

Truth

Magazine

Taking His hand, helping each other home. 

TM

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ABSTAINING FROM EVIL

But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good; abstain from every form of evil (1 Thess. 5:21-22).



Truth Magazine

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God Gave Gifts to Men

by Mark Mayberry

God bestows gifts on humanity, but these blessings are spoiled by sin. Victory comes through abstaining from every form of evil (1 Thess. 5:22) and avoiding fleshly lusts that war against the soul (1 Pet. 2:11).

Introduction

Discussing the redemptive work of Jesus, Paul quotes and adapts a statement from Psalm 68, a Davidic song praising the God of Sinai and the Sanctuary:

But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore it says, "When He ascended on high, He led captive a host of captives, and He gave gifts to men" (Eph. 4:7-8, NASB).

King David spoke of God receiving gifts: "You have ascended on high, You have led captive Your captives; You have received gifts among men. . ." (Ps. 68:15-19, esp. v. 18). Gifts are given in recognition of a king's exalted position. When the queen of Sheba perceived the wisdom of Solomon and all that he had built, she gave him 120 talents of gold and a large number of spices and precious stones. "Never again did such abundance of spices come in as that which the queen of Sheba gave King Solomon" (1 Kings 10:6-10, esp. v. 10). After God delivered the city of Jerusalem from Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, many brought gifts to the Lord and presents to Hezekiah, the king of Judah, so that he was exalted in the sight of all nations (2 Chron. 32:22-23). Magi from the east came and worshipped the Christ-child, presenting gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh (Matt. 2:11). Given all that God has done on our behalf, we should gratefully acknowledge His goodness by presenting our bodies as living sacrifices (Rom. 12:1), offering the praise of our lips (Heb. 13:15), and acceptable

spiritual sacrifices through Jesus Christ (1 Pet. 2:5).

However, in Ephesians 4, Paul shifts the focus. Instead of describing the necessity of giving gifts to God (which he does elsewhere), the inspired apostle refers to gifts that we receive *from* God. Discussing the redemptive work of Jesus Christ, Paul said, "When He ascended on high, He led captive a host of captives, and He gave gifts to men" (Eph. 4:7-13, esp. v. 8). Contextually, this refers to His death, burial, and resurrection. It also includes the establishment of the church and the appointment of offices of revelation, proclamation, leadership, and instruction.

Much could be said about the gift of God's Son, the benefits that we enjoy in His body, etc. Nevertheless, in this lesson, let us expand our focus to consider other gifts that God has bestowed upon humanity.

The Gift of Judgment

God gave us the gift of judgment, bestowing human intellect, and also revealing His mind unto man via special divine revelation that forms the bases of understanding. Accordingly, we should be of sound and sober judgment (Rom. 12:3; 1 Pet. 4:7). Alcohol, drug abuse, and other judgment-impairing behaviors debase the gift of intellectual ability, reasoning, and understanding (Prov. 20:1; Hos. 4:11).

The Gift of Liberty

God gave us the gift of liberty, freedom of will, and the ability to choose (Josh. 24:15; Acts 11:23). Smoking and

other addictive behaviors rob us of yet another gift that of self-mastery (1 Cor. 6:12-13) and also destroy our bodies, which individually function as the temple of God (1 Cor. 3:16-17).

The Gift of Marriage

God gave us the gift of marriage, providing companionship and intimacy (Gen. 2:18-24; Prov. 18:22). Sexual immorality, in its varied manifestations, not only debases this gift but also destroys those who pursue this path (Prov. 2:16-20; 6:24-35).

The Gift of Speech

God gave us the gift of speech and verbal expression (Exod. 4:10-12). Accordingly, we can communicate a nearly infinite range of thoughts, ideas, and emotions, the highest of which is praise (Ps. 51:14-15). Cursing, swearing, and profanity defile the gift of speech (Rom. 3:9-18; cf. Ps. 52:1-5).

The Gift of Stewardship

God gave us the gift of stewardship, entrusting us with responsibility (Luke 12:42-43; 1 Cor. 4:1-2). Gambling, slothfulness, and other wasteful behaviors render one unworthy of such trust (Prov. 24:30-34; Matt. 25:24-30).

The Gift of Truth

God gave us the gift of truth (Isa. 29:22-24; John 8:31-32). Jesus is forthright with His followers: "In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you. . ." (John 14:2). Theft, cheating, lying, and other dishonest behaviors

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reveal that we are unworthy of this blessing (John 8:44; 1 John 2:4-6).

Conclusion

Encouraging His disciples to pray fervently (“Ask. . . Seek. . . Knock. . .”), Jesus said, “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him” (Matt. 7:11)? In this lesson, we have considered specific divine blessings—the gift of judgment, liberty, marriage, speech, stewardship, and truth. However, evil conduct sets aside these gracious gifts. The next two issues of *Truth Magazine* focus upon Paul’s exhortation, “Abstain from every form of evil” (1 Thess. 5:22). Study with us as we contrast God’s goodness with the devil’s relentless attempts to defile these divine blessings.

Many view sin in a favorable light, because it brings fleshly gratification. However, its pleasures are passing, deceptive, and illusory. The Greek adjective *ponēros*, translated “evil,”

pertains to “(1) being morally or socially worthless; (2) being so deficient in quality in a physical sense as to be worthless; (3) being in an unhealthy condition physically” (BDAG). The undesirability of evil is seen through its figurative usage in John’s Apocalypse to describe “malignant sores” (Rev. 16:2). Instead of being attracted to sin, like a moth to a flame, let us recognize that victory over evil comes through abhorrence (Rom. 12:9), avoidance (1 Cor. 5:13; 1 Thess. 5:22; 2 John 11), assurance (John 17:15; 2 Thess. 3:3; 2 Tim. 4:18; 1 John 5:18), appealing to God in prayer (Matt. 6:13), and actively overcoming the evil one (1 John 2:13-14).

In writing to the Corinthians, the apostle Paul spoke of various gifts that God has bestowed upon His people. While the saints at Corinth did not lack in any gift (1 Cor. 1:7), yet they were fighting among themselves over who possessed the most significant spiritual gift (1 Cor. 12:1ff). Such petty arguments left them stunted in their spiritual development. Concluding his second

epistle to the Corinthians, Paul exclaims, “Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!” (2 Cor. 9:15).

Speaking with the Samaritan woman at the well, Jesus said, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, ‘Give Me a drink,’ you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water” (John 4:7-14, esp. v. 10).

Have you received God’s free gift of salvation (Isa. 55:1-2; Rom. 6:20-23)? Have you begun the process of spiritual transformation (Rom. 12:1-2)? To achieve that end, let us resolve to scrutinize everything. Holding fast to that which is good, may we abstain from every form of evil (1 Thess. 5:21-22).



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Zechariah and the AD 70 Doctrine

by Kyle Pope

Zechariah encouraged the returning remnant and foreshadowed the coming of Christ. Kyle offers a contextual explanation of the 14th chapter, which affirms that God will defend spiritual Zion against her adversaries.

Introduction

In July, the Olsen Park church in Amarillo, TX, where I preach, hosted a debate on the doctrine known as Realized Eschatology, Full-Preterism, or the AD 70 Doctrine. All four nights of the discussion can be viewed on our church website: www.olsenpark.com. To the surprise of many of us involved in the debate, a significant amount of time was spent on the last three chapters of Zechariah. Brother Holger Neubauer (who advocates this doctrine) emphatically argued that the proclamation of Zechariah 14:2b: “The city shall be taken, the houses rifled, and the women ravished” (NKJV), must refer to the events of AD 70, and cannot apply to Pentecost. His opponent, brother Bruce Reeves (for whom I had the honor to moderate), never claimed that this passage applies to Pentecost. Unfortunately, Neubauer continued to charge him with this belief, and time did not allow Reeves to address this accusation specifically.

Why This Passage?

Those unfamiliar with the AD 70 Doctrine may wonder why a passage like this would become so pivotal in a debate on the Second Coming of Christ. If I understand it correctly, here is the rationale: First, Zechariah 13:1-6 describes a time when a fountain will flow for forgiveness from Jerusalem, and also when the prophet and evil spirit will be cut off from the land. Second, Neubauer argues that this describes the end of a forty-year “transition period” from the cross until AD 70 during which

the Mosaic Law continued, miraculous gifts operated, the church was established but not fully consummated, and full forgiveness of sins awaited the Lord’s coming in judgment and the ushering in of complete salvation with the destruction of Jerusalem.

Does This Prove What He Argues?

Brother Neubauer argued passionately that this passage’s reference to “houses rifled” and “women ravished” unquestionably proved that it described AD 70. Still, he failed to read the rest of the verse: “Half of the city shall go into captivity, but the remnant of the people shall not be cut off from the city” (Zech. 14:2c). Jesus forewarned and commanded His disciples concerning the events of AD 70:

But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those who are in the midst of her depart, and let not those who are in the country enter her (Luke 21:20-21).

According to Jesus, unlike Zechariah 14:2c, there would be no faithful “remnant” preserved within the city when it was destroyed in AD 70. Instead, He commands the faithful to flee from it and not to “enter her.” Although brother Reeves did not specifically address the “women-ravished” element of the passage, he did raise how the promise it makes to the faithful “remnant” discredits the argument that this is AD 70. Brother Neubauer never answered that inconsistency.

Zechariah in Context

So how does Zechariah address these issues, and what bearing does it have on the questions raised by full-preterism? The book of Zechariah dates itself in three passages. The first two fall in the “second year of Darius” (Zech. 1:1; 1:7) and the third occurs in the fourth year of his reign (Zech. 7:1). While Darius was a common name among Medo-Persian royalty, this reference is to the fourth Persian king, Darius Hystaspes, who reigned from 522-486 BC. During his reign, Jews who had returned from Babylonian exile were allowed to resume the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem (Ezra 4:24).

The book of Zechariah is an interesting blend of encouragement, promise, and warning. It begins with a reminder of why Israel had faced exile: “The Lord has been very angry with your fathers” (1:2), but moves quickly to hold out the Lord’s promise of mercy: “I am returning to Jerusalem with mercy; My house shall be built in it,” says the LORD of hosts” (1:16b). The book calls Israel to a renewed relationship with God during the continued return from exile: “Up, Zion! Escape, you who dwell with the daughter of Babylon” (2:7). At the time Zechariah writes, those who act against God’s people are warned, “I will shake My hand against them, and they shall become spoil for their servants” (2:9b).

In addition to focusing on Israel’s past and present, Zechariah is also a book of future promise. The Lord declares:

Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion! For behold, I am coming and

I will dwell in your midst,” says the LORD. “Many nations shall be joined to the LORD in that day, and they shall become My people. And I will dwell in your midst. Then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent Me to you” (2:10-11).

Certainly, this describes the blessings of a renewed relationship with God, but it also foretells a future in which not only the Jews but “many nations” shall be God’s people, “joined to the LORD.” At a time when temple worship was being restored, the Lord reveals to Zechariah the coming of One that He calls, “My servant the BRANCH” (3:8), whom He says “shall build the temple of the LORD” (6:13a). This will not be an ordinary temple. The One who is called the “BRANCH” will act as Priest and King, who “shall sit and rule on His throne; so He shall be a priest on His throne” (6:13b). This was not permitted under Mosaic Law. Under the Old Law, priests came from Levi, and the Davidic throne came from Judah. Yet, this temple will involve “Even those from afar” who “shall come and build the temple of the LORD” (6:15a).

As if to balance such wonderful promises, the Lord then offers warnings. He reminds them, “Should you not have obeyed the words which the LORD proclaimed through the former prophets, when Jerusalem and the cities around it were inhabited and prosperous” (7:7a). Because of their past failures, God had “scattered them with a whirlwind among all the nations which they had not known” and “the land became desolate after them” (7:14a).

This repetition of encouragement, promise, and warning runs throughout the book. The Lord proclaims, “I am zealous for Zion with great zeal” (8:2b, *ENCOURAGEMENT*). “Thus says the LORD: ‘I will return to Zion, and dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. Jerusalem shall be called the City of Truth, the Mountain of the LORD of hosts, the Holy Mountain’” (8:3; cf. 10:6, *PROMISE*). “They shall be My people and I will be their God, in truth and righteousness” (8:8b; 10:9-10,

PROMISE). “Let your hands be strong, you who have been hearing in these days” (8:9b; cf. 10:12)—“‘Now I will not treat the remnant of this people as in the former days,’ says the LORD of hosts” (8:11, *ENCOURAGEMENT*). Yet, He also admonishes them, “Let none of you think evil in your heart against your neighbor; and do not love a false oath. For all these are things that I hate,” says the LORD” (8:17; cf. 10:3, *WARNING*)—even warning pagan nations of His judgment (9:1-8; cf. 11:1-3, *WARNING*).

