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# Words of Life

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Volume 5 Issue 1

January 2, 2005

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## What One Who Forsakes Assembling Does and Does Not Do

One of the problems that elders and preachers struggle with in working with our brethren is the problem of sporadic attendance in the various assemblies of the saints. We recognize and understand that it is unreasonable to expect every member at every service every week. This is a goal we would like to achieve; however, there are sicknesses, emergencies, travel and conflicts that arise which are unpredictable and impossible to avoid. Therefore, it is to be expected that some will miss an occasional assembly.

Yet, there are still those brethren who let every little thing hinder them in their attendance. There are so many things that can explain why brethren are irregular in their attendance. It may be a lack of discipline in time management. Sometimes it is conflict in the home—a spouse, a child or both are antagonistic. It may be fear to assert one's rights to accommodation for religious service from an employer.

Brethren are indifferent, worldly and even lazy.

For many years I have tried to address this problem. In order to effect change those who are involved in the behavior must understand what continuing in that behavior accomplishes. In other words, they must understand who and how they are hurting themselves and others by their habitual absence.

What follows is a scriptural attempt at addressing just that question. So, here is a list of what one does and does not do by forsaking assembling with his brethren whenever they come together to worship God and encourage one another.

- (1) He fails to provoke his brothers and sisters unto love and good works (Hebrews 10:24).
- (2) He sins willfully (Hebrews 10:25-26).
- (3) He treads underfoot the Son of God (Hebrews 10:29).

- (4) He counts the blood of the covenant an unholy thing (Hebrews 10:29).
- (5) He does despite to the Spirit of Grace (Hebrews 10:29).
- (6) He forsakes the appointment that the Lord has made with him to commune at the Lord's Table (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 10:16).
- (7) He prefers someone or something above being with the Lord in the assembly (Matthew 18:20).
- (8) He denies the allegiance to Christ he confessed at his baptism (Acts 8:37).
- (9) He is not seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness (Matthew 6:33).
- (10) He offends the church with his attitudes and actions (1 Corinthians 10:32).
- (11) He is a stumbling block to the babe in Christ (Matthew 18:6).
- (12) He hinders the efforts of the church to preach the

- gospel (1 Corinthians 9:12).
- (13) He neglects the worship which God is seeking (John 4:23).
- (14) He is not a light to the world around him (Matthew 5:14; Philippians 2:15).
- (15) He fails in his duty toward his children (Ephesians 6:1-4).
- (16) He fails in his duty toward his spouse (1 Peter 3:7; 1 Corinthians 7:16).
- (17) He is not seeking those things above (Matthew 6:19-20, 24; Colossians 3:1).
- (18) He has become an unfruitful branch (Matthew 13:22; John 15:1-6).
- (19) He sins by omitting what he knows is good (James 4:17).
- (20) He demonstrates his contempt for the wisdom of God manifested in the church (Ephesians 3:10).
- (21) He joins those who are trying to destroy the local church, since the church cannot exist or do its work without assembling (1 Corinthians 5:4).
- (22) He is failing to grow into a mature Christian (1 Peter 2:2; Hebrews 5:12-14).
- (23) He shows he loves someone else more than Christ (Matthew 10:37-38).
- (24) He fails to teach and admonish others, as well as be taught and admonished (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16).
- (25) He is not ready unto every good work (Titus 3:1), unless assembling with the saints is not a good work.
- (26) He fails to submit to the elders of the church who have the rule over him (1 Thessalonians 5:12-13) and are watching for his soul (Hebrews 13:17).
- (27) He fails to redeem the time for the glory of God (Ephesians 5:16).
- (28) He weakens his conscience making it easier to sin the next time (1 Corinthians 8:7; Romans 14:23).
- (29) He fails to lay by in store as prospered so that the work of the church can continue (1 Corinthians 16:1-2).
- (30) He is not ready to meet Christ, because no willful sinner is (Hebrews 10:30-31).

—Jeff Asher

## FYI: for your information

• Prayer List: *Terry & Leon Aldridge, Mark and Deidra Cone Dale Hill, Evelyn Laird, Troy Lake, Gerry McDaniel, Sherman & Cheryl Pope, Mildred Tennison, Dorothy Yoder.* Also pray for our elders, deacons, evangelist, Bible

class teachers and the coming meeting in February with *A.W. Goff*.

- *Gerry McDaniel* is making a strong recovery from her surgery. We expect to see her out again soon.
- *Dale Hill* was at the hospital on the 30<sup>th</sup> for his pre-op exam and will enter for surgery on January 6<sup>th</sup>.
- *Mark Cone* has been diagnosed with a cancer on one of his kidneys. He sees a surgeon on Monday in Dallas. The exact date of his surgery is unknown at this writing. Mark is off work at home until then.
- **Visitation:** *Group #1* will meet tonight after service.
- **Gospel Meeting:** *A.W. Goff* will be with us February 20-25, 2005. Mark your calendar now!
- **January Birthdays:** *Kyle Cone (1/15), Leon Aldridge (1/20), Cindy May (1/21).*

### Northside Church of Christ

701 W. Cottage Road/POB 456  
Carthage, TX 75633  
(903) 693-8336

#### Sunday

Bible Class.....9:30 AM  
Assembly ..... 10:30AM  
Assembly.....6:00 PM

#### Wednesday

Bible Class..... 7:00PM  
**Sunday Radio Programs**  
KGAS 104.3FM..... 7:00AM  
CATV Channel 21...7:00AM  
KMHT 103.9FM... 8:00AM

#### Elders

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Jim Rhiddlehoover (903) 693-3084

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Jeff Asher (903) 694-2049

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# Words of Life

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Volume 5 Issue 2

January 9, 2005

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## Challenges to Accept

We are either going forward, standing still or falling behind. There is no status quo—especially in spiritual matters. It is very easy to become complacent and comfortable (the prelude to standing still). Once we stand still, everyone passes us by and we begin to fall behind.

Paul believed in moving ahead. In Philippians 3:13-14 he wrote: “Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the goal for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”

The only way to avoid stagnation and failure is to keep moving. 2004 saw a great many significant accomplishments by the church. However, these accomplishments do not mark the completion of our work. Rather, as a church, we need to think about what it takes to move ahead. We must never be satisfied with the past or believe that what we are doing in the present is all that we can or should do. To achieve all God will give us the opportunity to do, we must be ready to move forward to meet the challenges of the future.

### The Challenge to Make a Difference in the World

Jesus describes His people as salt and light (Matthew 5:13-16). These metaphors reflect the

reason why Christ has left the disciple in the world. Just as salt must come in contact with that which it preserves, so must we influence the world by the savory affects of righteous living. Similarly, Christians are lights in a sin darkened world (Philippians 2:15-16). We cannot expect to lead men to Christ if we hide our identity or cloister ourselves within the walls of the meeting house.

Christians have been silenced and made to feel unwelcome and unwanted by the world, and it probably won't get any better. But we cannot let them shut us up, shut us down, shut us out, or shut us in. We must show the world that we have answers to the problems plaguing mankind.

We need to speak out against sin whether to do so is popular or “politically incorrect.” Abortion, homosexuality, drunkenness, gambling, adultery, greed and racism are wicked soul-damning sins. They are destroying the moral fabric of our culture. We cannot be afraid to say so.

By the same token, we must present a positive and joyful lifestyle to the world that reflects the beauty of Christianity. We are not bitter negativists. We have a message that represents a life that is better and worth living. We must offer people an alternative that transcends anything this

world has to offer. Then things will change for the better.

### The Challenge to Evangelize Our Community

Everywhere I have ever lived, most people thought their community was not open to the gospel of Jesus. Was that opinion based on the failure of well planned and well financed efforts to evangelize the local community? No. Was it because there was so much opposition or animosity to the church that no one would listen? No. Neither was it because the people so hated God or His church that they refused to yield to His will? Why then? Mostly, it was because the local church simply did not make the effort.

So often churches think that once the building is paid for and they are able to support a preacher they must immediately start sending funds to a preacher ¼ of the way around the globe. They have little interest in actually using their resources for building up the local church by converting folks in the town where they live.

Coca Cola is so well known, that you can go into some of the most remote places in the world and there you will find bottles of Coke. I have traveled in the “third world” where folks can't have running water, but they have Coke. Their marketing strategy is: “Think globally, but act locally.”

They want to be everywhere. But to do it they know they must take care of each local market. So, they market their product where it is new and where it has been sold for decades. Keeping the old markets strong makes it possible for new markets to be developed.

This is the New Testament plan. Jesus told the Apostles that they would be His witnesses beginning at Jerusalem. From there the word of God grew in Judea, Samaria and into the uttermost parts of the world (Acts 1:8). Eventually disciples went everywhere preaching the word from Jerusalem (Acts 8:4). Throughout the Book of Acts and the Epistles we see cities become "centers for evangelism."

Jerusalem was the center from which the Gospel radiated in Palestine and the Middle East (Acts 1:8). Antioch in Syria was the center for Galatia and the Mediterranean (Acts 13). Ephesus was the center for Western Asia Minor (Acts 19). Thessalonica became the center for Macedonia and Greece (1 Thessalonians 1:8), so much so that the opponents of Christianity lamented that Paul and his companions had turned the world upside down (Acts 17:6).

Far too many congregations have no local plan of work, no budget for local evangelism, and use no media to get into the community. Something is wrong with this kind of thinking.

### The Challenge of Following God's Word

The effort to move the church forward into the future does not necessitate leaving the "old paths." Some seem to think that in order to make progress they must be "progressive," that is, change the church to reflect the desires of the time.

In recent years some have expressed a desire to change the message of our preaching and the content of our worship and alter the work of the local work through unsound and unbiblical reasoning.

Some of these changes are:

- (1) The increased use of entertainment as a replacement for worship.
- (2) An abandoning of the model of male leadership.
- (3) The use of instrumental music in our worship.
- (4) A de-emphasis of the role of baptism in salvation.
- (5) Compromise on various other doctrinal points for the sake of making Christianity more appealing to the world.

The Bible says we cannot and must not alter what God has required through His word (Deuteronomy 12:32; Revelation 22:18-19). Those who believe that the Bible is the Word of God also believe that He put in it all that we must believe and do.

These are a few of the challenges that are before us in the coming year. Are you willing to meet them with enthusiasm and confidence? In the words of Paul: "But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing" (2 Thessalonians 2:13).

—Jeff Asher

## FYI: for your information

• Prayer List: *Terry & Leon Aldridge, Mark and Deidra Cone Dale Hill, Evelyn Laird, Troy Lake, Gerry McDaniel, Sherman & Cheryl Pope, Mildred Tennison, Dorothy Yoder.*

• *Dale Hill* underwent surgery January 6<sup>th</sup> at Good Shepherd. He is making a good recovery.

• *Mark Cone* will have an MRI this week and surgery on February 4<sup>th</sup> unless an earlier opportunity arises.

• *Nell Fomby's* mother continues in the hospital at Center, TX recovering from congestive heart failure.

• *John Young* left Thursday returning to his job in Taiwan. John's contract continues through April 6<sup>th</sup>.

• *Visitation Group #2* will meet this morning after the service.

• **Business Meeting:** The elders will meet with all the men after the evening service.

• **Debate:** The debate with *David Proctor* on water baptism is scheduled for May 9–13, 2005.

• **Pictures:** *Mary Beth Asher* is taking pictures for the directory board—last names ending in A through C today in the study.

• **Gospel Meeting:** *A.W. Goff* will be with us February 20-25, 2005. Mark your calendar now!

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# Words of Life

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Volume 5 Issue 3

January 16, 2005

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## Enemies to Defeat

In Romans 12:4-5 the church is described as a body, both in its life and its function. *“For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.”* Bodies are designed to live, to act and to work. They naturally function so that life today promotes life tomorrow. The same is true for the Church. Life today promotes life tomorrow.

The human body has enemies that can damage or even kill it. There are diseases that injure and kill. Sometimes the body is wounded by an accident or attack. Sometimes we are even self-destructive by poor habits, a dissipative lifestyle or suicide.

Similarly, the church has enemies that can keep it from moving into the future. There are enemies that can damage or cripple it, even enemies that can kill it. We must be ready to fight these enemies in order to move forward.

### The Enemy of Ignorance

Ignorance comes in many forms. There is the religious ignorance which characterizes the pagan who makes his god from a tree (Isaiah 45:20; 44:9-20). This ignorance is the result of the Word of God being hampered and men just living in darkness (cf. Romans 1:18-32). The world is full of men that just do not know

God. Even in our own land we are encountering more and more people who know nothing about God and have been adversely influenced by astrology, witchcraft and earth worship.

Then there is that ignorance which is born of a stubborn will. It is an ignorance that comes to those who refuse to listen to God (Jeremiah 5 20-24; Isaiah 6:10; Ezekiel 12:2; Matthew 13:15; Acts 28:27). It is not that there is no one to make the will of God known; neither is it that they cannot understand the will of God. It is just that they do not want to know. If they seriously considered and understood then conscience would be bothered, and they might have to change or do something. Rather than do that, they remain ignorant. It has been said “ignorance is bliss.” In reality, ignorance is a temporary and deceitful comfort.

Just as ignorance affects the world so it can and does affect the church. The prophet Hosea in 4:1-6 laments the destruction of Israel on account of ignorance. Their ignorance was willful in the beginning (Hosea 6:1-6), but over time it was endemic (Amos 8:11-12). They became ignorant by choice (Isaiah 30:10) but when God took away their prophets they were doomed to remain in darkness (Isaiah 29:9-16).

Ignorance can cause us to miss salvation (Matthew 13:15;

Ephesians 4:18). It can cause us to “practice religion” instead of Biblical faith (Matthew 15:7-9; Acts 17:23, 30; Romans 10:3). Ignorance causes us to build monuments to ourselves instead of God (Matthew 23:29-32). Ignorance may cause us to miss God's purpose for us in the world (1 Timothy 1:13; Luke 12:48). We do not want ignorance to hold the church back in 2005.

### The Enemy of Unbelief

Whether or not one is a believer is a matter of life or death—eternal life or death that is. Jesus said unless one believes in Him as the Christ of God he will die in his sins and cannot go where Jesus has gone which is in Heaven with the Father (John 8:24; 14:1-6; 16:16-17, 28). Therefore, the man who does not believe in Jesus is not saved.

The church is fighting unbelief within and without. It is the mission of the church to preach the Truth of the Gospel to the world (Mark 16:15-16). However, Satan is opposing us and working to keep men from believing the truth (2 Corinthians 4:3-4). We must remember that we have an able enemy who is skillful in deceit, misrepresentation and prejudice. We must help men overcome Satan's impediments to faith. While it is certainly true that you cannot believe what you do not know (Romans 10:17), it is also true that the Devil steals the

Word out of men's hearts (Luke 8:12).

Unbelief is also a problem for the Christian. He is warned against having an evil heart of unbelief (Hebrews 3:12, 19) which may result from the influence of false doctrine (2 Timothy 2:18), fear (Hebrews 13:5), temptation (Luke 8:13), the lust of evil things (1 Timothy 1:19) and ignorance (1 Timothy 1:13).

Unbelief manifests itself in many different ways. When we know the truth but act contrary to it unbelief is manifested (Hebrews 10:26). We are in unbelief when assert that God does not care how we live (Psalm 94:7-10). When we have lost confidence in the power of God's Word to save we are in unbelief (Romans 1:16). We do not believe when we regard the worship as that which is subject to personal preference (John 8:24). And, we are unbelieving when we think it does not matter how committed we are (Matthew 25:26-30).

We should be like the man who cried out to Jesus in Mark 9:24, "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!"

### The Enemy of Apathy

Apathy is a lack of legitimate concern for real problems. Apathy appears at work, at home, at school and in government. Many problems are not addressed because folks do not want to be bothered. However, ignoring problems does not cause them to go away. Like the proverbial camel in the tent, they just grow to the point they cannot be ignored. Apathy is a sure path to destruction.

The church in Laodicea was apathetic (Revelation 3:15-16). They could muster no passion for the ills that were among them. They did not see the grave nature of the sins troubling the body.

They were satisfied and were certain "they had need of nothing."

Apathy causes us to lose our passion for the church, for righteousness, for reaching the lost, and for producing the fruit of the Spirit. We need to be zealous, literally "on fire", for Christ and the church.

### The Enemy of Sin

This is the most obvious enemy, but sin happens to people who don't know, don't believe and don't care. Sin is what comes from ignorance, unbelief, and apathy. Therefore, our greatest defense against sin is to defeat these other enemies.

No runner enters the race hampered by weights (Hebrews 12:1). We have all seen runners train by wearing leg weights, but you have never seen a runner enter the competition or the marathon with those weights. No, when the runner enters the race he puts the weights aside. Neither can the Christian run the spiritual race for heaven weighted down by sin. He must throw sin away.

The church is designed to create an environment where we can help one another throw off the weight of sin (Hebrews 3:12-13). Just like in the physical body where all the other members come to the aid of the one under attack, so in the body of Christ we rush to the aid of that member wounded by sin (James 5:19-20). Sometimes the remedy may be painful, but the body is at risk and must be saved. The church cannot tolerate sin among its members and remain the church (Revelation 2:5).

For the church to move forward, we must recognize and defeat our enemies.

—Jeff Asher

## FYI: for your information

• **Prayer List:** Terry & Leon Aldridge, Ruby Brittain, Mark and Deidra Cone, Nell Fomby, Dale Hill, Evelyn Laird, Troy Lake, Gerry McDaniel, Sherman & Cheryl Pope, Mildred Tennison, Dorothy Yoder.

• Mark Cone will have surgery on February 4<sup>th</sup> unless an earlier opportunity arises.

• Nell Fomby's mother, Ruby Brittain, returned to the nursing home in Center, TX. Nell is staying in Center during the week to help care for her.

• Visitation Group #3 will meet tonight after the service.

• **Singing School:** R.J. Stevens and Tim Stevens will conduct a singing school with the Southside Church in Mount Pleasant, TX January 19-21. Training class at 6:30 PM and a congregational sing at 7:30 PM.

• **Gospel Meeting:** A.W. Goff will be with us February 20-25, 2005. Mark your calendar now!

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# Words of Life

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Volume 5 Issue 4

January 23, 2005

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## Dangers to Avoid

What if, after you entered the building today, I discovered that we had a rattlesnake loose in the auditorium? Now, I could keep quiet about it, since I wouldn't want anyone to become upset, nor would I want people to panic and be hurt trying to get out. However it might be handled, I think all would agree that if a rattlesnake were loose under your pew, you'd want to know about it.

For this same reason we must discuss dangers that lie before the Church. Being unaware of the dangers lurking about may make us feel secure, but what happens when something slithers up and strikes? There are many things which will stop, or even kill our ability to move into the future if we do not warn against them.

### The Danger of False Doctrine

*False* signifies that which is not true; it is something that is a lie or intended to deceive. *Doctrine* is teaching; or that which is taught with the intent of producing a body of information to be believed and used for one's basis of faith, worship, life and service to God. *False doctrine* is any body of information that people believe and use as a basis for their relationship with God that is untrue. If the doctrine is untrue, then it cannot actually produce what it claims, and leaves the one

believing it in a dangerous position.

The Bible has many warnings about the dangers of false teachers who dispense false doctrine or teaching (Matthew 7:15-23; Acts 20:28-30; 2 Timothy 4:3-4; 1 Timothy 4:1-3; 6:3-5).

Now everything that is mistaken or incorrect does not qualify as *false doctrine*. I know this because Romans chapter 14 makes provisions for those who have incorrect views regarding eating meats and observing days to continue in their practice and preserve their conscience. The "strong," the brother with the right view, is specifically told not to judge his brother, as is the "weak" brother with the incorrect view. However, the weak is to be open to correct teaching.

*False doctrine* is determined by its "fruit" (Matthew 7:16). The criterion for determining evil fruit is revealed in the Scriptures. First, does the doctrine lead anyone to sin (1 Corinthians 8:8)? One may be wrong about eating or not eating meat, but he has not sinned in either case. Second, is the thing taught a matter of opinion that is elevated to the level of law? The Jews thought that men ought to eat only after washing their hands, journey only a certain distance on the Sabbath days and fast twice a week. However, Moses had

required none of these things. While they did not sin by doing so; they sinned by binding those things on others (Matthew 23:4; 15:6-9). Finally, does the doctrine deny the liberty assured to men by the word of God? When the Gentiles started submitting to circumcision as a requisite of salvation they sinned (Galatians 5:3-7). Paul opposed any teaching that perverted truth in that way (Galatians 2:5).

False doctrine is a perversion of God's truth. To overcome it, we must put the focus on what God has said (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

### The Danger of the Party Spirit

There is a tendency to form parties within the church around papers, schools or preachers. This tendency is as old as the church itself (1 Corinthians 1:10-12).

We need to be less concerned with what group we are going to tie ourselves to, and more concerned with God's will on matters. If God's position on something is "conservative," that needs to be my position, regardless of where the rest of the brotherhood stands. If God's position on something is "liberal," that needs to be my position, regardless of where the rest of the brotherhood stands.

We need to understand that the party spirit has nothing to do

with truth and righteousness and everything to do about influence and power (Galatians 4:16-18). The machinations that attend the party spirit are designed not to save men's souls but rather to destroy their influence and curry favor with those that "seemed to be somewhat" (Galatians 2:6; Philippians 2:21; 1:14-17).

### The Danger of Division

Division will destroy every effort regardless of its merit. Even Satan cannot accomplish his work if his forces are divided (Matthew 12:25). Certainly division will destroy the work of God.

Division among brethren has plagued the church since shortly after it began (Romans 16:17-18; 1 Corinthians 11:17-21). Jesus prayed specifically that His people would be unified (John 17:20-21). But, He warned that there would be wolves in sheep's clothing that would scatter the flock (Matthew 7:15; Acts 20:29).

It is through false doctrine and the party spirit that division is accomplished. If Satan can convince men to be more loyal to their opinions and their cronies than to the truth and Christ, he will succeed each and every time (1 Corinthians 4:6). Our unity is a determining factor in the world's acceptance of Jesus as the Christ (John 17:21). When the church is divided we are not winning souls to Christ and we are devouring ourselves whole (Galatians 5:15). When the church is united we cannot be overthrown.

Let us determine that we will move forward into the future as a unified body of people, and that we will do all within our power to avoid the dangers of division. The secret to succeeding is love Christ, love the truth, love each other and love the lost. Walking in love we cannot be deterred.

### The Danger of Imbalance

What do I mean by "imbalance"? Well, giving over emphasis to one thing while neglecting others. Imbalance often manifests itself as "hobby-riding". Some preachers, teachers and elders have their "pet" subjects that they continue to emphasize. These may even be right in their teaching. However, the approach is wrong because we are commanded to preach "the whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:27).

The New Testament encourages balance. There must be a balance between "milk" and "meat" (1 Corinthians 3:2; Hebrews 5:12). There must be a balance between "positive" and "negative" (2 Timothy 3:15-16). There must be a balance between "controversy" and "tranquility" (1 Timothy 2:2-3; 2 Timothy 4:2-3).

The effects of imbalance are destructive. Ignorant, stifled and stunted Christians result. Discouragement sets in. Skewed thinking regarding what a Christian is forms. There are no conversions or restorations. There are no qualified elders, preachers or teachers developed.

If we are imbalanced in our teaching then we are imbalanced in our practice. We cannot grow on all milk, all positive and all non-controversial preaching. Neither can we grow on all meat, all negative, all controversial preaching. It takes it all!

A balanced Church is a growing Church. Sinners are converted. Error is confronted. Saints are comforted.

In order to move forward we must avoid these dangers.

—Jeff Asher

## FYI: for your information

• **Prayer List:** Terry & Leon Aldridge, Ruby Brittain, Mark and Deidra Cone, Nell Fomby, Dale Hill, Evelyn Laird, Troy Lake, Gerry McDaniel, Sherman & Cheryl Pope, Mildred Tennison, Dorothy Yoder.

• **Danny Murphy** was baptized into Christ last Lord's Day. We rejoice with the angels of heaven and welcome him to the Kingdom. His address is 956 E. Sabine St. Carthage, TX 75633. The telephone number is 693-7823.

• Many thanks to **Gary Box** and **Kerry Henry** for teaching the Sunday morning class and preaching in Jeff's absence last week. Both did a wonderful job and their efforts are greatly appreciated.

• **Visitation Group #4** will meet tonight after the service.

• **Gospel Meeting:** A.W. Goff will be with us February 20-25, 2005. Mark your calendar now!

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# Words of Life

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Volume 5 Issue 5

January 30, 2005

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## Opportunities to Take

One noted modern preacher has rightly observed: "The Harvest is always urgent. The destiny of men and of nations is always being decided. Every generation is strategic. We are not responsible for the past generation, and we cannot bear full responsibility for the next one; but we do have our generation. God will hold us responsible as to how well we fulfill our responsibilities to this age and take advantage of our opportunities."

The urgency of this harvest is demonstrated in the parable of the eleventh hour laborers. The master went into the market looking for workers in the early morning, the mid-morning, at noon, mid-afternoon and just an hour before sundown (Matthew 20:3-6). He was looking for workers when there was really only an hour in which they could labor. Why? Well, when it's time to harvest, it's time to harvest! Every hand, if only for a short while, means more is gathered.

Like the master of the vineyard, we need to be able to see the great harvest and the limited amount of time in which it may be gathered. Work while the opportunity is present. Jesus knew this truth because it was He who said, "The night cometh, when no man can work" (John 9:4). Opportunities in the Kingdom of Heaven are limited. We must be able to see

them and be willing to seize them when presented.

### Principles Involved in Realizing Opportunities

As already noted, the ability to see opportunities is essential to success. The truth is that some men cannot see opportunity when it is staring them in the face. Ahab is an example of such a man. God had delivered his enemy Benhadad in to his hands after twice being attacked by that wicked Syrian (1 Kings 20). When he stood before Ahab in sackcloth obviously beaten, Ahab embraced him saying, "My brother." This folly on Ahab's part cost him the kingdom and his life.

There are those who do not recognize spiritual opportunity when it appears. The woman at the well was just such a person (John 4:10). Fortunately for her, Jesus recognized the opportunity He had and offered her "living water." How often have we let such opportunities pass by because the person with whom we were engaged did not appreciate at first contact the opportunity being offered?

Others are afraid of the opportunity and turn away. Israel was given the opportunity to take the land of Canaan when they arrived at Kadesh (Numbers 13:26-33). They missed their opportunity because they feared the Canaanites saying, "We were

in our own sight as grasshoppers." On account of their fear they wandered in the wilderness another 38 years and never entered into the land. God gave the opportunity to someone else that was willing to do the work and had faith enough to trust Him for success.

The rich young ruler is an example of someone who missed an opportunity on account of fear (Matthew 19:21-22). Here is someone who wanted eternal life but could not trust Christ to provide it. While the text does not say he was afraid, it is obvious that fear was a component in his turning away from Jesus. The Bible says he was very wealthy. Jesus when commenting about the matter observed, "How hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!" (Mark 10:24).

Some fail to see opportunity because they will not listen to wise counsel. Rehoboam drove the nation into rebellion because he would not listen to the older and more experienced men about him (1 Kings 12:1-11). We miss great opportunities in the church because we will not listen to those who have greater experience in reaching souls. We are like Nathaniel, but not as honest when confronted about it, we let our prejudices, opinions and limited experiences cloud our

judgment. When Philip told Nathaniel he had found Christ, Nathaniel dismissed the matter without a fair hearing (John 1:43-51). Philip would not give up so easy and challenged his prejudice. Nathaniel being an honest man seized the opportunity. Why don't we do as much?

The ability to eliminate negative thinking and attitudes causes us to miss opportunity. I hate to say it, but some of my brethren have lost their conviction that the Gospel is God's power to save (Romans 1:16; 1 Corinthians 1:18). For this reason they turn to gimmicks and "water down" the gospel message, or worse, preach pop psychology and sectarian dogma. Another negative factor is that some have lost their compassion for the lost (Matthew 9:36). Like that woman at the well, most folks don't even know that they need Jesus. While we may have been rejected and even ridiculed, we need to feel compassion toward the lost. We are the one's who know; we are the lights in this dark world (Philippians 2:15-16). Like the Eunuch, they need someone to guide them (Acts 8:31). One other negative attitude that needs to be eliminated is cowardice. We talk ourselves out of opportunity by focusing on the difficulties and limitations we may possess. We need to be like Bartimaeus. Convinced that Jesus was the Messiah, he let nothing impede him from getting Jesus' attention (Mark 10:46-52). It appears that he and another blind man walked all the way around the wall of Jericho as Jesus passed through the city so that they could be at the gate as he passed out on the way toward Jerusalem (cf. Luke 18:35; Matthew 20:29-30; Mark 10:46). That was a difficult task; think how they had to grope for their way as they hurried to be

there when Jesus passed them again. Perhaps bruised and weary, they were ready when Jesus arrived. The crowd discouraged them and urged them to be quiet, but not Bartimaeus. Nothing would keep him from seizing the only opportunity he might ever have to regain his sight.

Opportunity, in order to be realized, must be acted upon quickly. Miriam did not wait to ask her mother if she wanted to be Moses' nurse (Exodus 2:7-8). The woman with the issue just reached (Matthew 9:19-22). The eunuch was ready when the opportunity was presented (Acts 8:36). We miss a lot of good opportunities because we just analyze them to death.

Opportunity seekers are risk takers. Failure is a distinct possibility in every attempt to share the Gospel. However, Jesus was not afraid to fail (John 4:17-19). He did not let the possibility of hurt feelings keep him from addressing that woman's sin. Paul was not afraid to fail by addressing Felix's sinful behavior and lost condition even though it may have resulted in his own death (Acts 24:24-25).

The inability to make the effort with zeal and determination causes us to be unsuccessful. Opportunity is not the same as a gift—there is always some work involved. We need to be like the woman and her oil (2 Kings 4:1-7). She went out expecting to succeed and she did. She worked until all opportunity was exhausted. She was successful because she trusted and was enthusiastic in her obedience.

The Lord sends us opportunity and he will give us success when we trust and obey.

—Jeff Asher

## FYI: for your information

- **Prayer List:** *Terry & Leon Aldridge, Ruby Brittain, Mark and Deidra Cone, Nell Fomby, Dale Hill, Evelyn Laird, Troy Lake, Gerry McDaniel, Sherman & Cheryl Pope, Mildred Tennison, Dorothy Yoder.*
- The *Communion Preparation List for 2005* has been posted on the bulletin board in the foyer. If you have not taken the opportunity to volunteer for this work please do so soon. Many spots have already been filled, but opportunities remain to participate in this part of our worship preparation.
- **Wedding Announcement:** *Casey Singletary and Earl Fannin* announce their engagement and approaching marriage on March 12, 2005. The ceremony will be held at 2:00 P.M. in the Carthage Community Center; all are invited to attend this celebration of love.
- **Gospel Meeting:** *A.W. Goff* will be with us February 20-25, 2005. Mark your calendar now!

### Northside Church of Christ

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# Words of Life

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Volume 5 Issue 6

February 6, 2005

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## Attitudes to Develop

The following thoughtful verse written by an unknown author teaches a powerful lesson about attitudes. It is called *The Advance Man*.

*Its roots are inward  
but its fruit is outward.*

*It is our best friend  
or our worst enemy.*

*It is more honest  
and more consistent  
than our words.*

*It is an outward look  
based on past experiences.*

*It is a thing that draws people to us  
or repels them.*

*It is never content  
until it is expressed.*

*It is the librarian of our past,  
It is the speaker of our present,*

*It is the prophet of our future.*

*What is it?*

*It's out attitude!*

### What Is an Attitude and Why Is It So Important?

Attitude is a person's prevailing tendency to respond favorable or unfavorably to an object, a person, a group, or an event. Normally, we speak either of a positive or negative attitude. Practically, it is how we think or feel about things. Attitudes are formed by what we believe to be true about things.

We express attitude in a number of different ways: in our facial expressions, our tone of voice, by our behavior or lack of it. It is expressed in the way we perform

at a task, by the energy we put into whatever we are doing, and through the interest we have in a person, thing or activity.

The importance of attitude is revealed in this story about a grandmother's glasses: "Wouldn't you hate to wear glasses all the time?" asked a small boy of his playmate. "No-o-o," the other boy answered slowly, "not if I had the kind grandma wears. She sees how to fix a lot of things, and she sees lots of nice things to do on rainy days, and she sees when folks are tired and sorry, and what will make them feel better, and she always sees what you meant to do even if you haven't got things just right. I asked her one day how she could see that way all the time, and she said it was the way she learned to look at things, as she grew older. So it must be her glasses."

The power of attitude is seen in the fact that since it reflects what we believe, it reflects what we are, what we will do, what we will sacrifice, how hard we will work, and how much of ourselves we will give to anything. There is no doubting that attitude determines success.

### Attitudes Needful for the Success of the Church

*We need a positive attitude toward God.* By this I mean we must truly believe in God and believe God (Hebrews 11:6). It is not enough

to say that I know there is a God; we must confess our faith and do His will. Too many think that all there is to the love of God is His great love for us. We ought to respond to Him in love (Galatians 5:6, John 14:15; Romans 2:4). When our hearts are full of faith and love and gratitude for God it makes a difference in how interested we are in God and spiritual things. It will shape your willingness to seek for spiritual growth. It will determine the moral climate in which you decide to live. It will lead us to pray to and meditate upon God. However, if we derive no pleasure from the worship of God and the study of His word we have a serious heart problem caused by a weak faith.

*We need a positive attitude toward the Church.* By this I mean we need to appreciate the Church for its real worth and value. The world in general, most religious folks in particular and, sadly, too many Christians do not understand the precious character of the Church of Christ. The Lord died for the Church; He gave Himself in order that it could be saved (Acts 20:28; Ephesians 5:25). It is His body and the Temple of the God of Heaven (1 Corinthians 3:16; Ephesians 1:22-23). Men do not have the right to abuse it, neglect it or forsake it. An improper attitude is reflected by those who disregard its

appointments. The church is essential to the proper worship of God (1 Corinthians 11:22; 16:1-4; Hebrews 10:25; Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; Acts 12:12). Furthermore, an improper attitude is demonstrated when we mistreat or neglect our brethren (Romans 14:15, 20; Matthew 12:44-45). Christians are our *brethren*; we are begotten of the same Father (1 Peter 1:3, 23) and born of the same mother, the church (Galatians 4:22-26; 1 Corinthians 4:15). We do not have the love of God, if we forsake and neglect them (1 John 3:14-17).

If we have the right attitude about the Church, we will want to share it with others. If we have a proper attitude we will love the people that make up the Church (1 Corinthians 12:25-26) and actively support the work of the Church by assembling with them, sharing in the work and supporting the church with our time, talents and offerings (2 Corinthians 8:8; 9:12-13). If we have the proper attitude we will actively seek to build up the Church by sharing the Gospel with others that they too may have the blessing which it affords (Ephesians 1:3, 22-23).

