

Truth

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JULY 2022 | NO. 7 | VOLUME 66

FACE TO FACE

Though I have many things to write to you, I do not want to do so with paper and ink; but I hope to come to you and speak face to face, so that your joy may be made full (2 John 12).



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(ISSN 1538-0793) is published once a month by Truth Publications, Inc., 220 S. Marion, Athens, AL 35611. Postage paid at Decatur, AL, and additional mailing offices.

Manuscripts should be sent to the editor:
Mark Mayberry (mark@truthpublications.com)

Subscriptions, renewals & other correspondence should be sent to:
Truth Magazine
220 S. Marion, Athens, AL 35611
subscriptions@truthmagazine.com

Book orders should be sent to:
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Face to Face

by Mark Mayberry

The theme of the July 2022 issue of *Truth Magazine* is “Face to Face.” Let us consider several significant biblical passages that contain this phrase, while making application to current cultural conditions.

Introduction

Life is returning to a semblance of normality after the two-year shutdown occasioned by the COVID crisis.

Now is the time to refocus, regroup, and recommit ourselves to personal engagement with our brethren. This series of articles emphasizes the need for affirmative interaction among God’s people.

Satan seeks to divide and conquer. He wants us to feel isolated and outnumbered, demoralized and defeated. Conformity and assimilation are the siren song by which he would rob us of purity and power. We need to fight against the worldly pressures that lead people away from God. We gain great strength from our brethren. As Solomon said:

Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labor. For if either of them falls, the one will lift up his companion. But woe to the one who falls when there is not another to lift him up. Furthermore, if two lie down together, they keep warm, but how can one be warm alone? And if one can overpower him who is alone, two can resist him. A cord of three strands is not quickly torn apart (Eccl. 4:9-12).

By focusing upon the power that is derived from “face to face” relationships, let us fill (or refill) a void that has been created in our lives. Instead of allowing an upside-down world (filled with carnality, chaos, and conflict) to control our lives, believers possess the power to actively, purposefully, and passionately be conformed to the image of Christ. Through obedience to the gospel and by

cultivating the bonds of brotherhood, we can live with meaning and hope—and be “the light of the world,” as the Lord intends us to be.

In Old Testament History

Before and after his sojourn in Haran, Jacob/Israel experienced a close encounter with God. The first occurred at Bethel, where he exclaimed, “How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven” (Gen. 28:10-22, esp. v. 17). The latter occurred at the Jabbok, where—after wrestling with an angelic representative all night, and the subsequent discussion that occurred—Jacob called the place Peniel, “I have seen God face to face, yet my life has been preserved” (Gen. 32:24-30, esp. v. 30).

Then Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him until daybreak. When he saw that he had not prevailed against him, he touched the socket of his thigh; so the socket of Jacob’s thigh was dislocated while he wrestled with him. Then he said, “Let me go, for the dawn is breaking.” But he said, “I will not let you go unless you bless me.” So he said to him, “What is your name?” And he said, “Jacob.” He said, “Your name shall no longer be Jacob, but Israel; for you have striven with God and with men and have prevailed.” Then Jacob asked him and said, “Please tell me your name.” But he said, “Why is it that you ask my name?” And he blessed him there. So Jacob named the place Peniel, for he said, “I have seen God face to face, yet my life has been preserved” (Gen. 32:24-30).

Moses shared a close relationship with God: “the LORD used to speak to Moses face to face, just as a man speaks to his friend” (Exod. 33:11; cf. Deut. 34:10-12).

Thus the LORD used to speak to Moses face to face, just as a man speaks to his friend. . . (Exod. 33:11a).

Since that time no prophet has risen in Israel like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face, for all the signs and wonders which the LORD sent him to perform in the land of Egypt against Pharaoh, all his servants, and all his land, and for all the mighty power and for all the great terror which Moses performed in the sight of all Israel (Deut. 34:10-12).

The openness of their relationship is reflected in God’s rebuke of Miriam and Aaron for unjustly criticizing Moses:

He said, “Hear now My words: If there is a prophet among you, I, the LORD, shall make Myself known to him in a vision. I shall speak with him in a dream. Not so, with My servant Moses, he is faithful in all My household; with him I speak mouth to mouth, even openly, and not in dark sayings, and he beholds the form of the LORD. Why then were you not afraid to speak against My servant, against Moses?” (Num. 12:6-8).

In Old Testament Prophecy

After suffering the consequences of their rebellion, the Lord would plead with the remnant of His people “face to face,” calling them to repentance, recommitting them to the covenant (Ezek. 20:33-38).

“As I live,” declares the Lord GOD, “surely with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm and with wrath poured out, I shall be king over you. I will bring you out from the peoples and gather you from the lands where you are scattered, with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm and with wrath poured out; and I will bring you into the wilderness of the peoples, and there I will enter into judgment with you face to face. As I entered into judgment with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so I will enter into judgment with you, declares the Lord GOD. I will make you pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant; and I will purge from you the rebels and those who transgress against Me; I will bring them out of the land where they sojourn, but they will not enter the land of Israel. Thus you will know that I am the LORD” (Ezek. 20:33-38).

In the New Testament

As the apostle Paul described things of enduring value (i.e., faith, hope, and love—compared to the temporal gifts of the Spirit over which the Corinthians were squabbling), he emphasized the surpassing value of divine revelation, by which we can know God’s will (and also be known by Him). When the inspired

apostles and prophets had completed their revelatory work, we would know (and be known) fully, i.e., “face to face” (1 Cor. 13:12).

For now, we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known (1 Cor. 13:12).

John, who became known as the apostle of love, sought a close relationship with the disciples to whom he wrote:

Though I have many things to write to you, I do not want to do so with paper and ink; but I hope to come to you and speak face to face, so that your joy may be made full (2 John 12).

I had many things to write to you, but I am not willing to write them to you with pen and ink; but I hope to see you shortly, and we will speak face to face (3 John 13-14).

Conclusion

Each member of the Godhead is a distinct personality; yet they share the same purpose, thought process, values, approach, etc. Thus, Jesus (the Son) said, “I and the Father are one.” The body of Christ is composed of different members with unique talents, who (though being joined in a body) contribute to the improved functionality of the whole.

The expression “face to face” suggests close relationships. Although believers have distinct personalities and come from different backgrounds, they share fellowship in the gospel of Jesus Christ. The relationship that Christians enjoy is not occasional or superficial, but persistent and profound. Therefore, let us remember the importance of “face to face” involvement in periods of worship and Bible study, in reaching the lost and restoring the fallen, in developing disciples and showing hospitality. We encourage you to study these topics with an open Bible and a receptive spirit. **IT**



Mark Mayberry
Editor

Mark has labored with the Adoue Street church of Christ in Alvin, TX, since 1998, where he serves as the evangelist and an elder. The church website is ascoc.org. His Bible study website is markmayberry.net. He can be reached at mark@truthpublications.com.

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Shall We Dance?

by Kyle Pope

The school year has ended, and like most years, young people had to face a question that has long plagued us—should Christians dance? In this study, let's consider what the Bible teaches on this important issue.

Dancing in the Bible

We should note that Scripture describes types of dance that were *not* sinful and types that were sinful. Distinguishing between the two is important to answer the question posed in the title of this study from a scriptural standpoint.

Dancing That Was Not Sinful

Scripture describes dancing that was done as a sign of joy. Job bemoaned that the children of the wicked feel joy—“their children dance. They sing to the tambourine and harp, and rejoice to the sound of the flute” (Job 21:11-12), while the righteous often suffer. Job does not characterize the dance of joy (in and of itself) as sinful, but speaks of it merely as a demonstration of happiness. David praised God, declaring, “You have turned for me my mourning into dancing; You have put off my sackcloth and clothed me with gladness” (Ps. 30:11). He is describing a type of dance set in synonymous parallel with “gladness,” and he praises God for blessing him in such a way as to move him to “dancing.” Solomon tells us plainly that there is a “time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance” (Eccl. 3:4). Clearly, he was not teaching that life's circumstances necessitate something sinful. Even Jesus illustrates this in quoting the children's parable, which He applied to their reception of John and Himself: “We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we mourned to you, and you did not lament” (Matt. 11:16-19). Jesus was not using sinful behavior to illustrate the joyous reception of His teaching—He was describing a type of joyful dance that is not sinful.

Scripture frequently describes a type of dance connected with celebration. Jephthah's daughter danced with the

tambourine after her father's victory (Judg. 11:34). Israelite women danced with tambourines after the victories of Saul and David (1 Sam. 18:6-7). All Israel danced after the defeat of the Philistines (1 Sam. 30:16). In Jesus's parable of the lost son, when the prodigal returned home, there was “music and dancing” (Luke 15:25). Jesus does not illustrate the joy of repentance by a reference to sinful behavior. Nothing about this kind of dance was sensual, indecent, or immodest.

Finally, there were actually occasions in which dancing was an element of Old Testament worship. After the crossing of the Red Sea, Miriam and the Israelite women praised God, singing “with timbrels and with dances” (Exod. 15:20-21). When the ark was returned to Israel, “David danced before the LORD with all his might,” which involved “leaping and whirling before the LORD” (2 Sam. 6:13-15). Two psalms actually commanded dance in worship of God: “Let them praise His name with the dance” (Ps. 149:2-4) and “Praise Him with the timbrel and dance” (Ps. 150:3-6). We should note that this command is not repeated under the New Covenant, nor is there any example of dance as an act of worship under Christ. So, it would not be scriptural, therefore, under the Law of Christ to dance in worship to God (just as it is not scriptural to use mechanical instruments of music in worship under Christ).

Dancing That Was Sinful

In contrast to the preceding examples, Scripture describes sinful dancing connected with idolatry. Israel danced around the golden calf that was constructed while Moses was on the mountain (Exod. 32:17-19). In the challenge of Elijah, the prophets of Baal leaped around the altar as they called upon their god (1 Kings 18:26-29). Scripture

also describes a type of dancing associated with sinful behavior. The dance of Herodias's daughter before Herod ultimately led to the death of John the Baptist (Matt. 14:6-8). This was likely a seductive and sexually explicit type of dancing that motivated Herod's lust, leading to his rash oath. Nothing about this was proper!

The New Testament also condemns these sinful types of dancing in its frequent use of two words for behaviors which Christians must avoid: *kōmos* and *aselgeia*. The Greek word *kōmos*, usually translated “revelry,” is defined: “Properly a village festival: a revel, carousal, merry-making. . . it ended in the party parading the streets crowned, bearing torches, singing, dancing, and playing frolics” (Liddell and Scott, *Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon*).

Thayer explains that it refers to:

A nocturnal and riotous procession of half drunken and frolicsome fellows who, after supper, parade through the streets with torches and music in honour of Bacchus or some other deity, and sing and play before houses of male and female friends; hence used generally of feasts and drinking parties that are protracted till late at night and indulge in revelry (Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*).

These processions, like modern Mardi Gras festivals, involved wild dancing and drinking. Christians are emphatically commanded not to engage in such behavior (Rom. 13:13-14). If they had previously done so, they must spend no more time on such sinful pursuits (1 Pet. 4:3-5). Paul warns that Christians cannot participate in these things and inherit the kingdom of heaven (Gal. 5:21).

Second, the Greek word *aselgeia*, usually translated “lewdness” (NKJV) or “lasciviousness” (KJV) is defined as “unbridled lust, excess, licentiousness,

lasciviousness, wantonness, outrageousness, shamelessness, insolence” (Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*). It refers to various types of behavior that promote and arouse sinful, sexual desire. Jesus lists it among behaviors that “defile” a person (Mark 7:21-23). Paul identifies it as a work of the flesh that can prevent one from inheriting the kingdom of God (Gal. 5:19-21). He commanded the Corinthians to repent of their former practice of it (2 Cor. 12:21) and explained to the Ephesians that those who practice it have “their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God” (Eph. 4:17-20). Clearly, the types of dance that would be included in behaviors associated with “lewdness” and “lasciviousness” are sinful.

Dancing in Our World

In modern society, what kinds of opportunities present themselves for dancing today? Unlike the dances of joy and celebration described in Scripture, most dance today involves drinking, immodest clothing, and movements that mimic sexual behavior. Adults dance in bars, ballrooms, exercise in the presence of others, or at weddings. Young people dance at school dances, parties, or banquets. Unfortunately, the clothing often worn in these venues exposes parts of the body that Scripture defines as “nakedness” (Exod. 20:26; 28:42; Isa. 47:2-3). This is not the type of attire Christians should wear anywhere in public (1 Tim. 2:9). Unfortunately, all of these occasions involve movements in dance (whether fast or slow) that arouse sexual desire within those who participate or those who observe them. How is this not behavior that Scripture condemns under the words *kōmos* and *aselgeia*? If so, we are commanded not to participate in this behavior (Rom. 13:13). If so, we are not to waste any additional time on such behavior (1 Pet. 4:3). If so, we cannot participate in this behavior and hope to inherit the kingdom of heaven (Gal. 5:21).

“But What’s the Harm?”

Let’s say you are not convinced that modern types of dances are the kinds

of activities that are condemned by Scripture. Are there still reasons you should avoid them? Yes! First, you might be led into sin. In warning the young to avoid that which could lead to adultery, the wise man asked, “Can a man take fire to his bosom, and his clothes not be burned? Can one walk on hot coals, and his feet not be seared?” (Prov. 6:27-28). The physical attraction between man and woman is one of the most powerful forces God has ever created. It is a powerful bond intended to draw a husband and wife close to one another, but it can be misdirected toward one to whom a person is not married. Two bodies cannot be pressed against one another and moved in rhythm to music without arousal! Two bodies cannot stand in front of one another and move to music in gestures that approximate sexual behavior without arousal! To ignore this is embracing fire or walking on coals and imagining you will not be burned.

Second, you might lead others to sin. Jesus taught, “whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart” (Matt. 5:28). I am convinced that most young girls (and even some women) do not understand the struggle that young boys and men have with this temptation. I have asked both my wife and grown daughter if they truly understood this before they were married. Both said, “No.” It is not simply that males find females attractive. Non-Christian males who do not deliberately fight to control their thoughts (as Christ has commanded), with no effort at all, can have sexual thoughts about women around them. That includes not only mentally undressing them, but even imagining themselves in sexual acts with those women. If girls and women could ever spend five minutes in a football locker-room listening to the kind of talk in which non-Christian boys and men engage, this would become crystal clear!