This promise of a different kind of temple, and a future involving unification of the Jew with Gentile nations is so clear in Zechariah one wonders how the Jews of the first century could miss it! The Lord promises:

“Yes, many peoples and strong nations Shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the LORD.” Thus says the LORD of hosts: “In those days ten men from every language of the nations shall grasp the sleeve of a Jewish man, saying, ‘Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you’” (Zech. 8:22-23).

Whatever conclusions we draw about this book’s final chapters, let us not forget this emphasis and this promise. Zechariah is a highly messianic book. After foreshadowing fellowship with the nations (8:22-23) yet warning these same sinful nations (9:1-8), we see a messianic prophecy which is specifically cited in the New Testament: “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey” (9:9). Matthew quotes this passage directly and describes it as being fulfilled in Jesus’s triumphant entry into Jerusalem at the start of the final week before His death (Matt. 21:1-10). Clearly, Zechariah is not talking about AD 70, but about Jesus’s first coming. He promises a messianic reign that will span from “sea to sea” and “to the ends of the

earth” (9:10)—something accomplished long before AD 70 (Matt. 28:18; Rev. 1:5).

Another messianic allusion comes in a warning to Israel’s shepherds. In Matthew 27:9-10, the apostle quotes Zechariah 11:12-13, describing the thirty pieces of silver that were paid as a betrayal price for Jesus and then used to purchase the potter’s field. Matthew affirms that this fulfilled what Jeremiah wrote, which either includes elements from Jeremiah that also relate to this (cf. Jer. 19:4, 6; 32:6-9) or the ancient arrangement of scrolls which placed Jeremiah before Ezekiel, Isaiah, and the Minor Prophets (Babylonian Talmud, Baba Batra 14b). While this is an unusual application of the text of Zechariah, the Holy Spirit makes it clear the context of Jesus’s death is the focus, not AD 70.

The Last Chapters of Zechariah

This sets the background for the closing chapters of the book. Preterists argue that the last three chapters of Zechariah describe a single act of judgment, introduced by the words, “The burden of the word of the LORD against Israel” (12:1a). While this wording often precedes a coming punishment (cf. Isa. 21:13; Jer. 23:34; etc.), it literally refers to a weight to be borne—as seen in the “burden of the beasts of the south” (Isa. 30:6) who would carry the riches of the wicked.

The opening words of this “burden” in Zechariah do not foretell punishment, but protection. Like the warning of 2:9b that the Lord would fight against those who assault His people, God declares to any who “lay siege against Judah and Jerusalem” that their efforts will be like taking a “cup of drunkenness” (12:2), who would be “cut in pieces, though all nations of the earth are gathered against it” (12:3)—hardly a description of AD 70! In fact, God promises, “In that day the LORD will defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem” (12:8a)—“It shall be in

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I Love Thy Kingdom, Lord

by Sherelyn Mayberry

From a biblical standpoint, the church and the kingdom identify the same realm, but from different perspectives. Sherelyn encourages us to consider the blessings of kingdom citizenship and embrace its related responsibilities.

Our love for the kingdom, the church of the living God, brings manifold blessings and weighty responsibilities as well. In the song "I Love Thy Kingdom, Lord" (*Psalms Hymns and Spiritual Songs* #369), we learn of God's love in establishing this body, our love reciprocated, the blessings found in it, and the glory deserved by it. Our love for Christ's kingdom leads to obedience, resulting in everlasting life (John 14:15). Becoming citizens in this spiritual kingdom, we are added to His body, the church (Matt. 16:18-19; Acts 2:40-41, 47).

Christ's love for lost humanity led Him to give Himself upon the cross to cleanse the body that needed sanctification. Since all have sinned, we need purification and propitiation through His precious blood (Rom. 3:23-25). Have you availed yourself of this blessing? Have you been baptized into Christ? Are you reciprocating His love for you?

Jesus shed His blood to save (i.e., purchase) the church (Acts 20:28). Do you love the church for which Christ died, and are you striving to build it up? Like the Israelites who were told to rebuild the walls of physical Jerusalem, are you building the walls of spiritual Zion? Are you willing to stand in the gap and defend her against the enemies of truth?

Christians are the temple of the living God. Does God dwell in you (2 Cor. 6:16)? Do you confess Christ in your daily life by word and example? Evidencing your love of His kingdom, do you seek to expand its borders? Do you build up your brethren by reproving, rebuking, and exhorting them in a spirit of love? God

gave His only begotten Son so you might have everlasting life (John 3:16). What are you doing for the church, which is the apple of God's eye?

Abundant blessings are found in the Lord Jesus (Eph. 1:3). Upon being baptized into Christ, we are added to His church and, subsequently, gain access to the rich blessings He bestows (Gal. 3:26-27). Are you counted among the offspring whom the Lord has blessed (Isa. 61:9)?

This relationship with Christ and His church brings a response of caring, prayer, and labor. Caring for our brothers and sisters in the kingdom, we uphold each other through physical and spiritual struggles. We should pray for the furtherance of Christ's kingdom and the growth of His church. Laboring in the Lord's service, we lead others to Christ and rejoice as they commit their lives to Him. We shed tears of thanksgiving at the conversion of lost sinners, weeping in sorrow when acknowledging our guilt and asking divine pardon.

The kingdom's way brings fellowship, singing, and commitment, which ultimately leads to the hope of an eternal reward. We live our daily lives with purpose. When our anxieties are cast on the Lord, peace is forthcoming (Phil. 4:6-7).

In this kingdom relationship with Jesus we have a Friend, a Savior, a Deliverer, and a King. Abundant blessings flow. Our Friend laid down His life for us, and no greater love could be bestowed (John 15:13). As Christ said to the paralytic, He can say to us, "Friend, your sins are forgiven you" (Luke 5:20). Through His loving kindness, God saves

us by His mercy and grace, which is poured out in Christ Jesus our Savior.

When we are justified by faith and obedience in baptism, we have hope of eternal life (Titus 3:4-7). Godly living profits us now and in eternity. Having our hope fixed on God, the Savior of all men, we labor and strive (1 Tim. 4:7-10). Moreover, we are assured of being delivered from any temptation that is beyond our ability to bear (1 Cor. 10:13).

As citizens in Christ's kingdom, we look to Him for all authority. He is our King. All rule, authority, and dominion are placed under Him. As subjects, we look to Him as head of the church (Col. 2:9-10; Eph. 1:20-23). The work of the church, spiritual Zion, is to glorify God. Not only should we pray for the growth of the church, let us endeavor to keep her spotless and blameless (2 Cor. 8:19; Eph. 5:27). God's fullness working in us gives us the power to glorify Him in the church (Eph. 3:21).

Jesus made us to be a kingdom (Rev. 1:5-6). As citizens of this spiritual kingdom, we long for our heavenly home. Our love for Christ's kingdom compels us to wait for the Savior, who will give us an immortal body in which we will glorify Him in eternity (Phil. 3:20-21).



Sherelyn Mayberry

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3. Be - lie - ve, O God, Thy friend all - vine. Our Sov - er - ain and our King.

The church our bless - ed - den - ed saved With His om - ni - pre - cious blood,
To her my cares and joys be - gun Till both and cares shall end
Thy hand from me - ry snare and foe Still great de - li - vrance bring.

I love Thy church, O God. Her walls be - lie - ve Thee stand,
Be - yond my high - est joy. I prize her heav'n - ly ways,
Sure as Thy truth shall last. In Zi - on shall be - gin

Dear as the ap - ple of Thine eye, And glar - en on Thy hand,
Her sweet com - mu - nic - a - tion, her love, her hymns of love and praise,
The bright - est glo - ries earth can yield And bright - er bliss of heav'n,

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God's Selection and Reshaping a Remnant (Part 3)

by David Flatt

Despite Israel's widespread rejection of the Messiah, there was still hope for Abraham's descendants. David discusses how God employed the Gentiles to fulfill His covenant promises and redeem a remnant.

Introduction

After reading Romans chapters 9-10, Jewish readers might have gotten the impression that God has rejected them. Yet, He had not cast away His people. This point could be proven through Paul, an Israelite who had initially rejected Jesus as the Messiah. Of course, Paul repented and accepted the truth. God graciously received him and was willing to do the same for any Israelite who would believe and obey the gospel.

The Remnant Family of Grace (Rom. 11:1-6)

God continues doing what He had been doing throughout Israel's history: saving a remnant by grace. Paul makes the same point about the remnant as he did in chapter 9, but does so now by referencing Elijah (1 Kings 18-19). Israel had rejected God and turned to idols. Through a contest at Mt. Carmel, Jehovah was shown to be the One, True and Living God. Yet, this dramatic display of divine power did not cause wayward Israel to seek restoration with Jehovah. Devastated, Elijah felt he was the only one who remained faithful. Of course, this was untrue. God revealed that there was a remnant within Israel who had not bowed the knee to Baal.

While Paul does not assume himself to be a representation of Elijah, there is a correlation between the two men. Paul was not the only Israelite who believed the gospel. He never made such a declaration. However, most Jews rejected Jesus. Paul enjoyed some

success among the Gentiles, while only a remnant of Israel had been obedient.

Israel's rejection of the gospel was discouraging for Paul (Rom. 9:1-5). In his second letter to the Corinthians, Paul remarks about the struggles that he and his traveling companions experienced in Asia (2 Cor. 1:8-9). They had been pressed beyond measure and despaired of life. They operated under a sentence of death—Paul was persecuted by the Gentiles, and his countrymen, the Jews (2 Cor. 11:26). He, like Elijah, experienced emotional trials.



The essential point that Paul conveys to Jewish readers relates to the historical concept of God saving a remnant by grace. Whenever God punished Israel, He spared a remnant. After enduring periods of exile, devout Jews emerged with reshaped hearts and a renewed commitment to God. Now,

as Israel had rejected the gospel, they were symbolically experiencing another period of exile. Through belief in Jesus as the Messiah, a remnant of Israel could experience a new exodus.

Of course, saving a remnant from exile through the Messiah was not due to Israel's faithfulness to God. They had not earned deliverance through keeping the Law of Moses, nor did they deserve redemption. Salvation (for Jew and Gentile alike) is not according to works of human merit, but according to God's grace (Rom. 3:21-31, 5:1-21).

Grace is an identifying trait of this new remnant. This point is illustrated throughout Paul's letter to the Romans. God's saving grace is seen in His covenant with Abraham, in His redemption of a remnant of Israel, and offering the gospel to the Gentiles. We, too, can become part of this remnant today by God's grace through our faith (Eph. 2:8-9). Nevertheless, God's grace is for naught if we do not believe.

A Stumble with a Purpose (Rom. 11:7-15)

Luke 15 contains parables about a lost sheep, a lost coin, and a lost son. In the Parable of the Lost Son, Jesus contrasted the relationship of two brothers. The older brother represented the Pharisees, and "sinners" were represented by the younger. Of course, when the prodigal returns home, he is received by his father. However, the older brother is jealous and angry at how his younger brother was welcomed back home after having wasted his

father's inheritance. This parable draws on familiar themes of historical relationships between brothers: Cain and Abel, Isaac and Ishmael, Jacob and Esau, and Joseph and his brothers.

Notice the essential dynamics of these relationships: (1) Cain murdered Abel as a result of jealousy; (2) Ishmael and Isaac shared little relationship at all, living separate lives, only reuniting to bury their father, Abraham. Isaac, the younger, would become a father of the covenant nation, while the descendants of the older brother, Ishmael, would eventually form a false religion—Islam; (3) Jacob and Esau had a tumultuous relationship. Although they reconciled later in life, their respective families remained enemies; (4) Joseph and his brothers had a terrible relationship, marring domestic harmony and happiness; yet, eventually, they were reunited. So, what's the point? In each case, including the parable of the prodigal, the story ends with the exoneration of the younger brother.

In this section of Romans, Paul describes the dynamic between two parts of God's family. In so doing, he offers a positive perspective on the two groups. Israel is the older brother. The Gentiles and the minority of Jews who believed are like the younger brother. The Jewish part of the family had rejected the Messiah, whereas the Gentile portion of the family had accepted Him. Paul explains that this was anticipated as well as designed.

The obedience of the Gentiles became a means by which God provoked the Jews to obey. The descendants of Abraham had not been forever exiled from God's family. They could return by manifesting faith in the Messiah. There was no other way. This is why Paul quotes Deuteronomy 29:4, which says, "But to this day the LORD has not given you a heart to understand or eyes to see or ears to hear."

