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# TRUTH

MAGAZINE



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## The Danger of Congregational Drifting

# Please Enjoy this Special Issue on Congregational Drifting

By Joe R. Price



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**B**y definition, drifting begins gradually. Drifting implies movement away from a given location or point. It is almost imperceptible at first, yet real. Without correction, drifting becomes extreme, as when an object adrift in the ocean ends up far from its original position. Similarly, Christians can drift away from the sure foundation of Christ and His truth.

The Scriptures warn Christians of drifting from the Son of God. The possibility that we go with the flow and drift away from divine truth is a constant reminder to *“give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard”* (Heb. 2:1).

Warnings against drifting from the faith are not new or irrelevant. Since we can *“fall from our own steadfastness”* it is imperative that we examine ourselves to know whether we are in the faith or have drifted from it (2 Pet. 3:17; 2 Cor. 13:5). Faithful New Testament Christians welcome such Biblical warnings, knowing we can drift away from the truth. Personal application requires that we ask relevant questions such as, “Have I drifted? Has the church of which I am a member drifted from the course of truth and changed for the worse? Are we drifting now?”

Churches of Christ are under attack by the agents of Satan. Brethren and entire congregations are being swept away by the currents of this evil world. Paul’s admonition to grow up in Christ so that *“we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with*

*every wind of doctrine”* continues to be needful and necessary (Eph. 4:14). We must keep our eyes open, ever watchful for the enemy’s deceptive snares. *“Therefore, let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall”* (1 Cor. 10:12).

This special series of articles is designed to remind us that, in a variety of ways, congregations can drift away from the moorings of truth and glide into the dangerous and deadly waters of manmade innovations, sectarianism, moral relativism, religious subjectivism, and self-righteousness. This present world promotes a life without moral and doctrinal judgments and restraint. However, the Scriptures provide both. God’s judgments *“are true, and righteous altogether”* (Psa. 19:9). Therefore, His word on error and immorality is final. Furthermore, God’s word provides restraint from sin when put into the heart and obeyed in one’s life (Psa. 119:9-11).

These articles warn churches not to drift away from their faithfulness to Christ. A church’s goal is not to be faithful to a movement, a magazine, a heritage, or just one defining issue, but to the whole counsel of God. The letters to the churches of Asia in Revelation 2-3 give ample warnings against various sins into which five of the churches had drifted while calling them to faithfulness in view of the promised reward. Such warnings from Christ are still needed.

A thread running through this issue is respect and submission to Bible authority. The New Testament of Christ

remains the *“pattern of sound words”* we must hold fast (2 Tim. 1:13). Preaching on how to establish and apply Bible authority is roundly criticized in some quarters, yet it is the very Bible teaching that remains crucial for us to *“rightly divide the word of truth”* (2 Tim. 2:15). Christians and churches must never apologize for the commands, apostolic examples, and necessary inferences in the Scriptures. They define our faith and guide us in *“all things that pertain to life and godliness”* (2 Pet. 1:3; Col. 3:17).

Elders, preachers, and members are being influenced to lay aside book, chapter, and verse preaching and living for a less offensive, more non-combatant gospel. The aim of gospel preaching is not to be offensive. Christians must not be rude, overbearing or mean to others while we *“fight the good fight of faith”* (1 Tim. 6:12). Those who prefer error and sin do not appreciate the battle or those who fight it. Such an attitude constitutes major drift away from the truth while giving aid and comfort to our adversary, the devil. Churches that will not fight the good fight have already drifted into the enemy’s camp.

Much can be learned about a church from observing the kind of preaching it demands as well as the kind of preaching it refuses. Does it demand Bible preaching, or preaching that scratches itching ears? Gospel preaching is about proclaiming the whole counsel of God *“in season and out of season,”* not about entertaining the audience with anecdotes and

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## Christians Under 30

# Serving God While Single

By Ethan Longhenry

Quite often it is a difficult thing to be a Christian and single.

In the church, emphasis is most often placed on marriage and relationships for understandable reasons: most people in the church are married or would like to be married one day. Most young people will find marriage partners and will begin families. It is important for Christians to be continually reminded of God's purposes in and for marriage (Matt. 19:1-9; Eph. 5:22-33); there is a powerful need in every generation for godly men and women to marry, have children, and grow and mature in the faith so as to be able to serve as elders with the assistance of their wives (1 Tim. 3:1-12; Titus 1:5-8). This is right and good; it is good for people to marry, and it is no sin to get married, as Paul says in 1 Corinthians 7:38.

Yet in the midst of encouraging young people to make wise decisions in terms of getting married and developing so as to become elders, it proves very easy to go beyond what is written in Scripture and to miss the important truths made evident in 1 Corinthians 7:1-2, 6-9, 17-40: marriage and the consummation thereof is a good thing, but is not necessarily the best thing. The Corinthians had many questions about relationships and sexuality; Paul told them that each should remain in the condition he was called, to not separate if he were already married, that he could get married and consummate that marriage without sin, but suggested that it would be better, if he were able,

to remain as he was and to refrain from marriage. The married Christian has divided interests; the single Christian can serve God wholeheartedly (1 Cor. 7:32-35). Thus, despite popular expectations and opinions, the New Testament allows for marriage, but prizes those who remain single and fully devote themselves to the Lord!

Modern Western culture is very different from the ancient world in terms of the relationship and marriage process. The situation Paul suggests in 1 Corinthians 7:36-38 would be unheard of today: two people engaged to be married but who have decided to maintain celibate lives. It proved necessary since the Corinthian Christians had not chosen whom they would marry; their parents decided that for them in advance. They could not be forced into consummating the relationship; it was the only choice they could exercise in those circumstances. A person in the ancient world would only be truly single if the family could not find a suitable spouse for whatever reason or if the person had been widowed (e.g. 2 Sam. 13:20; 1 Cor. 7:39). The situation in which young people find themselves today – spending between five and fifteen years after sexual maturity in studies and in work, looking to marry for love – would have been unthinkable in the ancient world.

Nevertheless, a Christian can serve the Lord and serve Him well as a single person. A single Christian is not less of a person because he or she is not part of a marriage unit. While single Christians

no doubt struggle with the temptations of lust and fornication, no one has the right to question the sexual integrity or purity of a Christian just because he or she is single or has been single for many years. After all, temptations to commit sexual immorality continue to exist for married Christians as well (Matt. 5:27-28; 1 Cor. 6:13-20)! No passage of Scripture declares that a single young man is rendered unfit for the proclamation of the gospel and the work of evangelism because he is not married; let us never forget that Jesus and Paul were single and yet preached the gospel, and even discussed issues of marriage and family (Matt. 19:1-9; 1 Cor. 7:1-40; Eph. 5:22-6:4)! Single Christians are not incomplete “projects”; single Christians have the opportunity to serve the Lord fully and can devote time and energy to the advancement of the Kingdom in ways which married Christians, especially married Christians with children, cannot (1 Cor. 7:32-35). Married Christians do well to remember that single Christians are as much part of the body of Christ as they are and ought to be incorporated into the community of God's people so they do not have to feel alone (1 Cor. 12:12-28).

Single Christians do well to recognize the particular challenges and temptations that come to those who are single. Even if they feel as if they are in a holding or waiting pattern, they do well to devote themselves fully to the Lord and His purposes. Being single is not an excuse for being a loner, isolated from the fellow people of God,

or to live so independently as to be unable to effectively serve others and considering the good of one's neighbor above one's own (Phil. 2:1-4). Paul is not commending the single life as a testament to independence, but as an opportunity to fully devote oneself to the service of others (1 Cor. 7:32-35).

Let none be deceived: marriage is honorable and good, and it is not a sin to marry (1 Cor. 7:38; Heb. 13:4). Yet on account of the resurrection it is better to refrain from marriage (1 Cor. 7:32-40). Our hope as Christians is not in the generative power of sex or the passing down of genetic material in children but in Jesus's resurrection and the belief

that we will rise with Him one day (1 Cor. 15:20-58). A Christian who is single should not be seen as an aberration; a single Christian is an affirmation of the power of the hope of the resurrection and the importance of the church as the family of the people of God, providing a place to belong and in which to share in life. May single Christians be honored for the place they fulfill in God's Kingdom, and may we all obtain a share in the resurrection of life! **T**



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## CHRISTIANS UNDER 30!

**Would you like to respond to this article? Do you have requests or suggestions for topics to explore in this space? Please let me know at [deverbovitae@hotmail.com](mailto:deverbovitae@hotmail.com)**

## The Danger of Congregational Drifting

... Continued from page 2

impressing the crowd with eloquence (Acts 20:27; 2 Tim. 4:2). Worship is not a spectator sport. We ought to heed the warning against turning it into a spectacle. Reverence for God and devotion to truth defines true worshippers (John 4:23-24).

The denominations of men have always adapted their doctrines and practices to the desires of the people. Churches of Christ are not immune to this temptation. Expanding the role of women, adding instrumental music to worship, emphasizing educational credentials, the social gospel and moral relativism are just some of the denominational innovations that continue to infect and influence brethren.

A broadening of fellowship continues to plague God's people. The Scriptures are twisted to allow ongoing fellowship in spite of ongoing sin. Voices that rise up to sound the alarm are silenced as

hindrances to unity and guardians of orthodoxy. Brethren are not immune from the temptation to be politically correct. Pressure to either conform or be marginalized continues to rear its ugly, ungodly head. *"Endeavoring to keep the unity of the faith in the bond of peace"* compels us to be vigilant for the sake of truth and souls, while being patient to teach and correct those ensnared by the devil (Eph. 4:3; 2 Tim 2:24-26). That balance is vital, though not easily attained or maintained. Drifting into open fellowship with error easily occurs if we do not remain vigilant.

Corrective discipline is God's way of seeing to it that churches remain faithful and vital in rescuing the erring and protecting the saved. Accepting and following God's purposes for congregational discipline is a God-given marker of whether a church is *"obedient in all things"* or whether it has drifted away from the Lord (2 Cor. 2:9).

Our God is holy, and He demands our holiness. He calls us to soundness and purity. Churches must be on guard to avoid the corruption of sin in all its forms. The gospel is absolute and above reproach. It is our pattern in all things. Each Christian and every church must resist the devil's temptations to go with the flow of error and drift away from the *"simplicity that is in Christ"* (2 Cor. 11:2-4).

These articles will have accomplished their objective to the extent that they help Christians and congregations identify, correct, and guard against drifting from the truth. My thanks to each writer for his time and effort to teach God's word and sound God's warnings against drifting away from Him. **T**

## The Bible and Archaeology

# The Pilate Inscription

By Leon Mauldin

There are many instances where biblical characters are also named in historical records, including inscriptions. The “Pilate Inscription” is a case in point. *Biblical Archaeological Review* reported,

One of the most sensational discoveries at Caesarea was this inscribed stone mentioning Pontius Pilate. Found in a step of the theater, it was originally part of a nearby temple honoring the emperor Tiberius. The stone was moved to the theater to repair a step after the temple fell into disuse. The Latin reads: “Pontius Pilate, the Prefect of Judea, has dedicated to the people of Caesarea a temple in honor of Tiberius” (BAR 08:03 May/June 1982).

The inscription was chiseled in Latin on a limestone block, and is the only known occurrence of an ancient inscription bearing the name of Pontius Pilate. Pilate was governor of Judaea, AD 26-37. This artifact clarifies that Pilate’s rank was that of *prefect*, Latin *praefectus*, i.e. governor, and not procurator. Everett Ferguson explains that the office of prefect “combined military, financial, and judicial authority” (*Backgrounds of Early Christianity*). As prefect, Pilate would have had 500-1000 military troops at his disposal.

Of course, all four gospel records mention Pilate in connection with the (“kangaroo court”) trial of Jesus. John 18 records Pilate’s questioning of Jesus:

33 So Pilate entered his headquarters again and called Jesus and said to him, “Are you the King of the Jews?” 34 Jesus answered, “Do you say this of your own accord, or did others say it to you about me?” 35 Pilate answered, “Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered you over to me. What have you done?” 36 Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world.” 37 Then Pilate said to him, “So you are a king?” Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world- to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice.” 38 Pilate said to him, “What is truth?” After he had said this, he went back outside to the Jews and told them, “I find no guilt in him.”

Pilate really did not want to crucify Jesus. His purpose in scourging Jesus was to satisfy the Jewish leaders and thereby avoid putting Jesus to death (John 19:1-6), but he underestimated their determination. John 19 continues,

7 The Jews answered him, “We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he has made himself the Son of God.” 8 When Pilate heard this

statement, he was even more afraid. 9 He entered his headquarters again and said to Jesus, “Where are you from?” But Jesus gave him no answer. 10 So Pilate said to him, “You will not speak to me? Do you not know that I have authority to release you and authority to crucify you?” 11 Jesus answered him, “You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above. Therefore he who delivered me over to you has the greater sin.”

Perceiving their very clear threat in the words, “If you let this Man go, you are not Caesar’s friend. Whoever makes himself a king speaks against Caesar” (v. 12), Pilate handed Jesus over to them to be crucified (v. 16).



Much of what is known about Pilate outside the Bible comes from Josephus (*Antiquities* 18.2.2 §§35; 18.3.1-2 §§55-62; 18.4.1-2 §§85-99; *Jewish Wars* 2.9.2-4 §§169-77). Also Philo references Pilate as “one of the emperor’s lieutenants, having been appointed governor of Judaea” (Legat. 299-305; compare Luke 3:1) and Tacitus confirms that “the crucifixion of *Chrestus* came by Pilate during the reign of Tiberius” (*Annales ab exsusu divi Augusti* 15.44.4).

The Pilate Inscription displayed in Caesarea shown here in our photo is a replica. The original is in the Israel Museum (see *Truth Magazine* Oct 2014 p.22 for photo).

### END NOTES

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- 2 Yonge, C. D. with Philo of Alexandria. (1995). *The Works of Philo: Complete and Unabridged* (p. 784).

- 3 Massey, M. B. Pontius Pilate. *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*. **T**



Leon Mauldin

Leon has worked with the Hanceville church of Christ, Hanceville, AL for twenty-five years.

## Chili Trip AND PREACHER IN NEED OF support

Johnie Edwards and David Eldridge did two gospel meetings and one preacher training program in Chile **January 2-20, 2015**. Juan Canelo was our translator. Juan is one of the best preachers in the country of Chile. He works with a small group in La Serena, Chile. Brother Canelo is married with two children in college and his monthly support is only about \$800.00. He is very sound in his teaching. He had to stop a very successful area-wide radio program due to lack of funds. Perhaps there are some individuals or churches who are in position to assist him in his monthly support. You can e-mail him for details at: [juanhcanelo@terra.cl](mailto:juanhcanelo@terra.cl).

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*Edwards, Eldridge and Canelo in Chile >*

## Tough Texts

# 1 Samuel 13:1: The Age of King Saul

By Daniel H. King, Sr.

This text has always been considered very difficult to figure out and especially challenging for those who work in the area of textual criticism, i.e. scholars who attempt to determine the original text of Scripture. H. P. Smith, in the *International Critical Commentary* on 1-2 Samuel, judged: “The verse as it stands in the Hebrew is meaningless and evidently a late insertion.” Following this line of reasoning, the *Bible in Basic English* left out the verse altogether in its translation.

Some of the translations do not even attempt a confident reconstruction of this passage, since they consider it too thorny for that. For example, the *American Standard Version* has, “Saul was [forty] years old when he began to reign...” These translators chose to render it thus in spite of the four LXX manuscripts that have “thirty years old” (most Greek mss. leave the verse out) and no Hebrew manuscripts at all that read “forty.” They reasoned that Jonathan was too old at the time to be consistent with a thirty-year-old father.

