

Truth

Magazine

*Taking His hand,
helping each other home.*




JANUARY 2022 | NO. 1 | VOLUME 66

DEALING WITH DIFFICULTIES

Behold, I am the LORD, the
God of all flesh; is anything
too difficult for Me?
(Jer. 32:27).



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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 Bowling Green, KY and additional mailing offices.

Manuscripts should be sent to the editor:
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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:
CEI Bookstore | truthbooks.com
220 S. Marion, Athens, AL 35611
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pg 35



Monthly Columns

EDITORIAL: COURAGE IN TIMES OF CRISIS

by Mark Mayberry

pg 4

Mark Twain once wrote, “Courage is resistance to fear, mastery of fear, and not the absence of fear.” God is the source of true courage: “Wait for the LORD; Be strong and let your heart take courage; Yes, wait for the LORD” (Ps. 27:14).

MEDITATIONS: RESPECT FOR AUTHORITY

by Kyle Pope

pg 6

American culture often promotes a mindset that views authority with distrust and contempt. The Bible teaches a much different attitude that should characterize our behavior toward authorities that exist in many relationships in this life.

WOMEN’S INSIGHTS: BE THOU MY VISION

by Shereilyn Mayberry

pg 8

The wise man said, “Where there is no vision, the people are unrestrained, but happy is he who keeps the law” (Prov. 29:18). Knowledge of how to live comes from divine revelation. Let us, therefore, faithfully follow the word of God.

PREACHING THE GOSPEL: PREACHING IN THE UNITED STATES

by John Humphries

pg 10

Looking back on a lifetime of preaching, John shares his observations borne of experience and wisdom regarding the cause of Christ in our country and culture.

LIFE IN THE SPIRIT: LIFE IN THE SPIRIT (INTRODUCTION)

By Shane Carrington

pg 14

Like that of the Father and Son, the Holy Spirit’s work is central to our redemption, spiritual growth, and eternal life. In this issue, Shane begins a year-long examination of biblical teaching on “Life in the Spirit.” Welcome, friend!

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

by Bobby L. Graham

pg 16

What is a “worship leader,” and should we use such terminology?

ARCHAEOLOGY: TIME TO UPDATE THE CUBIT . . .

by Luke Chandler

pg 18

Archaeology leads us to update our assumption of the cubit and offers an important reminder for Christians.



Dealing with Difficulties

DEALING WITH DISEASE

pg 22

by Darin Henry

When illness hits close to home, will we rely upon God or question His goodness? “The spirit of a man can endure his sickness, but as for a broken spirit, who can bear it?” (Prov. 18:14). Don’t allow Satan to damage or destroy your faith.

DEALING WITH DIVISION

pg 28

by Robert Harkrider

Without question, it can be affirmed that, when division occurs, the devil has wormed his way into the hearts of some, if not all, of those involved. Let’s not give him that opportunity!

DEALING WITH DEATH

pg 24

by Don Hooton

How do we handle the sorrow when a loved one dies? Though hope exists for our tomorrow, we must allow ourselves (and others) to grieve now to get to tomorrow’s hope. [Note: Don lost his father during the COVID pandemic.]

DEALING WITH DOCTRINAL ERROR

pg 30

by Kyle Pope

How should Christians handle circumstances in which a brother or sister in Christ promotes doctrinal error? What biblical principles should guide and govern our behavior?

DEALING WITH DISOBEDIENCE

pg 26

by Alan Finley

Jesus’s parables in Luke 15 provide guidance for Christians who are dealing with disobedience in the church and also with their children.

DEALING WITH DISTRACTIONS

pg 32

by Melvin Curry

Christians must try to keep focused on Christ, but we cannot completely avoid distractions; however, we can separate them into categories of right or wrong by the prism of God’s word and yield only to the beneficial ones.

Courage in Times of Crisis

by Mark Mayberry

Mark Twain once wrote, “Courage is resistance to fear, mastery of fear, and not the absence of fear.” God is the source of true courage: “Wait for the LORD; Be strong and let your heart take courage; Yes, wait for the LORD” (Ps. 27:14).