Strangely enough, Israel's rejection of the Messiah had been factored into God's redemptive plan. Paul quotes Psalm

69:22-23, in which David explains how the table fellowship Israel enjoyed with God had become part of the problem of their rejection. Their privileged view of themselves, i.e., their position as God's "favorite nation," caused them to stumble at the teaching of Jesus. Yet, faith in Jesus as the Messiah was the only way back to God's table.

This creates similar questions to those raised in chapter 9 regarding predestination, selection, and partiality. Why was Israel's rejection foretold? What purpose was it to serve? Paul begins to answer these questions.

Overall, something good came from the Jews rejecting the Messiah: the rest of the world sought reconciliation through Jesus Christ. As Joseph explained to his brothers that God had used their evil to bring about something good, Paul describes how God was going to make something good out of Israel's rejection of the Messiah. "As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today" (Gen. 50:20). If something good could come from the Jewish rejection of the Christ, imagine the good that could come from their acceptance of Him.

Additionally, let us consider the broader context of Israel's rejection of the Messiah. Earlier in the letter, Paul explained how the sin of Adam was being reenacted collectively by Israel (Rom. 5). He explained how the Law of Moses was given so that Israel's trespass would grow to its full strength (Rom. 5:20). In this paragraph, Paul describes Israel's stumbling, failure, and poverty, bringing riches to the Gentiles (Rom. 11:12). If their casting away brought reconciliation to the world, their eventual acceptance of the gospel could result in life from the dead (Rom. 11:15).

What has happened with ethnic/fleshly Israel is what happened to the Messiah. Israel was reenacting this sad story. The Messiah had been rejected, crucified, and raised to new life; in like manner, Israel had been rejected

because of their disobedience. They were dead because of unbelief but could be raised to renewed life if they would respond in faith.

Yet, will they believe? Thus far, they had refused. This is why Paul has such sorrow for his family's rejection of the Messiah. Nevertheless, he is encouraged by the hopeful prospect of Israel being welcomed back to the family of God. Paul had been welcomed back to God's family by faith. Although Israel is dead, they could be made alive—if they would *only* believe it.

Two Olive Trees (Rom. 11:16-24)

Paul continues to deal with an important issue: has God forever cast away the Jews? He begins to explain equality between the Jews and the Gentiles, making his point by two illustrations: the sacrifice of first fruits and the grafting of olive trees.

In the first illustration, Paul considers the sacrificial system of first fruits. When a farmer gave thanks to God and dedicated his seasons' crops, he would offer a sacrifice of the first fruits. This initial offering would declare the rest of the harvest as holy. The point of the illustration is this: since a small number of Jews had believed, the rest of the unbelieving Jews could be brought into the family of God. God had not "cast them away." The Jews who first believed demonstrated the promising potential of the remaining Jews. The gospel was still for them all if they would only believe.

The second illustration is directed toward Gentiles who had believed and become part of God's family. Paul uses an example of olive trees, a common sight of the Mediterranean landscape. Because of their robust nature, farmers would take a branch from a healthy, cultivated olive tree and graft it to a wild olive tree. Wild olive trees are usually strong but do not produce good fruit. Grafting a branch from a domesticated olive tree enabled the wild tree to produce good fruit.

In this passage, Paul uses the opposite of this illustration to describe what God did for the Gentiles through Jesus Christ. Instead of grafting a good branch to a wild olive tree, a branch from a wild olive tree is grafted into a good olive tree. Paul uses this illustration in reverse as a means to keep Gentile Christians from pride. They have no right to boast over the Jews. They, too, were part of the remnant of grace, not works. This point brings a sense of balance to Paul's rebuke of unbelieving Jews. He does not want to leave the wrong impression with the Gentiles that they are now superior to Jews.

Mercy on Everyone (Rom. 11:25-32)

Offering a final summation of chapters 9-11, Paul addresses his readers as "brothers." He has been describing how his family, Israel, had rejected the Messiah while the Gentiles had embraced Him. Nevertheless, Paul is concerned that the Gentiles will get the wrong idea about his point. He does not want Gentiles to think they now hold a special/favored place in God's heart: i.e., they are the new favorites. Believing Jews and Gentiles alike are part of the same family of God, so Paul addresses them accordingly.

Paul begins to finish explaining the mystery of how God would save all His people, Jew and Gentile alike. Israel rejecting the gospel is a well-established point. Instead of destroying Israel in their rebellion, God allowed them to exist in this condition. Like God is toward us today, He was patient with Israel. After Israel rejected the Messiah, the gospel was preached to the Gentiles. Through their obedience, they provoked Israel to jealousy. Now, the time was right for Israel to reconsider the gospel and obey. To prove this point, Paul carefully quotes from Isaiah and Jeremiah:

And a Redeemer will come to Zion, to those in Jacob who turn from transgression," declares the LORD (Isa 59:20).

For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, "Know the LORD," for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more (Jer. 31:33-34).

Therefore by this the guilt of Jacob will be atoned for, and this will be the full fruit of the removal of his sin: when he makes all the stones of the altars like chalkstones crushed to pieces, no Asherim or incense altars will remain standing (Isa. 27:9).

This trio of verses describes God working through the Gentiles for the sake of fulfilling His covenant. The Messiah will come out of Zion to bless the wider world. Unbelieving Israel will be provoked to jealousy. Hopefully, this will cause some of them to return to God through faith in Jesus Christ. By so doing, they will be forgiven. The passage in Jeremiah is not about the old covenant but a new covenant that would be offered to a renewed people who returned from exile. This prophecy was being fulfilled during the time that Paul was preaching the gospel to the Gentiles.

Understanding the mystery of how God would save all His people is essential. God's plan demonstrates that everyone, Jew and Gentile alike, comes into His family on equal footing. Earlier, Paul described God's family as a remnant of grace, not only a remnant of works. The Jews were not morally superior to the Gentiles, nor were the Gentiles morally superior to the Jews. Both were sinners saved by grace through faith. Divine mercy had been extended to both.

Glory to God (Rom. 11:33-36)

Paul completes his explanation of chapters 9-11 with a statement of praise to God. These chapters are among the

most perplexing and fascinating in all the Bible. They describe in detail what God had been doing to save humanity. Even with this explanation, we struggle to comprehend how God was able to work with (and through) a rebellious people to bring salvation to the entire human family.

God's plan of salvation should instill us with an overwhelming sense of gratitude. To express their sense of wonder, amazement, and praise towards the works of God, the Jews would often draw on the Scriptures. Paul does the same here, using expressions and thoughts first conveyed in Job (Job 5:9, 15:8, 36:22-23, 41:11).

Conclusion

We are in a constant state of failure before God. We will never arrive at a place in life in which we can repay God. Neither will we reach a "break-even" state. He most certainly will never be indebted to us. All that we are will always be owed to God's wisdom, grace, and mercy. Through the transforming power of the gospel, our lives can become sacrificial expressions of praise to God. This glorious theme will be considered in the last section of the letter: Romans 12-15.



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Praise as an Act of Worship

by Matthew Bassford

Are we fulfilling the mandate, expressed initially in Psalm 22:22 and later quoted in Hebrews 2:12, that says, “I WILL PROCLAIM YOUR NAME TO MY BRETHREN, IN THE MIDST OF THE CONGREGATION I WILL SING YOUR PRAISE”?

Introduction

Many things have changed between the covenant of Moses and the covenant of Christ, but one that has remained constant is the responsibility of God’s people to praise Him. As the psalmist notes in Psalm 33:1, praise is becoming to the upright. Indeed, devotion to the praise of God is one of the marks of God’s children. By contrast, Paul observes that the apostasy of the Gentiles began with their refusal to honor God or give thanks despite their knowledge of Him (Rom. 1:21).

Even today, our decision to praise God, or not, reveals a great deal about us. The heart that refuses to praise God is hardened and corrupt, while the heart that glorifies Him is submissive and grateful. In particular, the practice of praising God with singing shows that we belong to the church that belongs to Christ.

There are many reasons why such praise is appropriate. First, we praise God because He deserves it. He is the Creator of heaven and earth. He is our Maker. According to Matthew 5:45, God’s compassion for humankind is such that He sends sunshine and rain even on the ungrateful and evil. James 1:17 reports that, without wavering, He provides every good thing given and every perfect gift. Most of all, God is worthy of praise because while we were helpless, He gave even His own Son to die in our place. Indeed, it would be easy to spend the rest of this article doing nothing but enumerating the reasons why God is worthy of praise!



Thus, even though we exalt God far above any other being, there is nothing of flattery or fulsomeness in our praise. It is a simple acknowledgment of the greatness of His nature and His works. When we recount the deeds of the Lord in song, we only are giving credit where credit is due.

Second, praise is important because it fixes in our minds the true relationship between God and us. In some ways, the monarchies and empires of the ancient world gave God’s people in those times an advantage over us. Our brethren of old accepted that some others were intrinsically superior to them, so they had little trouble acknowledging God as the great King over the nations and embracing the implications of the statement.

For modern-day Americans, this is no longer true. We hold that all men are created equal and that no one is

intrinsically superior to another. This conviction benefits us in many ways (*not least* by giving us the freedom to worship according to our conscience), but it also can keep us from seeing God clearly. In practice, it has proven far too easy to make the leap from accepting equality between people to asserting equality between man and God. “Nobody gets to tell me what to do!” millions cry out today, and they do not exclude God from their proud boast of autonomy. Sadly, in recent years, this arrogant spirit has become evident even among some brethren.

Praise for the King of heaven is an essential part of the cure for the disease. God is eternal; we are not. God has done wondrous things; we haven’t. When our heart repeats these things, it shatters all illusions of equality. We are compelled to admit that God is as high above us as the heavens are above the earth,

and that is a consequential admission! In the face of His awesome power and authority, who are we to insist upon having our own way? When we honestly praise God, it leaves us with no choice but to obey Him.

Worship, then, is something that God deserves, and that we need. Furthermore, the motivations for our worship imply the mode of our worship too. It doesn't make any sense to humble ourselves before His deity on the one hand while worshiping Him in the way that seems best to us on the other. Instead, the humility that worship should produce in us leads us to humble ourselves before His revealed word too.

Though there are several passages in the New Testament that define our song worship, one of the most important is Colossians 3:16, which reads in the NASB:

Let the word of Christ dwell richly within you, in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

In this single verse, there are at least three vital lessons about our praise for God in song.

Praise Must Be Mindful

The first is that it must be mindful. The passage tells us that our song worship must arise from a rich indwelling of the word in our hearts, that it must express spiritual wisdom, and that it is to teach and admonish.

We recognize that preachers should not preach on autopilot, nor should Bible class teachers teach on autopilot. That would show a lack of reverence for the Scriptures! The same is true, though, of singing on autopilot.

Even when we are singing a hymn we've known for decades; we owe it to our Creator to focus our minds upon His magnificence. Proper attention to the truth in our hymns will make our singing

more powerful and more pleasing to God.

Praise Must Be Corporate

Second, our praises in song must be corporate. Though there are other passages in the New Testament, such as James 5:13, that speak of individual praise, Colossians 3:16 is not one of them. Instead, Paul describes song worship as a "one another" activity. At least part of the time, we must praise God when other Christians can hear us.

This serves several important functions. It expresses our faith to our hearers, it forces us to acknowledge our lowliness in a public manner, and it teaches others the truth we hold dear. It is probably true that our beliefs are shaped as much by the hymns we sing as they are by the Scriptures we study!

Praise Consists of Singing

Finally, our song worship must consist of singing. God's will here is clear. In the Old Testament, in passages like 2 Chronicles 29:25, God clearly commanded the mode of worship that He wanted—instrumental music. So also today, throughout the New Testament, God clearly commands the mode of worship He wants—singing.

As the saying goes, "This ain't rocket science!" Either we are humble before God, and we offer Him the praise He has asked for, or we are arrogant, and we offer Him praise He hasn't asked for. The fact that such a simple doctrinal issue has caused so much controversy reveals much more about the deceitfulness of Satan and the hardness of human hearts than it does about the issue's difficulty. The Bible instructs us to sing praises, so we ought to... sing praises—*End of Story*.