It has been the conclusion that some writers hold that the text is impossible either to read with confidence its precise meaning or even to reconstruct it sufficiently with the information we have on hand at the present. So they have quit in despair. Hence, the RSV has, “Saul was . . . years old when he began to reign; and he reigned . . . and two years over Israel.” A footnote then says, “The number is lacking in Hebrew.”

The highly respected Masoretic Hebrew Text reads: *ben shanah sha’ul bemaIchō* (literally, “Saul was one year old when he began to reign”). A literal and non-idiomatic reading of the text is impossible, since Saul is clearly portrayed as an adult in his first regnal year. *Young’s Literal Translation* renders it as, “A son of a year is Saul in his reigning, yea, two years he hath reigned over Israel, and Saul chooseth for himself three thousand men...”

There are a number of possible ways of viewing the passage and producing a readable text. Some involve reconstruction of the original Hebrew text whilst others try to read it as it now stands. The latter see the text as difficult but not impossible. Here are a few of the alternatives, along with what we consider to be the best of the lot:

1. The ASV as quoted above ignores the obvious idiom which we shall discuss below and emphasizes the parallel passages in the other historical narratives about the regnal years of the various kings. In 2 Samuel 5:4: “David was thirty years old when he began to reign (*ben sheloshiym shanah dawid bemaIchō*), and he reigned forty years.” The writer of the Book of Kings, also, in stating the age of a king at accession, and then later the length of his reign employs language very similar to this: 1 Kings 14:21: “Rehoboam was forty-one years old when he began to reign, and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem...” (cf. also 22:42; 2 Kings 8:17; 8:26; 11:21; 14:2; etc.).

The strength of this way of seeing the phrase is in terms of the many parallel passages that can be called forth as evidence of this general formula in the history of the various kings. Its formidable weaknesses are that so early in the Samuel narratives this formula may not be expected, and its willingness to ignore completely and leave untranslated the obvious idiom which appears here, along with the fact that the Hebrew text without emendation (generally the last hope of the textual critic) is hopeless and untranslatable. As it stands it is meaningless. It may read “thirty” or “forty,” or perhaps even “fifty.” The *New English Bible* translators (who probably take more liberty with the text than any other group) suggested: “Saul was fifty years old when he became king, and he reigned over Israel for twenty-two years.”

Confusing the situation even further, the ISV has, “Saul was 30 years old when he began to reign, and he ruled for 42 years over Israel.” The *English Revised Version* deals with the problem in exactly the same way. In every instance, however, the singular number of *shanah*, “year,” is changed to read “years” without any Hebrew textual support from any source.

2. The KJV (following the *Bishop’s Bible* and the *Geneva Bible* before it) rendered the Hebrew text in the following way: “Saul reigned one year; and when he had reigned two years over Israel, Saul chose him three thousand men...” The *English Standard Version* follows this same approach and renders



it similarly. This has a clear advantage over the readings which require one or more changes in the Hebrew text (which are not generally justified by the force of adequate alternative manuscript readings). It ignores the attempted reconstruction by the translators of the LXX, who clearly thought that the text was inadequate in its present form. All of them either emended it or deleted it. The strength of this way of seeing the sentence is that it takes the Hebrew text exactly as it stands without any emendation. Its weakness is that it ignores altogether the obvious idiom present in the Hebrew phrase, and it produces a reading that is clumsy and unnatural. Why would the author not simply have said, "When Saul had reigned two years over Israel he chose three thousand men...?"

3. The *Contemporary English Version* like the Catholic *Douay-Rheims Bible* attempts to take into consideration the idiom for Saul being a "one year old" in its rendering, but does so in a most stilted fashion. It has, "Saul was a young man when he became king, and he ruled Israel for two years. Then he chose..." According to these translators, the meaning of the idiom is that Saul was very young at the time of his accession to the throne. The strength of this manner of approaching the text is that it takes the passage on its own merit without requiring a renovation or alteration of the original Hebrew. The weakness of it is that this idiom as rendered in their translation has no parallel elsewhere in classical Hebrew literature. That would not make it impossible, but certainly presents an obstacle to viewing it so.

4. Some writers think the first clause of this verse belongs to the preceding chapter rather than to the present one, either as a part of the whole, or as a chronological note added afterwards. The force of it would be that "these things (related in 1 Sam. 12:1-25) took place in the first year of Saul's reign." And then the writer proceeds in the next place to tell his readers what

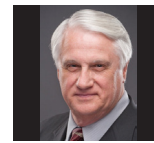
took place in Saul's second year of his reign. Together they certainly represent the most remarkable years of Saul's kingship. In the first he was appointed, anointed, and twice confirmed, at both Mizpeh and at Gilgal. In the second, Israel was brought to the lowest state of degradation by the Philistines as Saul acted unconstitutionally and without divine authority, and at the last was rejected from being king over the people of God. Once more, the strength of this approach is that it takes the text precisely as it stands, without the need for emendation. Its only weaknesses are that it takes no account of the idiomatic nature of the Hebrew phrase itself which is so key to understanding it, and the fact that those who divided the text at first into paragraphs and then chapters did not see the worth of it or perhaps were not insightful enough to appreciate it.

5. Finally, there is the approach which takes into consideration first and foremost the way the Hebrew text actually reads: "Saul was a one-year old when he began to reign..." The Semitic Chaldee or Aramaic version of this passage tells us that "Saul was as innocent as a one-year-old child when he began to reign..." In our view this is the most insightful approach to the idiom of our writer. Note that these translators are themselves comfortable in a Semitic background, speaking and writing a Semitic language like Hebrew. After all, the text may be appropriately compared with 2 Kings 11:21 and the accession of king Jehoash at seven years old, and the Hebrew is almost exactly the same, except that the Hebrew for "years" is in the plural in that place whereas it is in the singular in 1 Samuel 13:1.

Now, this is not to say that we concur with the force of the passage being that Saul was innocent. Rather, we consider that it means Saul was as "immature, inexperienced, and unproven as a one-year-old child when he began to reign." He was as inexpert in the principles of leadership as a one-year-

old child. He was devoid of many of the essential qualities of good shepherding skills of the Lord's flock, and he was dragged down by several unwholesome character flaws. In point of fact, this statement begins a section of the book that demonstrates his total lack of ability as a leader. He was exactly what Israel wanted in a king. But he was not what God wanted the people to have in their king. He was not at all "a man after God's own heart." This we believe to be the force of 1 Samuel 13:1.

Obviously we consider this last approach to the passage to be the most satisfactory. This is so because it accounts for the words of the text precisely in this context without any need for textual emendation or change. And most importantly, it does justice to the idiomatic nature of the statement itself which alleges that, in some sense at least, "Saul was a one-year-old." **T**



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## Mediations of the Heart

# “Blessing” and “Giving Thanks” for the Lord’s Supper

By Kyle Pope

*“Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight,  
O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer” (Psalm 19:14).*

**W**hy do the accounts of Matthew and Mark speak of Jesus blessing the bread but giving thanks for the fruit of the vine? Does this show a difference in what is to be done for each element?

In Matthew’s account of the institution of the Lord’s Supper, the Holy Spirit records that, “...as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, ‘Take, eat; this is My body’” (26:26). Matthew goes on to record that Jesus then, “...took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, ‘Drink from it, all of you’” (26:27). We note that Matthew describes Jesus “blessing” the cup but then “giving thanks” for the bread. This same distinction is found in Mark’s account (Mark 14:22-23). This leads to the question, is there a difference between “blessing” and “giving thanks” for the different elements?

The difference in translation in these texts reflects the use of two distinct words in the Greek. The word translated “bless” comes from the word *eulogeō* which Thayer defines “to praise, celebrate with praises; to invoke blessings; to consecrate a thing with solemn prayers, to ask God’s blessing on a thing...” (*Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*). The prefix *eu-* meaning “well, or good” is combined with a form of the word *legō* meaning “to speak.” Thus it is literally “to speak well” of something (cf. James 3:10 where the noun is used). The single

word in the Greek, rendered “give thanks” is *eucharisteō* meaning “to be grateful, feel thankful; give thanks” (Thayer). The name “eucharist,” which the denominational world applies to the Lord’s Supper, is never used in Scripture as a name for the memorial, but comes from this verb. The idea here is using the mouth to express thankfulness – in the context, thankfulness for the memorial fruit of the vine.

While the accounts of Matthew and Mark might lead us to think that we must ask the Lord’s “blessing” for the bread, yet express “thanks” for the cup, the accounts in Luke and 1 Corinthians give us further insight into how these words are to be understood. Luke records, “Then He took the cup, and gave thanks (*eucharisteō*), and said, ‘Take this and divide it among yourselves’” (22:17). This took place before they ate the Passover meal. This is clear because Luke goes further to record that during the meal Jesus, “... took bread, gave thanks (*eucharisteō*) and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, ‘This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me’” (22:19). Luke then tells us, regarding the cup for which Jesus had previously given thanks and divided, “Likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you’” (22:20). Luke uses the term *eucharisteō*, “give thanks,” in reference to what Jesus did to the bread and the cup. Paul also, although he does not address the fact that Jesus gave thanks for the cup before the meal, echoes the same wording describing

Jesus “giving thanks” for the bread and taking the cup after supper (1 Cor. 11:23-25).

What does this teach us about the different words used in Matthew and Mark? The account in Luke shows us that while a subtle difference in meaning exists between “blessing” (*eulogeō*) something and “giving thanks” (*eucharisteō*) for it, the two words are basically used synonymously. They are both appeals of gratitude to God as well as appeals that God will accept the memorial observance as something well-pleasing to Him.

*Is “blessing” the elements the same as “giving thanks” for the elements? It might be argued that Christ alone, blessed the bread, but Christians cannot “bless” the elements. That is not correct. While it is true that we do not determine whether God accepts something as well-pleasing to Him, or not, Scripture does teach that the elements of the memorial are “blessed” by Christians. One chapter before Paul recounts the institution of the Lord’s Supper, he asks, “The cup of blessing which we bless (*eulogeō*), is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?” (1 Cor. 10:16a). This shows two things: (1) The same things which Matthew and Mark refer to as “giving thanks” Paul speaks of as “blessing” the cup; (2) This is something which “WE bless” as Christians.*

**What does this mean to us?** We should make certain that the prayers we offer in the observance of the memorial focus on the elements and what they

represent. The Lord's Supper is not the time for prayers for the sick, for our troops, or other things for which we ought to pray. However, the very fact that Scripture uses two words (*eulogeō*, "to bless," and *eucharisteō*, "to give

thanks") synonymously for what is commanded regarding prayer for the elements shows us that either or both can be used to describe what precedes eating of the memorial.



Kyle Pope

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## The Ladies' Column

# Teaching Our Children: Exercising the Senses

By Aleta Samford

**Synopsis:** Teaching God's Word effectively takes work, but not in the sense of preparing the best craft or take-home. Teaching requires that we hone the skill of sense-exercising so that our children develop the ability to discern both good and evil.

On a Sunday morning several years ago, little Rebecca entered the room and with great heaviness plopped her books on the table. "I thought David was supposed to be good," she said.

She and the other children had fallen in love with the gentle warrior. He courageously fought lions and bears with his hands. With complete faith in God, he killed Goliath with just one stone. With a heart of honor, he spared Saul's life. What happened?

They were all disappointed in their hero. How could he do the terrible things they had read about? Their senses were engaged. Their hearts were broken. They needed answers from God's Word. I could hardly speak as we recounted the narrative of David's sin. It was the most emotional moment I had ever experienced as a Bible class teacher.

In the September issue, I mentioned a book, *The Seven Laws of Teaching* by John Milton Gregory. Here is one of my favorite quotes:

How different are the results when

this great law of teaching is properly followed! The stimulated self-activities operate in the correct manner, into a busy laboratory. The pupils become thinkers and discoverers. They master great truths, and apply them to the great questions of life. They invade new fields of knowledge. The teacher merely leads the march. Their reconnaissance becomes a conquest. Skill and power grow with exercise. Through this the students find out what their minds are for and become students for life.

"*This great law of teaching*" is the Law of the Teaching Process which describes the teacher in action. Teaching is a workout; but so should learning be. Children need to become "*thinkers*" and "*master great truths*." It was thrilling to "*lead the march*." I had picked up where diligent parents had left off and, as a group, we continued the "*conquest*."

We need our students to react. We need them to feel the disappointment – the sickening feeling – that sin brings, and to know that it can happen to the best of us. We must not become

teachers who do all the thinking and all the talking. True learning and application comes by thinking, not by being told. The challenge comes in honing our skills so that we help them "*find out what their minds are for and become students for life*."

"But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who **by reason of use have their senses exercised** to discern both good and evil" (Heb. 5:14).

Concerning *The Seven Laws of Teaching*, I stated: "It was not an easy read, but buried within were nuggets of truth and potential ideas that led my search for improvement to the greatest teaching resource of all – God's Word." Principles of teaching begin with our heavenly Father, which we will look at next.



Aleta Samford

Aleta is the wife of Gene Samford who preaches for the church that meets in Kemp, TX. She has taught Bible classes for 40 years and, in an effort to help other women join the ranks, presents a series of lessons based on her own experiences and *The Seven Laws of Teaching*. Her email address is [aletas10@sbcglobal.net](mailto:aletas10@sbcglobal.net).

## Questions and Answers

By Bobby L. Graham

### QUESTION:

I read your Q&A article in May's Truth Magazine. Your answer to the question (one concerning the church being divided over the institutional issues, BLG) was not very conclusive. You talk in circles. Get to the bottom line! Does the division spoken of really make sense?

### ANSWER:

Though this writer tries to write concisely and clearly, he admits that he sometimes fails in his objective. It is also possible for one sending a question to fail in this area, and for one reading to see what he wants to see in the answer. In the interest of clarity, I here submit some statements from the answer found lacking by our querist:

(1) In this local-church fellowship there must be decisions concerning which activities scripturally fit into the

church's work and which people are in fellowship with the Lord. Instructions/admonitions to local churches to withdraw from certain ones because of their lives or teachings illustrate this principle (Rom. 16:17; 1 Cor. 5; 2 Thess. 3). With them they could have no part (be in fellowship), but with others they could have a part. Decisions of the congregation should be based on clear approval of the Lord's Word for the practice.

(2) Because of the authority of Christ over every individual Christian and each congregation, many Christians have objected to such practices as church support of human institutions for doing the work which Christ assigned to the churches and congregational support of social/recreational endeavors.

(3) It never "makes sense" when brethren insist on their own agenda instead of the Lord's.

From the first quotation it should be evident that fellowship in a particular activity in a local church depends upon God's approval or authority as reflected in the Scriptures, thus requiring the agreement of the members of the congregation on that matter. When some insist on a course of action about which the New Testament is silent, those objecting are correct to object. The second quotation also continues this same thread of thought. Not only the Scriptures but also their consciences forbid the course desired by some. When this division remains because

the proponents push their activities, those disapproving the course have no choice but to form a congregation where the teaching of the Lord is honored, allowing them to serve Christ in good conscience.

No, as statement three says, it never makes sense when brethren push their projects in violation of the Scriptures and in disregard of brethren's consciences, resulting in the ruin of the local church. From the standpoint of such violation, it makes no sense for such division to take place or to remain; but from the standpoint of honorable conduct in the Lord's work, it makes sense for brethren to separate from unscriptural activities so they can serve the Lord according to His will. If this answer is not what our questioner wanted to hear, possibly he needs to ask someone else.