Certainly, controlling one’s thoughts is a personal responsibility. Failure to do so is sin, but, as Christians, should we ever do things that we know will tempt others to sin? No! How can a Christian woman or girl wear a dress that climbs up her thigh and it not contribute to the sin of others?

How can a Christian woman or girl wear a top that exposes her chest, shoulders, or back and it not contribute to the sin of others? How can a Christian woman or girl wear clothing that exposes straps or bands of her undergarments, and imagine that she is not contributing to the sin of others? When a woman or girl (or even men and boys) expose part of their undergarments, they are inviting those around them to consider what is concealed. This is not the way Christians should dress in public—church, the store, school, work, or anywhere else. At dances, girls and women often dress this way and even worse. Christians should not put themselves in such environments. Some might agree, but how is it different for one to go to a dance, or to watch one on television (or some other visual medium)? How is it any different? Now, not all types of dance are sinful, but when there is skimpy clothing, provocative movements and gestures, Christians don’t need to engage in such things through media—or in person.

Conclusion

We might be inclined to say, “that’s not my problem—people just need to control their own thoughts!” That’s true, but what measures does Jesus teach that we should take to avoid sin? After His instruction regarding lust, Jesus said to personally avoid sin, we should be willing to pluck out an eye or cut off a hand (Matt. 5:29-30). After praising the nature and humility of children, Jesus repeated His teaching on plucking out an eye or cutting off a hand to avoid causing another to sin—adding that it would be better “if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea” than to cause someone else to sin (Matt. 18:6-9). If we really took these warnings seriously, how could Christians participate in anything that could lead to sin? These principles make it clear that Christians have no business participating in, or going to, dances. **T**



Kyle Pope

Kyle preaches for the Olsen Park church of Christ in Amarillo, TX. He has written several books published by Truth Publications, including *Thinking About AD 70: Challenging Realized Eschatology*. Visit truthbooks.com for more info. The church website is olsenpark.com. He can be reached at kmpope@att.net.

Son of God, Eternal Savior

by Sherelyn Mayberry

Jesus Christ is a full member of the Godhead, possessing all the qualities that make God to be God. He is Omnipotent, Omniscient, Omnipresent. He is eternal, i.e., the same yesterday and today and forever (Heb. 13:8).

In the hymn “Son of God, Eternal Savior” (PHSS #341), we sing of the unity of the Spirit through Jesus Christ our Savior, spoken of in Ephesians 4:4-16. Verses 4-6 refer to different “ones”—one body, one Spirit, one Lord, one God, one faith, one baptism, and one hope. Verses 7-13 speak of the gifts given to attain the unity of the faith in Christ. Verses 14-16 address the growth of the body in love with Christ as head. Unity in the church is centered around the Son of God, our eternal Savior.

Jesus, the Son of God, is the source of eternal life through the grace of God the Father. “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life” (John 3:16). Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. He provides access to the Father (John 14:6). Christ emptied Himself, became a man, and died for us. As we believe in the Son of Man who was lifted up on the cross, we are honored as holy through Him (Phil. 2:5-8; John 3:13-15). Acknowledging Christ as head of the church and Savior of the body, we plead for love and mercy as He meets our need of salvation (Eph. 4:15; 5:23). We enjoy redemption through Him, as He provides forgiveness of sins and reconciliation to God through His shed blood (Col. 1:13-20).

Just as Christ lived for others, we should do the same. The second great commandment is to love your neighbor as yourself (Matt. 22:39). Like Jesus, we should always seek the good of our neighbor and not put a stumbling block in his way (1 Cor. 10:24). By encouraging



and building up one another, we help each other on the pathway to heaven. By admonishing the unruly, encouraging the fainthearted, helping the weak, and being patient with everyone, we seek that which is good for all people, and thus, evidence *agape* love (1 Thess. 5:11, 14-15). In humility, we must regard others as more important than ourselves and look out for others' interests—not merely our own (Phil. 2:3-4). Having this attitude, we will seek to help bear one another's burdens, whether want, pain, or sorrow (Gal. 6:2).

How can you stimulate others to love and good deeds? Do not forsake the assembling of yourselves together, like some do, but encourage one another to greater service (Heb. 10:23-25). Face-to-face relationships are necessary for the growth of the church. Although some are weaker and others stronger, all members are important. God blesses each of us with different roles, and we should show love for each other by encouraging the use of these talents to the glory of God. Then, as one member suffers, we

suffer along with him. As one member is honored, we rejoice with him (1 Cor. 12:22-26). To the extent that we meet the needs of our brothers and sisters, we are actually serving the Lord (Matt. 25:34-40).

Bound together as one in the Lord's church, we experience unity in hope. His body, the church, grows in love as we place ourselves under Christ, the head. While we are knit together as a whole, each individual must do his part with whatever blessings he has received (Eph. 4:4, 15-16). The Lord prayed that believers will be one in Him, so that the world might believe. When each member recognizes and embraces his God-given purpose, the church enjoys unity and growth (John 17:20-21). Paul asked the Philippian saints to make his joy complete by being of the same mind, loving each other, and having unity in God's word and aim (Phil. 2:2). We should be diligent to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Eph. 4:3). In Psalm 133:1, David declares, “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!” What can you do to promote unity in hope provided by the Son of God, our eternal Savior? **TL**



Sherelyn Mayberry

Sherelyn is the wife of Mark Mayberry, who labors with the Adoue Street congregation in Alvin, TX, as an evangelist and elder. She can be reached at sherelynmayberry@live.com.

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Are We Able to Choose Faith?

by Bruce Reeves

The Bible affirms that man is a creature of choice, while Calvinism alleges that humanity is totally depraved. These foundational positions reflect radically different views of man and God.

Introduction

What we believe about the nature of God and humanity has practical consequences in our lives, relationships, and our view of sharing the gospel of Christ with the lost. Can we proclaim that Jesus died for everyone (John 3:16), that salvation is available to the whole world (Matt. 11:28-30; Mark 16:15), and that the gospel is for all (Heb. 5:8-9; Rev. 22:17)? If we believe the gospel, “Yes!” In contrast with these scriptural affirmations, Calvinism not only asserts that specific individuals were chosen unconditionally from eternity for either salvation or damnation, but also teaches that every person is born totally depraved and unable to choose faith in Christ. What a contrast!

Understanding Total Inherited Depravity

We are not denying that mankind is guilty of sin (Rom. 3:23) or that we need God’s grace for salvation (Rom. 3:9-28; Eph. 2:8-9). The real issue at hand can be seen in the following questions:

“Have we inherited a sinful nature from Adam?”

“Did Adam’s sin corrupt the nature of all subsequent humans that would be born?”

“Do we have the ability to choose faith and resist the temptation to sin?”

Reformed Theology asserts that all descendants of Adam inherit both the guilt and consequences of his sin as a judicial act of God. Accordingly, they

believe the descendants of Adam are born so completely corrupted and depraved that they cannot, of their own free will, even turn to God.

By “total,” the Calvinist means that in body, soul, and spirit, humanity has been corrupted and rendered incapable of exercising faith without an irresistible act of God through a direct operation of the Holy Spirit. R.C. Sproul writes: “We are not sinners because we sin; we sin because we are sinners. Since the fall, human nature has been corrupt. We are born with a sin nature. Our acts of sin flow out of this corrupted nature” (Sproul, *Reformed Theology*, 118). Calvinist Edwin H. Palmer defines this teaching as “Positively, only, and always sinning. . . in fact. . . relative good is basically, in the deepest sense, nothing else than sin and evil. . . from conception and birth man is polluted with sin because of the fall of Adam” (*The Five Points of Calvinism*, 13). He proceeds to define the concept: “Another way of describing total depravity is to call it total inability. . . Man cannot do good. . . man cannot understand good. . . man cannot desire good.” Norman Geisler writes: “We are sinners not only because we sin, but also because we were born sinners. . . Just as certainly, the soul is not created sinless; it becomes sinful in joining with the human body” (*Systematic Theology, Volume Three: Sin, Salvation*, 125). This teaching not only argues that we inherit a sinful nature from Adam, but that we are unable to resist the temptation to sin because of Adam’s actions: “We simply are unable to live without sinning. We sin out of a kind of moral necessity, because

we act according to our fallen nature. We do corrupt things because we are corrupt people” (Sproul, 123). One is made to wonder how God would be just in condemning a sinner when (according to Calvinistic theology) He foreordained all sin and is directly responsible for man’s inability to do anything other than what he has done.

The Widespread Reach of the Doctrine

In *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, John Calvin (1509-1564) affirmed, in more systematic terms than did Augustine, the doctrines of Original Sin and Total Inherited Depravity. Likewise, Martin Luther argued for the same teaching in his work, *The Bondage of the Will*. This teaching is not only reflected in Roman Catholicism, but has also pervaded Protestant denominations, including the Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Methodists, Lutherans, Baptists, Congregationalists, Pentecostals, and many inter-denominational congregations. Although some argue for moderated forms of Calvinism, R.C. Sproul points out the inconsistencies of watered-down versions of Reformed Theology:

If ever the Reformed doctrine of total depravity has been crystallized into one brief statement, it is here. The moral inability of fallen man is the core concept of the doctrine of total depravity or radical corruption. If one embraces this aspect of the *T* in *TULIP*, the rest of the acrostic follows from a resistless logic. One cannot embrace the *T* and reject any of the other four letters

with any degree of consistency (Sproul, 128).

Calvinism is like dominos: when one tenet falls, logically they must all fall.

What Does the Bible Teach?

Now, let us examine the passages that are often used as proof-texts by Calvinists.

Psalms 51:5

David wrote: “Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.” We see the idea again in Psalm 58:3, which says, “The wicked are estranged from the womb; these who speak lies go astray from birth.” Of course, they cannot speak intelligible words as infants. Calvinists are guilty of misreading biblical poetry to support an unbiblical interpretation. Let us remember the style of writing and the genre of Scripture. This psalm is Hebrew poetry in which David is pouring his heart out in confession before the Lord. He is using hyperbole, i.e., exaggeration to emphasize a point. When a friend, while laughing at a joke, says, “You are killing me,” we know that he is not in fear for his life. This is a common figure of speech in the Scriptures (Job 17:14; 25:6; Ps. 22:6). Since David had accepted personal responsibility throughout his confession, why would he now blame his behavior on his supposed inherited-sin nature (Ps. 51:1-4)? Walter Brueggemann insightfully comments:

The statement of verse 5 can be readily misunderstood. It does not mean that sex is sinful, nor that this speaker had a perverted beginning, or that the mother is morally implicated. Rather, the speaker asserts that he is utterly guilty. . . I take this to be not a clinical statement, but an expression of theological candor as the speaker exposes himself to God’s righteousness. One may say that it is a piece of liturgical hyperbole, as is much of the Psalms. We do not need to take the statement as a “doctrine of man” (*The Message of the Psalms*, 99).

Ephesians 2:3

Paul said, “. . . [you] were by nature the children of wrath. . .” While some use this verse to bolster their view of the nature of man, Paul is merely describing the sinful way of life of these believers before their conversion. The original term for “nature” can indicate “a mode of feeling and acting which by long habit has become nature” (Thayer, 660). Paul also speaks of Gentiles who, “by nature do the things in the law” (NKJV), or “do instinctively the things of the Law” (NASB), although they did not have the written law (Rom. 2:14-16). How could this be true if they were born totally depraved?

Romans 3:9-20, 23

Paul affirms, “There is no one who seeks God.” This text affirms the truth that Jews and Gentiles are all under the condemnation of sin (Rom. 3:9, 19-20, 23). Paul uses a string of Old Testament verses (filled with hyperbole) to show that humanity is guilty of sin. They are not teaching that man is unable to believe and obey God; instead, they reflect the fact that accountable individuals consciously chose the path of rebellion. When preaching to the Athenians, the same apostle wrote: “God did this so that they would seek Him and perhaps reach out for Him and find Him, though He is not far from any one of us. ‘For in Him we live and move and have our being’” (Acts 17:27). Paul proclaims that we can reach out to the Lord and find Him in faith.

Romans 5:12-21

This text contains an Adam-Christ typology. Paul uses Adam to show that all of us need Christ. He shows that Jesus’s act of obedience in His death was necessary to free us from condemnation (Phil. 2:8). Lest the Jews deny the possibility that one man could bring redemption, he reminds them that one man opened the door for sin. Yet, the text says nothing of Total Inherited Depravity or our tendency to sin. We become sinners through the *imitation* of Adam’s behavior, not the *inheritance* of

his nature. His sin was a bridgehead that paved the way for “sinning” for those who followed in his steps. The consequences of Adam’s transgression unleashed the power of sin into the world. Paul wrote: “Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned. . .” (Rom. 5:12). The apostle later affirms that he was spiritually “alive” before having received God’s commandment (Rom. 7:9-11).

Biblical Challenges to Total Inherited Depravity

Individual Responsibility (Ezek. 18:1, 20-32)

Some generations bear the physical/temporal consequences of the sin of a previous generation, but in this case, God emphasizes the personal responsibility of individuals within the community of Israel. Ezekiel 18 refutes all five points of classic Calvinism. The prophet says, “The soul who sins will die. . . the son will not bear the punishment of the father’s iniquity, nor will the father bear the punishment for the son’s iniquity” (Ezek. 18:4, 20). It would be unjust for the Lord to command us to do the impossible and then condemn us for not doing it!

Children Are Models of Christ’s Kingdom

Why did Jesus hold children up as examples of humility for His disciples if they were totally depraved sinners (Matt. 18:3-4; 19:13-14)? If infants are born dead in sin, separated from God, incapable of doing any good, and only motivated by selfishness, why would He tell us that we must be like them to enter the kingdom?