Introduction

Merriam-Webster defines a “crisis” as “(1) the turning point for better or worse in an acute disease or fever; an emotionally significant event or radical change of status in a person’s life; (2) the decisive moment (as in a literary plot); (3) an unstable or crucial time or state of affairs in which a decisive change is impending; especially: one with the distinct possibility of a highly undesirable outcome (as a financial crisis).” The word “crisis” has been in use since the fifteenth century. It traces its derivation through Middle English, and Latin to the Greek *krisis*.

The Greek word *krisis*, derived from *krinō* (to judge, decide), identifies “a decision” or “a judgment” (Thomas, 2920). Louw and Nida say it refers to “the legal decision rendered by a judge, whether for or against the accused, and should be rendered ‘verdict,’ ‘sentence,’ or ‘judgment’” (56.24).

Bauer, Danker, Arndt and Gingrich define it as “(1) legal process of judgment [and is used] of the activity of God or the Messiah as judge, especially on the Last Day (2 Thess. 1:5); (2) a board of judges, court, specifically, a local court (Matt. 5:21); (3) administration of what is right and fair, right in the sense of justice/righteousness (John 7:24)” (BDAG, 569).

So, how does this underlying meaning relate to our topic? The Greek word *krisis*



signifies a time when we are called into judgment, either by God (in time or eternity) and also (potentially) in courts of men. From the standpoint of eternity, those who are unprepared to stand before God on the last day will face a calamitous crisis. On a temporal level, when someone is tried in civil or criminal court, his future hangs in the balance—freedom and/or fortune may be lost. Other crises also arise: disease and death, difficulties in our physical or spiritual families, occasions when division and doctrinal error rears its ugly head in the church, etc.

Disease

In this special issue of *Truth Magazine*, Darin Henry addresses the question, “How do we handle the stress when sickness hits close to home?” Darin, and his wife, Karen, along with Forrest and Sue Morris, are members of the Adoue Street congregation. Cancer casts its spectral shadow over these homes.

Sometimes we take others for granted, but in times of crisis, we witness their underlying commitment and courage. I am impressed with the remarkable grace in which these two families are presently facing serious illnesses.

Death

From an intellectual standpoint, we know that death is an inescapable reality—we are all terminal. From a biblical standpoint,

we know that “it is appointed for men to die once, and after this comes judgment” (Heb. 9:27). What about when it hits close to home? Don Hooton offers an article on “Dealing with Death.” He lost his dad during the COVID crisis. Don addresses the question, “How do we handle the sorrow when a loved one dies?”

On Thursday, November 18, 2021, Shereyn and I drove to Kemp, TX, to visit with Gene and Aleta Samford—dear friends and dedicated workers in the kingdom. Gene was recently diagnosed with terminal pancreatic cancer. While it is appointed for men once to die and afterwards stand before the judgment seat of God (Heb. 10:29; 2 Cor. 5:10), few people are mindful of either appointment. However, not Gene and Aleta. In years past, both experienced the anguish of losing their respective spouses. Gene lost Carol; Aleta lost Steve. Some years later, Gene and Aleta found each other. Joy replaced sadness. Hope and happiness

were renewed. Love and laughter filled their home.

Now they are facing an ordeal that neither wished nor wanted; yet their faith is strong. As we visited with Gene and Aleta, their focus was on spiritual matters. Gene preached his “last sermon” the previous Sunday, in which he offered parting commendations and challenges to his brethren, friends, and family. In our conversation, he was grateful for the opportunity of preaching the gospel, appreciative of the support that has come from Aleta, and the encouragement of countless brothers and sisters in Christ.

Jimmy Stevens offers these observations about Andrew Eugene “Gene” Samford:

Having received encouragement in his younger years to preach the gospel, Gene Samford became a “Barnabas”, an “encourager” in the church. Following an extended illness, he lost his first wife. A few years later, he married my sister, Aleta Walker, who had lost her husband. Working together, they successfully encouraged brethren to seek unity and forgiveness, and to be a “friendly congregation”, without compromising truth. In his last work, he encouraged the men of the congregation to develop their talents in teaching, preaching, and leading prayers and songs. As his health began declining, he witnessed the fruit of his encouragement when a number of these brethren stepped up to fill in for him.