Conclusion

The act of praising God, especially in song, is a vital part of our spiritual lives. Unless we are willing to praise Him, we cannot please Him. Conversely, when we are willing to give Him the glory He deserves, our worship will transform

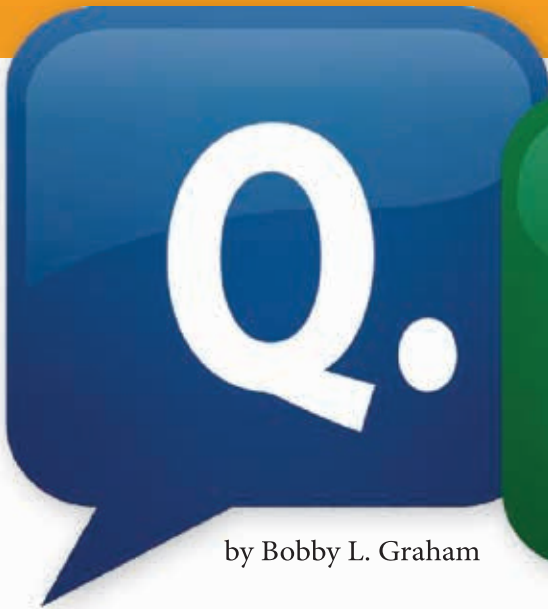
our lives. God is mindful of our frame; indeed, He is the one who crafted it. He made us particularly receptive to the truths that we sing together. The more we honor His will when it comes to praise, and the more we open our hearts to the things we sing, the more we equip ourselves to praise Him forever!



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Bobby actively participates in fill-in preaching, Belize trips, teaching an hour each day at Athens Bible School, and in

gospel meeting work. He and his wife, Karen, have three children. He can be reached at bobbylgraham@pclnet.net.

QUESTION.

A reader from Chile asks, “Can an unbeliever baptize someone who wishes to become a Christian?”

ANSWER.

As important as baptism is in God’s plan of salvation, it does seem to have little emphasis placed upon the person doing the baptizing. One can search the New Testament through and through without ever reading any particular stress being placed on the individual baptizing another person. There are requirements/prerequisites applicable to the one being baptized in almost every passage relating to baptism, but there are no requirements/prerequisites clearly stated concerning the baptizer. How does one explain this absence of teaching in the New Testament?

When the Lord gave the Great Commission to His apostles near the end of His earthly work, He naturally included baptism in the work that they were to do when people were ready for baptism (Matt. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16). They were the ones directly involved in carrying out

the Lord’s orders and were thereby qualified to baptize others. Did He caution them about the kind of people who could do future baptizing? No!

On the day of Pentecost, when the church began in Acts 2, who did the baptizing of the 3000? Someone suggests that apostles did, but how do you know? The truth is that Luke does not tell us who baptized the 3000 who obeyed the gospel. On successive occasions, when people were baptized in the book of Acts, who did the baptizing? How do you know? The truth is that no one knows who baptized the thousands who became Christians in the early chapters of Acts, the Samaritans in chapter 8, Cornelius and his household in chapter 10, or even Saul of Tarsus in chapter 9. If it makes a difference who does the baptizing, why did the Lord not inform us of those baptizing the named individuals?

Someone suddenly exclaims, “Philip baptized the Ethiopian in chapter 8.” Yes, he was the only other person who

was present. Would this one instance of knowing the baptizer require a Christian to baptize a person? If it would, would it not also require that the one doing the teaching also do the baptizing? In other words, after one teaches another about Christ (to the extent that the taught individual desires to be baptized), based upon this reasoning, it would be wrong to allow another person (who did not participate in the teaching but was influential earlier in that person’s life) to step in and baptize the person. If this is not so, would someone please point out why it is incorrect reasoning. One cannot avoid the conclusion that the Bible does not emphasize who has the right to baptize another person.

Another problem arises when one insists that the baptizer be a Christian. This human requirement demands that the validity of one’s baptism depends both upon the person baptizing him, as well as all of the persons who earlier baptized people in the chain of baptizers. This chain of baptizers must consist of Christians, faithful Christians,

all the way back to the apostles of Jesus Christ. In other words, an individual could not know that his baptism was valid unless he also could vouch for the validity of the baptisms performed all the way back from him to the apostles. Since this is an impossibility, such insistence as we are examining places a cloud of suspicion or doubt over many baptisms, about which one has no information. Do you know for certain that the person who baptized you was faithful to the Lord? What about the person who baptized that one? Take it all the way back as many times as baptisms took place. Were all these baptizers faithful servants of the Lord? If even one was not faithful as judged by the Lord, then all subsequent baptisms in that line of conversions were invalid or unscriptural, at least according to this line of reasoning.

I challenge all who insist upon the baptizer being a Christian (*Remember he must be a faithful Christian.*) to admit that they simply do not know about all who baptized someone in the line of baptisms culminating with theirs. In other words, when judged by your own standard, your baptism is not valid or scriptural. Why? You do not

know about the person who baptized someone in that line of baptisms 100 years ago or 1000 years ago, do you? With your lack of qualification to baptize another, are not all of the baptisms performed by you called into question?

When the Bible sets forth a command, like the necessity of baptism, there are specific requirements surrounding the command, as well as expediencies, to be used in implementing the command. The specifics must be obeyed as they are stated (like who can be baptized, why the person should be baptized, and how the baptism is to be done). However, the expediencies available in carrying out the command are optional (like the place for the baptism, the person doing the baptizing, and what other activities might accompany the baptism). Two problems can arise relative to baptizing a person: 1) loosing the specifics/mandates and 2) binding the expediencies available for baptism. If a person chooses either the loosing or the binding, he is wrong in doing so. When one requires the baptizer to be a Christian, he errs by elevating a human tradition to the level of divine law (Mark 7:8-9).

There is no problem that this writer knows about in using a Christian to baptize another. In most instances, I would even recommend that such be done. On the other hand, there are rare situations in which no Christian is available. Would you require that the person postpone his baptism until one is available? I would not make such a recommendation, but instead, suggest that the candidate for baptism find someone willing to do the baptizing so that all might be right then with God. I know of some Christians in Alabama church history who were baptized by individuals who did not believe baptism is necessary for the remission of sins. The one being baptized knew biblical teaching along this line and believed it. He wanted to be baptized so fervently he sought out a Baptist preacher, who already believed in immersion, and asked him to baptize him that his sins might be forgiven. Should John Taylor have waited to be baptized until he met some Christians who were able to baptize him? I would not want to make such a faulty recommendation and risk the loss of souls because of it.



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Mount Arbel: A Reminder of God's Love

by Barry Britnell

Mount Arbel overshadows the Sea of Galilee, the Plain of Gennesaret, and the Via Maris, an ancient trade route connecting the north and south. From atop these cliffs, believers are reminded of the universality of God's love.

On the western shore of the Sea of Galilee stands a cliff, known as Mount Arbel, that casts a shadow over the water in the late afternoon. If you have never heard of this mountain, do not feel bad. It is not mentioned in the Bible, yet it is a place that the people of the first century who lived around the lake would have seen daily. Undoubtedly, Jesus and the disciples watched the sun set behind its massive face every afternoon.

The top of this mountain is only 181 meters (594 feet) above sea

level. However, since the surface of the Sea of Galilee is 212 meters (700 feet) below sea level, Mount Arbel towers nearly 400 meters (1300 feet) above the surface of the waters.

As the people of the first century walked from lower Galilee to the lake, Mount Arbel would have been in sight most of the way. For the first portion of the journey, the top of the mountain would have been below them. However, as they slowly descended to the lake, the mountain would have

risen above them, providing needed shade from the summertime heat.

As one would expect, the view from the top is stunning. Looking toward the east, the entire Sea of Galilee is visible. In all other directions, you can see many of the rolling hills of lower Galilee. On a clear day, you can even see the snow-capped top of Mount Hermon, situated about 60 miles away, rising to an elevation of over 2,800 meters (9,200 feet) high.

I have been fortunate to have been to the top of Mount Arbel many times. Even



The early morning sun is reflected off the massive face of Mount Arbel.



*The northern half of the Sea of Galilee, as seen from the top of Mount Arbel.
Most of the Galilean ministry of Jesus was spent within the frame of this picture.*

though I have dozens of pictures from that vantage point, I find myself taking even more. I am always looking for a slightly different angle, or perhaps the sun is shining across the hills in a better way. Every time that I ascend Mount Arbel, a single verse comes to mind:

Jesus went throughout all of the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction (Matt. 9:35).

I find this passage very interesting. Because God loves us, He sent his

Son to the earth with an essential task to perform and an important message to tell. To be the most effective and to reach the most people, logic would seemingly dictate that Jesus would have spent a majority of His time in Jerusalem (where the Jewish leadership and many people lived) or in Rome (where the Roman leadership and many people lived).

Yet, that is not what happened. Jesus did not spend most of his time with the elite of this world. He spent time with ordinary people. He spent

time with fishermen, tax collectors, farmers, older people, younger people, friends, and neighbors. He spent time with those who were sick, those who were suffering, and those who needed a shoulder on which to cry.

From the top of Mount Arbel, you can easily take a picture of the northern third of the Sea of Galilee. Of all of the places in the entire world for Jesus to spend His time, He spent a majority of His ministry within the frame of this picture. “For God so loved the world that He sent His Son” not to the elite of the world, but to the common man. I appreciate that because I am about as common as they come. Every time I see the view from atop Mount Arbel, I am reminded once again that Jesus came for me.



Mount Arbel, the Plain of Gennesaret, and some of the hills of lower Galilee.



Barry Britnell

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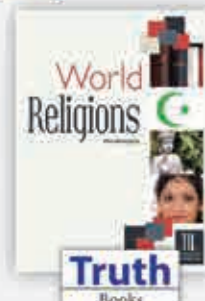
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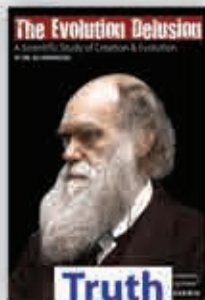
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Alcohol, Drug Abuse, & Other Judgment Impairing Behaviors

by Bruce Reeves

According to reports, alcohol abuse and dependence claim an estimated 100,000 lives and cost U.S. taxpayers over \$249 billion each year. Yet, the spiritual costs are far greater. God calls us to a higher path and purpose.

Introduction

The apostle Paul wrote, “Examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good; abstain from every form of evil. Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thess. 5:21-23). As faithful Christians, we should commit ourselves to the teaching of the Lord. As a result, we must “abstain from every form of evil.” Paul is not merely describing innocent activities that may look bad; rather, he affirms the fact that evil may express itself in different ways.

The Need for a Clear Mind

The New Testament frequently exhorts us to be “sober in our spirit” and to be of “sound judgment” (1 Cor. 15:34; 1 Pet. 1:13; 4:7; 5:8). Although this is a general encouragement to protect our hearts from the influences of sin, the metaphor itself implies the danger of losing clarity of judgment through intoxication.

The loss of judgment due to alcohol and drug abuse is a significant sign of addiction. Diminished discernment caused by alcohol or drugs leads one to start making irrational and risky decisions that prove detrimental to one’s spiritual, social, physical, and psychological health. Drugs contain chemicals that can upset the brain’s natural communication system and cause the mind to process information differently.

Eventually, to get the initial effect that was produced when the person first started using drugs, he will have to keep increasing the amount he takes, which is how the cycle of addiction enslaves. The most common types of drugs that are notable for impairing one’s judgment are cocaine, marijuana, opioids, alcohol, prescription depressants, and prescription stimulants.¹ All of these can result in a greater or lesser degree of reaction time. One’s judgment of speed, spatial awareness, and the ability to assess danger becomes distorted. This can put you, and others around you, in danger. It also seriously undermines your ability to make spiritual, moral, and ethical decisions, impacting not only your individual wellbeing but also that of others.

The Danger of Alcohol on Our Youth

Alcohol is the most commonly used mind-altering substance in the U.S. The *Center for Disease Control* (CDC) estimates 37 million U.S. adults—or 1 in 6—binge drink² about once a week, consuming an average of seven drinks per binge. As a result, U.S. adults consume about 17 billion binge drinks annually or about 470 binge drinks per binge drinker. Binge drinking is most common

among younger adults 18-34 years old. It is associated with car crashes, alcohol poisoning, violence, homicide, suicide, sexual assault, sexually transmitted diseases, and memory and learning problems—many consequences of alcohol abuse point toward a loss of clarity in decision making. Alcohol impacts the inhibitions in the brain by affecting the neurotransmitter that acts as a stimulant, which in turn hinders people from considering consequences.

The *2017 Youth Risk Behavior Survey* found that, among high school students, during the past thirty days, 30% drank some amount of alcohol, 14% binge drank, 6% drove after drinking alcohol, and 17% rode with a driver who had been drinking alcohol. In 2018, the *National Survey on Drug Use and Health* reported that 19% of youth ages twelve to twenty drink alcohol, and 12% reported binge drinking in the past 30 days. In 2019, *Monitoring the Future Survey* reported that 8% of 8th graders and 30% of 12th graders drank during the past thirty days. Also, 4% of 8th graders and 14% of 12th graders binge drank during the past two weeks. By age fifteen, about 29.8% of teens have had at least one drink. By age eighteen, about 58% of teens have had at least one drink. In 2018, 7.1 million young people ages twelve to twenty reported that, in the past month, they drank alcohol beyond “just a few sips.”