Calvinism in Bible Class Materials

You may think, “I would see this from a mile away!” Nevertheless, there is much material addressing marriage, family, and parenting that is filled with Calvinistic theology. We must not only be alert regarding our public teaching in the

assembly but also in home Bible studies and ladies' classes. For example, Richard and Virginia Fugate have written several books for men, women, and parents. Sadly, their material is saturated with Calvinism. In his book, *What the Bible Says About Child Training: Parenting with Confidence*, Fugate writes:

Every sweet, innocent, cuddly baby possesses within his nature the constant temptation to fulfill his strong desire to sin. Under the control of sin, the child is totally self-centered; he wants what he wants when he wants it. A child wants to be fed what and when he wishes to have the total attention of others. . . without regard for anyone else (Fugate, 65).

He goes on to write: "Each is born with his spirit separated from fellowship with God (in a state of spiritual death. . . each is born with a soul that is under the penalty for sin under eternal condemnation)" (Fugate, 64). Children are not sinning when they cry out for food. Can anyone imagine that Jesus as a baby did not cry to be fed (Heb. 4:15)? Fugate goes so far as to argue that when children do good, they are doing so for selfish reasons because they are totally depraved:

Even when a child acts with acceptable behavior, he may be acting out of self-interest to gain attention or future reward. An intelligent child. . . can deceive a parent into thinking that he is inherently good and only occasionally acts badly. . . You can avoid this deception when you realize that the nature of sin will motivate a child to do whatever bad, or even good, that he thinks will cause benefit to himself. When parents recognize that the natural, normal tendency of their child is to satisfy his own sinful nature, they are ready to become successful parents. You cannot be successful in child training as long as you imagine that your child is an innocent, sweet cherub who is naturally good. . . (Fugate, 65).

Mr. Fugate argues that children are incapable of doing anything good because of his view of the depraved nature of humanity. Can you see how this would impact the nurturing and discipline of our children? Christ had a much different

view of children than Mr. Fugate. Parental mistreatment is even defended because of his distorted view: "When we see a child receive what we consider mistreatment from parents, we must remember that God is in control and has chosen to place the soul life of that child under those parents specifically. . . Perhaps the child who receives unfair treatment at the hand of his parents requires just that kind of pressure in order to submit to the will of God" (Fugate, *What the Bible Says About Child Training*, 36-37). *This is not only absurd, but dangerous and deplorable.* Although many would deny this interpretation of their view, this quotation reveals the consequences of the teachings of Calvinism.

Logical Consequences of Total Inherited Depravity

We do not charge all those who teach this doctrine with these conclusions, but they are still the logical and inevitable consequences of the theology:

- Denies actual freewill
- Releases individuals from personal responsibility for their sins
- Makes God responsible for all sin and indicts His goodness
- Requires the doctrine of Unconditional Election

Responsibility of Teachers and Students

We can benefit from the writings of authors with various backgrounds. However, we must be discerning and cautious. There can be a real danger of drinking too deeply from such authors if we do not exercise wisdom and maturity (Jer. 2:13). There are red flags of doctrinal compromise in a congregation when,

- Fundamental issues are ignored and evaded in the public forum
- Brethren become hyper-sympathetic toward denominational error
- They prefer to express views in a forum or format, like social media, wherein there will be no real accountability

There is a mischaracterization of those who question such teaching

Failure to consider an author's religious affiliation or doctrinal beliefs is a recipe for disaster when teaching on this subject, and can become a gateway for acceptance and affirmation of false doctrine.

Conclusion

The gospel is a beautiful revelation of God's love for humanity, which He has created in His own image (Gen. 1:26-27; Eccl. 7:20). God loves the entire world, Jesus died for every person, and the Lord's invitation to salvation is sincerely offered and genuinely needed (Matt. 11:28-30). Thank God that He has blessed us with free will to choose faith, obey the truth, and become His children through divine grace (John 3:16; Titus 2:11-15; 2 Pet. 3:9). **TL**

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Bruce Reeves

Bruce has labored with the Highway 65 church of Christ in Conway, AR, since 2000. He and his wife, Rachel, have one child. The church website is hwy65churchofchrist.org. He can be reached at brochuck1@aol.com.

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THUR.	I Believe Jesus Rose from the Dead	DANIEL H. KING, SR.
TUE.	I Believe Jesus Was Born of a Virgin	TYLER SAMS
WED.	I Believe Jesus Performed Miracles	PHIL STUCKEY
THUR.	I Believe Jesus Cast out Demons	SPENCER BLACKWELDER
TUE.	I Believe Jesus Was the Son of Man	JOHN HUMPHRIES
WED.	I Believe Jesus is the Christ	MIKE WILLIS
THUR.	I Believe that Jesus Is the Son of God	SHAWN CHANCELLOR
TUE.	I Believe that Jesus is the Savior of the World	NATHAN WARD
WED.	I Believe the Church Demonstrates the Glory of Jesus	BARRY BRITNELL
THUR.	I Believe Jesus Is with Believers Always	KEVIN MAXEY
TUE.	MEN'S TRACK How do I help the skeptic come to faith?	RICK BILLINGSLEY
TUE.	WOMEN'S TRACK How do I help the skeptic come to faith?	REBEKAH DUTTON
WED.	MEN'S TRACK Answering the problem of suffering	BRUCE REEVES
WED.	WOMEN'S TRACK Answering the problem of suffering	KATE MITCHELL
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Miraculous Gifts of the Spirit (1 Cor. 12-14)

by Shane Carrington

We have confidence in the Bible as the written word of God, because He used miraculous gifts from the Holy Spirit to reveal and confirm the word in the first century.

Introduction

“I wish God would speak to me. I have a lot of questions!”

In reality, God has spoken to us! He communicated directly with some first-century disciples. This is called inspiration. He speaks to us today through the written word. This is called revelation (cf. Eph. 3:2-5). To hear Him today, we must open His book and study. This is called edification.

The Variety and Purposes of Miraculous Gifts

In the Old Testament Scriptures, God revealed Himself “to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways” (Heb. 1:1). For us today, God, “in these last days has spoken to us in His Son” (Heb. 1:2a). As God revealed Himself in the New Testament era, “it [the gospel, sc] was at the first spoken through the Lord” and “was confirmed to us by those who heard [the apostles, sc], God also testifying with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will” (Heb. 2:3-4). The Father, Son, and Spirit revealed God’s powerful plan (Rom. 1:16) through the use of miraculous gifts distributed to certain disciples.

While these are categorized both as “signs and wonders and . . . various miracles” (Heb. 2:4; cf. Acts 2:22; 2 Cor. 12:12) and “gifts of the Holy Spirit” (Heb. 2:4), these gifts serve two primary purposes:



to reveal God’s word by inspiration (Heb. 2:3-4; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; Eph. 3:3-5).

to confirm God’s word by authenticating both the messengers who spoke/wrote (Heb. 2:3-4)—and the message God that manifested through them (Heb. 2:1-4).

Since we cannot read God’s mind, He had to reveal His word by inspiring people to make it known (1 Cor. 2:9-13). This ensured the accuracy and completeness of God’s revealed message to us. Furthermore, God gave us confidence in the inspired writers and the resulting “sword of the Spirit” (Eph. 6:17) which they wielded by empowering them with the ability to work miracles (Heb. 2:2-4). That is why God gave those gifts.

God gave a variety of gifts, and Paul enumerates several. The most extensive context discussing them is 1 Corinthians 12-14.

Chapter 12 lists many of these gifts (12:8-10, 28-30) and reveals that they came from the same source: the Spirit, Jesus, and the Father (12:4-6). The Holy Spirit is given special credit for being the source of miraculous gifts nine times in the first eleven verses of this chapter (cf. John 16:7-15). These gifts came from One source and were intended to unify the entire body of believers (12:12-26; cf. 1:10-17).

Chapter 13 emphasizes that love is the right motivation for using miraculous gifts (13:1-13)—while also revealing their temporary nature (13:8-12).

Chapter 14 describes the Corinthians’ misuse of miraculous gifts (especially tongues), lists regulations concerning the use of these gifts, and emphasizes the unity God wants among His people (cf. 14:4-5, 12, 19, 26-33, 40).

Jesus’s Promises to the Apostles

Jesus used a variety of expressions to make promises to the apostles about the days in which they would be inspired by the Holy Spirit. Note a few of these sayings that are found in John’s gospel:

the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you (John 14:26).

When the Helper comes. . . the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me (John 15:26).

the Helper will. . . come to you. . . to convict the world concerning sin,

righteousness, and judgment (John 16:7-8).

He will guide you into all the truth. . . I said that He takes of Mine and will disclose it to you (John 16:13-15).

He breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, their sins have been forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they have been retained" (John 20:22-23; cf. 16:7-15).

Consequently, John writes, "Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name" (John 20:30-31).

The world needs to know God's will, and the Holy Spirit inspired both apostles and prophets to reveal and record that message (Eph. 3:3-5).

The Beginning (and End) of Reception

In the pages of the New Testament, we discover that God gave miraculous powers in two ways:

Directly through Spirit baptism—described as only occurring on two occasions (Acts 2 & 10).

Indirectly through the laying on of hands by an apostle—described most notably in Acts 8 (vv. 6-7, 18-19), though it happened many times (cf. Acts 19:6).

By *directly*, we mean that the Holy Spirit directly came upon the apostles, empowering them. By *indirectly*, we mean that the Holy Spirit empowered others through an apostle laying hands on them. Are these two means still available today? No.

Holy Spirit baptism ceased to be available by the time Paul wrote Ephesians. In that letter, he declared that there is "one baptism" (Eph. 4:5). Water baptism is a command of God (Acts 10:44-48) that is both essential to salvation (Mark 16:16; Eph. 5:25-26; etc.) and available until Jesus comes again (Matt. 28:18-


20). Water baptism, performed in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, is the "one baptism" commanded until Jesus returns. In the early days of the gospel, Holy Spirit baptism was an essential part of revealing and confirming God's word, but that work is complete. That leaves no room for Holy Spirit baptism today.

Since the apostles have been deceased almost 2,000 years, they are not available to lay hands on modern-day disciples to impart those gifts. With neither the direct (Holy Spirit baptism) nor indirect (laying on of hands by an apostle) means of acquiring miraculous gifts of the Spirit available, these powers are no longer given to people today. As Paul said, these gifts would cease and "be done away" (1 Cor. 13:8-10).

During the infancy of the church, God gave these gifts as the means of revealing and verifying His word. However, we possess that completed revelation in written form (Eph. 3:3-5; Jude 3; John 20:30-31; etc.). What a blessing!

Conclusion

Because God revealed His word by inspiration, we can have confidence in it, though it was written by fallible men. Truly, God revealed His word, "not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words" (1 Cor. 2:13).

Let the Holy Spirit transform and indwell you through the inspired, verified word that He revealed (Eph. 3:3-5; 5:18,19; 6:10-18). God speaks! Listen to Him by reading and following His written word. 



Shane Carrington

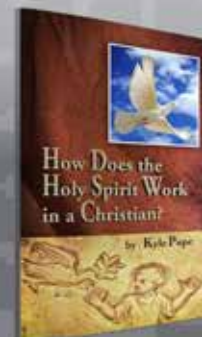
Shane has worked with the Southside church of Christ in Sulphur Springs, TX, for twenty-three years. He and his wife, Kelly, have two children. The church website is churchofchristss.com. He can be reached at bshane@mac.com.

How Does the Holy Spirit Work in a Christian?

by Kyle Pope

The views which many in the religious world hold regarding the work of the Holy Spirit color all aspects of their understanding of biblical topics. These denominational concepts far too often find their way into the church in the language we use and unscriptural notions we gradually adopt. This study is an attempt to carefully "weed out" concepts which are rooted in the theories and theologies of men in order to isolate the pure revelation of God on this most important question. The reader should test all things presented in the pages which follow by the infallible standard of God's word, accepting only what is found to be true to the Holy Spirit revealed oracles of God.

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By Bobby L. Graham



QUESTION.

Why are many Christians leaving the church for denominations?

ANSWER.

Question

Why are we hearing about so many Christians leaving the church for denominations?

Answer

This question, given to us by a young Christian, reminds us of the situation facing the Hebrew believers, if they abandoned Jesus Christ and His better covenant for the inferior things of the Old Covenant given through Moses. Who would willingly give up the types of the Old Testament for the antitypes of the New? Who would forfeit the realities associated with Christ for the shadows intended only to portray in faint outline form what was coming? It's somewhat illustrated by the idea of a Cadillac sitting in a sunny place, and its moving shadow

cast as the sun changes its position. Who would be pleased to accept the gift of the car's shadow when the Cadillac moves away to some distant place? Would you stand in that shadow rejoicing that the car was yours, when all you had was its shadow, which has now slipped away with the moving of the car? Of course not!

Why would anybody be pleased to leave the church which has its origin in the eternal purpose of God (Eph. 3:10-11), has Jesus Christ as its spiritual head

(Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18; Eph. 5:23-24), and is entered by divine addition upon obedience to the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 2:47, 41, 38) to become part of something substituted by human beings in defiance of the authority of Christ, who is our Head, by supplanting the eternal wisdom of God and entered by altogether different terms of membership than those sanctioned by the Lord? What possible reasons could explain such an earth-shaking shift in one's spiritual allegiance?

Popularity/praise of men, inferior wisdom of the world, so-called felt-needs of an earthly nature, and other such lower motivations (all of which come from unbelief) have often prompted the movements of people toward denominationalism. In contrast, when many of the early 1800s awakened from spiritual lethargy determined to leave their human denominations for the Lord's church, they were attempting to restore the New Testament church to its rightful place in their lives and to restore the Bible to its rightful place in the hearts



of men. They were not satisfied with the creeds and churches of which men had been the architects during the Protestant Reformation. Instead of leaving the denominations and going all the way back to Jerusalem to find the church of Christ as created by the Lord Himself, the reformers were content to stop at Rome and work merely around the fringes of the Roman Church to create something more pleasing to themselves. In their spiritual creations (Church of England/Episcopal, Lutheran, Methodist, Baptist, and Presbyterian), it is easy to see more resemblance to Rome than to Jerusalem. Although some came closer to Jerusalem than others did, none of them began in full submission to Jesus Christ, who has headship “over all things to the church” (Eph. 1:22).

