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THEME: STEPS AND STAGES OF DIGRESSION

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Steps and Stages of Digression

Digression Is Real and Occurs in Stages

By John Gentry

“We must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it” (Heb. 2:1, ESV).

Easy. We all like things that are easy and don't require a great amount of effort – the least amount of difficulty and effort, the better. This is why so many Americans are overweight – getting fat is easy; maintaining a healthy weight or losing weight is difficult and requires effort. But no one gets fat overnight. It takes a little time (though usually not a large amount of time). All of this is also true regarding our spirituality. Without putting forth any effort to maintain our spiritual health (whether as an individual or as a congregation), we can gradually become spiritually unhealthy. In addition to the passage cited earlier (Heb. 2:1), listen to the following admonitions against drifting, falling away, or falling short.

Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called “today,” that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin (Heb. 3:12-13).

Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience (Heb. 4:11).

Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall (1 Cor. 10:12).

You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability (2 Pet. 3:17).

Going back to the Old Testament, we see many warnings against gradually forgetting God or His ways for His people. The three sermons of Moses in Deuteronomy are primarily designed to warn Israel against digressing once they entered the promised land. Much of Solomon's words to his son in the book of Proverbs contain admonitions against forgetting or neglecting the instructions, commandments, and ways of God's wisdom.

Much of the work of elders involves constantly helping the sheep of the congregation to stay focused on God and His word/way. This work is summed up in the following passages.

Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood (Acts 20:28).

He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it (Tit. 1:9).

The key passage as to the work of a preacher clearly indicates that his work in a very large way focuses on



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encouraging people to avoid drifting from the truth of God's word:

I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths (2 Tim. 4:1-4).

Yes, digression is real, and it easily happens when there is not regular and consistent encouragement to stay in “the strait and narrow” (cf. Matt 7:13-14 in the KJV or ASV). And, as we indicated earlier, this digression doesn't happen overnight. Instead, it occurs in steps and stages. In the preacher's passage of 2 Timothy 4, we notice that before they completely “turn away from ... the truth” they first have itching ears, followed by a lack of endurance to listen and follow sound teaching (balanced, militant preaching and teaching), followed by finding teachers who will teach what they want to hear, which eventually leads to them wandering off into sin and error.

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Just Thinking Out Loud

Some Battles May Be Won or Lost in the Preacher's Study

By Daniel H. King, Sr.

Many preachers today in their presentations to audiences “fly by the seat of their pants,” so to speak. They consider that the work of preaching consists mostly of relating their own and other’s personal life experiences. Telling stories, in other words. And so they get up in front of an audience and relate these yarns (many of which sound like they have been concocted by themselves or others rather than actually having happened). People who have no depth of spirituality or knowledge of Holy Scripture are spell-bound by their methodology. These latter folks are quite certain that their modern preachers bear some sort of direct correlation to the teaching of our Savior. After all, Jesus was the Master Teacher, and He did utilize many parables in His instruction.

They forget, however, that Jesus explained that many of His parables were told in order to cloak important truths from the wise and elite classes of His day and to impart these simple but profound messages to the poor people of the streets of Palestine (Mark 4:34; Matt. 11:25; Luke 10:21). The gospel accounts inform us that Jesus interpreted the meaning of these stories to the disciples in private sessions with them afterward. So they were not merely stories told in order to entertain, but stories that contained deep meaning and profoundly important messages, as it were encoded in them, for the benefit of those who were willing to spend the time and thought essential to unravel their mysteries. Any preacher

worth his salt has himself spent many hours of useful study looking into the meanings of these brief messages. They are not empty or vacuous tales. They are genuine “parables” that are rich with content and heavy with signification.

Those who put forth such flights of verbal fancy in our time also neglect to take knowledge of the fact that many of the sermons of the apostles of Christ are quoted in whole or in part in the book of Acts, and so we have a dependable Spirit-certified record about how they preached. And we observe from Acts that not once did those men make use of parables as their principle method of teaching. In fact, I cannot think of a single one that they used in their proclamation. Too, their lessons were rich in content and filled with Scripture. The same thing is shown to be so in other ways in the New Testament as well. Some of the New Testament epistles have the form and function of veritable “sermons” for the benefit of those to whom they were written. For example, both the letters of James and that of Hebrews have the appearance of sermonic material that might well have been preached in other venues and at other times than in the form that we encounter them in the epistolary presentation in the Bible. They assuredly lend themselves to our usage in that form today. Both of them also are full of rich content as well as sprinkled with citations from the Old Testament Scriptures. Not a single parable can be found in either of them, although illustrations abound in both.

On the other hand, because they are “flying by the seat of their breeches,” many modern preachers depart from this clear biblical pattern and do very little to prepare for their preaching activity, preferring instead to allow “the juices to flow naturally” rather than “artificially” by meditation, prayer, and study. Some of them place the blame for their spiritual laziness on the Holy Spirit, saying that He will guide them in that moment of proclamation, even as He did the early apostles when they were told not to prepare for confrontation with the governmental authorities of their day (Mark 13:11; Matt. 10:19; Luke 12:11). But those passages did not involve the work of regular preaching to a congregation, and besides, no such general promise was ever made to anyone that would extend into our own day and thus pertain to contemporary preachers. It characterized the time of the miraculous and that age only.

If we cannot raise the dead as they had the power to do, why do we think that we will have the power to preach without preparation as some claim that they did? Where is the text that justifies preaching devoid of preparation? Where is there a sermon recorded in the documents of the New Testament that was delivered with something in mind rather than the salvation of the souls of men or else the instruction of the minds of men in the essentials of the gospel of Jesus Christ? It cannot be found! A sermon must be full of valuable content and such content must be studied and prepared in order to be delivered ►

for the consideration of an intelligent audience. Every sermon recorded from the lips of Jesus or His apostles was full of such rich meaning and instruction. Ours ought to be also.

As regards the importance of rich and biblical content in the message we deliver to listeners, C. H. Spurgeon once insightfully observed:

Nothing can compensate for the absence of teaching; all the rhetoric in the world is but chaff to the wheat in contrast to the Gospel of our salvation. However beautiful the sower's basket, it is a miserable mockery if it be without seed. The grandest discourse ever delivered is an ostentatious failure if the doctrine of the grace of God is absent from it; it sweeps over men's heads like a cloud, but it distributes no rain upon the thirsty earth; and therefore the remembrance of it to souls taught wisdom by an experience of pressing need is one of disappointment or worse. A man's style may be as fascinating as that of the authoress of whom one said, "that she should write with a crystal pen dipped in dew upon silver paper, and use for pounce the dust of a butterfly's wing"; but to an audience whose souls are in instant jeopardy, what will mere elegance be but "altogether lighter than vanity"?

Horses are not to be judged by their bells or their trappings, but by limb and bone and blood; and sermons, when criticized by judicious hearers, are largely measured by the amount of the Gospel truth and force of Gospel spirit which they contain ("Sermons: Their Matter," *Lectures to My Students*; quoted in *Selected Readings in Preaching*, 53).

Spurgeon had it right on that count. Content is king as regards preaching. Style and method may play to the whims of some listeners who are accustomed in our own day to what Hollywood illustrates by its ordinary fare; but only rich content is a blessing to the hearer. Only right teaching will change the sinner into a saint. Only gospel truth will instruct the heart in the

doctrine of Christ and the faith once for all delivered to the saints.

Hence, careful preparation is essential to proper proclamation of the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The battle of ideas is won in the study, not in the pulpit, for it is in the study that preparation is made for preaching. The preaching moment is a product. The preacher's study is the factory or laboratory that produces that product. As J. H. Jowett pointed out:

What manner of man must the preacher be when he enters his workshop, and what kind of work shall he do? A little while ago I was reading the life of a very distinguished English judge, Lord Bowen, and in an illuminating statement of the powers and qualities required for service at the bar he used these words: "Cases are won in chambers." That is to say, so far as the barrister is concerned, his critical arena is not the public court but his own private room. Cases are not won by jaunty "sorties" of flashing appeal, but by well-marshalled facts and disciplined arguments marching solidly together in invincible strength. "Cases are won in chambers." And if a barrister is to practically conquer his jury before he meets them, by the victorious strength and sway of his preparations, shall it be otherwise with a preacher, before he seeks the verdict of his congregation? With us, too, "cases are won in chambers." Men are not deeply influenced by extemporized thought. They are not carried along by a current of fluency which is ignorant where it is going. Mere talkativeness will not put people into bonds. Happy-go-lucky sermons will not lay strong constraint upon the heart. Preaching that costs nothing accomplishes nothing. If the study is a lounge the pulpit will be an impertinence.

It is, therefore, imperative that the preacher go into his study to do hard work. We must make the businessman in our congregation feel that we are his peer in labor. There is no man so speedily discovered as an idle minister, and there is no man

who is visited by swifter contempt. We may hide some things, but our idleness is as obtrusive as though the name of sluggard were branded on our foreheads. And indeed it is! ("*The Preacher and His Study*" from *The Preacher: His Life and Work*; quoted in *Selected Readings in Preaching*, 111-112).

If a man is to inhabit the environs of the pulpit, then let him spend much time in preparation for his work before he goes there, gathering the tools of his occupation, sharpening his wits and enlarging his mind just as the blade of the ancient soldier was sharpened to a razor's edge before entering into conflict. Those who preach ought to be prepared for preaching before they attempt to do it. We have often heard preachers criticized for their ignorance of certain matters or else their lack of preparation in dealing with specific issues that have come before the people of God. We have known of men who have been captivated by their hobbies and entertainments to the detriment of their understanding of the profound truths of Christianity. There is no excuse for any of this. Time spent in the study doing hard work will fix any such problem, but flash and flair cannot cover up for indolence or too much time spent on other indulgences.

On the other hand, we have also known men with precious little formal education who over the years have become scholars of the first rank because of thousands of hours of time spent reading and studying in order to fill the voids in their knowledge. Such men are the stuff of which legends are made in the pulpit. Learning should be a lifetime vocation for a preacher. Every week of the preacher's active life should be filled with new adventures in learning, exploring books and materials related to Holy Scripture and every other topic that might concern him in his work of teaching and preaching.

The Lord will not look kindly upon our offering of less than our very best on his behalf. Some spiritual battles ►

A City from David's Time – and Kingdom? – in the Valley of Elah

By Luke Chandler

Article synopsis: Skeptics have regarded the biblical stories of the United Kingdom as embellished tales. A new archaeological site on the Judah/Philistine border, in the same place where David killed Goliath, may give physical evidence of the earliest biblical kingdom.

Since the 1980s, some scholars have doubted the existence of Israel's United Kingdom under Saul, David, and Solomon. According to the Bible, Israel's tribes first formed a central monarchy a little before 1000 BC. Skeptics insist the stories of the first kings are just embellished folk tales. It is more likely, they say, that the Israelite kingdom formed up to a century later than the Bible claims.

Why question the United Kingdom, specifically? The basic reasoning is as follows:

1. A century of archaeology in ancient Canaan has failed to produce physical evidence of central government, such as fortified cities, inscriptions, or monumental architecture, that dates to the time of the United Kingdom.
2. We have these kinds of evidences for the later Divided Kingdoms and for the Canaanite



Archaeologist Yosef Garfinkel and Luke Chandler in front of a massive monolithic stone in Khirbet Qeiyafa's defensive walls.

3. The best explanation for this lack of evidence is that the

civilizations preceding Israel, so we must reckon with this "gap" for the United Kingdom.

United Kingdom, as depicted in the Bible, did not exist.

The skeptics' approach has some problems. There are good reasons why we would find little physical evidence ►

Some Battles May Be Won or Lost in the Preacher's Study

By Daniel H. King Sr. ...Continued from page 5

are won or lost in the preacher's study. If sufficient time and effort are spent there in earnest study and preparation, then the battle of ideas will be won. If the books and Bibles there gather dust while a man is out chasing his hobbies and gathering yarns to spin from the

pulpit, then many battles may well be lost before they are even fought and the Enemy of all that is good may enjoy victory at little cost. Let us do work that is worthy of the cause for which we labor! **T**



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Valley of Elah

of a kingdom in a society just emerging from Tribalism. Effective governments do not form overnight nor do they build their monuments in a day. In addition, major places associated with David and Solomon are now Palestinian neighborhoods and can be excavated little if at all.

There is another, more fundamental, issue with skeptics' reasoning. It is based entirely on negative evidence. "We have no evidence that David was a king.... No evidence of central authority in that period.... No evidence of administration...." These conclusions rely on what has *not* been found. The risk with this is that someone could someday find what is missing and collapse the entire paradigm. This may be what has happened at a new archaeological site.

Khirbet Qeiyafa (pronounced like "Caiaphas") is an ancient ruin overlooking David and Goliath's battlefield in the Elah Valley. The site was excavated from 2007 to 2013. I worked five consecutive seasons, beginning in 2009, with this

archaeological project. What we found has changed the debate over the early Israelite kingdom.

At Kh. Qeiyafa we uncovered a fortified, planned city from the time of Saul and David. It was a fortress town along Judah's border with the Philistines. The fortifications are massive, beyond the ability of tribal shepherds or local villagers. Only a central authority – a government – would have the resources and authority to spend years building something so big.

Was Kh. Qeiyafa an Israelite city? The material culture is not Philistine even though Gath sits just eight miles away. The architecture, pottery finds, and dietary evidence (i.e. animal bones and cookware) are similar to what we find in cities of Judah. It appears Kh. Qeiyafa was a Judahite fort built to guard the border against the Philistines.

We found inscriptions indicating the inhabitants were keeping track of taxes and exercising authority. These are both practices of a central government. In addition, the Philistines

could not prevent the city's construction over several years, right on their border. A powerful army must have protected the builders during that time. Administration and an organized military are markers of central government.

This site has also produced many significant finds. Some illuminate Judah's religious practice just prior to the Temple and may even clarify our translation of Hebrew terms in 1 Kings 6 and 7. There is insufficient space here to describe these, but perhaps future articles can discuss them.

At Kh. Qeiyafa we seem to have "missing" evidences for an early monarchy in southern Canaan. They do not prove that David killed Goliath or that Solomon built the first temple, but are significant in light of what little evidence existed just ten years ago. Some excavation results are still being analyzed and published, so we expect to learn more in coming years. **T**



Luke Chandler

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Questions and Answers

By Bobby L. Graham

QUESTION:

What does the Bible say about knowing each other in heaven?