*We must have a positive attitude about being different from the world* (John 17:15). This attitude makes the difference between our leading others to Christ and being led by others away from Christ (James 4:4). When our speech does not edify (Colossians 4:6) and our clothing suggests anything but a heart adorned with the doctrine of Christ (1 Peter 3:4; Titus 2:10; 1 Timothy 2:9), we display an attitude that reflects a desire to be like the world. When we are participating in the lascivious and hurtful things after which the world lusts,

we do not have the right attitude (Titus 2:12; 1 Corinthians 10:6). The Christian does not want to walk, talk and do as the citizens of Satan's domain (Ephesians 2:1-2; 1 Peter 4:1-5). The Christian is washed clean and no longer has fruit in those wicked things (Romans 6:17-23; Ephesians 5:1-8; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

When my children were small, we sent them out the door with the admonition: "Remember who you are." They were my children and our expectations for them were high. Because they were ours and bore my name, which my father had borne before me, they were, therefore, expected to keep it free from reproach. We bear the name of our Father's Son, *Christian*. Therefore, lift up your head and know you are a child of the King (Galatians 3:26-27). Never sully that precious name by which you are called (1 Peter 4:14-16).

How's your attitude? It is good and right and proper? Bless you for it. Now, do what you can to share it with others and keep it spreading and growing within this church.

—Jeff Asher

## FYI: for your information

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• The new class for the youth will meet this afternoon at 5:15 P.M. Bring your Bibles and a smiling face as we learn some great Bible facts together.

• **Gospel Meeting:** A.W. Goff will be with us February 20-25, 2005. Now is the time to give invitations to the meeting to your friends and family.

• *Sherman Blanton*, nephew to *Sherman Pope*, was in a serious work accident Sunday requiring surgery on both legs. **He is recovering well, but will require about a year of rehab.**

• **Sympathy:** *Wanda Stewart's* brother, *Charles Stephenson*, was buried Thursday. *Ruby Brittain*, *Nell Fomby's* mother was buried Monday. We express our heartfelt sorrow to both families and will remember them in our prayers today (Romans 12:15).

• *Mr. & Mrs. Troy Lake* celebrated 67 years of marriage this week.

• **Birthdays:** *Cyndi Asher* (2/9), *Bob White* (2/16), *Mary Beth Asher* (2/20), *Jay White* (2/28), *Sherman Pope* (3/2), *Deanna McKnight* (3/2), *Joe Fomby* (3/2).

• *Wallace Little* leaves Tuesday for the Philippines. *Gary Box* will join him in March for two weeks.

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# Words of Life

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Volume 5 Issue 7

February 13, 2005

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## New Testament Baptism

We are embarking on a series of articles on the subject of New Testament Baptism. We hope to be very thorough in investigating what the Bible says. Let me make it clear that we will be concerned with water baptism and will stick to that subject throughout.

### What is Baptism?

There is much confusion in religious circles concerning this subject. Much of this confusion is self-imposed due to a desire to do what is convenient rather than to comply with the Scriptures. Many are not fooled, but actually do know what baptism is supposed to be.

I once worked with a man who had little, if any, knowledge of the Bible. He was relating how he had accompanied his wife to the Crossroads Lutheran Church where their son was to be baptized. He related how the Lutheran pastor took a little water and "dribbled it" on the child's head. "That's not

baptism," he said. "Baptism is like when I was a boy and saw them take folks down to Lost River and put them clear under. Now, that's baptism." Even this man, though ignorant of the Scriptures, had it right.

Dictionaries are sometimes no help since they may define baptism as "immersion or sprinkling" or even as "pouring." This type of definition leaves one with the impression that it is a mere matter of choice. However, if one would consult a Bible reference work on New Testament words, such as Vine's, Thayer's, Strong's, Arndt and Gingrich, etc., one will find that the word "baptism" is generally be defined as "immerse, dip, submerge, plunge." You will not find "pour" or "sprinkle" in these works as a possible definition. The word "pour" means "to turn out of." "Sprinkle" means "to scatter about in drops."

Let us take these definitions and see how they work in a couple of passages:

### Mark 16:16.

- (1) "He that believes and is immersed will be saved."
- (2) "He that believes and is turned out will be saved."
- (3) "He that believes and is scattered about in drops will be saved."

### Acts 2:38

- (1) "Repent and let every one of you be immersed."
- (2) "Repent and let every one of you be turned out."
- (3) "Repent and let every one of you be scattered about in drops."

Which usage makes sense? I contend that the first in both cases are the only sensible selections. The only sense the others make is nonsense. Who can believe it? A person can be immersed in water. A person cannot be poured or sprinkled and live to tell it!

## Popular Religious Leaders of the Past

Notice what popular religious leaders have said about baptism:

*John Calvin*, "The word baptize signifies to immerse, and the rites of immersion was practiced by the ancient church."

*Martin Luther*, "Baptism is a sign of the death and resurrection. Being moved by this reason, I would have those who are to be baptized to be altogether dipped into the water, as the word doth express and the mystery doth signify."

*John Wesley*, "Buried with Him--alluding to the ancient manner of baptizing by immersion."

Yet the followers of these men sprinkle and call it baptism in the name of our Lord! Oh, consistency, thou art a jewel!

## New Testament Use

While the previous statements are interesting and provocative, they are not the ultimate proof. The New Testament is the ultimate proof. However this word is used in the New Testament is how we should understand it. What it meant to them in the 1st century is what it means to us in the 21st century.

Notice the following:

(1) John baptized *with much water* (John 3:23; Matthew 3:11).

(2) After being baptized by John; *Christ came up out of the water*, having first gone down into it (Matthew 3:16).

(3) Baptism requires a going *down into and coming up out of the water* (Acts 8:36-39).

(4) Baptism is likened to a *burial* (Colossians 2:12; Romans 6:4). Only immersion allows this likeness.

All of this should prove beyond a doubt that the baptism of the New Testament is immersion. It is with this sense of the word, and not pouring and/or sprinkling, that we will continue in this series.

—*Terry Sanders*

## FYI: for your information

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• The new class for the youth will meet this afternoon at 5:15 P.M. Bring your Bibles and a smiling face as we learn some great Bible facts together.

• **Gospel Meeting:** *A.W. Goff* will be with us February 20-25, 2005. Now is the time to give invitations to the meeting to your friends and family.

• *Mary Wilson, Sherman Pope's* sister, has been in the hospital in Nacogdoches. She received a pacemaker this past Thursday and expects to undergo angioplasty in the near future.

• **Cheryl Pope was in an automobile accident this week and has been home recovering.**

• **Chris Millican was in an automobile accident on Tuesday and off work for three days.**

• **Thank you!** Special thanks to *Thomas and Wanda Stewart, Loren Rhiddlehoover, Herschel and Dee Morris* for the extra work they have done in the past week getting the building ready for the Gospel Meeting.

• **Mystery Announcer:** If you didn't recognize the voice of the announcer on the radio broadcast, it's *Sherman Pope*. Thanks *Sherman* for taking the time.

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# Words of Life

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Volume 5 Issue 8

February 20, 2005

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## New Testament Baptism (2)

This is the second installment in a series of articles on the subject of New Testament Baptism. Last week we learned about the meaning of the word “baptism.” Keeping that in mind, we now move on to another topic.

### The Baptism of John

When we read the New Testament, do we read of John who was called “the Baptist?” Yes, we do (for example, see Matt. 3:11). John was called “the Baptist” due to his work. He baptized people (Matt. 3:5-6). He could easily have been referred to as “John the Immerser.” What he is called does not indicate *what he was* (a Baptist), it indicates *what he did!*

The baptism of John is one of those things in the New Testament that is greatly misunderstood. This has led to a number of inaccurate conclusions. In order to avoid doing this ourselves, let us examine the baptism of John.

One must first understand something about the ministry

of John in order to fully comprehend his baptism. We learn of the ministry of John by way of a fulfilled prophecy. Isaiah prophesied of John’s coming (Isaiah 40:3). This was fulfilled by John’s work (Matthew 3:3; Luke 3:4-6; John 1:23). John was sent before the Christ (John 3:28). Eventually, John’s work would decrease while the work of Jesus would increase (John 3:30; Luke 3:16). Thus, the work of John and the work of Jesus were different. Jesus did not merely continue the work started by John; He began a distinct ministry of His own. John’s baptism was connected *solely with his ministry*. John’s work is sometimes said to be associated with the Mosaic Law. If so, where is this said? Neither was John’s work some part of the gospel of Christ. John’s ministry was transitional and temporary and his baptism was the same. Nevertheless, John’s baptism was from God. Jesus asked some of the Jews, “The baptism of John—where was it from? From heaven or

from men?” (Matthew 21:25). The implied answer is that it was from heaven.

John was baptizing in the wilderness (uninhabited place) near the Jordan River (Mark 1:5) since immersion requires “much water” (John. 3:23). John’s baptism was “a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins” (Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3; Acts 19:4). John’s baptism was a shadow of the true—in anticipation of the baptism of Christ.

Faith in Jesus, which is necessary for the Christ’s baptism, is not a feature of the baptism of John. If so, where do we find it? Some may suggest it is found in Acts 19:4. However, that verse is simply saying they were baptized with John’s baptism and should look forward to the coming Messiah whose identity, at the time of John’s baptism, was unknown. The Messiah (or Christ) soon proved to be Jesus. That is why Paul words Acts 19:4 as he does. Faith is necessary in the baptism of Christ (Mark 16:16). Yet, this is a specific faith—in Jesus as the Christ,

the Son of God (John 8:24; Acts 8:35-38).

The baptism of John predated the New Testament church. The New Testament church began on Pentecost (Acts 2) and baptism played an integral role in the beginning (Acts 2:38, 41, 47). There is no indication that the church began somewhere in the wilderness near the Jordan outside of Jerusalem. We have our friends who call themselves "Baptists." Occasionally they will make a claim to be practitioners of the baptism associated with John and additionally claim the church began with John (see "Trail of Blood", a Baptist publication). This argument may, in this writer's opinion, be made to justify the use of the name "Baptist." This is curious, but does, at least, admit that they are not practicing New Testament baptism! It is an argument that is made out of desperation and, generally, soon regretted.

Friends, there was a transitional period of time when the baptism of John was authorized from heaven and practiced on Earth. However, that period of time is over and baptism today is to be the baptism of Christ. Nothing would be gained if one was to decide to be baptized with John's baptism. The baptism of Christ, on the other hand, forgives sins (Acts 2:38) and saves (Mark 16:16; 1 Peter

3:21). Those who were baptized with Christ's baptism were called Christians (Acts 11:26) not "Baptists." Why not follow Jesus in this regard yourself.

—Terry Sanders

## FYI: for your information

• **Prayer List:** Terry & Leon Aldridge, Sherman Blanton, Gary Box, Mark and Deidra Cone, Evelyn Laird, Troy Lake, Wallace Little, Gerry McDaniel, Chris Millican, Sherman Pope, Jimmy, Joy, Reagan and Landon Rhiddlehoover, Mildred Tennison, Dorothy Yoder, John Young.

• **Gospel Meeting:** Our meeting with A.W. Goff begins today and continues through Friday. We encourage everyone to attend every service. Today would be a good day to follow up on your invitations and other plans for this week related to the meeting.

• The new class for the youth will meet not meet this afternoon due to the Gospel Meeting. However, we will be back on schedule next week so be prepared to share in the memory work and drills.

• **Released:** Mark Cone came home from the hospital on Saturday and had a post operative follow-up on Wednesday. He is doing very well and is at home.

• **Surgery:** Reagan Rhiddlehoover will enter Children's Hospital in Dallas February 21 for surgery to correct several blood vessels in her respiratory track affected by hemangioma. Jim and Lorene

will be with Jimmy and Joy at the hospital Monday.

• **Sympathy:** We extend our condolences to Sherman Pope. His sister Mary Wilson passed away Wednesday and was buried Friday in Nacogdoches.

• **Thank you!** Special thanks to Thomas Stewart and Dale Hill for striping the parking lot and to Gary and Helen Box for providing the paint.

• **Card of Thanks:** "Your thoughtfulness has a way of touching lives... You are appreciated very much. Your kindness will never be forgotten. Thanks for the prayers, cards and plant." —Wanda and Thomas Stewart

• **Card of Thanks:** It is a wonderful thing to be part of a group of Christians who really care for each other... Thank you for being there for us when we needed you." —Nell and Joe Fomby

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# Words of Life

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Volume 5 Issue 9

February 27, 2005

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## New Testament Baptism (3)

This is the third article in a series on the subject of New Testament Baptism. Last week we learned about the baptism of John. We now move on to another important topic.

### Born Of Water?

Religious people seldom agree in great numbers on things. However, there are a vast number of religious people who do agree on one thing—you must be born again in order to be a Christian. This agreement is remarkable. Nevertheless, we should be cautious and not get carried away in the momentary euphoria of ecumenical bliss. While folks may say you must be born again, they are not agreed on how one is born again. Let us examine the Scriptures and see if we can determine how one is born again.

The classic teaching on this subject is found in John 3 where Jesus had a conversation with a man by the name of Nicodemus. Nicodemus was no ordinary individual. He was a Pharisee, a ruler, and a teacher (John 3:1, 10). At one point in this conversation Jesus says to Nicodemus, "Jesus answered and said to him, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God'" (John 3:3).

There it is—the very point upon which multitudes agree. Yet, we see that Nicodemus himself did not grasp the meaning of Jesus' words (John 3:4). So, it was incumbent on Jesus to explain His statement in more detail. When He does He explains how being born is achieved. "Jesus answered, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God'" (John 3:5). When one is born again, they are born of "water and the Spirit."

### Water Means Water

What do these words mean? Well, water means water (H<sub>2</sub>O). There is a striking similarity of John 3:5 to Titus 3:5. "not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit."

While our main interest is how the passage is connected with baptism, we must point out something about the Holy Spirit. The Spirit's activity is in the area of the revelation of the word of God (1 Corinthians 2:13). When one is led by the Spirit (Rom. 8:14) one is following the instructions of the gospel of Christ. Following of the Word is a definite part of the

process of being born again (1 Peter 1:23).

### The Water of Baptism

What about water in John 3:5, what does this mean to be born of water? I have books written by men who believe a number of false things about baptism, but who do say that John 3:5 is speaking about baptism. In this they are right. R. C. H. Lenski, who is a strong opponent of baptism being either immersion or saving one from sin, even admits that "water" in John 3:5 refers to baptism. Likely Lenski, and others, think it is sprinkling and they are wrong in that. (See the previous article in this series).

Nicodemus would not have been ignorant about the practice of baptism. After all his conversation with Jesus comes after Jesus had been baptized by John (John 1:29-34; Matthew 3:14-17). Remember that John's baptism was a well-known event at this time (Matthew 3:5-6). It is even possible that Jesus Himself was baptizing disciples at this time (John 3:26; 4:1).

The words of Christ also show how important it is to be born again. He says without doing so one "cannot see the kingdom of God." His later explanation says "cannot enter the kingdom of

God." Jesus also said, "You must be born again" showing the importance of being born again. It seems hard, after associating being born of water with baptism, to then dismiss baptism as unimportant! But, that is just what many folks do. In this they err for it cannot be important and unimportant. I take the position that being born again of water is important and absolutely necessary for salvation. I do this, not out of whim or some attempt to maintain some alleged status quo, but out of a study of what is said in John 3. I hope you agree that this is an important subject. I earnestly hope that you have been born again as the New Testament teaches.

—Terry Sanders

## Calling on His Name

We read in Joel 2:32, "And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call." Joel prophesied several hundred years before the Pentecost of Acts 2 but we hear Peter quoting from him and saying that the prophecies of Joel were being fulfilled on that occasion. (Read the entire chapter.) His concluding statement from that prophecy was "that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (v. 21).

To "call on the name of the Lord" sounds like calling out in

prayer and that's the way that many people look at it. In reality, "to call on his name" means to put one's trust and confidence in all that pertains to the Lord.

Let's look at it from a backward standpoint. Who were the ones saved on Pentecost? Why, the ones who obeyed the preaching of Peter. He had said to the ones who believed his preaching and were smitten in their hearts and said "what shall we do?", "repent and be baptized, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." "They that gladly received his word were baptized and there were added unto them in that day about 3000 souls." In other words, 3000 were saved on that occasion. What had they done? Prayed? No. What had they been told to do? Pray? Peter didn't mention prayer in his answer to their question.

When they completed their obedience they were saved. They had "called on the Lord" when they put their trust in him and did what he said. People today need to "call on the Lord." Hear what he says and do what he says.

—Bob Craig

## FYI: for your information

• **Prayer List:** Terry & Leon Aldridge, Sherman Blanton, Gary Box, Mark and Deidra Cone, Evelyn Laird, Troy Lake, Wallace Little, Gerry McDaniel, Jeff McKnight, Mildred Tennison, Dorothy Yoder, John and Chris Young.

• The *Youth Class* will meet this afternoon at 5:15 P.M. Be prepared to share in the memory work and drills.

• **Sympathy:** We extend our condolences to *Kerry Henry and family* at the death of his great grandmother *Barbara Galloway*.

• **Sympathy:** We extend our condolences to the family of *Jim Everett*. You may send a card to his family care of *Cedar Park Church of Christ* POB 864 Cedar Park, Texas 78630-0864.

• **Sympathy:** We also extend our condolences to the family of *David and Shelia Little* at the death of Shelia's father, *Mr. Ted Gotcher*. You may send a card to the family at 205 Enola Mae Dr. Marshall, TX 75670.

• **Visitation:** Group #4 will meet tonight after the service.

• **March Birthdays:** *Deanna McKnight* (3/2), *Joe Fomby* (3/2), *Sherman Pope* (3/2), *Lori Pryor* (3/16), *Joyce Anderson* (3/17), *Carla Little* (3/24), *Jeff Asher* (3/27).

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Dale Hill (903) 693-3274  
Jim Rhiddlehoover (903) 693-3084

#### Preacher

Jeff Asher (903) 694-2049

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# Words of Life

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Volume 5 Issue 10

March 6, 2005

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## New Testament Baptism (4)

This is the fourth portion of a series on the subject of New Testament Baptism. Last week we studied what it means to be born of water. We now move on to another important topic.

### The Great Commission

Let me firmly state in the beginning that I understand and teach that the New Testament (and therefore Jesus) commands baptism! This means that baptism is not, as some allege an option. The idea of an optional command is an oxymoron. If something is commanded it *must* be obeyed. There is no "option" to it.

Jesus had spent much of his time in the preparation of His apostles. This was extremely important since they would be taking the message of His gospel into the world (Mk. 16:15). The time for their activity to begin was *after* Jesus had been raised from the grave. He gathered the apostles together one last time and gave them their instructions. We sometimes refer to these instructions as "The Great Commission." We are interested in the portions of this referring to our subject. Here are the passages

*"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in*

*the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit"* (Matthew 28:19).

*"He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned"* (Mark 16:16).

Do you see how baptism is a part of these instructions? Do you see any indication that the apostles could leave baptism out? Do you see how baptism is a part of "making disciples"? Do you see where Jesus said baptism is a part of salvation? Let me ask you another question. Is there anyway to word this so as to make the importance of baptism clearer? But, there is no reason to change the wording. It is clear enough that even a child can understand it.

### Why Disregard It?

Why is it that something so clear can be regarded as optional and viewed inconsequential? The answer is because of a bias in one's doctrine. Those who are of the "salvation by faith only" position are determined to lessen, even eliminate, baptism from salvation altogether. They will offer many "answers" as to why this is so. However, they are unable to do one thing—get baptism out of The Great Commission! Jesus put it there

and there is no one alive who has the authority to remove it or to lessen its importance.

### The Apostles & Baptism

What did the apostles understand about The Great Commission? We see on Pentecost the preaching of the gospel for the first time (Acts 2:14-36). The crowd was moved to inquire what to do (Acts 2:37). Peter then told them, "*Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call*" (Acts 2:38-39). Where did Peter come up with baptism? He received from Jesus in the Great Commission. Later the gospel went for the first time to the Gentiles, to the house of Cornelius in particular. Peter was there in the house of Cornelius also. We notice that Peter "*commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord*" (Acts 10:48).

So, Peter, who heard the Great Commission, commanded baptism at the conclusion of his preaching on *both* occasions. That is hardly a coincidence. He did so

because that is what the Lord told him to do.

My practice is to consistently follow this practice myself. I do so not out of whim or custom, but because there is authority for it.

Folks, do not be deceived by those who try to get baptism *out* of The Great Commission. It was put there and is thus commanded by Jesus. Anyone who leaves it out is leaving out something *you* need to do in order to be saved.

—Terry Sanders

## They Preached Everywhere

We read in Acts 8:4, "Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word." Christians in the first century were persecuted because of their faith in the crucified Christ. Instead of allowing this persecution to stop them from worshiping in harmony with the Lord's will, they felt an obligation to let others know of Jesus. At this time the scattering abroad included only the regions of Judea and Samaria. So, according to the context, they didn't go everywhere in the known world of their day, but just to a limited area. I think the verse would read better like this: "everywhere they went, they preached the word."

Their zeal for Christ was unlimited even though their territory was limited. This attitude should be the attitude of people today. Peter and John were warned to no longer preach in the name of Jesus. The threat of death hung over

them yet they still preached the word. Paul suffered all kinds of hardship, yet he never wavered. In fact, ever since men began to call on the name of the Lord they have been persecuted because of their faith in God.

We, today, have freedom of religion just as we have freedom of speech. How do we use it? Some use that freedom to blaspheme God; some use it to deceive people and to fleece them of their money; others use it in some watered down version of the gospel. We are not commanded to cover the globe with the gospel. But, we must use it like those people of Acts 8:4 did: "Everywhere they went, they preached the word."

—Bob Craig

## FYI: for your information

• **Prayer List:** Terry & Leon Aldridge, Sherman Blanton, Gary Box, David Cone, Mark and Deidra Cone, Ann Fodder, Evelyn Laird, Troy Lake, Wallace Little, Gerry McDaniel, Jeff McKnight, Elzie Taylor, Mildred Tennison, Dorothy Yoder, John and Chris Young.

• The *Youth Class* will meet this afternoon at 5:15 P.M. Be prepared to share in the memory work and drills.

• Ann Fodder, Michelle Morris Fodder's mother-in-law, is in the hospital in Dallas. She is battling cancer. Herschel and Dee Morris are there looking after the grandchildren.

• Elzie Taylor, Leon Taylor's brother was released from the hospital to the home yesterday. He is doing well and expected to make a full recovery.

• **Visitation:** Group #1 will meet tonight after the service.

• **Gospel Meetings:** *Reel Road* in Longview starts a meeting today with *Dan King*. Week night services continue through Friday at 7:30 PM. *Southside* in Jacksonville begins a meeting March 13 with *Rickie Jenkins*. *James* starts a meeting on the 13<sup>th</sup> with *Jeff Henderson*. *North Loop* in Mineola starts a meeting on the 14<sup>th</sup> with different speakers every night.

• **Thank You Card:** "Thank you for the wedding shower and all the nice gifts. We really appreciated them." *Casey Singletary and Earl Fannin*

• **Wedding:** *Casey Singletary and Earl Fannin* will wed Saturday March 12<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 PM in the Carthage Community Center.

• *John & Chris Young* are both in Taiwan making plans to leave. John's contract is up at the end of the month. At present it is not known where they will be stationed next.

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#### Preacher

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# Words of Life

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Volume 5 Issue 11

March 13, 2005

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## New Testament Baptism (5)

This is the fifth article in a series on the subject of New Testament Baptism. Last week we studied what it means to be born of water. We now move on to another important topic.

### Baptism in the Plan of Salvation

Before we continue to investigate this aspect of baptism we must say something about a plan of salvation. Some object to any mention of a plan in the Bible. Some especially do not like the idea of a plan of salvation. There must be some comfort in an "anything goes" method of salvation. Think about that!

However, the Bible does mention a plan. In Hebrews 8:5 we read of a "pattern." This pattern was used in constructing the tabernacle of the Old Testament. God wanted Moses to follow the pattern. The pattern was contained in the commandments given to Moses. This word "pattern" comes from the Greek word TUPOS and means, "an impression, the mark of a blow...the impress of a seal, the stamp made by a die, a figure, image...a form or

mould...the sense or substance of a letter...an ensample, pattern" (*Vine's Expository Dictionary of NT Words*, p. 373). This same word is used in Romans 6:17 where it is translated as "form": "But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered."

We could very easily say that there is a pattern (or form) of doctrine to obey. There is no difference from saying there is a pattern to obey and saying there is a plan to obey. So, we ought to be able to understand that there is indeed a plan of salvation.

### Elements of the Plan

What is contained in this plan? For the sake of brevity, allow me to list the basics:

- (1) Hearing (Rom. 10:17)
- (2) Believing (Jn. 8:24)
- (3) Repentance (Lk. 13:3)
- (4) Confession (Matt. 10:32)
- (5) Baptism (Mk. 16:16)

### All the Steps Required

One can see that this puts salvation at the end of the plan. Does this mean that it is

at the point of baptism that salvation occurs? Yes, that is what God's word says. Notice that Jesus says that baptism is the end and the result is salvation (Mk. 16:16). Thus, it is possible to take of the steps in the plan and not be saved. It is possible to: hear and not be saved (Jn. 12:48); believe and not be saved (Jn. 12:42); repent and not be saved (Matt. 27:3); confess and not be saved (Matt. 27:3).

The Lord has placed baptism before salvation. In like manner, He has placed baptism before the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38). It is really very simple. Baptism is in God's plan of salvation. Just like Moses was to follow the pattern in building the tabernacle, we must follow God's plan if we expect to be saved. Baptism is necessary for salvation.

—Terry Sanders

## Take Up Your Cross

In Matthew 16:24, Jesus said to his disciples, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." Some

misunderstand this verse and think that Jesus is saying that his disciples are to take up the cross of Jesus, but if you will notice carefully, he is saying "take up YOUR cross." No mortal man is able to take the cross of Jesus. We could carry it physically, as Simon the Cyrenian did, but spiritually, no one can bear the cross of Jesus.

The cross of Jesus is not a splinter of wood nor a medallion one wears around his neck or exalts in some other way; the cross of Jesus is the redemption of mankind. No person can do that. Bear your own cross. What does it mean? First, let us deny our own self. Such denial means to forget one's self, lose sight of one's self and one's own interests, and then, take up our own cross and follow him. That would mean that we put our own interests second and wrap ourselves in the things that please him and that would include suffering, if necessary. (2 Timothy

2:12) "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him." And as stated in Galatians 3:27, "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."

Some say that baptism is optional, nor essential. But notice, the Bible says baptism is the consummation of obedience that translates us into Christ and where we clothe ourselves in the clothing of Christ. Looking at the above verse, what would YOU say? Is baptism essential?

Is being in Christ essential? Is wearing the clothing of Christ essential? Deny yourself; take up your cross and follow the Lord.

—Bob Craig

## FYI: for your information

• **Prayer List:** Terry & Leon Aldridge, Sherman Blanton, Gary Box, Paul Coffman, David Cone, Mark and Deidra Cone, Andy & Michelle Fodder, Evelyn Laird, Troy Lake, Wallace Little, Mildred Tennison, Dorothy Yoder, John and Chris Young.

• **Visitation:** Group #2 will meet tonight after the service

• The Youth Class will meet this afternoon at 5:15 P.M.

• Ann Fodder, Michelle Morris Fodder's mother-in-law, passed away Tuesday in Dallas. Memorial services were held on Friday evening. You may send a sympathy card to Ann's husband Ray Fodder and her son, Andy, at 2607 Logan Rd. Mansfield, TX 76063.

• Paul Coffman, Dale & Mary Hill's son-in-law has been diagnosed with prostate cancer. He is expected to undergo surgery within the next month.

• **Gospel Meetings:** Southside in Jacksonville begins a meeting March today with Rickie Jenkins. James starts a meeting today with Jeff Henderson. North Loop in Mineola starts a meeting on the 14<sup>th</sup> with different speakers every night. Weeknight services begin at 7:30 PM.

• **Thank You Card:** "Thanks for all the prayers, calls, cards and

food. Mark and Deidra Cone and boys."

• **Thank You Card:** "Thank you all so much for your prayers and support in the passing of our sister and the continued recovery of our nephew. Also many thanks for the gift certificate for a living memorial. In Christian love, Sherman and Cheryl Pope."

• **Congratulations:** Casey Singletary and Earl Fannin were wed yesterday at 2:00 PM. We wish them both the very best and a lifetime of happiness.

• John & Chris Young are in Taiwan preparing to come home. John will be in Houston at least six months taking some training. Pray for their safe return.

• **Mark Your Calendar:** The debate on salvation is scheduled for May 9-10, 12-13 at Northside. VBS is scheduled for August 8-11. Our next Gospel Meeting will be September 25-30.

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Jeff Asher (903) 694-2049

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# Words of Life

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Volume 5 Issue 12

March 20, 2005

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## New Testament Baptism (6)

This is the sixth article in a series on the subject of New Testament Baptism. Last week we studied about baptism and the plan of salvation. We now move on to another important topic.

### Baptism on the Day of Pentecost

Upon reading the New Testament one soon realizes that the events of the Day of Pentecost, as recorded in Acts 2, are very important. There is much contained in that chapter where unanimity of understanding can be found. Everyone agrees this the first time the gospel was proclaimed as instructed by Jesus in the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:47-49). There is agreement that the apostles spoke as they were inspired by the Holy Spirit (John 14:26; 16:13). There is also agreement that the context of the message in Acts 2 was the presentation of Jesus as “both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36). There is further agreement that the audience felt the impact of the message and responded with the earnest inquiry, “What shall we do?” in Acts 2:37. It is also agreed that Peter responded to that question in Acts 2:38 and following.

### What Was Peter’s Answer?

After all of the previous agreement, we sadly find that this does not exist when we discuss what Peter told them to do. Some see only the gift of the Holy Spirit in this verse and go from there. Some see only repentance. Some see baptism, but only in some minor capacity. Some see repentance and baptism together. Some see these two in connection with the remission of sins. Some do not. What does the Scripture say?

One thing has always appeared clear to me. What ever is said about repentance applies equally to what is said about baptism. This is because they are linked together by the conjunction “and.” Thus, the phrase “for the remission of sins” is the product of both repentance and baptism.

Some lexicons give the meaning of “for” (Greek EIS) as “in order to.” So, one repents in order to (receive) the remission of sins. One also is baptized in order to (receive) the remission of sins. That’s simple enough. Both repentance and baptism have been ordered by God as necessary to receive the remission of sins.

### An Absurd Dodge

However, some come along and say that “for” means “because of” and so one is baptized because one’s sins are already forgiven. Problem here is that the lexicons do not define it that way and there is no reputable translation of the Bible that has it that way. This view lacks something important—proof! Also, this “because of” view runs afoul of something else, namely repentance. If “for” means “because of” then we find an absurdity. We would have repentance because of the remission of sins. In other words one repents because one’s sins are forgiven. This is nonsense! One repents of sins. One does not repent because the sins are already forgiven. What would there be to repent of if the sins are already forgiven? So, the argument collapses this time, not necessarily for lack of proof, though it lacks proof, but due to a lack of believability. Again, repentance and baptism are for (in order to) the remission of sins.

We really need to be impressed with the fact that until the Day of Pentecost the remission of sins had been promised. Now they became a reality. As the gospel is preached for the first

time, the promise becomes fulfilled. From this point on there will be forgiveness as never before. Such did not exist under the Old Testament Law of Moses except in promise (Hebrews 10:1-4). Yet now has the blood of Christ been shed for the remission of sins (Matthew 26:28; Hebrews 9:14-15, 22). It is the blood of Christ that constitutes the price for the remission of sins (1 Peter 1:18-19). It is baptism where we receive the benefit of the shed blood—the remission of sins. All of this began on Pentecost and continues to this very day and will continue until the end.

The Day of Pentecost and baptism are pivotal in the salvation of man. They are a part of "the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Ephesians 3:11).

—Terry Sanders

## What Is the Price of Your Soul?

In Matthew 16:26, Jesus asked two questions that every person should ponder. "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" The whole world can probably be summed up with, all the wealth in the world, all the power in the world and all the pleasure in the world.

No man has ever had all three, but Solomon comes about as close as a person could. He had enough wealth to buy anything he desired; he had as much power as anyone of his time could have; he had ever

pleasurable thing that man might enjoy. But after he tried all these in the refinery of life, he could say in all truthfulness, they are "vanity and vexation." Vanity is defined as "vapor, breath," i.e., nothing, while vexation is defined as "longing, striving." Solomon might have said that his life was made up of longing or striving for nothing.

Howard Hughes almost reached the heights of Solomon as one who had enough money to buy anything he wanted, especially the pleasures of life. His demise is well documented as one of misery and debauchery. Adolph Hitler and Mussolini sought after world conquest and where did they end? One ended hanging upside down on a utility pole aside his mistress while Hitler ended up a suicide in a hole in the ground alongside his mistress. Now Bill Gates has a corner on the wealth of the world. How will he end? We don't know. Saddam Hussein would seemingly like to be a world power. We'll see.

You and I will not have these experiences so Jesus asks us little folk, "What will WE give in exchange for our souls?" And some would give theirs just for a "mess of pottage."

—Bob Craig

## FYI: for your information

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- **Visitation:** Group #3 will meet tonight after the service
- The *Youth Class* will meet this afternoon at 5:15 P.M.
- *Paul Coffman, Dale & Mary Hill's* son-in-law has been diagnosed with prostate cancer. He is expected to undergo surgery on the 14<sup>th</sup> of April.
- *Carla Little* is home today preparing for eye surgery tomorrow in Marshall.
- *Nancy Ragland* is home still recuperating from bronchitis.
- *John & Chris Young* are laying over in Hawaii for a few days before returning home. John is scheduled for some training in Houston which will last about six months. Pray for their safe return.
- **Mark Your Calendar:** The debate on salvation is scheduled for May 9-10, 12-13 at *Northside*. VBS is scheduled for August 8-11. Our next Gospel Meeting will be September 25-30.

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# Words of Life

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Volume 5 Issue 13

March 27, 2005

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## New Testament Baptism (7)

This is the seventh article in a series on the subject of New Testament Baptism. Last time we studied about baptism and the Day of Pentecost. We now move on to another important topic.

### Baptism & Sin

As we have said before, The Bible is all about the salvation of man from sin. Therefore, since baptism is in the Bible, then it has a connection with salvation from sin. To further illustrate this point, let us notice a couple of verses:

*“Then Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit’” (Acts 2:38)*

*“Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (Acts 22:16)*

Anyone ought to be able to see that these two verses are indeed connected with salvation for sin. Receiving the remission of sins and having sins washed away are things greatly to be desired as far as salvation is concerned.

I understand that there are many people who deny that baptism has such a connection. However, that denial is based more on what one’s theology is

and *not* on what is said in the Bible.

### The Problem of Sin

Sin first appeared in the Garden of Eden (Romans 5:12). It happened as a result of the violation of God’s law (1 John 3:4). Adam and Eve did not do what God said to do (Genesis 3:16-17). The penalty for this was separation from God (Genesis 3:23-24). All who sinned since that time to this sin the same way—through disobedience to God. The magnitude of this is seen in Paul’s words found in Romans 3:9, “For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin.” The same declaration is found in Romans 3:23. Sin brings separation from God (Isaiah 59:1-2; Romans 6:23; Revelation 21:8). Here we see what the penalty for sin is—eternal separation from God.