Whenever any motivation, besides this complete submission to Christ described in Ephesians 1:22, moves people to leave His church or to associate with other “churches,” such people are misguided—sometimes unknowingly, but at other times knowingly *and* willfully. Only the true gospel will rescue them and place them in the Lord’s true church. **T**



Bobby L. Graham

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@spectrum.net.

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OT Aphek and NT Antipatris

by Leon Mauldin

Aphek was the site of the Philistine encampment when the ark of God was taken; it became Antipatris in Roman times and was a stopping point for Paul's military escort to Caesarea.

Some biblical sites are unique to the Old Testament, while others are mentioned only in the New Testament. Aphek is a location referenced in both. Aphek was important as a Canaanite site. The earliest remains date back to the Early Bronze Age. It was an important station on the Via Maris. It is included in the list of Pharaoh Tutmosis III (who reigned 1479-1425 BC). Aphek's king was one of the thirty-one rulers of Canaan that Joshua defeated during the Conquest (Josh. 12:18). During the Intertestamental Period, it was conquered by John Hyrcanus I. Then in Roman times, Herod the Great rebuilt the city, naming it Antipatris after his father, Antipater.

Aphek is mentioned in 1 Samuel 4:1 as the position of the Philistine camp as they prepared for battle against Israel. This was in the period of the Judges, in the last days of Eli's tenure as High Priest and Judge of Israel. Israel was defeated soundly in two back-to-back battles in this area (1 Sam. 4:2, 10); tragically, the ark of God was taken by the Philistines after Israel's second defeat (1 Sam. 4:11). Our aerial photo shows Aphek at bottom and left; the view is from the south. As you look to the north, you are seeing the Sharon plain. The modern highway at this point is following the route of the ancient Via Maris.

Aphek is located at modern Tell Ras el' Ain. Here is the

source of the Yarkon River as seen in our photo. Additionally, the remains of a Canaanite temple can still be seen.

In the New Testament, this location was known as Antipatris. When the Roman commander, Claudius Lysias, became aware of an assassination plot (by more than forty conspirators) to kill the apostle Paul in Jerusalem (the plot being revealed by Paul's nephew), he acted decisively. He ordered a military escort of Paul to Caesarea (Acts 23:13-33). This was for Paul's own protection. Because Paul was a Roman citizen, Claudius Lysias felt keenly responsible for his safety. Accordingly, the commander

was very thorough: two centurions were commanded to prepare 200 soldiers, 200 spearmen, and seventy horsemen (the three primary elements of the Roman army). That's a total of 470 soldiers to guard and safely escort one prisoner! It certainly demonstrates how seriously Lysias took the threat. The Roman militia departed at 9:00 p.m. (Acts 23:23). Mounts (horses) were provided for Paul to ride (v. 24). On the way to Caesarea, the governor's residence, they went through Antipatris: "Then the soldiers, as they were commanded, took Paul and brought him by night to Antipatris" (v. 31). The next day, the horsemen went on



River Yarkon Source © Leon Mauldin



Aerial View of Aphek/Antipatris (center-right) © Leon Mauldin



Canaanite Temple Remains © Leon Mauldin



Roman Road Leading Out of Aphek © Leon Mauldin

with Paul to his destination at Caesarea, whereas the soldiers returned to the barracks at Jerusalem (v. 32).

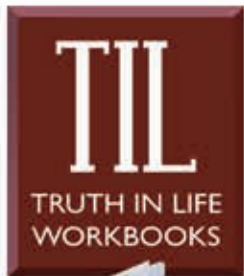
This escape from the plot to kill Paul is, no doubt, another instance of the overruling providence of God! It is one of the many occasions when God delivered him from what otherwise would have been certain death.

Paul would remain a prisoner at Caesarea for two years, at which time he would begin his voyage to Rome, but that's for another study. **LI**



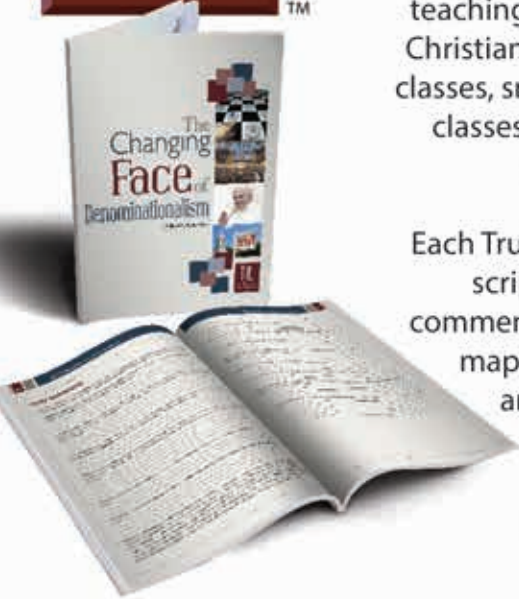
Leon Mauldin

Leon has worked with the Hanceville church of Christ in Hanceville, AL, for over thirty-two years. He and his wife, Linda, have three children and nine grandchildren (one deceased). The church website is hancevillechurchofchrist.com. His personal websites are leonmauldin.blog and mauldinbiblelandtours.com. He can be reached at leon.mauldin@gmail.com.

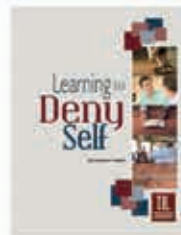
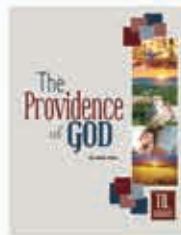
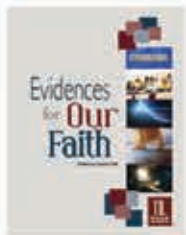


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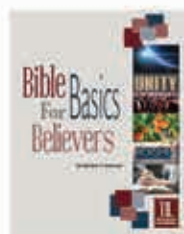
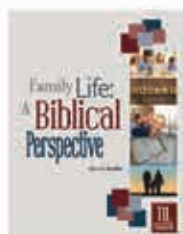


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Worship

by David A. Cox

The after-effects of the COVID crisis on in-person assemblies of the Lord's church have driven many to see worship in a way that does not keep God's view of worship in mind.

Introduction

In March of 2020, no one could have imagined the complex unraveling that would take place as this nation closed the doors of many things determined to be non-essential activities. The government declared church gatherings to be non-essential, and many states required that churches stop their assemblies. This decision was monumental, for most churches in this nation have always been seen as safe places. In the past, when tragic and unraveling events of life occurred, people could find stability in the churches. However, the recent pandemic brought about a fear of gathering together and affected the worship of saints throughout the nation.

What Are We To Do?

Elders, preachers, leaders of congregations, and individual members grappled with what to do. Assembling with the church is not something that members of the church can quickly pass over (Heb. 10:25). As disciples of the Lord, we are to be guided in our faith and practice by the scriptures. Christians are to be subject to those in governmental positions of authority (Rom. 13:1-7). Christians also understand that "we ought to obey God rather than man" (Acts 5:29). In dealing with these principles, congregations made various decisions about the in-person worship services. Many held had some kind of online service. Members could tune in from their homes, view the services, and have a time of devotion and service in their home. It is not the purpose of

this article to pass judgment about the decisions that occurred. The decisions were varied, and I know fully that many, if not all, were made with much prayer, care, and a keen awareness of the gravity of the decisions. Rather than looking back, we need to look ahead as we come out of the pandemic and see what we are to do to please the Lord now.

"Face to Face"

In considering the thought "Face to Face," the Scriptures indeed emphasize this idea in suggesting a close and intimate relationship. In John's epistles, he writes:

Having many things to write to you, I did not wish to do so with paper and ink; but I hope to come to you and speak face to face, that our joy may be full (2 John 12).

. . .but I hope to see you shortly, and we shall speak face to face. Peace to you. Our friends greet you. Greet the friends by name (3 John 13-14).

Isolation is not good, and many adverse effects flow from it. In the Scriptures, the emphasis and the expression of this closeness can only be experienced when brethren are together.

God Knows We Need One Another

From the shutdowns of the pandemic, it is easy to see why the Lord desires His people to be in groups (congregations) as they live and serve Him. How often have people expressed the yearning desire to be able to shake hands, give hugs, see smiles, and hear the voices of their brethren? Without being in the assembly, these things disappeared. God knew



that man was a social creature from the beginning and possessed a great need for companionship (Gen. 2:18). It should not be surprising to any that God set in place the church for Christians to come together to interact and edify one another. The Hebrew writer speaks of the assemblies and the encouragement Christians are to give one another as we live to serve the Lord (Heb. 10:24-25). Before these instructions, the writer says, “let us draw near. . .” (Heb. 10:22). It is true that to “draw near” is in a spiritual sense, but as the text continues, the drawing near includes physically drawing near to one another. We need one another! God knows we need one another, and He has told us to assemble together.

Examining the Purpose of Worship

The purpose of worship is to give God the praise, honor, and glory that is due Him. Also, God designed worship to be done with others. In the book of Acts and throughout the epistles, Christians came together to worship. The gathering of the people of God is a special time—an occasion when Christians come together to sing, pray, study, give, and partake of the Lord’s Supper. As we prepare for worship and go through the worship of God, all should be uplifted, strengthened, edified, and motivated in their service to God. There are times in life when individuals may not be able to come together face to face to worship. In these times, souls face the most significant challenges to their faith. Why? It is because they miss the encouragement, instruction, and the things others do for them. What was lacking when we were not allowed to assemble in person for gatherings of the church? The number one thing I was told time and again, and I experienced this myself, was the blending of voices, one with another, to praise God. You can sing at home by yourself, with a recording, or with a few others, but it does not replicate the singing that takes place in the assembly. The teaching and admonition of one another were not present during the shutdown

of assemblies. It was just not the same. We must not think of it as just an odd feeling, but it was also the failure to do what the Lord desires. “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns” (Col. 3:16). “Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord” (Eph. 5:19). In all areas of worship, being “face to face” as we assemble is paramount.

Coming Back Face to Face

There are many things in life that we might do and enjoy while not being face to face, but worship is simply not one of them. Those who are infirmed, or just unable to be at services, have always expressed how they miss the “face to face” gatherings. The most important thing to remember is that God knows us well. He knows everything about us. He knows what is best for us. God has made it clear that His people should come together face to face. The establishment of the Lord’s Supper and the command for followers of Christ to partake of it until Jesus comes again gives a time that God has enjoined upon us to do together. God has commanded us to do this because He knows we need to be together. We need to share in fellowship with one another as we live in this life. There are many uncertainties in life, but the importance of gathering together with the saints of God is not something about which we should be uncertain.

May we be strong in faith as we face the obstacles confronting us in life, especially as we are faced with attacks on our face-to-face worship. Let us resolve to serve the Lord, trust in His power, and worship Him as He desires for us to do. **T**



David A. Cox

David has worked with the Market Street church of Christ in Athens, AL, since 2008. He and his wife, Kerry, have two sons, Tyler (wife: Lindsey) and Hunter (wife: Heather). The church’s website is marketstreet-church.com. He can be reached at davidacox85@gmail.com.

NEW!

Worshipping with the Psalms

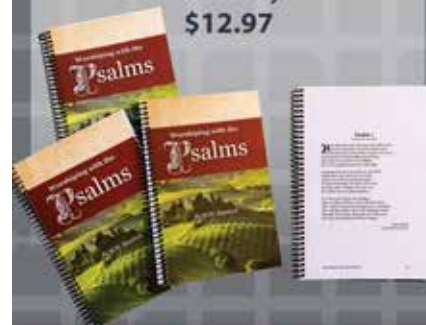
by Matthew Bassford

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Bible Study

by Lance Taylor

As brethren seek to restore what they have lost/missed over the last two years, let us remember an essential truth: Nothing beats face-to-face Bible study!

Since the pandemic of 2020, face-to-face interactions have changed in seemingly every arena of our lives. One significant area of impact has been Bible studies and Bible classes among saints and congregations across the globe. As we strive to hold fast to the most holy faith, continuing in effective Bible study is of utmost importance. There simply is no replacement for in-person Bible study participation.

The pandemic brought trials of various alternative means of study. Even in the secular field of education, schools attempted distance learning, virtual classrooms, and providing online resources to continue the progress of children and young people across the country. What resulted from that approach? Consider the reports from several sources in the following article: “Virtual school resulted in ‘significant’ academic learning loss, study finds” by Jessica Dickler, which was posted to *CNBC.com* on 3/30/21 and updated on 10/12/2021:

Nothing beats being in a classroom.

After a year of school closings and distance learning amid the coronavirus crisis, more than half of public school K-12 teachers said the pandemic resulted in a “significant” learning loss for students, both academically and from a social-emotional standpoint, according to a report by Horace Mann.

Data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention also suggested that virtual learning “might present more risks than in-person instruction related to child and parental mental and

emotional health and some health-supporting behaviors.”

Nearly all—over ninety-seven percent—of educators reported seeing some learning loss in their students over the past year when compared with children in previous years, and a majority, or fifty-seven percent, estimated their students are behind by more than three months in their social-emotional progress, Horace Mann found.

A separate study by McKinsey & Company found similar results worldwide. The majority of teachers from eight different countries said that remote learning is a poor substitute for being back in the classroom.

The U.S. and Japan gave distance learning the harshest scores overall, with a majority of teachers ranking the effectiveness only slightly better than skipping school completely.

Economic status mattered, too. Educators in schools in areas with higher poverty found virtual classes to be especially ineffective, heightening concerns that COVID-19 exacerbated educational inequalities.

If our general education systems recognize the negative impact of not being in the classroom, face to face, with in-person instruction and teaching, then certainly, as Christians, we can also see that, if we do not resume or move forward with regular in-person Bible study and teaching, we will also experience “significant learning loss for students of the Bible.”

Working in the book industry, I have witnessed firsthand the ups and downs of congregations through the pandemic and

recovery, as we all have attempted to return to normal worship and Bible study. The challenges have been manifested in several ways, but especially in the lack of Bible class materials being purchased during the pandemic and the slow return of the sales of those materials in 2021, and now 2022. While there has been growth back to some levels of “normal,” it seems that we are all still “off,” to some degree, with Bible class activities. In many places, brethren are not back to where we should be.