ANSWER: This question is one which people interested in heaven have long discussed. I believe the Bible teaches personal recognition in heaven, based on some very convincing principles of divine truth. We will be like the Lord, know Him, and therefore be knowable, according to 1 John 3:2. Though incomplete in our knowledge of the afterlife (“it has not yet been revealed what we shall be”), John affirmed our confidence in being like the Lord when He is revealed at the resurrection of all and return of Jesus. The resurrection being the time of the change in our bodies, whether dead or alive (1 Cor. 15:50-54), it follows that the same spiritual state will remain in the judgment and the heavenly state. David’s statement concerning being with his son who had died, found in 2 Samuel 12:23, also implies that personal recognition shall exist. This meaningful and confidence-instilling affirmation becomes meaningless and senseless without the understanding that we shall know each other in heaven.

The Lord’s description of the kingdom – both in its temporal phase and its heavenly phase – in Matthew 8:11f, further implies personal recognition in heaven. That the eternal phase of the kingdom is here included

can be easily seen from the contrast of the state of the “sons of the kingdom” in outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth, a picture of the final punishment of the wicked (v. 12). In vivid contrast is the blessedness enjoyed in the kingdom with saints like Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who were no part of the kingdom of Christ. It is the extension of this enjoyment to the eternal kingdom which is necessarily implied in this passage.

That individuals retain their identity and power to recognize others, as well as their consciousness and mental powers, is seen again in the rich man depicted by the Lord in Luke 16:24. He obviously recognized Abraham when he called him by name. Likewise Jesus’s teaching about the resurrection in Matthew 22:32 involves the survival of individual personality. Along with individual personality also comes personal identity and personal recognition. Long after their deaths God continued to be the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, not just of the beings who used to be Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This provides a very strong basis for believing that we shall know each other in heaven.

The chief objection raised to what I have here taught is one based on emotion, not on a discussion of the passages cited or the argumentation used. Some have objected that, if there is personal recognition in heaven and we thus fail to see our loved ones there, there could be no joy because of their absence. Will the perfect happiness

of the eternal city be marred by such considerations? I try hard to understand why eternal happiness depends on who is present or absent, but I do not yet understand it. We ought to know, however, that we do not love those relatives any more than God does. Appreciating God’s eternal plan will help us to be content with the working out of that plan. It might also prove helpful to ask if there is no personal recognition in heaven and, consequently, no one recognizes anybody, how could there be any joy or bliss in the presence of non-entities and non-personalities? The thought of joy in our present state depends entirely on present experiences, as must its anticipation in the next world, if the assurances of the Bible are not accepted. The truth is that we do not know whether we will be joyous, based on present experiences. After all, we do enjoy life even when we now know that loved ones are living their lives apart from God. God will take care of this matter in heaven, when our joys shall exceed all that we have known or anticipated while in this world (Rev. 21:4). **T**



Bobby L. Graham

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Christians Under 30

Relational Unity

By Ethan Longhenry

When you hear the word “theology,” what comes to mind? Theology seems to be something academics study in their ivory towers; most people assume that theology is an arcane field, perhaps entirely irrelevant, but certainly irrelevant to their lives. And yet, as the “study of God,” *everyone* has a theology. Everyone has some idea about who God is (or, in the case of atheists, is not), and shapes their view of God and themselves accordingly. Theology’s bad reputation is often deserved yet tragically unfortunate, because good, solid Biblical theology can help us ground our understanding of God and ourselves and how we are to serve Him.

The great revelation about the nature of God in the New Testament is God’s *relational unity*. In the New Testament, the Father is God, the Word is Jesus the Son and He is God, and the Holy Spirit is God (John 1:1, 14, 18; 2 Pet. 1:21). And yet God is one (James 2:19)! For generations this mystery has baffled people; how could God be one yet three? He cannot be one God in three manifestations, since the Father and the Son make unique witnesses (John 8:17-18); He cannot be one “full” God and two “lesser” gods, since the fullness of Godhead dwelt in Jesus in bodily form, and He is given the honor of being the Creator along with the Father (John 1:1-3; Rom. 1:25; Col. 2:9). So how can God be one? He is one in substance/being, essence, nature, purpose, will, eternity, and character; as expressed

in John 17:20-23, the Father is in the Son as the Son is in the Father, and they are one. They are one in relational unity: individual Persons yet so connected and unified that we speak of God in the singular!

God’s nature as one in relational unity allows us to better understand God, ourselves, and what we seek out of life. Even though the idea of the Trinity may seem strange to people it is the only way God can be Himself as revealed in Scripture: God is love (1 John 4:8). Love demands an object; if God is one person, He must be the ultimate narcissist (loving Himself) or insufficient in and of Himself, needing *something* to love. But when we understand God is the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, we see how God is love within Himself.

God told us that He has made us in His image (Gen. 1:26-27). From the beginning it has not been good for man to be alone (Gen. 2:18); we yearn for relationship and companionship with other people. In marriage we seek that special relationship with the one also made in God’s image who is complementary to us; the two become one flesh, and they produce offspring with which they can also share in relationship (Gen. 2:24).

Such is not coincidental! God has demonstrated His divine nature through humans whom He made in His image (Rom. 1:19-20): as God is one in relationship, so mankind made in His image seeks after relationship. God shared love within Himself, and made

the creation to love it and share in relationship with humanity who is God’s “offspring” (Acts 17:28). We humans keep searching for what we feel is missing in our lives; we only truly find it when we are restored in our relationship with God our Creator through Jesus the Christ (John 17:20-23; Rom. 5:6-11), and then to be in communion with our fellow people of God, to be one with each other as God is one within Himself (John 17:20-23; 1 Cor. 12:12-28).

Theology need not be dry and arcane; theology ought to be quite relevant to our lives! We are who we are and seek what we seek because God made us in His image; as He is one in relational unity, so we are really seeking relational unity with Him and with our fellow people (Acts 17:27; Eph. 2:11-18). Let us trust in the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, the Three in One relational unity, grow in that relationship, and maintain our communion with our fellow people of God! **T**



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Ethan currently works with the Venice church of Christ in Los Angeles, California; if you would like to discuss this article further, or have topics you would like to see in this column, please contact him

Is John 7:53-8:11 Inspired?

By Kyle Pope

Some modern translations place notes in the text at the end of John chapter seven which read something like this one found in the English Standard Version—“[The earliest manuscripts do not include 7:53-8:11].” If this is true why do most Bibles include this text? Noted Greek Scholar Daniel B. Wallace in an article entitled “My Favorite Passage that’s Not in the Bible” has even gone so far as to argue that it is time to “own up to our tradition of timidity” calling on “translators to remove this text from the Gospel of John and relegate it to the footnotes” (*Bible.org*). Is Wallace correct? Should this passage be removed from biblical translations, or is it indeed part of the inspired record?

It is true that many of the early Greek manuscripts that have survived do not include this passage and a gap exists between the main manuscript that does and later copies. However, there is also evidence that indicates that this passage was present in early manuscripts that have not survived and was understood from the very beginning to have been a part of the inspired record. Because of this, more accurately such notes should read, “the earliest surviving manuscripts do not include John 7:53-8:11.”

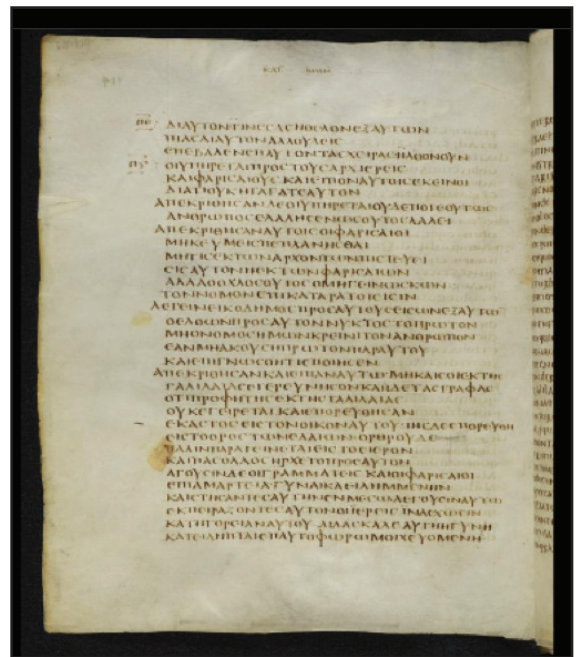
It is clear that very early on a textual issue arose regarding this passage, which likely explains its exclusion from some manuscripts. The 2nd-3rd-century church writer Origen claimed that by his time, “much disagreement of manuscripts” had already arisen

“either from the laziness of some scribes, the boldness of some wretched persons, from the thoughtlessness of the corrector of the things written, or even from those determining things for themselves by either making additions or taking things away” (*Commentary on Matthew* 15.14, Pope). The 4th-5th century commentator Augustine claimed that this had been done to the account of Jesus’s forgiveness of the woman caught in adultery. Addressing the Lord’s willingness to forgive the woman, he wrote:

But this apparently frightens the unbelieving senses, so that some of little faith, or rather enemies of the true faith, (I believe, fearing that by the forgiveness of the adulteress the Lord has given immunity to their wives to sin), remove it out of their manuscripts, as if He gives permission to sin who said: “From now on, sin no more...” (*On Adulterous Marriages* 2.7, Pope).

Is there evidence to support Augustine’s claim that some had removed John 7:53-8:11 out of biblical manuscripts for fear that it might encourage sin?

The oldest surviving Greek manuscript to preserve this text is the late 4th century bilingual parchment known as Codex Bezae, which has been



Codex Bezae

housed at Cambridge University since 1581. The text has Greek and Latin on facing pages, and contains versions of this passage in both the Greek and a pre-Vulgate version of the Latin. Although this is the earliest surviving copy that preserves this text, that does not indicate, as Philip Comfort has conjectured that it was “first inserted by the scribe of Codex Bezae” (*Commentary*, 286). This is true because of additional manuscript evidence, and external testimony about this passage, which pre-date Codex Bezae. For example, while the 3rd century parchment housed in the Vatican known as Codex Vaticanus does not include this text, it does place a horizontal divided

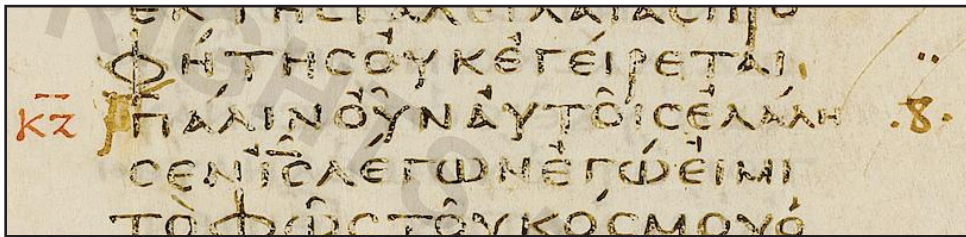
bar (or “bar umlaut”) between 7:52 and 8:12 written in the original hand of the scribe who penned the text. Philip Payne, in a study on the use of such markings in this manuscript, argues that in Vaticanus such markers usually “indicate scribal awareness of a textual problem” (257). If that is correct it would indicate that a century before Bezae the scribe who penned Vaticanus was aware that a textual issue involved this section of John’s gospel.

The earliest reference to this account outside of Scripture comes from the writings of the 1st-2nd century writer Papias. Although none of his works is preserved in complete form, he is quoted by a number of ancient writers. The 3rd-4th century church historian Eusebius claims that Papias told a “story of a woman, who was accused of many sins before the Lord” but he does not speak of this as part of the gospel of John (*Ecclesiastical History* 3.39.16). The 10th century historian Agapius of Heirapolis, however, in a reference to Papias known as fragment 23, writes:

At this time there lived in Heirapolis a prominent teacher and author of many treatises; he wrote five treatises about the gospel. In one of these treatises, which he wrote concerning the gospel of John, he relates that in the book of John the evangelist there is a report about a woman who was an adulteress. When the people led her before Christ our Lord, he spoke to the Jews who had brought her to him: Whoever among you is himself certain that he is innocent of that of which she is accused, let him now bear witness against her. After he had said this, they gave him no answer and went away (*History of the World*).

If Agapius accurately represents Papias’s original text, it demonstrates a 2nd-century witness to the presence of

this passage in the gospel of John! The next reference comes in a 3rd-century Syriac work known as the *Didascalia Apostolorum* which paraphrases part of this passage to teach bishops to follow the Lord’s example in showing mercy to those who repent. It warns, “But if you do not receive one who repents because you do not show mercy, you shall sin against the Lord God, for you do not obey our Savior and our God, to do as He also did with her that had sinned...” going on to paraphrase the text (7). This same admonition is echoed, and the account is also paraphrased in a collection known as the *Apostolic Constitutions* written around 380, which claims that Jesus’s mercy “ought to be set before you as your pattern” (24).



John 8:12 from Codex Vaticanus

Pacian, the bishop of Barcelona who wrote in the mid-4th century, in his *Third Epistle to Sympronian against the Treatise of the Novatians* writes sarcastically to those who show no mercy, that they should, “Stone the petulant. Choose not to read in the Gospel that the Lord spared even the adulteress who confessed, when none had condemned her” (39). This charges the reader to “read in the Gospel” about this account. This demonstrates that well before Codex Bezae one could read a gospel record of this account? This is further supported by other writers also. Around 370 Ambrosiaster in his *Quaestiones ex Utroque Mixtim* 102: *Contra Novatianum* speaks of Jesus having “spared her who had been apprehended in adultery.” Ambrose of Milan, around 386 in *Epistle 26* written to Irenaeus claimed, “The acquittal of the woman who, in the Gospel of John, was brought to Christ accused of adultery,

is very famous” (2). He quotes from the passage later in the same epistle and in *Epistle 74* affirms its position before John 8:12. Near the end of the 4th century, the Alexandrian teacher known as Didymus the Blind, in his commentary on Ecclesiastes, speaks of the presence of this passage “in some gospels” (223:7)—a clear elusion to its presence in some manuscripts of the gospels.

Perhaps the most significant witness to the presence of this text in early manuscripts of the gospel of John is found in the claims of Jerome. In 383 Jerome presented to Damasus I, the bishop of Rome, a Latin translation of the gospels that he had been commissioned to produce. In a letter to

Damasus offered as a preface to the four gospels he claimed that:

...They have been revised by a comparison of the Greek manuscripts. Only early ones have been used.

To avoid any great divergences from the Latin which we are accustomed to read, I have used my pen with some restraint, and while I have corrected only such passages as seemed to convey a different meaning, I have allowed the rest to remain as they are (*Preface to the Vulgate Gospels*).