It is clear from these statistics that alcohol serves as a threat to Christians of all ages, reaching even to the very young. What leads those who are so

¹ Prescription medications may be needed for legitimate reasons under medical care, but these substances must not be abused.

² This typically happens when men consume 5 or more drinks or women consume 4 or more drinks in about 2 hours.



young to drink? It may be peer-pressure, development of alcohol dependence, negative influences at home, or unhealthy coping mechanisms for stress. A healthy relationship with Christ will help us overcome the obstacles in life that might lead us down the wrong path (Jer. 10:23; Prov. 14:12).

It is also essential for parents to be observant of their children's behavior, friends, personality traits, and conduct. If there are red flags, parents can see the problem their family is facing. There are several things parents may do to meet these challenges beginning with a healthy spiritual life, honest conversations about alcohol, and participating in a local congregation that takes a stand on this issue.

What Does the Bible Teach on the Subject?

The Danger of Alcohol

Drunkenness is condemned as a work of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-21); it is forbidden as a fulfillment of the lusts of the flesh (Rom. 13:11-14); it is described as bringing harm and sorrow (Prov. 23:29-35), as well as mockery and a waste of life (Prov. 20:1; Eph. 5:17-18). Solomon writes, "Do not look on the wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it goes down smoothly; at the last, it bites like a serpent and stings like a viper. Your eyes will see strange things and your mind will utter perverse things. . . . When shall I awake? I will

seek another drink" (Prov. 23:29-33, 35). To avoid the *at last* ("it stings like a viper"), we must avoid the *at first* ("do not look on the wine"). The venom of a viper is poisonous; thus, the Bible emphatically admonishes us to avoid the influence of alcohol.

By including *pharmakeia* in the works of the flesh (Gal. 5:20), Paul also condemns the illicit use of drugs—included in the ancient art of sorcery. The recreational use of drugs cannot be justified by sober-minded saints.

Reasons to Avoid Alcohol

We are taught to care for the physical body, as it is the "temple of the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor. 6:19-20). Accordingly, those things that would abuse the body or unnecessarily harm our wellbeing must be avoided. Sacred Scripture also warns us against associating with "heavy drinkers" and their influence on our choices (Prov. 23:20-21). We must protect our reputation and our influence on others by guarding our actions and the behaviors we support (Eph. 5:10-11).

Is It Wrong to Drink Socially?

The Bible does not support modern attempts to argue that social drinking is permissible. It is noteworthy that the apostle Peter condemns both "drinking parties" and "drunkenness" (1 Pet. 4:3).³ Others will reference 1 Timothy 5:23 when Paul instructed Timothy, "No longer drink water exclusively, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments." It should be noted that there is a big difference between social drinking and the medicinal use of alcohol for physical illness. If social drinking were acceptable, why would Paul have had to tell Timothy it was permissible for him to drink wine for health reasons? Did Paul say, "Use a little wine for the sake of socializing with the boys"? Hardly. Someone may counter,

³ Interestingly, the legal authorities have a very strict standard for the amount of alcohol in the bloodstream that constitutes a DUI and disables one from being able to make wise decisions when operating a vehicle.

"Well, deacons were not 'to be given to much wine'" (1 Tim. 3:8) as if a *little bit* would be all right. The condemnation of excesses does not justify other sins. For instance, Peter condemned "much rioting," yet that was not intended to justify some rioting (1 Pet. 4:4). None of these arguments justifies social drinking when the whole of Scripture is considered. If we truly focus on the good of the kingdom and the wellbeing of others, how could we ever defend such an activity? Let us strive to "put on the Lord Jesus Christ" and refuse to "make provision for the flesh" (Rom. 13:14).

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Smoking, Vaping & Other Addictive & Destructive Behaviors

by Robert Harkrider

Whatever the habit may be (whether illegal narcotics, liquor, tobacco, or any other misused thing), if it destroys the body or becomes one's master, it damns the soul.

Introduction

When I was a young teenager in the 1950s, smoking was so prevalent that the story was told as a humorous account of two children pretending to smoke. When they were asked what they were doing, they replied, "Playing church. We just finished Bible class, and now we are smoking before going back inside for the sermon."

In those days, many brethren smoked, and numerous arguments prevailed over its biblical justification. In fact, one Sunday, my sermon was titled, "Have I Become Your Enemy Because I Tell You the Truth?" (Gal. 4:16). Unbeknown to me, a heated argument over smoking had occurred in the adult Bible class. My lesson made an elder so angry at me that I had to show him my printed outline to prove I was not attacking him and his tobacco habit.

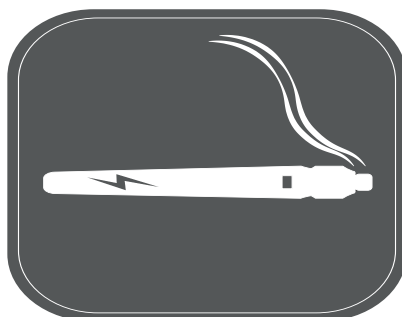
What is so wrong about smoking? Fortunately, the answer to that question was settled beyond all arguments when the Public Health Smoking Act of 1970 required all cigarette packaging to contain the statement:

Warning: The Surgeon General Has Determined that Cigarette Smoking Is Dangerous to Your Health.

In addition to that warning on packages, the following was also published:

SURGEON GENERAL'S WARNING: Smoking Causes Lung Cancer, Heart Disease, Emphysema, and May Complicate Pregnancy. Quitting Smoking Now Greatly Reduces Serious Risks to Your Health. Smoking by Pregnant Women May Result in

Fetal Injury, Premature Birth, and Low Birth Weight. Cigarette Smoke Contains Carbon Monoxide.



E-Cigarettes and Vaping

Although the warnings from the Surgeon General were instrumental in significantly reducing the number of smokers of conventional cigarettes, substitutes were introduced, known as E-cigarettes and Vaping. Many people saw these as a safe alternative. The rising popularity of vaping has been dramatic, especially among teenagers.

"E-cigarettes," "vapes," "vape pens," "Juil," etc., all refer to the same class of products, with "E-cigarette" being the product itself, and the term "vaping" referring to its use. E-cigarettes are devices that heat a liquid via a battery into an aerosol that the user inhales. The liquid usually consists of nicotine with flavoring and other additives. Therefore, E-cigarettes are considered tobacco products because most of them contain nicotine, which comes from tobacco. "Vape" is a slang term for the vaporizer, and "vaping" refers to the

process as tiny puffs or clouds of vapor are produced when using the devices.

Because E-cigarettes have been on the market for only a few years, we do not possess thousands upon thousands of pages of research about how vaping affects the body as we do with conventional smoking. However, reports are plentiful of severe lung illness experienced by people who have been vaping.

Does the Bible Condemn Smoking?

The U.S. has responded to proven health risks by enforcing various national restrictions on smoking. Consequently, the popularity of smoking has dramatically changed. Should a Christian consider additional reasons that would impact his decision to abstain from this habit? Since there are no specific warnings (or commands) that describe smoking tobacco or vaping as a sin, how can we know what to do based on God's word? Let us consider the following biblical principles:

Our Bodies Are the Temple of the Holy Spirit.

Paul said, "Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Cor. 6:19-20).

God Demands Full Commitment.

Jesus affirmed, "The first of all the commandments is: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your

heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This is the first commandment" (Mark 12:29-30).

Our Bodies Belong to God.

We must not misuse for selfish lusts that which is God's. Whatever the habit may be, whether illegal narcotics, liquor, tobacco, or any other misused thing, if it destroys the body, it damns the soul (Gal. 5:19-21).

God Demands Holiness/Purity of His Children—in Body, Soul, and Spirit.

Paul exhorted Timothy, "Keep yourself pure" (1 Tim. 5:22). Writing to the Thessalonians, he said, "Each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor" (1 Thess. 4:4).

If we should glorify God in our bodies, how can one engage in a habit that knowingly will defile and corrupt his body? Smoking is an expensive and offensive habit that should be put away!

What about Substances that Are Addictive?

The underlying sin of the habit of smoking tobacco, E-cigarettes, or even marijuana is their addictive nature. When the apostle Paul wrote about temptations involving one's body, he clearly affirmed the need for self-control: "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but *I will not be brought under the power of any*" (1 Cor. 6:12). The NASB translates the last phrase, "*I will not be mastered by anything.*" Do you want to be a slave to tobacco? How sad it is to watch someone who tried to stop the habit but was overcome by its addiction. The struggle, some have learned only too late, is illustrated in a story that was told by the late gospel preacher, T.B. Larimore:

A gentleman on horseback saw a hawk of the finest and largest species flit, like a flash of lightning, from the heavens to the earth, and almost as quickly and rapidly flit away to the heavens again, having been within a few feet of him when it touched the earth. Scarcely a moment later, the

hawk, high up in the heavens, began to flutter and otherwise show signs of distress; and a few moments later, it fell near the astonished horseman, who saw a weasel run rapidly from the lifeless bird. A careful examination of the hapless hawk revealed the secret of its distress and death. The active little animal had gnawed a hole under the wing of the bird, cut a large blood-vessel and thus destroyed the hawk that had caught the weasel to eat it.

It was easy enough for the hawk to catch the weasel; impossible for it to free itself from it. So also, it is easy to catch, contract, cultivate bad habits; but, having become their slaves, it may be practically impossible to free ourselves from them. We have probably all heard of the hero who caught the bear, then begged for help to turn him loose. May the Lord help us to turn our bad habits loose; and He will, if we help ourselves (*Life, Letters, and Sermons of T. B. Larimore*, 222-223).

Conclusion

Free yourself from any temptation to be enslaved with tobacco and all other addictive and destructive substances. Join with the apostle Paul who described victory in life by being "*temperate* (i.e., under control) in all things."

Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. Therefore, I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus, I fight: not as one who beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified" (1 Cor. 9:24-27).



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Gambling, Slothfulness & Other Wasteful Behaviors

by Kevin Maxey

Paul counted himself as a servant of Christ and a steward of God's mysteries (1 Cor. 4:1-2). Are we trustworthy or slothful? Are we wise or wasteful? How are we using the limited resources that have been entrusted to us?

Introduction

According to the *Centre for Addiction and Mental Health*, your chance of winning the average lottery is 1 in 200 million. You have a better chance of being struck by lightning (1 in 56,439), dying from a flesh-eating disease (1 in 1 million), or finding an ant on a football field while blindfolded (1 in 14 million). Is it worth it to risk money while wasting time playing games of chance? Don't bet on it!

Defining Wasteful Behavior

English dictionaries associate wasteful behavior with four types of action: careless conduct, reckless destruction, useless consumption, and excessive indulgence. Wasteful behavior involves spending time, energy, and resources on things of decreasing, little, or no value. Wasteful behavior involves foolishly exchanging what is valuable for what is worthless. According to God, wasteful behavior aligns you with the character of the slothful man (Prov. 21:5), the prodigal son (Luke 15:13), and the unprofitable servant (Luke 16:1).

The Money Waster

Many of Jesus's parables present the principle of stewardship. The prodigal son wasted his inheritance on extravagant and sinful living (Luke 15:13). The unprofitable servant wasted his master's possessions (Luke 16:1). The one-talent man wasted his master's goods (Matt. 25:14-30). "For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. Cast the worthless servant into

the outer darkness" (Matt. 25:29-30). We are accountable for how we use the possessions that have been entrusted into our care. "One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much" (Luke 16:10).

Wasting Money on Games of Chance

Gambling is "a type of transaction between two parties in which something of value is transferred from one to the other solely on the basis of an uncertain outcome of some event, or on mere chance" (*Pocket Dictionary of Ethics*, 45-46). Gambling violates several biblical principles relating to stewardship, brotherly love, covetousness, family provision, and addictive behavior.

Some say gambling is a harmless form of entertainment. What could be wrong with lottery tickets, friendly wagers, slot machines, and sports betting? According to Maremont and Berzon, a study of gamblers' winnings revealed 89% lost money over a two-year period. Of the 11% who made money, most earned less than \$150. Ninety-five percent of gamblers who bet the most money in the same study lost money, some losing tens of thousands of dollars. Gambling is a bad bet.

Wasting Money on Earthly Treasures

What are your most valued possessions? What are you saving to buy? Jesus affirmed, "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where

neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal" (Matt. 6:19-20). Don't waste your life accumulating treasure that you cannot take with you. You will never see a U-Haul behind a hearse. Remember the words of Jesus: "For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?" (Matt. 16:26).

The Time Waster

Roman philosopher Seneca, circa 49 AD, observed, "It is not that we have a short space of time, but that we waste much of it, until...forced at last by the ultimate necessity, we perceive that it has passed away before we were aware that it was passing." No one purposefully chooses this path, but millions passively allow this path to choose them.