### The Remedy for Sin

If the penalty for sin could be paid then one could say there is salvation from sin. Man is unable to pay this penalty himself (Romans 5:6a). Someone else has paid it—Jesus Christ (Romans 5:6b). “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8). With His

death Jesus paid the price of redemption for the penalty due for sin (Colossians 1:14; 1 Peter 1:18-19). Notice that the price was the blood of Christ. Jesus spoke of this when He instituted the Lord’s Supper, “For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins” (Matthew 26:28). Thus, the remedy for sin is the blood of Christ. If we are saved at all it will be through His blood.

### Baptism’s Place in Salvation

Many of our religious friends will agree with the previous section of this article. However, if we were to ask the question “How does one contact the blood of Christ for the remission of sins?” we would receive a host of different answers. Let me offer an answer from the Bible to this question. One contacts the blood of Christ through New Testament baptism. Notice these two passages, especially the highlighted parts:

*“For this is My **blood** of the new covenant, which is **shed** for many **for the remission of sins**” (Matt. 26:28)*

*“Then Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and let every one of you **be baptized** in the name of Jesus*

*Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38)*

Both are for the remissions of sins. It is not an “either-or” situation. We can think of it this way: It is the blood of Christ that makes the remission of sins possible. It is baptism that makes the remission of sins a reality. When one is baptized as the New Testament teaches, one can be assured of the remission of sins made possible by the blood of Christ. This is the sense of Acts 22:16 as well.

I find it necessary to point out that sins do not magically disappear when one is baptized. It is the penalty of sin that is forgiven or washed away. The same things that were sins before baptism are still sins after baptism.

—Terry Sanders

## Conversion as a Little Child

We hear Jesus as we read from Matthew 18:3: "Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." Jesus is not teaching in this passage that the kingdom of heaven is made up of little children. He is using the analogy of a little child to teach grown people a lesson. This was a lesson on humility.

There was some discussion among the disciples concerning who would be greatest in the kingdom. Even his disciples needed the lesson. The word "converted" means to "turn again" or to "turn back." For one to be a part of the kingdom he

must empty himself of all arrogance and self-esteem and put himself completely into the hands of the Savior of mankind. The little child epitomizes the character of the one who desires to enter the kingdom. A child is completely innocent, guiltless and has none of the attributes of what he will later possess. So grown people are to divest themselves of pride, put their trust and dependence upon the Lord. Basically, this is accomplished in the act of repentance-- a change of mind, of attitude, of disposition.

Some say the little child is guilty of Adam's sin and therefore stands condemned before God. Not so. We grown people are to become "as a little child." Not doomed and damned as some say a little child is, but humble and obedient, trusting and dependent. If we will not "turn back" from all the ways of a wicked world and "become as a little child," heaven cannot be our eternal abiding place.

—Bob Craig

## FYI: for your information

• **Prayer List:** *Terry & Leon Aldridge, Sherman Blanton, Gary and Helen Box, Paul Coffman, David Cone, Mark and Deidra Cone, Mary Hill, Evelyn Laird, Troy Lake, Wallace and Carla Little, Mildred Tennison, Dorothy Yoder.*

• *Mary Hill* will see a specialist on April 4<sup>th</sup>.

• **Visitation:** Group #4 will meet tonight after the service

• The *Youth Class* will meet this afternoon at 5:15 P.M.

• **Gospel Meetings:** *Henderson Blvd.* in Kilgore starts a meeting today with *Roger Hendricks*. Services start at 7:30 PM Monday through Wednesday. *Gay Avenue* in Gladewater starts a Gospel Meeting on April 3<sup>rd</sup> with *Lawrence Kelley*. Services start at 7:30 PM Monday through Friday.

• **Visitors:** *Lillian Taylor, 1214 MLK Carthage, 76533; Patricia Taylor, POB 542 Beckville, 75631; Doug Herman, 42 E. 2<sup>nd</sup> Tyler, 75701.*

• **April Birthdays:** *Kerry Henry (04/03), Gary Box (04/28), Mark Cone (04/29).*

• **Mark Your Calendar:** The debate on salvation is scheduled for May 9-10, 12-13 at *Northside*. VBS is scheduled for August 8-11. Our next Gospel Meeting will be September 25-30.

### Northside Church of Christ

701 W. Cottage Road/POB 456  
Carthage, TX 75633  
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#### Sunday

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Dale Hill (903) 693-3274  
Jim Rhiddlehoover (903) 693-3084

#### Preacher

Jeff Asher (903) 694-2049

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# Words of Life

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Volume 5 Issue 14

April 3, 2005

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## New Testament Baptism (8)

We resume our series on baptism with this eighth in the series. Last time we studied about baptism and sin. We will now investigate another important topic.

### Baptism & Sin

The Acts of the Apostles is sometimes called a record of conversions. Indeed, the whole of the New Testament is about conversion. There are those things recorded in order to move one to be converted and instructions how conversion comes about.

Conversion, according to Vine (p. 241), is *"a turning from and a turning to."* We find in Acts 26:18 these words in regard to the gospel being preached to the Gentiles, *"to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me."*

Obviously we can see the relationship of these words to conversion.

### What Are We Talking About?

We are talking about a change being made. Conversion, we might say, involves the old man being put away and the new man holding forth (Ephesians 4:22-24; Colossians 3:9-10). Water baptism plays an important part in this since it is there where we find such a change being made. Let me suggest Romans 6:3-5 as teaching much about being converted through baptism: *"Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life; for if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection."*

In Romans 5:20 Paul affirms that there is an abundance of grace for sin. However, that does not mean that we may

continue in sin that grace may abound (Romans 6:1). Those whom he has declared as sinners (Romans 3:23) are said to be dead in sins (Ephesians 2:1). Yet, those who *"were dead in trespasses, [God] made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus"* (Ephesians 2:5-6). I understand that this is accomplished through baptism.

There is a burial in baptism whereas the dead man is *"buried with Him in baptism into death."* That dead man I, through baptism, brought to *"walk in newness of life."* This will not happen without baptism. Friends, plainly speaking, a dead man brought to life is certainly a conversion in anyone's book. And, not just brought back to the old life, but to a newness of life. The old man is dead and the new man lives and it is baptism that has brought this about.

—Terry Sanders

## Renewing Your Friendship

Last time we talked about how to make peace with the brother who has wronged you. Now, suppose you are the one who committed the wrong. What is your obligation? Read with me from Matthew 5:23: *"Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift."*

Now you are the transgressor. You are the one who has, in some way, wronged your brother. Don't wait for the brother to come to you with the problem. You know you are wrong. So, go, make the first move in the direction of peace with him. You cannot offer acceptable worship when you have something wrong in your life that stands between you and your brother and, actually, you are the only one who can do anything about it. When you sin against a brother, you have sinned against God. That's the reason your gift is not acceptable.

The word "reconciled" means literally, "making friends again." So, be reconciled to your brother. Make friends with him again. He may reject your efforts for reconciliation at first, but try

again. If he continues to reject your advances, then he is at fault. He's the one who has a problem. You have done the best you could, but, remember, it's your first move.

—Bob Craig

## FYI: for your information

• **Prayer List:** Terry & Leon Aldridge, Sherman Blanton, Gary and Helen Box, Paul Coffman, David Cone, Mark and Deidra Cone, Mary Hill, Evelyn Laird, Troy Lake, Wallace and Carla Little, Mildred Tennison, Dorothy Yoder.

- Mary Hill will see a specialist on April 5<sup>th</sup>.
- Paul Coffman, the son-in-law of Dale and Mary Hill is scheduled for cancer surgery on April 14<sup>th</sup>.
- Herschel Morris was in the hospital last weekend. Doctors prescribed changes in his meds and he is feeling much better.
- Gary Box arrived in the Philippines safely and has been busy teaching classes and leading singing. Continue to pray for him and Wallace Little.
- **Visitation:** Group #1 will meet tonight after the service
- The Youth Class will meet this afternoon at 5:15 P.M. The memory verse is Ephesians 3:3 and the Bible facts review will come from Genesis chapters 3 and 4.
- **Gospel Meetings:** Gay Avenue in Gladewater starts a Gospel Meeting today with Lawrence Kelley. Services start at 7:30 PM Monday through Friday. Herty

in Lufkin begins a four day meeting today with Mack Duncan. Services through Wednesday begin at 7:00 P.M. Greggton in Longview will be in a meeting with Virgil Faires April 10-13, services at 7:30 P.M.

• **Visitors:** Lillian Taylor, 1214 MLK Carthage, 76533; Patricia Taylor, POB 542 Beckville, 75631; Doug Herman, 42 E. 2<sup>nd</sup> Tyler, 75701.

• **April Birthdays:** Kerry Henry (04/03), Gary Box (04/28), and Mark Cone (04/29).

• **New Address:** Maxine Asher 103 Senior Ave. Apt. 81 Carthage, TX (903) 693-0122.

• **Debate Update:** Due to the unforeseen illness of Dr. Proctor the debate on the role of water baptism in the plan of salvation must be re-scheduled. A new date and time will be announced.

• Our next Gospel Meeting is scheduled for September 25-30 with Robert Harkrider.

### Northside Church of Christ

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Carthage, TX 75633  
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# Words of Life

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Volume 5 Issue 15

April 10, 2005

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## New Testament Baptism (9)

We continue our study of baptism. Last time we studied about baptism and conversion. We will now investigate a subject of much controversy among religious people.

### Does Baptism Save?

In preparation for this article I went to the Internet and asked for a search of the question "Does baptism save?" The results were overwhelming. There were hundreds of responses. Time did not allow me to look at each one (I might still be doing so). I did look at a few. A staggering number of these responses did not believe that baptism saves. A few, mostly by gospel preachers, affirmed that baptism saves. Folks, if we were to search the Bible, what would we find? Here is what we would find: *"He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned"* (Mk. 16:16)

*"There is also an antitype which now saves us; baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ"* (1 Peter 3:21)

Now, dear reader, how would you answer this question after reading these two verses? I

think you would say, "Yes, the Bible says baptism saves."

Yet, how can there be so many that say that baptism does not save? This is indeed a fair question and a puzzle to me. My short answer to such an inquiry is, "They simply choose to deny what anyone can see the Bible clearly teaches."

### If Not Mentioned, It's Not Necessary?

One argument against baptism goes like this: The Bible teaches that to be saved a person must "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." They will cite a passage like Acts 16:31, *"So they said, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.'"* They will then talk much how baptism is not mentioned in Acts 16:31. They must just ignore Acts 16:33 where baptism is included in the conversion of the Philippian jailer.

Another argument contends salvation is by faith alone. A passage like Romans 5:1 shows justification by faith without mention of baptism. Well, Romans 5:9 has us justified by His blood. Does that mean that salvation is by blood alone without faith since faith is not mentioned in that verse? If not, why not?

Let me freely admit that you can find verses in the Bible that speak of salvation and do not mention baptism. You will find passages that also speak of salvation without mention of faith. So what? Does faith and baptism have to be in every verse in the Bible before we feel comfortable in saying that either saves? Of course not! Some arguments used to argue away baptism are just plain foolish.

Let us consider Mark 16:16 once again. This verse Jesus says there are two things which are necessary in order to be saved: belief and baptism. There is one thing mentioned in order to be lost: unbelief. How would you hope to end up at the judgment? One who wants to be saved needs to believe that Jesus is the Christ and be baptized in order to be saved. Please notice a comparison of Jesus to most religious folks today:

#### Jesus Said:

**BELIEF + BAPTISM = SAVED**

#### Most Folks Say:

**BELIEF = SAVED + BAPTISM**

Which is according to Mark 16:16? If you say Jesus is right, then you have your answer as baptism is indeed necessary to be saved. Pay no attention to

those, though many, who try to convince you that baptism does not save. The Bible and Jesus say it does.

—Terry Sanders

## Forgive Regardless

A discussion has arisen among the public concerning whether one is obligated to forgive some person who has raped or murdered some member of your family. The preachers nearly all say, "Yes," Christians must forgive regardless of the circumstances. Well, what does the Lord say?

In Matthew 18:21-22, Jesus says, "Forgive." In Luke 17:3-4 he gives the conditions of forgiveness: *"Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. 4 And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him."*

As I mentioned before, the words "against thee" are not in the Nestle's Greek in the Luke reading and have been dropped out of nearly all the more recent translations, the ASV, the NAS, the RSV and the NRSV, thus making the statement a general obligation. But we are not obligated to forgive anyone unless they repent, which is sometimes hard to distinguish. But if someone genuinely repents, then we must forgive.

In fact, until and unless a person repents of his misdeed, forgiveness cannot be complete. Maybe he doesn't care whether he is forgiven or not. But two

parties are involved, the sinner and the one sinned against. Actually, three parties, because God has been sinned against also. We are separated by a wall. That wall is the sin or misdeed of the sinner. The sinner must do his part in removing his portion of that wall by repentance and I must remove the other part by forgiving. But until both parties act, that wall remains even if a person says, "I will forgive him whether he wants to be forgiven or not." God doesn't say that. No, forgiveness cannot be consummated until that which separates the sinner and the one sinned against is removed. There must be action on the part of both.

—Bob Craig

## FYI: for your information

• **Prayer List:** Terry & Leon Aldridge, Paul Coffman, David Cone, Mark and Deidra Cone, Mary Hill, Evelyn Laird, Troy Lake, Wallace and Carla Little, Mildred Tennison, Dorothy Yoder.

• *Mary Hill* will see another specialist on April 22<sup>nd</sup>. She is expecting to undergo surgery in the near future.

• *Paul Coffman*, the son-in-law of *Dale and Mary Hill* is scheduled for cancer surgery on April 14<sup>th</sup>. *David Cone*, *Mark Cone's* brother, will have prostate surgery on April 20<sup>th</sup> in Dallas.

• **Welcome Home:** *Gary Box* returned safely from the Philippines Thursday. Be sure and ask him about the trip.

• **Visitation:** Group #2 will meet tonight after the service

• **Youth Class:** Memory verse, Ephesians 3:3-4. Bible Facts Review Genesis 3 and 4.

• **Gospel Meetings:** *Greggton* in Longview will be in a meeting with *Virgil Faires* April 10-13, services at 7:30 P.M.

• **April Birthdays:** *Kerry Henry* (04/03), *Brianne Young* (04/18), *Gary Box* (04/28), and *Mark Cone* (04/29).

• **Debate Update:** The debate on water baptism has been rescheduled for August 8-9, 11-12, 2005. As a result it was necessary to cancel the VBS.

• Our next Gospel Meeting is scheduled for *September 25-30* with Robert Harkrider.

• Today, we started an adjusted bell schedule reducing the time between class and assembly by five minutes.

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# Words of Life

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Volume 5 Issue 16

April 17, 2005

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## Things Morally Right, but Religiously Wrong

Some folks equate being moral with being religious or Christian. However, morality alone does not constitute the religion of Christ (e.g., Cornelius in Acts 10). Others think that if a thing is moral, it is necessarily something which may be incorporated into the worship of the church. These do not seem to understand why Christians do not practice certain things in a religious context. They look at a particular practice and not finding any thing wrong with it morally ask, "Well, why don't you use ... why can't you do ..." The reason is that some things may be morally right, but religiously wrong.

### This Is a Bible Principle

The mistake of Nadab and Abihu is an example which establishes this principle (Leviticus 10:1,2). There is nothing immoral about kindling a fire (Genesis 22:6). However, God had said from where this fire was to come (Leviticus 16:12). These men offered to God something morally right, but religiously wrong.

Another example is found in Moses' actions at Kadesh (Numbers 20:1-13). Moses struck the rock in order to bring forth

water. Now there is nothing immoral about striking a rock (Exodus 17:6). Yet, God had said He wanted something different—Moses was to speak to the rock (Numbers 20:8). But, Moses offered to God something morally right, but religiously wrong.

David is another example of man offering to God that which is morally right, but religiously wrong (2 Sam. 6:1-11). Surely there is nothing immoral about an oxcart (Numbers 7:1-9). However, God had said that He wanted something different—the priests were to carry the ark (Numbers 4:6-15). David offered to God something morally right, but religiously wrong.

Now, having established this biblical principle, let's consider some things which folks do today which are morally right, but religiously wrong.

### Modern Day Examples

*Hamburgers and cokes are morally right but religiously wrong.* There is nothing immoral about eating meat (Romans 14:1-23) or drinking soda (1 Corinthians 6:12,13). However, does it have any place in the worship at the Lord's table? Over the last several years I have heard of

churches which have introduced all kinds of elements into the Communion.

However, the Lord has authorized in the Lord's Supper unleavened bread and fruit of the vine (1 Corinthians 11:23-27; Luke 22:13-20). It is religiously wrong to use hamburgers and cokes or anything else except unleavened bread and fruit of the vine on the Lord's Table.

*X-mas is morally right but religiously wrong.* There is nothing immoral about a day on which to have a big meal with friends and family and to exchange gifts with one another (Luke 5:29; Acts 20:35). Neither is there anything immoral about studying the birth of Jesus (1 Timothy 3:16; Matthew 2:1ff; etc.). However, the only day to which the Lord has attached any religious significance is the first day of the week (Acts 20:7). It is religiously wrong to set aside another day and make it a religious obligation and attach to it religious traditions and myths.

*Anointing oneself is morally right but religiously wrong.* There is nothing immoral about using ointments or perfumes (Proverbs 27:9; Matthew 6:17).

However, the Lord has not authorized their use in the worship of the New Testament Church (cf. Mark 6:13; James 5:14). It is religiously wrong to use anointing oil with a religious significance or impose such upon others for religious purposes?

*Instrumental music is morally right but religiously wrong.* There is nothing immoral about playing a mechanical instrument (1 Samuel 16:23). However, the Lord has not authorized their use in the worship of the New Testament Church (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; Hebrews 2:12; 1 Corinthians 14:15). It is religiously wrong to add instrumental music to the worship of God in singing praises.

*Christians eating together is morally right but religiously wrong.* There is nothing immoral about Christians eating together (Acts 2:46). However, the Lord has not authorized the elders of the local church to call the saints together to eat a common meal as a religious exercise. The only meal they are authorized to call the saints together for is the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:20ff). Likewise, the church is certainly authorized to provide food for those of the faith that are hungry and in need (Acts 2:44; 4:35). Yet, it is religiously wrong for the church as the church to organize and promote the eating of common meals.

*Young people's parties, dominoes and golf are morally right but religiously wrong.* There is nothing immoral about wholesome recreation (Mark 6:31). However, these types of

activities are the responsibility of the home (Ephesians 6:1-4; 1 Corinthians 13:11). The church has not been charged with the entertainment of the youth. The church does have authority to teach young people the gospel (Ephesians 6:1; Colossians 3:20). But, it is religiously wrong for the church to organize and promote recreation for the members of the church.

### Conclusion

There is a biblical principle that distinguishes between things moral and things religious. The Christian is free to participate in anything that is moral provided he does it in an appropriate context. We err when we seek to add to the worship of God or the work of the church on the basis of morality and not on the basis of what is authorized. We must be careful to observe the difference.

—Jeff Asher

## FYI: for your information

- **Prayer List:** *Terry & Leon Aldridge, Paul Coffman, David Cone, Mark and Deidra Cone, Mary Hill, Evelyn Laird, Troy Lake, Wallace and Carla Little, Mildred Tennison, Dorothy Yoder.*
- *Cheryl Pope* had corrective eye surgery Wednesday and is doing very well.
- *Paul Coffman*, the son-in-law of *Dale and Mary Hill* had prostate surgery on Thursday and all went well. He is expected to make a good recovery. *David Cone, Mark Cone's* brother, will have prostate surgery on April 20<sup>th</sup> in Dallas.

- **Visitation:** Group #3 will meet tonight after the service
- *Gary Box* will report to the congregation tonight about his recent preaching trip to the Philippines.
- **Youth Class:** Memory verse, Ephesians 3:3-5. Bible Facts Review Genesis 3 and 4.
- Thanks to *Joe Fomby, Hershel Morris* and *Thomas Stewart* for taking care of some extra maintenance on the parking lot and in the yard.
- **Out of Town:** *Jim & Lorene Rhiddlehoover* are in Illinois visiting family. *Hershel and Dee Morris* are in Ft. Worth with family. The *Stewarts* will be in Marshall. AR the next two weeks, and the *Fombys* will be in Snook next week.
- **Debate Update:** The debate on water baptism has been rescheduled for August 8-9, 11-12, 2005.

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# Words of Life

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Volume 5 Issue 17

April 24, 2005

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## Resurrection Consequences

1 Corinthians 15 is Paul's great resurrection chapter. Verse twelve is Paul's first argument for the resurrection of the dead. He has preached the Gospel at Corinth which affirms the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth from the dead. However, some were denying that believers would be raised (2 Timothy 2:17, 18). Paul shows that such a doctrine is inconsistent with the Gospel which was preached unto them (1 Corinthians 15:12, 13).

Throughout the remainder of the context Paul considers what must be true "if there be no resurrection of the dead" (15:13). He concludes, "Then Christ be not risen... our preaching is vain... we are found false witnesses... your faith is vain... ye are yet in your sins... they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished... we are of all men most miserable"

Finally, Paul considers a positive consequence of the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth "But now is Christ risen from the dead and become the firstfruits of them that slept" (15:20). Contextually, this is the only consequence of the resurrection that Paul should consider. However, it certainly is not the only consequence of the resurrection

of Jesus of Nazareth from the dead.

The resurrection of Jesus from the dead is the keystone of Christianity. If it did not occur then none of what is predicated upon it is true. Christians, like their Lord, need to make their stand on this truth (Matthew 12:39, 40; 1 Corinthians 15:12-19; John 2:19). Believing the evidence for the resurrection to be so strong let us consider what must be true since Christ is arisen from the dead.

### There Is a God

Peter wrote that our faith in God is established by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead: "Who by him do believe in God that raised Him up from the dead, and gave Him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God" (1 Peter 1:21).

How else do we account for the fact that the tomb was empty? Men have tried to explain it away. But the explanation requires more "faith" than accepting the obvious "that God raised Him from the dead" (Romans 10:9). There is only one Being capable of the resurrection—God Almighty.

### Jesus Is the Son of God

Jesus claimed to be the Son of God (John 8:21-24). The miracles which He worked

proved it (John 10:30-38; Hebrews 2:1-4). However, Jesus was willing to stake all his claims upon the validity of the resurrection (Matthew 12:39, 40; John 2:19). Paul wrote that Jesus was declared to be "the Son of God with power ... by the resurrection of the dead" (Romans 1:4).

### Sins Are Forgiven

The resurrection of Jesus proves that the Father accepted the death of Jesus as satisfaction for the sins of the world and the purchase price of the church (Hebrews 9:14, 26; Acts 20:28; Isaiah 53:10-12).

Jesus entered Heaven as our High Priest (Romans 4:25, 26; 5:10; 8:34; Hebrews 7:25). Jesus did not take this honor upon Himself, but it was given to Him by the Father (Hebrews 5:1, 4). Jesus' holiness perfected Him as our sacrifice (Hebrews 5:8, 9) and qualified Him to be our High Priest chosen of God (Psalms 110:1-3).

### Water Baptism Saves

Baptism is meaningless without the resurrection (Romans 6:3-11). If Jesus was not raised from the dead there is nothing which corresponds in significance to our being "risen to walk in newness of life." If Jesus did not die to sin once and arise to live unto God, then we cannot

reckon ourselves dead to sin and alive unto God through Jesus Christ.

Baptism is powerless without the resurrection (Hebrews 9:14; 10:22). As already shown, it was the resurrection that established the efficacy of Jesus' death. If Jesus was not raised then we surely were not baptized into death because His death would be meaningless (Romans 6:3, 4).

Baptism is vain without the resurrection (Colossians 2:11, 12). The confidence that we have that our sins are forgiven is in the "operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead." If Jesus is not raised we could not possibly be "saved" or have had our "hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience."

### The Kingdom Has Come

The prophets promised that the seed of David would rule over the kingdom (Psalms 89:35, 36; 2 Samuel 7:13). Isaiah said that this Messiah would be raised from the dead in order to rule (Isaiah 53). On Pentecost Peter preached "that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, He would raise up Christ to sit on his throne" (Acts 2:30). Thus, the prophets spoke of the resurrection of Jesus as being antecedent to the establishment of the kingdom of Heaven.

The glorified seed of David is in Heaven reigning over His Kingdom (1 John 3:1; Philippians 3:20). He is truly David's seed "according to the flesh" (Romans 1:3; John 1:1, 14).

### There Will Judgment

Paul when preaching on Mars' Hill in Athens urged his audience to repent because

Jesus was raised from the dead (Acts 17:30,31). The resurrection of Christ not only assures us of God's acceptance of His death as the penalty for sin, but also assures us that He has given Him all authority including that of the Judge of the quick and the dead (John 5:22-29; 1 Peter 4:5; Hebrews 9:22-28).

Many think that there will be another opportunity to be saved when Christ returns. However, when Jesus comes it will be apart from sin, not to make another atonement (John 5:22-29; Hebrews 9:24-28; cf. Hebrews 10:26-30). Men will confess Christ at His coming, but not unto their salvation (Romans 10:9, 10)—rather only unto their just condemnation (Romans 14:10-12). When Jesus returns, it will be for those who have been faithful in this life (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

### Facing the Consequences

You and I must face the consequences of the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. "Now if Christ be preached that He rose from the dead ..." what will you say and do with Christ? You cannot ignore His resurrection. It has implications that affect you now and hereafter. Have you believed on Jesus? Do you trust in God that raised Him from the dead? Have you been baptized in His name? Do you look unto Him to appear again apart from sin? Are you ready to stand before Him in judgment of everything you have done?

—Jeff Asher

## FYI: for your information

• **Prayer List:** *Terry & Leon Aldridge, David Cone, Mary Hill, Evelyn Laird, Troy Lake, Wallace and Carla Little, Mildred Tennison, Dorothy Yoder.*

• *David Cone, Mark Cone's* brother, had prostate surgery on April 20<sup>th</sup> in Dallas.

• **Visitation:** Group #4 will meet tonight after the service

• **Youth Class:** Memory verse, Ephesians 3:3-5 and start on 1 Corinthians 2:9-11. Bible Facts Review: Genesis 5 and 6.

• **Out of Town:** The *Stewarts* will be in Marshall. AR the next two weeks, and the *Fombys* are in Snook, TX next week.

• **Area Gospel Meetings:** April 24-29 at Hwy 79 in Henderson, TX w/ *John Kilgore*. April 24-27 at Rice Road in Tyler, TX w/ *Philip Strong*. M-F services begin at 7:30 PM.

### Northside Church of Christ

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# Words of Life

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Volume 5 Issue 18

May 1, 2005

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## Why Are Our Kids Killing Each Other?

Well it's happened again, a school age boy has taken a gun and opened fire on his teachers and fellow students. This time, the troubled youth has killed his grandfather who was acting as a surrogate parent. There were obvious warning signs—a fascination with violent games and literature, preoccupation with Neo-Nazi websites on the internet, and a history of problems at school and home. Psychologists, educators, politicians, counselors, sociologists and concerned parents are all asking the question: Why are our kids killing each other?

There is no simple answer to that question. Each incident of violence when studied presents its own unique set of circumstances which enter into the explanation. However, there are some obvious similarities in the killings. There are common denominators which not only offer an explanation of these homicidal episodes, but also reveal a serious cancer in the soul of America.

### What Is the Cause?

*"I just wanted to see what it was like to kill someone!"* This is the theme we are hearing in many of these murders. These teens and preteens are desensitized to death, suffering and pain. Every night they sit in front of a television and watch half a dozen

murders, a couple of rapes and an assortment of assaults portrayed as entertainment. Their weekends are filled with the gore and masochism of Hollywood at the local Cineplex. While they do their homework the lyrics of pain and torture sift through their subconscious while they listen to gangster rap. Unthinking parents let them slip away into this bottomless pit of socio-pathological waste.

The devaluation of human life is reinforced daily before their eyes. Jack Kevorkian is glamorized as a medical ethicist. An abortion is a matter of "choice," and something "constitutional" which is a protected "right." O.J., the Menendez brothers and a dozen others "get away with murder."

The prevailing solution to all of life's problems is violence. Many of these children are in homes where the parents are abusive to each other, as well as to them. All they know about resolving conflict, overcoming jealousy, venting frustration and extinguishing anger is violence.

Most youngsters have no sense of their own mortality—let alone the vast eternity that opens before them at death. Americans, in general, are less and less spiritual, and more and more doubtful of immortality, judgment and eternal punishment. Few of these adolescent triggermen have received the spiritual training of a God-fearing home. Instead of

being in Sunday-school learning the books of the Bible and the golden rule, they have stayed up late on Saturday watching Halloween XIX, the Texas Chainsaw Massacre Revisited and Scream 24. They emulate their parents in the ritual of sleeping in on Sunday mornings and playing games on Sunday afternoons.

Is it any wonder that they do not know that they themselves were made in the image of God, as was that boy, that girl, that pregnant teacher and her unborn child, and the dozens of others that have been murdered in school?

### What Is the Cure?

*First, we must reestablish respect for the image of God which is in every man.* If we do not want to loose this nation to lawlessness and greedy selfishness we are going to have to stop the abortion mills, jail the euthanists and execute the murderers.

The Word of God teaches that man is different from the rest of creation because he alone is made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26). When men murder they mar that image and usurp authority over God who alone has authority to take life and has authorized the state as His minister of justice.

God has decreed that the murderer forfeits his own life as the penalty for his crime (Genesis 9:3-6). Furthermore, He has endowed civil government with

the responsibility to protect the innocent and to punish the guilty (Romans 13:1–4).

Government sponsored and protected abortions, and suicides are contrary to the divine mission of government. The warehousing of murderers in government prisons with television, air-conditioning and reduced work at a cost to the taxpayer in excess of what many working families earn is repugnant to the sensibilities and a stench in the nostrils of a righteous God.

American children will never learn to respect life as long as we continue to institutionalize murder through a perverse interpretation of the Constitution and common law.

*We must teach our children that retaliation is not the solution, but the problem.* You can begin by learning to properly control your own frustration and anger (Ephesians 4:26, 27). How children deal with their problems is usually through an imitation of what they see their parents doing.

Teach your child the value of conflict resolution. The word of God is filled with wisdom from Proverbs to James about the blessing that comes to the man who can change his enemies into friends and keep his tongue from evil. Get familiar with what God says and teach it to your child.

*Supervise what your children watch and hear as entertainment.* The best thing you may do for your child is turn off the television. Remember, "As a man thinks in his heart so is he... out of the heart are the issues of life" (Proverbs 23:7; 4:23). What comes out of the heart is necessarily what has been put into it (Mark 7:18–20). The Apostle Paul urges us to think on things that are just, pure, good and virtuous (Philippians 4:8, 9).

The issue in music and television is not the beat, not the instrumentation, not the volume and not the artist. The issue is the words and the actions that are being portrayed. What are your kids putting into their heart?

*Be a faithful Christian.* If you want your child to learn respect for God and the image of God in others then show him that you respect them. What better way to convince a child of the worth of the soul than to save one—especially your own. The man who believes that the soul in God's image is worth more than all the world has to offer, will turn to Christ for salvation (Matthew 16:26).

Hypocrisy will not win this war against evil. It is not enough to send your child to church to get religion. Nor will half-hearted service do. The only sure way to deliver the children from the morass of our wicked generation is to lead them out (Ephesians 6:1–4). Moses told Israel to teach God's precepts when they were arising and when they were lying down. We must live it before them.

We can stop this senseless waste of life and ruination of human potential if we will turn to the God in whose image we were made.

—Jeff Asher

## FYI: for your information

- **Prayer List:** *Terry & Leon Aldridge, Tom & Ginny Brantley, Floyd Bush, Mark & Jenny Bush, Mary Hill, Evelyn Laird, Troy Lake, Wallace and Carla Little, Travis May, Mildred Tennison, Dorothy Yoder.*
- *Travis May, Tonya Millican's grandfather fell in the nursing home last week. He is not doing well.*

- *Cody Lenhart, the Ragland's grandson, underwent a bronchoscope Thursday after being admitted to the hospital for a lung infection. As of Friday he was on antibiotics but had not been released.*
- *Floyd Bush* was admitted to ETMC on Thursday for pneumonia and back trouble.
- *Mark and Ginny Bush's* youngest child recently underwent a seven hour surgery to correct a kidney defect. Her condition is serious. The family asks our prayers. This child is a great grandchild of *Floyd and Doris Bush.*
- *Tom Brantley* has been diagnosed with a rare throat cancer and asks for our prayers.
- **Birthdays:** *James Burke (5/15), Nancy Ragland (5/20), Luke Goolsby (5/21).*
- **New Directory:** Picture retakes and make-ups in the study today. Please turn in your driving directions and map to either *Scott Goolsby* or *Joe Fomby.*
- *Southside* in Mt. Pleasant will have *Ira Lynn* in a Gospel Meeting May 1-6. Services begin at 7:30 PM M-F.

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# Words of Life

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Volume 5 Issue 19

May 8, 2005

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## Will You Let Your Home Die?

A woman accompanied her husband to the doctor's office. After his checkup, the doctor called the wife into his office alone. He said, "Your husband is suffering from a very severe disease, combined with horrible stress. If you don't do the following, your husband will surely die."

"Each morning, fix him a healthy breakfast, be pleasant and make sure he is in a good mood. For lunch, make him a nutritious meal. For dinner, prepare an especially nice meal. Don't burden him with chores, as he probably had a hard day. Don't discuss your problems with him, it will only make his stress worse. And most importantly, shower him with a lot of love and affection daily. If you can do this for the next ten months to a year, I think your husband will regain his health completely."

On the way home, the husband asked his wife, "What did the doctor say?"

"He says you're going to die," she replied.

### Homes Are Sick

The home is in trouble and it is not just the home of the worldly. The home of the Christian is in trouble too. It

may be the home of the family who sits behind you or the ones next to you. It could even be your home!

The fact that Christians have troubled homes is not the problem. A reality check will reveal that Christians are human and as such, are prone to weakness. Add to this, that homes are made up of more than one personality and you have the ingredients for trouble in the home.

It is becoming more and more common for Christians to give up on having a trouble-free home. Some even give up to the point of destroying the home through divorce. Why? Is there no solution to this devastating problem?

### Good News & Bad News for the Home

There is good news and bad news. The good news is, 'YES,' there is an answer to the problem. The Bible teaches us how to have good, solid homes. It instructs us in the ways that will ensure a home complete with peace and harmony, a home where all members are happy and well adjusted, a home that will equip its members with the spiritual armor necessary to

face the battles with the ungodly forces that surround the Christian.

Then why are there so many Christians' homes that are unhappy and in disarray? That is the bad news.

The bad news is that too many Christians are like the wife in our introduction to this article. They are not willing to do what is necessary to make the sick home well. Whether it is selfishness or just plain laziness, the things, which would ensure success in the home, are neglected.