Jerome’s translation included John 7:53-8:11 and provided what essentially became the “authorized” and scholarly researched version of the biblical text accepted by the Western world for centuries. Over thirty years later, in 417, in a text arguing *Against the Pelagians*, Jerome wrote, “In the gospel according to John, there is found in many manuscripts of both Greek and Latin, about the adulterous woman accused before the Lord” (2:17, Pope). Jerome, who includes this passage in the Vulgate, here claims that it was present in “many” Greek and Latin manuscripts. This makes it highly

... Continued from page 11

unlikely, as Philip Comfort claims that this is “a passage not written by John but inserted later” (*Encountering the Manuscripts*, 387). Writers of Jerome’s time and following him confirm this same fact. Among these are Augustine, the bishop of Hippo, who cites this text frequently (*Tractate 33 on John 2*, 4-8; *Contra Faustus* 22.25), his Manichean opponent Faustus, whom Augustine records as also citing this passage (*Contra Faustus* 33), Peter Chrysologus, the archbishop of Ravenna from 433-450 (*Sermon 115*), and Leo the Great, the bishop of Rome from 440-461 (*Sermon 62*, 4).

All of this makes it clear that although the text of John 7:53-8:11 suffered from attempts to expunge it from the biblical record in the past (as we see recurring once again in the present) there is significant evidence to recognize its place in the inspired Biblical record from the very beginning. Even the manuscript evidence itself must not be overstated. A footnote in the New King James Version claims that this text is present in “over 900 manuscripts.” According to James Snapp from research provided to him by Dr. James Robinson, that number must now be raised to 1476, with the number of Greek manuscripts that contain this section (but do not include the passage) at only 267 (135). Before we allow the witness of these 267 manuscripts to lead us to reject a biblical text, scholars must give us sufficient reason to question the claims of ancient writers who attest to the presence of this text from the very beginning.

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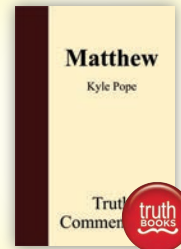


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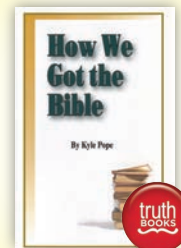
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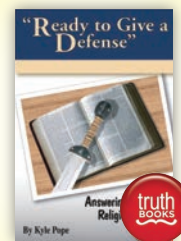
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Women's Section

Children's Lessons from the Garden: The Master Gardener and the Harvest

By Deborah Towles

The planting and tending of gardens is as old as Creation. God planted the first perfect garden in Eden where it flourished for a time under Adam's care (Gen. 1: 11; 2:5-9). God saw that His plan was very good (Gen. 2:5) for in His wisdom regarding plants, He has revealed Himself.

God, the Master Gardener/Husbandman (John 15:1), prepares the ground (Isa. 5:1-2), plants (Exod. 15:7; Psa. 44:2), and transplants (Psa. 80:8). He prunes for greater productivity (John 15:2; James 1:2-4), and grafts new growth on established plants for increased fruit (Rom 11:13-24). Since God is the Light of Life (1 John 1:5) and the Living Water (Jer. 17:13; John 7:38), He provides these necessities in perfect measure to the good but fragile plant, for He knows that too much or too little of either is fatal. He monitors plant growth, adding fertilizer and cultivating when needed (Luke 13:6-9), because He knows that a neglected garden will perish (Psa. 80:8-19). He uproots invasive weeds which He has not planted, and also unproductive or dead plants (Matt. 15:13). He expects a bountiful harvest, where one seed produces exponentially (Matt. 4:20-29), yet He waits patiently for the time of reaping (1 Cor. 9:7; 2 Pet. 3:9).

Sometimes the care of the garden is put into the hands of men, as with Adam. Some laborers are good and reliable, faithfully fulfilling their stewardship (John 4:34-38; 1 Cor. 3:6-9).

Others are dishonest and self-serving, seeking to steal the blessings of the harvest for themselves (Matt. 21:33-46). Sometimes, enemies creep in and maliciously plant tares, reducing the harvest (Matt. 13:22, 25). After all, Satan, the enemy of all that was good, crept into the first garden and polluted the ground forever with seeds of deception. These same seeds can still invade and choke the productivity of the good seed

for the unsuspecting or unwatchful steward (Gen. 3:17-19). Even so, God designed plants to produce after their kind and be known by their fruit (Gen. 1:11; Matt. 7:20). At the final harvest, there will be no mistake regarding which seeds to save and which to burn (Matt. 13:30-39)!

Jesus is described as a "tender shoot," a "root out of parched ground" (Isa. 53: 2). This unlikely plant, scorned and despised, became the most productive and longest living vine ever to be tended by the Master Gardener! As seed has to fall to the earth and die before it can grow (John 12:24), so Jesus, the Seed which is the Word (John 1:1; Luke 8:11), had to die before He could become the Vine. This Plant will never fail as a source of life and productivity to the attached branches bearing fruit (John 15: 1-6). God is expectantly, yet patiently, awaiting the harvest (Jas. 5:7).

May God bless you as you search for ways to plant the precious seed of faith in the heart of children for the coming harvest! **T**

The planting and tending of gardens is as old as Creation. God planted the first perfect garden in Eden where it flourished for a time under the care of Adam (Gen.1: 11; 2:5-9). God saw that His plan was very good (Gen. 2:5) for in His wisdom regarding plants, He has revealed Himself.



Deborah Towles

Deborah Towles is the wife of Gale Towles who preaches for the State Line Church of Christ in Charlotte, NC. Deborah and Gale have been married for over 38 years. They have four children and eighteen grandchildren. Deborah and Gale both learned many lessons from the garden from their parents and grandparents. They still love to play in the dirt and share its bounty with family and friends! Her email address is deborah@carolina.rr.com

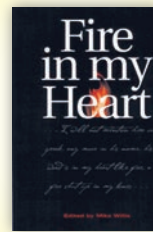
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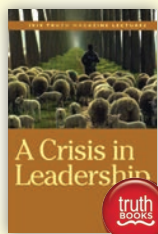
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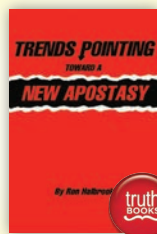
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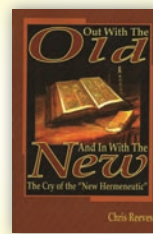
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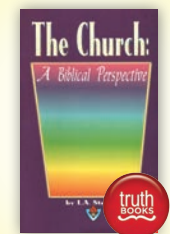
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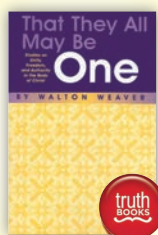
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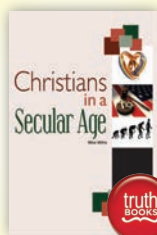
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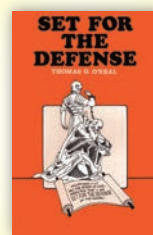
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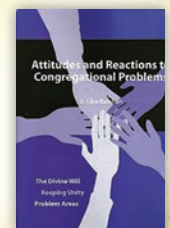
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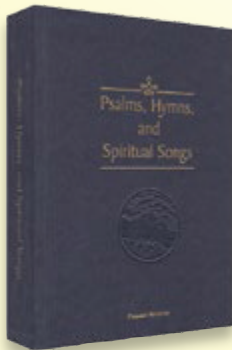
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Steps and Stages of Digression

Stage 1: Neglecting God's Word

By Joshua Gurtler

Article synopsis: God's word is an awe-inspiring gift to mankind that should be treasured and held as more precious than pure gold. God's word is being neglected both at the congregational level as well as in the lives of individual Christians. The end result of neglecting God's word is spiritual apathy, leading to the death and destruction of Christians and especially their posterity.

Introduction

God's word has been given to us for our knowledge, growth, edification, protection, and salvation. God delivering this divine message to mankind is such an awe-inspiring thought that it should stir up in us the hunger and desire that our Lord Jesus had: *"Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work"* (John 4:34, KJV). Oh, that we all had the intense appetite and longing for God's message, as our incarnate Lord did. King David had this longing and wrote of his love for God's word in Psalm 119, where every one of the 176 verses mentions God's word, laws, commandments, testimonies, precepts, statutes, judgments, etc. Nevertheless, today, God's word frequently is treated with a lack of respect and given low priority by many, even within churches and by evangelists.

I. Neglecting God's Word at the Congregational Level

God fitted the church with teachers *"for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. As a result, we*

are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine" (Eph. 4:12-14). The natural result of neglecting God's word in the church is that members become *"immature like children ... tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching"* (NLT).

speechwriter Roger Ailes, and said that reading this book would be the best way to enhance my preaching.(?)

While it's true that we should *"become all things to all men"* (1 Cor. 9:19-23), the centrality of preaching must still be rooted in God's word and not in secular thought and reasoning.

"While listening to Mr. Osteen speak, I've often thought that 95% of his sermons' content (void of Scripture) could probably be presented at any gathering of Buddhists, Hindus or New Age devotees with no objection from the audience. 'Woe to you, when all men speak well of you' (Luke 6:26)."

When I was in college, I presented a devotional lesson to a group of young men, teaching from 1 Corinthians 14. When I was done, one of the guys approached me and said something to this effect, *"We don't need to hear all those scriptures. We know them and have heard them all of our lives. We need to get away from reading so much scripture and present more encouraging lessons."* He later gave me a book entitled *You are the Message* by presidential

A perfect example of neglecting God's word in teaching is that of our friend, Mr. Joel Osteen. Although he presents very motivational speeches (sometimes even with Biblical principles), he never actually engages in any real study of God's word. He may occasionally use a passing verse here or there. His lessons are primarily composed of jokes, witty sayings, anecdotes, inspirational stories and lots of positive thinking. I have to admit.... he can be pretty entertaining. ►

But isn't this what Paul warned of, as rendered in the ESV *"the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions"* (2 Tim. 4:3). While listening to Mr. Osteen speak, I've often thought that 95% of his sermons' content (void of Scripture) could probably be presented at any gathering of Buddhists, Hindus, or New Age devotees with no objection from the audience. *"Woe to you, when all men speak well of you"* (Luke 6:26).

Further, I attended a gospel meeting one time and after 35 minutes, the preacher finally used his first scripture, which was a brief quote from one of the "beatitudes" of Matthew chapter 5. Evangelists have the charge to know and accurately present God's word to the hearers. Here is a paraphrase of 2 Timothy 2:15, which I believe correctly brings out the meaning, *"Be a good worker, one who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly explains the word of truth"* (NLT). The result of this teaching will prophylactically treat spiritual weakness and apostasy. As Paul says in 1 Timothy 4:6, *"If you instruct the brothers of these things, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, nourished in the words of the faith, and of the good doctrine which you have followed"* (WEB).


II. Neglecting God's Word at the Individual Level

Christians have the mandate to study God's word. We are told, *"Do not quench the Spirit; do not despise prophetic utterances. But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good; abstain from every form of evil"* (1 Thess. 5:19-22). Examining everything carefully (cf. 1 John 4:1) is also what the Bereans did in Acts 17:11, *"for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily, to see whether these things were so."* Evangelists should challenge members of the local church to place emphasis on personal times of study and devotion in their daily lives.

III. Results of Neglecting God's Word

People with low blood iron are considered anemic, and become weak as they do not have enough of the oxygen-binding mineral to carry out important metabolic processes, crucial for health and vigor. Likewise, Christians who do not know God's word also become spiritually anemic, such that when they are confronted with an unknown divine command (e.g., biblical reasons for divorce and remarriage, church discipline, the six days of creation, harmonizing so-called biblical contradictions, etc.), they often become defensive, angry, frustrated, or accuse the teacher of being overzealous, legalistic or pharisaical. Hear how the International Standard Version translates 1 Corinthians 1:18, *"For the message about the cross is nonsense to those who are being destroyed, but it is God's power to us who are being saved."* Nonsense indeed. Unless the importance of the Scripture is stressed, especially to children and adolescents, there should be no shock and awe at the apostasy of such a large percentage of our youth away from the Lord and His body.

The devastating consequences of carrying the ark on David's ox cart was a result of failing to consult God's word, as follows: *"the LORD our God made an outburst on us, for we did not seek Him according to the ordinance"* (1 Chron. 15:13). God bemoans those who make their own plans without seeking His will, *"Ah, stubborn children, declares the LORD, 'who carry out a plan, but not of my Spirit, that they may add sin to sin'"* (Isa. 30:1). Simply calling oneself a Christian, or calling on the name of the Lord is not enough (Matt. 7:21-23). The end result of neglecting God's word is spiritual apathy, leading to death and destruction, especially of our posterity, *"My people are destroyed because they lack knowledge of me. Because you rejected that knowledge, I will reject you as a priest for me. Since you forget the*

Law of your God, I will also forget your children" (Hos. 4:6, ISV). 



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Steps and Stages of Digression

Stages 2-4: Flirtation, Consideration, and Toleration of Error

By Mitchell Stevens

“I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ”

It happens before you know it. A fellow Christian begins some sort of occasional participation with a denomination or other error-teaching church. He may be accommodating a loved one, a family member, or have a romantic interest in a person. Maybe he is seeking goods or services offered by the church, like a school or daycare. Sometimes he is drawn by convenience. Perhaps, having gone off to school or moved to an unfamiliar area, he begins interacting with a group because of its location, facilities, or friendliness. One minute, you're discussing with this brother or sister the observed differences between your shared faith and this other. Before you know it, you are desperately debating your once-common faith to your brother or sister as if they had never been convinced of it before.

Paul, too, was shocked when he wrote the letter to the Galatians. It is unique among his letters in having no warm greeting with thanks given to God on their behalf. Even *First Corinthians* starts with a blessing and commendation! Corinth's problems primarily had to do with compromises toward their former way of living, which caused serious problems, but the path to digression forming in Galatia receives

a harsher approach. Paul immediately expressed his astonishment (Gal. 1:6-7). What could possibly make Paul's approach in this letter even more frank and confrontational than that to Corinth? I suggest that it has to do with the perception that this error was biblically justified. It was being packaged and sold as Christianity. The teachers ("false brothers," 2:4) appear to have been motivated to make the church fit more in line with the surrounding religious culture, in this case, the Jewish community. The danger was in the illusion of biblical legitimacy. The young converts would have seen an origin in Scriptures ("Look, they're using the Bible!") and the allure of acceptance by a community traditionally regarded as the people of God. Some of these same motivators can drive one along the path of digression today.

Very often, when people begin to change their doctrinal convictions, it is motivated by personal interests. They could be looking for comfort, acceptance, or convenience. Or it could be that they suffered an offense within the body of Christ. Any of these may persuade a person to give himself over to another path, taking their bodies to a place where their hearts may be flattered and, eventually, their minds reoriented.

It is very fitting that the Lord has so often described religious error in

terms of a romantic involvement. In fact, God knew that intermarriage was the primary way that idolatry would take hold of His people. "[Y]ou shall not intermarry with them; you shall not give your daughters to their sons, nor shall you take their daughters for your sons. For they will turn your sons away from following Me to serve other gods; then the anger of the Lord will be kindled against you and He will quickly destroy you" (Deut. 7:3-4). False religion operates much like the proverbial "strange" or "foreign" woman with her sexual enticements. "Keep your way far from her And do not go near the door of her house" (Prov. 5:8)!