God exposes this folly of wasting time. The rich man built and re-built, filled and re-filled his barns. However, God required his neglected soul and condemned him as a fool (Luke 12:13-21). Are you wasting your time chasing after things that won't last (illusive popularity, ungodly passions, fickle status, fleeting wealth)? Similarly, the determined builder constructed a house on the sand, but the storm destroyed that unstable house, and God labeled him as a fool (Matt. 7:24-27). Are you wasting time building on untested foundations that are doomed to collapse? Wisdom calls you to redeem, not waste time (Col. 4:5; Eph. 5:16). The Greek word *exagorazo*, rendered "redeeming," means "to make wise and sacred use of every opportunity for doing good" (Thayer, 220). Are you

making wise and sacred use of your time? Consider the following examples of youthful timewasters.

Wasting Time on Social Media and Electronics

According to a study by *Common Sense Media*, teenagers average nine hours a day accessing some form of entertainment media via cell phones, tablets, computers, video games, etc.

We often hear, “There is nothing inherently wrong with using electronic devices.” Even so, screen time quickly adds up to days and weeks and years of your life. Nine hours a day turns into sixty-three hours a week, 273 hours a month, and 3,285 hours a year. Are you “average”? Is it the best use of your time to spend over 3,000 hours a year on your cell phone, laptop, or iPad? Imagine how much good you can accomplish for the Lord in 3,000 hours!

Wasting Time on Worldly Content

Consider not only the quantity of time you spend on electronics but contemplate the quality. What is your mind consuming during all of those hours? Are you filling your heart with provocative photos on Instagram, seductive links on the internet, pornographic websites, violent video games, or movies filled with profanity and promiscuity? Instead, why not resolve, “I will set nothing wicked before my eyes” (Ps. 101:3)?

Tragically, electronics waste more than time. They also waste emotional stability and meaningful face-to-face interactions. For example, a 2018 study conducted by Pew Research found approximately 40% of teenagers, especially girls, experience increased anxiety when not in possession of their cellphone. The same survey explained, “56% of teens associate the absence of their cellphone with at least one of these three emotions: loneliness, being upset or feeling anxious.” Psychologists call this condition the “fear of missing out” (FOMO).

Wasting Time in Slothfulness

Instead of wasting time doing too much of something, the slothful person

wastes time doing nothing at all. The slothful person is one “not easily aroused to activity,” is disinclined to work, loves ease, dislikes activity, and possesses an “inability to act promptly or speedily when action or speed is called for” (*Merriam-Webster*). Slothful souls are neither helpful nor welcome. “Like vinegar to the teeth and smoke to the eyes, so is the sluggard to those who send him” (Prov. 10:26).

Concerned about her “lazy” teenager, one mom sent the following letter to a professional parent life coach:

My 13-year-old daughter is driving me crazy. She lays around all day like a lazy teen sloth, scrolling mindlessly on her phone. When I ask her to do something, she’ll say “ok” but never does it. . . . When I see how unmotivated and ungrateful she is, I feel like I’ve wasted my time. . . . I feel disrespected when she lays on the couch, zones out, ignores me. I’m worried my daughter will always be like this, and it’s too late to teach her to be different.

In response to this frustration, Lori Henderson, a “Master Certified Life Coach” gave the following worldly advice:

Congratulations. It sounds like your 13-year-old has officially entered adolescence and is a typical teenager. . . . It’s possible that our teenagers are wiser and less susceptible to cultural insanity than we are. What if they are here to remind us of the importance of relaxation? . . . it is possible to be a good mom and have a lazy kid. . . . Praise yourself for teaching her that it’s ok to rest and chill. . . . question the thoughts that are saying that her behavior is wrong and bad.

This is the exact opposite of truths affirmed in God’s divine wisdom. Far from praising inactivity, the word of God declares, “Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might” (Eccl. 9:10). No matter how many life coaches affirm otherwise, God does not accept the excuses of lazy, slothful teens (Prov. 26:13-16; Eccl. 11:4). Wastefulness only wins if we ignore the slow creep of dissipation. Rise to the challenge and “let your conduct be worthy of the

gospel of Christ” (Phil. 1:27). Do not let wasteful behavior win in you. Resolve, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” (Phil. 4:13).

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Theft, Cheating, Lying & Other Dishonest Behaviors

by Kyle Pope

Sharing a relationship with God involves showing Him reverence and respect, and being trustworthy and truthful in our dealings with others. Are we individuals of integrity, or are we deceitful and devious?

Introduction

The Holy Spirit led Paul to pen these words to the saints in Ephesus: “Therefore, putting away lying, ‘Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor,’ for we are members of one another” (Eph. 4:25, NKJV). Paul’s wording in the middle of this verse is drawn from Zechariah. To those who had returned from the Babylonian exile, and were working to rebuild the temple and their relationship with God, the Lord told Zechariah:

For thus says the LORD of hosts: “Just as I determined to punish you when your fathers provoked Me to wrath,” says the LORD of hosts, “and I would not relent, so again in these days I am determined to do good to Jerusalem and to the house of Judah. Do not fear. These are the things you shall do: speak each man the truth to his neighbor; give judgment in your gates for truth, justice, and peace; let none of you think evil in your heart against your neighbor; and do not love a false oath. For all these are things that I hate,” says the LORD (Zech. 8:14-17).

To maintain (or restore) a good relationship with the Lord, Zechariah and the people were instructed (in Paul’s wording), “Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor.” God sees our treatment of others and holds us accountable for it. This means not only that honest, fair, and just treatment of others will allow things to go smoother for us in our relationships with one another, but our very relationship with God depends upon it. We cannot love God and do things that He hates.

A Message for Today

This is an essential lesson for us today! In many areas of life, we may imagine we can share a saved relationship with God while practicing the sinful behavior that Paul and Zechariah rebuked, but such thoughts are delusional.

Stealing

No one is looking, so you slip that candy bar into your pocket at the convenience store. Someone has wronged you, so you “get even” by taking something that belongs to her. A man drops his wallet. You turn it in—but first, you help yourself to some of the cash it contains. You borrow money, then forget (or refuse) to pay it back. Your neighbor’s newspaper was thrown just outside his driveway. That makes it “fair game,” right? No!

All of these things might seem minor, but Scripture condemns them! God hates “robbery” (Isa. 61:8), and the partner of a thief is said to hate his own life (Prov. 29:24). The thief deserves shame (Jer. 2:26) and to act in this way is to follow the example of Judas, the betrayer of Jesus (John 12:6)! Any hope that one places in the joys that come from theft are “vain” because “power belongs to God” (Ps. 62:10-11). The Holy Spirit says, “The wicked borrows and does not repay” (Ps. 37:21a). So, even when society may sympathize with some types of stealing, the thief will be called to account for his actions (Prov. 6:30-31). Ultimately, taking what doesn’t belong to us does not bring lasting satisfaction. The wise man wrote,

“Bread gained by deceit is sweet to a man, but afterward his mouth will be filled with gravel” (Prov. 20:17).

Cheating

The test is hard, so you glance over at your friend’s paper. An essay is due at school, so you find (or buy) one that someone else wrote and put your name on it. You’re weighing produce at the grocery store, and you lift the scale just a little to lower the price. You notice that the salesman forgot to charge you for that extra feature on your bill, but you remain silent. Your employees are entitled to some particular benefit, but you don’t mention it to them. It’s time to figure your taxes, but you don’t declare some income or take deductions that aren’t allowed—then smile, sing, pray, and worship God on Sunday—acting as if everything is fine!

God has always condemned cheating. In the Law of Moses, He commanded:

You shall not have in your bag differing weights, a heavy and a light. You shall not have in your house differing measures, a large and a small. You shall have a perfect and just weight, a perfect and just measure, that your days may be lengthened in the land which the LORD your God is giving you. For all who do such things, all who behave unrighteously, are an abomination to the LORD your God (Deut. 25:13-16).

We should note this behavior is considered unrighteous, and the Lord views it as “an abomination.” Echoing this truth, the wise man affirms, “Dishonest

scales are an abomination to the LORD, but a just weight is His delight” (Prov. 11:1). Do we truly want to please the Lord? Then we must do things that delight Him. In the days of Amos, the Lord rebuked those who looked forward to the conclusion of times of worship so they could make a profit “by deceit.” The Lord told them—and any who would act this way—“I will never forget any of their works” (Amos 8:4-7).

Lying

A politician says one thing when speaking to a particular audience, but the exact opposite when talking to another. Someone needs our help, and we quickly say, “Sure, I can help,” but we never follow through. Before God and witnesses, a man and woman stand and promise to be faithful to each other—“until death do us part.” Then, as the years and common interests grow further apart, they go their separate ways—forsaking their word, their families, and their covenant before God.

A “false witness” is among those things the Lord “hates” (Prov. 6:16-19). “Lying lips are an abomination to the LORD, but those who deal truthfully are His delight” (Prov. 12:22). The deceitful tongue is “a deadly arrow” as it speaks “peace” to one’s neighbor while plotting to do him harm (Jer. 9:8). Jesus called His disciples to a level of honesty that did not consider some statements binding and others not. He prohibited swearing (Jas. 5:12), teaching His followers to let their “‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’” and their

“‘No,’ ‘No’” (Matt. 5:37). The Christian must recognize, “One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much” (Luke 16:10, ESV).

Called to Better Things

In the text we noted earlier, Zechariah told the exiles who were striving to restore their relationship with the Lord to “speak each man the truth to his neighbor,” not to “think evil in your heart against your neighbor” and not to “love a false oath” (Zech. 8:14-17, NKJV). Disciples of Christ, in a similar light, are told to recognize the high standard of conduct to which children of the King of Heaven are called. Paul wrote, “Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator” (Col. 3:9-10).

The heart that lies and practices deceit does not imitate the behavior of its Creator—it seeks to take advantage of its neighbor. The wise man prayed, “Keep falsehood and lies far from me” (Prov. 30:8a). This should be the prayer of every Christian! The person who cheats and steals to gain profit cares nothing for the loss he imposes upon his neighbor. He ignores the command of God and shows ingratitude for all He has already provided. The wise man continues, “Give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. Otherwise, I may have too much and disown You and say,

‘Who is the LORD?’ Or I may become poor and steal, and so dishonor the name of my God” (Prov. 30:8b-9).

The Israelite who had stolen from his neighbor was commanded to make restitution greater than the value of the item initially taken. An ox was to be restored fivefold and the sheep fourfold (Exod. 22:1). This recognized the harm inflicted upon the one who suffered the loss and the value it would have brought to him during its absence. In Christ, we are taught, “Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need” (Eph. 4:28). Honest work must replace dishonest gain, and a concern for the needs of others must replace a desire to gain an advantage over them. The one who “loves and practices a lie” will be excluded from eternal life with God (Rev. 22:15). These passages affirm the importance of maintaining honest behavior. We are not talking about things that have only temporary consequences—“The truthful lip shall be established forever, but a lying tongue is but for a moment” (Prov. 12:19).



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Cursing, Swearing & Other Corrupt Expressions of Speech

by David Dann

Profanity in speech and lifestyle is a form of evil that is closely connected to irreverence and lack of interest in the things of God. Do you value things of value, and is this underlying sense of respect communicated in your speech?

Introduction

Followers of Christ are commanded to “seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God” (Col. 3:1, NKJV). They are expected to live in such a way so that the primary focus is upon serving and pleasing the Lord (Matt. 6:33). Those who fail in this regard often do so as a result of having succumbed to profanity.

What Is Profanity?

Definitions

The word “profane” in English versions of the New Testament is a translation of the Greek word *bebelos*, which means: “permitted to be trodden, accessible” (Vine, 490). It refers to that which is “trodden under foot, unhallowed” (Robertson, 438). That “profane” carries the same connotation in English is evident in that Webster defines it as “showing contempt of sacred things, irreverent.”

Old Testament References

This concept is often employed regarding the irreverent attitudes, words, and actions displayed by Israel. For example, the Israelites profaned the name of God (Lev. 18:21; Jer. 34:16), the Sabbath (Ezek. 20:16), and the holy things of the sanctuary (Ezek. 22:26). Profanity was displayed when God’s people turned their backs on Him, disrespected His laws, and treated that which was holy as though it were common.

New Testament References

The word occurs in the following five passages in the New Testament:

Knowing this: that the law is not made for a righteous person, but for the lawless and insubordinate, for the ungodly and for sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers. . . (1 Tim. 1:9).

But reject profane and old wives’ fables, and exercise yourself toward godliness (1 Tim. 4:7).

O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane and idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge (1 Tim. 6:20).

But shun profane and idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness (2 Tim. 2:16).