A selfish wife who constantly wants her way or a demanding husband, who never considers his wife's needs, is a disaster waiting to happen. A self-indulgent husband who surrounds himself with his "toys" or a domineering wife who seeks to control every aspect of the relationship will bring a home to ruin.

In the weeks to come, this space will be used to find the Biblical remedy for a sick home. Will you put to practice the remedy or will you let the home die?

—Glen Young

## A Matter of Proper Emphasis

The following articles were written by F. W. Emmons in 1873. As you read the articles, please note that each one is just exactly the same, word for word, yet the meaning is set forth by differences in punctuation. Much in life depends on where we put the emphasis or punctuation.

### The Godly Man

He is an old and experienced man. In vice and wickedness he is never found. Opposing the work of iniquity he takes delight. In the downfall of any of his fellow creatures he is ready to assist. In destroying the peace of society he takes no pleasure. In serving the Lord he is uncommonly diligent. In sowing discord among his friends and acquaintances he takes no pride. In laboring to promote the cause of Christianity he has not been negligent. In endeavoring to stigmatize all public teachers he makes no exertions. To subdue his passions he strives hard. To build up Satan's kingdom he lends no aid. To support the Gospel among the heathen he contributes largely. To the evil adversary he pays no attention. To good advice he gives great heed. To the devil he will never to. To heaven he must go where he will receive the just recompense of his reward.

### The Ungodly Man

He is an old and experienced man in vice and wickedness. He is never found opposing the work of iniquity. He takes delight in the down fall of his

neighbor. He never rejoices in the prosperity of any of his fellow creatures. He is ready to assist in destroying the peace of society. He takes no pleasure in serving the Lord. He is uncommonly diligent in sowing discord among his friends and acquaintances. He takes no pride in laboring to promote the cause of Christianity. He has not been negligent in endeavoring to stigmatize all public teachers. He makes no exertions to subdue his passions. He strives hard to build up Satan's kingdom. He lends no aid to support the Gospel among the heaven. He contributes largely to the evil adversary. He pays no attention to good advice. He gives great heed to the devil. He will never go to heaven. He must go where he will receive the just recompense of his reward.

—Warren Berkley

## FYI: for your information

- **Prayer List:** *Terry & Leon Aldridge, Tom & Ginny Brantley, Floyd Bush, Mark, Jenny and Kaylee Bush, Mary Hill, Evelyn Laird, Troy Lake, Wallace and Carla Little, Travis May, Mildred Tennison, Dorothy Yoder.*
- *Mary Hill* was pre-admitted on Friday and will have surgery Monday afternoon in Marshall.
- *Travis May, Tonya Millican's* grandfather is doing better. He is eating again and getting around some in a wheelchair.

- *Floyd Bush* was released from ETMC on Wednesday and continues to recover at home.
- *Mark and Ginny Bush's* youngest child *Kaylee* continues her recovery from major surgery in the hospital in Houston. Her condition is serious. The family asks our prayers. *Kaylee* is a great grandchild of *Floyd and Doris Bush*.
- **New Directory:** Picture retakes and make-ups continue in the study today. Please turn in your driving directions and map to either *Scott Goolsby* or *Joe Fomby*.
- **Visitation:** Group #2 meets tonight after service.
- **Visitors:** *Marlin Bush* Route 4 Box 628 Carthage, TX 75633. *Floyd and Doris Bush* 604 Rebecca Dr. Carthage, TX 75633. *Lillian Taylor* 1218 MLK Carthage, TX 75633. *Jackie and Janece Harris* 956 E. Sabine Carthage, TX 75633.

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# Words of Life

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Volume 5 Issue 20

May 15, 2005

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## How a Wife Builds a Godly Home

Several years ago in a discussion about the home, I made the point that the wife should never put her children before her husband. Needless to say, this created quite a stir. I thought for a moment that some of my sisters were about to resurrect the old custom of tarring and feathering.

Years of dealing with church problems that directly relate to problems in the home have caused me to conclude that before there can be a godly home, there must be a godly relationship between the husband and wife. The foundation of the home is faulty when God is left out of the husband wife relationship. Because God created marriage, abiding together as God teaches, results in a godly relationship.

God solved Adam's problem of being incomplete by creating for him a helpmeet, which Adam called woman for she was taken out of man (Genesis 2:21-23). For this reason, a man [woman] is to leave their parents and cleave to their mate. In this way, the two become one flesh (Genesis 2:24-25). The coming together as one flesh certainly addresses the issue of physical union, and yet, it is more. It brings into existence a home which contains different

personalities that must learn to function as one.

The intimacy of marriage is considered by God to be undefiled (Hebrews 13:4). From this God sanctioned joining, children are born (Genesis 1:28). It is both joyous and frightening when the home is blessed with children. As we glory in this blessing, we must not forget God's order of things.

Problems occur in marriages when wives assume the role of mother to the exclusion of their role as wife. She must remember that she was a wife before she was a mother. Paul recognized this potential problem for he told older women to, "train the young women to love their husbands" (Titus 2:4). He further instructs Christian husbands and wives to, "Defraud ye not one the other, except it be by consent for a season, that ye may give yourselves unto prayer, and may be together again, that Satan tempt you not because of your incontinency" (1 Corinthians 7:5).

The loving passion that is manifested in the sexual union is not all there is to the husband and wife relationship. Of equal importance, is the subjection of the wife (Ephesians 5:22-24). "For after this manner aforetime

the holy women also, who hoped in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection to their own husbands: as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose children ye now are, if ye do well, and are not put in fear by any terror" (1 Peter 3:5-6). She will find that many of the burdens she finds so upsetting will flee from her if she will just abide in her God given role.

When wives learn to put their love for their husbands in the number one spot, it will go a long way in developing the foundation upon which to build a godly home.

—Glen Young

## Leaders in the Home

One of the greatest problems facing our nation is a lack of good leaders. Leadership is needed no where more desperately than in our homes. We need homes in which the father is strong as head and leader of that home.

We do not make any apologies for teaching this. Yes, I realize that the prevailing, culturally correct opinion is that neither man nor woman has the right to be head over the other.

However, that is just contrary to the Bible.

### The Wisdom of God

In Ephesians 5:24ff, Jesus taught wives to be subject to their husbands. Are we wiser than God? I have seen a wife with a strong personality usurp the authority and become the leader of her family. Why does this happen? Why are men not insisting that their homes be established according to Biblical precept?

Some man may reply, "I can't be the head, she won't follow." That is not so. You can exercise your leadership and whether or not she follows is not your responsibility. But it is your responsibility to lead your family. If your wife wants to be godly she will follow. Do your duty. Strong personalities cannot be an excuse to avoid our obligations.

Another man may reply, "We have agreed to let her do the leading. She is smarter than I am." She may be smarter, but that has nothing to do with what God tells each of us to do. Are both of you together smarter than God? Can you agree to set aside His revealed will on this issue? If you can, why can't you agree to set aside all of His commands? Men, you cannot abdicate your God-given responsibility—it is no more right for the wife to be the head of the family than it is to sprinkle for baptism.

### What Is Required?

Leadership involves the husband and father physically providing for that family. Men have the responsibility to provide for the care and needs of their own. The man who

won't provide is condemned by God's word (1 Timothy 5:8). Our society has refused God's exhortation and many men feel no guilt by sitting at home and allowing their wives to take care of them. God says such men are worse than an unbeliever.

This leadership must be spiritual in its character. God chose Abraham to lead the Messianic family because he was a spiritual leader (Genesis 18:19). He made decisions that reflected his family's spiritual and physical well being. Men, your job is to be like Abraham in your home, a man of faith. You must make the decisions that will rear your children in a proper way.

### How to Begin

Start by developing character and wisdom that will encourage even a strong willed woman to submit. Such can come only through studying the Word of God.

Women, you must develop the humility of spirit that will submit even to one who is imperfect in his leadership qualifications. However, it cannot be a begrudged submission. It must spring from love—love for God's will and love for a husband you want to help be what God wants him to be.

You will succeed only to the extent that you believe God's word. You will succeed only to the extent that you obey His commandments. You will succeed only to the extent that His Word is the rule of your home.

—adapted by Jeff Asher

## FYI: for your information

- **Prayer List:** *Terry & Leon Aldridge, Floyd Bush, Kaylee Bush, Mary Hill, Evelyn Laird, Troy Lake, Wallace Little, Travis May, Mildred Tennison, Dorothy Yoder.*
- *Mary Hill* underwent surgery Monday at MRH. She has an appointment soon to discuss the results of the pathology with her doctors. *Mary* is feeling much better. Let's pray that her surgery will be a success and she will not have to undergo further treatments.
- *Floyd Bush* was in the Sunday morning assembly last week. He is feeling better and gradually getting stronger.
- **New Directory:** Please turn in your driving directions and map to the deacons.
- **Visitation:** Group #3 meets tonight after service.

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# Words of Life

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Volume 5 Issue 21

May 22, 2005

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## How a Husband Builds a Godly Home

Have you ever heard these expressions: “The little woman,” “The old ball and chain”? Have you ever used one of these expressions? I would hope that husbands think more highly of their wives than to be guilty of such inconsiderate remarks. Now, this brings me to a discussion of how husbands can build a godly home by changing their perception of their wives.

Where did you get your wife? Think a moment, then consider this, “House and riches are an inheritance from fathers; But a prudent wife is from Jehovah” (Proverbs 19:14). Do you accept that your wife was given to you from God? I believe this is where we must start. Too many husbands never think in terms of their wives as a gift from God.

The failure to think this way has caused husbands to think of their wives as burdens and, to put it mildly, the cause of all their troubles. They believe that all their failures and unhappiness are the fault of their wives. Yet, God says, “Whoso findeth a

wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favor of Jehovah” (Proverbs 18:22). Until husbands think appropriately about their wives there cannot be a godly home.

Two things are responsible for this fault in the husband’s thinking. First, he does not understand his wife’s mental and emotional state. Women are different from men in more ways than those that are obvious. Women view life and its problems differently. They tend to approach life with the need to be caregivers. They are not problem solvers. They want to talk about their problems but what they need is someone to listen and then to give them a hug, expressing one’s concern for the hurt they feel.

On the other hand, men are problem solvers. They can hear a problem explained and in a matter of moments give forth an infallible solution. When their wives need one thing, they are giving something else. They then become frustrated because their wives are

continually upset about a problem that could be solved at the snap of the finger if the wife would just do what he told her to do. Does any of this sound familiar yet?

Second, is the husband’s failure to understand and apply biblical teaching to his relationship with his wife. In Ephesians 5:23, we are told that the husband is the head of his wife. We husbands love to hear sermons preached on this passage.

I am convinced husbands have not comprehended what headship means. Let me illustrate. The Apostle’s comparison is to Christ’s headship over the church. When it came to effecting reconciliation in the church, who effected that reconciliation? Christ did (Romans 5:10). When there is division between the husband and wife, who is to effect reconciliation? The husband is. That is a part of his responsibility as being her head. The husband that is so childish that he pouts for days until his wife gives in, isn’t head of anything.

—Glen Young

## Of Plants, Shrubs & Habits

A wise old tutor was once taking a walk through a forest with a shiftless youth at his side. The tutor suddenly stopped and pointed to four plants nearby. The first was a tiny sprout, just coming out of the earth. The second had rooted itself quite firmly in the fertile soil. The third was a small shrub. The fourth had grown into a well developed tree.

The tutor said to his youthful companion, "Pull up this first plant." The youth pulled it up easily with his fingers. "Now pull up the second," the tutor said. The youth obeyed, and with a little effort, the plant came up, roots and all. "And pull up the third." The boy pulled with one hand, then the other, but it would not come. He then took both hands, and finally the plant yielded to all his strength. "And now," said the master, "try the fourth plant." The youth grasped the tree with all his might, but hardly a leaf shook. "I can't move it," he exclaimed. "So it is, my son, with our bad habits," said the tutor. "When they are young and small, we can cast them out, but when they are full grown, they cannot be uprooted."

Certainly, this is true. The habits we develop in our youth, both good and bad, are still with us in our adult years.

Parents, do you want your children to have the same habits in twenty years as they have right now? If they are worthwhile and good habits, encourage and fertilize them, but if they are bad, now is the time to root them out of your child's life. Your children will thank you in later life.

God through His Word can help us to instill good habits in our own lives and the lives of our children. Ephesians 6:4 says, "And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord."

—Tom Sutherland

## FYI: for your information

- **Prayer List:** *Terry & Leon Aldridge, Mary Hill, Evelyn Laird, Troy Lake, Wallace Little, Mildred Tennison, Jay White, Dorothy Yoder.*
- *Mary Hill* saw the doctor last Tuesday and got an excellent post-op report. She will return for another check-up this Wednesday, May 25.
- *Kaylee Bush, Jim and Lorene Rhiddlehoover's* great niece, has been released from the hospital and is expected to make a full recovery.

- *Jay White* will enter Longview Regional Hospital for gall bladder surgery on Monday.
- *Gerry McDaniel's* mother, *Evelyn Laird* continues to be in serious condition. She was placed under hospice care on Thursday. *Gerry* will travel to Little Rock on the 28<sup>th</sup>.
- **Visitation:** *Group #4* meets tonight after service.
- **Youth Class:** Today at 5:15 PM. The memory verse is 1 Corinthians 2:9-11. Bible facts from Genesis 12-14.
- **Gospel Meetings:** *Jeff Asher* will be with the Church in *Joaquin, TX* May 29-June 3. Services begin at 7:30 P.M. M-F. *Timberland Drive Church* in *Lufkin, TX* will conduct their annual VBS June 27-30 activities will begin at 6:30 PM.
- **New Directory:** Please turn in your map and driving directions to the deacons.

### Northside Church of Christ

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Carthage, TX 75633  
(903) 693-8336

#### Sunday

Bible Class.....9:30 AM  
Assembly.....10:25 AM  
Assembly.....6:00 PM

#### Wednesday

Bible Class..... 7:00PM

#### Sunday Radio Programs

KGAS 104.3FM..... 7:00AM  
CATV Channel 21... 7:00AM  
KMHT 103.9FM... 8:00AM

#### Elders

James Burke (903) 889-3318  
Kerry Henry (903) 836-4438  
Dale Hill (903) 693-3274  
Jim Rhiddlehoover (903) 693-3084

#### Preacher

Jeff Asher (903) 694-2049

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# Words of Life

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Volume 5 Issue 22

May 29, 2005

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## Husbands & Wives, Build Godly Homes

“The honeymoon is over!” Often, this phrase is used to acknowledge a problem exists between the husband and wife. It tells us that the couple no longer has the same passionate desire for each other they once had. Why does the breathless excitement of a marriage begin to wane?

There are many reasons. It could be a health problem on the part of either the husband or wife. It could be that the relationship was started upon physical attraction only; hence, any change in physical appearance changes one’s attraction for the other. Because change in the physical body is inevitable, one or both of these may be the cause of tension between the husband and wife.

We must understand that God commands husbands to love their wives and wives to love their husbands (Ephesians 5:25; Titus 2:4). When we married, we made a promise to always love the one with whom we entered

the marriage covenant. We promised to love them unconditionally. To forget this, is to set one’s self up for a fall.

The failure to control ones thoughts and emotions toward those who are not the spouse will cause adultery. This is so serious, that Jesus taught, “but I say unto you, that every one that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart” (Matthew 5:28). I believe a woman can be just as guilty as a man for this works both ways. Jesus’ teaching illustrates the importance of our thoughts. To allow ourselves to become emotionally involved with someone of the opposite sex, other than our spouse, is extremely dangerous.

The danger is not just in what might happen, but in the destruction of trust. I know a couple, both of whom are Christians. It didn’t take long for me to find out that they were having marital problems.

What I learned was that the husband had admitted to his wife that he was sexually attracted to a co-worker in his office. I came to know him very well. There is no doubt in my mind that he would, and did, practice self-control, abstaining from committing physical adultery. However, his wife could not get over feeling betrayed because of his mental infidelity. I heard a few years ago that they had finally divorced.

The problem was that it came down to a matter of trust. The wife felt betrayed because he had violated a trust she had placed in him. She had trusted him when he promised to love her until death parted them. So, when he confessed feelings for another, she felt he no longer loved her as he should, thus her trust was betrayed.

Husbands need to love their wives as Christ loved the church (Ephesians 5:25-33). The church is the center of Christ’s affection, so let the wife be to her husband. The

husband should nourish his wife as he does his own body. When these terms are met, the husband will truly be the head of his wife.

Wife, respect your husband as your head. Wife, use the desire to be a caregiver to create for your husband the secure feeling that he is loved. Wife, keep yourself from emotional entanglements so your husband can trust that there is no other for you but him. Wife, make a home for your husband in which there is harmony and happiness, provide a place of refuge from a sin-cursed world. Wife, make a home where a husband knows he is respected and honored.

—Glen Young

## You Thought I Wasn't Looking

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw you hang my first painting on the refrigerator, and I wanted to paint another one.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw you feed a stray cat, and I thought it was good to be kind to animals.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw you make my favorite cake for me, and I knew that little things are special things.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I heard you say a prayer, and I believed there is a God to whom I could talk.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I felt you kiss me good night, and I felt loved.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw tears come from your eyes, and I learned that sometimes things hurt, but it's all right to cry.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw that you cared and I wanted to be everything that I could be.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I looked ... and wanted to say thanks for all the things I saw when you thought I wasn't looking.

—Kent Heaton, Sr.

## FYI: for your information

- **Prayer List:** *Terry & Leon Aldridge, Mary Hill, Evelyn Laird, Troy Lake, Wallace Little, Mildred Tennison, Jay White, Dorothy Yoder.*
- *Jay White* had surgery on Monday and is recovering nicely. She hopes to be released from the doctor in a little over a week.
- *Lane McKnight* is recovering well after his surgery last week.
- *Gerry McDaniel* is in Little Rock visiting her mother, *Evelyn Laird*. She continues to be in serious condition.

- We rejoice that *Earl Fannin* was baptized into Christ last Sunday in Henderson.
- *Wallace Little* will be home from the Philippines next Tuesday.
- **Youth Class:** Today at 5:15 PM. The memory verse is 1 Corinthians 2:9-11. Bible facts from Genesis 14-16.
- **New Directory:** Please turn in your map and driving directions to the deacons.
- **Debate:** Remember the debate on water baptism is scheduled for August 8- 9 and 11-12 in our building at 7:00 PM nightly.
- **VBS:** *Timberland Drive Church* in *Lufkin, TX* will conduct their annual VBS June 27-30 each evening at 6:30 PM. *Harold Hancock* will be teaching the adult class.
- **Visitors:** *Sadie Palmer* 481 CR 113 Carthage, TX 75633, (903) 693-8814.

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# Words of Life

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Volume 5 Issue 23

June 5, 2005

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## When God Resides In the Home

A godly home is a home where God is a welcomed resident. Some may be saying that the previous statement is so obvious as to be unnecessary. Yet, the problems of the home are many. Could it be that the statement is not obvious, even to Christians?

God's presence in the home is the deciding factor of whether or not the home will remain intact. It is my experience that dedication to God and His righteousness is the key to overcoming the problems, which occur in marriage. When marriages disintegrate, it is because the man or the woman, or both, have lost sight of the greater picture. Are my actions pleasing to God? This is the question that puts differences into proper perspective.

With the rise in popularity of divorce, there arose the "no fault divorce." This particular divorce is based on the argument that two people have "grown" apart. They no longer share the same interests. For this reason, the courts will grant them a divorce.

People are different in their likes and dislikes. Women are different than men in what they enjoy and vice versa. Does this mean that men and women are incompatible for marriage? No! Paul writes, "But, because of

fornications, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband...But if they have not continency, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn" (1 Corinthians 7:2, 9). If marriage is doomed to failure because of differences, why would God tell us that we should marry rather than commit fornication? If incompatibility is such an insurmountable problem for marriages, why did Jesus give only one reason for divorce and that for the offended spouse only (Matthew 19:9)?

When God is in the picture, couples will work out their problems. This is not a pie-in-the-sky pronouncement. It works, it really works. Those who doubt it are those who have never tried it.

If your spouse has become less attractive to you and you are tempted to stray, hear God. "There hath no temptation taken you but such as man can bear: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation make also the way of escape, that ye may be able to endure it." 1 Corinthians 10:13. The way of escape may be as simple as concentrating on your spouse's

good qualities. It may be remembering that your love is more than physical attraction. Or, it could be as simple as staying away from sexually oriented entertainment.

If your spouse is unkind and spiteful, hear Jesus: "All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them: for this is the law and the prophets" (Matthew 7:12).

I have often said that husbands and wives don't fight fair. They know where the "soft" spots are. They can and do take the cheap shots. Husbands know more about their wives than their mother-in-law knows about her little girl. The wife knows more about her husband than he knows about himself. In short, husbands and wives know how to hurt one another with words. This "golden rule" is very important for married couples. Never forget it!

Statistically, my wife and I shouldn't be together. We were young when we married, 17 and 20. However, we both have the same goal in mind, going to heaven. That goal has kept us together for 30 years through thick and thin. It works!

—Glen Young

## Is Your Silence Golden or Just Yellow?

There are times when it is noble to hold one's peace, and say nothing (Matthew 26:62-63). Yet, there is a time when not speaking up is cowardly.

To answer a fool can be wasted effort, just giving him more material to act foolishly. "Do not answer a fool according to his folly, lest you also be like him" (Proverbs 26:4). Reasoning with a fool is like throwing pearls to the hogs or casting that which is holy to dogs—they have neither the capacity nor the interest to discern or respect such.

Yet, there is a time when foolishness should be shown up for what it is—"Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own eyes." (Proverbs 26:5) If one is foolish, he will see in these verses a contradiction. When is the time to remain silent or answer a fool according to his folly? This takes some prayerful thought and good judgment.

Lincoln said, "Better to be thought a fool than to open one's mouth and remove all doubt." Solomon said, "A fool's mouth is his destruction" (Proverbs 18:7). There is a time when we should hold our peace and seek further instruction. When challenged as to the correctness of our view of the Bible we need to be certain whereof we speak. If we are correct in our thinking, we'll be strengthened by further investigation. However, if we are off base, perhaps we'll see the error of our way and be able to correct it in time (James 5:19).

Yet, we should never fear "speaking as the oracles of God." Solomon urged men, "Debate thy cause with thy neighbor" (Proverbs 25:9). If we are "workmen" that have diligently studied the word of God, our mouths should be ready to speak in opposing that which is false and erroneous (2 Timothy 2:15). We are commanded to "contend earnestly" (Jude 3) and be "set for the defense" of the gospel of Christ (Philippians 1:17).

What about your silence, is it golden or just plain yellow? Do you speak when you need to speak and reprove those in error? Are you just cowering in the corner because you are fearful, untaught, or even unbelieving? Are you proving yourself a fool rather than answering the fool's folly. There is a remedy to the problem (Psalm 119:128-144).

—Jeff Asher

## FYI: for your information

- **Prayer List:** Terry & Leon Aldridge, Floyd Bush, Evelyn Laird, Troy Lake, Mildred Tennison, Jay White, Dorothy Yoder.
- Jay White will see the doctor Tuesday for her post-op check-up. She is doing better every day.
- Wallace Little returned home from the Philippines without incident on Tuesday. We look forward to hearing about his trip.
- **Visitation:** Group #1 meets tonight after service.

- **Lectureships:** *Stallings Drive* in Nacogdoches begins their annual lectureship tomorrow morning at 9:30 AM, 10:30 AM and 7:00 PM. The evening services begin with a full half hour of congregational singing. The series concludes on Thursday night.
- **Youth Class:** Today at 5:15 PM. The memory verse is 1 Corinthians 2:9-11. Bible facts from Genesis 17-18.
- **New Directory:** A few have still not turned in their map and driving directions for the new directory. Please do this today if possible.
- **Debate:** Remember the debate on water baptism is scheduled for August 8-9 and 11-12 in our building at 7:00 PM nightly.
- **VBS:** *Timberland Drive Church* in Lufkin, TX will conduct their annual VBS June 27-30 each evening at 6:30 PM. Harold Hancock will be teaching the adult class.

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# Words of Life

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Volume 5 Issue 24

June 12, 2005

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## Discipline the Child

Too often, we consider disciplining a child only in terms of a "spanking" or "loss of privileges." Discipline involves much more. It is the spiritual and moral teaching we give them—the "nurture and admonition" God commands (Ephesians 6:3; Proverbs 22:6). Let's consider a couple of things, we can do to help us along in the disciplining of our children.

### Prevention & Intervention

There is a proverb that says a "stitch in time saves nine". We must give our children teaching in order to save them from having unnecessary heartaches. When this is not done, children only hear constant criticism and correction from his parents. This kind of parent is always behind the curve and, therefore, must continually correct. It is discouraging to all involved. How much better to give positive teaching that will prevent many childhood mistakes. A parent's primary goal with a child is not to give the child a beating when he does wrong. The goal is to

prevent the need for corporal punishment. Teach the child to avoid problems. Help him mature to give God his best.

How do we do that?

### Consider the Child

First, each parent must take the time to look at his child for both strengths and weaknesses as he grows. Be perceptive—ready to teach, guide, control and help the child through his weak points. As the Song of Solomon discusses in the last chapter, if the child is easily influenced, we will put a wall around him. The other is just as important. Look for the child's strengths. In these areas give him reign, cultivate his talents, allow him to develop.

A good opportunity to meditate upon what is needed is when the children have gone to bed; then, let father and mother sit down and discuss their job. When children know their parents spend that kind of time thinking about them, looking for ways to help them, striving to be there for them, they will be motivated to cooperate with them rather

than resist them. These children will feel important, appreciated and loved.

More importantly, you will be a parent who is training your child rather than fighting with your child over who will be in control.

### Consider Yourself

Take time to analyze yourselves. Ask yourselves, "What are we doing as parents?" Are you letting some things slip by? Are you making some problems? Are you being fair? Are you doing what you need to do? Are you doing what is best for the child or what is least bothersome for yourselves?

Check your spiritual attitude. Some have the idea that so long as we have a Bible sitting on our child's dressing table, and we take them to church, that we have done our job in providing them with "nurture and admonition." Not at all. We want them to desire for themselves to be God's servants. That will take early and great effort (but so worth our time).

In years to come, as you reflect one evening about all the hours you spent discussing, planning, and caring for your child's soul, you will know that with God's help, you did your best to raise a child that walk's with God. On bent knees, you will thank God. That moment will be ever so special and one well worth working towards.

—David Hurst

## Being a Mother ...

Is doing things when  
They're needed,  
Even when you're tired.  
Through love your instincts  
are heeded,  
Not fear of being fired.

Is watching  
From the time of birth,  
Listening to it's every call;  
Guiding it's steps  
Upon the earth,  
Helping it, not to fall.

Is kissing an injured finger,  
Or, even a grubby, little toe--  
Is taking the time to linger  
To sooth some  
Troublesome woe.

Is being a person  
Who will reach  
A tender, loving heart  
While it's young enough  
To teach;

Its way, in life, to start.

Is guiding it through its teens—  
Its wavering, adolescent years,  
Loving, correcting, as it leans  
On you to calm it's fears.

Is always being ready to give  
In any way that you can,  
So that your child  
Is ready to live  
As an honest and caring  
Woman or man.

—L. B. Strawn

## FYI: for your information

- **Prayer List:** *Terry & Leon Aldridge, Floyd Bush, Evelyn Laird, Troy Lake, Mildred Tennison, Jay White, Dorothy Yoder.*
- *Jay White* was released from the doctor on Tuesday. She continues to make a good recovery.
- **Visitation:** Group #2 meets tonight after service.
- **Youth Class:** Today at 5:15 PM. *New Memory Verse:* 2 Peter 1:19-21. Review Genesis 17-20
- **Debate:** Remember the debate on water baptism is scheduled for August 8-9 and 11-12 in our building at 7:00 PM.
- **VBS:** *Timberland Drive Church* in *Lufkin, TX* will conduct their annual VBS June 27-30 each evening at 6:30 PM. *Harold Hancock* will be teaching the adult class.
- **Lectureships:** *The 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Westside Youth Lectureship* will be held July 29-31 at *Westside Church of Christ* in Irving, TX. This year's theme is "We Would See Jesus." Speakers include: Ken Weliever, Dee Bowman, Wilson Adams, Don Truex and Rusty Miller. Call: (972) 986-9131 for more information.
- **Gospel Meetings:** Our next meeting is September 25-30 with *Robert Harkrider.*

- *Jeff Asher* will be leaving on Tuesday to start a meeting in Marshall, AR on June 15. The meeting continues through Sunday. Starting on Monday the 20<sup>th</sup> *Jeff* will be in Conway, AR helping *Bruce Reeves* in his debate with *Gene Cook* on the subject of salvation by grace through faith alone. During *Jeff's* absence *Kerry Henry* and *Gary Box* will be covering the preaching and class teaching.
- **Birthdays:** *Anthony Cone (6/7), Jaime White (6/7), Wanda Stewart (6/11), Lane McKnight (6/13), Wally Little (6/14), Betty Burke (6/29), Bonnie McKnight (7/3), Paul Ragland (7/8), Melissa Briggs (7/8), Savannah Millican (7/11), Tanya Millican (7/15).*

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# Words of Life

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Volume 5 Issue 25

June 19, 2005

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## Ten Things Youth May Do for God

The world's greatest accomplishments have been done by young men and women. Alexander the Great became king before he was thirty years old. The great works of Shelley, Byron, Keats, Chopin, and Mozart were composed when they were teenagers. Hitler and Mussolini built their power on the dedication and energy of young people. Today, Communists make their strongest appeals to youth, because they know of the influence and dedication of the young. Now, much of the mission work of the church is being done by young adults. And the church needs consecrated young people. Times are perilous and our cause is the greatest that the world has ever known. The very hope of the human race lies in wise youth committed to high principles. Young people need the church—they need Christ. Those who are indifferent to the way of the Lord are inviting sorrow on their lives and souls. Jesus says to every age, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take

up his cross, and follow me" (Mark 8:34).

Here are ten things that you can do to serve God and gain life's greatest blessing:

### **Obey the Gospel**

Christ commands us to believe in Him (John 8:24), to repent of our sins (Acts 2:38), to confess His name (Matthew 10:32-33), and to be baptized into Him for the remission of our sins (Romans 6:3-6). Every young person who can understand these commands should obey them. There is nothing you will ever do that will mean so much to you in coming years.

### **Keep Yourself Pure**

If you like a real challenge, the challenge of conquering our own will is life's greatest, for sin is easy (1 Corinthians 9:26-27). Beside the personal satisfaction that moral purity brings, there is the blessing of God (Matthew 5:8).

### **Build Character**

True greatness lies in spiritual things. Emphasize prayer, study, and righteousness, and they will bless you. "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his

own soul?" (Matthew 16:26).

Those who follow Christ learn how to do good unto all men, even their enemies. Their lives radiate the beauty of his way (Matthew 5:14-16). Christianity brings peace with God, peace with others, and peace within.

### **Lead Others to Christ**

Christ has commanded His disciples to take the gospel to everyone. You can be a soul-winner. And nothing enlarges one's faith and spiritual capacity like teaching the lost.

### **Prepare Yourself for a Decent Profession**

The Bible commands honest and honorable work (1 Thessalonians 3:10-12). The Christian life is one of industry. Learn to enjoy work.

### **Build a Christian Home**

Next to obeying the gospel of Christ, the greatest favor you will ever do yourself is to build a Christian home. When you marry, marry a Christian.

### **Learn to Study the Bible**

There is only so much you can learn from others. You must make your own active

and independent study of God's will. Start early and develop good habits of daily Bible study. Go deeper into the Scriptures. Start a study group. Build your own library of study aids and notes you have made.

### **Be a Leader**

The church needs every competent leader and teacher that it can get. Develop your talents for leadership by the sincere and zealous practice of spiritual responsibilities. Be useful in the Lord's service.

### **Help Others**

Everyone bears a burden. When we help bear other's burdens and encourage them in Christ's walk, we fulfill the law of Christ (Galatians 6:2).

### **Be Faithful All Your Life**

Many perils will beset your pathway. Temptations and disappointments came to the Lord and they will also come to you. And all who live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer some persecution (2 Timothy 3:12), but God calls us to a life that man cannot destroy and to treasures that are eternal. He will never leave us or forsake us (Hebrews 13:5). Keep your faith and it will keep you (Revelation 2:10). There is great potential in your life. May God bless you as you develop it in His service.

—Steve Rudd

## **Should I Spank My Children?**

Last evening, one of our young sisters asked a question about whether Christians ought to spank their children. She stated

that she had been listening to a public forum in which some experts stated that it harmed the children and caused them to withdraw.

We went to the Bible and of many passages, we settled on this one, which states, "Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him" (Proverbs 22:15). This is God's answer, but notice what kind of rod He speaks of, a rod of "correction."

The problem today, is that some use a rod of frustration. Some use a rod of anger. Some use a rod of "hitting at" or "slapping at" a child. Some use a rod of inconsistency. Some use a rod of selfishness. Some use a rod when all else fails. The point is, that few, very few use the rod of correction. These other rods are merely a form of abuse in one way or another. Therefore, the reaction of children to these rods is normally negative and almost always brings wrath (cf. Ephesians 6:4). If we are going to be prudent parents, we must never use the rod in these ungodly ways.

The rod of correction is used as a "measure" or "kind" of punishment. It is not the punishment for every crime; but, there is a time it is needed for the foolishness of a child. Especially, when our children are very young, they understand very little other than pain and pleasure. As they mature, we are able to teach them more and the rod will not be used as much (or we may use different punishments). Regardless, the rod is always used with reason and in desire

to help the child. It will always hurt the parent of love deeply. He will always explain to the child what is being done and why. The number of stripes will be in accordance with the crime.

Spanking works when the rules are known. Don't make rules that are not important enough to enforce or that you refuse to make sure are followed. Spanking works when it is used consistently. It works when it is used rationally and with love. It works when the child is taught why it is used and understands that it is just. Children know the difference between being spanked righteously and when someone is taking something out on them. Are we abusing our children? We can do it by not spanking them or we can do it by "hitting at" them often done in the name of justified spanking.

—David Hurst

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# Words of Life

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Volume 5 Issue 26

June 26, 2005

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## A Great Home Respects the Bible

There is an awesome and devilish attack upon our homes today. Families as God would have them are becoming fewer and fewer in these modern times. Someone has said Home is one of the three most beautiful words in the English Language. I wonder if people still feel that way today; especially, in view of the fact that many are cheated from ever knowing a true home.

What does Home mean to you? More importantly, what do you think are qualities that make a home that please God? One thing is certain, any home that pleases God must be a home wherein the Bible is loved, respected and taught.