The stages of digression moving into tolerance of error play out very much like getting involved with the wrong kind of man or woman. I imagine many of you also have stood helplessly by as a friend or loved one allowed loneliness rather than conviction to take the lead in seeking a mate. How does it start and where does it end?

1. It starts with *flirtation*: "She's just a friend."
2. Next is *consideration*: "Believe me, I'm being very careful."
3. Then comes *toleration*: "You just don't know her like I do."

Let's consider what each of these

stages might sound like in a drift toward religious apostasy.

1. *Flirtation*: When it starts, the errors are held forth alongside your friend's spiritual understanding: "It's nothing serious, don't worry. I know better." Their justifications are similar to one dining in an idol's temple. "I know that what they do and teach in this matter and that is wrong. But it's not like I'm missing from our church to go to that one! I know what's right." Sure, we could respond, "we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge makes arrogant, but love edifies. If anyone supposes that he knows anything, he has not yet known as he ought to know" (1 Cor. 8:1-2). This person's love of the brotherhood is threatened by this flirtation!
2. *Consideration*: "They actually do a lot of things biblically, you'd be surprised," they say. "I've learned a lot! Believe me, I'm being very careful. I know what's what." The false religion is exciting because it presents something new to the person considering it. They get a case of Mars Hill Syndrome, spending time in nothing other than telling or hearing something new (Acts 17:21). This rationalization is presented as if we believe that every other church is 100% wrong. I've never accused any church of having no truth whatsoever. Even apostate Israel never forgot the name *Yahweh* – they just adopted contemporary expressions of worship. Oh, and set up an Asherah beside Him. (Don't worry, they take up a separate fund for that.) What shall we say to such considerations? I could get some great guidance on family values from the Latter-Day Saints if I were willing to grudgingly ignore their pagan theology! "These are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body,

- but are of no value against fleshly indulgence" (Col. 2:23).
3. *Toleration*: "This is our problem," the drifting Christian says. "We're so judgmental! This is how we see it, but there are other ways of looking at it. I've seen how this other group helps people, the impact they have on the community!" Now your friend is like Felix, resting between Paul and his Jewish accusers, weighing with a consumerist mentality which will render the greater benefit. His new friends are telling him, and he is persuaded concerning you, "[W]e have found this man a real pest and a fellow who stirs up dissension among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes" (Acts 24:5). Consider Paul's response as you form your own.

This is why Paul opened Galatians as he does – to knock the rose-colored glasses off before the love affair begins. Religious error isn't "another way to look at it" because there is no such thing as another gospel (Gal. 1:7). Paul pronounces a curse (1:9) and calls digression what it is: desertion (1:6), trouble (1:7), a bewitching (3:1). **Where the drifting saint is using the language of a love affair, the Lord uses language of warfare.** "We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:5).

When we begin to hear the "love language" of digression, we must have the courage to speak plainly in true brotherly love. And we must pray that should we ourselves ever drift, another will have such regard for us. **T**



Mitchell Stevens

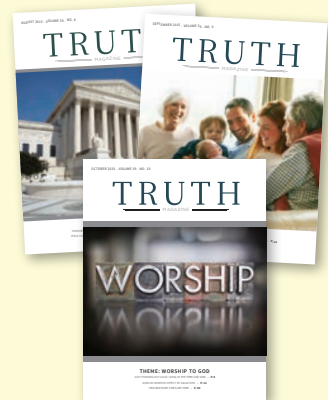
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Steps and Stages of Digression

Stage 5: Accommodation to Error

By Steve Wallace

By “accommodation” herein we mean, Reconciliation or settlement of opposing views.¹

A process of mutual adaptation between persons or social groups, usu. achieved by eliminating or reducing hostility.²

Accommodation to someone or someplace is part of life and has its proper place in service to our Lord. The apostle Paul accommodated himself to every change of circumstances (Phil. 4:11-12) and to the spiritual immaturity of brethren (1 Thess. 2:4-7). He also generally sought to “please all men in all things” in his attempt to save them (1 Cor. 10:33; 9:19-22; “please” is defined, “to accommodate oneself to the opinions, desires, interests of others” [Thayer, 72]). The apostle had a reason for using the word “please” in the way he means it here and in Romans 15:1-3. It was to teach some Christians an important lesson regarding matters which they, along with Paul, knew were indifferent to God. He hoped his teaching would lead to accommodation to brethren who held opposing views on the same matters (1 Cor. 8:7-13; Rom. 14:21-22). Accommodating ourselves to others, both Christians and non-Christians as described above, is clearly something our Lord wants to see in the lives of His people.

In contrast to such accommodation, during His earthly ministry our Lord would not accommodate Himself to the traditions which Jewish leaders

had added to God’s Old Testament law (Matt. 12:1-8; Mark 7:1-8). Jesus openly disobeyed *their* laws on the Sabbath and explained the rightness of His doing so in an attempt to help them see their errors (Luke 6:6-11; 14:1-6). He kept God’s Law perfectly but refused every attempt to get Him to accommodate Himself to laws which men had added to God’s law (John 8:46; 1 Pet. 2:21-23; Matt. 15:9).

The same is true of the apostle Paul with regards to the New Testament. “Not for an hour” did he accommodate himself to Judaizers with their false beliefs and teaching (Gal. 2:5), nor did he adjust his preaching to fit the interests of the Jews and Greeks (1 Cor. 1:22-24). There is a reason for this. In deciding the message of salvation God did not, even in one point, accommodate Himself to the wisdom of this world (1 Cor. 1:21). The gospel “is not after man” (Gal. 1:11; cf. this phrase in Rom. 3:5; 1 Cor. 3:3; 9:8; 15:32; Gal. 3:15; “is not after man” means, “is not accommodated to the opinions and desires of men” [Thayer, 46]). As God said in the long ago, “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways...” (Isa. 55:8).

The Gospel of Accommodation

With this background, let us examine how Christians have sought to accommodate themselves to error. Let it first be recognized that they cannot do so by simply speaking as “oracles of God” (1 Pet. 4:11). Rather, they must preach a “gospel” of accommodation, adding their uninspired thoughts to the New Testament in a manner similar to the way scribes and Pharisees added

their own thoughts to the Old Testament (we use the word “gospel” here as Paul did in Gal. 1:6).

It has sought to redefine what a false teacher is (2 Pet. 2:1). We have been told that, if one who teaches clear error is honest and sincere, such a one is not a false teacher. When Peter, by inspiration, wrote of “false teachers” he mentioned the “destructive heresies” they brought in among God’s people. Dishonesty and insincerity are sins (Rev. 21:8; 1 Cor. 5:8; 2 Cor. 1:12). However, Peter describes the sin of “false teachers” to be bringing “in destructive heresies” (1 Pet. 2:1). It is folly to argue that all false teachers will be guilty of all the sins of the particular false teachers of which Peter wrote (v. 1, denying Jesus; v. 2, sensuality; v. 10, depraved lust; vv. 11-12, slander; v. 13, reveling; v. 14, having eyes full of adultery).

Let us also note that “false teachers” are seen by Peter to be in the same class as “false prophets” (2 Pet. 2:1). In the Sermon on the Mount, “false prophets” are known by their fruits (Matt. 7:15-16). Their fruits in that context are keeping people from doing God’s will and helping them to “work iniquity” (Matt. 7:15-23). When brethren are led to believe that false teachers are something other than what the Bible shows them to be, their own fallible human judgment becomes the measure for who they will and will not accommodate themselves to.

Brethren have based their teaching on common sense rather than the Bible. (Some would call it “Baconian”

common sense.”) Years ago I heard a religious program on the BBC where a professor asked his students, “How many commandments are there?” A student raised his hand and replied, “Ten.” The professor countered that there were *eleven* commandments. When the student inquired as to what the eleventh commandment might be, the professor replied, “Thou shalt have common sense!” The student answered that *the Bible does not say that*. The professor assured him, “It does not have to. It’s common sense!” Though originating from those in human denominations this account shows how easily man can exalt his thoughts to the level of God’s thoughts and add to His word (Isa. 55:8). Regarding the teaching of Romans 14, one brother once wrote, “Neither can one argue that the passage simply proves that we can differ about indifferent matters. Common sense tells me that without revelation.”³ Romans 14 clearly teaches Christians how to conduct themselves regarding matters that are indifferent to God (cf. 1 Cor. 8:8; Rom 14:20). Common sense makes a person too sure of himself. Common sense is not Scripture.

Another page in the gospel of accommodation is the claim that there are “gray areas,” that the Bible is unclear on some matter(s). Noting what different people have put in this so-called “gray area” is the quickest way to unmask this assertion. Dancing, social drinking, immodest clothing, marriage, divorce and remarriage, centralization of church funds, instrumental music in worship, the days of creation in Genesis 1, and same-sex marriage all are said, by different people (not all of whom are Christians, sw) to fall into “gray areas.” Hopefully, *all* who appeal to “gray areas” will see the door that such appeals open for accommodating oneself to sin and base their beliefs on the Bible instead of “gray areas” (Eph. 3:3-5; John 8:32).

A clear call to accommodate error is seen in the argument that, “We’re all off on something.” Rather than using such a belief to justify others who are in sin (and doing nothing to help them out

of it), would it not be wiser to keep on “studying to show ourselves approved” recognizing the convicting power of the word of the One who called us by His word (2 Thess. 2:14; Acts 2:37; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; Phil. 3:4-14)?

The gospel of accommodation also contains the following verse: “The apostles were inspired, we are not.” Can we as Christians today “continue steadfastly in the apostles’ teaching” as first-century Christians did (Acts 2:42)? Regarding differences among brethren, can we follow the inspired apostle’s command to “preach the word; be urgent in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching” (2 Tim. 4:2; cf. 2:2)? All seem to be agreed that we can, by the words the apostles and other inspired men left us, tell people what they need to do to be saved, which includes informing them of their sins (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:22-38).

Yet another passage from the “gospel of accommodation” is, “Local autonomy allows us to decide and forbids you to deny.” First, 1 Timothy 5:19-20 implies a standard of authority higher than that of elders of a local church, as does Acts 20:32. This standard is the same for *all* churches that would be faithful to our Lord (Matt. 28:20; 1 Cor. 4:17; 7:17). Second, the New Testament shows us that members of one church were concerned about the spiritual well-being of their brethren in other churches and contacted them to help them (Acts 18:27).

The above plea for accommodation is similar to another: “Fellowship is limited to the local church, so it can use someone who is not a member and yet teaches error.” John wrote to the brethren who received his first epistle so that he could have fellowship with them (1 John 1:3-7). The writer and recipients were in different locations and yet could have fellowship. Further, 2 John 9-11 shows a local church has a responsibility to refuse one who *comes from outside of its membership* and does not bring the doctrine of Christ. To receive him would

cause them to partake in his evil works. Thus, they may not use such a one, regardless if he plans to teach his error or not.

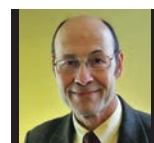
Conclusion

As we bring this study to a close, let us recall the account of the rich young ruler. Jesus loved him (Mark 10:21). However, He showed His love by trying to help the man out of his sin. We rightly infer that the ruler was not the only one sorrowful when he went away (Matt. 19:22; Ezek 33:11; 2 Pet. 3:9). In spite of His sadness, Jesus did not accommodate Himself to the man in his sin.

Is there a danger that the pure truth of the gospel is no longer the guide for you or other Christians you know (2 Tim. 4:3-4)? Is it possible that a version diluted with uninspired opinions, the “Gospel of Accommodation,” as described above has crept in? We hope the series of lessons in this month’s *Truth Magazine* will cause all who are troubled with this new “gospel” to carefully study their Bibles before proceeding further. As the next article in this series shows, the step beyond the accommodation of error is even more grave.

Endnotes

- 1 *American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fifth Edition* (2011).
- 2 *Random House Kernerman Webster’s College Dictionary*. (2010). Both accessed 10/1/15 <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/accommodation>.
- 3 Ed Harrell. “The Bounds of Christian Unity (3),” *Christianity Magazine* (April 1989), p. 6. **T**



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Steps and Stages of Digression

Stage 6: Aversion to Militant Preaching

By Jesse Flowers

There seems to be an epidemic today among non-institutional churches of Christ, and that is an aversion to militant preaching. In too many local churches there exists a strong dislike, and in some instances even opposition, to militant type preaching.

What exactly do we mean by “militant” preaching? Well, consider passages such as...

1 Timothy 6:12 – “Fight the good fight of faith...”

2 Timothy 4:2 – “Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.”

Jude 3 – “I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.”

To be militant is to fight, to contend, and to preach the word of God in season and out of season. Militant preaching is sound, strong, clear, pointed gospel preaching. It is preaching that teaches no other doctrine (1 Tim. 1:3), but also takes a stand against any false doctrines or practices that are espoused (Rom. 16:17; Gal. 2:4-5), exposing even those who espouse it (2 Tim. 2:17-18).

To certain ones “militant preaching” is thought of as being too negative, too specific and pointed, offensive, perhaps unloving and even mean-spirited. I certainly could more readily understand this mindset if it only included members

of the denominational world, but how sad and alarming when a growing number of brethren share a similar mindset.

I’m afraid that the list of topics that would be considered as “militant” by some brethren has only grown in recent years. And I also believe that, as a result, we are already seeing the fruits of this in compromise and digression. Emphasis on the need for Bible authority and how to establish it is not as well received as it once was. Some also resist or avoid preaching on the one, true church, instrumental music in worship, the sin of denominationalism and denominational error, institutionalism, church discipline, eternal punishment in hell, immodesty, dancing, gambling, mixed swimming, social drinking, marriage, divorce, and remarriage, fellowship, error and identifying those who teach it.

For too long now saints have preferred softer, more positive, and generic type sermons. As the apostle Paul warned long ago: “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables” (2 Tim. 4:3-4). The prevailing attitude in many congregations is “speak to us smooth things” (Isa. 30:10), and sadly God’s “people love to have it so” (Jer. 5:31).

What Must We Do?

So what shall we do as individual Christians, as elders, as gospel preachers, and as congregations as we face and encounter the reality today of an aversion to militant preaching?

Realize that we are at war. “For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled” (2 Cor. 10:3-6). We must “put on the whole armor of God” (Eph. 6:10-18) as we engage in this spiritual war, fighting “the **good** fight of faith” (1 Tim. 6:12). Never forget that we are at war against our adversary the devil (1 Pet. 5:8) and the ministers of Satan (2 Cor. 11:13-15). We are in a war for our soul and the souls of men. And so we must fight, and encourage our brethren to fight.