Anne Stevens (wife of Jimmy) composed the following comments:

Of all the activities Aleta Samford has enjoyed in this life, teaching Bible classes is among the most loved. God alone knows the hours and effort she has spent to help others gain a better understanding of God and His will for mankind. In marrying Gene Samford, a preacher of the gospel, she accepted the responsibilities, joys and disappointments that come with being a preacher’s wife. Her faith has equipped her to serve the Lord and His servant, Gene, in a confident and gentle way, loving the Lord’s people and helping Gene to serve them well. As sisters-in-law, some of our most special moments

together have been spent sharing our faith and experiences as fellow Christians and preachers’ wives.

On December 10th, I spoke with Aleta. Gene is now bedfast and the toxins in his body are clouding his mind and memory. A lonely vigil awaits. Yet, through the tears, she expressed gratitude, and a confidence borne of lifelong commitment. In the darkest moments, God’s light radiates through the lives of His faithful followers. [Gene passed away on the 13th and his funeral was held on the 18th.]

Disobedience, Division, and Doctrinal Error

Sometimes we remain faithful until our kids do wrong, until our friends depart from the faith. If family and friendship are more important to us than “the faith of the gospel,” we may rationalize their actions and rethink our previously held convictions. Will we stand when others compromise? Will our faith fail in times of trial? Alan Finley, who is father of four faithful Christians, and who also serves as an elder of the Lord’s church, addresses the subject: “How do we handle circumstances where our children or brethren manifest a spirit of disobedience?”

The Mosaic law required that faith take precedence over family (Deut. 13:6-11). Despite being the Prince of peace, Jesus serves as a source of conflict—a flash point of contention—between those committed to His ways, and those who pursue the path of rebellion (Matt. 10:21-22, 34-39).

Brother Robert Harkrider addresses the question, “How do we handle circumstances when a local congregation experiences division?” Kyle Pope considers, “How do we handle circumstances when a brother in Christ teaches doctrinal error?” Both situations represent a spiritual crisis for all involved: the offending individual(s) fostering division or promoting error, and the congregation, which must decide how to confront the problem. Will they stand on principle, or be swayed by personality?

Distractions, Demands, and Doubtful Decisions

Brother Melvin Curry addresses the subject, “Dealing with Distractions.” Crises may arise because we become distracted and do not take advantage of present opportunities. Lamenting Judah’s impending destruction, Jeremiah said, “Harvest is past, summer is ended, and we are not saved” (Jer. 8:20). Satan suggests delay: As the apostle Paul was discussing righteousness, self-control and the judgment to come, Felix became frightened and said, “Go away for the present, and when I find time, I will summon you” (Acts 24:25).

While the Roman poet Horace used the phrase “carpe diem” (Latin: “pluck the day” or “seize the day”) to express the idea that one should enjoy the present moment, God’s word adds a level of seriousness:

And working together with Him, we also urge you not to receive the grace of God in vain—for He says, “AT THE ACCEPTABLE TIME I LISTENED TO YOU, AND ON THE DAY OF SALVATION I HELPED YOU.” Behold, now is “THE ACCEPTABLE TIME,” behold, now is “THE DAY OF SALVATION” (2 Cor. 6:1-2).

In times of crisis, God’s people may be pressured to compromise in various ways. King Nebuchadnezzar demanded that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego bow before the golden image that towered over the plain of Dura. Their response inspires us to remain true to our convictions:

O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to give you an answer concerning this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But even if He does not, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up (Dan. 3:16-18).

Continued on page 34

Respect for Authority

by Kyle Pope

American culture often promotes a mindset that views authority with distrust and contempt. The Bible teaches a much different attitude that should characterize our behavior toward authorities that exist in many relationships in this life.

Introduction

A challenge that Christians face is that of determining what characteristics of the culture in which we find ourselves can co-exist with proper Christian behavior and what we must put away. If my culture teaches that being an American, a Canadian, a Mexican, or a German means that I violate the teachings of Jesus, it is more important that I am a Christian than it is that I am a good citizen. A common mindset within modern American culture that presents such a challenge has to do with attitudes we hold toward authority. Some of this comes to us as a part of our heritage.

We honor the challenge our ancestors made to the authority of the king of England that was formalized in the Declaration of Independence. We consider this a significant moment in our history. In fact, it shaped our national identity, and taught us to be cautious in attitudes toward authority.