The Bible is God's book of answers to our problem filled lives (cf. 2 Tim. 3:16-17). In it we find how to correct the family, instruct the family in right living and provide the family with all that is needed to successfully serve God. The family that respects the Bible will live in harmony with its teachings and avoid those things contrary to its teachings (cf. 2 Peter 1:3). This means that the godly home will have its priorities straight (Matthew 6:33). Every family must be involved with work and with school. Every family enjoys the holidays and birthdays. We enjoy summer vacations and

entertainment. We enjoy little league, scouts, golf, hunting and so many pleasures that occupy our time. But the home that pleases God will never allow these things to interfere with or hinder their worship to God. The very things that make this a Christian home are also the things that make these Christians understand what is important in life.

### The Sad Story

The story usually goes like this, when the children are small, from about birth to six years, mother says, "Let's stay home from church this morning the children are fussy and won't behave well. That afternoon, they're feeling much better and the whole goes for a ride in the park".

When the children get a little older and into school, **dad** says, "Let's not go to church tonight, remember tomorrow's another school day and the children need their rest." So that night the family sits in front of the TV well past the time that evening service is over

As the children get older and grow more independent, ages 12-18 years, mom says to dad, "Dear, I am concerned about Jimmy and Janie; they don't want to go to church today, don't you think they'll rebel at church

if we make them go?" So, mom and dad stay home with Jimmy and Janie so that they won't feel like their being pressured, intimidated or embarrassed about not attending services that Sunday.

By age 18, if not sooner, the parents of Jimmy and Janie are in the living room with the elders sighing, "We just don't understand why Jimmy and Janie have left the church; they were raised in the church." These godly elders try and console these grieving parents, but little comfort is found in the truth that parental example and compromise with the world is primarily responsible.

If you don't teach them the right way, and teach them to respect the church of God, someone else will teach them the wrong way. The devil is making assault on your children from all directions. If the Bible is respected the church will be respected.

### Who Respects the Bible & the Church?

Those who teach the Bible in their homes honor the church redeemed with the blood of our God. These are people who not only attend Bible class but they are on time and are prepared.

These parents have spent time with their young people making

sure they understand the lessons they will study with others. These family members understand the importance of supporting and doing their individual parts in the church of our Lord.

In a home where the Bible is respected, each person is committed to following his role in the family as taught in the scriptures. There is harmony in such homes. This family has each one following the guidelines of God; whether, Dad, Mom or the kids. They all look into the word of God to learn what each ought to be doing.

Fathers are not abusive but loving and mothers put the family first, rather than a career outside the home. Sadly, we often see families where rebellion, anger, and disrespect are a part of the young folk's life. We exhort you, the Bible teaches rebellion against God's way is sin; it is imperative that we each remain in our proper rolls as God teaches.

When the Bible is respected in the home, then the idea of marriage is respected. These (Husbands and Wives who love the Bible), will love God's institution and will make their marriage what it ought to be. Their marriages are going to stay together. They will be committed to making them work in mutual respect for one another (Matthew 19:6).

### **Satan at Work**

Contrariwise, Satan and this world in sin seek to tear down what God pulls together through His word. The Bible will draw husband and wife into a life of righteousness. Let's respect God's word in our homes and make it

the foundation and support to all that we do and are.

—David Hurst

## **“Everything Better”**

I picked up a recent issue of *ENTREPRENEUR Magazine* (February 1999, Page#126). In an article by Geoff Williams called “How to do everything better,” there was a section on keeping your creditors at bay. He explained a couple of cash flow and book-keeping tricks, and then said, “If you're desperate.” He offered several examples; here are three of them: “Send your creditor a check, but 'forget' to sign it. This can buy you a few days or even weeks.” “Some vendors take credit cards, so when you pay over the phone, you can 'accidentally' give them the wrong account number — not somebody else's, but just reverse a digit ... Eventually, they'll call and usually apologize, saying they wrote down the wrong number. This strategy buys you about three days.” “When collection agencies telephone and ask for you, tell them you're not in. Eventually, they'll stop calling and send you a letter instead, buying you valuable time.

Dishonesty now becomes a business “strategy,” and the wisdom of this world advocates another reason to lie! Are you surprised? We have heard some say that it is all right to lie about sex. The bold and obnoxious attorney everybody wants to interview, Jerry Spence, dismisses the lies of the President. “I don't care,” he says,

“There are honorable lies and there are dishonorable lies!”

In such a time, we need to resolve to preach and practice the kind of integrity recommended in the word of God.

Here is an excellent description of the kind of integrity and honesty we ought to preach and practice: “He who walks righteously and speaks uprightly, he who despises the gain of oppressions, who gestures with hands, refusing bribes, who stops his ears from hearing of bloodshed, and shuts his eyes from seeing evil: he will dwell on high; his place of defense will be the fortress of rocks; bread will be given him, his water will be sure.” (Isaiah 33:15,16). You may not see this in the corporate world, national politics, your work place or in some churches. You will see this kind of behavior clearly in God's people.

—Warren Berkley

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#### **Preacher**

Jeff Asher (903) 694-2049

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# Words of Life

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Volume 5 Issue 27

July 3, 2005

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## Solving Family Problems in the Bible Way

United Press International recently reported that in Bloemfontein, South Africa, a man built a wall through the middle of the house and told his wife to stay on the other side. This is the kind of wall which one cannot break through physically. But many people have built walls which cannot be seen, but which prevent people from communicating emotionally and spiritually.

### Communicate

“Bear you one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.” This statement from Galatians 6:2 must certainly include family relationships, but only when we are in an authentic dialogue will we know the burdens that others bear. Only when we are willing to reveal our burdens, only when we are truly sensitive to the burdens of others, only in a relationship of genuine openness can we “Fulfill the law of Christ”. It is a truism that you cannot really love another person unless you know that person's needs and help fill those needs. Yet, too often people fail to reveal their needs to members of

their own family. Too often, others are not listening with sufficient attention to notice these needs.

### Confront

It is not always wise to “smooth things over”. There are worse situations than conflict: hidden resentments are worse; silent bitterness is worse; hypocrisy is worse. When the Apostle Paul had a grievance against Peter, he “withstood him to the face” (Galatians 2:11-14). More face-to-face frankness in the right spirit would help many a parent-child relationship and many a marriage.

In Matthew 18:15-17, Jesus said that a person who has been wronged should go to the one who offended him and discuss the matter directly. Surely, this must apply to the family as well as to other human relationships. When your child, your parent, or your marriage partner does bring a grievance, try to be “quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger” (James 1:19). Allow the other person to express fully whatever he feels. Too often, we cut each other off and give

hasty advice. Too often, we resent hearing about grievances. When we are “slow to hear and quick to speak”, we reverse the Biblical teaching and we disobey God. Have we thought, instead, of listening lovingly as part of our Christian way of life?

### Confess

When James wrote “confess your faults one to another” (James 5:16), there is little doubt that he included all Christian relationships. Fathers and sons, mothers and daughters, husbands and wives, should be able to express their weaknesses to each other. A life of pretense can be an unbearable burden. Besides, those closest to us usually know our strengths and weaknesses anyway. It helps when we ourselves are frank about them.

Honesty and courage about acknowledging your faults will encourage others in the family both to understand you better and to talk freely about their shortcomings. In this sharing, we learn to love and help each other more beautifully than in a “closed circuit” situation.

## Compassion

In Ephesians 4, we are exhorted to "be kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." Part of forgiveness, and part of genuine dialogue involves acceptance. The Father of the prodigal son accepted his boy completely, compassionately, joyfully. He expressed unconditional love. In true family dialogue, we do not expect perfection in the other, even as we know we are not perfect. Rather, we receive the other with sympathy and unconditional love. When a person finds that he is accepted, he is able to grow into an increasingly meaningful and strengthening dialogue.

So do not allow a wall to be built inside your house. Share your real feelings. Share your burdens. Share your needs, and share the emotions and burdens of everyone in your family. In doing so, you will build a family circle which cannot be broken.

—Steve Rudd

## FYI: for your information

- **Prayer List:** *Terry & Leon Aldridge, Floyd and Doris Bush, Gary Hill, Gerry McDaniel, Troy Lake, Mildred Tennison, Dorothy Yoder.*

- *Nell Fomby* will have an MRI on July 21<sup>st</sup>.
- *Floyd Bush* was released from Longview RMC after a successful back treatment. He is feeling much better both sitting up and walking.
- *Doris Bush* was admitted to Longview RMC on Thursday and is currently undergoing tests.
- *Gary Hill, Dale Hill's* brother is scheduled for surgery at ETMC Carthage on July 11<sup>th</sup>.
- **Sympathy:** We extend our sympathy to *Gerry McDaniel* and her family over the recent death of her mother *Evelyn Laird*
- **Baptism:** *Lauren Underwood*, daughter of *Angela Underwood* and grand daughter of *John and Chris Young*, put on Christ Wednesday night after the service. About 20 saints remained to witness her immersion and sing praises as she obeyed the Lord.
- *John Young* is on his way to Washington D.C. or London England to take on a new assignment. *Chris & Brie* will be with us another six weeks or so before leaving to join him.
- **Visitation:** Group #1 meets tonight after service.
- **Debate:** Remember the debate on water baptism is scheduled for August 8-9 and 11-12 in our building at 7:00 PM.
- **Youth Class:** Will not meet today, but will resume next week with 2 Peter 1:19-21 for the memory verse.
- **Lectureships:** *The 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Westside Youth Lectureship* will be held July 29-31 at *Westside Church of Christ* in Irving, TX. This year's theme is "We Would See Jesus." Speakers include: Ken Weliever, Dee Bowman, Wilson Adams, Don Truex and Rusty Miller. Call: (972) 986-9131 for more information.
- **Gospel Meetings:** Our next meeting is September 25-30 with *Robert Harkrider*.
- **Birthdays:** *Bonnie McKnight (7/3), Paul Ragland (7/8), Melissa Briggs (7/8), Savannah Millican (7/11), Tanya Millican (7/15), Nell Fomby (7/21), Daryl May (7/31).*

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# Words of Life

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Volume 5 Issue 28

July 10, 2005

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## A Child's Duty to Parents

The New Testament binds a great responsibility on children when it says in Ephesians 6:1-3, *"Children obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honor 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."* The key words are "honor" and "obey". There is no time limit on this. God does not free a child from this responsibility simply because he has now gone to college or is married. A child in the earliest years of adulthood makes a tragic mistake by neglecting his parents.

### Children Must Obey

It is necessary that we say something about the word "obey". Children are to obey their parents "in the Lord". One must never forget that his allegiance to God comes before any man. That includes government, companions and parents. The early apostles expressed it well when they were commanded not to preach in the name of Christ. They responded by saying in Acts 5, verse 29, *"We ought to obey God rather than men"*.

The term "obey your parents" indicates that the parents have laid down some laws or provided some instruction to guide the children. This is what is meant by the wise man when he said in Proverbs 22:6, *"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old he will not depart from it"*. It is understood that the law to be obeyed by the child is that which will make him a fine, decent, responsible person. Instructions of parents should be revered by children beyond the parents' death. There is no time limit then on "Children obey your parents in the Lord" (Ephesians 6:1).

### Children Must Give Honor

The other word that stands out so predominantly in the children's responsibility to their parents is the word "honor." In Ephesians 6:2, the Bible says: *"Honor thy father and mother"*.

This is a responsibility which concerns the child's attitude and respect toward parents. *Webster's New World Dictionary* says of the word honor, it is "high regard or great respect

given; something done or given as a token of respect".

The home for centuries has provided an environment for one to learn all of the ABC's of Christian living. It is in the home that seeds of character can be sown and given an opportunity to flourish. The great principles of God are to be taught, practiced and cultivated in the home. The child who has learned to honor parents can then effectively show high regard toward his fellow man. He later can easily show respect for a companion and his own children.

### A Word to Parents

It is important that we pause to say that parents have the responsibility to provide the proper atmosphere in the home so that the child can develop an appreciation for law and order given by parents. Such an environment will cause children to rise up and call their parents "blessed."

The example of parents set in honoring and loving one another is far-reaching in the heart and life-pattern of the

child. When a child cannot see parents love, respect and honor one another, it is extremely difficult for him to rise above this obstacle and honor those that do not honor themselves. Remember, in order to manifest honor towards others, you must respect yourself.

### The Example of Christ

Christ provides us with an example in all things. Having returned from the visit to the city of Jerusalem at the age of 12, the Bible says that Christ, "was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man" (Luke 2:51-52).

Christ was obedient to his parents. His affection and respect for his mother was manifested from the cross. He was concerned about her care and well-being. He gave this responsibility to the beloved Apostle John (John 19:25-27). You shall always be children in the eyes of your parents and in the eyes of the Lord. Your response to the commandment, "Obey your parents" and "Honor thy father and thy mother", will be a pretty good yardstick measuring how well you will obey your Lord and give Him honor through faithful worship.

The child's responsibility is a lifetime achievement, an achievement that will be

richly blessed in all walks of life. In the words of Ephesians Chapter 6, it is the first commandment with promise.

—Steve Rudd

## FYI: for your information

- **Prayer List:** *Terry & Leon Aldridge, Danny Orman, Floyd and Doris Bush, Nell Fomby, Gary Hill, Gerry McDaniel, Troy Lake, Mildred Tennison, Dorothy Yoder.*
- *Kurt and Amber Jones* are visiting with us today from Rosenberg, TX. *Kurt* is originally from Pampa in the Panhandle and began preaching at Borger while I was in Amarillo. We are glad to have them this morning, and have asked *Kurt* to preach.
- *Nell Fomby* will have an MRI on July 21<sup>st</sup>.
- *Floyd and Doris Bush* are both at home now making a gradual recovery. Brother *Bush* is still having some pain associated with his back.
- *Gary Hill, Dale Hill's* brother is scheduled for surgery at ETMC Carthage on July 11<sup>th</sup>.
- *John Young* is on his way to Aberdeen, MD where he will take charge of a shift involved in reclamation of the Army's testing ground. *Chris & Brie* will be with us another six weeks or so before leaving to join him. *John's* assignment will last at least one year.

- **Visitation:** Group meetings will be suspended until September.
- **Debate:** Remember the debate on water baptism is scheduled for August 8-9 and 11-12 in our building at 7:00 PM. Flyers are on the table in the foyer.
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# Words of Life

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Volume 5 Issue 29

July 17, 2005

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## Jerusalem: The Model Church

*“Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with singleness of heart, praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved” (Acts 2:40–47).*

A model is “the plan from which an item not yet constructed will be produced.” It is “an example to be imitated or compared” (*The American Heritage Dictionary*). It is that which is “worthy of imitation or duplication.” It is the “ideal,” an “exemplar,” the “standard” (*Roget’s Thesaurus*).

The Jerusalem Church of Christ is the working model after which every Church of Christ should pattern itself. This is so because the Jerusalem Church was the very first Church of Christ. It began according to inspired prophecy, and the inspired apostles of Christ organized and

oversaw it. The Jerusalem Church had a supernatural beginning under a divine providence that resulted in a perfect model of the local Church to follow in every age.

### A Model of Organization

The Apostles organized the Church according to a plan that preserved its autonomy and independence. Elders were installed as the overseers of the flock (Acts 15:6,22) and deacons were chosen to serve the needs of the saints (Acts 6:1–7). These men were taken from among the Jewish converts that exemplified the qualifications later outlined and applied in all the churches (Acts 14:23; 1 Timothy 3:1–10).

There was no organization in the early Church tying the congregations together in either a denomination or a society. Every Church had its own elders which directed the work of each Church (Acts 11:29,30). There was nothing but independent, autonomous cooperation between the Churches.

### A Model in Worship

The Church at Jerusalem was a worshipping Church. There was a distinct pattern to their worship established by the Apostles. It included teaching, preaching and reading the Scriptures, the Lord’s Supper,

prayer, a collection and praise (Acts 2:42,47).

From the very beginning the Church assembled on the first day of the week to eat the Lord’s Supper and give (Acts 2:1; cf. Leviticus 23:16; Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:2). They were often times assembled to pray (Acts 4:23–31; 12:12) and to teach (Acts 2:46; 5:42). Moreover, as did the Gentile churches, the saints in Jerusalem sang praises to God (cf., Ephesians 5:19; 1 Corinthians 14:26; Acts 16:25).

### A Model of Church Growth & Evangelism

The Jerusalem Church came into existence when a prepared people were in the prepared place at the prepared time. The first gospel sermon ever preached resulted in three thousand conversions in one day (Acts 2:41). These were followed by five thousand more on another day (4:4). Men and women were added to the Church daily (Acts 2:47). The success of their efforts extended even to the teachers of false religion (Acts 6:7).

Jesus had said that the fields were white unto harvest (John 4:35). It is doubtful that the gospel has ever had that kind of response since Pentecost. However, not even the first soul would have been garnered

without the efforts of the Jerusalem Church.

There is tremendous emphasis on growth today because we are not growing. However, we cannot expect to grow without doing what these saints did—“they ceased not to preach and teach Jesus Christ.” The secret to growth is sowing the seed of the Kingdom, the Word of God (1 Corinthians 3:1-9).

### A Model of Liberality

The Jerusalem Church was filled with cheerful givers (2 Corinthians 9:7). From the first service, there were critical financial needs to be met by the saints in Jerusalem. The circumstances were unusual—thousands of people hundreds of miles away from home unprepared for the extended stay. The need was pressing—“teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.” The only way to feed, clothe and house these converts was for the “possessors of lands or houses” to sell them, giving the proceeds to the Church for “distribution” to every man that had any need (Acts 4:31-35).

The saints in Jerusalem gave until they impoverished themselves for the cause of Christ and their brethren (Hebrews 10:32-34; Acts 11:27-30; Romans 15:25-27). They did not regard their possessions as belonging unto themselves, but as belonging to their brethren (Acts 2:44; 4:32).

### A Model Church

The Jerusalem Church of Christ is a Church to imitate. She faced many of the same challenges and crises that the Churches have faced through the centuries. In

her experiences, are found the divine answers to our modern questions. Whether persecution, doctrinal purity, the worship, or the terms of membership is the issue we can return to Jerusalem for the answer.

—Jeff Asher

## FYI: for your information

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- **Gospel Meetings:** *Tony Ripley* will be with the *Judson Rd.* congregation in Longview July 17-20. Services begin at 7:00 P.M. Our next meeting is September 25-30 with *Robert Harkrider.*
- **Thank You:** Thanks to *Bill Pryor* and *Bart Henry* for installing the poles to display the banner at the corner of our lot advertising the upcoming debate. Thanks to *Cheryl and Sherman Pope* for sending out flyers to every Baptist Church in the four-county area.
- We have scheduled a “work day” for July 23<sup>rd</sup> in order to get the meeting house ready for the debate. Please plan to participate. Bring your hedge clippers and pruning shears. We will start at 7:00 A.M.
- **Letters:** Check out the bulletin board for recent letters from Roy Fenner and a radio listener.

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# Words of Life

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Volume 5 Issue 30

July 24, 2005

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## Baptist Baptism vs. Bible Baptism

After reading my tract on *Why I Left the Baptist Church* a man recently asked me "when and where I ever heard of any candidate being baptized into the Baptist Church rather than into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Do Baptists believe that a person is baptized "into the name of the Father...Son... and Holy Ghost?" Listen to this: On page 12 of Pendleton's *Church Manual for Baptist Churches* we read, "Regeneration, repentance, and faith are private matters between God and the soul. They involve internal piety, but of this piety there must be an external manifestation. This manifestation is made in baptism. The penitent, regenerate believer is baptized into the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. There is a visible, symbolic expression of a new relationship to the three persons of the Godhead--a relationship entered into in repentance, faith, and regeneration." This simply says that the relationship of being into the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit is "entered into in repentance, faith and regeneration," which come before baptism, and that baptism is only a "visible, symbolic expression" of this new relationship Hence we are forced to conclude that according to

Baptist doctrine that Baptists baptize a person whom they believe is already "into the name of the Father, and of the Holy Ghost." But, the Bible teaches that we are baptized into this relationship, hence we reach the relationship when we are baptized, and not before as Baptists teach. I realize that when Baptists baptize a person they say, "I baptize you into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," but in the alight of the above, they do not do what they say they do, nor do they believe that they do what they say they are doing, for they believe that the person being baptized is already "into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost."

My Baptist friend, if you do not believe that, then you should renounce Baptist Doctrine, and leave the Baptist Church for they do believe it, and you are standing for it and lending your support to it as long as you are a member of the Baptist Church. Be honest with your own soul. There is a judgment day coming!

### Baptist Baptism Puts One into the Baptist Church

This can be demonstrated by a few quotations from the Church Manual. On page 12 we read, "The ceremonial qualification for church membership. This qualification is baptism." Again,

on page 14, "This shows baptism to be prerequisite to church membership." Again on pages 17 and 18 under the caption "How Members are Received" we read, "In accordance with the first way (experience and baptism), persons wishing to unite with a church give an account of the dealings of God with their souls, and state the `reason of the hope that is in them;' where upon, if in the judgment of the church recognized as candidates for baptism, with the understanding that when baptized they will be entitled to al the rights and privileges of membership." This is further evidenced by the fact that simply being baptized does not qualify one to become a member of the Baptist Church, but only those who receive Baptist baptism--by the hands of an ordained Baptist preacher by the authority of a Baptist Church (pp. 64 and 65).

### Bible Baptism Puts One into Christ

The apostle Paul wrote the Galatians, "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." (Gal. 3:26-27). The same apostle wrote the Romans, "Know ye not, that so many of us were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death. Therefore we are buried with

Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father even so we also should walk in newness of life." (Rom. 6:3-4). Baptists claim that a person is in Christ before and without baptism. Hence, Baptists do not baptize a person into Christ as the Bible teaches; therefore, they do not administer Bible baptism.

### **Bible Baptism Is in the Name of Christ**

Actually, Baptists do not baptize "in the name of Christ." "In the name of" means it is "by one's command and authority." On page 65 of the Manual "a proper administrator" is defined as "a person who has received from a church authority to baptize." In other words the Baptist preacher gets his authority to baptize from a (Baptist) Church, hence "by the authority of" the Baptist Church, or "in the name of the Baptist Church." Bible baptism is by the command and authority of Christ, or "in the name of Christ" (Acts 2:38; Acts 10:48; Acts 19:5). My Baptist friend, if you would follow Jesus, you should do as the twelve men in Ephesus, who upon learning that their baptism was, among other things, not in the name of Christ, "were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 19:1-5).

### **Bible Baptism Is for the Remission of Sins**

Baptist baptize people whom they claim have already received remission of sins. "There is an actual, a real remission of sins when we believe in Christ -- there is a declarative, formal symbolic remission in baptism." (Baptist Church Manual, page 13). The Bible plainly states that

baptism is "For the remission of sins (Acts 2:38) or to "wash away sins" (Acts 22:16).

Baptists administer baptism only on a confession that one is already saved. Baptists believe and teach that a person is saved "when he believes in Christ" (p. 13), hence, "He that believeth shall be saved." The Lord Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." (Mark 16:16). The apostle Peter said, "Baptism doth also now save us" (1 Peter 3:21).

### **How Baptists Are Made**

Another interesting point is how one becomes a Baptist. This is clearly outlined in the quotation already given from pages 17 and 18 of the Manual. First a person must tell his experience and state that he is saved. Whereupon, if the Baptist Church thinks that his experience is genuine and that he is actually saved, they vote to recognize him as a candidate for baptism and after baptism into their membership. Hence the steps are: (1) confess that you are saved. (2) Be voted on. (3) Receive Baptist baptism. The vote determines at least three things (1) Whether the Baptist Church things you are saved or not. (2) Authorizes your baptism. (3) To receive you as a member of the Baptist Church after baptism.

### **Conclusion**

We have seen that Baptists do not baptize "into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit," that they do not baptize "into Christ," that they do not baptize "in the name of Christ," that they do not baptize "for the remission of sins" or to be saved, therefore Baptist baptism is not scriptural baptism.

Let me plead with you, my friend, to consider these things carefully. They deal with the most important thing in the world to you—the eternal salvation of your soul. Have you accepted man's imitation of God's commandment? Won't you surrender your rebellious will to the will of the Lord in being baptized as the scriptures direct?

The church of Christ is the church that you read about in the Bible. We became Christians, children of God just as people did in New Testament days. As members of the Lord's body, the church, and without joining any denominational group, we meet together and worship God as the New Testament directs. We are, therefore, Christians, and Christians only. We teach what the Bible teaches. We call Bible things by Bible names, and do Bible things in Bible ways.

—Grover Stevens

(For more articles like this one visit [www.bibletalk.net](http://www.bibletalk.net))

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# Words of Life

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Volume 5 Issue 31

July 31, 2005

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## Repentance Before Faith?

The following article of faith appears in many Baptist Church Manuals as a declaration of what Baptists believe concerning these matters:

*"We believe that Repentance and Faith are sacred duties, and also inseparable graces, wrought in our souls by the regenerating Spirit of God; whereby being deeply convinced of our guilt, danger and helplessness, and of the way of salvation by Christ, we turn to God with unfeigned contribution, confession, and supplication for mercy; at the same time heartily receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as our Prophet, Priest, and King, and relying on him alone as the all sufficient Saviour."* (See: *Pendleton's Church Manual*, p.51; *Hiscox's Standard Manual for Baptist Churches*, p. 64; and *Cobb's New Manual for Baptist Churches*, pp. 91-92.)

I would find no fault and offer no criticism concerning the teaching that repentance and faith are necessary conditions of salvation. Certainly, this is abundantly taught in the word of the Lord. But the order in the plan of salvation in which by Baptist Manuals and Baptist preachers is not sustained by reason or the Bible. As you may know, in harmony with the article quoted above, Baptists place repentance before faith in that plan. The following scriptures are offered, by them as proof that they should be so arranged:

"And ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him" (Matthew 21:32). "Repent ye, and believe the gospel" (Mark 1:15). "Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20:21).

In all these passages repentance is mentioned first, and it is concluded by Baptist preachers that repentance must precede faith in the plan of redemption. Let us, therefore, make a little study of these matters in the light of God's word.

### **1. The order of mention is not always the order of occurrence.**

The contention of Baptist to repentance and faith in this respect is based purely upon an assumption—they assume that the order of mention is the order of occurrence. Without this assumption there is no basis for the theory that repentance precedes faith. But this assumption is absolutely not true. Of course, when God promises a blessing on a certain condition, the condition must always precede the blessing. Salvation is based upon the conditions of faith and repentance. Necessarily, the conditions must precede the salvation. Likewise, baptism is made a condition of salvation (Mark 16:16), and, as such, it must precede salvation. But when salvation is offered on a number of conditions, the order in

which the conditions are mentioned may not be the order of occurrence. To prove this just look at Paul's statement in Romans 10:9: "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." In this verse salvation is offered on the conditions of faith and confession, but confession is mentioned before faith. Must we say this is the order of occurrence? Can a man "Confess with his mouth" something he has "believed in his heart" before he has believed it? This would be impossible. So the order of mention in this passage cannot be the order of occurrence. Besides, the very next verse reverses it and mentions faith before confession. The order of mention could not be made the order of occurrence in both verses. The mere fact then that repentance is mentioned before faith does not necessarily prove that it comes before faith in the plan of salvation on.

### **2. The significance of the passages investigated.**

Matthew 21:32 and Mark 1:15 are both addressed to the Jews who lived during the personal ministry of Christ on the earth. They were already believers in God. According to Matthew John the Baptist "came in the way of righteousness" but the Jews "believed him not," that is, they did not believe what he preached.

"But the publicans and the harlots believed him." But the Jews addressed, after they "had seen it," did not afterward repent that they "might believe him." Since they were already believers in God, they could have repented toward God that they might believe the preaching of John. While this would be "repentance toward God" before "faith in John," It would not be repentance toward God before faith in God. Faith in God had to come first. The same can be said of the statement in Mark 1:15: "Repent ye, and believe the gospel." Again the Jews were addressed in this passage. They were already believers in God and could therefore repent toward Him that they might believe the gospel. This would be repentance before they believed the gospel, but it would be repentance toward Him in whom they already believed. Consequently, faith in God came before repentance toward God, and there is no comfort here for Baptist preachers in the proclamation of their doctrine.

While the language of Acts 20:21 is spoken concerning both Jews and Greeks, the principle involved is the same. Paul testified "repentance toward God" and "faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." The repentance and the faith were not directed toward the same person. It was not "repentance toward God" and "faith toward God." Neither was it "repentance toward Christ" and "faith toward Christ." But it was "Repentance toward God" and "faith toward Christ." When the repentance and faith are directed toward the same person, the repentance is never mentioned before faith.

**3. It is impossible to make a practical application of the theory.** Some theories are like some men—they won't work. And this is one

of them. Men may preach long and loudly that sinners must repent before they can have faith, but getting some one to do the impossible is quite another thing. Paul said in 2 Corinthians 7:10 that "Godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation." Repentance must follow "godly sorrow" as a result of it. But what produces the "godly sorrow"? Do you think it would be possible to produce godly sorrow in a man who has no sign of faith in God? Without some degree of faith in God no man could ever be led to "godly sorrow" or to "repentance toward God." And unless a man, to some extent, believes in Jesus Christ, he could never be led to "repentance toward Christ." Some degree of faith is absolutely indispensable in leading one to repent of his sins. It is contrary to all reason as well as to revelation, for a man to insist that it is otherwise.

**4. If it could be worked; it would be displeasing to God.** I have had Baptist debaters, while engaged in discussion with me, make the claim that everything that an alien sinner does is displeasing to God and is a sin. They have based such contention on the statement of Paul in Hebrews 11:6. He says: "Without faith it is impossible to please him." All the acts of a man before he is saved, according to Baptist debaters, is without faith, for just as soon as he has faith they say he is saved. Hence, they conclude that such a sinner cannot do anything that pleases God—everything is without faith and is therefore a sin. But in view of this, either it is Impossible for men to repent before faith, or if they should do so, it would not be pleasing to God, for "repentance before faith" is "repentance without faith." According to their doctrine, as outlined in Article 8 of their creed, it becomes a sin to

repent of sin. This is but the absurdity of Baptist teaching.

**5. They say they are "inseparable graces."** When faced with the consequences of their doctrine, they will then begin to hedge and say that you cannot say that repentance comes first for they are "inseparable graces." The very instant one occurs the other occurs. This has been illustrated by some of them by referring to a man's firing a bullet through a plank wall. They ask the question: "Which goes through the wall first -- the hole or the bullet?" And they reason that there is no difference -- they go through at the same time. Well, if this is a correct representation of repentance and faith in the plan of salvation, they should quit preaching that repentance precedes faith and revise their creed accordingly. If they occur at the same instant, one does not precede the other, and their creeds and their doctrines are wrong. They cannot have it both ways—either repentance comes before faith or it does not. Let them take their choice and Stick with it.

—W. Curtis Porter

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# Words of Life

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Volume 5 Issue 32

August 7, 2005

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## Was Cornelius Saved without Baptism?

Dr. Robert Morey a Missionary Baptist preacher has written an article stating *Twelve Reasons Why Baptism Is Not Essential for Salvation*. Morey, like most Baptist preachers, thinks he has justification for rejecting water baptism in the conversion of Cornelius. However, does this noble centurion make their case?

Dr. Morey's writes: "Cornelius believed the Gospel, was saved, filled with the Holy Spirit, spoke in tongues and then got baptized (Acts 10:44-48). Did not Cornelius' salvation take place before his baptism? The text clearly states that Cornelius and his family heard the word, believed it, were saved, filled with the spirit, spoke in tongues and then were baptized. None of this should have taken place if the Campbellite doctrine was true."

Let's read these verses in Acts chapter ten.

*"While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on*

*all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days."*

The passages cited does not say that Cornelius was saved at the point of faith before he was baptized in water. As a matter of fact, Cornelius is nowhere called a believer before his baptism. There are some important facts left out that you must consider before you can make a decision about the case of Cornelius.

First, notice in Acts chapter ten and verse six. When the angel of the Lord appeared to Cornelius he commanded

him to send to Joppa for Simon Peter who "shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do." When the Apostle Peter recounted this matter to the brethren in Jerusalem he said that the angel told Cornelius, "Call for Simon...who shall tell thee words whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved" (Acts 11:15).

Therefore, it was necessary that Cornelius and those with him hear what Peter had to say in order to be saved. Furthermore, Cornelius and Peter both recognized that obedience to what Peter had to say was absolutely essential. When Peter arrived Cornelius said in Acts chapter ten and verse 33, "Thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God." Peter responded to him with these words, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."

I also want to call your attention to Peter's sermon. Beginning at verse 36 and continuing through verse 43 Peter speaks concerning the life, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. He also briefly speaks of his own association with Jesus and his place as a chosen witness of Christ who, along with the Eleven, had preached that Jesus was the Messiah of Old Testament promise and prophecy. Now, I call your attention to verse 37. Notice what Peter says of Cornelius' relation to these facts about Jesus, "He is Lord of all—That word I say ye know." Peter was preaching to a man that already knew and was convicted by the OT prophets and John that Jesus was the Messiah. This is significant; it indicates that up until verse 43 Peter had not said anything that Cornelius did not know or had not believed. Yet, we know that Peter came to tell Cornelius what he needed to do to be saved.

At this juncture, the gift of the Holy Spirit is poured out directly from heaven upon Cornelius and his house. The believing Jews are astonished by this event because these men were Gentiles (look at verse 45). Up until this moment the Gospel had been preached "to none but unto the Jews only" (Acts 11:26). Peter says later of this miracle that it was a divine witness from heaven that there was

no difference between Jews and Gentiles respecting the plan of salvation (Acts 15:7–9). This is exactly where Peter had begun preaching, he had said in verse 34 of chapter ten, "I perceive that God is no respecter of persons." The outpouring of the Spirit on the Gentiles served the purpose of confirming the rightness of the next action Peter would take.

Peter commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Acts chapter eight and verse 16 establishes beyond doubt that baptism "in the name of the Lord" is water baptism. So that which had not been done before, preaching the Gospel to Gentiles and baptizing those that believed, is now commanded by an Apostle of Jesus Christ with the miraculous sanction of the Holy Spirit. This command to be baptized was the only thing which Cornelius had not heard or known concerning Jesus Christ. It was among those things which God had commanded Peter to speak, which was something that Cornelius ought to do and which would save him and his house. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit was neither the means to, nor a sign of Cornelius' salvation, but, rather, it was a sign to the believing Jews that Gentiles were amenable to the Gospel and subjects for salvation on the same terms as the Jews, by grace through faith which

worketh by love (Galatians 5:6). It was in the presence of this miracle that Peter challenged the Jews to withhold water and after which he defended his own actions by saying, "What was I that I could withstand God?" (Acts 11:17).

Dr. Morey is just wrong about Cornelius. He does not say what he asserts and his doctrine based on this text is nothing more than wild assertion and wishful thinking. Cornelius was saved just like every man has ever been saved. He believed and was baptized.

[The above article is a taken from a series of replies to Dr. Morey's article presented over KGAS radio in Carthage, TX. The entire series may be downloaded free at our website: [www.bibletalk.net](http://www.bibletalk.net).]

—Jeff Asher

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# Words of Life

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Volume 5 Issue 33

August 21, 2005

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## Berea: They had the Right Stuff

*“And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews. 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. Therefore many of them believed; also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few” (Acts 17:10–12).*

The work of an evangelist can be frustrating at times. Finding suitable prospects to teach is often like looking for a 2X4. It’s getting harder and harder to find one that’s straight, knotless and not splintered. As with boards, so with people, you have to go through the whole stack to find the good ones.