Realize that some will be offended by the truth. This has always been the case (1 Kings 13:1-4; 18:17; 22:8). We must be humble and speak the truth in love (2 Tim. 2:25; Eph. 4:15). But in spite of our best efforts not to offend, some will simply be offended by the truth of God that we speak (1 Pet. 4:11). Consider that the greatest preacher, Jesus Christ, who did all things well and without sin offended many (including ►

many of His own disciples) during His earthly ministry (Matt. 15:7-14; Luke 6:6-11; 11:37-52; 13:14-17; John 6:60-66). Just remember that, when certain brethren get angry and oppose militant preaching, the master Teacher warned: “Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for so did their fathers to the false prophets” (Luke 6:26).

Preach the whole counsel of God.

This is what God expects and requires of every gospel preacher. That’s exactly what the apostle Paul did as an evangelist. “Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:26-27). He reminded the Ephesian elders how he had “kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house” (Acts 20:20). Our preaching will be balanced when we resolve to proclaim the whole counsel of God. It will include those things considered “positive” and “negative,” any and all spiritual instruction that is needed and helpful. “Whole counsel of God” preaching is what must be demanded by elderships, congregations, and preachers of themselves.

Look to the examples of Bible preachers. We would do well to examine and emulate the faithful preachers found in the Scriptures (1 Cor. 11:1). If we patterned our preaching style after Nathan, we would make clear and specific application to our audience (2 Sam. 12:1-7). For instance, we would specifically identify what it is to dress modestly or immodestly (Exod. 28:42; Isa. 47:1-3; 1 Tim. 2:9-10). If we preached like Elijah, we would boldly stand alone for the cause of righteousness, and challenge our hearers to make up their minds who they would faithfully follow (1 Kings 18:17-22). If like Micaiah, we would firmly declare, “As the Lord lives, whatever the Lord says to me, that I will speak” (1 Kings 22:14; cf. 1 Pet. 4:11). If like John, we would rebuke the evils in a person’s life, including

unlawful marriages, in order to call me to repentance (Luke 3:19; Matt. 14:3-4; 19:9). If like Paul, we would reason with those we taught from the Scriptures (Acts 17:2), not from our wisdom or the wisdom of men (1 Cor. 3:19). And if like Jesus, we would speak with the full impact of heaven’s authority (Matt. 7:29; cf. Titus 2:15).

Do not apologize for the truth.

Remember that we are not in the business of pleasing men, but God, otherwise we would not be a bondservant of Jesus Christ (Gal. 1:10). Remember to “speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts” (1 Thess. 2:4). Like Paul, we will sadly make enemies simply by proclaiming the truth of God’s inspired word (Gal. 4:16). Yet, we must never yield submission even for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue (Gal. 2:5). But never, ever apologize for the truth. For it is the truth that sets men free from the bondage of sin (John 8:32, 34; Rom. 6:16-18). It is the truth that purifies souls unto salvation (1 Pet. 1:22-23). It is truth that endures forever (1 Pet. 1:25). So buy the truth (Prov. 23:23), and do not sell it!

Do not grow weary. Consistently standing for the truth, preaching militantly when the occasion calls for it, dealing with the opposition, undeserved attacks, unpopularity and isolation can cause even the best of men to grow weary and discouraged in their souls (Heb. 12:3). But we must do our best to “not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart” (Gal. 6:9). We must remain “steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Cor. 15:58). And, of course, it is vital that we “watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong. Let all that you do be done with love” (1 Cor. 16:13-14). So that at the end of life’s journey we may say with the aged apostle: “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord,

the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing” (2 Tim. 4:7-8). **T**



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Steps and Stages of Digression

Stages 7-8

Cooperation and Contamination

By Kurt G. Jones

Cooperation

In chapter 2 of the Book of Revelation, the Lord speaks to the church at Thyatira: “I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess to teach and seduce my servants to commit sexual immortality and eat things sacrificed to idols (Rev. 2:20). He goes on to say “Now to you I say, and to the rest in Thyatira as many as do not have this doctrine But hold fast what you have till I come” (Rev. 2:24-25). Such, so often, is the nature of error. Regardless of the issue, false teaching seeks to be accepted and to prevail. How does a church, that was once faithful to the Lord, allow error to take hold inasmuch that a violation of the organization of the local church was tolerated and used to perpetuate false doctrine? What is to be done by those who seek to remain faithful in order to stop the progression of error?

As error and false teaching begin to take a foothold, it is seen as less of a threat. After all, some may surmise when it was first taught, “The world didn’t stop spinning, no one was struck by lightning, and the local church didn’t crumble into oblivion.” Thus, those who may have had early misgivings have their consciences soothed. Those who perpetuate false teaching begin to become bolder in their proclamation of error. There begins to be a toleration of, and cooperation with, error.

The Scriptures show the importance of vigilance that is no less true during this state of digression. Paul encouraged

the church at Ephesus “and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them” (Eph. 5:11). Rather than cooperating with sin, it is the responsibility of the faithful to expose error! It is important that, at this time, the faithful uphold the principles of truth, and show the consequences of false teaching. John noted, “Look to yourselves that you do not lose the things you worked for, but that we may receive a full reward. Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him: for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds” (2 John 9-11). The warning is poignant and clear. If those who hold to the truth have spiritual fellowship with false teachers, they themselves become partakers in the error that is taught.

When the faithful fail to stand up against error, the process of digression continues. False teachers and their sympathizers soon take more public roles in the church. There is more freedom to teach false doctrine, as they have garnered a larger following. Those who oppose the error are seen as a nuisance and hindering the forward momentum. They are tolerated, but begin to be ostracized and marginalized as obstructionists, factionalists, and radicals.

It is also important to note, that opposition to error must always and

only be on the basis of truth. Paul wrote, “Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you – unless you believed in vain” (1 Cor. 15:1-2). There is a tendency to overreact to error. In doing so, some who seek to stand against the error, will swing so far to the right of the error that they begin to operate outside of God’s revealed will. Some begin to bind opinions, and scruples even to the point of division. This also placed one on a pathway to digression. Any deviation from the divine pattern is an affront to truth. It is vastly important that Christians stand in the Gospel of Christ, and ensure that they hold fast to God’s word and stand therein.

Contamination

When I was seventeen, my family, along with several others, left a church that was polluted by error. As we found our way to the truth, one brother described the change in these terms: “It is like drinking from a cool, clear spring, when you have been sipping from a stagnant, muddy puddle for years.” How does a local church that used to be faithful to the Lord, that used to stand as a beacon of light in a dark world, find itself in the unsettling position of being described as a polluted stagnant water? The fact is, the contamination happens little by little. Just like the muddy puddle, that water was once pure and clean. When Christians have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, ►

and greet those who do not bring the doctrine of Christ, they have become contaminated. The Apostle Paul noted, “A little leaven leavens the whole lump” (1 Cor. 5:6).

Once this point of digression is reached, there no longer is toleration for those who are in opposition. The majority accepts the error, and it begins to be seen as common practice. In years gone by, the schools and publications were their primary vehicles for influencing people. This gives the error a sense of permanence and acceptance. As new generations of adherents arise, the error is seen as something that has always been believed and practiced.

In the current “social media” climate, this process moves much faster. Position articles and arguments do not have to wait for “next month’s issue” but can be posted in a status, or emailed far and wide. There is no need for a subscription and even the audio and video can be instantly uploaded. False teachers are well aware of this, and take full advantage of this medium to teach and influence.

There are many opportunities to exit the path of digression as it moves along. It is vastly important for faithful Christians to heed the inspired apostle’s writing to the church at Thessalonica: “Stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle” (2 Thess. 2:15). Those who hold fast will find those exits from digression and stand firmly in the gospel. It does not matter how the error is perpetuated and sent forth. Truth never changes and it is incumbent upon Christians to hold the divine standard, guarding against cooperation and contamination of error. **T**



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Steps and Stages of Digression

Stages 9 and 10: Capitulation and Condemnation

By David Dann

Jesus Christ established clear boundaries for those who would follow Him, saying, “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:31-32).

Though God has always lovingly imposed limits on His people through His righteous instruction, His people have demonstrated a tendency to move away from strict obedience to His instruction. For example, Jeremiah spoke to God’s people under the old covenant, saying, “Thus says the LORD: ‘Stand in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where the good way is, and walk in it; then you will find rest for your souls. But they said, “We will not walk in it”’” (Jer. 6:16). Jeremiah’s words encapsulate the persistent determination of Israel to digress, or turn aside from God’s instruction. Rather than remain safely within the confines of the Lord’s gracious instruction, it is so often the case that His people are bent on progressing beyond that which He has authorized.

Digression and apostasy have always followed a familiar course. Paul pointed out concerning the digressive teaching of Hymenaeus and Philetus that “their message will spread like cancer” (2 Tim. 2:17). Digression’s progress, like the silent spread of disease, may be slow and barely detectable at first, however, its impact upon the Lord’s body will eventually be devastating. What begins as an effort to exercise a little more freedom in Christ,

as an effort to attract more worshipers, or as an attempt to make the church and its worship a little more appealing, will eventually yield the perverse fruit of a people who refuse to follow the Lord’s instruction.

With these thoughts in mind, please consider the following stages that take place when the Lord’s people refuse to abide in His word:

Capitulation

1. Itching ears lead to hardened hearts. The apostle Paul instructed Timothy, saying, “Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables” (2 Tim. 4:2-4). When members of the church no longer want to hear bold and direct preaching from God’s word that exposes sin, calls on those in sin to repent, and fortifies and strengthens those who desire to please the Lord above all else, then digression will follow. At this stage brethren begin to seek out a certain type of preaching that is less offensive, that is considered more uplifting, and that won’t make anyone feel guilty for participating in worldly behavior or religious error. Their hearts become hardened against the truth of God’s word because their ears

have become accustomed to hearing only that which pleases them.

2. Worshipers embrace whatever suits their preferences. God spoke to Isaiah concerning those among His people “who say to the seers, ‘Do not see,’ And to the prophets, ‘Do not prophesy to us right things; Speak to us smooth things, prophesy deceits’” (Isa. 30:10). Later, God spoke through Jeremiah, saying, “An astonishing and horrible thing Has been committed in the land: the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests rule by their own power; and My people love to have it so. But what will you do in the end?” (Jer. 5:30-31). The time eventually arrives when the worshipers have decided that they will hear only what they want to hear and they will practice only what they want to practice. Instrumental music may be added to the church’s worship, the Lord’s supper may become part of a large social meal, hand-waving and hand-clapping may become incorporated into the worship, and women may be encouraged to address the assembly where men are present, while the high moral standard of Scripture is lowered to include a more accommodating view when it comes to such things as the social drinking of intoxicating drink, modest dress, and divorce and remarriage. The direction of the digression is based on the whims of the worshipers rather than on the solid foundation of God’s word.

3. Error begets more error. Paul instructed the saints in Ephesus, saying, “And have no fellowship with ►

the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them” (Eph. 5:11). But in an environment in which religious and moral errors are accepted or even embraced rather than being rebuked and exposed, the progress of the digression is able to gather steam and move ahead at a rapid pace. We come to accept and even practice that which we will not actively oppose. And so it is that, when brethren abandon preaching against the errors of denominationalism, they come to view those among the denominations as fellow Christians, abandon the necessity of baptism in connection with forgiveness of sins and salvation, and eventually discard any distinction between the Lord’s church and churches established by men. The capitulation is complete; the worshipers have surrendered any claim to an adherence to the absolute truth of God’s word that would in any way distinguish them from other religious people.

Castigation

1. The righteous are ridiculed and reviled. Once the majority has accepted and embraced their preferred errors and false doctrines, those who insist on following the word of God will be castigated and marginalized. Stephen highlighted this attitude in preaching to the Jews of his day, saying, “Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers” (Acts 7:59). Those who have no Scriptural basis upon which to stand and defend their beliefs and practices will often mock, ridicule, and belittle those who strive to abide in the word of the Lord as those who are out of touch, stuck in the past, narrow-minded, “antis” who are opposed to everything, or self-appointed “guardians of orthodoxy.”

2. Those who oppose the digression are cast out. The digressive element sought to ridicule the apostle Paul and separate him from the church in Corinth as follows: “‘For his letters,’

they say, ‘are weighty and powerful, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible’” (2 Cor. 10:10). They belittled Paul’s speaking ability and physical appearance because his teaching, which was rooted in the word of God, did not suit their digressive preferences. The time eventually arrives when those bent on digression want nothing to do with those who are determined to abide in the word of the Lord (cf. Luke 6:22-23).

The progression of digression leads to the acceptance of error, the rejection of faithful brethren, and ultimately, to condemnation from the Lord.

3. False teachers are preferred over teachers of truth. Paul made reference to this tendency in his first letter to the church at Corinth, saying, “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. 11:4). Apostate brethren don’t want someone in their midst who will point out from Scripture that their moral behavior and religious practices are wrong and that changes for the better must be made. They don’t want someone in their midst who will call them back to the word of God since they have already determined that they would like to go in a different direction. As a result of these attitudes, they will only invite into their midst false teachers who will continue to reinforce what they want to hear, who will tell them that it’s alright to conform a little

to the standard set by the world, that just about any style of worship will be accepted by God as long as it is sincere, and that all that really matters is that we love the Lord. Teachers of truth are harshly reprimanded while false teachers are embraced and revered.

Condemnation

1. Worship that is based on the preferences of the worshipers is worthless. While it would seem on the surface that the digressive brethren have made wonderful progress and have emerged victorious, the truth is that all is not well. As Jesus said concerning the digressives of His day, saying, “And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men” (Matt. 15:9). The apparent success they have achieved in styling the worship to suit their preferences is overshadowed by the fact that the Lord will not accept their worship. Worship that is based on man’s instruction rather than on God’s instruction is worship that is offered in vain.

2. Rejection of the Lord’s authority results in rejection by the Lord.

The apostle John writes, “Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son” (2 John 9). The move beyond what is approved by the word of God does not result in a better and deeper spiritual experience, nor does it provide an enlightened freedom in Christ. Instead, the failure to respect the Lord’s authority results in a severing of the relationship these people had previously enjoyed with the Lord. Though they may continue to worship and mouth words of praise toward heaven, the Lord will ultimately reject those who reject His authority (cf. Matt. 7:21-23).

3. Failing to oppose error leads to being opposed by the Lord. The Lord sent the following message to the church in Thyatira: “Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach

... Continued from page 27

and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols. And I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent. Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds. I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works” (Rev. 2:20-23). By accommodating a false teacher and false doctrine the church in Thyatira made itself detestable in the sight of the Lord. Those who fail to oppose soul-condemning error and embrace that which is contrary to God’s word should expect to be condemned by the Lord unless and until they repent.