In religion, unlike many Roman Catholic countries, the strong Protestant background of many US citizens has led to the rejection of an idea that there is a “pope” who holds religious authority over all churches. This independent spirit has even bled over to professing Catholics. In America, many Catholics may honor the pope but reject some of his teachings.

Since the 1960s, there has been an increasing push to resist authority. The anti-war counterculture of the 60s taught the generation trained by them that older people are “out of touch,” so it’s OK to speak to them with contempt and disrespect. From this thinking

(directly or indirectly) has been born children that may curse their parents and teachers, teenagers that lie and defy instruction, leading to a generation of young adults who think nothing of breaking laws they don’t like—so long as they don’t get caught!

As Christians, we must consider what the Bible teaches us about respect for authority. Should Christians show respect for authority? Must this respect be shown only when authorities demonstrate that they are worthy of respect? Should the attitudes of Christians differ from that of the surrounding culture?

God Has Established Positions of Authority

1. In the Family

Paul taught, “Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body” (Eph. 5:22-23, NKJV). Parents and children are commanded, “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ‘Honor your father and mother,’ which is the first commandment with promise” (Eph. 6:1-2).

2. In the Church

After talking about elders in the local church, Peter wrote, “Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for ‘God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble’” (1 Pet. 5:5). In the church, God has set specific roles

of leadership. Paul, through inspiration, wrote, “I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence” (1 Tim. 2:12).

3. Civil Government

Paul commanded, “Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God” (Rom. 13:1). Peter commanded, “Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake, whether to the king as supreme, or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good” (1 Pet. 2:13-14).

4. Daily Affairs

Peter instructed servants to “be submissive to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle but also to the harsh” (1 Pet. 2:18). This sets forth a general principle about those times when we find ourselves under the authority of those to whom it is difficult to submit. This applies to other relationships as well. In the workplace, we can choose the job we hold, but must manifest all due respect for our employers. The same is true of the attitude of students toward their teachers. If Christians make their faith known but are irresponsible and rebellious employees or students, we bring shame to the God whom we claim to follow.

Principles Regulating Authority

1. We must obey God rather than man.

What should Christians do when authorities seek to compel Christians to violate God's will? When the apostles faced this in the early church, they boldly declared, "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). That doesn't sanction disobedience in order to change policies we don't like. The Bible doesn't teach children to break rules their parents make if they disagree with them. Godly parents do not urge students to talk back or disobey teachers who are too strict or boring (Rom. 13:2). We must do right regardless of the circumstance. Certainly, Christians can seek to influence the beliefs and practices of those in authority. Peter taught wives married to unbelieving husbands the value of such influence (1 Pet. 3:1). However, this is not accomplished by defiance and insubordination.

2. We should value those in authority for the "work's sake."

Paul told the Thessalonians, "And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. Be at peace among yourselves" (1 Thess. 5:12-13). We should submit to them so that their work may be pleasant and not a burden. The Hebrew writer wrote, "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). When Paul converted Onesimus, a slave who had run away from Philemon, in writing

to his master, he did not command, "Set him free!" Nor did he tell Onesimus, "Don't go back!" Instead, he taught these two Christians in different positions of submission and authority how to make each other's tasks bearable. That's what Christians do!

3. Authority does not equal flawlessness.

We don't obey and respect authority because those over us are better, smarter, wiser, or more important than we are. In Acts, Paul came before the Roman governor, Felix (Acts 24:10; 24-25). According to history, Felix was a wicked and ruthless man, but Paul treated him with respect because of his office. In Israelite history, after Saul's sin, David was appointed by God to be the next king of Israel. Saul violently opposed David, but David maintained respect for his position as God's anointed king (1 Sam. 24:3-7). As God in the flesh, Jesus was worthy of all respect and honor, but as a child, He faithfully yielded Himself in submission to the authority and guidance of His parents (Luke 2:51-52). Jesus's parents were not flawless, but Jesus submitted to their authority as His parents.

Conclusion

A number of years ago, a friend who was in the military shared with me some of the frustration the enlisted often felt toward the officers who were over them. He was not an officer, but handled equipment and technology used in military communications. He told me of instances in which the officers that had authority over him did not understand as much as their underlings about the equipment or how it was used—but that didn't change the fact that they were still in charge!

As Christians, there will be times when. . .