Paul found a choice group of men and women in Berea. Luke describes them as *noble*, a beautiful word indicating the character all men must have, if they would be saved. It is men and women like these that keep the evangelist and Bible teacher going back to the “stack” to look for more. Let’s consider what there was about them that made them *noble* in comparison to others just as religious and zealous.

### The Bereans Were Willing to Listen

The Bereans sat down to listen to Paul whereas their Thessalonian counterparts raised a riot in order to stop his preaching (Acts 17:5–7). They were possessed with sufficient intellectual honesty to admit that they might not know everything, and sufficient confidence to know they could know something (cf. John 7:17). Truth and righteousness have nothing to fear from a thorough examination. Neither is compromised by a fair consideration of something diverse from it. Only error can suffer from testing. However, the honest, sincere man who wants to do right and is mistaken can only benefit from such an examination.

The Bereans were the exception then, and that kind of character is the exception now. Very few will join with David in saying, “Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting” (Psalm 139:23,24). The common reaction today, while falling short of picking up stones or rioting, is to close one’s ears. Invitations for Bible study are often met with “I am satisfied

with my religion” or “You have your belief and I have mine.” Friend, there is nothing noble in that.

### The Bereans Seriously Examined the Scriptures

The Bereans were not men of unstable conviction (*vis a vis* 2 Timothy 3:7). They did not embrace Christianity in a flight after novelty. Neither did they join Christ out of an angry sectarianism driven by dissatisfaction. Rather, their decision in favor of Jesus was the result of cautious and reasoned Bible study— they searched the Scriptures daily (Acts 17:11).

The greatest impediment to evangelism today is willful ignorance. Paul had the advantage at Berea— these men and women knew the Book. He was not preaching to people who, as one preacher said, “did not know the difference between Generations and Revolutions.” Many in our society are totally ignorant of the Bible. They could not look up a Scripture to read it if book, chapter and verse were given. There is a terrible spiritual apathy in our land. Few truly hunger and thirst after the word of God.

The Bereans had another advantage in their character, they respected the authority of the Scriptures. It takes more

than just knowledge of the word of God. The Thessalonians had knowledge—familiarity with the Scriptures (Acts 17:3–5).

However, one must be willing to accept what the Scriptures say because *they are the Scriptures* (Psalm 119:30). Your efforts have fallen upon ignobility when the response is “I know that’s what the Bible says but ...”

### They Were Dispassionate in Their Considerations

Emotionally, it is not a pleasant thing to be told you are wrong. The human heart is capable of all kinds of reactions to the realization of personal error. Anger, embarrassment, denial and self-justification are all possible reactions to the evidence that one is wrong in his convictions and conclusions. These emotions serve to distract the mind away from the truth and strengthen the commitment to error.

However, the noble heart rises above the rest when face to face with the reality of mistaken conviction and misplaced confidence. The noble heart gives entrance to light which dispels the darkness and gives us the proper understanding (Psalm 119:130).

Some at Thessalonica just got mad at Paul (Acts 17:13). Their anger turned to jealousy as they witnessed others turning to Christ when they would not (Acts 17:5). They then resorted to lies, violence and malicious prosecution.

In stark contrast, the Bereans confronted with the same truth and consequences were able to reason to a happy end. There must have been the same rush of

embarrassment coupled with wounded pride when they realized their beloved traditions and cherished prejudices were contrary to God’s eternal purpose. Yet, a true desire to be right with the God they loved but served with misdirected zeal (cf. Romans 10:3,4) conquered whatever irrational response that was provoked.

### The Bereans Offered Ready Obedience

As a result “many of them believed” (Acts 17:12). Full, unflagging obedience to the Word of God always springs from the noble heart. Convinced of the truth the only thing that remains is to respond favorably to it.

The Bereans were immediately tested concerning their convictions, and they passed gloriously. Trial, persecution and sacrifice was their reward, and they fell not away (Luke 8:13; Matthew 13:21). While some only seem to go through the motions, the Lord can separate the wheat from the chaff (1 Corinthians 11:19; 2 Corinthians 2:9).

Are you noble of heart? Will you listen dispassionately to the Word of God letting it lead you to truth? Then study these things to see if they are so.

—Jeff Asher

## FYI: for your information

- **Prayer List:** *Terry & Leon Aldridge, Danny Orman, Floyd & Doris Bush, Troy Lake, Mildred Tennison, Dorothy Yoder.*
- **Youth Class:** The Youth Class is dismissed until the first

Sunday after Labor Day, September 11.

- **Gospel Meetings:** Tuesday classes start again at *White Oak* August 23. The study series is titled: “Ancient Stories Written for Our Learning.” *Richard Fox* begins the study with “The Temptation and Fall.” (See the schedule on the bulletin board for the rest of the study subjects).
- *Jeff Asher* starts a Gospel Meeting in Joaquin, TX next Sunday, August 28<sup>th</sup>, continuing through Friday night.
- Our next Gospel Meeting is September 25-30 with *Robert Harkrider* of Orlando, FL.
- The *Rhiddlehoovers* are in Dallas. The *Popes* are in Houston. *Wallace Little* is in Memphis, TN. *John Young* is on his way home from Washington, D.C.

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# Words of Life

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Volume 5 Issue 34

August 28, 2005

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## Corinth, the Perfect Church

*Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you; and I will not be burdensome to you: for I seek not yours, but you: for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children. And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved. But be it so, I did not burden you: nevertheless, being crafty, I caught you with guile. Did I make a gain of you by any of them whom I sent unto you? I desired Titus, and with him I sent a brother. Did Titus make a gain of you? Walked we not in the same spirit? Walked we not in the same steps? Again, think ye that we excuse ourselves unto you? we speak before God in Christ: but we do all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying. For I fear, lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, and that I shall be found unto you such as ye would not: lest there be debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults: And lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and that I shall bewail many which have sinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness which they have committed" (II Corinthians 12:15-21).*

### Paul's Relation to Corinth

The Apostle Paul and the Church at Corinth had a very unusual relationship. It was one filled

with conflict and tension. The brief history recorded in Acts 18 does not begin to tell the story of this Church. Read Paul's letters to them, I and II Corinthians, for a better picture of the conditions that existed in this Church.

Paul was in Corinth for nearly two years (Acts 18:11, 18). During which time he either supported himself or took wages from the Churches in Macedonia (I Corinthians 9:3-14; II Corinthians 11:7-9). Paul made two additional trips to Corinth and wrote them three epistles (I Corinthians 5:9; 16:8; II Corinthians 12:14; 13:1; 2:1-14; Acts 20:1-3). He was greatly concerned about the welfare of this Church not only traveling there himself but also keeping in touch through his most trusted companions in the Gospel (I Corinthians 4:17; 16:10-12; II Corinthians 7:5-6).

We would think that such concern and sacrifice from an Apostle would endear him to the brethren. However, Paul said, "The more abundantly I love you, the less I am loved." Why did the Corinthians behave this way toward the one man who had their interests uppermost in his own heart?

### They Were Carnal

Paul identifies their problem in the first epistle, "I, brethren, could

*not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ" (I Corinthians 3:1). The Corinthians were easily led into a party spirit which made it impossible for them to dwell together in unity (3:3-7).*

Their partyism allowed the Judaizers to have undo influence among them (II Corinthians 11:1-21). Some questioned Paul's authority and ability because he did not belong to their party and often rebuked it (2 Corinthians 3:1). Others overlooked the sin of those who were in their party and resented any correction thereof (I Corinthians 5:1-2). The Church was filled with gossip, slander and backbiting against those who stood for truth and righteousness (2 Corinthians 12:20-13:5). The division in the Church was so severe that the members could not resolve their personal differences among themselves (I Corinthians 6:1-8).

Blinded by party loyalty the Corinthians were unable to discern Paul's love for them.

### Problems, Problems, and More Problems

The Corinthians' carnality not only led them into partyism, but it also promoted ignorance and weakness. The Church at Corinth was plagued by a whole set of issues ranging from eating

meats to marriage (1 Corinthians 7–8, 10–11). All of these matters would promote strife in a Church where partyism was prevailing and not love and patience for each other. Sides would be taken and lines drawn. It would be a constant state of bickering over whether to eat or not to eat, marry or not to marry, to be covered or uncovered.

Their division gave rise to an abuse of their gifts and carnal pride in the possession of any particular one (I Corinthians 14:1–22). Thus, some thought that tongue speakers were more important than prophets, teachers, interpreters or miracle workers. Their carnal party pride led them to conclude that they actually had no need of some members (I Corinthians 12:14–21). This pride resulted in a corruption of the worship wherein the Lord's Supper was changed to a common meal from which certain in the Church were shamefully excluded (I Corinthians 11:21–23).

### Why Did Paul Love Them?

As fickle, stubborn and unstable as the Corinthians were, Paul still loved them. As carnal and selfish as they had been about Paul's support, he still sacrificed for them and endured hardship. Why?

When the Lord first sent Paul to Corinth he said of them, "I have much people in this city" (Acts 18:10). However, to be a "Corinthian" was to be pagan and immoral living a debauched life (Mike Willis, *Commentary on First Corinthians*, p. ii). The challenge would seem impossible to many of us. We might have been inclined to by-pass Corinth altogether and seek prospects elsewhere. When Paul

preached "many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized" (Acts 18:8). The quality of heart which readily brought the Corinthians to Christ in the first place was the quality that assured Paul that his efforts on their behalf were not in vain.

A careful study of the two epistles leads us to the conclusion that many at Corinth could still be persuaded by the Gospel message. After Paul's rebuke in the matter of the incestuous adulterer, Paul writes "ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing" (2 Corinthians 7:9). Regarding the collection for the needy saints in Jerusalem (I Corinthians 16:1–4), Paul rejoiced when Titus met him in Macedonia with good news. Of them he then wrote, "I know the forwardness of your mind ... and your zeal hath provoked very many" (9:1–2). Paul's confidence in them was not misplaced. After a strong letter and a brief visit in which he had been very stern with them (2 Corinthians 13:1,2), Paul is able to rejoice. He says that he is comforted by "your fervent mind toward me" (7:7). After all the controversy, struggle and prayer Corinth was redeemed.

Now, what made Corinth such a perfect Church? It was their perfect heart—a heart that was tender and receptive to truth, a heart that was willing to be reproved and rebuked. Any Church that has that kind of spirit is a perfect Church even though it is awash in trouble and problems. This is the Church for which every preacher is looking.

—Jeff Asher

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- **Thank You:** Thanks to *Gary Box and Kerry Henry* for filling the pulpit this morning, tonight and teaching the class on Wednesday. Without their help it would not be possible to do evangelistic meeting work.

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KGAS 104.3FM.....7:00AM  
CATV Channel 21...7:00AM  
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#### Website

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#### Elders

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Dale Hill (903) 693-3274  
Jim Rhiddlehoover (903) 693-3084

#### Preacher

Jeff Asher (903) 694-2049

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# Words of Life

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Volume 5 Issue 35

September 4, 2005

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## Ephesus: By Grace through Faith

*“Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, he said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, John’s baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on Him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus” (Acts 19:1–5).*

The Church at Ephesus was established while Paul briefly passed by that way journeying to Jerusalem at the end of the second tour (Acts 18:19–21).

Paul’s traveling companions, Aquila and Priscilla, remained behind to build upon the effort he began. The Apostle pledged to return, which he did.

No mention of specific converts is made until these found in Acts 19:1–5. Paul did in Ephesus as he always did; he preached the word in the synagogue seeking to convert the Jews first. Later, after his prospects were exhausted he turned to the Gentile population (Acts 19:8–9). Paul appears to have been very successful among the Jews, but that success did not come

without the animosity of those that would not believe (cf. Acts 19:33–34; 21:27). Likewise, his success among the Gentiles called forth the hatred of the pagan devotees (Acts 19:24–27).

Ephesus became Paul’s third center of evangelism. In the beginning, it was Antioch in Syria. Later, it was Philippi in Macedonia. Now, it was Ephesus. Paul’s work in the school of Tyrannus allowed him to spread the Word throughout all Asia (Acts 19:10). During the two years at Ephesus, Churches of Christ were established in Laodicea, Heiropolis, Sardis, Pergamos, Thyatira, Smyrna, Troas, Philadelphia, Colossae and (cf. Revelation 2 and 3, 2 Corinthians 2:12).

Those who hold the false doctrine that salvation occurs at the point of faith before and without water baptism misuse the conversions at Ephesus. A favorite passage of these false teachers is Ephesians 2:8–9, “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works lest any man should boast.” Let’s consider the Scripture evidence revealed concerning their redemption. Specifically, let’s see what the New Testament says about their baptism.

### Not of Our Own Works, But of God’s Grace

There is no debating about whether or not salvation is a matter of grace—it is. We are not saved by works of our own righteousness, but according to God’s mercy (Titus 3:5). The question is whether or not there are works of another class included within the realm of grace. Does the Bible teach there are “works” which exclude boasting consistent with divine grace?

The Bible says Abraham was saved by “works” (James 2:21–23). These were works of faith, that is, obedience to God that was rooted in and sprang forth from faith (Hebrews 11:8, 17–19). There is no sense in which the works that Abraham did can be said to have been “his own works.” He did not appoint the journey. He did not originate the sacrifice of his only son. God asked for these things and Abraham with implicit trust gave to God what he asked.

Thus, we are urged to walk in the steps of Abraham’s faith (Romans 4:12). How can we so walk, if “doing” nullifies grace?

Paul clearly declares that salvation is promised to him that fears God and works righteousness (Acts 10:34–35). He affirms that he preached in

order to secure from others "obedience of faith" (Romans 1:5; 16:26). Such obedience is not inconsistent with grace, but establishes it (Romans 6:15–18).

### Their Faith Came by Hearing the Word of God

The apostle speaks very favorably of the Ephesians in his letter to them from Rome.

Particularly, he writes of their exalted position in Christ "in heavenly places" (Ephesians 1:3,20; 2:6). Paul writes of the Church that is the bride of Christ, and the fact that they are that Church, the visible expression of the "manifold wisdom of God" (3:10).

Now, the Ephesians were the inheritors of all the spiritual blessings in Christ (1:3) when they trusted in Christ (1:13). However, that faith could not exist apart from "the word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation." Their faith existed "after" they heard, because "faith comes by hearing ... the word of God" (Romans 10:17). We were "pricked" in the heart when we "heard this" (Acts 2:36). Salvation faith is always the result of hearing the Word.

### Baptism Is Justification by Grace through Faith

The Ephesians were most certainly baptized (Acts 19:1–5). With respect to their baptism Paul said, "Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word" (Ephesians 5:25,26). What did Christ sanctify and cleanse? It was the Church. With what did Jesus sanctify and cleanse it? Jesus used two things in setting the

Church apart in holiness: baptism and the Gospel.

Notice, it is "the washing of water," baptism (Acts 22:16), "through the word," the Gospel. Baptism is efficacious to our sanctification because God has revealed it (Mark 16:16). It is a matter of faith because what we believe is the Word and the Word says be baptized (Acts 2:36–40).

Our faith is neither in ourselves nor in what we have done (Titus 3:5), but rather it is in His mercy and what He has promised. Paul said, "[Ye are] buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through faith of the operation of God" (Colossians 2:12). The baptized believer is not trusting in himself so that he can boast and demand a reward as a matter of debt. Rather, he is trusting in Christ to save him.

Similarly, Peter affirmed that baptism saves us "by the resurrection of Jesus Christ who is gone into heaven and is on the right hand of God" (1 Peter 3:21,22). Clearly the saving power is not in us but in the Resurrected Redeemer Who has all power in Heaven and in earth.

—Jeff Asher

## FYI: for your information

- **Prayer List:** *Terry & Leon Aldridge, Floyd & Doris Bush, Travis Farrell, Troy Lake, Mildred Tennison, Dorothy Yoder.*
- **Sympathy:** To the family of *Mary Hill* and *Thomas Stewart* at the passing of their nephew *Danny Orman* after a long illness on the morning of 8/29.

- *Floyd Bush* continues in Longview Regional Rehab Room #405.
- **Gospel Meetings:** Our next meeting is just three weeks away. Have you made your plans to attend every night? *Robert Harkrider* will be with us September 25<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup>. Meeting announcements are on the table in the foyer.
- **Youth Class:** Class is dismissed until the first Sunday after Labor Day, September 11.
- **In the Area:** Tuesday Classes have resumed at White Oak. *Leon Goff* will address the theme "Ancient Stories Written for Our Learning" on 9/6 with a study on "Noah and the Great Flood." The class begins at 7:30PM. *Randy Harshbarger* will be in a Gospel meeting September 11–16 at the James Community just east of Center on TX 7. Weeknight services begin at 7:30 PM.

### Northside Church of Christ

701 W. Cottage Road/POB 456  
Carthage, TX 75633  
(903) 693-8336

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Assembly.....10:25 AM  
Assembly.....6:00 PM

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# Words of Life

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Volume 5 Issue 36

September 11, 2005

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## Troas: Proper Attitudes about Worship

*“And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight. And there were many lights in the upper chamber, where they were gathered together. And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead. And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him said, Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him. When he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed. And they brought the young man alive, and were not a little comforted (Acts 20:7–12).*

The history of the Church at Troas is sketchy. Very little is known except what is contained in the verses above. Evidently Paul established this Church near the end of his third preaching journey (2 Corinthians 2:12). At some point they had an evangelist that worked with them by the name of Carpus to whom Paul had loaned some books (2 Timothy 4:13).

While little is known about their history, these few words reveal a lot about their enthusiasm and zeal for the worship of Jesus.

They are a positive example of a proper attitude toward the worship of the saints for all Christians in all times.

### They Made Assembly for Worship a Habit

The Christians at Troas assembled every first day of the week to eat the Lord’s Supper and engage in other acts of worship (Acts 20:7). Luke observes, “the first day of the week when the Disciples came together” indicating it was their habit to do so. The fact that Paul remained in Troas for seven days further proves that this was the usual day when Christians met (cf. Acts 20:16).

We need to develop the habit of assembling with the saints (Hebrews 10:25). Sunday is the “Lord’s Day” (Revelation 1:10). It is the only day in the week to which we can attach any significance concerning Christ. It is the day of His resurrection (Luke 24:1,13,21). It is the day upon which He appeared alive to His Disciples (John 20:1,11; Luke 24:30–43). The Gospel was first preached on Sunday (Acts 2:1,14). The first baptism was performed on that day (Acts 2:41). It is the day of the week upon which the Church came into existence (Acts 2:47). The worship of the saints upon this day of the week should inspire their hearts with love for Jesus,

confidence in their salvation and zeal for the souls of men.

Do you have this habit of assembling with the saints?

### They Ate the Lord’s Supper in an Assembly

Notice that they “came together” to eat the Supper. These saints did not regard the Supper as a private devotion. Neither did they care so little for it that they carried it with them wherever they went like a sack lunch. Furthermore, Paul’s determination to remain in Troas is proof that this is the arrangement the Lord desires for the His Supper. The Apostle could have eaten on the road, by himself or with those of his company. However, he chose to eat with Disciples in their assemblies (cf. Acts 21:4).

They came together to break bread in order to preach Christ’s death (1 Corinthians 11:26). The Trojan Christians understood the importance of the memorial feast. They could see in it a perpetual reminder of the promise of Christ’s return and the assurance of their own resurrection by virtue of His atoning death and triumphant resurrection from the grave. This message of hope had to be shared. They were truly “one bread” and “one cup”, even as they were one body

(1 Corinthians 10:16,17). Assembled together they could all eat that bread and drink that cup in remembrance of the Jesus that died for the remission of sins (1 Corinthians 11:27,28).

Do you discern the Lord's body and show is death with the saints when the come together?

### They Didn't Complain about the Time Involved

Luke says Paul was "long preaching" (Acts 20:9), and that he did not quit even at midnight (20:7). I grant that there are some special circumstances in this situation at Troas. Paul probably had established the Church just months earlier on his way into Macedonia (2 Corinthians 2:12). He was anxious to visit the Church and see how they were doing (cf. Acts 15:36). Naturally, there would be things that he would want to say to these special people. This would justify a longer sermon than usual. However, just because Paul came to town their daily responsibilities did not disappear. They still had work to do the next day, children to care for and responsibilities at home. All of this and even more, yet they still managed to work in an all night session to hear Paul preach (Acts 20:11).

How unlike some brethren they are. Today many are continually looking for ways to shorten the assembly. In some Churches it is worship "by the numbers". We have to start "on time" and quit "on time". We can sing only two songs and not all the verses because we don't want to "go over". Preachers are being forced to confine their sermons to 15 minutes. A twenty-five minute sermon is "long

preaching" for some. God forbid that we should have a baptism.

I recently attended a Gospel Meeting in our area. I drove 80 miles to get there. From the time I drove on the parking lot to the last "Amen" it was only 45 minutes—that's announcements, singing, praying and preaching. There was not one verse explained, expounded upon or exegeted. It was barely read!

We are living in troublesome times when the value of a sermon is determined by its length—long or short. What gives it worth is *content*. Some folks are chaffing under long preaching because it is poorly prepared and delivered. However, others have a heart and mind somewhere else. They like them short because there is nothing in them. As one brother said, "Sermonettes by preacherettes for Christianettes who would rather be drinking coffee around the dinette."

Do you have the Trojan spirit concerning worship?

—Jeff Asher

## FYI: for your information

- **Prayer List:** *Terry & Leon Aldridge, Floyd & Doris Bush, Travis Farrell, Troy Lake, Ken Midyett, Tanya & Chris Millican, Mildred Tennison, Dorothy Yoder.*
- Funeral services for *Danny Ormand* will be conducted today at 2:00 PM at *Restland Funeral Home* in Dallas, Texas. Internment will be tomorrow in *Dallas-Ft. Worth National Cemetery* at 9:00 AM.

- *Floyd Bush* went home from LR Rehab on Wednesday.
- **Youth Class:** We resume our class today with a general review at 5:15 PM.
- **Gospel Meetings:** Our next meeting is just two weeks away. Have you made your plans to attend every night? *Robert Harkrider* will be with us September 25-30. Meeting announcements are on the table in the foyer.
- **In the Area:** *Randy Harshbarger* starts a meeting today at *James Church of Christ* just east of Center on TX 7. Weeknight services begin at 7:30 PM.
- **Benevolence:** The elders are receiving funds today in anticipation of relief of brethren in LA and along the Gulf Coast. At present immediate needs are being met; however, we are preparing for expected needs in the longer term.

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# Words of Life

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Volume 5 Issue 37

September 18, 2005

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## Troas: Paul's Last Planting

*"After these things were ended, Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome. So he sent into Macedonia two of them that ministered unto him, Timotheus and Erastus; but he himself stayed in Asia for a season ... Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ's gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord, <sup>13</sup>I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother: but taking my leave of them, I went from thence into Macedonia ... "* (Acts 19:21,22 and 2 Corinthians 2:12-14).

### The City of Troy

It was the beautiful Helen whose face "launched a thousand ships" which started the epic war against the city of Troy. Other wars and warriors passed this way in the centuries that followed: Xerxes at the head of the Persian columns as they advanced toward Greece. Philip of Macedon and his son Alexander, who at the tomb of Achilles girded on his armor and marched to India. Then came Julius Caesar and the Roman legions retaking what Alexander's generals fought among themselves to have. That was centuries before Paul and his companions traversed the Roman roads that crossed Asia

Minor preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ and conquering for eternity in the name of the King born in Bethlehem.

In the first century Troas was a Roman colony. Like Antioch in Pisidia and Philippi in Macedonia, it enjoyed a favored status among the cities and towns of Mysia. Roman law, Roman custom and Roman culture had its birth in this soil and the Roman emperors had bestowed special privilege to those who dwelt there.

### The Holy Spirit Suffered Them Not ...

Paul's first visit to Troas did not result in a Church being started. The Holy Spirit directed Paul away from Mysia and Bithynia bringing him to Troas. Here God revealed His plan for Europe to Paul in the vision of "a man of Macedonia" (Acts 16:6-10). Immediately they set out arriving in Macedonia in but a few days (Acts 16:11,12; cf. 20:6).

Just why the Holy Spirit directed Paul away from Asia Minor at this time is unknown.

Eventually, the Gospel would be taken into all of Asia Minor (see: 1 Peter 1:1). Silas, Paul's companion on the journey into Europe, seems to have had a great influence over these Asian Churches (1 Peter 5:12). The Apostle Peter wrote two epistles

to them from Babylon (1 Peter 5:13; 2 Peter 3:1). Yet, they were well acquainted with Paul and had read his letters (2 Peter 3:14-16). Whether or not he ever preached in these regions is unknown.

The fact that God "by-passed" Troas at this time does not mean He cared not for them or forgot them. Sending Paul into Macedonia put Troas at the crossroads of all of Paul's journeys and under the influence of many great evangelists and teachers.

Troas, for Paul, became the front door to Europe and the backdoor to Asia Minor. The Second preaching Tour began with a revisit to the Galatian Churches (Acts 15:41-16:6) and ended with a brief stop in Ephesus (Acts 19:21). The Third Journey began with a fourth visit to Galatia (Acts 18:23) and then a return to Ephesus (Acts 19:1). Troas was on the way to and from Macedonia (2 Corinthians 2:13), was included on almost any circuit through Asia Minor (Acts 19:10, 22, 26) and a necessary layover for travelers catching sea transport to Palestine (Acts 20:13).

### When Did Paul Preach the Gospel in Troas?

Paul says he went to Troas for the express purpose of preaching

Christ's Gospel (2 Corinthians 2:12). When did he do this?

The only point in the ministry of Paul that would allow for the establishment of a Church at Troas is the two years period in Ephesus (Acts 19:10). The early part of that period would have involved Paul in the establishment of the Ephesian Church (Acts 19:1-12). He preached there in the synagogue briefly at the end of the second journey (18:19) leaving Acquila and Priscilla behind for the purpose of preparing the ground. It was during this intervening period that Apollos was converted later journeying on to Corinth (18:24-28).

Others may have been incorrectly instructed as Apollos was. Paul corrected twelve Disciples when he returned from Syria (19:1-7).

After the Jews were converted, Paul set in to convert the Gentiles (Acts 19:8-20). There was a great turning to the Lord in Ephesus and the Gospel began to spread to regions beyond (19:10). It is at this time that the Gospel may have gone to Troas. This may have been when Carpus was converted (2 Timothy 4:13), who in turn took the gospel home with him.

However, 2 Corinthians 2:12 implies that Paul started the Church personally. When could he have been there? It seems that the establishment of the Trojan Church would better be placed on Paul's second journey to Macedonia.

Paul is making the rounds to the Churches of Macedonia and Achaia in order to gather the collection for the poor saints in Jerusalem (1 Corinthians 16:2,3; 2 Corinthians 8,9). Paul sends

Timothy and Erastus (cf. Romans 16:23) to Macedonia (Acts 19:22). He sends Titus to Corinth to help forestall the necessity of a third trip there to discipline those that are in sin (2 Corinthians 12:14-21). He tarries in Asia preaching (Acts 19:22). He has planned to go to Troas where Titus can come and meet him, report on the situation in Corinth and help establish the work (2 Corinthians 2:12,13). However, Titus was not there and did not come in what Paul considered a reasonable time. Therefore, he left the work in Troas and proceeded to Macedonia where Titus did finally arrive (2 Corinthians 7:4-7).

These facts explain why Paul was so determined to be with the Trojan Church on the first day of the week (Acts 20:4-16). Though he hastened toward Jerusalem with the collection for the saints, Paul waited seven days because he was concerned about their welfare and wanted to perfect them in the faith. Paul was ever the caring father for his children in the faith.

—Jeff Asher

## FYI: for your information

- **Prayer List:** Terry & Leon Aldridge, Floyd & Doris Bush, Travis Farrell, Troy Lake, Ken Midyett, Tanya & Chris Millican, Mildred Tennison, Dorothy Yoder.
- **Youth Class:** Nugget #14 and the 15 Periods of Bible History. Class begins at 5:15 PM
- **Gospel Meetings:** Our next meeting is just one week away. Have you made your plans to

attend every night? *Robert Harkrider* will be with us September 25-30. Meeting announcements are on the table in the foyer.

- **Gospel Singing:** *Timberland Drive* will host their annual singing October 15 from 5-7 PM at 912 S. Timberland Drive in Lufkin, TX. Song leaders include: R.J. Stevens, Tim Stevens, Dave Duren and Don Hooten.
- **Benevolence:** The elders are receiving funds today in anticipation of relief of brethren in LA and along the Gulf Coast. At present immediate needs are being met; however, we are preparing for expected needs in the longer term.
- **Congratulations:** *Wallace and Carla Little* celebrated 57 years of marriage on September 14.

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# Words of Life

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Volume 5 Issue 38

September 25, 2005

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## Colossae: Complete in Christ

*“As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead” (Colossians 2:6–12).*

The Church at Colossae was most likely established by Paul during the first journey (Acts 14:24) or by one of his trusted companions, Epaphras, during his two years in Ephesus (Acts 19:9,10; Colossians 1:7) on the third journey. Colossae along with Laodicea and Heiropolis lay within the Phrygian region of the Roman province of Asia on the Lycus River. It was a city of commercial importance to the area. Colossae was the third point on a triad of economic wealth and prosperity that was

enjoyed by Phrygians, Greeks, Romans and Jews.

This letter was probably written on the occasion of Paul sending Onesimus back to Philemon (Philemon 14). Tychicus was in Rome (Colossians 4:7) as was Epaphras (4:12). Onesimus was conducted back to Colossae by the former while the latter stayed with the Apostle in expectation of his first trial before Caesar. Tychicus bore a report of Paul’s condition, the conversion of Onesimus and the two letters, one for Philemon and the other for the Church.

Some on the basis of Colossians 2:1 question Paul’s relationship to this Church. However, Paul was obviously acquainted with some in the Church. He knew Philemon well enough to “ask for credit” (Philemon 18) and to remind him of his conversion for which he takes credit (v. 19). Paul requests of him “lodging” (v. 22) and speaks of Apphia as “our beloved”(v. 2). While feigning not to presume to tell Philemon what to do with Onesimus, he does just that in a most diplomatic but nonetheless direct fashion (vv. 10–13). These are hardly the actions of one unknown by face. Reason seems to dictate that we conclude Paul had been in Colossae, that he had converted Philemon’s house

and that he knew several of the saints very well. In the time that had passed since Paul had been there, the Church had grown under the teaching of Epaphras and Archippus (Colossians 4:17). There were several that did not know Paul, but whether known or unknown he regarded them as his children in the faith. Thus, he writes this letter.

The details of their conversion are not recorded in Acts.

However, the letter that Paul writes to this Church details sufficient information for us to document how they came to be, as Paul says, “complete in Him” (Colossians 2:10).

### Their Conversion Began with the Word Preached

Paul assigns the Colossians’ faith to their having heard “the word of the truth of the Gospel” (Colossians 1:5). He affirms that it was by means of this Word that they “knew the grace of God in truth” (1:6), that is, were saved.

The Apostle describes their conversion in the same terms that Jesus used in the Parable of the Sower. Jesus said, “The Sower went forth to sow ... the seed is the Word of God ... he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the Word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and

bringeth forth ...” (Matthew 13:18–23). Of that Word Paul says it brought forth “fruit” (1:6, cf. 1 Thessalonians 2:13).

The ministry of the Word at Colossae was accomplished according to the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19). Jesus sent the Apostles to teach, baptize and teach. This is exactly what happened.

### They Were Buried with Christ in Baptism

Notice Paul affirms that all the blessings that the Godhead provides are found “in Christ” (Colossians 1:19; 2:9). Therefore, he concludes the Colossians were “complete in Him” (2:10). Yet, how were they “in Christ”? Paul says they were “buried with him in baptism” and “risen with him” (2:12). Thus, Paul shows the necessity of water baptism to spiritual completion.

In water baptism the Colossians were “quicken,” that is, made alive with Christ (2:13). Then Jesus cut off the “body of sins” by the “circumcision made without hands” forgiving them of all their trespasses. Their baptism was a work of faith and not a work of their own righteousness. In being baptized their faith was in “the operation of God” and not themselves.

### They Were Filled with Knowledge

The directive of the Great Commission was completed in the Colossians through the joint effort of Epaphras, Tychicus, Archippus and Paul (Colossians 1:7; 4:7, 12, 17). The instruction of Christ was “teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:18). Paul had begun the work of edifying the

saints, and Epaphras followed faithfully. While Epaphras was in Rome Archippus soldiered diligently in his place (Philemon 2). In order to help in the work and see how things were faring, Paul sent Tychicus with the Colossian epistle.

In the first few verses of the letter Paul expresses the sentiment of the Commission when he writes: “[We] cease not to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God” (1:9,10). The goal for the Colossian Church was that they be taught “all things” that Paul had received of Christ. The end result of this further instruction would be strength, endurance and joy (1:11). Christ would be pleased by the spiritually worthy and productive lives they would lead.

Colossae was complete in Christ through His wonderful Word.

Jeff Asher

## FYI: for your information

- **Prayer List:** *Terry & Leon Aldridge, Floyd & Doris Bush, Travis Farrell, Mary Hill, Troy Lake, Ken Midyett, Tanya & Chris Millican, Mildred Tennison, Dorothy Yoder.*
- **Youth Class:** Due to the severity of the weather today and the inclement driving conditions the youth class will not meet today.

- **Gospel Singing:** *Timberland Drive* will host their annual singing October 15 from 5–7 PM in their meeting house located at 912 S. Timberland Drive in Lufkin, TX.
- **Benevolence:** The elders are receiving funds today in anticipation of relief of brethren in LA, TX and along the Gulf Coast. At present immediate needs are being met; however, we are preparing for expected needs in the longer term.
- Many of our brethren have family and friends in their homes this week due to the ravages of *Rita*. Let’s be considerate of their needs in the days ahead since many of these folk will be displaced for quite awhile. Also be mindful of our older members who may need some special assistance. Due to the hardships of the weather.

### Northside Church of Christ

701 W. Cottage Road/POB 456  
Carthage, TX 75633  
(903) 693-8336

#### Sunday

Bible Class.....9:30 AM  
Assembly.....10:25 AM  
Assembly.....6:00 PM

#### Wednesday

Bible Class..... 7:00PM

#### Sunday Radio Programs

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#### Preacher

Jeff Asher (903) 694-2049

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# Words of Life

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Volume 5 Issue 39

October 2, 2005

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## Rome: On the Salvation Road

*"First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world. For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers; Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you. For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established; That is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me. Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto,) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles. I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians, both to the wise, and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also" (Romans 1:8-15).*

Periodically I find a religious tract that purports to show men the way to Christ on the "Roman Road." The idea is that one can learn all that he must do to be saved from the New Testament epistle of Romans alone. There are several things wrong with that approach.