Such a condition of division can be resolved honorably when those pushing their projects agree to confine the work of the local church to those matters clearly authorized by Christ our Head. **T**



Bobby L. Graham

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# Some Signs a Congregation May Be in Trouble

By Rufus Clifford III

Parents are constantly warned to be aware of signs that their child may be on drugs, alcohol, or depressed. Society spends thousands of dollars informing parents on how to detect these signs in their children. Have you ever considered if it's possible to detect when a congregation is in trouble? Can there be signs that will let a leadership know if a congregation is heading down the wrong road? I have seen some over the years and I pray, just as parents do, we will heed them and take action if needed. Let's notice some of these signs.

## 1. No personal work being done.

The local church, in any given area of the country, has a great responsibility to teach the lost and bring folks to Christ. The Holy Spirit tells us: *"But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth"* (1 Tim. 3:15). Whenever I am told by a member of a local congregation, *"Oh boy, we are really having trouble here,"* I always ask, *"How many Bible studies do you folks have in progress right now?"* Most always, without exception, the answer will be none! You see, the Devil knows that if he can get a group to stop looking **"out"** for lost souls, that will lead to only one thing! They will begin looking **"in"** at each other. When this happens there will always be trouble on the horizon for that group. So when you see this sign, in your congregation, take action quickly or trouble is sure to follow. It is sad that so many congregations have taken the

great commission (Matt. 28:19-20) and made it the great omission!

**2. No sense of personal responsibility.** This is another sign that a congregation is headed for trouble or already in trouble. I see this often in congregations that do not have elders, but it is possible to have it in congregations with elders. To detect this sign just ask, *"What are you doing to help the work grow here?"* Usually the answer will be, *"Well, I used to do a lot, but no one else seems to care, so why should I?"* I believe there is one passage of Scripture that sums up how every Christian's mentality ought to be, whether there are elders in the group or not. The Spirit through Paul says, *"And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ"* (Col. 3:23-24). Most congregations that are in trouble have very few folks with this frame of mind. Notice that the Holy Spirit tells us that our reward will come from the Lord and not men. Notice also the person with this attitude is *"serving the Lord Christ"* and not himself! When a congregation is in trouble, every member should first examine his own frame of mind to see if his thinking is right, and, if it is not, correct it immediately. It's sad that so many Christians have the *"let somebody else do it mentality."* This is sad for them and sad for that congregation.

**3. No real love for God.** This sign may come as a surprise to many but,

when I hear of a congregation in trouble, this always pops up! To detect it simply ask, *"How are the brethren treating each other right now?"* The answer will almost always be, *"Well, there is a lot of gossip and backbiting taking place and many are no longer talking!"* The Holy Spirit tells us how this problem can be remedied: *"I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace"* (Eph. 4:1-3). I never cease to be amazed at folks who claim to love God and yet they won't even show love for their own brethren in Christ. The apostle John addressed this problem in (1 John 4:20). We must understand that if we cannot love those who we can see, then this shows we have no real love for our Heavenly Father who we cannot see! Friends, love for God and love for man embraces the whole of true religion.

Let's always be watchful for these signs, for the Devil knows them well. Determine not to let him win in your congregation. Remember, he doesn't win when there is trouble, he wins when we fail to correct the trouble! **T**



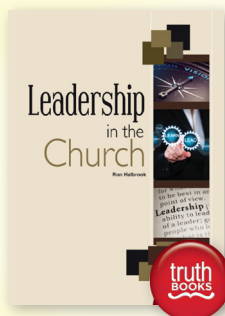
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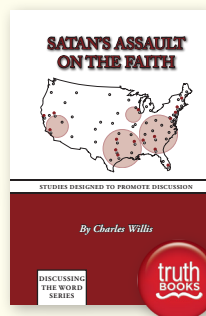
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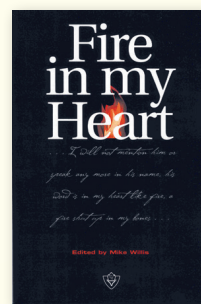
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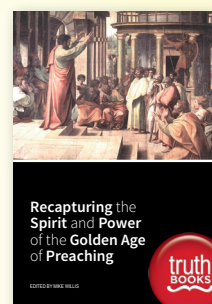
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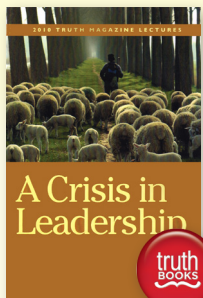
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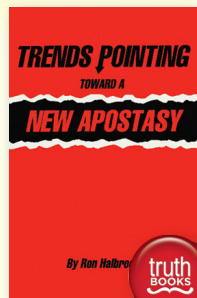
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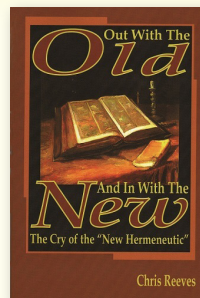
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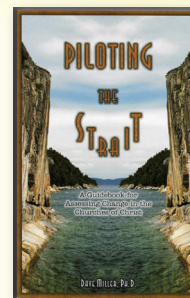
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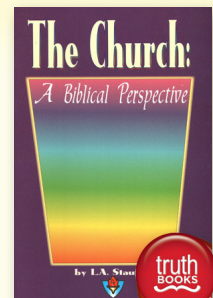
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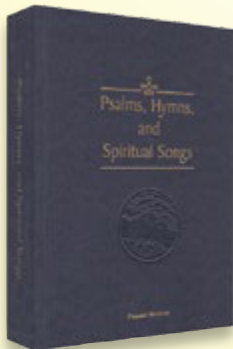
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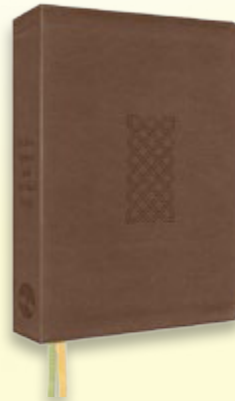
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## The Danger of Congregational Drifting

# Away From Their Faithfulness to Christ

By Jarrod Jacobs

In the early to mid-1900's, when brother J. D. Tant would preach, he would tell congregations, "Brethren, we are drifting!" Those words of warning were needed then and they are needed today. Eternal vigilance is needed to keep congregations from "drifting away" from the truth of God's word. The Hebrew writer said, "Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it" (Heb. 2:1, ESV). Yes, there is a danger of congregations of God's people drifting away from the truth they had once learned and obeyed. The apostle Paul said, "What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me – practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you" (Phil. 4:9). Let these words instruct and warn us that there is a possibility of congregations drifting away from what they had once learned, received, heard, and seen. Beware friends, Philippians 4:9 makes it clear that drifting away from the things we know means leaving God behind!

To help illustrate the reality of congregations drifting from the truth, please read the letter to the church at Ephesus in Revelation 2. Christ told the church at Ephesus that they had left their first love (Rev. 2:4). Sometime between the letter from Paul to Ephesus, and this letter, those folks had drifted away. Christ saw it, and told them to "repent ... or else" (Rev. 2:5). How this drifting specifically began, we are not told. How many years it took to get to this point is not revealed. The fact remains, however, that it happened. In the space of a few decades, these folks had drifted from Christ to the point that they had left their first love. How tragic!

Another example in this context would be the church at Pergamos (Rev. 2:12-17). In this section, we see again a group of people who had started out

correctly. They were following the Lord faithfully. They were commended for the faithfulness they had shown in the past, even to the point of death for some (Rev. 2:13). However, over time these folks had drifted away from what they knew and had practiced, and now some among them were actually accepting and following false doctrines (Rev. 2:14-15). Why this happened and how long it had taken to get to this point is not revealed. Yet, as we read this section, we are keenly aware of the fact that it was going on, and repentance was now needed among these people if they wished to please the Lord (Rev. 2:16).

We could also study the letters to the other churches in Asia at this time and see other congregations that were at various stages of drifting away from God (Rev. 2-3). While some were not there yet, history and our own observation tell us that the churches that were alive in these areas in Bible days no longer exist today. Therefore, something happened to them at some point in history and it caused them to drift and finally be completely swept away into sin and error.

We could make similar observations about congregations in the United States. Some are drifting, some have drifted, and some no longer exist. Some have drifted so far into apostasy that they do not like to retain Christ's name, nor His doctrine! At times, we might be aware of a congregation where the building may exist in a certain geographic location, but the congregation is not "of Christ" anymore. This congregation's attitude, doctrine, and practice are no longer reflective at all of Biblical teachings. What happened? The congregation in question has drifted away from what they once heard (Heb. 2:1). They did not continue to practice the things they had learned, received, heard, and seen (Phil. 4:9).

Why did such a thing occur? What causes congregations to drift away from what they once knew? I wish I had the "cut-and-dried" answer. Sadly, I do not. Depending upon the congregation, the eldership, the preaching that is demanded, and the like, drifting can occur for any number of reasons. In the rest of this article, I wish to address some potential reasons for drifting away from God. Brethren, let us heed God's warnings in this area!

As was stated earlier, there can be many reasons for a congregation drifting away from God. One action that contributes to this drifting is when a congregation refuses to address certain sins. Perhaps in the past, these things were addressed, but now they are not. Regardless of the reasoning behind it, if a congregation is not teaching "the whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:27), then this is a recipe for danger and drifting away from what we have heard (Heb. 2:1). For example, when a congregation's elders, preacher, Bible class teachers, etc., no longer speak about immodesty, then something is wrong. Brethren, when was the last time you heard sermons that dealt with modesty, as well as the sins associated with immodesty? This is a Bible subject (1 Tim. 2:9-10; 1 Pet. 3:3-5; etc.). Why would it not be taught? Another subject demanding our attention concerns the Lord's church and its unique and special place it holds in the Bible (Acts 20:28; Matt. 16:18; etc.). When is the last time we heard a sermon or had a Bible study that spent time talking about the "One True Church" or similar subjects that declare the unique place the Lord's church holds in Bible history? Do our children know that there is only "one body" and that "one body" is the church (Eph. 1:22-23, 4:4; Col. 1:18, 21)? Are we simply assuming that folks know such truths as these? We might include in this



discussion the work and worship of the local church. Are our people aware that our worship is done for a certain reason (John 4:24)? Are folks in the congregation aware of why we do what we do? If not, why not? When we do not address these “basic” elements, we are going to see a congregation drift away!

Another problem observed today is that it is not “politically correct” to call certain actions sins anymore! After all, drinking alcohol is not a sin in the minds of the majority, but a “disease” (this contradicts Prov. 20:1; 1 Pet. 4:3; etc.). Homosexuality is not an abomination before God, we are told, but simply a “lifestyle choice” (this contradicts Rom. 1:26-27; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; Gal. 5:19-21; etc.). Sins such as gambling, abortion, dancing, and the like are regularly ignored in many congregations. Why? Is it not “politically correct” to discuss such things? Are there too many in our congregation who are engaged in such already? Friend, so long as we are satisfied to hold back the truth in unrighteousness (Rom. 1:18), we are going to continue to drift! Who are the ones studying and discussing such matters in their sermons, Bible classes, and other avenues of teaching? If we choose to ignore what is in front of us, we will drift! If we choose to not discuss matters such as these for fear of “offending,” then we will drift! I am reminded of the passage in Luke 8:14 where Jesus said some will have the word “choked out” of them by the “cares, riches, and pleasures of this life.” Have the “cares, riches, and pleasures of this life” choked out the word that needs to ring from our pulpits? There is only one answer: “come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord” (2 Cor. 6:17)!

Again, when pulpits and our lives are silent concerning the subject of marriage, divorce, and remarriage (Matt. 5:32, 19:9), we are drifting. When we are negligent to teach the “rule” (one man, one woman for life, Rom. 7:2-3), for fear of offending those who have not fulfilled and respected their vows, we are drifting! When we refuse to teach that there is only one Biblical exception allowed by God for a Scriptural divorce (fornication) then we are drifting! Have we become

so “politically correct” and so concerned about making someone mad that we will not show them what the Bible says? Brethren, we are drifting!

When is the last time we heard a sermon where the subject of “church discipline,” with a view toward corrective discipline, was studied? This is in the Bible (1 Cor. 5; 2 Thess. 3:6, 14-15)! Are we now so afraid of hurt feelings and the like that we will not discuss it? When we give “lip-service” to church discipline, but are ready to tell others it doesn’t apply in family situations, then we are drifting! Yes, I run into too many people who wish to make exceptions in the family relationship when it comes to corrective discipline in the church. Has no one ever considered the fact that the discipline described in 1 Corinthians 5 was being done to a member of someone’s family? Further, have we never considered the fact that whenever corrective discipline is done, it always affects people in a family because this one being withdrawn from has a family? Refusing to do this God-prescribed work causes a church to drift away from the Lord.

Are the elders, preacher, or other members of the congregation guilty of marginalizing good brethren? Sometimes, sound brethren, faithful brethren, are given the “black mark” in a congregation. This is not right. Are we drifting in this way? Sometimes, if a man has not gone to the “right school,” if he does not write for the “right magazine,” if he does not attend the “right lectures,” if he does not have the “right friends,” or rub elbows at the “right” places, he will be marginalized and ill-treated by the elders, preachers, and members of a congregation. Some brethren have been marginalized because they were called “old-school preachers.” I mean, you don’t want an “old-school preacher” preaching in the congregation! Brethren, what is that? Let us call it what it is – factionalism! Factionalism rears its ugly head at times, and can separate good brethren from one another. This is not right. I remember when Paul was ill-treated by some of the brethren. Paul told the brethren at Philippi that some had taken the opportunity of his being in prison to try to “add affliction” to his bonds by speaking ill of him (Phil.

1:14-16). What good did this do for the Lord’s cause? Let me hasten to say I am not talking about the warning necessary when we know someone is preaching false doctrine (Rom. 16:17; 2 John 7-8). To the contrary, this concerns sound brethren, men faithful to the Lord, who are being marginalized and ill-treated at times by those who are drifting from God. Sound doctrine needs to be preached everywhere and in every church, and we need to encourage folks in this work (Matt. 10:40-42).

Let me also suggest that living in the past can be an indicator of drifting. In other words, when folks speak of fighting for the Lord in the past, but no battles with Satan are currently taking place, then something is wrong. Just because a congregation is “non-institutional” does not mean they have fought all fights and can never drift from the Lord’s truth. Being “non-institutional” does not mean they are not guilty of sinful actions in other areas! So far as we can see in Scripture, every one of the churches in Asia (Rev. 2-3) would be considered “non-institutional.” Does this mean none of those churches were drifting? Read Revelation 2-3 for yourself and answer that question. A group can be “non-institutional” and still be drifting away from God! We cataloged just a few of those ways above. “Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall” (1 Cor. 10:12). This applies in a congregational setting as well!

Sometimes, we sing the song “You Are Drifting Too Far from Shore.” Could this be our problem? Drifting is dangerous because it seems so innocent at first. It could be so slight at first that we do not recognize it. Drifting away can take months or years, but the end result is still destruction! Let us beware, brethren. Let us examine ourselves, see where we are in relation to the Lord, and let us determine not to leave the things we have known and been taught through the Bible (2 Cor. 13:5; Phil. 4:9; Heb. 2:1)! **11**



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## The Danger of Congregational Drifting

# Away From Bible Authority

By Mark Mayberry

**F**ailure to recognize the importance of Bible authority is a danger facing the church today. In many places, this topic is neglected. Some avoid preaching on authority for fear of driving away the weak, the erring, and the uninformed. As a result, brethren do not understand this fundamental subject, or appreciate how it impacts one's personal faith and congregational actions.