I am reminded of Paul’s words to Timothy: “You, therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also” (2 Tim. 2:1-2).

This admonition has echoed through the Lord’s church for years as a call to be steadfast in the teaching of the Scriptures in order to secure the continuation of biblical teaching in generations coming after us.

In my short nineteen-plus years of preaching the gospel, I have had the privilege of teaching many young people. When I was first given the opportunity to preach, my responsibilities specifically included teaching the teenagers and young people of the congregation. One thing that has always been evident in young people learning the Bible is that they absorb so much so fast when provided consistent and organized instruction. Another trait that stands out over the years is the curiosity and inquisitiveness of our young people. They are searching every day for answers and information as they are discovering

themselves, growing into their own persons, and maturing in their physical and spiritual lives. So, what happens when they miss weeks of in-person Bible classes?

We all have likely seen the impact that Bible class has on youth in simple ways, such as hearing our children singing every word of the song “Jesus Loves Me” and “This Little Light of Mine.” Each week at Sandlin Road we have a children’s singing and Bible drill. I am reminded every week of just how much even a small child’s mind is capable of learning and retaining. To see an eighteen-month-old little girl sing and do hand motions to “My God Is So Big” will melt your heart and humble you as a Bible teacher. What if we skipped eighteen months of singing and teaching these little ones?

It is not just our children who fall behind when we lose focus on Bible study and classes. Remember the example of Apollos when Priscilla and Aquila “took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately” (Acts 18:24-26)? Then he went on to Achaia and “greatly helped those who had believed through grace; for he vigorously refuted the Jews publicly, showing from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ” (vv. 27-28). In this, we see the benefits of Bible teaching that is personal, tactful, and helpful. It was a blessing for Apollos and also for us. We also see the power of in-person Bible teaching and preaching when Apollos helped other brethren and refuted the unbelieving Jews. What if we do not mentor the next generation of gospel preachers and Bible teachers?

In Acts 20:17-38, Paul emotionally expresses his work among the church at Ephesus. The entire text affirms the positive impact of being together, in person, to learn and live the gospel message. In verse 20, Paul specifies that he “taught you publicly and from house to house.” Then, in verse 25, he laments the fact that those he has taught will “see his face no more.” In verses 36-38,



as Paul kneels and prays with the elders, they wept and fell on his neck and kissed him, “sorrowing most of all for the words which he spoke, that they would see his face no more.” As a Bible teacher, I would sorrow over the thought of seeing faces no more in the classroom, in the auditorium, and in homes where the Bible would (and should) be studied together. Wouldn’t you?

God has instructed us to teach and share His word directly with one another. In Deuteronomy 6:6-9, the children of Israel were commanded concerning God’s word:

...they shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Do you gather that teaching God’s word was to be an important part of everyday life? Absolutely! It was to be taught repeatedly and consistently!

Paul also states the importance of this dedication to such instruction several times in his letters. In 1 Corinthians 4:17, as he implores the Corinthian brethren to heed his words, the apostle speaks of sending Timothy to them (in person) to “remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church.” In verse 16, Paul stated, “Therefore I urge you, imitate me.” He was their father in the gospel and their teacher among other instructors in Christ, but note that he

wants them to see Timothy’s example of Paul’s ways in Christ (in person) and hear him teach Christ (in person).

What have we potentially lost during these challenging times? Have we lost weeks, maybe months, of Bible study and in person classes? Seeing Christianity modeled by one another and especially those in leadership in the Lord’s church as teachers and mentors? It is

time to return to committed efforts to teach and make disciples with in-person Bible study and classes for all ages!

Undoubtedly, we have faced uncertain days and encountered real challenges over the last several years. Yet, the word of God holds the answers to all that we face. Therefore, the need to share God’s word with one another in person, and to learn more from the Scriptures, is real now, perhaps more than ever. Losing spiritual knowledge and stunted growth are equally real when we neglect the continued teaching of God’s word. Let us be those who will press on in teaching and studying the Bible together, face to face! 📖

Sources

Biblical quotations come from *The New King James Version (NKJV)*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982.

Dickler, Jessica. “Virtual School Resulted in ‘Significant’ Academic Learning Loss, Study Finds.” *CNBC.com*. March 30, 2021. <https://www.cnbc.com/2021/03/30/learning-loss-from-virtual-school-due-to-covid-is-significant-.html>.



Lance Taylor

Lance and his wife, Moriah, live in Toney, AL with Maicy (11) and their son Leo (3) and daughter Dolly (1). Lance works with Sandlin Road church of Christ (sandlinroadchurch.com) in Elkmont, AL. He is also the Director of Operations for CEI Bookstore and Truth Publications, Inc. (truthbooks.com). He can be reached at lance@truthpublications.com.

Rescuing the Perishing

by David Dann

Let us make it our aim to meet face to face with those who are perishing so that we can lead them to salvation in Christ.

Introduction

Jesus came to rescue the perishing. “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). Without Jesus, people would spiritually perish. Yet, through faith in Him, the perishing can be rescued and given everlasting life. Instead of instructing His disciples to withdraw from interaction with the outside world or attempt to influence the lost from afar, the Lord commanded His disciples to “go” in order to rescue the perishing among all nations (Matt. 28:19-20).

The message of the cross must be delivered in order for the perishing to be rescued. Paul writes, “For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God” (1 Cor. 1:18). To rescue the perishing, those who have the message of salvation will have to come face to face with those who need it. In our present age of mass media and advanced digital technology, we may engage in Bible study with others from a distance through Zoom, Skype, phone, e-mail, and text messages, as well as through the sharing of sermon audio recordings, instructional videos, and articles on various Bible subjects. While these tools are often useful in our efforts to reach the lost, the perishing are ultimately rescued when

God’s people are present to interact with them face to face.

Why Is There A Need?

Those who practice sin are cut off from fellowship with God and are bound for eternal destruction (cf. Isa. 59:1-2; Gal. 5:21). Since all capable individuals have personally sinned against God by violating His law, the world is populated primarily by people who are perishing (Rom. 3:23).



What can be done to deter these perishing people from spending eternity in the lake of fire (Rev. 21:8)? Paul writes, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek” (Rom. 1:16). The gospel message of Jesus Christ is the only solution powerful enough to rescue the perishing from the fires of hell. However, in order for the gospel to work on the hearts of the lost, someone must be willing to communicate the message

directly to those who need it (Rom. 10:13-17). God’s people are responsible for communicating face to face with those who are perishing in order to help deliver them from destruction.

What Are Some Bible Examples?

Jesus personally interacted with the lost in order to give them the words of eternal life. The Lord engaged in a face-to-face conversation with Nicodemus so that He could inform him of his need to be born again (John 3:1-5). He spoke face to face with a woman at a well so that He could offer her living water (John 4:1-26). In fact, He was criticized for meeting the tax collectors and sinners whom He sought to save (Luke 15:1-2). The example set by Jesus is one of personal, face-to-face interactions with sinners in order to rescue the perishing.

Christ’s followers also personally interacted with people in order to teach them the way of salvation. Philip “preached Jesus” during a face to face encounter with the Ethiopian, resulting in his obedience to the gospel (Acts 8:35-38). Peter personally “went in and found many who had come together” at the house of Cornelius and taught them the gospel (Acts 10:27). Paul met with Felix face to face and “reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come” (Acts 24:25). The example set by first-century disciples is one of personal, face-to-face interactions

with sinners in order to rescue the perishing.

Why Is It So Important?

Face to Face Interaction Is the Goal.

Targeted mailings, websites filled with teaching materials, e-mail and text exchanges, correspondence courses, Zoom sessions, and other interactions from a distance have their place as efforts are put forth to reach the lost. Yet, those methods are simply tools to use in working toward the goal of sitting down face to face with those who are lost in sin. Like Philip, we must invite the lost to “come and see” what the Lord offers to those who are perishing (John 1:46). Teaching the gospel remotely is no real substitute for engaging in a face-to-face meeting between the one who is perishing and the one who can show him, from the Scriptures, the way of salvation. Whatever methods we employ in reaching out to the lost, the goal must always be to engage them in a face-to-face presentation of the gospel.

Face to Face Interaction Is Meaningful.

John concluded his second letter, saying, “Having many things to write to you, I did not wish to do so with paper and ink; but I hope to come to you and speak face to face, that our joy may be full” (2 John 12). While “paper and ink” and other remote methods may be all that can be employed at times, speaking face to face is to be preferred. Direct interaction involves personal investments and sacrifices of time, energy, and focus that far outweigh any attempt to teach the gospel from a distance. Meeting in person to sit down face to face with a lost soul demonstrates a compassionate commitment to communicate the way of salvation to the one in need of it. Face-to-face efforts to rescue the perishing are meaningful in ways that other efforts cannot duplicate.

Face to Face Interaction Is Necessary.

When Paul and Silas met with the Philippian jailer, the Bible says, “Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes. And immediately he and all his family were baptized” (Acts 16:32-33). The gospel of Christ demands a response from those who hear it. Someone had to be present in order to baptize the jailer and his family when their hearts were convicted by the truth. There may be moments when Zoom, FaceTime, phone, or e-mail are all that are available to us as we seek to rescue a perishing soul. Eventually, someone will need to meet face to face with the one who is deciding to follow Jesus in order to hear his confession of faith in Christ and to baptize him for the remission of his sins (cf. Rom. 10:9-10; Acts 2:38). A loving hug, a pat on the back, and a shoulder on which to cry are only available in situations where we meet face to face. No matter how our interaction with the lost begins, it must conclude with a face-to-face meeting if those who are perishing are truly going to be rescued.

Conclusion

To rescue the perishing is to engage in the greatest and most urgent work in this world. Jesus said, “I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance” (Luke 15:7). Do you see how needed and important it is for us to reach out to those who are perishing so that we can show them the way of salvation? If so, then won't you follow the example of Jesus and His disciples and make it your goal to meet face to face with a lost soul who needs to hear the message of the cross? **T**



David Dann

After having worked with churches in IN, Canada, FL, TX, and KY, David moved to the Athens, GA area in August 2021 to work with the recently formed University church of Christ. He and his wife, Cynthia, have been blessed with six children. The church website is uccathens.com. He may be reached at ddann1@hotmail.com.

NEW!

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edited by Mark Mayberry and
Kyle Pope

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Restoring the Fallen

by Mike Richardson

In a time in which texting has become the standard form of communication, let us recognize the value personal interaction—especially when attempting to restore those who have fallen into sin.

In a time in which *texting* has become the standard form of communication, let us recognize the value *personal* interaction—especially when attempting to restore those who have fallen into sin. Nathan the prophet confronted King David directly. Jesus restored Peter to his apostleship in the same manner.

Introduction

There has been a lot of fallout because of the COVID virus. With so many varying views on the subject, churches have had to deal with the issue carefully and wisely to prevent division. With all that occurred during the corona period, I have noticed that a majority of congregations have experienced a “falling away” of some members who no longer assemble with the saints, as directed in Hebrews 10:25. It is a reminder that many times, the flock is not as strong as we might think. Some of the sheep might need some “special attention.”

What is the responsibility of the elders and members of a local congregation to those who have not returned since the virus began? We need to remember the parables Jesus spoke in Luke 15, in particular, the parable of the “lost sheep” in Luke 15:4-7 and Matthew 18:10-14. We need to leave the ninety and nine and seek the one that is lost. When we think about restoring the fallen, several things come to mind.

The Elders Have an Important Task.

So often we forget that elders are to be shepherds of the flock. Think of the words penned by Peter:

The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away (1 Pet. 5:1-4).

The Bible does not describe elders as Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of the local work, but as shepherds tending the flock. In ancient Middle-Eastern culture, shepherds took their responsibility seriously. Jesus described the difference between a shepherd and a hireling:

The “hireling, he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep” (John 10:12-13).

A shepherd’s job is to watch and care for the sheep. Likewise, this is the job of *elders*. In many congregations, the elders are given oversight on everything but the souls of the brethren—the very thing they need to be overseeing! Deacons have spiritual qualifications to do a spiritual

work, as do elders. Let the deacons do their work and let the elders oversee the spiritual needs of the flock. Remember the admonition of the Hebrew writer, who said, “Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your *souls*, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you” (Heb. 13:17). Elders need to be the first to go and find the fallen member.

Congregations without elders also need to be aware of those who have quit attending. We are to be concerned with those who have fallen away and need to be restored to fellowship with Christ and the local church. So often it is easy to say, “We still have ninety-nine” instead of looking for the one that has strayed.

The Way to Approach Ones Who Have Fallen Away

In Galatians 6:1, The apostle Paul clearly instructs how we should approach someone who has fallen into sin: “Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.” There are several things we need to observe from this text.

One Who Is Spiritual and Mature in the Faith Should Go

It is good for all to encourage individuals who are struggling in the faith, but in dealing directly with one who has fallen, the spiritually mature Christian needs to respond. Such

individuals will use Scripture and exercise careful discernment during difficult conversations.

Restore With a Spirit of Gentleness

A rebuke without love will only drive a person further away. We must approach others with the same gentleness with which we would want to be approached. The greatest appeal to the fallen is love. Paul identifies the characteristics of love in 1 Corinthians 13. I go to my fallen brother in Christ because I love him and God loves him. I am considering his soul as I would want him to consider mine if I had given in to temptation and fallen away. We go, not seeking to justify their sin, but to bring them back to the flock of safety under the care of the Chief Shepherd, Christ. Here is where we are to be given an important reminder: *We are told to go and restore them.* I do not think letters warning of withdrawing fellowship will serve any good purpose until one who is spiritually mature has first gone and sought to restore the fallen. So often, congregations wait in silence before firing off a letter stating they are withdrawing from a person who has not been attending. The question is, "Have we sought to restore them?" Picture a wounded soldier down on the battlefield. His "brothers" would not leave him there. They would seek to get him to safety. When it comes to the fallen, there is a brother or sister down. Don't leave them to the enemy to devour (1 Pet. 5:8) but go and seek to bring them to safety. Sending a letter is easier, but much less effective than going in love to persuade your brother or sister to return.