Conclusion

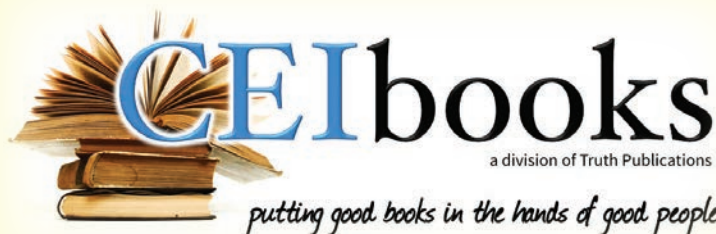
The progression of digression is very real, very dangerous, and very destructive. Rather than placing ourselves in the position of being rejected by the very Lord whom we claim to serve, may we resolve to abide in His word. Let us strive to follow His instruction fully so that instead of facing the destiny of the digressives we may, at the judgment, hear the words: “Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord” (Matt. 25:21). **I**



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Steps and Stages of Digression

What Should We Do About Digression?

By Philip Stuckey

Digression is an unfortunate reality. The Holy Spirit expressly said that some would depart from the faith (1 Tim. 4:1-3). Several of the epistles were written to encourage and warn brethren who were digressing, both those who were contemplating it or who were on their way to apostatizing. The threat of digression is a real danger; while the warnings of Scripture should make us be on guard against it, they also should encourage us that it doesn't have to happen. It can be avoided. It can be stopped. But how do we avoid it? How do we turn things around if we find ourselves on the road to apostasy? What should we do about digression?

One of the most important things we can do is cultivate what Jesus referred to as an "honest and good heart" (Luke 8:15). In the parable of the sower, four soils are discussed; each represents a hearer of God's word. Note that only the one who hears the word, accepts it, and obeys is called "good and honest." Whenever we approach God's word we should be honest with what it says and what it calls on us to do. We should desire to please the Lord and be willing to do what He says no matter the cost or the consequences. This challenges us to put aside all our preconceived notions, biases, and opinions every time we open the Bible. If we are honest with God's word when we hear it, and are determined to do what He says, then the threat of digression will be cut off at its very root.

In addition, we need to be determined to have a close and dedicated relationship with God. James rebuked brethren who had one foot in the world and one foot in the church. He called them adulterers, friends of the world, and enemies of God (Jas. 4:4). They were digressing. The remedy for them was to humble themselves, resist the devil and draw near to God (Jas. 4:7-8). They needed to stop being double-minded; they needed to make a choice. We also need to be honest and ask ourselves who we're really trying to serve – God or ourselves? Far too many times we deceive ourselves about who our master really is (Rom. 6:16). Strive to reaffirm your allegiance to God on a daily basis. Submit to Him, resist the devil, and draw near to God. Offer yourself daily to God as a living sacrifice (Rom. 12:1-2).

We need to "ask for the ancient paths" (Jer. 6:16). In Jeremiah's day the people had digressed from God's word and God's ways. Instead they said, "We will not walk in it!" Today, as in every generation, there are those who become dissatisfied with the old ways and the old truths that they have been taught, tested, and proven in the light of God's word. Some want to change what they perceive as tradition merely for the sake of change. Others feel the message must change to be relevant to the times. The truth is that God's word and God's ways do not change. The gospel is an unchanging message in a changing world. Yet the gospel is as applicable today as it was when it was first given.

Don't be deceived. Instead of seeking to innovate we need to learn to appreciate and seek the "ancient paths." We need to demand this from our elders, preachers, and teachers. Only in God's word do we find "the good ways." Only there, do we "find rest" for our souls.

Once we have asked for and found the ancient paths we then must walk in them. In other words, there is still work to be done. There is sometimes an attitude among Christians that we have learned all there is to learn or that we no longer need to review the things we believe we already know. For some, their hunger and thirst for righteousness has been fulfilled to their own satisfaction. But Christians who have come to know and be known by God must continue to grow in grace and knowledge. Otherwise they run the risk of falling away (2 Pet. 3:17-18). The Christian must stay hungry for knowledge, understanding, and wisdom of God's word (1 Pet. 2:2). We cannot rest on our past accomplishments or understanding. Those brethren who were contemplating leaving Christ and going back to the old covenant were told to "pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it" (Heb. 2:1). Peter was determined to remind the brethren of things they already knew (2 Pet. 1:12, 13, 15; 3:1), because continuing to study and learn and even revisit things we already know will protect us from digression (Phil. 3:1). So then let each of us daily keep on earnestly seeking to understand what the will of the Lord ►

is (Eph. 5:17). Let each of us make time to encourage one another daily to grow and learn and walk in God's ways so we don't slip into digression (Heb. 3:12-13).

What a comfort it is to know that God has given us such a great blessing in the knowledge of Christ. May God help us not to underestimate its power. Not only will it equip us to protect ourselves, but others as well (1 Tim. 4:16). Paul wrote, "...it (the gospel) is the power of God for salvation" (Rom. 1:16). Not only will it convert a sinner, but through the gospel the saint has "divine power to destroy strongholds" through which he can "destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God" (2 Cor. 10:3-5). No error can stand before the light of God's truth in the good and honest heart that desires

to draw near to God. Therefore we must take the knowledge we have, and that we continue to gain, and use it to discern good and evil (Heb. 5:11-14). We need to equip ourselves to confront the religious error and philosophies that challenge the truth of the gospel today. Across the kitchen table, in social media, in the breakroom at work, and wherever else we have the opportunity, we need to expose error and the unfruitful works of darkness (Eph. 5:11). Because of our love for God and our fellowman, we need to be willing to confront those who teach things that are outside the doctrine of Christ, no matter who they might be (2 John 9-11).

Digression will always be a threat for the people of God. Within the pages of God's holy book time and time

again we see digression, but we also see the remedy. Let us cultivate good and honest hearts. Let us cultivate a love for God and draw near to Him. Let us cultivate a love for truth and seek the ancient paths and walk in them. Let us cultivate a love for one another and encourage one another daily to be faithful. Let us preach the word in all its fullness to everyone we have the opportunity to teach (1 Tim. 4:1-5; Acts 20:27). **T**



Phillip Stuckey

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Six Steps Backward to Sin

By Chris Reeves

Have you ever noticed in Paul’s epistles how much he has to say to *Christians* about sin? He writes to *Christians* about the danger of falling into a life of sin. For example, his list of the works of the flesh in Galatians 5:19–21 is addressed to “the churches of Galatia” (Gal. 1:2). Paul writes about putting off the old man with his sins in Colossians 3:5–9. This is addressed to “the saints and faithful brethren in Christ that are at Colossae” (Col. 1:2). Paul also writes about putting off the old man in Ephesians 4:25 – 5:14 and this is addressed to “the saints ... and the faithful in Christ Jesus” (Eph. 1:1). Paul wants *Christians* to know that they can live in sin just as easily as someone in the world.

Christians who have been members of the Lord’s church for many years know about cases where fellow-brethren are caught up in a life of sin. These brethren digress and go backward into sin. They know about once faithful gospel preachers who are caught in adultery. They know about elders, deacons, and Bible class teachers who are found engaged in some kind of sexual immorality, pornography, lying, embezzling, deceit, gambling, scandal, etc. They know of church members who live a private life of sin while they continue to take part in the local church services.

How is it that a Christian can be “overtaken in a trespass” (Gal. 6:1)? How was it that he “fell away” (Heb. 6:6)? Why did he “err from the truth” (Jas.

5:19)? When did he become “entangled therein and overcome” with worldliness (2 Pet. 2:20)? The answer, in part, is found in Ephesians 5:3–14. If you read Ephesians 5:3–5, you will notice that Paul talks about different kinds of sins that a person can commit. But, how is it that a *Christian* can find himself committing these sins? Let me suggest that you read Ephesians 5:3–14 again, but this time in reverse. Read from verse 14 backward to verse 3 and you will find what I call the “Six Backward Steps to Sin.”

Step 1: Fall Asleep. The first step back into sin is when the Christian falls asleep spiritually. Paul writes: “*awake ... and arise from the dead*” (v. 14). The Christian who falls asleep spiritually will eventually end up in sin. The Christian who falls asleep spiritually is not vigilant. He has stopped walking wisely and using his time wisely for the Lord (vv. 15–16). He is not praying as he should be. He is not reading his Bible as he should be. He is not attending worship services as he should be. He is not busy in the Lord’s kingdom as he should be. Paul elsewhere writes: “*And this, knowing the season, that already it is time for you to awake out of sleep: for now is salvation nearer to us than when we first believed*” (Rom. 13:11; see also 1 Cor. 15:34 and 1 Thess. 5:6). Jesus said, “*Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak*” (Matt. 26:41; see also 1 Pet. 5:8). Are you spiritually asleep or awake? Are you watchful and vigilant each day?

Step 2: Stop Reproving Sin. The second step back into sin comes when the Christian stops openly reproving sin with the light of God’s word. Paul writes: “*but rather reprove them...*” (vv. 11; see also v. 13). The Christian who stops reproving sin will eventually end up in sin. This Christian stops calling sin, “sin” and he stops saying “No” to sin. He does not call a particular sin “unlawful,” “wrong,” “false,” “error,” “abominable,” etc. He does not talk with others (family, friends, brethren, etc.) about how bad a particular sin really is. The Greek word Paul uses for “reprove” is *elegcho*, meaning “to convict as wrong, or to expose as wrong.” We must always convict and expose sin as wrong. When Paul wrote to Timothy and Titus, he mentioned several times the importance of reproving sin. He wrote: “*preach the word; be urgent in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching*” (2 Tim. 4:2; see also 1 Tim. 5:10; Tit. 1:9, 13; and 2:15). Does your preaching, teaching, and conversation with others really reprove sin or does it give sin a pass?

Step 3: Fellowship Sin. The third step back into sin comes when the Christian fellowships those in sin. (He may not be personally engaging in the sin at this time, but he fellowships those who are engaging in the sin.) Paul writes: “*have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness...*” (v. 11). The Christian who fellowships sin will eventually end up in sin. This Christian has fallen asleep spiritually, he has stopped reproving ►

sin, and now he is fellowshiping (condoning, tolerating) those who engage in it. He is one step closer to committing the sin himself. Paul writes that we must never fellowship sin: *“Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers: for what fellowship have righteousness and iniquity? Or what communion hath light with darkness?”* (2 Cor. 6:14; see also 1 Cor. 5:9 and Rev. 18:4). The psalmist writes: *“Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers”* (Psa. 1:1). The faithful Christian will not engage in sin and he will not consent with those who engage in sin (Rom. 1:31). Do you condone the sinful behavior that is around you with tacit approval or even spoken agreement?

Step 4: Stop Bearing Fruit. The fourth step back into sin comes when the Christian stops bearing the fruit of goodness, righteousness, and truth; he stops being well-pleasing to the Lord. Paul writes: *“walk as children of light ... the fruit of the light”* (vv. 7-10). The Christian who stops walking properly and stops bearing the fruit of a good, Christian life will eventually end up in sin. This Christian is not spending his days walking and bearing good fruit for the Lord. He may be idle. He may be lazy. He may be wasting his time. He may be worldly minded. He has opened his life up to the Devil and the Devil will eventually fill it with sin (John 13:2, 27; Eph. 4:27; 1 Tim. 5:11-15). We must be actively bearing fruit each day for good to keep us out of sin. Jesus wants us to *“bear fruit”* for Him (John 15:16; see also Matt. 7:16-20). Paul wants Christians to be *“filled with the fruits of righteousness”* (Phil. 1:11; see also Gal. 5:22-23). James wants Christians to be *“full of mercy and good fruits”* (James 3:17-18). What are you planting and harvesting each day? What fruit, if any, are you bearing for the Lord today?

Step 5: Be Deceived. The fifth step back into sin comes when the Christian allows himself to be deceived into thinking that sin is not all that bad. Paul

writes: *“Let no man deceive you...”* (v. 6). The Christian who allows himself to be deceived will eventually end up in sin. This Christian has stopped listening to what the Bible says about sin. He listens to the worldly wisdom around him that comes from his music, movies, books, educators, friends, co-workers, society, etc. He begins to think that sin is not all that bad. He hears that it is “ok” to sin, sin is “not all that bad,” and, “it won’t hurt just this once.” He is told “you deserve a break today,” “it’s your right to do it,” and “you have a choice to do it.” We must never be deceived by the worldly wisdom that comes from the media, experts, scholars, the majority, our friends, etc. Paul writes: *“Be not deceived...”* (1 Cor. 6:9; see also 15:33 and Col. 2:8). Who are you listening to for your information about sin, God or man?

Step 6: Sin. The sixth and final step back into sin comes when the Christian actually engages in the sin. Paul writes: *“let it not even be named among you...”* (v. 3). This Christian is now doing the very thing that he once said or thought he would never do. Over time, he took the backward steps into apostasy, digression, and sin. Paul reminds the Ephesian Christians of four things about sin: (1) sin is not to be named among Christians, (2) sin is not “becoming” or “befitting” of the Christian life, (3) sin will keep a Christian out of the kingdom of Christ and God, and (4) sin will cause a Christian to receive the wrath of God (vv. 3-6). We must never forget that there is no place for sinful behavior in God’s kingdom. On three different occasions Paul wrote that sinful behavior cannot be a part of *“the kingdom of God”* (1 Cor. 6:9; Gal. 5:21; and Eph. 5:5). We must put it away (Eph. 4:25ff; Col. 3:5ff). Are you engaged in sinful behavior that is unbecoming of a Christian?

Friend, do you see yourself taking any of these steps backward to sin? Are your steps backward slow and gradual? Are they rapid? Are you taking each step, or are you skipping some of them as you go backward to sin? We know how

the Devil works. We are not ignorant of his devices (2 Cor. 2:11). He is wily, cunning, and crafty (Eph. 6:11). Don’t allow the Devil to lead you backward into sin! **T**



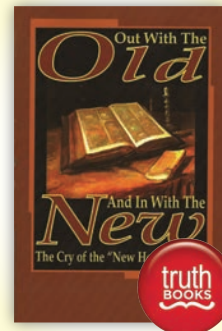
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James, in James 1:13-14, identified the steps to sin as (1) a person has a desire / area of temptation, who is then (2) lured or enticed by this desire (the conception and pregnancy of sin), and then (3) gives into that temptation (birth of sin), which results in (4) the spiritual death of the person.