The concept that man is the measure of all things, and that human thinking alone distinguishes purity from defilement, right from wrong, and wisdom from folly is very much in vogue. However, this mindset reflects a spirit of rebellion. The 12th Psalm, written by David, depicts God as a Helper against wicked men, who defiantly say, "With our tongue we will prevail; our lips are our own; who is lord over us?" (v. 4).

While men are inclined to follow their own wisdom, Solomon affirms this is folly (Prov. 14:11-12; 16:20-25). Jeremiah declares, "I know, O Lord, that a man's way is not in himself, nor is it in a man who walks to direct his steps" (Jer. 10:23-24). God is the Potter; we are the clay (Isa. 64:8). Let us not defy our Maker (Isa. 29:15-16; 45:9), but rather, allow Him to mold and make us after His will (Jer. 18:1-11).

Knowing that man is not pure, in and of himself (Psa. 14:1-3; Prov. 30:11-14), we must seek purity on God's terms, through the forgiveness that He alone offers, and by living in harmony with His

Holy Word (1 John 3:1-10). Knowing that man is not right, in and of himself (Deut. 12:8-12; Judg. 21:25; Isa. 30:9-11), let us seek righteousness on God's terms, according to His perfect precepts (Psa. 19:7-11; Prov. 12:15; 21:2). Knowing that man is not wise, in and of himself (Psa. 36:1-4; Prov. 26:4-5, 12, 16), let us seek wisdom on God's terms, according to His infinite wisdom (1 Cor. 1:26-31; 2:12-16).

### Acting Without Divine Authority

*Old Testament Examples.* Nadab and Abihu were killed because they offered strange fire to the Lord (Lev. 10:1-11). Jeroboam, the first king of Israel, made wholesale changes in worship, thus causing Israel to sin (1 Kings 12:25-33). King Uzziah was stricken with leprosy because he usurped the priestly function of offering incense (2 Chron. 26:16-21).

*New Testament Admonitions.* Jesus warned against lawlessness, i.e., acting without divine authorization (Matt. 7:21-23; 23:27-28). He denounced vain worship that accords with the traditions of men; therefore, we must heed the age old prohibition against adding to, subtracting from, or otherwise altering the Word of God (Matt. 15:1-14; Mark 7:1-13). Inspired apostles cautioned against heresy, i.e., causing divisions by departing from the divine standard (1 Cor. 11:17-32; 2 Pet. 2:1-3).

### Establishing Bible Authority

In former times, God spoke to

the fathers through Moses and the prophets, but in this present age, he speaks through His Son (Heb. 1:1-4). Having been installed as King upon Zion, God's holy mountain (Psa. 2:6; Heb. 1:8), government rests upon His shoulders (Isa. 9:6-7). Accordingly, Jesus Christ possesses all authority (Matt. 28:18-20; Eph. 1:20-23).

The Greek word *exousia*, oft translated "authority," refers to the "power to act" (Thomas 1849). BDAG offers a more detailed definition: "(1) a state of control over something, *freedom of choice, right*; (2) potential or resource to command, control, or govern, *capability, might, power*; (3) the right to control or command, *authority, absolute power, warrant*; (4) power exercised by rulers or others in high position by virtue of their office, *ruling power, official power...*"

Realizing that we will be judged by the Word of God (John 12:48-50), it is imperative that we respect the authority of Sacred Scripture (2 Tim. 3:16-17; Col. 3:17). Jesus delegated authority to His apostles and prophets who collectively revealed the New Testament (John 14:25-26; 16:12-15; 1 Cor. 2:12-13; Eph. 3:1-5; etc.). Hence, we must accurately handle the word of truth (2 Tim. 2:15), not going beyond the things that are written (1 Cor. 4:6) or preaching another gospel (Gal. 1:6-9), or distorting the Scriptures to our own destruction (2 Pet. 3:16).

The Holy Spirit caused the inspired apostles and prophets to use three

basic methods of authorizing religious actions: direct statements, divinely approved examples, and necessary inferences. Sacred Scripture also distinguishes between general and specific commands. The Lord calls upon us to use our minds in understanding the will of God (Col. 1:9-12; Eph. 5:15-17).

*Direct Statements.* It should go without saying that we are bound to obey any direct statement regarding our obligations to God. A direct statement might take the form of a positive commandment (Acts 2:38-40), a negative prohibition (Eph. 5:3-12), or a declarative statement of fact (Gal. 5:19-23).

*Approved Examples.* The Scriptures also teach by example or illustration (1 Cor. 10:6, 11). Christ conducted Himself so that when men saw His actions they could know how they ought to live (Matt. 16:24; 1 Pet. 2:21). So likewise, the Apostles acted under the direction of the Holy Spirit, and their example guided the early church (1 Cor. 11:1; Phil. 3:17; 4:9).

*Necessary Inferences.* The Bible teaches through necessary inference, i.e., conclusions that must be true even though they are not explicitly stated. For example, a noteworthy Messianic prophecy affirms, “The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek” (Ps. 110:4). This verse necessarily infers three irrefutable facts: (1) There would be a change in the priesthood; (2) There would be a change in the law, for a change in the priesthood necessitated a change in the law; and (3) perfection could not be attained through the Levitical priesthood, thus it was necessary that another priest should arise after the order of Melchizedek (Heb. 7:11-17).

Jesus taught through parables or illustrative stories, and then called upon men to infer the necessary spiritual lesson and apply it to their lives: “He who has ears to hear, let him hear!”

Sometimes we are expected to conclude points of truth from other instruction given. Necessary inference is that which must be true even though it is not explicitly stated. It is something clearly implied by that which is said. For example, our Lord condemned the Sadducees for not concluding that there is a resurrection from God’s statement to Moses in Exodus chapter three (Matt. 22:23-33). Again He used this method in reassuring John the Baptist that He was indeed the Christ (Matt. 11:2-6). This concept appears elsewhere in the New Testament (Eph. 4:9-10; Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22).

Is a “necessary inference” binding upon the conscience? Yes! When careful study of God’s word impresses you with an inescapable conclusion, however conveyed, you must accept it or be untrue to yourself and to God.

*General vs. Specific.* At times, God’s commandments are generic. When the Lord does not specify exactly what He wants us to do or the method by which we are to obey, we may use any action or method that falls within the realm of the command. General commands and examples **include** all that is necessary to the carrying out of that command.

At times, the Lord specifies various particulars. When God specifies exactly what He wants us to do, or the method by which we are to obey, we are not free to do anything else, or use any other methods. Specific statements or examples **exclude** anything outside the scope of that which is specified.

For example, the command “Go teach/preach” (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16) is general, authorizing various means of transportation: walking, riding, sailing, etc. However, the content of the message is specified: we must only preach the gospel (Acts 20:26-27; 2 John 9).

Other important lessons should also be considered, such as “When is an example binding?”, or “What is the proper application of expediency?” or “Is the silence of God permissive

or prohibitive?” If you seek a deeper understanding of these issues, I encourage you to consider some of the good material on the subject of Bible authority available at <http://www.ceibooks.com/>.

## Conclusion

The confusion and division so characteristic of the religious world would not exist if men would only learn to respect the authority of Christ. Unity is attainable if we would only “speak as the oracles of God” (1 Pet. 4:11) and preach those “things which are fitting for sound doctrine” (Tit. 2:1).

## Sources

BDAG = Frederick William Danker, ed., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2000).

NASB = Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations come from the *New American Standard Bible: 1995 Update Edition* (LaHabra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1995).

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## The Danger of Congregational Drifting

# Away From Bible Preaching

By Steve Wallace

Let us note three points relevant to our title.

## **Bible Preaching**

The Lord's church came into existence as the result of preaching that cited, explained, emphasized, and applied *Scripture* (Acts 2:14-36; 13:13-39). Such preaching contained exhortation to respond to the word of God (Acts 2:40; 3:19; 13:40,41). It called attention to God's word and not to the abilities or credentials of those who preached it (Acts 4:13; 1 Cor. 2:1-5). Rather, a clear connection was made between the words preached and the God who had revealed them (Acts 2:39; 3:18, 26; 4:8-12; 1 Cor. 2:2, 12, 13; note the many occurrences of "God" and "He" in Acts 13:16-37).

Churches were established on the pure apostolic teaching (1 Cor. 3:10, 11; Acts 11:19-26). This teaching is the authoritative *Scripture* of the Christian dispensation (2 Pet. 3:15, 16). When problems arose appeal was made to what God had revealed to the inspired men of the first century (Acts 15:1-21; 1 Cor. 7:1-14:40). Lines were clearly drawn between that revelation and teaching from other sources (Acts 20:28-32; 1 Tim. 4:1-5; Titus 1:9-11). Christians were commended to God and His word as their rule and guide (Acts 20:32; Rom. 16:17,18; 1 John 2:24; 2 John 9; Jude 3). This preaching saves from sin and guides to final salvation in heaven.

## **Drifting Away from Bible Preaching**

As Paul's life was drawing to a close he foresaw that "the time will come when they will not endure the sound doctrine; but, having itching ears, will heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts; and will turn away their ears from the truth, and turn aside unto fables" (2 Tim. 4:3, 4). This was the reason he gave for telling Timothy to "preach the word; be urgent in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching" (2 Tim. 4:2). We note a big difference between the message Timothy was to preach and that implicitly desired by those with itching ears. He was to base his preaching on the *original gospel* while they would not endure sound doctrine. They wanted a message suited to *their own desires*. His preaching would sometimes contain stinging *reproof* or *rebuke* while the preaching desired by those drifting from the faith would be designed to *scratch itching ears*. Preaching that cites, explains, emphasizes, and applies *Scripture*, along with exhortations to make needed application, is what has been needed by each generation of God's people, including this generation. In light of all this, it is hoped that the reader can better appreciate the following exhortation from *Scripture*: "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things that were heard, lest haply we *drift away from them*" (Heb. 2:1). This brings up a question.

## **What Are Some Signs of Drifting Away from Bible Preaching Today?**

1. *Complaints that are made.* Such preaching is branded "old fashioned" and part of what is wrong with so-called "traditional churches." First, God's word will always be fresh and like new to those who truly seek it (1 Cor. 15:1, 2; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17; Heb. 4:12). They will want it preached and applied. Secondly, the "traditional" charge is short-sighted and self-condemning. That to which such critics change itself will become traditional with time. All should beware of labeling something as "traditional" which is actually an outward manifestation of faithful Christians continuing in the faith (Acts 2:42; 1 Cor. 16:1-2). Would anyone be so bold as to say that Timothy was being traditional for continuing on in preaching the word (2 Tim. 4:2)?

2. *Finding fault with those who model their preaching after first century preachers.* First of all, let it be remembered that there were those who criticized Jesus and Paul (John 7:12; 10:20; 2 Cor. 10:10). Some who hear Bible preaching say, "I don't like the way he said that." One who is preaching the truth in love has no defense against such a charge as there are perhaps as many ideas about how a certain thing should be said as there are people. Matthew 7:12 applies in such cases. One should think of how he would feel upon hearing such criticism when trying his best to please God with his preaching.

If one preaches against error affecting the brotherhood he is sometimes accused of “trying to control the brotherhood.” First, is there any preacher who writes or preaches a truth from God’s word who does not want to see the widest possible application of that truth? Second, why is this charge generally made when a sermon is preached *against* some error among churches? Has anyone ever heard this charge made when a preacher preaches error or advocates accepting brethren who teach error?

3. *The seeming desire for “ouchless” preaching.* It seems that some today are thinking that preachers should draw a lesson from ouchless band aids. (Younger readers may not remember the days when band aids sometimes stuck to the wound they were covering and, hence, caused pain when they were removed.) The thought seems to be that preaching which identifies and rebukes sin should not be done. Such preaching is thought to drive people away. Rather, hearers should be treated to a diet of preaching that pleases or, at worst, brings a tear to the eye via some sentimental story. As we think back on the opening paragraphs of this article it must be asked, *Is this the kind of preaching upon which the church was founded and upon which it thrived (Acts 2:23, 37; 3:13-15; Gal. 2:11-18; 1 Tim. 5:20; Titus 1:13)?* In this light the demise of the invitation in some churches is better understood. The purpose of the invitation is to cause listeners to think about the urgent needs of their souls in case they are not in a right relationship with God and to urge relevant response. Why would anyone want to stop this practice? One reason would be to spare listeners the pain. As John T. Lewis once wrote, “I would rather have thousands say to me at the judgment, ‘We heard you preach and you hurt our feelings,’ than to have just one lost soul to say, ‘I heard you preach, but you did not tell me the truth’” (“Obedience [2],” *Gospel Advocate*, 10/4/34, p. 953).

4. *Treating the assembly as if it were an audience waiting to be entertained.* This can lead to the idea that only “lettered” preachers and dynamic speakers should be sought to fill pulpits. The fact that a given preacher is a “professor” or “doctor” is now being emphasized by some non-institutional churches. (One preacher, who had gotten his PhD, had the misfortune of having a church list him as “doctor” on the announcements for his meeting with them.) When entertaining preaching is desired, preachers known more for their sense of humor than for their exegesis of Scripture are likely to be in the pulpit. Will this kind of preaching draw people to Jesus (John 6:44, 45; 12:32, 33)?

5. *Turning to “fables” (2 Tim. 4:4).* Something has to fill the void in the absence of real preaching. There are brethren today who have long been known for lending their influence to preachers who have furthered adulterous marriages among churches. Others commend those who teach that the creation week of Genesis 1 was millions or billions of years long. The idea that polygamy cannot be condemned has gained ground among brethren as has the error of denying eternal punishment. Still others claim that churches always met in houses in the first century. Brethren, the general course of apostasy that Paul predicted can manifest itself in many ways. Let us show reverence for his inspired words (Isa. 66:2).

Bible preaching, as described in this article, is what the church and the world have always needed. However, things like those we have noted under our last point both feed and evidence the development of a mindset against sound, solid Bible preaching. **T**



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## The Danger of Congregational Drifting

# Away From Bible Patterns

By Steven J. Wallace

*“...but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Tim. 3:15).*

The church of Christ was designed to be the pillar and ground of truth, and it is sufficient for such a work because the Head of the church is the truth (John 14:6). Further, our Lord chose apostles to represent Him and reveal the whole truth to the church by the Holy Spirit (John 16:13). Either the apostles were directed into all truth, or Jesus lied. It cannot be any other way. Jesus Christ and the apostles have done their part. What remains is for the body (the church) to cling to the head (Christ), that it can support the truth in a world where error runs rampant. That churches can drift away from the truth is obvious from the Scriptures. Corinth was splintered and plagued by all kinds of error. Paul cautioned the church at Colossae, instructing them to hold fast to the head lest they be cheated of their reward by false wisdom, false worship, and false doctrine (Col. 2:18–23). Many in Asia were departing from the pattern revealed to them. Paul had some apostasy on his mind when he wrote in his last letter, “... all those in Asia have turned away from me, among whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes” (2 Tim. 1:15). Timothy was therefore commanded to hold fast to the pattern of sound words, because men would be given to change and would desire ear-

tickling fables over truth (2 Tim. 1:13; 4:2–5). We read in John’s Revelation that Ephesus was on the brink of having her lampstand removed and the churches at Pergamos and Thyatira had tolerated false doctrine. Laodicea had made Jesus sick to where He could not find one thing good to say about them. It may be that the church at Sardis was a trendy and worldly church; they had a name that they were alive, but the Lord looked at their works and pronounced them dead (Rev. 3:1). They were counseled to remember how they heard the word, hold fast to it, and repent (Rev. 3:3). It is hard to imagine any better counsel to be given to churches where the currents of worldliness and compromise flow through today.