Restore Considering Their Soul

When we go to restore the fallen, we must remember we are seeking to bring them back to the fold of safety. If they are in error, we lovingly and tenderly point this out so that it can be corrected before God. I plead with brethren, "May we go with the right spirit!" It's not to win an argument, but to bring one back to God. What has been gained if we win

an argument, but lose a soul because we did not approach the situation correctly? We must not compromise or agree with sin, but let us do as Paul said, "*considering yourself lest you also be tempted.*" How would I want someone to approach me if I was the one that needed to be restored? The first reaction of most people when they are confronted about their sin is to become defensive. That is why I should come gently, humbly, realizing the need. A shepherd that finds the lost sheep doesn't recklessly and roughly grab the sheep, but tenderly restores it to the flock.

Rejoicing When One Returns

When the fallen are restored, it is important that we rejoice. We encourage, we edify, we express our joy and love that they have returned to the Lord. After the shepherd has found the sheep, Jesus states, "He lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!' I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance" (Luke 15:5-8). Look at all the rejoicing! If heaven rejoices over one sinner who is restored, shouldn't we also?

Conclusion

Instead of relying upon indirect and impersonal forms of communication, may we recognize the value face-to-face interaction—especially when attempting to restore those who have fallen into sin. Nathan the prophet confronted King David directly. Jesus restored Peter to his apostleship in the same manner. Let us do the same. **T**



Mike Richardson

Mike preaches for the Kemper Heights congregation in Madison, TN. The church website is kemperheights.com. He can be reached at mdronrockytop@bellsouth.net.



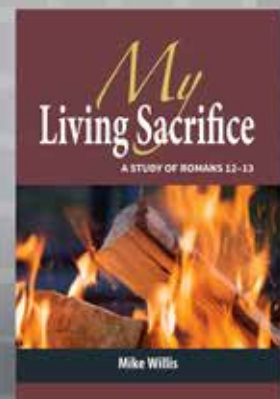
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Developing Disciples

by Daniel H. King, Sr.

In antiquity, the teachers shared a close relationship with their students. Jesus spent three years in constant daily association with the twelve. The daily growth of the early church was connected with their daily association (Acts 2:46-47).

Introduction

Over the past two years of restrictions associated with the viral pandemic, many Christians, like much of the general population, have pulled back from their regular manner of doing things in fear of contracting the disease, or else simply because others feared getting the virus from us. Now that this period is past, one activity that needs to return to “normal” is the business of bringing disciples of Jesus to a more mature level of spiritual growth. This is an aspect of the Christian system that must not be neglected, for the Lord instructed us to do this until He returns: “Go therefore, and *make disciples* of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, *teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you*. And behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matt. 28:19-20, emphasis mine). The apostles of Christ were persistently engaged in this activity from that day forward (cf. Acts 14:21; etc.).

This is part of our Christian duty that must not be neglected, but has been for too long (for whatever reasons). Now that we are back to a “face-to-face” situation in society generally, making stronger disciples must be something that is carried on with a renewed vigor and enthusiasm for God’s people in the same way that many are returning to their jobs and livelihoods now that this dark period of our history is over.

According to the divine pattern set forth in the Lord’s instructions in this important text, disciples are first to be *made* (which is done by teaching the first

principles that lead to conversion), and then they are to be *taught* all the Savior’s other commands. Making and teaching disciples is an ongoing process in the life of the church, and neither aspect should be neglected. Prior to conversion, one only needs to understand a limited range of truths that are necessary for them to decide whether they want to follow Jesus. Afterward, there is much more that needs to be taught and learned. This latter aspect is a lifelong process.

The Greek word “disciple” (*mathētēs*) is derived from the verbal root *manthanō*, and its meaning is “to learn” or “to understand.” One becomes a disciple of Christ when he learns that Jesus is Lord and comes to understand the necessity of faith, repentance, confession and baptism, and does what is required of him in this regard. These are classified in the Bible as “the rudiments of the first principles of the oracles of God” (Heb. 5:12), and are also referred to as spiritual “milk” as opposed to spiritual “meat.”

A person becomes a mature disciple by means of learning the more advanced doctrines of the faith, and then eventually grows to spiritual adulthood (see Heb. 6:1-2). This is a necessary process. There is no possibility of short-circuiting it without dire consequences. Even the Son of God became a disciple while on earth, learning (*emathen*, from *manthanō*) the ways of obedience “by means of the things he suffered” (Heb. 5:8). The author of Hebrews warns that some of their number had failed fully to matriculate through this process, and so had “fallen away” rather than passing successfully

beyond the more advanced course of study (6:6). All such learning occurs by two means: study and application. This is the way we learn everything: first we come to know it, and then we put it into practice and make proper application. So, failing to complete this process has the potential to have undesirable consequences, as the author of Hebrews goes on to say.

Unfortunately, there are a great many disciples of the Lord who were caught at a bad time in that learning curve of which we speak here when they were first led to Christ. Soon afterward, a pall fell upon human society comparable to a biblical plague on the earth. Unless they were followed up with by telephone, mail, or email, or by means of Zoom calls, or other methods, some of them had their growth arrested at a minimal level of spiritual development. If you can think of someone who fits that scenario in your local congregation, or even in your circle of friends, then someone needs to follow up with them, and instruct them at a higher level. We can only hope and pray that their development was not permanently affected by this world-wide panic that has surrounded us during the last several years.

The New Testament is replete with exhortations for us to persist in this wholesome activity, whether it is performed in the building where the church assembles, or in the homes of the members, or even at alternative sites. One of the most important passages that we encounter is 2 Timothy 2:2, which says, “. . .and the things that you have

heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.” In this text, Paul told Timothy to train others to train still others—*ad infinitum*. As long as the process continued and was not stopped by some means or other (as in the case of a pandemic!), it would never end until the Lord returns. This was precisely the Lord’s intention. We must therefore redouble our efforts to make up for lost time!

Application

The Bible contains many other such encouragements to be faithful in this continuous, never-ending effort. For example:

Parents Are to Train Their Own Children in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord (Eph. 6:4).

As long as there are young children still needing instruction, this work cannot cease. Hopefully, while all this chaos has surrounded us, this important teaching has gone forward apace. Many children have been away from the teaching environment of the schoolhouse, but that has only meant that there was more time for them to be taught in the Sacred Scriptures by their parents and grandparents. We hope this valuable time has not been wasted.

Older Women Are Told to Train the Younger Women in the Faith and a Wholesome Christian Lifestyle (Titus 2:4).

So long as there are older and experienced women who are capable of doing this and younger women needing this teaching, this work also must persist. Previously, many feared to be in gatherings where the virus might spread. However, that time is over. Originally counted as a *pandemic*, the COVID virus is now described as *endemic*, meaning that it is like the cold or flu. It will be with us from now on, but in a different and less dangerous variant for the majority of people. So, this kind of work must

resume as before. Colds and influenza never stopped it, so new variants of this virus must not be allowed to do so.

Christians Are to Exhort One Another Daily to Love and Good Works (Heb. 3:13).

Therefore, for as long as disciples assemble together, and there are weaker members needing encouragement and instruction in faithful service, all Christians are supposed to exhort each other every day to steer clear of sin and engage in fruit-bearing activities for Christ—starting with regular assembly, but attended with exhorting to love and good works (Heb. 3:13; 10:24-25). This is a case where the telephone can be a marvelous tool to accomplish much good work. Yet, we should not be afraid to visit people in person as well.

good thing. What one person is unable to do, another can accomplish especially well. We all need to put our unique talents back to work for the Lord.

Conclusion

There is no reason any longer for excuse-making. Let’s all get back to work making and training disciples. **T**



Each Must Use the Talents Which the Lord Has Given to Us.

As Peter said: “Each of you has been blessed with one of God’s many wonderful gifts to be used in the service of others. So use your gift well” (1 Pet. 4:10, CEV). We shall all have to give an account of ourselves based on our personal abilities and unique specialties. All of them are different, but that is a



Daniel H. King, Sr.

Dan has preached for the Locust St. church of Christ in Mt. Pleasant, TN, for seven years. The church website is lscoc.com. He can be reached at danielhking@hotmail.com.

Hospitality

by Tommy Peeler

Christians are commanded to practice hospitality (Rom. 12:13), which suggests a welcoming attitude toward brethren and also strangers.

Introduction

Hebrews 13:1-2 says, “Let love of the brethren continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it.”

One interesting point in this verse is the close connection between love and hospitality, a connection made in other passages as well. 1 Peter 4:8-9 states, “Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins. Be hospitable to one another without complaint.” Romans 12:9 reminds us, “Let love be without hypocrisy” and Romans 12:10 calls us to “be devoted to one another in brotherly love.” A few verses later, we are told to be “practicing hospitality” (Rom. 12:13). 3 John 5-8 praises Gaius for his reception of those who spoke God’s truth and the preachers he received testified to his love before the assembly (3 John 6). Our love is to display itself in hospitality. An elder is to practice hospitality (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:8). A widow who would be cared for by the local church is to be one who “has shown hospitality to strangers” (1 Tim. 5:10). Early Christians often engaged in hospitality at great personal risk to themselves (Acts 17:6-7; Rom. 16:3-5). “Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth” (1 John 3:18).

Another thought arising from Hebrews 13:1-2 worthy of attention is that some have entertained angels without knowing it. In reading this, we remember especially Abraham (Gen. 18:1-8) and Lot (Gen. 19:1-11),

possibly even Gideon (Judg. 6:11-24) and Manoah (Judg. 13:8-23). These were all literal cases where real men and women interacted with angels. One message for us is that hospitality often brings a greater blessing to the giver than to the recipient. How many times have hosts given of themselves for their guests only to receive a greater blessing? 1 Kings 17:8-24 and 2 Kings 4:8-37 serve as good Biblical illustrations of this principle. Also, Hebrews 13:2 shows us that our visitors may be of greater importance than we could ever imagine. Jesus will say to those on His right hand, “I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me something to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in” (Matt. 25:35). The righteous will question when this ever happened (Matt. 25:37-39), and Jesus will say, “To the extent

that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me” (Matt. 25:40). Do we see Jesus in the face of our fellow Christians? Do we realize the kindness shown to them is the kindness shown to Him? When we help the least of His people, we are serving Him. These small acts of service in His name may have eternal significance (Matt. 10:42).

Abraham’s Example

Genesis 18 provides a classic illustration of real hospitality by Abraham. The first verse reveals the identity of the visitor to the readers: “Now the LORD appeared to him. . .” (Gen. 18:1), but Abraham was unaware of who He was. Yet, Abraham shows great kindness to his visitors. He ran to



meet them (despite being ninety-nine years old) and bowed himself before them (Gen. 18:2). He addresses his guest as “lord” (Gen. 18:3) and speaks of himself as “your servant” (Gen. 18:3, 5). While the Hebrew word translated *lord* is used in speaking of God (Ps. 8:1, 9), it is also used as a term of respect toward another person (Gen. 18:12; 23:6, 11, 15). Abraham does not even eat with his guests, but while the visitors eat, he stands by them ready to serve (Gen. 18:8). Abraham shows great respect for his guests.

As he invites them to be his guests, he emphasizes how they will not be any inconvenience to him. He speaks of bringing “a little water” to wash their feet (Gen. 18:4) and “a piece of bread” to satisfy their hunger (Gen. 18:5). He seeks to minimize his sacrifice and make his visitors feel comfortable in accepting his kindness. The actual description of Abraham’s service and care is striking. While Abraham spoke of “a piece of bread,” he asks Sarah to prepare “three measures of fine flour” (Gen. 18:6). This word for *flour* elsewhere in the Pentateuch “is only used in cereal offerings and for making the bread of the presence (Lev. 24:5)” (Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, 47). The word for *measure* is used in 1 Samuel 25:18 and 1 Kings 18:32. These references seem to indicate that these three measures of the best flour would produce a large amount of bread, much more than these visitors could eat. Abraham said nothing to the guests of preparing meat, but “Abraham also ran to the herd and took a tender calf and gave it to the servant, and he hurried to prepare it” (Gen. 18:7). He treated these visitors as if they were the prodigal son and killed the fattened calf for them (Luke 15:22-24). He also prepared curds and milk for his guests (Gen. 18:8). Everything about Abraham’s hospitality is lavish. He gave them the best of what he had. Many of us have been blessed to receive this kind of treatment from some hosts who had comparatively little.

Are you a “son of Abraham”? Interestingly, the rich man of Luke 16:19-31 views himself that way. He called Abraham “father” (Luke 16:24, 27, 30), and Abraham even refers to him as his child (Luke 16:25). However, there is more to being a son of Abraham than physical descent. The fact that the rich man ignored Lazarus, who was continually at his gate (Luke 16:19-21), demonstrates that he failed to learn from the example of Abraham’s hospitality in Genesis 18. If we are Abraham’s spiritual children, we need to follow his example (John 8:40).

The LORD is the Greatest Host

There is no more gracious host than the LORD Himself. Psalm 23 emphasizes the LORD as the good shepherd and as a gracious host. The Host does many of the things for the guest that the Shepherd does for the sheep. He provides food, drink, and shelter. “You prepare a table before Me in the presence of my enemies; You have anointed my head with oil; My cup overflows” (Ps. 23:5). In the illustration in Genesis 18, Abraham offered his visitors water to wash their feet. It was a common act of hospitality to provide guests with water to wash their feet after travelling the dusty roads in sandals (Gen. 19:2; 24:32; 43:24; Judg. 19:21). Simon the Pharisee is rebuked for failing to perform this kindness for Jesus (Luke 7:44). An examination of these passages shows that each time water was provided, the guest washed his own feet. Even the greatest host rarely, if ever, washed his guest’s feet. However, Jesus, as the host, washed His disciple’s feet (John 13:1-11). “There is no instance in either Jewish or Greco-Roman sources of a superior washing the feet of an inferior” (D. A. Carson, *John*, 462). We sometimes say, “What an amazing God we serve.” True, but even more overwhelming is that this amazing God serves us (Luke 12:37). There is no host more gracious than the LORD Himself.