Lest there be any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright (Heb. 12:16).

Significantly, the writer of Hebrews employs Esau as an illustration of the profane mindset. Esau treated something sacred (his birthright) with contempt and irreverence by selling it to fulfill a common desire—hunger. New Testament usage of the word indicates that profanity is closely connected with that which is unholy and those who are uninterested in holy things.

Profanity in Religion

While profanity is not often considered in connection with religion, the Israelites were rebuked for committing profanity within the context of

practicing religion (Ezek. 22:26). Please consider the following ways in which those who profess to be Christians display profanity in religion:

Tolerating Sin in the Church

The church is the temple of God and must not be defiled in any way (1 Cor. 3:16-17). However, the church is profaned when sin and immorality are tolerated among its members. Profanity among the denominations has come to be expected in many cases where those engaged in immoral behavior, such as homosexuality and adultery, are welcomed into fellowship despite the clear teaching of Scripture (cf. 1 Cor. 6:9-11; 5:11-13). However, let us not think that this sort of profanity is limited to the denominational realm. Where adulterous marriages, social drinking, immodest and lascivious dress, and other sins are tolerated, the local church has been profaned.

Secularizing the Church

The mission and purpose of the church are suited to meet the spiritual needs of man, rather than his worldly and physical desires (1 Tim. 3:15). When the church becomes involved in serving social and recreational desires, it has been profaned (cf. 1 Cor. 11:20-22, 34). Additionally, the way of God is profaned by those who seek to change the spiritual mission of the church into a mission focused on feeding and clothing the world and righting the social ills of the day. The church is profaned when it is turned into a secular institution.

Ignoring God's Instruction

God has provided a perfect guide in religion in the Scriptures (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Where God's word is trampled on in favor of human wisdom, there is profanity in religion. This profanity is seen in the use of mechanical instruments of music in worship (Eph. 5:19), the use of women in leadership positions over men (1 Tim. 2:11-12), and in any other substitution or innovation that is enacted without regard for the word of God. When the New Testament pattern for the work, worship, and organization of the church is cast aside, profanity is in full bloom (2 Tim. 1:13).

Profanity in Everyday Life

We probably most often think of profanity outside the context of religion and in connection with a person's speech and conduct. The Christian must be on guard against the profanity that is prevalent in our world.

Profane Culture

The Bible associates profanity with anything that is against sound doctrine (1 Tim. 1:9). Who can deny the reality of a constant stream of unholy, immoral, and irreverent behavior depicted in movies, on television, in music, and on the internet? The faithful Christian should be offended and turn away from the profanity that has engulfed our media and our culture (Rom. 12:1-2). However, do we indeed turn away from it? With what are we filling our minds? The one who says that the foul language he hears in his choice of music and movies will not affect him has already been affected more than he thinks!

Profane Speech

The profane person thinks nothing of making irreverent references to God and Christ in his everyday conversation. Yet, the profanity doesn't end there. Dirty jokes are also popular. You may not be the one telling them, but too many find enjoyment in listening to them. Others cannot seem to complete a sentence without including some curse or oath. Some feel justified because they only



use foul words when they are really upset or angry. For the Christian, there is no justification for profanity in speech. Paul warned his fellow Christians, saying, "But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth" (Col. 3:8) and, "Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers" (Eph. 4:29). Many have sought to soften the offensive nature of their speech by using "euphemisms" such as "golly," "gee," "gosh," "darn," and "heck" or abbreviations like "OMG," in place of the actual words. While this may seem less offensive, it is no less profane. It is especially disheartening to hear or see Christians using these kinds of terms and abbreviations in their speech, on social media, and in text messages. Profane speech reveals a profane heart (Matt. 12:34). Guard your tongue. Before you utter something profane, stop and think: "For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned" (Matt. 12:37).

Profane Actions

Profanity is undoubtedly seen in the lives of those who are too busy seeking after pleasure to acknowledge their Creator. They are too self-absorbed to have any reverence or regard for the God who made them. The Bible says that such people "are without excuse" (Rom. 1:20-21). Yet, the profane lifestyle isn't limited to those who openly reject

God. Many Christians live profane lives simply by placing worldly matters ahead of serving the Lord. Profanity is prevalent when parents make time for their children to be involved in little league and scouts but cannot find time to bring them to Bible study, gospel meetings, or teach them God's word at home. Profane parents may help their children become star athletes and honor students but do very little to "bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4). As a result, they raise profane children who grow up to be profane adults. They may assemble with the church as long as their parents make them, but as soon as they are old enough to make their own decisions, they will be off pursuing the worldly goals that their profane parents taught them to place ahead of spiritual things. Don't be surprised if this scenario sounds familiar. Profanity is popular.

Conclusion

To "abstain from every form of evil" (1 Thess. 5:22), the child of God must reject every form of profanity. Stand guard against this subtle tool of Satan that is all too common both in the world and even among Christians. Devote yourself to the Lord, and heaven will be yours.

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Overcoming Worldliness Through Transformation (Rom. 12:1-2)

by Scott Willis

Contemporary culture rejects the good news of salvation and seeks to impose corrupt conformity upon all. Yet, by allowing God's word to operate in our lives, we undergo a spiritual metamorphosis and are changed for the better.

Introduction

The message of the apostle Paul in Romans 12:1-2 is familiar to most of us:

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God (NKJV).

One who has studied God's word with diligence understands the dangers that are associated with a humanistic worldview. There is considerable conflict between the instructions that God has given to His children and what the world generally desires and practices. The morality outlined by God in the Bible has always been under attack by the devil and his angels. That is especially true of modern society and particularly of America in recent years. While not true of every person, there was a time in America when God's word was generally respected, and most folks attempted to follow His teachings. Of course, that has dramatically and sadly changed. Today there is more often disdain for God's standard of morality than there is acceptance of it. People do not want their wishes to be infringed on by others, including God. Most people reject the morality found in Scripture.

When confronted with the truth found in the Bible, people are not affected by it. They lack any sense of shame for the worldly conduct in which they participate, much like the children

of Israel in Jeremiah's day. Of that generation, the prophet asked, "Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? No! They were not at all ashamed; Nor did they know how to blush" (Jer. 6:15).

Sinful behaviors are paraded and celebrated in our modern world. Everyone is expected to accept without judgment whatever deviant lifestyle people choose to follow, *except*, of course, choosing to follow God. For *that*, you will be publicly ridiculed.



Being Transformed

Of course, the same was true in the first century, which is why Paul gave this admonition. It demands that followers of God must be familiar with His will and respect His authority. One who respects God's will does not seek to change it to conform to his will; instead, he conforms his life to God's will. This is what is meant by the living sacrifice one should make. As we live each day, we should seek ways to serve and please God. At the least, that means we must ensure that what we are doing is consistent with God's will for us.

Moreover, we should be seeking ways to add to our conduct the good works described in God's word (Gal. 5:22-23). After affirming that we have "all things that lead to life and godliness," the apostle Peter listed various ways in which we must continually grow (2 Pet. 1:3, 5-11). In other words, the New Testament contains everything that we need to please God.

Paul exhorted Timothy to "be diligent to present yourself approved to God." The KJV used the word "study," while the NKJV uses "diligent." This implies an effort to know and apply God's word in our lives every day. Doing these things will ensure that we are being transformed from the world.

Being Conformed

Conforming to the world is contrasted here with God's will. This is an either-or construction—that means it is one or the other—not both. Christians must understand that distinction. God will not be pleased if we attempt to blend worldliness and godliness. The combination is itself worldliness.

Throughout God's word, we are instructed to avoid any and all types of sin. Paul wrote, "Abstain from every form of evil." (1 Thess. 5:22). Here "abstain" means "to refrain from or hold oneself off from evil." That is to be done from things that have even "the form of evil." The KJV uses the word "appearance" of evil. Regarding this verse, Walton Weaver wrote: "In this sense, Paul is saying that whatever (*pantos*, all [KJV], or 'every' [RSV, ASV, NASB, NIV]) 'form' (RSV, ASV, NASB) that evil may take,

or whatever 'kind' (NIV) it may be, it must be shunned or avoided" (1 and 2 Thessalonians, 378).

Paul also wrote, "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them" (Eph. 5:11). This admonition is consistent with what he wrote in both Romans 12:1-2 and 1 Thessalonians 5:22. We should have nothing to do with sin. We understand this principle in every other situation in life. If a white shirt has dirt in one area, we call the shirt dirty because it is! The same is true here. If we are engaged in any form of sin/worldliness, we are sinful/worldly and no longer pure and free from sin. Therefore, Paul calls on us to be transformed from worldliness.

Renewing Our Minds

We do not need to wonder how to accomplish this. Here Paul calls on us to renew our minds by God's word. That involves changing what we think and do. Thayer defines the term "renew" as a "complete change for the better." To the church at Colossae, Paul wrote:

Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth...But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him (Col. 3:2, 8-10).

An "either-or" construction is seen here as well. We must put off worldliness and put on godliness. This can be done because we have been told what godliness is and have been given all of it. That knowledge can and must be used to change (renew) our lives. In that process, our minds and lives will be renewed.

Proving What Is Good

The transformation and renewal are for the purpose of proving "what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." Clinton Hamilton wrote, "God has expressed his desire or will that men behave in a certain way. It is man's role

to prove or test what this wish or will is. This comes through study and meditation upon what God has said in his word" (Romans, 683). As we have already pointed out, this is possible because God has revealed His will (2 Pet. 1:3). It is up to us to learn it and apply it (2 Tim. 2:15). When we do these things, we will experience a life much better than the one that worldliness offers.

Conclusion

The humanistic worldview is popular in America, but it stands opposed to God's will, and it is not welcoming of His morality. As Christians, we must reject and refuse to conform to such worldliness. In doing so, we are likely to see continued hostility directed toward us as we stand for the way of life outlined in the New Testament. Paul's call to transform our lives by the renewing power of the gospel will enable us to please God with the lives we live and receive the eternal reward of heaven. Let us commit ourselves to overcoming worldliness!

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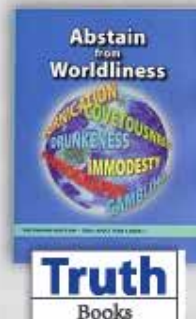
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that day that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem” (12:9). That’s not AD 70! How does the Lord indicate that He will offer this protection? He promises,

And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn (Zech. 12:10).

This is another messianic prophecy. John says it was fulfilled in Jesus’s side being pierced at His crucifixion (John 19:37). Zechariah speaks of mourning over this “pierced” One (12:10-14), through whom the “Spirit of grace and supplication” was poured out—not in Jerusalem’s destruction in AD 70.

This is the context of the “day” in which “a fountain shall be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness” (13:1)—the sacrifice of Jesus upon the cross. Instead of referring to a literal fountain, Zechariah points to the “pierced” One who is the source of this “fountain” for “sin and uncleanness” (cf. Jer. 17:13—“The LORD, the fountain of living waters”). This did not wait for AD 70 (as proponents of this doctrine claim). Before that event (if their early dating of Revelation is correct—which I reject), John saw the “pierced” One (Rev. 1:7) who was said to have “loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood” (Rev. 1:5). I would actually agree with the preterists that Zechariah 13:2-6 anticipates the time when spiritual gifts would end. While Joel 2:28-32 foretells the outpouring of these gifts, Zechariah 13:2-6 (like 1 Corinthians 13:8-13) looks to its termination. Yet, there is no forty-year “transition period” spelled out here. The prophet doesn’t jump from Jesus’s sacrifice on the cross to AD 70. He is generally dealing with the cross and its impact and consequences.

This is clear from yet another messianic prophecy that follows the foretelling of the termination of prophecy itself. The Lord proclaims, “Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, against the Man

who is My Companion,” says the LORD of hosts. “Strike the Shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered” (13:7a). Jesus Himself quotes this passage of what will begin on the “night” of His betrayal (Matt. 26:31; Mark 14:27)—His disciples would flee in fear. Yet, Zechariah’s application suggests that the Lord meant this not merely of the disciples’ fear on that night but anticipated the cycle of persecution and opposition against God’s faithful remnant who serve the Lord’s “Shepherd.” Jesus warned, “If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you” (John 15:20b). The inevitability of this persecution is likely what is meant by the call “awake O sword”—not a call to judgment but to the reality of coming persecutions (cf. Matt. 10:34).

The Meaning of Zechariah 14:2

This is the context of brother Neubauer’s passage. What will happen as a result of the striking of the “Shepherd”? “Two-thirds in *IT* shall be cut off and die, but one-third shall be left in *IT*” (13:8b, emphasis mine). The Lord promises, “I will bring the one-third through the fire, will refine them as silver is refined, and test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, and I will answer them. I will say, ‘This is My people’; and each one will say, ‘The LORD is my God’” (13:9).