### Attitudes Adrift for the Worship

Several churches trend with the world. Many churches who may have a name that they are alive seek to culture their worship with what their culture worships. Since our society has replaced the Biblical roles distinct to being male and female, churches have done the same with their worship. More and more we hear of women serving the Lord’s Supper. Some churches have created “worship leadership teams” to help blend modern religious songs into their *a cappella* praise. These teams consist of four to sixteen people who sit on the first few pews with microphones. These groups are often men mixed with women and have easily transitioned to women taking on more of a leadership

role, where they read Scripture and lead prayer from their seat during worship.

Since our society is entertainment crazed, instrumental music continues to be added to the worship services. Hence congregations that claim to be “of Christ” are following the denominational invention of having two kinds of worship. These churches will have one service as “traditional worship” for the older generation and another service as “contemporary worship.” The one that is traditional will be *a cappella*, while the contemporary service will have mechanical instruments and often an expanded role of women. Such a system mocks Bible authority, defies the goal of unity, and ignores the command to be of the same mind and same judgment (1 Cor. 1:10).

When faced with the various currents of error, let us possess the mind of Christ. While there were many good and capable women whom Jesus could have chosen to serve as apostles, He purposefully chose males. This follows what the law taught regarding the respective gender roles (Gen. 2:18; 3:16). He further underscored that the overseers of the church would not be just men, but faithful fathers of faithful children (Titus 1:5–7; 1 Tim. 3:1–7). Likewise deacons were to be the *husbands of one wife* (1 Tim. 3:12). God called upon woman to submit to man and his headship (Eph. 5:22). This is not to say that there is nothing women can do in the church; however, her role is limited. Women can excel at encouraging others, supporting the

truth, teaching women and children, and serving in various ways, but she is called to not teach or exercise authority over a man (1 Tim. 2:11, 12). This would exclude her from leading the church, leading in worship, or serving as an evangelist (cf. Titus 2:15).

Further, let us remember and hold fast that worship to God is to be about God. We should happily steer away from turning worship into pleasing self. “But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth” (John 4:23, 24). Let us make our worship pleasing in His sight, lest He not respect us or our service (see Cain’s sacrifice, Gen. 4:5). If the Lord wanted instrumental music, He would have easily commanded its use. Nevertheless, He chose only *a cappella*. He has bound that we *speak* and make *melody* in our *heart*, not on a *harp* (Eph. 5:19; Heb. 13:15). “And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him” (Col. 3:17). Ironically, this very passage which calls men to authority is placed right after a verse that calls men to sing to the Lord!

### Attitudes Adrift for the Work

The work of the church is defined in Scripture to be evangelism, edification, and encompasses limited benevolence to needy saints. The church at Thessalonica was instrumental in being evangelistic, for the word of the Lord sounded forth from them (1 Thess. 1:8). Paul commanded the work of edification (1 Cor. 14:26; Eph. 4:12–16). Edification is building up the body of Christ and essentially fulfills the second part of the great commission, “teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you...” (Matt. 28:20). Benevolence, or gifts of charity from the church, was always limited to poor and needy saints (Rom. 15:25, 26; Acts 11:29; etc.). In fact, the church was

commissioned to discern even between widows for such charity (1 Tim. 5:3, 16).

Many are not content with the mission of the church and have sought to spice it up with social programs and burden it with humanitarian efforts that were never a part of its design. Many churches seek a “bait and switch” gospel, where they can draw people in with social programs and then seek to introduce the gospel to them. No first-century church or preacher sought to do this. Today, it is not uncommon to hear of retreats, dinners, games, and other works of frolic plastered on advertisements from the church. The modern youth group is an abject failure which prolongs youthful immaturity and ignorance. To many folks, the church is viewed as nothing but a humanitarian organization to give homeless people shelter, food, and money. Many become angry to learn that this has never been a work of the church. The church’s spiritual mission to teach and uphold the truth so that people can be saved from sin seems foreign to the masses. These carnal additions cheapen the church. Jesus said the poor would always exist and that individuals can give to them whenever they want. However, He exonerated a woman who was accused of wasting money when she gave a lavish gift to Him for the gospel’s sake (Mark 14:3–9). Such should underscore the separation of humanitarian works and the gospel’s focus – the soul. Let us not be carried away by the world’s church. If we are “of Christ,” let us speak and act with His authority. The Bible has provided us all things that pertain to life and godliness; be content to abide within the pattern (2 Pet. 1:3; John 8:31; 1 John 2:24; 1 Pet. 4:11; 2 John 9–11). **T**



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## The Danger of Congregational Drifting

# Away From Reverence in Worship

By Kyle Campbell

**T** rue worship, extended in the proper manner and spirit, will edify Christians. Worship that is not taken seriously is not only ineffective but also tends to wear us down spiritually. Whatever the exact meaning of 1 Corinthians 11:30 is (“*For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.*”), it does show that altered worship (in this context the observance of the Lord’s Supper) is serious.

For a good while, the attitude of Christians in worship has been becoming more casual, perhaps too casual. Some equate worship assemblies with mundane efforts like attending school or going to work. But worship should be the most significant event of our lives. Psalm 27:4 says, “*One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple*” (cf. Psalms 138:2; Acts 2:42-47). When saints assemble, the Lord is with them. Therefore, whatever impedes His people from worshiping Him affects Him.

Any problem in worshiping God is usually caused by a lack of appreciation for the holiness of worship. That lack of love or desire may have first developed because someone made them attend. What my intent is in this article is to get you to see the need for seeing worship as God sees it, then altering your heart

and actions to make it more special. When it is more special to you, it will be more special to God. In that way, you will grow, and more importantly, you will want to worship. Let’s think about what we need to watch and then see what a casual attitude does.

### Areas We Need to Watch

*First, let’s watch how we act.* It is easy to demonize the Internet and talk about how members now text, check/post on Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter during the assembly, but the truth is, distractions in worship have been around a long time. I have seen and regrettably participated in talking, giggling, laughing, gazing around, punching each other, passing notes, sleeping, going multiple times to the restroom, clipping fingernails, making grocery lists, habitually running late, etc., for as long as I can remember. The gospel message is the “word of life” that should be searched and meditated on (Phil. 2:16; Isa. 34:16). Allowing yourself to become easily distracted betrays an interest that is not very strong. Furthermore, some have used “experience enhancers” such as clapping at baptisms, hand-raising/waving, light-dimming, etc. in their assemblies. True reverence and respect for God comes from our heart, not what we work up using external stimuli. One last area we should watch is providing play time for small children during the

worship assembly (denominations call it “Children’s Church”) instead of letting them listen to the sermon and learning to act appropriately.

*Second, let’s watch how we dress.* One might think it goes without saying in the worship assembly, but we must dress modestly (1 Tim. 2:9-10; 1 Pet. 3:1-7). No one who respects the Lord and his/her body will be seen among Christians in revealing or tight outfits. When God clothed the priests in Exodus 28-29, He put them in clothing that was both modest and showed respect toward their office. I know it is in the Old Testament, but could we not learn from how God wanted His servants to look? Denominational churches have advocated that “you don’t have to dress up; it’s just church.” It’s interesting that people who go to funerals will dress in ways they never have before because they realize the importance and solemnity of the occasion. What about worship to our Almighty God? From my observation, there has been a tendency toward casual dress which I fear indicates (but I realize that it does not conclusively prove) a casual attitude toward our worship and other areas of service to God. This is an area where care has to be exercised. There are many matters that are opinion to brethren, but are not a part of the revealed “faith” of the Bible. One needs to recognize the difference between faith and opinion. “The faith” is the body of teaching or



doctrine which we must obey and follow in order to be saved (Acts 6:7; 13:8; 16:5; 2 Cor. 13:5; Col. 1:23; 2 Tim. 4:7; Jude 3). Opinion is an impression resting on human judgment, without clear and satisfactory testimony. An opinion may be a very strong impression, but it is based on a deduction or inference from a passage or passages of Scripture. Through the years, brethren have had varying opinions on men having facial hair or wearing coats and ties when waiting on the Lord's table, women wearing slacks in the assemblies, men wearing jeans or casual shirts, etc. However, if the clothing is modest and it shows respect by virtue of being the best we have, then we cannot argue the point.

*Third, let's watch how we speak.* Even conscientious, godly brethren let their mouths get the best of them. The person who slanders and backbites is a fool (Prov. 10:18). The wicked love ungodly speech (Psa. 52:4), so keep your mouth from speaking wickedness (Psa. 34:13; 1 Pet. 3:10). Proverbs 25:23 guarantees that words like these will cause problems in a congregation (Prov. 25:23). If you allow evil out of your mouth, it will demonstrate to everyone the condition of your heart (Luke 6:45). On the other hand, Christians appreciate men who take the time to speak publicly in a way that is thought-provoking, not cliché (Col. 4:6). Christians also appreciate preachers and teachers who speak sound words in the assembly (sermons and Bible classes) that are consistent with sound doctrine (1 Tim. 4:6, 13, 16; 6:3; 2 Tim. 4:3; Tit. 1:9; 2:1, 7, 10).

### What a Casual Attitude Shows

*First, it shows a lack of respect for the speaker.* The preacher or Bible class teacher deserves respect because of the word they present (Neh. 8:5-8; Heb. 12:25-26). When people act improperly during preaching or in a Bible class, they have a disregard for both the messenger and the message. How would you like to have the situation reversed (Matt.

7:12)? Many young and old view the speaker with the same attitude as they would a secular teacher. They refuse the message by saying, "It's boring." Do you actively work at holding your attention? The Bible is interesting on its own. Although the preacher and teacher must do their part to be engaging, sermons and especially classes are two-way streets.

*Second, it shows a lack of respect for parents.* For the young people, your parents have often sacrificed to give you life, to care for you when you could not care for yourself, to clothe you, feed you, and stand by you. How do you think it makes them feel to learn that you are a disturbance in assemblies or in classes (Prov. 15:5)?

*Third, it shows a lack of respect for other worshippers.* It is hard to teach and to listen when there are distractions and disruptions. Visitors may be watching your actions and judging not only your congregation, but the Lord's church in general. I know it may not seem fair, but it is reality.

*Fourth, it shows a lack of maturity.* Although young people like to think they are older than they are, when they misbehave, they are behaving like children. When adults misbehave, they show their carnality (1 Cor. 3:1; Heb. 5:11). Someone once said, "You're never too old to grow up."

*Fifth, it shows a lack of respect for God.* Worship assemblies are for the purpose of praising and honoring God (Psa. 44:8). However, the previously mentioned actions show a disrespect for God, and the behavior could cause you to lose your soul.

William Temple, the archbishop of Canterbury, defined worship as "quicken the conscience by the holiness of God, feeding the mind with the truth of God, purging the imagination by the beauty of God, opening the heart to the love of God, and devoting the will to the purpose of God." Our actions can either hinder us or others from realizing that worth

and value, or it can increase it. Worship is a tremendous privilege that should be guarded with love, zeal, and a realization of its worth and value (Psa. 29:2; 56:10). **T**



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## The Danger of Congregational Drifting

# Away From the Militant Gospel

By Chris Reeves

I applaud the brethren in charge of organizing this special series of articles on drifting. Like the author of Hebrews, we must constantly warn our brethren about the dangers of drifting: “*Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things that were heard, lest haply we drift away from them*” (Heb. 2:1). Brethren can slowly slip away into sin and error if they are not vigilant. Today, there is a number of signs and trends indicating that members of the Lord’s church are indeed drifting. Drifting away from a militant gospel is one such trend that we want to examine in this article.

Foy E. Wallace once wrote many years ago: “The spirit of pacifism is taking the fight out of the church. But the conflict between truth and error is unending. Victory does not come by truce. God’s terms are unconditional surrender... The church grew when the fight was waged and the battles raged. When the let-up came in the fight, the let-down came in the church. It is said that the denominations do not fight any more. That is because the church has quit fighting and they have nothing to fight. If gospel preachers will fight now as gospel preachers fought then, the denominations will fight now as they fought then and truth will triumph now as it triumphed then” (“What the Church Must Do to Be Saved,” *Bible Banner*, July, 1939, p. 3).

Several years before Wallace wrote these words, J. D. Tant put it simply this way: “Don’t forget, brethren, we are drifting” (*Firm Foundation*, June

15, 1915). What was written years ago by Wallace and Tant is still true today! Each generation of Christians faces the potential of drifting from the militant preaching of God’s word. Today, there are signs and trends among some brethren of their desire for a “softer, more positive approach” in writing articles and preaching sermons. Some brethren no longer want to debate (among themselves or with denominationalists). They refuse to “*contend earnestly for the faith*” (Jude 3) publicly or privately. (Don’t confuse contending with be contentious, Titus 3:2. These are two different things.) Others no longer want to identify error by name even though this practice was done by men like Paul (1 Tim. 1:20; 2 Tim. 2:17).

Drifting from a militant gospel can also be seen in the attempts by some brethren to maintain fellowship with those who are persistent in teaching error (2 John 9-11). Other brethren refuse to preach “*the whole counsel of God*” (Acts 20:20-27). What they preach is often sound, but it is not so much what they preach that is the problem as what they refuse to preach. They will not preach plainly and boldly on topics like immodest apparel, unscriptural divorce and remarriage, social drinking, dancing at the prom, pornography, lack of attendance, undisciplined children, and such like. They don’t want to run off the church members who are engaged in these things. They refuse to present hard-hitting lessons against denominational errors. They don’t want

to run off visitors who may be offended. Some congregations desire gospel meetings that are more like “seminars” with only positive, non-offending lessons presented. It makes you wonder if even Jesus or Paul would be invited to speak in these congregations today.

### What Is the Militant Gospel?

The New Testament gospel, because it is truth, is by nature militant. Truth, by nature, divides and conquers. The light of truth exposes the darkness of sin and error (John 1:4-9; 3:19-21). Truth often makes enemies (Gal. 4:16). Jesus said, “*Think not that I came to send peace on the earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword*” (Matt. 10:34). Jesus came to make war against sin and error and he used gospel truth to do it. The gospel is “*the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God*” (Eph. 6:17). The gospel truth, the word of God, is “*living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword*” (Heb. 4:12). Jesus wielded this sharp “*two-edged sword*” as he denounced sin and error with His words of truth (Rev. 1:16; 2:12, 16). We should do the same!

Yes, we are to be “*speaking the truth in love*” (Eph. 4:15), but this does not eliminate militancy. The gospel by nature is militant and we cannot change that. When others have “*itching ears*” for something other than truth, we must still preach a militant gospel. The militant gospel is a part of preaching in season and out of season, a part of reproof and rebuking, and a part of suffering hardship as an evangelist (2 Tim. 4:2-5). Preaching the militant

gospel is a part of *“being ready always to give answer”* (1 Pet. 3:15) and keeping others from *“being carried away with the error of the wicked”* (2 Pet. 3:17). Preaching the militant gospel is a part of being strong in order to *“overcome the evil one”* (1 John 2:14).

## Why Preach a Militant Gospel?

We preach a militant gospel in order to be the true Christian we need to be. Christians are to be strong and take a stand against the devil by putting on *“the whole armor of God”* (Eph. 6:10ff). A Christian is supposed to be a *“soldier”* in the Lord’s army and not entangled by *“the affairs of this life”* (Phil. 2:25; 2 Tim. 2:3-4; Phile. 2). He is to *“fight the good fight of the faith”* (1 Tim. 6:12; 2 Tim. 4:7) and to *“war the good warfare”* (1 Tim. 1:18). Let us never forget that we are in a spiritual battle with the devil who is our *“enemy”* (Matt. 13:39; Acts 13:10) and our *“adversary”* (1 Pet. 5:8). It doesn’t make sense for a Christian to be a soldier if he is not going to be militant. What soldier is not militant? It is true that the cowardly soldier will not fight (Rev. 21:8) and the AWOL soldier will not fight (1 Tim. 5:8; 2 Tim. 2:12; Tit. 1:16), but do we really want to be this kind of soldier for Christ? Absolutely not!