Conclusion

Final salvation is also pictured as a great banquet that the LORD has offered to all peoples (Isa. 25:6-9; Matt. 8:11; Luke 13:28-29; 14:15-24; Rev. 19:7-9). I am not seeking to argue whether this is literal or symbolic. However, those of us who are blessed to be guests at His table must seek to use our tables to serve in His kingdom. 📖



Tommy Peeler

Tommy preaches for the Avon Heights church of Christ in Avon, IN. The church website is avonheightschurch.com. He can be reached at lexicalionis@reagan.com.

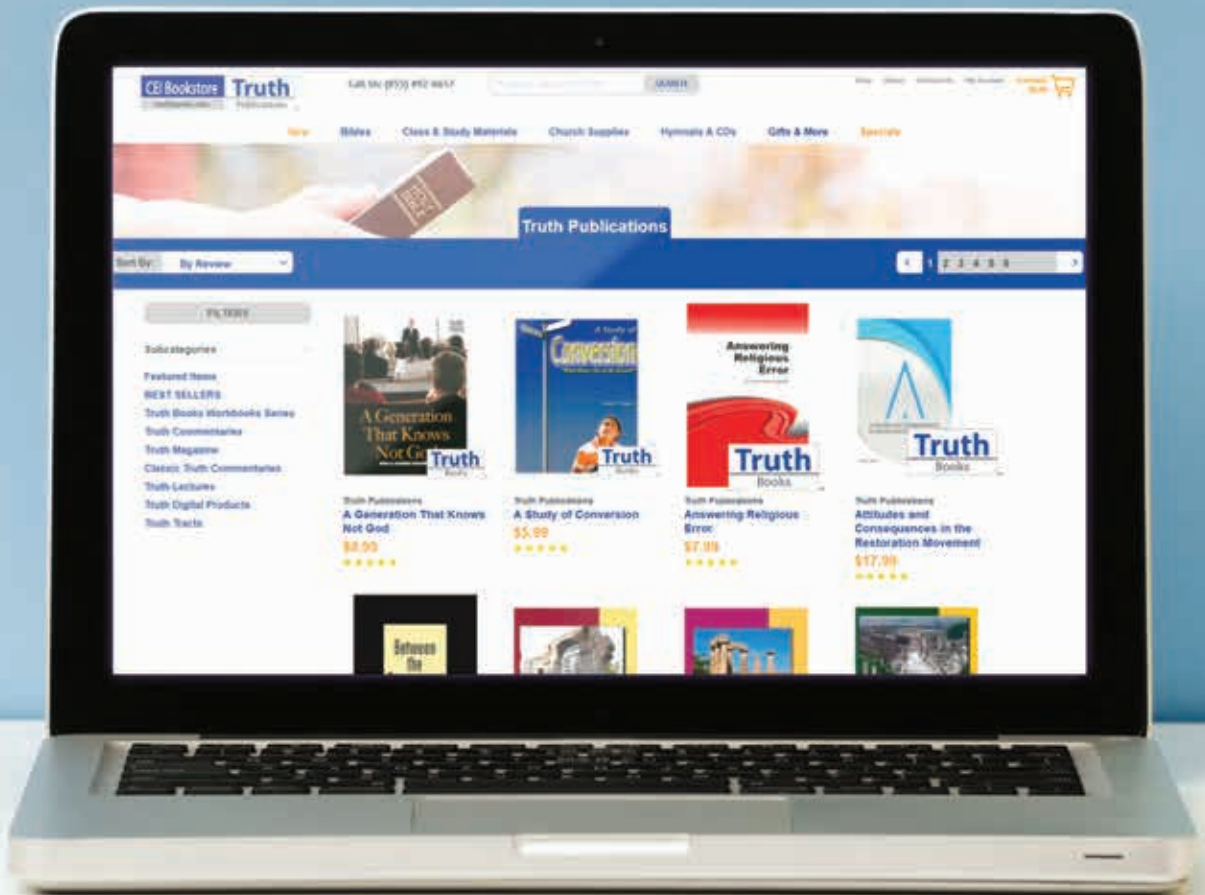
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Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Worship 10:50 am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:30 pm
Evangelist: Bobby Witherington | 813-684-1297 | seffnercoc.org

GEORGIA

PINE MTN. VALLEY

Church of Christ

Route 116 (near Callaway Gardens)
Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Worship 11:00 pm & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:30 pm
Evangelist: Tommy W. Thomas | 706-628-5117 or 628-5229 | pmvchurch.com

ChurchDirectory

IDAHO

BLACKFOOT

Church of Christ

370 N. Shilling | P.O. Box 158-83221
Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Worship
11:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:30 pm
208-785-6168 or 681-1552

IOWA

DES MOINES

Church of Christ

1310 N.E. 54th Ave.
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship 10:40
am | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
515-262-6799

ILLINOIS

DOWNERS GROVE

Church of Christ

1236 63rd St. (Dir: 1.5 miles E of I355)
Sun. Bible Study 9:00 am | Worship 9:55
am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:30 pm
Evangelist: Steve Wolfgang | 630-968-
0760 | dgcc.org

GLEN ELLYN

Glen Ellyn Church of Christ

796 Prairie Ave.
Glen Ellyn, IL 60137
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Sun. Worship
10:30 am & 5:00 pm
Evangelist: Keith E. Brown | 630-858-
2290 & 630-377-3990

MATTOON

Southside Church of Christ

1100 S. 17th St.
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship 10:30
am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
217-234-3702

SOUTH HOLLAND

Southeast Church of Christ

16224 S Vincennes Ave.
Sun. Bible Study 9:00 am | Worship 10:00
am & 4 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Donald Hawkins | 708-339-
1008 | southeastchurchofchrist.com

WASHINGTON

Tazewell County Church of Christ

Meeting @ Sleep Inn Suites and Motel |
1101 North Cummings Lane, Washington,
IL 61571
Sun. Worship: 11:30 am | Bible Study:
12:30 pm | Wed. Bible Study 6:30 pm @
home of Tim Sundlie, call for address
Evangelist: Tim Sundlie | 608-796-9028
| sunbeads1@gmail.com | tazewellcococ.
org

INDIANA

CLARKSVILLE

Clarksville Church of Christ

407 W. Lewis & Clark Parkway, 47129
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship 10:30
am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:30 pm
Evangelist: Brian Anderson | 812-944-
2305 or 812-948-9917 | clarksvillechur-
chofchrist.org

JAMESTOWN

Church of Christ

Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship 10:25
am & 4 pm | Wed. 7:00 pm
765-676-6404 | jamestowncoc.com

NOBLESVILLE

Stony Creek Church of Christ

15530 Herriman Blvd, 46060
Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Worship
11:00 am | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: John Smith | preacher-
john54@att.net | 317-501-8035 or
317-501-0249 or 317-701-1204

OOLITIC

Church of Christ

400 Lafayette Ave. | P.O. Box 34
Sun. Bible Study 9:45 am | Worship 10:30
am & 6:00 pm | Wed. 7:00 pm
812-279-4332

PEKIN

Church of Christ

(First St. & Karnes Ct.)
Sun. Bible Study 9:45 am | Worship 10:30
am & 5:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Jeremy Goen | 812-967-3437
or 967-3520 | pekinchurchofchrist.com

KANSAS

TOPEKA

17th Street Church of Christ

5600 SW 17th St, Topeka, KS 66604
Sun. Bible Study 9:15 am | Sun. Worship
10:30 am | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
785-235-8687 or 785-273-7977 |
17thstreetchurchofchrist.org

KENTUCKY

BEAVER DAM

Church of Christ

1235 Williams St.
Sun. Worship 10:00 am | Bible Study After
am Worship & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study
7:00 pm
Evangelist: Jerid Gunter | 270-274-4451

BENTON

Fairdealing Church of Christ

8081 US Hwy 68-East, Benton, KY 42025
Sun. Bible Study 9:00 am | Worship 10:00
am | Wed. Bible Study 6:00 pm
270-354-9451 | fairdealingmarc@gmail.
com | churchofchristatfairdealing.com |
Conveniently located near Kenlake State
Resort Park on the western shore of
Kentucky Lake.

BRANDENBURG

Brandenburg Church of Christ

612 Broadway
Sun. Bible Study 9:45 am | Worship 10:30
am & 5:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 6:30 pm
Evangelist: Charles J. White | 270-422-
3878

CAMPBELLSVILLE

Sunny Hill Dr. Church of Christ

107 Sunny Hill Dr.
Worship 9:30 am & 11:30 am | Bible
Study 10:30 am | Wed. Bible Study 7:00
pm
Evangelist: Steve Lee | 270-789-1651 |
sunnyhillcoc.com

CANEYVILLE

Caneyville Church of Christ

103 N. Main St. | P.O. Box 233
Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Worship
10:45 am & 5:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study
7:00 pm
Evangelist: Jarrod Jacobs | 270-589-4167
or 270-274-3065

DANVILLE

Church of Christ

385 E. Lexington Ave.
Sun. Worship 10:00 am | Bible Study
11:15 am & 5:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study
7:00 pm
Evangelist: B.J. Sipe | 859-236-4204

FLORENCE

Northern Kentucky Church of Christ

18 Scott Drive, Florence, KY 41042
Sun. Worship 9:30 am & 5:30 pm | Sun.
Bible Study 10:30 am | Wed. Bible Study
7:00 pm
859-371-2095 | nkcofc.com

FRANKLIN

31-W North Church of Christ

1733 Bowling Green Rd.
Sun. Bible Study 9:00 am | Worship 10:00
am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Steve Monts | 270-776-9393 |
31wchurchofchrist.com

LEITCHFIELD

Mill St. Church of Christ

733 Mill St. Hwy 62 E.
Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Worship
10:55 am & 5:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study
7:00 pm
Evangelist: Dan McMahan | 270-971-
1492 | millstreetchurchofchrist.org

LOUISVILLE

Valley Station Church of Christ

1803 Dixie Garden Dr.
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship 10:30
am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Michael Hardin | michaelhar-
din1123@att.net | 502-937-2822

SHEPHERDSVILLE

Hebron Lane Church of Christ

3221 East Hebron Lane
Sun. Bible Study 9:00 am | Worship 10:00
am & 5 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:30 pm
Evangelist: Ron Halbrook & Connie W.
Adams | 502-957-5115 or 502-955-1748 |
hebronlanechurchofchrist.com

LOUISIANA

GONZALES

Southside Church of Christ

405 Orice Roth Rd. | 70737 (Baton Rouge
area)
Sun. Bible Class 9:30 am | Worship 10:30
am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: R.J. Evans | rjevans@eatel.net
| 225-622-4587

MANY

Lakeside Church of Christ

12095 Texas Hwy. (Hwy. 6 W.)
12 miles west of Many
Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Worship
11:00 pm & 5:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study
7:00 pm
318-256-9396

MAINE

PORTLAND

Church of Christ

856 Brighton Ave. (Breakwater School) |
Leave Maine Turnpike at Exit 48
Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Worship
11:00 pm w/ second service immediately
following am worship | Mid-week Bible
Study (please call for times & places)
207-839-3075 or 839-8409

MICHIGAN

KENTWOOD

W. Michigan Church of Christ

3084 Creek Drive SE, #1-C, Kentwood, MI 49512 | P.O. Box 8446, Kentwood, Mich. 49508 (Grand Rapids area)
Sun. Worship 11:00 am | Sun. Bible Study 12:30 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Joseph Gladwell | cedar-springs98@gmail.com

ROSCOMMON

N. Michigan Church of Christ

414 South Main Street
Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Worship 11:00 am | Wed. Bible Study 6:00 pm
Evangelist: Ryan Thomas | 810-837-1302 or 989-389-3226 | northernmichigan-churchofchrist.com

MISSISSIPPI

CLINTON

McRaven Rd. Church of Christ

301 McRaven Rd. (I20, exit 36)
Sun. Bible Study 9:00 am | Worship 10:00 am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Leonard White | 601-925-9757 or 924-2645

MERIDIAN

7th St. Church of Christ

2914 7th St.
Sun. Bible Study 9:00 am | Worship 10:00 am

Grandview Church of Christ

2820 Grandview Ave.
Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Sun. Worship 11:00 pm | Wed. 6:30 pm
Ron Cooper: 601-934-3675 | roncooper@bellsouth.net | Ricky Ethridge: 601-737-5778 | rickymarsha@bellsouth.net

SOUTH HAVEN

Church of Christ

2110 E State Line Rd. (Exit I-55) (Memphis area)
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship 10:30 am | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: James A. Brown | Bldg: 662-342-1132

MARYLAND

SEVERN

Southwest Church of Christ

805 Meadow Rd, Severn, MD 21144
Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Sun. Worship 11:00 pm & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:30 pm
Evangelist: Brandon Trout | 410-969-1420 or 410-551-6549 | swcfcchrist.com

MISSOURI

BLODGETT

Blodgett Church of Christ

422 N Linton St., Blodgett, MO 63824
Sun. Worship 10:00 am | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Russell Rice | 573-475-0417

BLUE SPRINGS

Southside Church of Christ

4000 SW Christiansen
Sun. Worship 9:00 pm | Bible Study 10:00 am | Worship 11:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Brett Hogland | 816-228-9262

BRANSON

Eagle Rock Rd. Church of Christ

432 Eagle Rock Rd.
Sun. Worship 9:30 am | Bible Study 10:30 am | Sun. Evening Worship 2 pm | Wed. Bible Study 6:00 pm
Evangelist: Philip North | 417-239-1036 | primrosenor@suddenink.net | eaglerock-roadchurchofchrist.org

CAPE GIRARDEAU

Cape County Church of Christ

2912 Bloomfield Rd
Sun. Bible Study 9:15 am | Worship 10:00 am | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Seth McDonald & Jerry Lee Westbrook | 573-837-1001 | capecountycoc@gmail.com | capecountycoc.com

FAIR GROVE

Church of Christ

217 N. Orchard Blvd.
Sun. Bible Study 9:00 am & 10:00 am | Worship 11:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Walter Myers | 417-830-8972 or 417-736-2663

KENNETT

Church of Christ

703 Harrison St.
Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Worship 11:00 pm & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Nolan Glover | 573-888-6778 or 870-650-1648 | westsidechurchofchrist.us

SAINT JAMES

Church of Christ

685 Sidney St.
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship 10:15 am & 5:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Lynn Huggins | 573-265-8628