In the Old Testament, in Joshua 7:21, we see Achan (1) saw the cloak, silver, and gold, (2) coveted them, (3) took them, and (4) hid them; these steps of digression ultimately led to his death and the death of his family. And then we see David, in 2 Samuel 11, go through various steps in which he kept getting farther and farther away from the person God wanted him to be. Rather than turning away as soon as he saw Bathsheba bathing, (1) he stared, (2) inquired more about her, (3) had her brought to him, (4) committed adultery with her, (5) tried to cover it up, and (6) ultimately murdered her husband.

In this special issue of *Truth Magazine*, we want to take the opportunity to remind us all of the steps and stages of digression, whether in our lives as individuals or as congregations. The following list of these steps have been identified by various preachers and Bible teachers of the last century, but they are just as applicable in the 21st century as they were in the 20th,

19th, or first centuries. Here are the steps and stages discussed in this issue.

- Neglecting God's Word
- Flirtation with Error
- Consideration of Error
- Toleration of Error
- Accommodation to Error
- Aversion to Militant Preaching
- Cooperation with Error or Those in Error
- Contamination of Error
- Capitulation (or Surrender) to Error
- Castigation of Those Who Oppose Error
- Condemnation by God

Following a discussion of these steps and stages is an article that provides a plan of action for preventing digression. We conclude this series with an article showing these stages summarized in six steps as discussed in Ephesians 5. I'm thankful to all of the writers, most of them young men, who have taken the time to contribute solid material to this discussion.

I commend this special series of articles to you as a reminder of the reality of digression and the need for us to avoid drifting away from the truth of God's word. We all must remain focused and deliberate, willing to exert whatever energy or effort is needed, to follow God every day of our lives. May God help us to "pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it." **T**

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Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Kenny Moorner (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

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.
Contacts: Brian Moore: (334) 279-1077
Charles Martin: (334) 283-2983

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 Summer 7 P.M.
Wednesday Winter 6 P.M.
Evangelist: Aaron Andrews
(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
Sunday Bible Classes 9:30 A.M.
Sunday Worship 10:30 A.M.
Sunday Worship 6 P.M.,
Wednesday Bible Classes 7 P.M.
www.conwaychurchofchrist.org

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

FORT 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: John Hagenbuch
Bldg: (479) 782-0588

HARRISON

Capps Rd. Church of Christ
407 Bella Vista Dr.
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:15 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Norman E. Sewell
www.cappsroad.org
870-741-9104 or 870-741-5151

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.mcarthurdrcoc.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
rlb612@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

MARVELL

Marvell church of Christ
Highway 49 • Marvell, AR 72366
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
(870) 714-1472 or (870) 338-1833

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

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
145 N. Country Club Road
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 P.M.
Call Us! (510) 523-9547

BELLFLOWER

Rose Ave. church of Christ
17903 Ibbetson Ave.
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

FOLSOM

church of Christ
900 E. Natomas St. • P.O. Box 492
Sunday Bible Study 9:30 A.M.,
Sunday Worship 10:30 A.M.,
Sunday Bible Study 4 P.M.,
Wednesday Bible Study 7:30 P.M.
Evangelist: David Posey
(530) 676-9514 or (916) 608-4866
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

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.
Wednesday Bible Study 6 P.M.
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

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

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

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

GENEVA

church of Christ
Ave. C and 2nd St.
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:45 A.M.
(407) 349-9998

JACKSONVILLE

Marietta church of Christ
8150 Driggers Street
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Jamie Rhoden, (904) 781-5704
or 693-0432, www.mariettacoc.com

KEY LARGO

Key Largo church of Christ
100695 N. Overseas Hwy.
33037 m.m. 100.7 on US 1
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: William LeDent (305) 451-1194

MIAMI

church of Christ
Eglise du Christ de Miami
8343 NE 3rd Court
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Wednesday 7 P.M.
Minister: Junot Joseph (305) 244-8295

MIAMI

Flagler Grove church of Christ
(Nearest to Airport), 500 N.W. 53rd Ave.
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
Evangelist: John Buttrick (305) 634-5924

MIAMI

church of Christ
12780 Quail Roost Dr.
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Clark Pace
(305) 233-9590 or (954) 430-1437

OCALA

Anthony church of Christ
9778 N.E. Jacksonville Rd., Anthony, FL 32617
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 10 A.M.
Wednesday 6:30 P.M.
Evangelist: Greg Cruz (352) 629-5505
www.anthonycocf.com

ORLANDO

Azalea Park church of Christ
6800 Lake Underhill Rd.
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
(407) 277-7931

ORLANDO

church of Christ at S. Bumby
3940 S. Bumby Ave.
Sunday Worship 9 A.M., Bible Study 10 A.M.
Worship w/ communion 10:55 A.M. (No Evening
Service), Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Adam Willingham
Office: (407) 851-8031

ORLANDO, FL

Pine Hills Church of Christ
890 N Hastings St, 32808
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
Evangelist: Ray West
(407) 293-2851 or (407) 290-8650

PALMETTO

Palmetto church of Christ
1575 14th Avenue W.
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 10 A.M.
Wednesday 7 P.M.
www.palmettochurchofchrist.com
(941) 722-1307

PANAMA CITY BEACH

Beach Church of Christ
8910 Front Beach Rd.
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
(850) 234-2521

PENSACOLA

East Hill church of Christ
2078 E. Nine Mile Rd. at Camberwell Rd.
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Hal Hammons
(850) 479-2130 or (850) 602-8420

SEFFNER

church of Christ
621 E. Wheeler Rd.
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 10:50 A.M.
Worship 6 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
Evangelist: Bobby Witherington (813) 684-1297
www.seffnercoc.org

GEORGIA

CENTERVILLE

Centerville church of Christ
250 Collins Ave. (Near Robins AFB)
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
Evangelist: J. Wiley Adams (478) 922-1158

COLUMBUS

River City Church of Christ
3900 River Road, Columbus GA 31904
Bible Class 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelists Jeff McCrary & Bo Couchman
(205) 451-9028, rivercitychurchofchrist.com
backtothebible@rivercitychurchofchrist.com

CONYERS

Rockdale church of Christ
East Metro Atlanta, 705 Smyrna Road
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 5:30 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
Building (770) 929-3973

PINE MTN. VALLEY

church of Christ
Route 116 (near Callaway Gardens)
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
Evangelist: Tommy W. Thomas
(706) 628-5117 or 628-5229
www.pmvchurch.com

SAVANNAH

Coastal church of Christ
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
(912) 344-1687
coastalchurchofchrist@outlook.com

VALDOSTA

Gonwood church of Christ
4030 Mulligan Rd. (4 miles S. of Moody, Next to
Fred's Store on Bemiss Rd.), Valdosta, GA 31605
Sun. Bible Class 10 A.M., Sun. Worship 11 A.M.
Sun. Evening 6 P.M., Wed. Eve. Bible Class 7 P.M.
(229) 219-8449 or (229) 300-3739
agospelpreacher@gmail.com

VALDOSTA

church Of Christ
4313 North Valdosta Rd.
(Located 1 mile E. of Exit 22 off I-75)
Worship 9 A.M., Bible Study 10 A.M.
Communion 11 A.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
(229) 244-8630, www.northvaldostacoc.com

HAWAII

ISLAND OF OAHU

Leeward church of Christ
94-1233 Waipahu St., Waipahu, HI 96797
(15 mi. from Honolulu; 18 mi. from Waikiki)
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 10 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
www.leewardchurchofchrist.org

IOWA

GRINNELL

church of Christ
1402 Third Ave.
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Wednesday 7 P.M.
(641) 521-6485, (641) 236-3883
www.grinnellcoc.com

DES MOINES

church of Christ
1310 N.E. 54th Ave.
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:40 A.M.
Wednesday 7 P.M., (515) 262-6799

IDAHO

BLACKFOOT

church of Christ
370 N. Shilling • P.O. Box 158-83221
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
(208) 785-6168 or 681-1552

ILLINOIS

CHICAGO

church of Christ
1514 West 74th Street
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 10 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: James E. Scott
Bldg. (773) 224-9279, (708) 339-6126

DOWNERS GROVE

church of Christ
1236 63rd St., (1 and 1/2 mile E. of I355)
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 9:55 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
(630) 968-0760 • www.dgccc.org

GLENN ELLYN

church of Christ
796 Prairie Ave., 60137
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
Evangelist: Keith E. Brown
(630) 858-2290, (630) 377-3990

MATTOON

Southside church of Christ
1100 S. 17th Street
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
(217) 234-3702

SOUTH HOLLAND

Southeast church of Christ
16224 S Vincennes Ave.
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 10 A.M.
Evening 4 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Donald Hawkins, (708) 339-1008
www.southeastchurchofchrist.com

INDIANA

CLARKSVILLE

Clarks ville church of Christ
407 W. Lewis & Clark Parkway, 47129
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
Evangelist: Brian Anderson (812) 944-2305
or (812) 948-9917
www.clarksvillechurchofchrist.org

GREENWOOD

Greenwood church of Christ
371 W. Main Street
Sun. Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 4:30 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelists: Neil Tremblett
(317) 888-8288
www.churchofchristatgreenwood.org

HOBART

church of Christ
300 N. Liberty Street
Bible Study 9:45 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Jerry Cleek (219) 942-2663

INDIANAPOLIS

Castleton church of Christ
7701 East 86th St., 46256
Sun. Worship 9:30 A.M., Bible Study 10:25 A.M.
Worship 11:15 A.M., Wed. Bible Study 7 P.M.
(317) 710-1204

JAMESTOWN

church of Christ
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:25 A.M.
Evening 4 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: David McPherson
(765) 676-6404 or (270) 994-4397
www.jamestowncoc.com

MARION

South Marion church of Christ
3629 S. Washington St.
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Alan Jones (765) 922-7602
www.southmarionchurchofchrist.org

OOLITIC

church of Christ
400 Lafayette Ave. • P.O. Box 34
Bible Study 9:45 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M. Wednesday 7 P.M.
(812) 279-4332

PEKIN

church of Christ
(First St. & Karnes Ct.)
Bible Study 9:45 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Jeremy Goen
(812) 967-3437 or 967-3520
www.pekinchurchofchrist.com

PLAINFIELD

church of Christ West
2028 Stafford Rd., Ste. C., (Marsh Shopping Cntr.)
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 9:50 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Johnie Edwards
(317) 964-9404 or (317) 839-1769
www.churchofchristwest.org

SAINT LEON, IN

Church of Christ
7140 Hyland Rd., Guildford, IN 47022
I74 exit 164 1 mile south on SR 1
Bible study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6:00 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
812-637-1252 or 513-367-7871

SALEM

Westside church of Christ
2000 West State Rd. 56
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 10:45 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
(812) 883-2033, www.westsidechurchofchrist.net

TRAFALGAR

Spearsville Rd. church of Christ, 6244 S. 500W.
(1.2 mi. S. of Hwy. 135)
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Ed Rangel. (317) 878-5969
www.trafalgarchurch.com

KANSAS

TOPEKA

17th Street church of Christ
5600 SW 17th St.
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 4 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
(785) 235-8687 or 273-7977
www.17thstreetchurchofchrist.org

KENTUCKY

AUSTIN

Peter's Creek church of Christ
856 Thomerson Park Rd.
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M.
Evangelist: David Cox (270) 579-8074 or
(270) 646-0498, www.peterscreekcoc.com

BEAVER DAM

church of Christ
1235 Williams St.
Worship 10 A.M., Bible Study After Worship
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Mike Thomas
(270) 274-4451 or 274-4486

BRANDENBURG

Brandenburg church of Christ
612 Broadway
Bible Study 9:45 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 6:30 P.M.
Evangelist: Charles J. White (270) 422-3878

CAMPBELLSVILLE

Sunny Hill Dr. church of Christ
A.M. Worship 9:30 A.M., A.M. Bible Study 10:30 A.M.
A.M. Worship 11:30 A.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Steve Lee (270) 789-1651
stevelee4510@windstream.net
www.sunnyhillcoc.com

CANEYVILLE

Caneyville church of Christ
103 N. Main St. • P.O. Box 233
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 10:45 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Jarrod Jacobs (270) 589-4167,
(270) 274-3065 or (502) 724-2231

DANVILLE

church of Christ
385 E. Lexington Ave.
Worship 10 A.M., Bible Study 11:15 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Scott Vifquain (859) 236-4204

FRANKLIN

31--W North church of Christ
1733 Bowling Green Road
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 10 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Steve Monts, (270) 586-3978
www.31wchurchofchrist.com

HODGENVILLE

Hodgenville church of Christ
613 S Lincoln Blvd.
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Don Brady (270) 358-6053
Dbrady1295@aol.com

LEITCHFIELD

Mill St. church of Christ
733 Mill Street, Highway 62 E.
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 10:55 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Michael Hardin
(270) 259-4968 or (270) 300-3239
www.millstreetchurchofchrist.org

LOUISVILLE

Valley Station church of Christ
1803 Dixie Garden Drive
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
Evangelist: Dudley Ross Spears (502) 937-2822

LOUISIANA

GONZALES

Southside church of Christ
405 Orice Roth Road, 70737, (Baton Rouge area)
Bible Class 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: R.J. Evans (225) 622-4587
rjevans@eatel.net

MANY

Lakeside church of Christ
12095 Texas Hwy. (Hwy. 6 W.)
12 miles west of Many
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
(318) 256-9396

STONEWALL

N. DeSoto church of Christ
2071 Highway 171 (South of Shreveport)
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 10 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
(318) 925-2733

MARYLAND

SEVERN

Southwest church of Christ
805 Meadow Rd.
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
Evangelist: Brandon Trout
(410) 969-1420 or (410) 551-6549
www.swcofchrist.com

RIVERDALE

Wildercroft church of Christ
6330 Auburn Ave., (Washington, D.C. area)
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
Evangelist: Antoine Holloway
(301) 474-7460 or (301) 741-0012

MAINE

PORTLAND

church of Christ • 856 Brighton Ave.
Leave Maine Turnpike at Exit 48
(Breakwater School)
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Second service immediately following morning
worship. Mid-week Bible Study. Please call for
times & places. (207) 839-3075 or 839-8409

MICHIGAN

CEDAR SPRINGS

W. Michigan church of Christ
Sr. Citizen Center, 44 Park Street
(Grand Rapids Area)
Worship 11 A.M., Bible Study 12:30 P.M.
Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Joseph Gladwell, (616) 975-2778
westmichcofc10@yahoo.com

MINNESOTA

DULUTH

church of Christ
4401 Glenwood St.
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 10 A.M.
Bible Study 5:30 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Taylor Ladd (218) 728-3233

ST. CHARLES

church of Christ
636 Whitewater Ave.
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Wednesday 7 P.M., call for location
Bible Study 2:15 P.M.
FREE Bible correspondence studies
Evangelist: Robert Lehnertz (507) 534-2905