First, it implies that the rest of the New Testament is not necessary, or at least not as

authoritative as the book of Romans. However, Paul affirmed that *all* Scripture is inspired and profitable for doctrine and instruction in righteousness (2 Timothy 3:17). Therefore, whatever is found in the rest of the New Testament is just as essential to salvation as is Romans.

Second, it is an approach that is built on a partial truth, which is as good as a whole lie. Recognizing the authority of the rest of the New Testament leads us to the conclusion that we will never have to do less than the book of Romans requires, but we may have to do more. All the truth is not found in this one epistle, if it were why use the rest of the Bible?

Finally, it is a deceptive and manipulative use of the epistle to Rome. Such tracts usually cite Romans 3:23, 5:1,8, 6:23 and 10:13, followed by instructions to pray the "sinners prayer." It goes something like this: "Lord Jesus I need You. Thank You for dying on the cross for my sins. I open the door of my life and receive You as my Savior and Lord. Thank You for forgiving my sins and giving me eternal life." However, this prayer is not found in the book of Romans or anywhere else in the Bible.

Let's study what Romans does say about salvation. The book is written to believers not in order to convert them, but to strengthen their faith and give them a better understanding of what Christ did for them. It is also written in order to correct the false doctrines that were popular at the time. Therefore, Paul writes from the perspective of application and affirmation regarding what they had done. Let's travel that Roman Road.

### They Heard Preaching in Order to Believe

Paul opens the book expressing his desire to preach the Gospel in Rome (1:15-17). He regards the Word as "the power of God unto salvation" for all men. His apostleship is rooted in the duty to secure the obedience of men to the faith (1:5; 16:26).

Paul's conviction concerning the essentiality of hearing the Gospel is found in his designation of it as "the word of faith which we preach" (10:8). In calling upon men to obey this Gospel, he rejects the notion that obedience would predicate redemption on our own works. He writes: "Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law [is it excluded]? [Is it excluded by the law] of works? No, but [it is excluded] by the law of faith" (3:27).

## Their Faith & Repentance Resulted from Preaching

“Calling upon the name of the Lord” does not involve the sinner’s prayer, but it does involve obedience to the preached word. Paul asked the question, “How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?” His answer was, “Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:14–17). Faith is the by-product of declaring the Gospel.

This is affirmed elsewhere by Paul. To Ephesus he wrote, “In whom ye also trusted *after* that ye heard the word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation” (Ephesians 1:13). To the Thessalonians he said, “Ye became followers of us and the Lord *having received* the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost” (1 Thessalonians 1:6). To the Corinthians he stated, “It pleased God *by the foolishness of preaching* to save them that believe” (1 Corinthians 1:21).

Out of this faith grows the desire to repent which is essential to salvation (Acts 11:18). It is the “goodness of God” that leads men to repentance (Romans 2:4). They learn of this goodness in God’s revelation of Himself in the Word (Ephesians 1:7–9). It is the written Word when received into the heart that has the power to turn a sinner to God (2 Corinthians 7:8–12).

## They Confessed Their Faith after Preaching

If the Word of Faith is in the heart it must be upon the lips (Romans 10:9–10). There is no salvation apart from a public declaration of faith in Christ.

This is exemplified in the conversion of the Ethiopian (Acts 8:37,38), and stated in the words of Jesus (Matthew 10:32). There may be many times when we have opportunity to confess Christ before men. Our union with him begins with that confession.

## They Were Baptized In Obedience to Preaching

The Romans and Paul shared a common baptism (Romans 6:3). It was a baptism that put them into Christ’s death and at the same time made them dead to sin (6:4–5); therefore, free (6:7). In this baptism they were raised to walk in new life (6:11). No longer were they the slaves of sin yielding their bodies to the will of the flesh (6:12–13).

Baptism was the moment of their transformation. It was their obedience to the doctrine of Christ, the Gospel, which made them free. Jesus had commanded it (Mark 16:16) and Paul delivered it. When the Romans obeyed it, the Word changed them from sinner to saint and alien to child of God (6:17).

This is the Roman Road to salvation will you walk it today?

—Jeff Asher

## FYI: for your information

- **Prayer List:** *Terry & Leon Aldridge, Floyd & Doris Bush, Travis Farrell, Nell Fomby, Mary Hill, Troy Lake, Gerry McDaniel, Ken Midyett, Tanya & Chris Millican.*
- **Youth Class:** Daily Nugget #16 and the Books of the OT Work Sheet.

- **Gospel Meetings:** *Rice Road* in Tyler will have *Scott Finley* October 2–7. at 7:30 PM *Judson Road* in Longview will have *Tim Coffey* October 9–12 at 7:00 PM.
- **Gospel Singing:** *Timberland Drive* in Lufkin will host their annual singing October 15 from 5–7 PM.
- **Benevolence:** The elders are receiving funds today for relief of brethren in LA, TX and along the Gulf Coast. An accounting of this offering is posted on the bulletin board in the foyer.
- **Card of Thanks:** *Your kindness means so much. It will always be remembered. Thank you for your prayers, phone calls and cards during our time of loss. It means so much to have a loving Christian family to lean on for comfort and support. s/ Chris, Tanya and Savannah Millican*

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# Words of Life

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Volume 5 Issue 40

October 9, 2005

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## Crete: Set the Churches in Order

*“And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of GOD” (Acts 2:8–11).*

*“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 have appointed thee” (Titus 1:4–5).*

### Origin of the Churches

The Church in Crete most likely had its beginning with the return of certain Jews converted in Jerusalem at the first Pentecost after the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus (Acts 2:11). It is impossible to assign a visit by any Apostle other than Paul to this island before 62 AD. Of course, it is possible that any number of the Apostles or other evangelists may have gone there before that time, but there is no evidence of it.

### Paul's Influence

Paul is recorded as having been on the island in the port of Fair Havens and the city of Lasea while in route to Rome. It is

conceivable that Paul may have found and visited brethren during his lay over. However, none are mentioned (Acts 27:1–14). It was after this brief visit that Paul was shipwrecked one of the three times mentioned in the New Testament (Acts 27:25,26; 2 Corinthians 11:25).

After two years in Rome, Paul was released from captivity. The epistles that he wrote just prior to his imprisonment and during it indicate that Paul was released (Philippians 1:19–25; Philemon 22) and had definite plans about the continued evangelization of Mediterranean Europe (Romans 15:18–28). Whether or not Paul realized all of his plans is difficult to say. However, that he was released and revisited many of the Churches he established on the former three journeys are reasonable conclusions.

Based on the evidence, Paul left Rome and traveled to Ephesus (1 Timothy 1:3). Leaving Timothy behind, he came into Macedonia, very likely to Philippi. From there Paul wrote 1 Timothy. Journeying south he passed through Greece where Titus joined him at some point. Together they made their way to Crete where Paul left Titus for the purpose of maturing the Churches (Titus 1:5). From thence, Paul returned to Asia

(1 Timothy 3:14–15) where he resided in Ephesus and visited the Asian Churches (Philemon 22; 2 Timothy 4:13).

At some point after this, Paul was arrested again and sent to Rome (2 Timothy 4:6–12). The Apostle was not without bitter enemies in Asia (Acts 19, 21:27–31; 2 Timothy 1:15; 2:17; 4:14). He may have been charged and arrested there, or he may have journeyed again to Corinth and then arrested (2 Timothy 4:20; cf. Titus 3:13). In either case, he was back in Rome and desired the companionship of his faithful friends and fellow laborers in the Gospel (2 Timothy 4:9).

### Set in Order What Is Wanting

Paul left Titus in Crete for the purpose of setting in order the things that were wanting (Titus 1:5; cf. Acts 14:23). Specifically, he was to ordain elders in every city. The urgent need for these officers is revealed in Paul's letter to Titus.

There were obviously some among the Cretans that had been or were being influenced by the Judaizers (1:10). The false doctrine of circumcision had finally made its way to these saints (cf. Acts 15:1ff.). This was the principal error of the first century and the one that

occupied most of Paul's attention (Philippians 3:1-3; Galatians 5:6-12; 6:11-15). We should not be surprised that trouble found its way there.

Titus was no stranger to the conflict having been with Paul in it from the beginning (Galatians 2:3-5). Unlike Timothy whom Paul circumcised in order to use him in the work of converting Jews (Acts 16:3-4), Titus was from the other side of the conflict, one like Paul who recognized the liberty of the Gentiles and the dangers in taking away that liberty (Galatians 2:21).

However, the Judaizers were not the only trouble on Crete. There was the problem of the Gentiles having lived in a society that was immoral and corrupt (Titus 1:12; cf. Romans 1:18-31). Thus, Paul writes about basic morality and human relationships (Titus 2:11-12). Titus was to be a good example in order that they might see in him what should be in them (2:7-8).

There was also the need to remind them of their duty to be obedient to the civil government, to live quietly among their fellows and to be devout in doing good deeds. If the Cretans would perfect themselves in these things they would be good representatives of Christ having adorned the doctrine of God (2:10; 3:8).

In order to accomplish this goal of mature Churches in every city, it was necessary that there be elders or bishops in every city. The maturation of the churches is accomplished through the diligent oversight of qualified elders (1:13-14).

Elders provide a proper example of spiritual character, home life, morality and discipline to all

believers (cf. 1:16). They have the knowledge and experience necessary to deal with those who would destroy the flock (1:11). Having demonstrated successfully that they do indeed "hold fast the faithful word," they have the respect of the saints and, thus, the influence to command others (1:13).

Modern Churches are no less in need of these spiritual guides today. Young families need good examples of parenting and spousal relationships. Preachers need the sound judgment that comes with experience to help them as they "speak, exhort and rebuke." There are still many "unruly and vain talkers and deceivers" whose mouths must be stopped. All Christians need encouragement and guidance concerning the daily trials that come on the job, at school or in the neighborhood.

What a blessing when things are in order.

—Jeff Asher

## FYI: for your information

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- **Benevolence:** The elders are receiving funds today for relief of brethren in LA, TX and along the Gulf Coast. An accounting of this offering is posted on the bulletin board in the foyer.
- **Directory:** The new pictorial directory will be available after service today. One directory has been prepared for each family. Included with the directory are an updated phone tree and a personal information sheet. Please read the directions and return that sheet to one of the elders.
- **Gospel Meetings:** Our next meeting will be in February 2006 with *David Tant*.
- **Thank You:** *Bob Harkrider* called to again thank everyone for their hospitality and generosity. *Lori Fields* from Lumberton called to say how much she appreciated us and that they were all doing well.

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# Words of Life

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Volume 5 Issue 41

October 16 2005

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## The Nature of Authority

Two extremes in practice are found among brethren. The great majority of those who call themselves members of the church of Christ engage in activities unauthorized by Christ. A small minority refuse to engage in practices the Lord permits. Both extremes are caused by the same misunderstanding of the nature of divine authority.

Brethren who practice institutionalism think a practice is unauthorized unless it is specifically mentioned in Scripture. They correctly assert we engage in many practices not specifically mentioned in the Bible, such as the use of church buildings and song books. Thus, they argue, "We do lots of things without Bible authority."

There are some brethren who oppose the church using the class arrangement for teaching the Bible. They also think something must be expressly mentioned to be authorized. They argue:

There is not one verse in all the Bible that says one word about dividing an assembly into two or more classes with teachers teaching at the same time (Miller. 5).

Therefore, they conclude the class arrangement of teaching is unscriptural.

Both groups misunderstand the nature of scriptural authority. This nature may be stated as a proposition: Divine authority is both exclusive and inclusive. In this lesson we will define, illustrate, prove, and apply this proposition.

### Definitions

When I say divine authority is exclusive, I simply mean whatever the Lord has not authorized is excluded. If this is so, we cannot practice anything unless we can prove it is divinely authorized. It is not enough to ask, Where does the Bible condemn it? We must be able to prove the New Testament authorizes it.

By inclusive, I mean that whatever the Lord authorizes includes those things that are incidental to accomplishing what He authorizes. Thus, though a specific item may not be mentioned in Scripture, if it is necessary or aids what God requires or permits, and by using it we do nothing in addition to that which He authorized, the specific item is itself authorized.

If these principles are true, two important conclusions follow.

Some things are sinful although not specifically condemned in Scripture. This is because they are unauthorized and thus excluded. On the other hand, it means some things are authorized and therefore pleasing to God, although not specifically mentioned. This is because they are incidental to accomplishing an authorized action.

### Illustrations

Suppose a dad gives his teenage son a twenty dollar bill (first mistake) and tells him, "Son, go get a loaf of bread." Suppose the son stays gone three hours and comes home with the loaf of bread but no change from the twenty dollars. The father indignantly inquires, "Where have you been and where is my change?" The son replies, "Dad, I got the bread, but you didn't say not to go to the movies, so I used the change to go to a movie. And, of course, while I was there, I got popcorn, a soft drink, a hot dog and a candy bar." Would the dad be impressed with his son's logic? Or would he respond, "I didn't give you permission to use my money for anything but a loaf of bread. You're grounded!" That's the exclusive nature of authority.

Now, let's try another scene. The dad gives his son a twenty dollar bill (slow learner) and again says, "Son, go get a loaf of bread." This time the son returns in ten minutes with \$18.50 change and a loaf of bread. The father inquires, "Son, how did you get back so fast?" His son replies, "Dad, it's just three blocks to the store. It doesn't take long to drive there." To which the dad replies, "Son, who told you to take the car? Why didn't you just walk?" To which Jr. replies, "Dad, you just told me to go get a loaf of bread; you didn't say how to go." This time the son was right. This is the inclusive nature of authority.

### Proof

Is divine authority exclusive? We must "do all in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Colossians 3:17), i.e., by His authority. To do or teach those things unauthorized by the Lord is to leave God and be without Him (2 John 9-11). Yes, divine authority is exclusive. We must have divine authority for all we do.

But is divine authority also inclusive? The Lord commands, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). He didn't say how to go; He just said "go." We have approved examples in the New Testament of a man walking and riding in a chariot to preach the gospel (Acts 8:29-31) and of men sailing in a ship to preach the gospel (Acts 13:1-4). The Lord said nothing about running, riding in a chariot, or sailing in a ship, but these are just means of going. In using these methods of transportation, the preachers

did nothing in addition to "go preach the gospel." So today, if I drive a car or fly in an airplane to a preaching engagement, I'm just doing what the Lord authorized in Mark 16:15. If I buy a passport to go to a foreign country to preach, that is incidental to the command, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." Yes, divine authority is inclusive.

### Application

The Lord told Noah to build an ark of gopher wood (Genesis 6:14-16). Although the Lord did not mention tools such as a hammer or saw, such tools were incidentally authorized in the command to "Make yourself an ark." But Noah could not have used any wood other than gopher wood and pleased the Lord. Though God did not say "Thou shalt not" make the ark of any other wood, when He specified gopher wood as the material for the ark, all other kinds of wood were excluded.

The Lord has also told us the kind of music he wants Christians to use in worship in the New Testament age. He commands us to sing (Ephesians 5:18-19). This authorized action includes everything necessary and incidental to carrying it out. Thus, although the Bible does not mention them, we are authorized to use song books, a song leader, four part harmony, and a pitch pipe. When we use these aids, we do nothing in addition to what the Lord has authorized - sing. But, instrumental music, another kind of music than that which the Lord authorizes, is excluded. This is not because the Lord forbids instrumental music in

worship. He simply did not authorize its use in worship in this age.

### Conclusion

Thus, divine authority is both exclusive and inclusive. This answers the two common fallacies concerning the authority of the Scriptures. Just because a practice is not specifically condemned does not necessarily mean God approves it. It must be authorized. On the other hand, just because a practice is not specifically mentioned in Scripture does not mean it is wrong. It may be incidental to an authorized activity. If we will apply these principles in faith and love to issues over practices that divide brethren, we will be able to resolve them and be one in Christ.

—Keith Sharp

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# Words of Life

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Volume 5 Issue 42

October 23, 2005

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## How the Lord Expresses His Will

The New Testament plainly teaches we need authority from the Lord, as expressed in the New Testament, for all we believe, teach, and practice (Colossians 3:17; 2 Timothy 1:13; 2 John 9). But how does Christ express His authority in His Word? How can we tell what pleases Him?

For many years brethren have contended that the New Testament expresses the will of God in three ways. Many brethren call for a “new hermeneutic,” a new methodology to understand the Bible. They claim the old methods are merely human wisdom rooted in the philosophy of the “Age of Enlightenment.”

I believe God communicated His will to us in the same way we humans normally express our own wills to others. God made us the way we are, with minds and freedom of will. He employed words in the ways people usually use words. This is not mysterious, and it was not first discovered by eighteenth century philosophers. Please examine the Scriptures with me and see if you do not agree.

It is the aim of this lesson to turn to the New Testament itself and see if the Scriptures themselves reveal how the Lord expresses

His will for us. Thus, we inquire, How can we determine what pleases the Lord?

As Paul reminded the Ephesian elders of his work among them, he claimed, “For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:27). The apostle declared, or proclaimed (cf. 1 John 1:5) the divine counsel to them.

The inspired writers declare the Lord’s will in two general ways. First, they simply state it as fact. “This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all” (1 John 1:5). The proper response to such a statement of fact is to believe it.

But often the divine will demands that we act. In this case the writers declare the Lord’s commands. “And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord” (Acts 10:48). Our response must be obedience.

But the New Testament also records many examples. In fact, the historical portions of the gospel, Matthew through Acts, primarily consist of narratives of action, i.e., examples. Those examples that are approved of the Lord also express the will of God. We are to imitate the manner of life of Jesus (Luke

6:40; 1 Peter 2:21-22), the apostles (1 Corinthians 4:16; 11:1; Philippians 3:17; 4:9; 2 Thessalonians 3:7,9), and the New Testament examples of disciples who were directed by the apostles (Philippians 3:17).

Often the Lord simply implies His will and leaves it to us to infer His desire for us. One way He does this is by the use of rhetorical questions, questions in which the answer is implied.

For example, consider Paul’s statement in 1 Corinthians chapter One, “For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe’s household, that there are contentions among you. Now I say this, that each of you says, I am of Paul, or I am of Apollos, or I am of Cephas, or I am of Christ. Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?” (1:11-13)

Do you get the idea Paul didn’t want them to wear his name? But he didn’t command them not to or state they shouldn’t. But the rhetorical questions powerfully imply his disapproval.

Our very belief that Jesus is the Christ is based on the implication of Scripture. The Old Testament Scriptures never state that Jesus of Nazareth is

the Christ. But Paul demonstrated they imply He is (Acts 17:2-3), and he and the Lord expect us to use our minds to infer the implication of Scripture. The Lord gave you a mind, and he expects to use it in the study and application of His will (2 Timothy 2:7).

But just because men infer something from Scripture doesn't necessarily mean the Lord has implied it. Those who believe in sprinkling babies claim the baptism of Lydia's house (Acts 16:14-15) is an implicit example of infant baptism. If they can prove she was married, had children, had infant children, and had infant children with her on her business trip, then they will have demonstrated the Scriptures imply infant baptism. After thirty-nine years of preaching, I still await such proof.

It is of more than casual importance that Jesus Himself used these very methods of discerning the divine will when Satan tempted Him (Matthew 4:1-11). He appealed to scriptural example (Matthew 4:4; Deuteronomy 8:3), implication (Matthew 4:7; Deuteronomy 6:16), and declaration (Matthew 4:10; Deuteronomy 6:13-15).

When the apostles and elders of the church in Jerusalem were confronted with the issue of circumcision and keeping the law of Moses (Acts 15:5-6), they did not need to receive any new revelation from God to settle the question. Peter, Paul, and Barnabas combined approved examples with implication to draw the correct conclusion (Acts 15:6-12), and James

inferred the same conclusion from the implication of a divine declaration (Acts 15:13-19; cf. Amos 9:11-12).

The application of this simple hermeneutic should be obvious. Consider the subject of baptism. It's necessity is declared, both by command (Acts 2:38) and statement (1 Peter 3:21). The proper subjects of baptism are demonstrated by approved example (Acts 18:8). It's proper element, water, is implied (Acts 10:47-48).

The same methods apply to the Lord's Supper. The Lord has declared that Christians must partake of it (1 Corinthians 11:23-25), He has shown the day of the week on which we do so, the first day, by example (Acts 20:7), and He has implied, since no particular first day is specified, that we should partake each first day of the week (Acts 20:7).

And aren't these the very ways godly parents express their authority to their children? Do we not declare our will to them (Genesis 18:17-19), live a proper example before them, and imply, often by rhetorical question, our will? What parent has not asked his child, "Who told you that you could do that?" Did you not strongly imply your disapproval?

We don't need a new hermeneutic. We need a faithful application of the very one the Lord and His apostles used. In this way we will be one with God and each other (1 John 1:3, 7).

—Keith Sharp

## FYI: for your information

- **Prayer List:** *Terry & Leon Aldridge, Floyd & Doris Bush, Nell Fomby, Mary Hill, Troy Lake, Gerry McDaniel, Ken Midyett.*
- *Mary Hill* will return to her doctor on October 26 for a follow-up on her recent biopsy.
- **Youth Class:** Today at 5:15 PM. We will cover Nugget #18 and review the 15 Periods of Bible History.
- **Gospel Meetings:** Stallings Drive in Nacogdoches will have *Ricky Jenkins* October 23-26 at 7:30 PM. South Main in Lindale will have *Tony Ripley* at the same time. The church in Groveton will have *Max Dunkin* through Friday.

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# Words of Life

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Volume 5 Issue 43

October 30, 2005

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## How to Know What It Is the Lord Requires

The New Testament is a binding pattern of authority (2 Timothy 1:13). Yet, those who deny this fact are quick to point out that Christians generally do not deem it necessary to follow many New Testament examples. For example, every time the Scriptures record where the Lord's supper was observed, it was in an upper room (cf. Luke 22:7-20; Acts 20:7-8). Yet virtually no one believes it is necessary to meet in an upper room for the purpose of observing the Lord's Supper.

But the same possible confusion we face relative to the authority of approved examples applies to declarations and implications. The apostle Paul commanded Timothy to bring his cloak, books and parchments (2 Timothy 4:13). Must we obey this apostolic command? It is necessarily implied that the apostle Peter was a married man (Matthew 8:14). Must a preacher of the gospel be married (as some brethren seem to think)?

It will not do to simply say, We've always recognized these passages are not binding, for that is simply following human tradition (Matthew 15:1-9). Nor will it do to throw the baby out with the bath water and simply

deny we must follow the New Testament as a binding pattern, for the Scriptures plainly teach we must follow apostolic doctrine and not deviate from it (2 John 9). We must find inspired teaching that will lead us to determine accurately what in a passage is binding and what is not.

This leads us to the question this lesson will answer. How can we tell which details of a passage are authoritatively binding and must be followed and which are not?

### The General Approach

The Scriptures demand that we follow declarations, approved examples, and implications (Philippians 4:9). Thus, our approach must be that all New Testament declarations (commands and statements), examples, and implications are binding unless we can prove otherwise. When in doubt, follow the inspired information as authoritative.

### General Rules

There are important, universally recognized rules of Bible study, rules which actually apply to the understanding of all language and which we use to determine the meaning of a

passage, which we must also employ to determine what in a passage is authoritatively binding. These rules can be posed in the form of questions the answers to which determine both the meaning and authority of specific details.

We should ask, Who is the speaker? For example, Acts 26:28-29 records two statements, one we must follow and one we must not follow. King Agrippa said he was almost persuaded to be a Christian. He was an impenitent sinner, and it would be sinful to adopt his statement as a guide. Paul, an inspired apostle, replied that he wished all who heard him were as he is except for his chains. Paul was an inspired apostle, and we must be Christians as he was.

We should ask, To whom is the passage addressed? 1 Corinthians 14:27 is a rule for those who exercised the miraculous gift of tongue speaking in the public worship assembly, and, since miraculous spiritual gifts have ceased (1 Corinthians 13:8-13), the specific injunction does not apply today.

We should inquire, what is the subject? 1 Corinthians 3:16-17 is often misapplied by brethren to

teach we should not harm our physical bodies, whereas the context (verses 5-15) indicates the apostle is forbidding harming the church by following human wisdom.

We should ask, Is the language literal or figurative? Brethren who bind the use of just one drinking vessel for the Lord's Supper should realize we cannot literally divide a drinking vessel (Luke 22:17) and that Jesus, by metonymy, was referring to the contents, the fruit of the vine, not the container.

We should also ask, Why is this said (or done, or implied)? In John 13:1-15 Jesus washed His disciples feet and then taught, "I have given you an example that you should do as I have done to you" (verse 15). He was not teaching them a ritual to employ in the worship assembly. He was teaching them to humbly serve each other, and this principle of humble service to one another is the authoritatively binding principle.

### Three Kinds of Information

So far as authority is concerned, there are three kinds of material in New Testament passages.

There is information we must not follow. It is negative, teaching us things it would be sinful to do. The Bible records both false teaching (e.g., 2 Timothy 2:17-18) and sin (e.g., 3 John verse 9-11), and we must not follow either. The Jewish council commanded the apostles not to preach and teach in the name of Jesus (Acts 4:18; 5:27-28, 40), and we, as the apostles, must refuse to obey

such a command (Acts 4:19-20; 5:29-32,41-42). The apostle Peter denied the Lord three times (Matthew 26:69-75), but it would be a sin to follow his example. It is implied that some Christians in Corinth placed their confidence in human wisdom, but we must not do so (1 Corinthians 2:1-5; 2 Corinthians 10:10).

There is information we may follow. It is permissive, expressing liberties (cf. 1 Corinthians 7:6-7,25-28,38-40). When the New Testament records where baptism took place, it was always in an outdoor body of water (e.g., Matthew 3:5-6; Acts 8:36-38). I believe these examples are permissive, a liberty, not binding. Paul commanded the brethren at Corinth, "Let each one remain in the same calling in which he was called" (1 Corinthians 7:20). Is it sinful to change occupations? (cf. verse 26) It is implied that the apostles other than Paul refrained from manual labor to fully devote their time to the Lord's work (1 Corinthians 9:1-6). Is it wrong for a preacher to have a secular job?

But there is information we must follow. It is authoritatively binding. The Lord commanded us to eat the Lord's Supper in remembrance of Him (1 Corinthians 11:23-25), and we must obey this command. The disciples ate the Supper on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7), and we must follow their example. It is implied they did this each first day of the week (Acts 20:7; cf. Exodus 20:8), and we must do so.

—Keith Sharp

## FYI: for your information

- **Prayer List:** *Terry & Leon Aldridge, Gary Box, Floyd & Doris Bush, Nell Fomby, Mary Hill, Troy Lake, Gerry McDaniel, Ken Midyett.*
- *Mary Hill* learned Wednesday that she does not have cancer; however, she will still require surgery in the near future.
- We are truly thankful for *Gary Box* accepting the work of deacon. Please express your gratitude to Gary today.
- **Youth Class:** Today at 5:15 PM. We will cover Nugget #19 and review the 15 Periods of Bible History.
- **Benevolence:** We have sent \$4,000 to the elders of the West Groves Church in Groves, TX to meet the needs of several in the congregation affected by hurricane *Rita*.

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# Words of Life

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Volume 5 Issue 44

November 6, 2005

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## In Defense of Marriage

On Tuesday November 8 Texans may vote to support a constitutional amendment defining marriage as “a union between only one man and one woman.” Gay and Lesbian organizations are opposing Proposition 2, as this proposed amendment is called, because a “yes” vote upholds the biblical view of marriage in Texas.

In the Scriptures, marriage is defined as being a union between only one man and one woman. Jesus said: “Have ye not read, that He which made them at the beginning made them *male and female*, and said, ‘*For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?*’ Wherefore *they are no more twain, but one flesh*. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder” (Matthew 19:4–6).

God made man a sexual being. By design He made man *male and female*. Then, because He had made them male and female, He instituted *marriage*, bringing the woman to the man and giving her to him in order to be a suitable help and companion (see: Genesis 2:18–

25). This is God’s intent; it is His design; it is His law (I Corinthians 7:1–5).

God has expressed Himself on this matter. He has made it clear in His Word that homosexuality is sinful, soul damning and destructive to a moral society. If one has any respect at all for God and the Bible, he will support this constitutional amendment.

*God has said that homosexuality is unnatural.* One need be neither a physiologist nor a Solomon to understand that men were never intended to have a sexual relationship with other men, and women were never intended to have a sexual relationship with other women. The Apostle Paul denounced this behavior in Romans chapter one while describing the apostate Gentile nations (Romans 1:18–28).

Homosexuality is, as we have already noted, contrary to the design, purpose and intent which God had in the beginning. His law is that men marry and find sexual fulfillment in their spouse of the opposite sex. Paul also stated in I Corinthians 7:2–3, “Let every man have his own wife, and let every woman

have her own husband.” The terms “husband” and “wife” in the Greek language, as in English, are gender specific. A “husband” is a male and a “wife” is a female.

While marriage is intended for procreation, it is also intended for the joy and righteous pleasure of the married couple. Solomon said, “Rejoice with the wife of thy youth...and be thou ravished always with her love” (Proverbs 5:18–19). Homosexuality does not and cannot produce God’s intended will for mankind. It is a woman that is “meet” or “suitable” for a man and vice versa. God had showed this to Adam by bringing the various birds and beasts of the field that he had created before Adam to name. After naming the animals, it is said that Adam did not find “a help meet for him” (Genesis 2:19–20). The animals all had their sexual opposite as a mate, but Adam did not have his. It is after this that God creates the woman, Eve, and brings her to Adam.

*God has said that homosexuality debases and debauches society.* Let’s hear Paul again on this matter: “Who changed the

truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator...For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature" (Romans 1:25-26). When men retained God in their knowledge they knew what His plan and purpose was for them respecting marriage. However, apostasy, continued disregard and disrespect for the authority of God's Word led men into the vilest of sins. Homosexuality is one of the fruits of this prolonged digression away from God.

Sodom was a wicked place. When God went there in the person of His angels He did so looking for righteous men. Abraham pleaded for the city to be spared and God relented in His judgment if ten righteous persons could be found—ten men who truly respected, believed and would follow God's will. Those ten righteous men could not be found. They had not retained God in their knowledge. Even so in our land today, we see the religious crowd—the so-called Christians—leading the attack against the Word of God. Is it any wonder that the precedent of law has no meaning to men when the eternal word of God has none?

*God has said that homosexuality is fornication which will be condemned in the judgment. Since God does not join men with men in marriage, nor*

women with women. All homosexual acts are by definition fornication—sexual immorality. In Hebrews 13:4 Paul said, "Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and the sexually immoral." Those that violate their marriage vows and those that have sexual relationships without the benefit of marriage are condemned of God. As noted earlier, in order to avoid fornication, every man is to have his own wife and every woman is to have her own husband. All sexual relationships between non-married couples whether homosexual or heterosexual in nature are sin.

The Bible offers hope to the sexually immoral. The harlots were touched by the preaching of John the Baptist and Jesus said that they were entering the Kingdom of Heaven. Jesus offered redemption to the woman at the well who had been divorced five times and was living with a man to whom she was not married. He held up an immoral woman as an example of faith because she sought out Jesus and washed His feet with her tears. There were sexually immoral persons—even homosexuals—among Paul's converts at Corinth. Sexual sin is not unpardonable sin, neither is it sin from which a man cannot turn.

John told the harlots that came to him to repent. Jesus told

the woman taken in adultery, "Go and sin no more." Paul taught the homosexuals the Word of God and baptized all that believed and repented. The same hope is available to all today whether your life is stained by sexual sin or any other sin. There is hope for you through Jesus Christ.

Friends and neighbors, Tuesday is a day on which the very least among us in this nation has a voice equal to every other. The most humble and decent citizens in our land have it within their power, if they are willing, which they must be if they are decent, to stem the rushing tide of immorality. I urge you to be heard in favor of "God's holy ordinance."

—Jeff Asher

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# Words of Life

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Volume 5 Issue 45

November 13, 2005

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## Expediency

Often when we question a religious practice, its defender will insist, "But look how much good it does." This is an appeal to expediency. Certainly we want to follow our Master, "who went about doing good" (Acts 10:38). But how can we tell if a certain practice is helpful? To answer this question, we will study the biblical usage and application of the word translated "expedient" in the King James Version of the New Testament.

### Meaning of Term

The Greek term for "expedient" (*sumphero*) occurs sixteen times in the New Testament. The term means "to help, be profitable" (Thayer, p. 597); "to be an advantage, profitable" (Vine. 2:62); "Help, confer a benefit, be advantageous or profitable or useful" (Arndt & Gingrich. 787). In the New King James Version it is translated "advantage" (John 16:7; 2 Corinthians 8:10), "better" (Matthew 18:6; 19:10), "expedient" (John 11:50; 18:14), "helpful" (Acts 20:20; 1 Corinthians 6:12; 10:23), "more profitable" (Matthew 5:29), "profit" (1 Corinthians 7:35; 10:33; Hebrews 12:10), and "profitable" (2 Corinthians 12:1). The word is used in a different sense in Acts 19:19, where it is translated "brought ... together."

Thus, to claim a practice is expedient is to assert it is helpful or profitable.

### Application to Christians

Whatever God commands us to do is for our good. "His commandments are not burdensome" (1 John 5:3). The Master informed His disciples, "It is to your advantage ("expedient" - KJV) that I go away" (John 16:7). It was the will of the Father that Christ leave the earth. It was not optional but required. Whatever God requires is expedient.

### Decisions about Expediency

But there is a realm of liberty involving things God allows but does not require (1 Corinthians 10:23-33). Within this area we must make judgments about expediency. Two New Testament passages teach us how to tell if a liberty is expedient.

#### 1 Corinthians 6:12

"All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any."

Is the apostle teaching that every conceivable practice is lawful? Is "all" unlimited? Paul also stated, "Now all things are of God" (2 Corinthians 5:18). Is

this unlimited? No, sin is not from God (James 1:13). The term "all" is unlimited in its context, but it is limited by its context. If the teacher says to the class, "All please stand to say the Pledge of Allegiance," she is not directing everyone in the world to recite the Pledge. The context of her order is the class she is teaching. The context of Paul's statement is eating food (verse 13; cf.

1 Timothy 4:4-5). It is lawful to eat any kind of food. There are many unlawful, i.e., sinful, practices (cf. Matthew 14:4; 2 Corinthians 12:3-4; 2 Timothy 2:5; 1 John 3:4).

But this does establish the first, most basic criterion to determine if a practice is expedient. Expediency is within the realm of divine law. Paul reminded the Ephesian elders that, in his teaching, he had "kept back nothing that was helpful (expedient)" (Acts 20:20). How had he done this? "For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:27). All God's Word is helpful to us, and only those things authorized in His Word are spiritually profitable.

The Jewish high priest Caiaphas asserted the doctrine that the end justifies the means.

And one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, 'You know nothing at all, nor do you consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish' (John 11:49-50; 18:14).

This doctrine led them to crucify the Son of God.

The apostle Paul was accused of teaching the doctrine "Let us do evil that good may come." He said his accusers slandered him and "their condemnation is just" (Romans 3:8). A seemingly good result does not mean the practice in question is expedient. The practice itself must be authorized by the Lord (Colossians 3:17). Every good work is authorized in the Scriptures (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

The priests Nadab and Abihu burned incense to the Lord. This seemed to be good. But they "offered profane fire before the Lord, which He had not commanded them." God consumed them with fire for acting without divine authority (Leviticus 10:1-3).

