spirit today, there would be no need for the Bible, preachers, or teachers. The apostle Paul said, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:16-17). The Bible comes from God and that is all man needs to be complete in the knowledge of God. It is when man looks to himself or other men seeking knowledge about God and His way that a perverted view of religion is developed.

The Bible is incorruptible. It is written, “having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever, because ‘All flesh is as grass, And
all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, And its flower falls away, But the word of the Lord endures forever.” Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you” (1 Pet. 1:23-25). The teaching that originates from the Word of God does not decay with the passing of years. The things of the world will perish, all the grass and flowers will pass away. The accomplishments of this world will vanish. But, God’s Word will remain forever.

No one has the power or the knowledge to re-vise the Bible. Paul said, “But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed” (Gal. 1:8-9). God has given warning after warning for man not to add to or take away from His words (Pro. 30:6; Rev. 22:18-19). In selecting a translation, one must be very careful. There are too many translations that are not accurate with God’s Word. The saving of your soul will depend on the accur-acy of the translation you read.

Every spiritual need that man will have is pro-vided by God through His Word—the Bible. Those who teach that man needs additional help or influ-ences from the Holy Spirit are actually criticizing the inspired Word of God—the Bible. They are saying that the Bible is not enough, but God has said it is enough to prepare one for eternity. The Bible is the most important book to mankind. Its influence is felt throughout the world. Is it the mind of God in written form. How important is the Bible to you?

1415 Lincoln Road; Lewisport, KY 42351

What Is a Church Budget?

1. It is a goal. We take stock of what we are both willing and able to do. It is an orderly approach to the Lord’s work.
2. It is a plan. The church needs to plan its work and work its plan. A budget is a blueprint of what we want to do for the Lord in the forthcoming year.
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4. It is a picture. Having a budget provides us a concrete image of precisely where our money is going: local work, missionary work, benevolence, education, upkeep, etc.
5. It is a ladder. Step by step we can climb upward as we grow in faith, planning, giving, and doing. We need a challenging program (Is anything ever really accomplished without a challenge?). We must realize, however, that even the best laid-out program of work is futile without the means (money) to do it.
6. It is a scriptural operation. It puts the financial burden of the Lord’s work where it belongs—on the members. Thus, it eliminates the need of unscriptural money-raising schemes such as are practiced in the denominational world.
7. It is a satisfaction. The progress we make can be charted as we proceed, giving us a sense of accomplishment.
8. It is an opportunity. We enjoy the privilege of watching the church grow in grace, faith, knowl-edge, spirit, and liberality as we share our worldly goods (entrusted to us by God) more and more with the Master in His cause. Each man, woman, and child can see where his “gifts of love” are going. Each member can know he or she is a vital part—no matter how small that part may be (as long as it is his best)—of the Christ’s labors.

A budget is a way of doing God’s work in an orderly manner.

Author Unknown

“No Child Left Behind...” God Already Set That Standard, and He Holds to It Fully

Johnny Oxendine

On June 8 the New York Times ran an article with some not very pleasant news: “states vary widely on education.” No big deal? Well, according to the article, the gaps between some states were “of several grade levels.” Again, not that anyone really cares, but California’s schools are just ahead of Mississippi, and maybe (if we are lucky) Louisiana. We in California, however, have mastered the art of feel-good education (everyone is doing great)—so no one cares how the state stands nationally (47th or 48th) as long as the kids meet the state set standards.

This was exactly the point of the article—that states setting their own standards (like California) were not meeting the national gold standards for education as assessed through the National Assessment of Education tests. Examples could be given that reflect the obvious differences, but our thoughts are looking at a bigger story.

“The Lord is...not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Pet. 3:9). In other words, God does not want anyone to lose his or her soul. He wants all to come to repentance—a real “No Child Left Behind.”

In order for this to be accomplished God “hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself” (Eph. 1:4-5). This choosing results from the obedience to the Gospel (by which we are called) as stated in 2 Thessalonians 2:14.

Here is where having a universal standard is im-portant and the value easily discerned. By looking into the pages of the New Testament we can show anyone today how they can become a Christian in the same manner as they did in the first century. That God, “with whom is no variableness,” and who is not a respecter of persons (Acts 10:34) de-sires our good regardless of nationality, ethnicity, race, gender, etc., is a welcome relief in the world of religious division. Everyone must adhere to the same standard!

Not all are accepting of the clear path revealed by the Scriptures, however. Calvin was one of the first (in modern theology) to carve out the idea of separation and “class” in religion. There are other denominational groups that set out to make distinc-tions between those who adhere to their own pecu-liar doctrines (thus, standards).

Is there any wonder today that many religious people like the idea put forth by some that atten-dance is not necessary for salvation? That since God knows their hearts there is no real need to be in a worship service. A different standard, one many willingly are drawn toward. In this busy life we have we need a religion that will allow us to set our own standards, one that will allow us to feel good about ourselves and not criticize our family and friends when they sin, and not...the list goes on, but will God allow it?

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What is your most prized possession? It may be your house, clothing, automobile, or a computer. That which is most important to us speaks volumes about our priorities. I was asked by a Gospel preacher about all the books in my library. If the building was on fire which ones would I save? Of all the books I have, the only one I would save is my Bible! Why? It is the only book I need to help me go to Heaven.

The Bible has the power to penetrate and search the heart. It is written: “For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Heb. 4:12—NKJV). God’s Word, has the power to lay open the secret parts of our lives. It will direct one on the path of righteousness, enabling all to have forgiveness of sin.

The Bible produces faith. “So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17). There is no belief or complete knowledge of God, Jesus, Holy Spirit, Christianity, and the church without the Bible. If God worked by direct operation of the Holy Spirit today, there would be no need for the Bible, preachers, or teachers. The apostle Paul said, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:16-17). The Bible comes from God and that is all man needs to be complete in the knowledge of God. It is when man looks to himself or other men seeking knowledge about God and His way that a perverted view of religion is developed.

The Bible is incorruptible. It is written, “having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever, because ‘All flesh is as grass, And