Let’s ask what “*it*” is?—being described here. Zechariah 14:2a speaks of nations that come “against Jerusalem.” If this refers to physical Jerusalem, as noted above, it couldn’t apply to AD 70—there was no “one-third” of the city preserved and refined (cf. Matt. 24:21). Could this refer to spiritual Jerusalem (cf. Heb. 12:22)? We have already seen Zechariah describe a new type of spiritual temple (6:13, 15a). We have seen the promise of a spiritual fountain of forgiveness (13:1). The verses that follow seem to describe spiritual rather than physical things. “The LORD will go forth and fight against those nations” (14:3; cf. Rev. 2:16—“fight against them with the sword of My mouth”). The Mount of Olives will split in two as the Lord stands on it (14:4). Is this literal? “Living waters” flow “from Jerusalem” to the Dead Sea and the Mediterranean Sea (14:8). Is

that literal? Ironically, preterists would likely understand all of these things as spiritual or figurative, except 14:2b—“The city shall be taken, the houses rifled, and the women ravished.”

Jesus declared, “He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water” (John 7:38). Zechariah says that “living waters” would flow “from Jerusalem” (14:8)—not the physical city, but the spiritual dominion of those faithful to God. As God has offered encouragement, promise, and warning throughout Zechariah’s prophecy—in the last chapters, He tells the faithful Jews who were rebuilding the temple of a future time with a spiritual temple, city, and fountain of forgiveness. Although they will face persecution, and some may even turn from the Lord—which likely both explain the spiritual sense of 14:2b: “The city shall be taken, the houses rifled, and the women ravished”—the Lord still promises the spiritual Jerusalem of His faithful remnant who will one day be cleansed by His “pierced” One, “The people shall dwell in it; and no longer shall there be utter destruction, but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited” (14:11). That’s not talking about AD 70; instead, it refers to God’s people serving Him in faithfulness to the BRANCH, God’s Shepherd, and the “pierced” One who is the fountain for “sin and uncleanness.”



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

BIRMINGHAM

Vestavia Hills church of Christ
2325 Old Columbiana Rd. (near I-65 & Hwy. 31)
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 10 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelists: Doy Moyer and Zack Lee
(205) 822-0018 or 822-0082

FLORENCE

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

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
Ken Sils - Minister (765) 307-8048

MONTGOMERY

Ashburton Drive church of Christ
(formerly Southeast)
70 Ashburton Drive
Sunday Bible Study 9 A.M.,
Sunday Worship 10 A.M. & 5 P.M.
Wednesday Bible Study 7:00 P.M.
Contacts: Kirk Moore (334) 546-3788
John Humphries (334) 306-4172

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 Street, 72034
Sunday Worship 9 A.M., Bible class 9:50 A.M.
Worship and Lord's Supper 10:40 A.M.
Wednesday Bible Class 7 P.M.
(501) 450-8640

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
churchofchristfortsmith.com

HARRISON

Capps Rd. Church of Christ
407 Bella Vista Dr.
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:15 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Norman E. Sewell
www.cappsroad.org
870-741-9104 or 870-741-5151

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 6 P.M.
(870) 714-1452 or (870) 338-1833

PINE BLUFF

Highway 79 South church of Christ
4341 S Camden Road
Bible Study 9:45 A.M., Worship 10:45 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Clarence W. Sell (870) 879-2079

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.

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: Bryan Garlock

WALDRON

Westside church of Christ
1232 State Highway 248
Sunday Bible Study:10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Preacher: James Strickland, (479) 299-4763
strick93124@gmail.com

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: Chance Ruffino

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

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>

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 5 P.M.,
Wednesday Bible Study 7 P.M.
Evangelist: David Posey
(530) 676-9514 or (916) 608-4866
www.folsomchurch.com

LONG BEACH

church of Christ
3433 Studebaker Road
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) 377-1674
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

FORT COLLINS

Poudre Valley church of Christ
126 West Harvard St., Suite 6
Bible Study 9:30 A.M.
Worship 10:30 A.M. and 1:30 P.M.
Evangelist: Richie Thetford
www.poudrevalleychurchofchrist.org

MONTROSE

San Juan church of Christ
1414 Hawk Parkway, Unit C
Worship 11 A.M., Bible Study 2 P.M.
Evening 1:30 P.M., (970) 249-8116
sanjuanchurchofchrist.org

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
Pompano Plaza Shopping Center
70 East McNab Rd., Pompano Beach, FL 33060
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 12:30 P.M.
No evening service on Sunday
Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
(954) 822-1974
www.northsideflauderdale.com
Email: northsideflauderdale.com

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

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

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

MARY ESTHER

church of Christ
6 Lane Drive
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

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.anthonycoc.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: Ken Chapman and Greg Kline
Office: (407) 851-8031

ORLANDO

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

ORLANDO

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

SEFFNER

church of Christ
621 E. Wheeler Rd.
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 10:50 A.M.
Evening 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
backtothebibel@rivercitychurchofchrist.com

CONVERS

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

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

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

IOWA

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

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

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

GLEN ELLYN

Glen Ellyn Church of Christ
796 Prairie Ave.
Glen Ellyn, IL 60137
Sunday Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Sunday Evening 5 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

Clarksville 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 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Jerry Cleek (219) 942-2663

INDIANAPOLIS

Castleton church of Christ
7701 East 86th Street, 46256
Sun. Worship 11 A.M., Sun. Bible Study 10 A.M.
Wed. 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

OLITIC

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: Johnnie Edwards
(317) 964-9404 or (317) 839-1769
www.churchofchristwest.org

SAINT LEON, IN

Church of Christ
7140 Hyland Rd., Guilford, IN 47022
174 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 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Charles Wright
(317) 878-5969 or (317) 300-8790
www.trafalgarchurch.com

KANSAS

TOPEKA

17th Street church of Christ
5600 SW 17th St.
Bible Study 9:15 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.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: Jerid Gunter
(270) 274-4451

BENTON

Fairdealing church of Christ
8081 US Highway 68-East
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Wednesday Bible Study 7 P.M.
www.churchofchristatfairdealing.com • (270) 227-3262
CONVENIENTLY LOCATED NEAR KENLAKE STATE RESORT
PARK ON THE WESTERN SHORE OF KENTUCKY LAKE.

BRANDENBURG

Sunny Hill Dr. 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 or
(270) 274-3065

DANVILLE

church of Christ
385 E. Lexington Ave.
Worship 10 A.M., Bible Study 11:15 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: B.J. Sipe (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) 776-9393
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

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
westmichcof10@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
939 Whitewater Avenue
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Bible Study 2:15 P.M.
Wednesday 7 P.M., call for location
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.
Wednesday 6:30 P.M.
Ron Cooper: (601) 934-3675
roncooper@bellsouth.net
Ricky Ethridge: (601) 737-5778
rickymarsha@bellsouth.net

MERIDIAN

7th Street church of Christ
2914 7th Street
Sunday Mornings:
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 10 A.M.

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

BRANSON

Eagle Rock Road church of Christ
432 Eagle Rock Road
Sun. Worship 9:30 A.M., Bible Study 10:30 A.M.
Sun. Evening Worship 2 P.M., Wednesday 6 P.M.
Minister: Philip North (417) 239-1036
Email: primrosenor@suddenlink.net
www.eaglerockroadchurchofchrist.org

CAPE GIRARDEAU

Cape County church of Christ
2912 Bloomfield Rd • Cape Girardeau, MO 63703
(573) 837-1001, capecountycoc@gmail.com,
www.capecountycoc.com
Sun. Bible Study 9:15 A.M., Sun. Assembly 10 A.M.
Wed. Bible Study 7 P.M.
Seth McDonald
Jerry Lee Westbrook

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
Preacher: Nolan Glover
www.westsidchurchofchrist.us

LILBOURN

church of Christ
211 Benton Street
First Worship 9 A.M., Bible Study 10 A.M.,
Second Worship 10:45 A.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Ben Lawrence, (501) 470-5390

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: Justin Berss
(816) 356-3096 or (270) 320-6157
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.
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.churchofchrist7bell.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. Tryon Street
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Sun. Worship 10:30 A.M.
Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
(704) 525-5655
www.charlottechurchofchrist.org

OHIO

BEAVERCREEK

Knollwood church of Christ
1031 Welford Drive
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:20 A.M.
and 3 P.M., Wednesday Bible Study 1 P.M.
For Adults and 7 P.M.all ages.
Evangelist: Heath Rogers
(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 7:00 P.M.
(330) 723-0111 or (330) 590-0227
or (216) 322-9392
www.lorainave-churchofchrist.com

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.lccoc.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.
Evangelists: Michael Grushon (937) 866-5162
or Alan Beck (937) 469-3311
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.
Wednesday 4:30 P.M.
James Bond: (419) 564-3878
Mr. Kim Walton: (419) 651-3488
church: (419) 522-8982
<https://northsidecof.us/>

NEW LEBANON

New Lebanon church of Christ
1973 W Main Street
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.,
Evening 5 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

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

MCALESTER

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

OREGON

SWEET HOME

Church of Christ
3702 E. Long Street, Sweet Home, OR
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Evening 7 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

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://lowerrichlandchurch.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)
**OUR WEB SITE DISPLAYS OUR
CURRENT ASSEMBLY SCHEDULE.**
Evangelist: Terry W. Benton, Bldg. (803) 834-6978
<http://airport-church-of-christ.com>

TENNESSEE

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 3:30 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
(931) 388-5828 or (931) 381-7898
www.moorevillepikecoc.com

COSBY

Cosby church of Christ
4894 Hooper Hwy., 37722
(15 mi. E. of Gatlinburg on Hwy. 321)
Bible Study 10A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday Bible Study 6:00 P.M.
Evangelist: Olie Williamson
(423) 487-5540 or (423) 748-0844

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

KINGSPOORT

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

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

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.faiithweb.com>

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
dvrader@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 west 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 St
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
Evangelist: Mark Mayberry (346) 216-1707
www.ascoc.org & www.markmayberry.net

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

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

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.
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.springwoodschurhofchrist.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 Avenue 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.lubbockchurch.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 5:30 P.M.
www.northsidecoc.us
Evangelist: Tom Roberts (817) 466-3160

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.
Evangelist: Terry Starling
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: Ronald Stringer

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 7:30 P.M.
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.
Evening 5:00 P.M.
Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Marc Smith
(254) 292-2482 or 652-7698

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

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 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Nathan L. Morrison (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 6:00 P.M., Wednesday 7:00 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.
(276) 956-6049
www.churchofchristatridgeway.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

SEQUIM

Sequim church of Christ
American Legion Hall
7 W. Prairie St. at Sequim Ave.
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Wednesday night Bible study 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Jerry MacDonald
(360) 808-1021 or biblepage@att.net
www.churchofchristinsequim.com

TACOMA

Manitou Park church of Christ
(meets at Gray Middle School)
6229 S Tyler Street
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Wednesday 7 P.M.
(253) 242-3098
tacomachurch@gmail.com
www.tacomachurch.com

WEST VIRGINIA

CHARLESTON

Oakwood Road church of Christ
873 Oakwood Road
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 10:50 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
oakwoodrdcoc@suddenlinkmail.com
www.orcoc.org • (304) 342-5637

CLARKSBURG

Westside church of Christ
Davison 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

Marriott church of Christ
825 Martrtown 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

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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Mission of the Church

...likely pattern to the pattern that Christ provided for the church, and we deviate from it, we inevitably...

Reflections of Recent Events

...the Holy Spirit and the church, and we deviate from it, we inevitably...

...decision that was held in Dabok, TN, on November 13th.

...as a more general statement of intent, we are at a crossroads of belief, and we are at a crossroads of belief, and we are at a crossroads of belief...

The Importance of Having a Clear Mission

Many organizations receive the value of having a clearly defined mission. The Peter F. Drucker Institute for Strategic Management is short and clearly focused, clear and easily understood. It defines why we do what we do, and why we do it. The organization exists to do the work that God has called us to do. It is not simply a mission statement, it is a mission statement that is lived out in every aspect of the organization's life.

The Home and Government

The mission of the home is defined in Ephesians 5:22-33. It is to love the Lord with all our heart, mind, and strength, and to love our neighbor as ourselves. The mission of the church is to love the Lord with all our heart, mind, and strength, and to love our neighbor as ourselves.

The Love of the Church

The mission of the church is to love the Lord with all our heart, mind, and strength, and to love our neighbor as ourselves. This is the mission of the church, and it is the mission of the church.

The Meaning of Mission

Mission is the purpose of the church. It is the reason why we exist. It is the reason why we are here. It is the reason why we are here.

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