SAINT JOSEPH

County Line Church of Christ

2727 County Line Rd.
Sun. Bible Study 9:00 am | Worship 9:50 am | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
816-279-4737 | countylinechurchofchrist.com

NEBRASKA

BEATRICE

Church of Christ at 7th & Bell

Bell St & S 7th St. Beatrice, NE 68310
Sun. Bible Study 9:00 am | Worship 10:00 am & 6:30 pm
402-233-4102 or 402-228-3827 | churchofchrist7bell.org

NORTH CAROLINA

CHARLOTTE

Charlotte Church of Christ

5327 S. Tryon Street
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Sun. Worship 10:30 am | Wed. Bible Study 7:30 pm
704-525-5655 | charlottechurchofchrist.org

LINCOLN

Lincoln Church of Christ

3781 East Highway 27, Iron Station, NC 28080
Sun. Bible Study: 10:00 am | Sun. Worship 11:00 am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Stan Adams | 704-748-9777 (Bldg) & 704-748-3747 (Jerry) | lincolnnc-church@gmail.com | lincolnccoc.com

OHIO

BEAVERCREEK

Knollwood Church of Christ

1031 Welford Dr, Beavercreek, OH 45434 (located a few miles E of Dayton)
Sun. Short Worship: 9:30 am | Bible Study 10:05 am | Sun. Worship 11:00 am | Wed. Bible Study Adults: 1:00 pm & All ages: 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Heath Rogers | 937-426-1422 | knollwoodchurch.org

DAYTON

West Carrollton Church of Christ

28 W. Main St., 45449
Sun. Worship 9:00 pm | Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship 10:25 am | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelists: Michael Grushon 937-866-5162 or Alan Beck 937-469-3311 | wc-coc.org

FRANKLIN

Franklin Church of Christ

6417 Franklin-Lebanon Rd. 45005
Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Worship 10:45 am | Tues. Bible Study 6:30 pm
Evangelist: Josh Lee | 937-789-8055 or 937-746-1249 | franklin-church.org

MANSFIELD

Southside Church of Christ

687 Mansfield-Lucas Rd.
Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Worship 10:45 am | Wed. Bible Study 4:30 pm
James Bond: 419-564-3878 | Mr. Kim Walton: 419-651-3488 | Bldg: 419-522-8982 | northsidecofc.us

NEW LEBANON

New Lebanon Church of Christ

1973 W Main St.
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship 10:30 am, & 5:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Bruce Hastings | 937-687-7150 or 937-478-0367

MARIETTA-RENO

Marietta-Reno Church of Christ

80 Sandhill Rd. Reno, OH 45773
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship 10:30 am & 6:30 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Mark Childers | 304-615-1091 | 740-374-9827 | mariettarenochurchofchrist.org

NORTHWOOD

Frey Rd. Church of Christ

4110 Frey Rd. (Toledo Area)
Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Worship 11:00 pm & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Donald Jarabek | 419-893-3566 & 567-694-5062

OKLAHOMA

MCALESTER

North A St. Church of Christ

2120 No. A St.
Sun. Bible Study 9:45 am | Worship 10:45 am & 5:30 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Rob Lungstrum | 918-931-1362 or 918-423-3445

OREGON

SWEET HOME

Church of Christ

3702 E. Long St.
Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Worship 11:00 pm & 7:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:30 pm
Bldg: 541-367-1599

ChurchDirectory

PENNSYLVANIA

PHILADELPHIA

Mt. Airy Church of Christ

7222 Germantown Ave, Philadelphia, PA 19119

Sun. Bible Study 10:15 am | Sun. Worship: 11:15 am | Tues. Bible Study: 7:00 pm
Evangelist: James H. Baker, Jr. | 215-248-2026 | mtairychurchofchrist.org

SOUTH CAROLINA

SUMTER

Woodland Church of Christ

3370 Broad St. Extension

Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship 10:30 am & 5:30 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: A.A. Granke, Jr. | 803-499-6023

WEST COLUMBIA

Airport Church of Christ

4013 Edmund Hwy. (Hwy. 302)

Note: See our web site for current assembly schedule.
Evangelist: Terry W. Benton | 803-834-6978 | airport-church-of-christ.com

TENNESSEE

COLUMBIA

Mooresville Pike Church of Christ

417 Mooresville Pike | (Located .8 mi. N. of Hwy. 50/Jas. Campbell)

Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship 10:30 am & 3:30 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
931-388-5828 or 931-381-7898 | mooresvillepikecoc.com

COSBY

Cosby Church of Christ

4894 Hooper Hwy. | 37722 | (Located 15 mi. E. of Gatlinburg on Hwy. 321)

Sun. Bible Study 10am | Worship 11:00 pm & 5:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 6:00 pm
Evangelist: Olie Williamson | 423-487-5540 or 423-748-0844

KINGSTON SPRINGS

Kingston Springs Church of Christ

350 North Main St.

Sun. Bible Study 9:00 am | Worship 10:00 am & 5:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Steve Walker | kscoc.com

MOUNT PLEASANT

Locust St. Church of Christ

108 Locust St.

Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship 10:30 am & 5:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Daniel H. King, Sr. | 931-379-3704 or 931-964-3924 | lscoc.com

MURFREESBORO

Cason Ln. Church of Christ

1110 Cason Lane

Sun. Bible Study 9:00 am | Worship 10:00 am & 5:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Bldg: 615-896-0090 | casonlanechurch.org

Northfield Blvd. Church of Christ

2091 Pitts Ln, Murfreesboro, TN 37130
(located at the corner of Northfield Blvd and Pitts Lane)

Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Sun. Worship 10:30 am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm

Evangelist: David Bunting | 615-893-1200 | GodsRedeemed.org

NASHVILLE

Hillview Church of Christ

7471 Charlotte Pike

Sun. Bible Study 9:00 am | Worship 10:00 am & 5:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Lee Wildman | 615-952-5458 or 615-356-7318

Perry Heights Church of Christ

423 Donelson Pike

Sun. Bible Study 9:00 am | Worship 9:55 am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Johnny Felker | 615-883-3118 | perryheights.faithweb.com

TEXAS

ALLEN

Twin Creeks Church of Christ

1414 W. Exchange Pkwy

Sun. Bible Study 9:00 am | Worship 10:00 am & 5:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Jerry King 214-504-0443 or 972-727-5355 | twincreekscoc.com

ALVARADO

I-35 Church of Christ

E. Service Rd. off I-35, N. of Alvarado

Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Worship 11:00 pm & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
817-295-7277 or 790-7253

ALVIN

Adoue St. Church of Christ

605 E. Adoue St., Alvin, TX 77511

Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship 10:30 am & 5:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:30 pm
Evangelist: Mark Mayberry | mark@ascoc.org | ascoc.org

BAYTOWN

Church of Christ at Pruett & Lobit

701 North Pruett St.

Sun. Bible Study 9:45 am | Worship 10:40 am & 6:30 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Bldg: 281-422-5926 | Weldon: 713-818-1321 | biblework.com

BEAUMONT

Dowlen Rd. Church of Christ

3060 Dowlen Rd.

Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship 10:30 am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Max Dawson | 409-866-1996 | dowlenroad.com

DICKINSON

Dickinson Church of Christ

2919 Main St/FM 517 E., Dickinson, TX 77539

Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Sunday Worship 11:00 am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
713-298-6673

EDNA

Church of Christ

301 Robison St.

Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship 10:30 am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Phillip Stuckey | 361-782-5506 or 361-782-2844 | ednachurchof-christ.org

EL PASO

Eastridge Church of Christ

3277 Pendleton Rd.

Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship 10:30 am & 5:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
915-855-1524

GALVESTON (BACLIFF)

Bacliff Church of Christ

4303 18th St, Bacliff, TX 77518

Sun. Bible Study 9:00 am | Sun. Worship 10:00 am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Richard Lay | bacliffchurchof-christ.org

FORT WORTH

West Side Church of Christ

6110 White Settlement Rd. 76114

Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship 10:30 am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:30 pm
817-738-7269

GRANBURY

Old Granbury Rd Church of Christ

4313 Old Granbury Rd, Granbury, TX 76049

Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Sun. Worship 10:30 am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Chip Foster | 817-913-4209 or 817-279-3351 | oldgranburyrdchurch.org

HOUSTON

Fry Rd. Church of Christ

2510 Fry Rd, Houston, TX 77084

Sun. Bible Study 9:45 am | Worship 10:30 am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: David Flatt | fryroad.org | church@fryroad.org

IRVING

Westside Church of Christ

2320 Imperial Dr. (Located close to DFW Airport)

Sun. Bible Study 9:00 am | Worship 9:50 am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:30 pm
Evangelist: Mark Roberts | 972-986-9131 | justchristians.com

LUBBOCK

Indiana Avenue Church of Christ

6111 Indiana Ave, Lubbock, TX 79413

Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Sun. Worship 9:00 am & 11:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
806-795-3377 | lubbockchurch.com

MANSFIELD

Northside Church of Christ

1820 Mansfield Webb Rd, Mansfield, TX 76063

Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Sun. Worship: 10:20 am & 5:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 5:30 pm.
Evangelist: Tom Roberts | 817-996-3926 | northsidecocf.us

NACOGDOCHES

Shawnee Church of Christ

612 S Shawnee St, Nacogdoches, TX 75961

Sun. Bible Study 9:45 am | Worship 10:30 am & 6:00 | Wed. Bible Study 6:00 pm
Minister: Van Dennis | 936-615-2950

Stallings Dr. Church of Christ

3831 N.E. Stallings Dr.

Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship 10:20 am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelists: Randy Harshbarger & Jay Taylor

SAN ANTONIO

Pecan Valley Church of Christ

268 Utopia Ave. (Dir: I-37 S.E. Exit Pecan Valley)

Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship 10:30 am & 5:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Jesse Garcia | 210-660 0409 | pecanvalleychurchofchrist.org

SHERMAN

Westwood Village Church of Christ

314 N. Tolbert
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship
10:30 am & 5:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study
7:00 pm
Evangelist: Ronald Stringer

TEMPLE

Leon Valley Church of Christ

4404 Twin City Blvd.
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship
10:30 am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study
7:30 pm
Evangelist: Jason Garcia (yourfriend-
jgar@gmail.com) or (leonvalleychurch@
gmail.com) | 254-939-0682 | leonval-
leychurch.org

TEXARKANA

Franklin Dr. Church of Christ

2301 Franklin Dr.
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship
10:15 am | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Bryan Garlock | 870-772-
0746 | txkchurch.com

WACO

Sun Valley Church of Christ

340 E Warren St. (in Hewitt, a suburb
of Waco)
Sun. Bible Class 9:30 am | Worship
10:30 am & 5:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study
7:00 pm
Evangelist: Marc Smith | 254-292-2482
or 652-7698

VERMONT

MONTPELIER

Montpelier Church of Christ

Meeting in the Capital City Grange Hall,
6612 Route 12 Berlin, VT 05602
Sun. Bible Study 9:00 am | Worship 10
am | Tues. Evening in Homes
Evangelist: Open | montpelierchurchof-
christ.com | P.O. Box 70, Williamstown,
VT 05679 | For questions or directions:
Wade Holt 802-485-4311

VIRGINIA

CHESAPEAKE

Tidewater Church of Christ

217 Taxus St.
Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Worship
11:00 pm & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study
7:00 pm
Evangelist: Steven Matthews | 757-436-
6900 | tidewaterchurchofchrist.com

RICHMOND

Courthouse Church of Christ

8330 Doublecreek Court, Chesterfield,
VA 23832 (Located in teh Metro Area;
Courthouse Rd. at Double Creek Ct. 2.2
miles S of Rt. 288)
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship
10:30 am & 5:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study
7:00 pm
Evangelist: Nathan L. Morrison | 804-
778-4717 | courthousechurchofchrist.
com

Forest Hill Church of Christ

1208 W. 41st St.
Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Worship
11:00 pm & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study
7:00 pm
Evangelist: Jack Bise, Jr. | 804-233-5959

RIDGEWAY

Church of Christ

2970 Old Leaksville Rd.
Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Worship
11:00 pm & 5:30 pm | Wed. Bible Study
7:00 pm
276-956-6049 | churchofchristatridge-
way.com

ROANOKE

Blue Ridge Church of Christ

929 Indiana Ave. N.E. (5 min. from
Roanoke Convention Center)
Sun. 1st Lesson 9:15 am | Bible Study
10:00 am | Worship 11:00 pm | Wed.
Bible Study 7:30 pm
Evangelist: Brent Paschall | 540-344-
2755 | blueridgecoc.org

VIRGINIA BEACH

Southside Church of Christ

5652 Haden Rd.
Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Worship
11:00 pm
Robert Mallard | 757-464-4574

WASHINGTON

BELLINGHAM

Mt. Baker Church of Christ

1860 Mt. Baker Hwy.
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship
10:30 am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study
7:00 pm
Evangelist: Joe Price | 360-752-2692
or 360-920-6965 | bibleanswer.com/
mtbaker

TACOMA

Manitou Park Church of Christ

Meeting at Gray Middle School, 6229 S.
Tyler St., Tacoma, WA 98409
Note: Please see webpage for updated
meeting location and times.
Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Worship
11:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
(Online)
253-242-3098 | tacomachurch@gmail.
com | tacomachurch.com

WEST VIRGINIA

CLARKSBURG

Westside Church of Christ

7 Old Davisson Run Rd
Sun. Worship 9:30 am
304-622-5433 | westsidechurchof-
christwv.net

FAIRMONT

Eastside Church of Christ

1929 Morgantown Ave.
Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Worship
10:45 am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study
7:00 pm
304-363-8696 or 304-844-2437

MOUNDSVILLE

Moundsville Church of Christ

210 Cedar Ave, Moundsville, WV 26041
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Sun. Worship
10:30 am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study
7:00 pm
Evangelist: Tony Huntsman | 304-845-
4940 | cedarsower.com

CANADA

CALGARY, AB

Northside Church of Christ

803 20A Ave NE, Calgary AB T2E 1S1
Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Sun. Wor-
ship 11:00 am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible
Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Eric Castillo | +1-403-619-
1249 | churchofchristcalgary.com

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