MISSISSIPPI

BOONEVILLE

Oakleigh Dr. church of Christ
101 Oakleigh Dr.
Bible Study 9:45 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 4 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Building: (662) 728-1942

CLINTON

McRaven Rd. church of Christ
301 McRaven Rd. (I20, exit 36)
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 10 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Leonard White
(601) 925-9757 or 924-2645

MERIDIAN

Grandview church of Christ
2820 Grandview Ave.
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Sun. Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 6:30 P.M.
(601) 482-0543, (601) 479-3394 or (601) 934-3675
Contacts: Ron Cooper & Jim Young
youngins@comcast.net

MERIDIAN

7th St. church of Christ
2914 7th Street
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 10 A.M.
(601) 483-3101

SOUTHAVEN

church of Christ
2110 E State Line Rd. (Exit I-55), (Memphis area)
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: James A. Brown
(662) 342-1132 – church Building

MISSOURI

BLUE SPRINGS

Southside church of Christ
4000 SW Christiansen
Worship 9 A.M., Bible Study 10 A.M.
Worship 11 A.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Brett Hogland (816) 228-9262

CAPE GIRARDEAU

North Cape church of Christ
121 S. Broadview St. Suite 2,
Cape Girardeau, MO 63703
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M. CST/6 P.M. DST, Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Jerry Lee Westbrook (573)334-9673

DONIPHAN

Southside church of Christ
Hwy. 142 E. ½ mile (P.O. Box 220)
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
(573) 996-3251 or 996-3513

FAIR GROVE

church of Christ
217 N. Orchard Blvd.
Bible Study 9 A.M., Bible Study 10 A.M.
Worship 11 A.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Walter Myers (417) 830-8972 or (417)
736-2663

KENNETT

church of Christ
703 Harrison St.
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
(573) 888-6778 or (870) 650-1648
Nolan Glover, Preacher, www.
westsidechurchofchrist.us

LILBOURN

church of Christ
P.O. Box 270 • 211 Benton St.
Bible Study 9:45 A.M., Worship 10:45 A.M.
Evening 5:30 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
Evangelist: Shane Williams, (573) 688-2234
or 748-5204

RAYTOWN

Sterling Ave. church of Christ
5825 Sterling Ave. (Near Sports Complex)
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Norman E. Fultz, (816) 356-3096
or 554-0836
www.sterlingavechurchofchrist.org

ST. JAMES

church of Christ
685 Sidney St.
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:15 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Lynn Huggins (573) 265-8628

ST. JOSEPH

County Line church of Christ
2727 County Line Rd.
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 9:50 A.M.
Evening 3 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
(816) 279-4737
www.countylinechurchofchrist.com

NEBRASKA

BEATRICE

church of Christ • 7th and Bell
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 10 A.M.
Evening 6:30 P.M., 233-4102 or 228-3827
www.churhofchrist7bell.com

NEW JERSEY

VAUXHALL

church of Christ
Milbourn Mall Suite 6., 2933 Vauxhall Rd.
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
Contact: Harry Persaud
phone: (908) 964-6356 • cell: (908) 964-8570

NEW MEXICO

ALBUQUERQUE

Heights church of Christ
7801 Zuni Road, S.E.
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Darrel Yontz (505) 266-7577
www.heightschurchofchrist.com

NEVADA

RENO

Central church of Christ
2450 Wrondel Way, Suite A
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 10 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
(775) 786-2888

NORTH CAROLINA

CHARLOTTE

Charlotte church of Christ
5327 S. Tyron Street
Worship 9 A.M., Bible Study 10 A.M.
Worship 11 A.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
(704) 525-5655

HOPE MILLS

Gray's Creek church of Christ
Worship 10 A.M.
(910) 321-9023 or (910) 309-9844

OHIO

BEAVERCREEK

Knollwood church of Christ
1031 Welford Drive
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:20 A.M.
Afternoon 3 P.M., Wednesday Afternoon 1 P.M.
Wednesday Evening 7:30 P.M.
(937) 426-1422
www.knollwoodchurch.org

CINCINNATI

Blue Ash church of Christ
4667 Cooper Road
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 10:45 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Russell Dunaway, Jr. (513) 891-3174
www.blueashchurchofchrist.com

CLEVELAND

Lorain Ave. church of Christ
13501 Lorain Ave.
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
(216) 476-0660 or (330) 725-3960, 723-0111

COLUMBUS

Laurel Canyon church of Christ
409 McNaughton Road
Bible Study 9:45 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
(614) 868-1375, www.lcccoc.net

DAYTON

West Carrollton
28 W. Main Street, 45449
Early Worship 9 A.M., Bible Study 9:30 A.M.
Worship 10:25 A.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Michael Grushon (937) 866-5162
or 848-3779, www.wc-coc.org

FRANKLIN

Franklin church of Christ
6417 Franklin-Lebanon Rd. 45005
Sun. Bible Study 10 A.M.
Sun Worship 10:45 A.M.
Tues. Bible Study 6:30 P.M.
Evangelist: Josh Lee (937) 789-8055
or (937) 746-1249, www.franklin-church.org

FREMONT

church of Christ
3361 W. State Street, 1 mi. W. of Fremont
on U.S. Rt. 20
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 10:45 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
(419) 849-3340 or 849-2980
www.fremontchurchofchrist.com

HAMILTON

Westview church of Christ
1040 Azel Ave.
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 9:45 A.M.
Evening 6:30 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Eugene Ford (513) 856-9288

HILLIARD

church of Christ
4840 Cemetery Rd.
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
(614) 876-4089

MANSFIELD

Southside church of Christ
687 Mansfield-Lucas Road
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 10:45 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 6 P.M.
James Bond: (419) 526-2868
Leon Bond: (419) 525-3684
church: (419) 522-8982

NEW LEBANON

New Lebanon church of Christ
1973 W Main Street
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.,
Evening 6:30 P.M., Wed. Bible Study 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Bruce Hastings (937) 687-7150
or (937) 478-0367

MARIETTA-RENO

Marietta-Reno church of Christ
80 Sandhill Road
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6:30 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Daniel Ruegg: (740) 222-9160 or Steve Foutty:
(740) 473-9028

NEW RICHMOND

church of Christ
550 Washington St.
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:20 A.M.
Evening 6:30 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Contact: Dave Wylie (513) 553-6414
www.nrchurchofchrist.com

NORTHWOOD

Frey Road church of Christ
4110 Frey Rd. (Toledo Area)
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Donald Jarabek
(419) 893-3566, (567) 694-5062

UHRICHSVILLE

church of Christ
638 Parrish Street
Bible Study 9:45 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6:30 P.M., Mid-week 6:30 P.M.

OKLAHOMA

MCALISTER

North A St. church of Christ
2120 No. A Street
Bible Study 9:45 A.M., Worship 10:45 A.M.
Evening 5:30 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Rob Lungstrum, Cell: (918) 931-1362
Office: (918) 423-3445

OKLAHOMA CITY

Seminole Pointe church of Christ
16300 N. May Avenue
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: John M. Duvall (405) 340-3189
or (405) 513-6691, www.seminolepointe.church

SWEET HOME

church of Christ
3702 E. Long Street
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Evening 6:30 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
Building: (541) 367-1599

PENNSYLVANIA

PHILADELPHIA

church of Christ
7222 Germantown Ave., 19119
Bible Study 10:15 A.M., Worship 11:15 A.M.
Tuesday night 7 P.M.
Evangelist: James H. Baker, Jr. (215) 248-2026
www.mtairychurchofchrist.org

SOUTH CAROLINA

BEAUFORT

church of Christ
2107 King Street
Parris Island: Call for times, services for recruits only.
Sunday 10 A.M.,
Wednesday Bible Study 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Bryan Nash (843) 524-4400

COLUMBIA

Lower Richland church of Christ
3000 Trotter Rd. (Hopkins, SC)
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
(803) 730-0452, <http://lowerichlandchurch.org>

ORANGEBURG

Southside church of Christ
1502 Binnicker Bridge Rd.
(Grange Building - Hwy 70)
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11: A.M.
Evangelist: Fred England (803) 939-0672
www.southside-church.org

SUMTER

Woodland church of Christ
3370 Broad St. Extension
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 5:30 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: A.A. Granke, Jr. (803) 499-6023

WEST COLUMBIA

Airport church of Christ
4013 Edmund Hwy. (Hwy. 302)
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Evening 5:30 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Seth Mauldin, Buldg. (803) 834-6978
<http://airport-church-of-christ.com>

TENNESSEE

COLUMBIA

Jackson Hts. church of Christ
1200 Nashville Hwy., Hwy. 31N
Bible Study 9:15 A.M., Worship 10:15 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Mid-week 7 P.M.
Evangelists: Andrew Roberts & Shawn Jeffries:
(931) 388-6811, www.TheBibleWay.org

COLUMBIA

Mooreville Pike church of Christ
417 Mooreville Pike
(.8 mi. N. of Hwy. 50/Jas. Campbell)
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 5:30 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
(931) 388-5828 or (931) 381-7898
www.moorevillepikecoc.com

JACKSON

Sunset View church of Christ
3618 Hwy 70 East
(Exit 87 off I-40, 7mi. @ Spring Creek)
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 10 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Steve Wilkerson (731) 967-0590
or 968-9851

JOHNSON CITY

Brookmead church of Christ
2428 Lakeview Drive
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Kevin Kay (423) 282-6251 or 426-1836

JONESBOROUGH

11-E church of Christ
240 Headtown Road
Bible Study 10:30 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Evangelist: David Wheeler
(423) 557-9119 or (423) 948-6464
www.christianadmonisher.jigsy.com

KINGSTON SPRINGS

Kingston Springs church of Christ
350 North Main Street
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 10 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Steve Walker, www.kscoc.com

MT. PLEASANT

Locust St. Church of Christ
108 Locust Street • Mt. Pleasant, TN 38474
931-379-3704 or 931-964-3924
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Daniel H. King, Sr.
www.lscoc.com

KINGSPOUR

Kingsport church of Christ
4938 Fort Henry Dr. • P.O. Box 554
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 5:00 P.M., Wednesday 7:00 P.M.
Evangelist: Tom Kinzel, Bldg.# (423) 239-3979
or (423) 579-2002 • www.kptcoc.org

MARYVILLE

Smokey Mt. church of Christ
2206 Montvale Road
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Harold Tabor (865) 977-4230
Lon Spurgeon (865) 388-8749
<http://tinyurl.com/smchurch>

MEMPHIS

Rocky Pt. Road church of Christ
516 E. Rocky Point Rd., Cordova
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 10A.M.
Wednesday 7 P.M.
rockypointchurch@gmail.com
www.rockypointchurch.org

MURFREESBORO

Cason Lane church of Christ
1110 Cason Lane
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 10 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
(615) 896-0090 (Building)
www.casonlanechurch.org

MURFREESBORO, TN

Northfield Blvd. church of Christ
2091 Pitts Ln. at Northfield Blvd.
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: David Bunting (615) 893-1200

NASHVILLE

Bell Road church of Christ
1608 Bell Road
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 10 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Chris Pace (615) 833-4444

NASHVILLE

Hillview church of Christ
7471 Charlotte Pike
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 10 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
(615) 952-5458 or (615) 356-7318
Evangelist: Lee Wildman

NASHVILLE

Perry Heights church of Christ
423 Donelson Pike
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 9:55 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Johnny Felker (615) 883-3118
<http://perryheights.faithweb.com>

PIGEON FORGE

King Branch Road church of Christ
560 King Branch Road
Worship 10 A.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Facilities available for Sunday evening services
upon request.
Evangelist: Roger Williams (865) 430-5980
www.KingBranchRoadchurchOfChrist.org

SHELBYVILLE

El Bethel church of Christ
1801 Hwy. 41-A North
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 9:50 A.M.
Evening 5:30 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Donnie V. Rader (931) 607-9099
dvader@live.com

SHELBYVILLE

Shelbyville Mills church of Christ
1222 W. Jackson St.
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Jeff Curtis (931) 607-9118
djcurtis1963@hotmail.com

TEXAS

ALLEN

West Allen church of Christ
1414 W. Exchange Blvd. (2 miles w. of Hwy. 75)
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 9:50 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
Evangelist: Jerry King (214) 504-0443
Building phone (972) 727-5355

ALVARADO

I-35 church of Christ
E. Service Rd. off I-35, N. of Alvarado
Bible Study 10:00 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Evening 6:00 P.M., Wednesday 7:00 P.M.
(817) 295-7277 or 790-7253

ALVIN

Adoue St. church of Christ
605 E. Adoue Street
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
Evangelist: Mark Mayberry (281) 331-4953
or (832) 837-9038

AUSTIN

Schultz Lane church of Christ
Faber Rd. & Schultz Ln., Pflugerville, TX 78660
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 2 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
Evangelist: Ron Lehde

BAYTOWN

church of Christ at Pruett & Lobit
701 North Pruett Street
Bible Study 9:45 A.M., Worship 10:40 A.M.
Evening 6:30 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Jesse Flowers (281) 515-8939
Building: (281) 422-5926, Weldon: (713) 818-1321

BEAUMONT

Dowlen Rd. church of Christ
3060 Dowlen Road
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelists: Max Dawson & Benjamin Lee
(409) 866-1996

CONROE

Woodland Hills church of Christ
410 Woodland Hills Dr., 77303
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
phone: (936) 756-9322
www.conroechurch.com

CLEVELAND

church of Christ
310 E. Houston Street
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 10 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
Evangelist: Robert Davis (281) 592-5676
www.clevelandchurchofchrist.org

CORPUS CHRISTI

Hwy. 9 church of Christ
Worship 10 A.M., Bible Study 11 A.M.
Worship 12 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
Call for location: Keith Kalies (361) 776-2304
or Patrick Frazier (361) 235-1990

DICKINSON

church of Christ
2919 FM 517 Road E.
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 10:50 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 9:45 A.M.
Wednesday 7 P.M., (281) 534-4870
www.dickinsonchurchofchrist.org

DALLAS

Methodist Street church of Christ
211 Methodist St. • Red Oak TX, 75154
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: D. LeRoy Klice
(972) 576-3119 or 363-7672
www.methodiststreetchurchofchrist.com

DUNCANVILLE

Whispering Hills church of Christ
2126 S. Main (South Dallas)
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
(214) 874-5701, info@whchurchofchrist.net

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

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

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.lubbockindianaavecofc.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., Wednesday (Ladies Class) 10 A.M.,
Wednesday (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
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 5:30 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 9:30 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 or (304)844-2437

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

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 6 P.M., Wednesday Bible Study 7 P.M.
+1 (403) 452-5116
www.churchofchristcalgary.com

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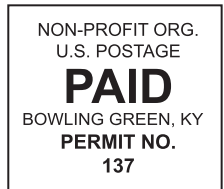
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