We also preach a militant gospel to follow the example of godly preachers in the Bible. The prophets of the Old Testament were militant men. Elijah (1 Kings 18:18) and Jeremiah (Jer. 20:7ff; 38:1ff) were militant. John the Baptist was militant (Matt. 3:1-12; 14:1-12). Jesus was militant (Matt. 15:1ff; 23:1ff). Stephen was militant (Acts 7:51-53). Paul was militant. His preaching *“turned the world upside down”* (Acts 17:6). He sought to cast down *“every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God”* and he was ready to *“avenge all disobedience”* (2 Cor. 10:4-6). He did not give in to false teachers (Acts 15:2; Gal. 2:5) and he even withstood Peter to his face (Gal. 2:14). He was *“set for the defense of the gospel”* (Phil. 1:7, 16) and he preached the *“gospel of God in much conflict”* (1 Thess. 2:2). We want

to be like *these* Bible preachers, not like the soft preachers of today who are motivated by pandering, performance, and positivity.

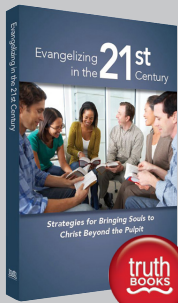
## How Do We Support a Militant Gospel?

There is a great need today in the Lord’s church to support the militant gospel. We need to demand militancy from our preachers. Elders reading this article need to secure evangelists who are willing when necessary to preach a militant gospel. If their current evangelist is not militant when he needs to be and he refuses to change, then elders need to seek another evangelist who will take a stand for truth. Faithful brethren reading this article need to be asking for strong, militant preaching from the pulpit as the occasion warrants it. They need to go to the preacher and elders and demand militant preaching. They should be asking to hear *“right things”* from the pulpit, not *“smooth things”* (Isa. 30:10) or *“smooth and fair speech”* (Rom. 16:18). Bible class teachers and preachers reading this article need to be developing lessons that will confront sin and error. Be honest, preacher, when was the last time you preached a militant lesson against sin and error? How sharp is your sword? Does your preaching *“turn the world upside down”*? If you are not militant, and you will not change, I urge you to quit and do some other kind of work. All brethren reading this article need to be militant as they share the gospel with others at work, at school, and in their community.

## Are You Drifting?

Sword. Enemy. Soldier. Armor. Contend. Fight. War. These words are all associated with someone in the military. They are also words associated with a militant gospel. Brethren, when we sing songs like *“Onward Christian Soldier”* and *“Soldiers of Christ Arise,”* do we really mean it? Are you militant, or have you been drifting? May we never drift from the militant gospel that saves. Like

Paul, we should always pray that we would *“speak boldly, as I ought to speak”* (Eph. 6:20; Col. 4:4). When it comes to our spiritual battle with the devil, sin, error, and false teaching ... make war, not peace! **T**



I recommend a new book by Charles G. Goodall titled *Evangelism in the 21st Century*. Brother Goodall does a fine job of surveying some of the past and present trends among brethren related to drifting from a militant gospel. **You can order this book from CEI Bookstore: 1-855-492-6657.**



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## The Danger of Congregational Drifting

# Into Denominationalism

By Stan Adams

**G**od is a jealous God (Exod. 34:14). He will not tolerate rivals. He will punish all unfaithfulness and sin and will do so with zeal. Since his creation man has been called upon to enjoy a close relationship with God voluntarily. Once committed to that relationship, God holds man accountable for the way he lives and acts. All of mankind is amenable to God, but those who call Him Lord, must adhere to particular standards that He has established. No departure is acceptable.

Under the Law of Moses, God rejected Israel, and later Judah for playing “the whore” (Ezek. 16:28; 23:30; Hos. 4:12; 9:1). God would not tolerate unfaithfulness then and He has not changed His mind today in His church.

There is only one church (Matt. 16:18; Eph. 1:22, 23; 4:4; Col. 1:18; Acts 2:38-47). It belongs to Christ and He is jealous over it. He loves it and gave Himself for her (Eph. 5:24-32). He will tolerate no divided love from His people and no rival is welcome to any degree. The Lord’s church has distinctive worship (Acts 2:42; Eph. 5:19; 1 Cor. 16:2; 11:23-26; Acts 20:7). It has a peculiar mission (evangelize, edify and practice limited benevolence). It has a distinctive way in which one enters it (hear, believe, repent, confess and be baptized for remission of sins and live faithful unto death). The Lord has been very specific and precise in stating how He wants His people to serve Him and love Him. If we do not obey His commandments, we do not love Him (John 14; 15). If we do not

love Him we are unfaithful to Him and “play the harlot” against Him.

Revelation 2 and 3 lists five congregations that were in danger of having their “candlestick removed” due to their failure to serve the Lord as He dictated. Each of these local works was in the throes of departing from the Lord and each was drifting into full-blown denominationalism. In Galatians 1:6 we see that Paul marveled that the churches of Galatia were “so soon removed . . . unto another gospel.” He tells them in verses 9 and 10 that no one has the right to alter the teachings of the Lord. The gospel is the creed the church is to adhere to and nothing else. No man has the right to depart from it without facing the wrath of the Lord.

If you were to ask the average person in the world what he knows about the church of Christ, he might well use the term Campbellite to refer to it. Friends, Alexander Campbell did not establish the Lord’s church. It was established in Jerusalem about A.D. 33 and was founded by Jesus Christ. Campbell lived in the 1800’s and he did not reside in Jerusalem and he was not Jesus Christ. So you have the wrong time, place, and individual; hence, he could not be the founder of the church of Christ. Many Christians are ignorant of this fact and have not studied church history enough to know how to confront this issue. Here in Hickory, NC there are digressive brethren who are accepting the notion that Campbell started the church of Christ. The drifting is not going to take place brethren; it is already here. How

do we confront this error? We study God’s word and go back and teach sermons on the authority of the Word of God and the unique, ancient origin of the church of Christ. We dig into church history and establish that the Lord’s church is spoken of as being in existence long before the 1800’s. It is not one of many – it is the only one and we do not need to apologize for that fact – one head, one body – one church (Eph. 1:22, 23; 4:4).

Many preachers have put aside preaching on the one true church and have adopted the notion that you can “preach Christ” without “preaching the church.” For the life of me I have not figured out how to do that scripturally. You cannot preach a head without a body (Col. 1:18). Instead of preaching what the Bible says, many brethren have become more enamored with preaching about “how to grow a church.” Many have adopted the teachings of denominational men and replaced Bible preaching with motivational sermons on how to get a bigger crowd and attract the most people. While all of us would agree that brethren need to get motivated and we should preach on zeal, we do not sell the truth for a larger crowd or a larger building. Any congregation that is built on such sandy soil is not built on the foundation of Christ and is not a church that is pleasing to the Lord, no matter how many people it has. The Lord said that the “fields are already white unto harvest” (John 4:35). However, many brethren are more interested in getting

transfers (preferably wealthy), than they are in reaching lost souls with the pure gospel. The Lord is the one who brings the increase and may He bring forth many, but those who are converted to a watered down gospel and who do not know that there is only one true church, are little more than wet sinners, who will drift away as soon as the truth is preached. They have been deceived into obedience without all the facts. This is not biblical growth.

The denominations have adopted the “social gospel” to reach the lost. Many in the Lord’s church seem to think that is working and that we should adopt it. Preachers from another generation preached long and loud against these things and said that if someone is a member because of “hotdogs, pony rides and entertainment” then when those things are gone these people will be gone too. They spoke the truth.

With a cheapened message comes a lowered morality. Preaching and teaching against works of the flesh is considered legalistic and too judgmental. We are told that that type of preaching will chase people off. Many do not want to hear the truth on marriage, divorce, and remarriage; gambling; immodesty; dancing; homosexuality; social drinking and a host of other issues that are addressed in the God’s word. They want a “kinder, gentler approach” that does not offend. We are told we can’t “draw lines” and that we are narrow-minded for preaching on subjects like these. Many brethren do not want to hear it and will chase off preachers who dare to preach with such boldness. We remedy this issue by heeding what Paul told Timothy: “preach the word, be urgent in season, out of season, reprove, rebuke and exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine for the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine but will heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears and they shall turn aside their ears from the truth and be turned unto fables” (2 Tim. 4:2-4). No one need be ashamed of the gospel of Christ; it is

still the “power of God unto salvation” (Rom. 1:16).

Denominationalism is not new. It was starting in Galatia, Colossae, Corinth, Ephesus, Laodicea, and many other congregations in the New Testament. It does not happen overnight. It is gradual and many are too blind to see it until it becomes full-blown. Notice that this article deals with the danger of **drifting** into denominationalism. No church sets out to depart the faith. Gradual softening of attitudes due to lack of study and teaching leads to apostasy. To my knowledge there are no sound congregations in Asia Minor. What happened? Gradual acceptance of counterfeit truth and a failure to watch for error. It starts with an attitude that apologizes for loving militance and adherence to the standard of the gospel. It starts by honoring men over God’s word and by cherishing friendships over the precious Truth. These winds are present not only among our institutional brethren but among many whom we would consider “sound.” We dare not sell out the truth for friendship or allegiance to men above God. One does not have to be steeped in error to be dangerous. All anyone needs is a little error and if allowed to roam unchecked among God’s people, the seeds of denominationalism will sprout. May we all go back to asking for book chapter and verse preaching and heed 2 John 9-11 by noting those who teach a generic, watered down gospel and rejecting them and their teaching. **T**



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## The Danger of Congregational Drifting

# Away From Practicing Bible Discipline

By John Isaac Edwards

**T**he Hebrew writer tells us, "...we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away" (Heb. 2:1, NKJV). Drifting away is an ever-present danger! It often takes place without us even realizing it has happened, because it occurs slowly and gradually. One area in which the local church is in danger of drifting away is when it comes to practicing Bible discipline. Thus, we study

### Instructive Discipline

Instructive discipline is preventive in nature, and "an Ounce of Prevention is worth a Pound of Cure."

#### *Illustrated in the Old Testament.*

This is what Moses did in the plains of Moab as he repeated the law of God to the people of God and exhorted them to obedience, pointing out the blessings for submission and the curses for rebellion to the will of God (Deuteronomy). This is what Joshua was doing in his parting speech to the leaders of Israel, entreating them "to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, that ye turn not aside therefrom to the right hand or to the left" (Josh. 23).

#### *Taught in the New Testament.*

Reminding the elders of his work in Ephesus Paul said, "I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house" (Acts 20:20). The aim and end of public

and private instruction may be summed up in these words: "Christ in you, the hope of glory: Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus" (Col. 1:27-28). This must be done with proper balance and patience as Paul charged Timothy, "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (2 Tim. 4:2). Paul exhorted the Thessalonians, "warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men" (1 Thess. 5:14). The Galatians were taught, "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted" (Gal. 6:1). James instructed, "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins" (James 5:19-20).

Everything possible should be done to prevent the necessity of taking corrective disciplinary action.

### Corrective Discipline

Even with the ablest instruction and sincerest appeal, there are occasions where corrective discipline cannot be averted. Man is a creature of choice, and every so often there are those who choose death and evil over life

and good (Deut. 30:15). Corrective discipline, which is punitive in nature, must be applied. This is what happened when Israel could not stand before her enemies and was removed from off the good land. Commands to "put the evil away" (Deut. 13:1-5; 17:2-7, 12; 19:16-20; 21:18-21; 22:13-24; 24:7), the stoning and burning of Achan (Josh. 7), and the deaths of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5) show God never has tolerated sin in the camp. New Testament teaching requires that corrective discipline be administered by the church.

*Matthew 18:15-17.* A personal, private affair may become a public, congregational matter. Jesus said, "And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican." Attempts to resolve such must first take place at the personal level, "between thee and him alone," without anyone else knowing about it!

*Romans 16:17.* Sowers of discord (Prov. 6:19) and promoters of false teaching must be marked and avoided. "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them."

*1 Corinthians 5.* The setting finds common report of fornication among the church and brethren puffed up about it. Notice the proper course of action: "...he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you"

(v. 5), “deliver such an one unto Satan” (v. 5), “not to company with” (v. 9), “with such an one no not to eat” (v. 11), and “put away from among yourselves that wicked person” (v. 13). The purpose of such was threefold: (1) To save the individual, “that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus” (v. 5); (2) To keep the church pure, “Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?” (v. 6); (3) To prove obedience, “For to this end did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things” (2 Cor. 2:9). And it worked! “Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many. So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. Wherefore I beseech you that ye confirm your love toward him” (2 Cor. 2:6-8).

*Titus 3:10-11.* A factious man is to be rejected.

*2 Thessalonians 3:6-15.* Apostolic command demands “that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us” (v. 6). When some of the Thessalonians were “working not at all, but are busybodies” (v. 11), they walked disorderly. This was contrary to the instruction of the apostles which came by example in that they “wrought with labour and travail night and day” (v. 8) and by command as they “commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat” (v. 10). Notice how this was to be handled: “Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread....And if any obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed” (vv. 12, 14). Our relationship with the person does not end here as verse 15 says, “Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.”

Though grievous, Bible discipline is a necessity (Heb. 12:5-11). When we do not practice discipline as the Bible

teaches, we prove ourselves disloyal to the Lord.

## Signs of Drifting Away

If we do not give earnest heed, it’s not a matter of *if* but *when* and *how far* we will drift away! Here are some signs of drifting away from practicing Bible discipline:

*Soft teaching and preaching.* When the teaching and preaching in the local church does not measure up to the Bible standard, we are drifting.

*Not teaching on the subject.* When the church is not being educated in what the Bible teaches about instructive and corrective discipline, we are drifting away! How long has it been since you heard basic teaching on this Bible subject?

*Failure to apply Galatians 6:1 and James 5:19-20.* When we do not seek to “restore” and “convert” brethren in sin, we are drifting.

*When we become weary.* In the midst of discipline teaching, Paul warned, “But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing” (2 Thess. 3:13). When we grow tired to the point of not practicing discipline as the Bible teaches, we are drifting.

*Refusal to practice corrective discipline.* When the local church refuses to withdraw from the disorderly, it is a sign the church is drifting away. Some have been heard to say, “If we started practicing that here, there wouldn’t be anyone left!” or when it is one’s relative, “You just don’t do my son that way. If you do that to him, we won’t be back!” When discipline is viewed as something other than an attempt to rescue a Christian from spiritual death, we are drifting.

*When we substitute for God’s way.* Some must think they know better than God in how to correct the erring Christian. Instead of not having company and not eating, they reason that there needs to be more social interaction (food, fun, and frolic) with

the individual. Do we not believe that God’s ways are higher than our own and will work when practiced correctly and consistently (Isa. 55:8-9)?

*When the church will not discipline those who are not faithful in worshipping God.* Hebrews 10:24-26 teaches, “And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.” When there are those sinning wilfully with nothing being said or done about it, we have drifted away!

May we stay the course of Bible teaching in practicing discipline. The souls of men and women, the purity of the church, and our obedience to the Lord are at stake! If we have drifted, let us make the necessary changes. **T**



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## The Danger of Congregational Drifting

# Away From the Simplicity That Is in Christ

By Joe R. Price

*Oh, that you would bear with me in a little folly – and indeed you do bear with me. For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or if you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted – you may well put up with it! (2 Cor. 11:1-4).*

The Corinthian church was in danger of putting up with the very things that would destroy it. While godly sorrow had worked repentance in the church toward disciplining the fornicator among them, there were still some in the church who had “not repented of the uncleanness, fornication, and lewdness which they have practiced” (2 Cor. 2:3-11; 7:8-12; 12:19-21). New warnings were needed and given by the apostle.