First Corinthians 6:12 establishes a second rule about expediency. Paul there declared, "I will not be brought under the power of any." The entire phrase "be brought under the power" is the translation of one Greek word meaning to "be mastered by" (New American Standard Bible). If a practice controls me, so that I will not give it up for the spiritual good of others, it has mastered me. Thus, an enslaving practice is not expedient.

First Corinthians 6:13 sets the context of verse twelve and

establishes another rule to determine if a practice is helpful. Paul was discussing eating food. Eating different kinds of food is a liberty (1 Corinthians 8:8-9). Thus, decisions about expediency involve liberties.

### 1 Corinthians 10:23

"All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful; all things are lawful for me, but not all things edify."

Once again, expediency is within the realm of divine law.

But the passage establishes a fourth rule for determining if a practice is spiritually helpful. The practice must edify. It must build us up spiritually, or it is not profitable.

The apostle discusses expediency in the realm of liberty through chapter eleven verse one. In chapter ten verse thirty-one he states, "Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." Thus, for a practice to be expedient, it must be to the glory of God. Our example of life should lead others to glorify God by being brought to Christ (Matthew 5:16).

Finally, Paul instructs: "Give no offense, either to the Jews or to the Greeks or to the church of God, just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved (Verses 32-33).

Thayer defines and explains the word translated "no offense" thus: "having nothing for one to strike against; not causing to stumble.... not leading others into sin by one's mode of life" (70). Thus, to be helpful, the

practice must not give offense (lead others to sin). This is a simple matter of being concerned about the spiritual welfare of others (verses 24, 32). It involves liberties (verse 29), matters of individual conscience (verses 27-31). It does NOT give anyone the right to bind his scruples on others (Romans 14:21-22).

### Conclusion

There are seven characteristics whereby we can determine if a practice is expedient or not. Innovations into the divine pattern violate at least three of these rules. They are not lawful, do not involve liberties, and are not to the glory of God. The end does not justify the means. The means must be both lawful and spiritually profitable. We must be content to "do all in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Colossians 3:17).

—Keith Sharp

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# Words of Life

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Volume 5 Issue 46

November 20, 2005

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## New Testament Church Discipline

It is difficult to imagine what it would be like to live in a society where citizens could flaunt the rules and absolutely no consequences would follow—no fines, no imprisonment, etc. Can you conceive of a home environment where the children are allowed to do whatever they please with utterly no discipline imposed? Total chaos would reign in either of these instances.

Yet, there are countless congregations belonging to Jesus Christ across our land where little, if any, discipline of the wayward is ever enacted. Is it any wonder that our brotherhood is weaker today than it has been in decades?

### Exactly What Is Church Discipline?

In its broadest sense, it involves everything from the most basic instruction that the new-born child of God receives – from the time of his conversion onward, all the way to the radical “surgery” sometimes required in the withholding of fellowship from impenitent apostates. For the purpose of this study, we are speaking solely of that terminal act—the church’s obligation to withdraw its fellowship from those who cannot be reached with more moderate approaches.

### NT Authority for Discipline

Every serious Bible student knows that there is ample authority for the practice of church discipline. Consider the following samples of New Testament evidence:

Jesus taught that one who has wronged his brother, and who cannot be persuaded to repent—either by the offended party, other independent witnesses, or the church in general – should be treated as “the Gentile and the publican” (Matthew 18:17). In the context of a first-century setting, this means that the church was to have no social contact with hardened offenders.

Paul instructed the saints in Rome to be on the lookout for those “who are causing the divisions and occasions of stumbling contrary to the doctrine.” He declared that the faithful should “turn away from” these self-serving egotists who were deceiving the innocent (Romans 16:17).

The entire 5th chapter of 1st Corinthians deals with the matter of discipline. A fornicating church member had pursued in his immoral lifestyle relentlessly, and the apostle rebuked the Corinthian

congregation for not having disciplined the man.

Paul declared that the brother should have “been taken away from among you,” delivered “unto Satan,” and “put away” (vv. 2, 5, 13). Further, with such a one, “company” was not to be kept. The fraternization of a common meal was forbidden (vs. 11). This instruction is quite explicit.

The inspired Paul commanded the church in Thessalonica to “withdraw” from every brother who persists in walking disorderly, thus contrary to divinely received traditions (II Thessalonians 3:6). Such persons, says he, are to be identified, and social company with them is to be severed. Excommunicated brethren, of course, are not to be treated harshly; rather, they are to be admonished in a brotherly fashion (vv. 14–15; cf. Galatians 6:1).

In Titus 3:10, inspiration affirms that a factious person, after appropriate admonition, is to be “refused,” i.e., refused further association.

These passages by no means exhaust the New Testament information on the subject of church discipline. They are sufficient, however, to provide

ample instruction of the kingdom's responsibility in this regard.

## The Purpose of Church Discipline

What is the purpose in withdrawing fellowship from the disorderly? It certainly is not an act of revenge towards those who have fallen from the faith. And it must never be exercised in a haughty or malevolent manner. The Scriptures do suggest, however, that discipline has both a corrective and a protective function.

Obviously, it is designed to save the erring child of God. The Corinthian fornicator was to be disciplined so that he might be motivated to destroy "the flesh," i.e., his ungodly fleshly passion (see *Thayer*, p. 443) in order that his spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus (I Corinthians 5:5). Discipline is designed to "gain" the wayward (Mt. 18:15), to make him "ashamed" (II Thessalonians 3:14), to the end that he may be restored (Galatians 6:1).

A consideration of certain passages in II Corinthians leads to the conclusion that the church in Corinth finally did withdraw from the sensuous offender, and that such brought him to repentance. The apostle wrote: "This punishment which was inflicted by the majority is sufficient for such a man" (II Corinthians 2:6, NKJV).

But discipline is not merely for the welfare of the rebel. It is for the protection of the church as well.

When Paul admonished the congregation at Corinth to take care of the problem of the

immoral brother, he warned: "Don't you know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?" (I Corinthians 5:6). The apostle elsewhere declared that those who cause divisions and occasions of stumbling "by their smooth and fair speech beguile the hearts of the innocent" (Romans 16:17).

Two false teachers in the early church, Hymenaeus and Alexander, had made shipwreck of the faith, hence Paul "delivered [them] unto Satan," i.e., he withdrew fellowship from them (I Timothy 1:19-20; cf. I Corinthians 5:5) for the welfare of the brethren. False teaching, if allowed to go unchecked within the body of Christ, can eat like a cancer, and cause the faith of some to be overthrown (see: II Timothy 2:16-18).

Discipline is also important in preserving the integrity of the church before the eyes of the world. Society has bias enough against us without having the legitimate complaint that we harbor evil within our fellowship. We should never give occasion to the adversary for reviling (I Timothy 5:14).

It is imperative that the conduct of the church be such that "the name of God and the doctrine be not blasphemed" (I Timothy 6:1), and that the way of truth be not "evil spoken of" (II Peter 2:2).

—Wayne Jackson

## FYI: for your information

- **Prayer List:** *Terry & Leon Aldridge, Floyd & Doris Bush,*

*Nell Fomby, Mary Hill, Troy Lake, Chris Millican, Mark & Deidre Cone, Jeff & Bonnie McKnight.*

- **Youth Class:** Today at 5:15 PM. We will cover the next Nugget #21 and review the 15 Periods of Bible History.
- **Sympathy:** *Mr. E.M. Lofton* the grandfather of *Chris Millican* passed away Thursday morning in Shreveport. We extend our sincere sympathy to Chris and family.
- **Thanks:** Many thanks to *Jim Rhiddlehoover* and *Gary Box* for filling in during the Gospel Meeting in Haynesville, LA. Also, thanks to *Gary Box, Kerry Henry* and *John Young* for taking the Gospel to Many, LA. The brethren there are very appreciative of your efforts and we are very proud of you for taking on the responsibility.

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# Words of Life

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Volume 5 Issue 47

November 27, 2005

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## Conduct Deserving Corrective Church Discipline

What sort of attitude or conduct warrants the extreme measure of withdrawing fellowship? The Bible addresses this matter in several ways.

### Sins & Offenses

A brother who has sinned against another, but who refuses to repent of his transgression, could, ultimately, be disciplined (Mt. 18:15-17).

Those who cause occasions of stumbling, and who initiate division, are proper subjects for church discipline (Rom. 16:17; Tit. 3:10).

Those who are practitioners of such sins as fornication, covetousness, extortion, idolatry, drunkenness, reviling, etc., could certainly be candidates for withdrawal (1 Cor. 5:9ff).

Advocates of soul-threatening doctrines must not be allowed to continue in open fellowship with the church (1 Tim. 1:19-20; 2 Tim. 2:16-18).

### Walking Disorderly

Those who walk disorderly are to be refused association by the faithful (2 Thessalonians 3:6). But what is disorderly conduct?

There are those who simply grow weary of the Christian life and decide to “resign” from the church. When approached about their neglect, and warned of possible discipline, they raise a voice of protest, claiming: “What am I doing that is wrong? I am not committing adultery; I am not a drunkard. The church cannot withdraw from me.”

An appropriate response would be: “Are you faithfully serving God? Do you meet with your brethren to sing, pray, observe the Lord’s supper, etc.? What would be the fate of the family of God if every member were at liberty to do as you have done?” Spiritual neglect is disorderly conduct, and a fitting response to such is discipline – of some sort at least.

It would be well to remember, however, that a person’s disposition is frequently the determining factor in terms of *when*, or *whether*, withdrawal of fellowship should be administered. No wise church leadership would discipline hastily a sincere Christian who, through weakness, had fallen into a sinful situation. As long as there is humility on the part of the offender, and a genuine effort to overcome the problem, long-suffering would be indicated. When, though, a surly, rebellious attitude is evidenced, more drastic measures may be speedily indicated.

Faithful elderships should let it be known that if a person wants to identify with the congregation over which they exercise supervision, he or she will be expected to live right, and to assume a healthy responsibility in the areas of Christian growth and service. If there is remiss in these matters, discipline,

in some form or another, could be advisable.

### How Should the Final Act Be Administered?

In every congregation where qualified men are serving as elders, it naturally would be the case that the eldership would lead the church in the withdrawal of fellowship from the unfaithful. Let it be stressed, however, that discipline is not an "eldership act" behind closed doors. It is an activity on the part of the entire church, and the formalization of the procedure must be enacted in the public assembly.

Paul commands the Corinthian Christians, by the authority of Christ, to deliver the erring brother unto Satan when they are "gathered together" (1 Cor. 5:4). Similarly, after the Lord gave instructions regarding the procedures for restoring the brother who had wronged his fellow, he declared: "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Mt. 18:20).

Few people seem to recognize that this comforting promise is given within a context of an exhortation regarding church discipline. Lenski has well noted: "Since he [Christ] is thus in the assembly of the church or present when two or three are convicting a brother of sin, it is he himself who acts with his church and

its members when they carry out his Word by invoking also his presence and his help" (p. 707).

—Wayne Jackson

## FYI: for your information

- **Prayer List:** *Terry & Leon Aldridge, Melissa Briggs, Mark & Deidra Cone, Floyd & Doris Bush, Mary Hill, Troy Lake, Daryl & Cindy May, Gerry McDaniel, Jeff & Bonnie McKnight.*
- **Singing Class:** Today at 5:00 PM will be the first meeting of our monthly singing class. All are invited and encouraged to attend and participate. *Gary Box* is the instructor. We will be learning new songs and some music fundamentals. Our purpose in this class is to *improve* our singing worship. We will continue to have our last Wednesday night singing where our song leaders will have opportunity to implement some of the things learned in this class.
- **Gospel Meetings:** Our next meeting is with J. David Tant, III of Roswell, Georgia March 5–10, 2006.
- *Mary Hill* is doing some better but will see a new doctor in Longview next month.
- *Cyndi Asher* had tests at MRMC last week. The

initial results are good. A change in medications was needed. In the meantime she waits for the pathological test results but the doctors expected everything to be benign.

- **Visitation:** *Group 4* meets tonight after the service.
- **Directory:** Add to the quick-list *Pryor Anniversary 12/17*. Additional pages for the directory are available on the table in the foyer.
- **Order of service change:** We will be adding a Scripture reading to the Sunday AM service in order to use more men in the service and give additional opportunities for the training of our younger men. The deacons will be posting the change on the weekly service roster.

### Northside Church of Christ

701 W. Cottage Road/POB 456  
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# Words of Life

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Volume 5 Issue 48

December 4, 2005

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## Objections to Corrective Church Discipline Answered

In spite of the fact that the Bible is quite clear on the obligation of Christ's church to practice discipline upon impenitent members, there are those who cavil against the responsibility—even to the point of asserting that withdrawal of fellowship is a violation of New Testament principles. Some of the more common objections offered are:

### **"No one is worthy to discipline another"**

The allegation is sometimes made that since no one is perfect, no one really has the right to initiate discipline against another. Commonly, John 8:7 will be cited as a proof-text for this idea. "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." Such is a woeful misuse of this passage. Two points need to be noted.

First, the Jews had brought a woman to Christ whom they claimed to have taken in the very act of adultery. They wanted the Lord to sanction her death (thus involving

Him in difficulty with the Roman authorities). However, though the Old Testament law had clearly stated that *both parties* in an adulterous union must be executed, these Jews had brought *only* the woman. Hence, they had ignored the very law they pretended to honor.

Christ's statement, therefore, as quoted above, was designed to highlight this inconsistency. It cannot be employed to militate against plain commands obligating the church to discipline the wayward.

Second, Paul was not "without sin," and yet, he withdrew himself from evil brethren (I Timothy 1:19, 20). One does not have to be sinless in order to honor the Bible teaching on this vital theme.

### **"Leave the tares for God"**

It sometimes is contended that whereas it must be acknowledged that there are "tares" in the kingdom, we

are instructed to leave them alone. At the Judgment, the Lord will exercise his own discipline (cf. Matthew 13:24-30; 36-43).

In response we must insist that no parabolic teaching can be arrayed against clear Bible instruction given elsewhere. This argument is like suggesting that simply because the debtor (in the parable of the unmerciful servant) was forgiven by his Lord, with no conditions being stated (Matthew 18:27), one may conclude that salvation is totally unconditional!

The parable of the tares is simply designed to inoculate against violent and premature attempts to completely purify the church on earth. It has nothing to do with the genuine practice of brotherly discipline. J. W. McGarvey noted that this type of reasoning is "in direct conflict with the teaching both of Jesus and the apostles on the subject of withdrawing from the disorderly" (p. 124).

### “Judge not!”

Some contend that church discipline would be a form of “judging,” a practice which the Bible condemns. The plain truth is, not all judging is wrong!

Jesus declared: “Judge not according to appearance, but judge ye righteous judgment” (John 7:24). In Paul’s rebuke of the Corinthians, he clearly stated that he had “judged” already the incestuous brother (I Corinthians 5:3). He then subsequently asked these brethren: “Do not ye judge them that are within?” (5:12). Church discipline does, therefore, involve a form of judging, but it is not the unjustified, hypocritical judgment that is censured by Christ in Matthew 7:1-5.

### “Where is the love?”

It is sometimes charged that if the church withdraws fellowship from the erring, it is demonstrating a lack of love. The sickening, superficial view that so many have regarding “love” these days is one of the most dramatic commentaries on biblical ignorance.

The fact is, discipline does not repudiate love, it reflects love. “Those whom the Lord loves, he disciplines” (Hebrews 12:6, NASB). When ancient Israel went astray, Jehovah withdrew His presence from them for seventy years (the

Babylonian Captivity). Was this an indication of an unloving disposition? To even suggest such is blasphemous.

If you are a member of a congregation which practices church discipline, you ought to thank Almighty God that you have the privilege of belonging to such a loving family!

### “What about him?”

Occasionally the claim will be made: “The church cannot withdraw from me, for there are others who are just as bad, or worse, and they haven’t been disciplined.” Several things may be said in rebutting this rationalization.

First, the fact that the church may have been remiss in its duty, or even inconsistent, in the past, does not mean that changes for the better cannot be made. No sane person would argue: We were wrong in the past; let us therefore always be wrong.

Second, the precise determination as to whom, and when, church discipline should be administered will frequently be a matter of leadership judgment. Some brethren may not know all the facts as to why decisions were made to withdraw from some and not from others. There may be extenuating circumstances that are not general information. This type of quibbling cannot be allowed to deter discipline

when such is obviously indicated.

Loving discipline was as much a trait of the primitive church as correct worship, organization, etc. This question, then, cannot but haunt many: *Can a church that utterly refuses to practice discipline truly be a New Testament church?*

—Wayne Jackson

## FYI: for your information

- **Prayer List:** Terry & Leon Aldridge, Floyd & Doris Bush, Marjorie Coffman, Mark & Deidra Cone, Mary Hill, Troy Lake, Jeff & Bonnie McKnight, Ken Midyett.
- Marjorie Coffman, Paul Coffman’s mother went under hospice care this week.

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# Words of Life

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Volume 5 Issue 49

December 11, 2005

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## Teaching Values: Responsibility

Responsibility is defined in the dictionary as, "Involving personal accountability or ability to act without guidance or superior authority." A person is regarded as responsible when he is "capable of making moral or rational decisions on his own and, therefore, answerable for one's own behavior." The principle of responsibility is recognized on nearly every page of the Bible. Here are just a few examples: Matthew 23:16; 27:24; 28:14; Luke 12:42; Acts 5:28; 19:40; Romans 14:4.

### Everyone is Responsible for...

*You are responsible only for today.* You cannot change the past. What is done is done. God can forgive sin. But, the fact remains that your actions are a part of the history of your life. You do not have to live in the past nor let the past rule the present (John 8:11; Romans 3:25; Mark 16:15-16). But, you cannot change what has happened; you must live through it and with it.

You cannot affect the future. By this I mean, there are forces in the world over which we have no control (Ecclesiastes 9:11). Some things are controlled by the immutable laws of the universe and cannot be changed regardless how much we may desire it (Matthew 6:27; Luke

12:25, 26). Other things are in the hands of God and are best left to His will and desires (Matthew 5:45; James 4:13-15). We can make reasonable plans and have expectations, but the future may not turn out as we wish it to be.

Only today is yours (Matthew 6:34). We need to do the very best with it we can and recognize that the choices and decisions we make within it affect us now and forever (Romans 2:6-11; Ezekiel 18:26-28). Today is the only day over which we have any real control; therefore, the choices we make are important (2 Corinthians 6:2; Hebrews 3:13; Joshua 24:15).

*You are certainly responsible for yourself.* I think most folks recognize it in principle, while maybe not owning up to it in practice; each one is responsible for his own actions (Romans 14:12; Ecclesiastes 12:14; Ezekiel 18:1-24).

However, we're also answerable for what we think and say (Proverbs 4:23; Matthew 5:28-30; 12:34-37). Now, our thoughts may not always have the same consequences as our actions, but thoughts are what determine our words and our actions (Mark 7:20-23). We may change our thoughts, and even regret our words, but we are still

accountable for having had them and their character determines the nature of the heart from where they came (Luke. 6:45).

*We are also responsible for what you fail or refuse to do* (James 4:17; John 12:48 Hebrews 10:26-31). All of us are liable to forget some things, but I am not talking about lapse of memory. Rather, it is neglect and rebellion. We are responsible when our will is such that we do not do what we know is right we insist on doing what we know is wrong. There are many things in this world with which we can become entangled and overpowered (II Timothy 2:26; II Peter 2:20). The fact that we are subdued by them does not release us from accountability.

### Choices Have Consequences

In the realm of physical "for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction." In the spiritual realm for every action there is a consequence.

As already established, all are free men with the power of choice (Joshua 24:15; Romans 10:16; Hebrews 3:7). You are free to do whatever you want. However, you are not free of the consequences of your actions (Proverbs 1:24; Ezekiel 3:19).

General Gerry Johnson said it very well when he observed, "No man was ever endowed with a right without being at the same time saddled with a responsibility." We do not have to make some of the choices we do, but we cannot avoid the consequences of our choices, nor shift the blame to others. A lot of men have tried, but God does not release us from our obligations in this matter (Genesis 3:12-13; 1 Samuel 15:20-21; Exodus 32:22-24; Matthew 27:24).

### Teach Your Children Responsibility

Jesus taught us how to teach responsibility. We can and must do so, for the good of the nation, for the good of the family, for the good of the church and, most importantly, for the of our children.

First, learn that one is responsible to the limits of his ability. Jesus taught that in the parables of the talents and the unfaithful servant (Matthew 25:15; Luke 12:47-48). Early training, therefore, should consist of gradually giving responsibilities to our children according to their newly acquired abilities (see: Galatians 4:1-2; I Corinthians 13:11). Duties about the home should increase with age and skill with a view to making the child a useful adult when on his own.

Second, when responsibility is given, the recipient must be held accountable. Jesus taught this as well in the above mentioned parables (Luke 12:47; Matthew 18:23). The one talent man was not punished because he did not do as well as the other two servants. He was

punished because he did not do what he had the ability and, therefore, obligation to do. A wise parent recognizes different levels of ability in his children and deals with each accordingly. But a fool fails to hold all equally accountable according to his individual ability. When parents do not make children give answer for their actions they eventually will have rebels with which to deal (1 Samuel 2:22-26; 3:13).

In order to teach responsibility it is necessary to let the young suffer consequences of their choices. This is why the prophet said, "It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth" (Lamentations 3:27). When parents are giving gradual responsibility they are able to help assuage the severity of the consequences. Children learn that the consequences can be serious by learning young from the results of their lesser responsibilities. It is better to learn that each man must bear his own burden (Galatians 6:5) when that burden is a household chore or a missed homework assignment than a job deadline or a utility bill.

Finally, parents must be an example in accepting responsibility (Job 19:4; Acts 25:11). Your children will never learn to be a mature, helpful, resourceful and responsible member of any community, if all they ever see is a parent that cast blame elsewhere refusing to accept blame miserably chaffing under the consequences of bad choices. Be responsible and your children will grow up to be responsible.

—Jeff Asher

## FYI: for your information

- **Prayer List:** *Terry & Leon Aldridge, Floyd & Doris Bush, Marjorie Coffman, Mary Hill, Troy Lake, Harvey McDaniel, Ken Midyett.*
- *Harvey McDaniel*, Gerry McDaniel's brother-in-law, was released from Veterans Hospital Thursday. Mr. McDaniel has cancer of the spine.
- *Marjorie Coffman, Paul Coffman's* mother continues in hospice care.
- **Youth Class:** Today at 5:15 PM. We will cover Nugget #23 and review the twelve sons of Jacob and Judges of Israel. No class on 12/25 or 01/01.
- **Singing Class:** Class this month will be a week early December 18 at 5:00 PM.

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# Words of Life

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Volume 5 Issue 50

December 18, 2005

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## Teaching Values: Contentment

Webster defines *contentment* as “the state of being contented: satisfaction...not desiring more than one has: satisfied; resigned to circumstances, assenting, satisfied with things as they are.” In the Bible *content* is from two words. The first word, *αρκέω*; means “to be possessed of unfailing strength, to be strong, to suffice, to be enough; passively to be satisfied with a thing, contented.” The second, *ἀντάρκεια*, describes “a perfect condition of life in which no aid or support is needed; hence, sufficiency of the necessities of life: contentment.”

### It Is Not...

*Gratification.* Paul did not always have all he needed. Sometimes he even went hungry (Philippians 4:11). However, he was always content (v. 12). Thus, gratification does not guarantee contentment and one may be content though lacking necessities and comforts.

How often have we seen someone who thought they could be happy if they could just have, or do, or be...only to experience disappointment, once gratified. Contentment is not rooted in possessing or pleasure.

*Lack of Ambition.* There is nothing wrong with wanting to

succeed, improve, or do better. As a matter of fact, God’s word teaches us to be thrifty and diligent in the management of our resources in order to increase our substance (Proverbs 10:4). God encourages us to work hard, achieve and rejoice in our success (Ecclesiastes 2:24; Proverbs 10:5; Ephesians 4:28).

What God disapproves is a covetous spirit and an insatiable desire for more and more (Ecclesiastes 5:10–11; Proverbs 1:19). The real joy in work, success and possessions is the realization that one has enough and the joy that comes from giving to other (Ephesians 4:28, 29; Proverbs 30:8–9; Acts 20:35).

*Indifference.* Laziness is a sin, and neglect is a greater sin (Proverbs 24:30–34). The man who will not work is unworthy of support (2 Thessalonians 3:10). Too many try to ennoble their disorderly conduct by calling it contentment (Proverbs 21:24–25).

### It Is...

*Submission.* In order to be content one MUST be realistic (Matthew 6:25–34; Ecclesiastes 1:15). The short man is not going to be tall, nor the bald man grow hair. There are some things we cannot change, but change the things you can and

use the things you cannot (Luke 19:4). As one fellow observed they’re not stumbling–blocks or barricades, but stepping stones.

*Pleasure.* The secret to finding contentment is learning to enjoy the things you have, rather than finding displeasure in what you do not (Hebrews 13:5). This wrong perspective leads to jealousy and envy (Ecclesiastes 4:4; Proverbs 14:30). Life is robbed of its joy when we waste it pining away for what we do not possess while never savoring the what is ours and ours alone.

*Satisfaction.* Paul wrote the Philippians and said, “I am full” (4:18). Contentment comes when one is able to recognize “It is enough.” The wise man says there are four things that are never satisfied: the grave, a barren womb, the earth which drinks in the rain and fire (Proverbs 30:14–16). He describes the men of his day as horse leeches that cry continually, “Give! Give!” (cf. Amos 4:1). There is a point when we have enough (1 Tim. 6:8–10).

### Contentment Must Be Learned

The Apostle Paul said, “I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content”

(Philippians 4:11). It is obvious then that we do not just wake up one morning and realize we are content. It is a state of mind that we must acquire through the discipline of the word of God. It is something that comes through the faithful practice of the religion of Jesus Christ (I Timothy 6:6).

We may learn to be content by following the example of Christ. Jesus did not possess a lot of things (Matthew 8:20), but surely He was one of the happiest men that ever lived. He understood that life is not measured by the size of one's bank account (Luke 12:15; Matthew 6:19-21, 25). He learned to trust in the Providence of God and the goodness of His brethren (Luke 6:27-38; Matthew 6:33). He was a giver not a taker (Acts 20:35).

We can learn contentment from the discipline of suffering. We can be perfected through suffering even Jesus was perfected (Hebrews 2:11). Trials build character which is of greater worth than things (1 Peter 1:5-7). Through suffering we develop greater faith and inner strength (Philippians 4:11-13; Romans 5:3-5).

The experiences of life will teach us how to be content if we will let them. The average or common lifestyle produces the heartiest people and those most likely to be truly reliant upon God (Proverbs 30:8, 9; cf. Hebrews 13:5; Matthew 6:24). Abundance tends toward dependence upon what one possesses (Ecclesiastes 4:6). Poverty often seduces to despair and cynicism (I Timothy 6:6-10). But a life filled with hard work

and a thrifty lifestyle brings one to know that God is good and takes care of the righteous (Ecclesiastes 5:12; Proverbs 11:28; 22:4; 1 Peter 3:12). It is important that men learn it is what you are and do that endures, rather than what you had and spent (Proverbs 23:5; Ecclesiastes 2:18-19).

We can learn to be content from the examples that are about us. I remember hearing my mother say of the life during the Depression, "We were all poor we just didn't know it." What they lacked in material things they made up for in love and affection. The simple life can be a wonderful life if there is love in the home, whereas we can have both fists full and be miserable because we are consumed with things rather than relationships (Proverbs 16:8; Proverbs 17:1).

Strength of character is what gives enjoyment to one's possessions. Jesus knew it was not having that brought joy but doing (Acts 20:35). When we put our faith and trust in God rather than things (Hebrews 13:5) and get our priorities in order (Matthew 6:33) putting our substance under His authority (Proverbs 22:7; 11:16; 12:11; 21:17), then we will be on the road to contentment.

—Jeff Asher

## FYI: for your information

- **Prayer List:** *Terry & Leon Aldridge, Floyd & Doris Bush, Marjorie Coffman, Mark & Deidra Cone; Dale & Mary Hill, Troy Lake, Jeff & Bonnie McKnight.*

- *Harvey McDaniel*, brother-in-law to *Gerry McDaniel*, died Thursday morning and was buried Saturday afternoon in Carthage. We extend our sincerest sympathy to her and all the McDaniel's family.
- **Youth Class:** No class on 12/25 or 01/01.
- **Singing Class:** Everyone come for this second session on improving our singing as a congregation. Today at 5:00 PM.
- Next years schedule for communion preparation is posted on the bulletin board. Please take the time today to volunteer to prepare the Lord's Table during the 2006.
- *Bob Rushing*, one of the members in Many, LA called this week to commend those brethren that have been over to preach. You have been a great encouragement to them. Thanks for your efforts.

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# Words of Life

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Volume 5 Issue 51

December 25, 2005

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## Teaching Values: Courage

Webster defines *courage* as “the quality or state of mind or spirit enabling one to face danger or hardship with confidence or resolution: the ability to disregard fear: bravery, boldness, intrepidity, valor, fearlessness.” In the Bible *courage* is confidence or assurance in speech (Acts 4:12, 29, 31), virtue, moral excellence, manliness, valor (2 Peter 1:3, 5; Philippians 4:3), the courage of one’s convictions (2 Chronicles 15:8), fearlessness (Hebrews 13:6)

### Bible Examples

There are numerous examples of the exhibition of courage to be found in the Bible. Abraham manifested courage when he left Ur of the Chaldees and came to the land of Canaan (Genesis 12:1–6; 15:1; Acts 7:1–8). Jacob demonstrated courage when as an old man he went into Egypt to obtain God’s promise (Genesis 46:3). Moses’ mother, Jochebed was fearless when she hid her son for three months and then put him into the River Nile (Hebrews 11:23). Moses showed not a faint heart when he resisted Pharaoh and his magicians and led Israel out of bondage (Hebrews 11:27). And, as the Hebrew writer said, “time would fail me to tell” of all the rest who through faith and

courage obtained “a good report” (Hebrews 11:32, 39).

In addition to these numerous examples from the ancient men of faith, there is the supreme example of Jesus Christ who “despised the shame” of the cross and endured “opposition from sinners” leaving us an example so we will “not grow weary and lose heart” (Hebrews 12:1–3).

### Bible Truths Concerning Courage

President Franklin D. Roosevelt said in his first inaugural address, “The only thing we have to fear is fear itself—nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance.” Roosevelt knew that fear is what holds us back in meeting any enemy, whether it was the Depression or the Axis powers. Boldness is rooted in confidence.

The believer has nothing to fear because he is confident through his God. Paul wrote: “He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me” (Matthew 10:28). So long as God is our Helper there is

nothing that man may do to us that He cannot over rule to our good (Romans 8:28).

When Jesus came to the disciples walking on the water, Peter asked the Lord to call him unto Himself (Matthew 14:27–31). Jesus did, and Peter walked on the water. That is, until he took his eyes off of Christ and focused on the wind and the waves. At that moment, Peter began to sink. Jesus caught him by the hand and asked, “O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?” Peter became afraid because he lost his confidence in Christ. Brother and sister we can “walk on the water” so long as we remain confident that we can do all things through Christ (Philippians 4:13).

This does not mean we will never suffer. When Paul affirmed he could “do all things” he had just admitted there were times when he was hungry. Paul was confident that everything would turn out for his good; however, he was not so certain that it would be good (II Timothy 4:6). The confident believer looks even death in face with calmness and assurance (Ephesians 3:12–13).

## Another Example on Point

When the three Hebrews were facing the decision of either bowing to the golden image or being cast into the fiery furnace, courage is what carried them through. Their decision reflects the reality that boldness does not depend upon a deliverance from every hardship or evil experience. When the king demanded a choice this was their reply: "We are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up" (Daniel 3:16-18). They understood they might not come out alive, but they would come out well.

## How to Teach Your Kids to Be Brave

*Give them love.* Perfect love casts out fear (I John 4:18). When small children are sure of the love of their parents and siblings then they are confident that they can meet the trials of daily life. They know that Mom and Dad, Big Brother and Sis are backing them up. That experience learned young in life translates into a powerful faith as an adult. When we are loved by God and love Him, then we lose our fears because we know there is nothing that will cause him to forsake us.

*Give them heroes.* Especially in this day and age, youth need real examples of men of courage. Teach your children about the great heroes of the

faith in the Bible (Romans 15:4). But, also, point them to men who today walk bravely through life serving God (Philippians 3:17). There are many fine saints who have a story to share with a young person.

*Be courageous.* However, the best heroes they could want are two courageous parents. You need to set the example. We all know that the example of others helps us (II Timothy 1:7-9). Therefore, children need to see their parents making the sometimes difficult decisions to do the right thing. Help them understand the costs and sacrifices that are involved in wearing the name of Christ (I Peter 3:14-18).

*Share your experience.* Paul was not reluctant to let brethren know how he was suffering (Colossians 4:18; I Corinthians 15:32). As a matter of fact, the knowledge of what was happening to him helped others endure as well (Hebrews 10:32-39; Philippians 1:13, 14). You can build confidence toward God in young people by letting them know how you and others that have influenced you, have stood fast when trials have come.

*Give encouragement.* When your child is going through the tough times do not stand idly by on the sidelines (Isaiah 41:6). Encourage him, counsel him and, if need be, help him. Let him know you are there if he needs you. Pray for him and enlist the prayers of others for him. Even Moses had Aaron and Hur to hold up his hands (Exodus 17:10-12).

—Jeff Asher

## FYI: for your information

- **Prayer List:** Terry & Leon Aldridge, Floyd & Doris Bush, Marjorie Coffman, Mark & Deidra Cone; Dale & Mary Hill, Troy Lake, Jeff & Bonnie McKnight, Helen Rushing.
- **Youth Class:** No class on 12/25 or 01/01.
- Next year's schedule for communion preparation is posted on the bulletin board. Please take the time today to volunteer to prepare the Lord's Table during the 2006.
- Helen Rushing, the wife of Bob Rushing of Many, LA, is undergoing chemotherapy treatment for cancer. They have asked that we remember them in our prayers.

### Northside Church of Christ

701 W. Cottage Road/POB 456  
Carthage, TX 75633  
(903) 693-8336

#### Sunday

Bible Class.....9:30 AM  
Assembly.....10:25 AM  
Assembly.....6:00 PM

#### Wednesday

Bible Class..... 7:00PM

**Sunday Radio Programs**  
KGAS 104.3FM..... 7:00AM  
CATV Channel 21... 7:00AM  
KMHT 103.9FM... 8:00AM

#### Website

www.bibletalk.net

#### Elders

James Burke (903) 889-3318  
Kerry Henry (903) 836-4438  
Dale Hill (903) 693-3274  
Jim Rhiddlehoover (903) 693-3084

#### Preacher

Jeff Asher (903) 694-2049