Some questioned Paul’s apostleship in an attempt to blunt the force of the gospel he preached (2 Cor. 10:7-11). They did not appreciate his message of absolute truth or the authority by which

he spoke (1 Cor. 4:6; 14:37; 2 Cor. 10:8-11). Nonetheless, Paul urged the church in Corinth to “bear with” him in some “folly” as he warned them of imminent corruption. They must be pure and faithful to Christ (2 Cor. 11:1-3)! Then, with an ironic turn of the phrase, he rebuked them because they “put up with” those who were teaching and advancing error (2 Cor. 11:4).

Not unlike the first century, ours is an age of selfish relativism. Secular humanism has long since come of age, and its offspring is postmodernism – a society where “no definite terms, boundaries, or absolute truths exist.”<sup>1</sup> Not unlike the Corinthian church, the moral and doctrinal relativism of our day endangers churches of Christ. Some churches are drifting and some have already succumbed to this corruption.

In a world where relativism prevails, the absolute truth of Christ is our sure defense against the deception of Satan. What is the “simplicity that is in Christ” which Paul championed? In Christ we have that which is “single, simple, uncompounded, sound, perfect.”<sup>2</sup> There is soundness and genuineness in Christ. His gospel is untainted by moral and doctrinal duplicity and obscurity. The “doctrine of Christ” contains no shades of gray that cast doubt on faith and practice. We “walk in the light” (1 John 1:6-7; 2 John 9-11). Simply put, absolute truth is in Christ: “I am the way,

the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me” (John 14:6). His absolute truth is revealed in the Scriptures so we can “know the truth,” be freed from our sins and truly be His disciples as we abide in His word (John 8:31-32). If Christ’s gospel is not absolute, then no Christian can have certain knowledge that he or she is truly a disciple and truly set free from sin.

Congregations are drifting away from the simplicity that is in Christ. The “pattern of sound words” is given lip service while appealing to and applying Bible authority is relegated to the dust bin of history as out-dated and irrelevant for today’s Christian (2 Tim. 1:13). Let us hear Paul’s warning in this light.

**Some churches put up with another Jesus being preached** (2 Cor. 11:4). For example, a number of churches accept preachers who teach the error that when Jesus was on earth He was really teaching Jews how to follow Moses. For example,

“Jesus taught the Jews under the law. He was not teaching any Gentiles, he was teaching them what Moses had to say.

“Every preacher and eldership that I know of in the entire Puget Sound – you look at every last one of them – and they agree with what I teach. I do not have a weird approach. So,



it's not going to be an approach that I take that somebody else hadn't had. It's an approach that everybody in all of this area takes, and throughout the country, many, many, likewise."<sup>3</sup>

This false doctrine is not new. In 1990 Samuel Dawson preached the following about Christ's sermon in Galilee in Matthew 5-7:

"...a section that obviously is not part of the new covenant teaching. Jesus teaching Jews, bringing them back to the Law of Moses – and He's going to be reinforcing exactly what Moses said" (emp., his).

On Matthew 5:19: The new covenant was "not going to be revealed for three more years!"

On Matthew 5:32: "Jesus is teaching the same thing in 5:32 that Moses taught in Deut. 24:1-4."

"Don't assume that Matthew 5 and Matthew 19 is addressed to Christians: It wasn't spoken to Christians. He was speaking to Jews, and He was saying it in a context of 'I didn't come to throw Moses out, I came to get you back to Moses the way you ought to have been.'"<sup>4</sup>

In truth, Jesus was "preaching the gospel of the kingdom" in Galilee, not the Law of Moses (Matt. 4:23; 9:35; Luke 4:16-21). To say Jesus was teaching what Moses said is a denial of the real Jesus (John 1:14-18; Mark 1:1; Luke 16:16). It is preaching another Jesus.

Congregations that have fellowship with this error (in order to justify unscriptural remarriages by nullifying Matthew 5:32 and 19:3-9 from present-day application) have already drifted from the simplicity that is in Christ. No Scripture allows individuals or churches to endorse and support false teachers (Rom. 16:17-18; 2 John 10-11).

**Some churches put up with receiving a different spirit** (2 Cor. 11:4). Where the spirit of timidity rules, the errors of sin are left unchallenged and souls are corrupted from the "simplicity


that is in Christ." Remember, "God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind" (2 Tim. 1:7). Instead of boldness in Christ to reprove error, drifting brethren and drifting churches are led by a spirit of tolerance to have fellowship with the "unfruitful works of darkness" (Eph. 5:11). The sin of immodest clothing is not taught against and lovingly corrected (1 Tim. 2:9). The lewdness and lasciviousness of the modern dance is condoned and participated in without objection (1 Pet. 4:3). Social drinking is silently accepted (1 Pet. 4:3). Brethren who imbibe of the spirit of non-confrontation have abandoned the moral absolutes of Christ for the ear-tickling "peace, peace" when there is no peace. The "simplicity that is in Christ" is forsaken while lost souls are neither warned nor rescued, but comforted in their sin (Jas. 5:19-20; Jude 22-23).

**Some churches put up with accepting a different gospel** (2 Cor. 11:4). Churches have drifted into believing there are certain gospel subjects that are too complex and controversial to be preached with absolute certainty. We hear explanations that "nobody has 100% doctrinal accuracy" and charges of demanding "100% doctrinal conformity" when we preach absolute truth. (Pray tell, how much sound doctrine can we fail to conform to and still please the Lord – 5%? 10%? What a foolish, diversionary quibble! Those who make it have grown tired of "the whole counsel of God," Acts 20:27.) Controversy always attends gospel preaching; that is the nature of truth (Matt. 10:34-39; Acts 17:6). Some brethren have taken to a style of preaching that offers different options on a controversial topic, leaving the audience to pick for themselves. Dear reader, Paul said, "preach the word," not "offer multiple choices"!

There is no doubt in Christ. He is absolute, and His word of truth is sound and sure. Satan's crafty deceptions are avoided and pure minds escape

the corruption of error as we remain committed to the "simplicity that is in Christ." "Buy the truth and do not sell it" (Prov. 23:23). Implant the perfect law of liberty into your heart and continue in it, for it "is able to save your souls" (Jas. 1:21, 25). Nothing else will do.

## Endnotes

- 1 "Postmodernism – A Description," *All About...Philosophy*, <http://www.allaboutphilosophy.org/postmodernism.htm>.
- 2 *Analytical Greek Lexicon*, Moulton, 40.
- 3 Lowell Williams, Sermon series on Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage (Part 1), May 9, 2010, Monroe Valley church of Christ, Monroe, WA.
- 4 Samuel G. Dawson, Taped sermon: "The Sermon on the Mount, the Law Of Moses, and the New Covenant," April 15, 1990, Sumner, WA. 



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# Adultery:

## The Sin of Sexual Selfishness

By David Sims

“*Maybe next time he’ll think before he cheats.*” These words in a country song offer a stern warning to adulterers: adultery has consequences! Certainly we don’t condone the acts of revenge described in the song, but the point is clearly made. No less clear is God’s condemnation of adulterers. It was forbidden in the Ten Commandments and in the covenant of Christ (Rom. 13:9). God pronounced the death penalty on adulterers in the Law of Moses (Lev. 20:10). Jesus named adultery as one of the many evils that originates in the heart of man (Mark 7:21). Apostle Paul said that adulterers will not inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6:9). Adultery, a sexual sin involving a married person and a person who is not his/her spouse, is a selfish act in many ways. Let’s consider how. (Note: men and women are equally susceptible to sexual temptations; though I’ve written this article using the masculine reference, the message applies to both men and women.)

**The adulterer puts his sexual satisfaction above the needs of his children.** Children need their parents to guide them and set the example. Is adultery the example you want to teach them? Is this how you would demonstrate your love for them and their other parent? Adultery frequently results in divorce, and the adulterer has declared, by his actions, that temporary sexual pleasure is more important than his role as a parent. Is that the way you want your children to remember you when they grow up? The adulterer is selfish for putting his desires above the needs of his children.

**The adulterer puts his sexual satisfaction above the needs of his wife.** Your spouse needs you to be committed to the relationship. Sharing your body with someone else is a violation of that trust and commitment,

and the adulterer makes himself “one flesh” with the illicit partner (1 Cor. 6:16). Furthermore, he has violated the vow he made to his wife when they married, showing himself to be dishonorable. “Marriage is to be held in honor among all, and the marriage bed is to be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge” (Heb. 13:4). How selfish to put his lusts before his wife’s needs!

**The adulterer puts his sexual satisfaction above the needs of the local church.** The local church needs godly leaders who are above reproach. We need honorable Bible class teachers for the children. A man (or woman) who gets caught in adultery has effectively deprived the local church of whatever talents he may have had to serve it. The whole church is affected and suffers for the adulterer’s sin. There is little doubt who the adulterer is thinking of first when he sins.

**The adulterer puts his sexual satisfaction above the needs of the other person with whom he is sinning.** Not only does the adulterer condemn himself to hell by his sin, but he also condemns the partner. Just ask yourself: are you worth sending *her* to hell for? Romans 13:10 says that “love does no wrong to a neighbor.” How are you loving your neighbor when you enjoy her to such wickedness?

**The adulterer puts his sexual satisfaction above the needs of the Holy Spirit.** Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19-20), but the adulterer willingly defiles it with sexual impurity, making himself inhospitable as a vessel of service to God, thus depriving the Holy Spirit of a servant.

**The adulterer puts his sexual satisfaction above the needs of society.** We need more examples of wholesome purity in this world. We

need more examples of successful marriages in the Bible pattern. The adulterer contributes to the wickedness in this world.

**The adulterer puts his sexual satisfaction above the needs of his own flesh.** It is no secret that many diseases are transmitted sexually. It is no secret that pregnancy is caused by sexual encounters. The adulterer, knowing the risk of disease and unplanned pregnancy, chooses to endanger his body’s health in favor of temporary pleasure. The adulterer destroys himself, just as Solomon said: “The one who commits adultery with a woman is lacking sense; he who would destroy himself does it” (Prov. 6:32).

**The adulterer puts his sexual satisfaction above the needs of his spirit.** The real you, the spirit of your existence which will go on into eternity, needs a pure relationship with God in order to go to heaven. But the adulterer puts his fleshly desires first, and thus condemns his soul to eternal suffering in hell. He has surrendered himself to Satan and is Satan’s slave.

### Conclusion

Truly the adulterer is the most selfish of all people. And yet, while he engages in his sin, he refuses to see his error. “This is the way of an adulterous woman: she eats and wipes her mouth, and says, ‘I have done no wrong’” (Prov. 30:20). If you find lust in your heart for a person who is not your spouse, you must overcome it and resist the temptation! As Jesus told the woman caught in the act of adultery, “sin no more!” (John 8:11). **T**



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# ChurchDirectory

The following congregations have paid for advertising in *Truth Magazine*. Inclusion of churches in this list is not an attempt by *Truth Magazine* to certify their faithfulness to God. We do believe the vast majority are striving to uphold the Word in faith and practice.

To make changes to your ad, contact:  
[tmmikewillis@gmail.com](mailto:tmmikewillis@gmail.com)

## ALASKA

### ANCHORAGE

Rose Street church of Christ  
3124 Rose Street  
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 10 A.M.  
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.  
Evangelist: David Webb (907) 350-8358

## ALABAMA

### BIRMINGHAM

Pine Lane church of Christ  
3955 Pine Lane Bessemer, AL  
(N. side of Exit #6 at I459)  
Bible Study 9:15 A.M., Worship 10 A.M.  
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.  
Evangelist: David Deason (205) 425-2352

### BIRMINGHAM

Vestavia Hills church of Christ  
2325 Old Columbiana Rd. (near I-65 & Hwy. 31)  
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 10 A.M.  
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.  
Evangelists: Harold Comer, Jason Cicero  
or David Banning (205) 822-0018 or 822-0082

### FLORENCE

College View church of Christ  
851 N. Pine St. (Next to University Campus)  
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:15 A.M.,  
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.  
Evangelist: Kenny Moorer (256) 766-0403

### HUNTSVILLE

Chapman Acres church of Christ  
2137 Penhall Dr., NE (I-565, Exit 21, right on  
Maysville Road left on Chapman Avenue,  
right on Penhall Drive)  
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 10 A.M.  
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.  
Evangelist: Isaac Muñoz, [www.chapmanacres.org](http://www.chapmanacres.org)

### MOBILE

West Mobile church of Christ  
129 Hillcrest Road  
Worship 9-9:30 A.M., Bible Study 9:30-10:30 A.M.  
Worship 10:30-11:30 A.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.  
(251) 342-4144 or 342-2041

### MONTGOMERY

Eastbrook church of Christ  
650 Coliseum Blvd.  
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 10 A.M.  
Wednesday 6 P.M., Bldg: (334) 272-4232  
Contacts: Brian Moore: (334) 279-1077  
Charles Martin: (334) 283-2983

### NORTHPORT

Northwood church of Christ  
4601 Northwood Estates Drive  
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.  
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.  
Evangelist: David Maxson (205) 339-6122  
<http://www.justchristians.info>

### PARRISH

McArthur Heights  
church of Christ, 5082 Hwy. 269  
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.  
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 6:30 P.M.  
(205) 686-5978 or 686-5620

### SCOTTSBORO

Eastside church of Christ  
John T. Reid Pkwy., (Hwy. 72, 2 mi. E. of Hwy. 35)  
Worship 9 A.M., Bible Study 9:30 A.M.  
Worship 10:30 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.  
Evangelist: Wayne Chappell, Sr.  
(256) 574-1603 or 575-2664

## ARKANSAS

### CONWAY

Hwy. 65 church of Christ  
271 Highway 65N  
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 10 A.M.  
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.  
Evangelist: Bruce Reeves, Bldg: (501) 336-0052

### CONWAY

Eastside church of Christ  
1540 E. Oak Street 72302  
[www.conwaychurchofchrist.org](http://www.conwaychurchofchrist.org)  
Sun. Bible Classes 9:30 A.M.  
Sun. Worship 10:30 A.M.  
Sun. Worship 6 P.M., Wed. Bible Classes 7 P.M.  
Preacher: Gary Prince, [gwprince@juno.com](mailto:gwprince@juno.com)

### CONWAY

Prince Street church of Christ  
2655 Prince St., (Hwy. 60)  
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 10 A.M.  
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.  
(501) 339-6917

### FT. SMITH

South 46th St. church of Christ  
2323 South 46th Street  
Bible Study 9:45 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.  
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.  
Evangelist: Shawn Chancellor  
(870) 648-2898 or (479) 782-0588

### JACKSONVILLE

church of Christ  
1807 McArthur Drive  
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.  
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.  
(501) 982-6413 - church bldg  
(501) 533-8801 - Jason Lankford  
[www.mcarthurdcc.com](http://www.mcarthurdcc.com)

### JONESBORO

StoneRidge church of Christ  
514 Airport Road  
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.  
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.  
Evangelist: Dick Blackford (870) 933-9134  
email: [rbb612@aol.com](mailto:rbb612@aol.com)

### LITTLE ROCK

church of Christ  
7115 West 65th Street  
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 10 A.M.  
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.  
Evangelist: Don McClain, Res. (501) 847-6677  
Study (501) 568-1062

### PARAGOULD

Village Creek church of Christ  
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 9:50 A.M.  
Wednesday 7 P.M., Sunday 5 P.M.  
Evangelist: Dwight Harrison  
[www.villagecreekchurchofchrist.com](http://www.villagecreekchurchofchrist.com)

### PINE BLUFF

church of Christ  
4700 W. 28th Street  
Bible Study 9:45 A.M., Worship 10:35 A.M.  
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.  
Evangelist: Clarence W. Fell (870) 879-2097

### POCAHONTAS

Westside church of Christ  
3644 Hwy 90 West • P.O. Box 43  
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 9:45 A.M.  
Afternoon 1 P.M., Wednesday 6:30 P.M.  
Herbert Starr, Evangelist

### TEXARKANA

church of Christ  
2301 Franklin Drive  
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:15 A.M.  
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.  
Evangelist: Rick Boswell

## ARIZONA

### GLENDALE

church of Christ  
6801 N. 60th Avenue  
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 9:40 A.M.  
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.  
Evangelist: Steven Harper

### TUCSON

church of Christ  
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Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 10 A.M.  
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.  
Evangelist: Hugh Delong  
(520) 326-3634 or 722-3179

## CALIFORNIA

### ALAMEDA

Alameda church of Christ  
2167 Santa Clara Avenue  
Bible Study 9:45 A.M., Worship 10:50 A.M.  
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.  
Call Us! (510) 523-9547  
[www.alamedachurchofchrist.com](http://www.alamedachurchofchrist.com)

### BELLFLOWER

Rose Ave. church of Christ  
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Bible Study 9:45 A.M., Worship 10:50 A.M.  
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.  
(562) 866-5615, <http://www.roseavenue.org>

### CANOGA PARK

(San Fernando Valley)  
church of Christ  
7054 Winnetka Ave.  
Bible Study 9:45 A.M., Worship 10:45 A.M.  
Afternoon 2:30 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.  
Minister: Bruce Evans (818) 795-5566  
Spanish congregation (818) 701-0112

### DUBLIN

Dublin church of Christ  
11873 Dublin Blvd. CA 94568  
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.  
Wednesday 7:30 P.M.  
Evangelist: Joshua Higgins (925) 828-8747

### FOLSOM

church of Christ  
900 E. Natomas St. • P.O. Box 492  
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Sun. Worship 10:30  
A.M., Sun. Bible Study 4 P.M., Wed. Bible Study  
7:30 P.M.  
Evangelist: David Posey  
(530) 676-9514 or (916) 608-4866  
[www.folsomchurch.com](http://www.folsomchurch.com)

### FREMONT

Centerville church of Christ  
3885 Beacon Ave, Ste D., Fremont, CA 94538  
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.  
Evening 5 P.M., (510) 794-7659

### LONG BEACH

church of Christ  
3433 Studebaker Rd.  
Bible Study 9:50 A.M., Worship 10:45 A.M.  
Evening 5:30 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.  
JP Flores (562) 420-2363  
Mark Reeves (562) 420-9577  
[www.JustChristians.org](http://www.JustChristians.org)

### OCEANSIDE-VISTA

church of Christ  
2020 Sunset Dr.  
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.  
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.  
(760) 940-8003

## COLORADO

### GRAND JUNCTION

church of Christ Western Slope  
2923 North Ave., Unit 3  
Grand Junction, CO 81504  
Worship 10:30 A.M., Evening 5 P.M.  
Wed. Bible Study 6 P.M.  
[www.churchofchristwesternslope.com](http://www.churchofchristwesternslope.com)

### LOVELAND

Poudre Valley church of Christ  
4202 North Garfield Avenue  
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.  
Afternoon 1:30 P.M.  
Evangelist: Richard Thetford (970) 667-0469  
[www.poudrevalleychurchofchrist.org](http://www.poudrevalleychurchofchrist.org)

### MONTROSE

San Juan church of Christ  
1414 Hawk Parkway, Unit C  
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.  
Evening 2 P.M., (970) 249-8116

## DELAWARE

### MILTON

Lighthouse church of Christ  
14574 Coastal Hwy. Rt. 1  
Worship 9:30 A.M., Sunday School 10:45 A.M.  
Wednesday 7 P.M., (302) 644-7379

## FLORIDA

### BROOKSVILLE

church of Christ  
604 W. Fort Dade Ave.  
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 10:50 A.M.  
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.  
Evangelist: V.C. McCormick (352) 796-9803

### DESTIN

South Walton church of Christ  
64 Casting Lake Road  
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 10 A.M.  
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.  
(850) 622-3817  
[www.southwaltonchurchofchrist.com](http://www.southwaltonchurchofchrist.com)

### FORT LAUDERDALE

Northside church of Christ  
912 NW 19th St.  
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.  
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.  
(954) 763-1404

### FORT MYERS

church of Christ  
200 Pine Island Rd.  
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:15 A.M.  
Evening 6:30 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.  
Evangelist: Vernon E. Ford (239) 567-2170

### FORT MYERS

Southside church of Christ  
13641 Learning Court  
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.  
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.  
Evangelist: David P. Schmidt  
(239) 433-2838 or 482-2158

### FORT WALTON BEACH

church of Christ  
6 Lane Dr., Mary Esther, FL  
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.  
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.  
Evangelist: Joey Rankin (850) 244-9222

### FROSTPROOF

Frostproof church of Christ  
40 W. "A" St., Frostproof, FL 33483  
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.  
Wednesday 7 P.M., (863) 635-2607 or 635-4278







**EDNA**  
church of Christ  
301 Robison Street  
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.  
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.  
(361) 782-5506 or 782-2844  
Elders: J. Mercer, S. Mercer & G. Nordin

**EL PASO**  
Eastridge church of Christ  
3277 Pendleton Road  
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.  
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.  
(915) 855-1524

**FORT WORTH**  
Woodmont church of Christ  
6417 Landview (at Alta Mesa)  
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.  
Afternoon 5 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.  
Evangelist: Steve Locklair (817) 292-4908  
www.woodmontchurch.org

**FORT WORTH**  
West Side church of Christ  
6110 White Settlement Rd. 76114  
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.  
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.  
(817) 738-7269

**GRANBURY**  
church of Christ  
4313 Old Granbury Road  
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.  
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.  
817-913-4209 or 817-279-3351

**HOUSTON**  
Fry Rd. church of Christ  
2510 Fry Road (77084)  
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:20 A.M.  
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.  
Bob Pulliam: (281) 832-4633, www.fryroad.org

**HOUSTON**  
Spring Woods church of Christ  
9955 Neuens Rd. at Witte Road  
Worship 9 A.M., Bible Study 10 A.M.  
Worship 11 A.M., Evening 6 P.M.  
Wednesday 7 P.M.  
Evangelist (713) 419-1750  
www.springwoodschurchofchrist.com

**IRVING**  
Westside church of Christ  
2320 Imperial Dr. (closest to DFW Airport)  
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 9:50 A.M.  
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.  
Evangelist: Mark Roberts (972) 986-9131  
www.JustChristians.com

**LANCASTER**  
Pleasant Run church of Christ  
831 W. Pleasant Run Road  
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:20 A.M.  
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.  
(972) 227-1708 or 227-2598

**LUBBOCK**  
Indiana Ave. church of Christ  
6111 Indiana Avenue  
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.  
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.  
(806) 795-3377  
www.lubbockindianavecofc.com

**LUFKIN**  
Timberland Dr. church of Christ  
912 S. Timberland Drive  
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 9:50 A.M.  
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.  
Evangelists: Harold Hancock & Reagan McClenny  
(936) 634-7110 or 632-7070

**MANSFIELD**  
Northside church of Christ  
1820 Mansfield-Webb Road  
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:20 A.M.  
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 6:30 P.M.  
Evangelist: Tom Roberts (817) 466-3160

**MIDLAND**  
Woodcrest Drive church of Christ  
1401 Woodcrest Drive  
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.  
Evening 4 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.  
Evangelist: Jay Martin (432) 689-0955  
or (432) 620-0762

**NACOGDOCHES**  
Stallings Dr. church of Christ  
3831 N.E. Stallings Drive  
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:20 A.M.  
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.  
Evangelists: Randy Harshbarger & Jay Taylor

**PLANO**  
Spring Creek church of Christ  
2100 W. Spring Creek Pkwy., (North Dallas  
Suburb)  
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 10 A.M.  
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.  
(972) 517-5582, www.planochurch.org

**SAN ANTONIO**  
Grissom Rd. church of Christ  
5470 Lost Lane at Grissom Rd.  
San Antonio, TX 78238-2700  
Bible Classes 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.  
Evening 5 P.M., Wed. (Ladies Class) 10 A.M.  
Wed. (Bible Class) 7:30 P.M.  
Terry Starling, Evangelist  
www.grissomroadcoc.org

**SAN ANTONIO**  
Pecan Valley church of Christ  
268 Utopia Avenue, (I-37 S.E. Exit Pecan Valley)  
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.  
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.  
Evangelist: Clyde W. Carter (210) 337-6143

**SHERMAN**  
Westwood Village church of Christ  
314 N. Tolbert  
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.  
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.  
Evangelist: Jim Smelser

**TEMPLE**  
Leon Valley church of Christ  
4404 Twin City Blvd.  
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.  
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.  
Evangelist: Evangelist: Jason Garcia  
email: yourfriendjgar@gmail.com  
www.biblemoments.org

**WACO**  
Sun Valley church of Christ  
340 E. Warren St. (In Hewitt, a suburb of Waco)  
Bible Class 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.  
Wednesday 7 P.M.  
Evangelist: Marc Smith  
(254) 666-1020 or 420-1484

**THE WOODLANDS**  
Woodlands church of Christ  
1500 Wellman Road • P.O. Box 7664 (77380)  
Bible Class 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:20 A.M.  
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.  
(281) 367-2099  
www.woodlandschurchofchrist.org

**VIRGINIA**  
**CHESAPEAKE**  
Tidewater church of Christ  
217 Taxus Street  
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.  
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.  
Evangelist: Steve Schlosser (757) 436-6900

**CHESTER**  
Chester church of Christ  
12100 Winfree St., (Central to Richmond,  
Hopewell, Petersburg, & Colonial Heights)  
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.  
Evening 5:30 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.  
church Building: (804) 796-2374, (804) 385-2725  
or (804) 271-0877

**NEWPORT NEWS**  
Harpersville Rd. church of Christ  
315 Harpersville Road  
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.  
Wednesday 7:00 P.M., (757) 595-9564

**RICHMOND (METRO)**  
Courthouse church of Christ  
Courthouse Rd. at Double Creek Ct.  
(2.2 miles S of Rt. 288)  
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.  
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.  
Evangelist: Gene Tope (804) 790-1629  
www.courthousechurchofchrist.com

**RICHMOND**  
Forest Hill church of Christ  
1208 W. 41st Street  
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.  
Evening 6:30 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.  
Evangelist: Jack Bise, Jr. (804) 233-5959

**RIDGEWAY**  
church of Christ  
2970 Old Leaksville Road  
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.  
Evening 6:30 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.  
Evangelist: Jarred McCrary (276) 956-6049  
www.churchofchristridgeway.com

**ROANOKE**  
Blue Ridge church of Christ  
929 Indiana Avenue N.E. (5 min. from Roanoke  
Convention Center)  
1st Lesson 9:15 A.M., Bible Study 10 A.M.  
Worship 11 A.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.  
(540) 344-2755

**VIRGINIA BEACH**  
Southside church of Christ  
5652 Haden Road  
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.  
Robert Mallard (757) 464-4574

**WASHINGTON**  
**BELLINGHAM**  
Mt. Baker church of Christ  
1860 Mt. Baker Hwy.  
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.  
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.  
Evangelist: Joe Price (360) 752-2692 or 380-2960  
www.bibleanswer.com/mtbaker

**WEST VIRGINIA**  
**CHARLESTON**  
church of Christ  
873 Oakwood Road  
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 10:50 A.M.  
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.  
Evangelist: Jonathan Chaffin (304) 342-5637  
www.oakwoodroadchurchofchrist.com

**CLARKSBURG**  
Westside church of Christ  
Davisson Run Road  
Sunday Morning 9:30 A.M.  
(304) 622-5433  
www.westsidechurchofchristwv.net

**FAIRMONT**  
Eastside church of Christ  
1929 Morgantown Avenue  
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 10:45 A.M.  
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.  
(304) 363-8696 (304) 842-7936

**GLADESVILLE**  
Gladesville church of Christ  
2906 Gladesville Rd., Independence, WV 26374  
Sunday Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 10:45 A.M.  
Sunday 7 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.  
(304) 864-3078

**MOUNDSVILLE**  
**CHURCH OF CHRIST**  
210 Cedar Street  
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.  
Evening 6:30 P.M., Mid-week 7:30 P.M.  
Evangelist: Tony Huntsman (304) 845-4940

**PARKERSBURG**  
Marrtown church of Christ  
825 Marrtown Road  
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10 A.M.  
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.  
(304) 422-7458 or 893-5227

**WELLSBURG**  
Charles St. church of Christ  
836 Charles Street  
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:20 A.M.  
Evening 6:30 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.  
(304) 527-4438 or 737-3124

**WYOMING**  
**RANCHESTER**  
Ranchester church of Christ  
Hwy. 14 West, Ranch Mart Mall  
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 10 A.M.  
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 6:30 P.M.  
Contact: Bob Reich (307) 655-2563

**CANADA**  
**CALGARY, AB**  
Northside church of Christ  
803 20A Avenue NE  
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.  
Evening 5 P.M., Wed. Bible Study 7 P.M.  
+1 (403) 452-5116  
www.northsidechurchofchrist.ca

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**2015 TRUTH LECTURES**  
**JUNE 22-25, 2015 - ATHENS, AL**  
**Refocusing on Evangelism**

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY
8 AM		DISCIPLESHIP: <b>Loving the Law</b> <i>Ken Chapman</i>	DISCIPLESHIP: <b>Loving the Lord</b> <i>Jim Allen</i>	DISCIPLESHIP: <b>Loving the Lost</b> <i>Gene Tope</i>
9 AM		ROADBLOCKS TO EVANGELISM: <b>Fishing With The Wrong Bait</b> <i>Ron Halbrook</i>	ROADBLOCKS TO EVANGELISM: <b>The Secular Spirit</b> <i>Mike Willis</i>	ROADBLOCKS TO EVANGELISM: <b>Stages of Churches</b> <i>Max Dawson</i>
10 AM		<b>Employing Our Credibility</b> <i>Bruce Reeves</i>	<b>Breaking Our Comfort Zone</b> <i>Rick Billingsley</i>	<b>Improving Our Communications</b> <i>Ethan Longhenry</i>
11 AM (MEN)		HELPING NEW CONVERTS MATURE: <b>The Number Who Fall Away</b> <i>Chuck Bartlett</i>	HELPING NEW CONVERTS MATURE: <b>What Can the Church Do?</b> <i>Chris Eppler</i>	HELPING NEW CONVERTS MATURE: <b>What Can I Do?</b> <i>David Cox</i>
11 AM (WOMEN)		EVANGELISTIC WOMEN: <b>The Woman at the Well</b> <i>Betty Tope</i>	EVANGELISTIC WOMEN: <b>Dorcas</b> <i>Wendy King</i>	EVANGELISTIC WOMEN: <b>Priscilla</b> <i>Stacy Gentry</i>
AFTERNOON		<b>Open Forum</b> <i>Max Dawson &amp; Charles Goodall</i>		
EVENING	LOOKING TO THE PAST: <b>Changes in Evangelism: The American Landscape</b> <i>Steve Wolfgang</i>	WORKING IN THE PRESENT: <b>In the Same Hour of the Night</b> <i>Charles Goodall</i>		FOCUSING ON THE FUTURE: <b>Evangelism in the 21st Century</b> <i>Nathan Morrison</i>