We must respect our parents, even if we don't understand the reasons for their instructions. We must use a respectful tone with our teachers, even if they are rude to us. We must be good employees even if our bosses don't deserve our respect. We must be submissive to our husbands, even when they disappoint us. We must submit to the elders, even when we disagree with judgments they make. We must honor political officials "for the work's sake."

We do all these things, not because all the people in positions of authority are always worthy of our respect, but because, when we do so, we are displaying the honor and respect that is due to God. As we serve others, we are serving God (Col. 3:22-25). ■



Kyle Pope

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Be Thou My Vision

by Shereilyn Mayberry

The wise man said, “Where there is no vision, the people are unrestrained, but happy is he who keeps the law” (Prov. 29:18). Knowledge of how to live comes from divine revelation. Let us, therefore, faithfully follow the word of God.

In the hymn, “Be Thou My Vision” (PHSS #318), we acknowledge our need to look to the Lord as our vision, as we maneuver the pathway of life. Where there is no vision, we are unrestrained, not knowing where we should go, but happy is the one who keeps the law of the Lord (Prov. 29:18). Formerly partaking in darkness, we are transformed through obedience to walk as children of Light. Having the Lord as our vision, we believe in the Light, and choose to become sons of Light (John 12:36). Paul obeyed the heavenly vision on the road to Damascus. He shared what he learned, so others then repented, turned from darkness to light, and performed deeds appropriate to repentance (Acts 26:19-20). Jesus shone in Paul’s heart, giving knowledge of the glory of God to the Jews and Gentiles whom he led to the Lord (2 Cor. 4:6). We, like Paul, can heed the heavenly calling and bring forth fruits of repentance in our daily walk. So, turn to the true vision. The fruit of this Light is all goodness, righteousness, and truth—and as we walk in it, the Lord is well pleased (Eph. 5:8-10).

The wisdom of Christ is reflected in our lives as the word of God dwells in our heart. True wisdom comes from words spoken by the Lord, not from lying words uttered by false teachers (Ezek. 13:7-8). The prophet Joel foreshadowed that the Holy Spirit would be poured out on all humanity (Joel 2:28). On the day of Pentecost, the inspired apostle Peter declared that this prophecy had



been fulfilled (Acts 2:17-21). After being baptized in the Holy Spirit, the apostles were divinely guided to reveal and record the truth of the gospel (John 14:26; 16:13). As the word given by the Holy Spirit dwells in our hearts, we evidenced proven character and hope through many trials (Rom 5:3-5). We, like the apostles, can be one with the Lord, as we walk with Him, following the true vision. As we heed His calling, walking in humility, gentleness, patience, and tolerance for one another in love, we are united through the Spirit in the bond of peace (Eph. 4:1-6).

The Lord on High gives stability, not with earthly riches, but through the wealth He offers of salvation, wisdom and knowledge. The fear of the Lord is his treasure (Isa. 33:5-6). A futile vision of man’s devices, such as man’s empty praise, is not from God, but it is from man’s imagination (Jer. 23:16). It will lead to calamity. Also, false vision does not expose iniquity to lead the captive in sin back to the Lord (Lam. 2:14). Do not seek it. We must take this treasure,

our inheritance, and place it first in our hearts, in earthen vessels, to give God the glory (2 Cor. 4:7). Where your treasure is, there is your heart also (Matt. 6:21; Luke 12:34). So, make yourselves money belts that do not wear out, holding unfailing treasure in heaven, where thieves cannot break through and steal (Matt. 6:20; Luke 12:33). “But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these *things* will be added to you” (Matt. 6:33).

If we live faithfully, looking to our vision, our victory is won through Him. Our toil is not in vain as we remain steadfast, no matter what trials come our way (1 Cor. 15:57-58). Being born of God, we overcome the world through our faith and belief that Jesus is the Son of God (1 John 5:4-5). Though persecution comes through Jesus’s death, we have hope. Pursue it. Our faith leads us to believe that we will be raised to live with the Lord for eternity (2 Cor. 4:8-14). Even when persecution comes, we can be glad and leap for joy, because our reward is great in heaven (Luke 6:22-23)! Singing the song of Moses, we who are victorious in Christ will praise Him there, glorifying our vision, the righteous King of the nations (Rev. 15:1-4). 📖



Shereilyn Mayberry

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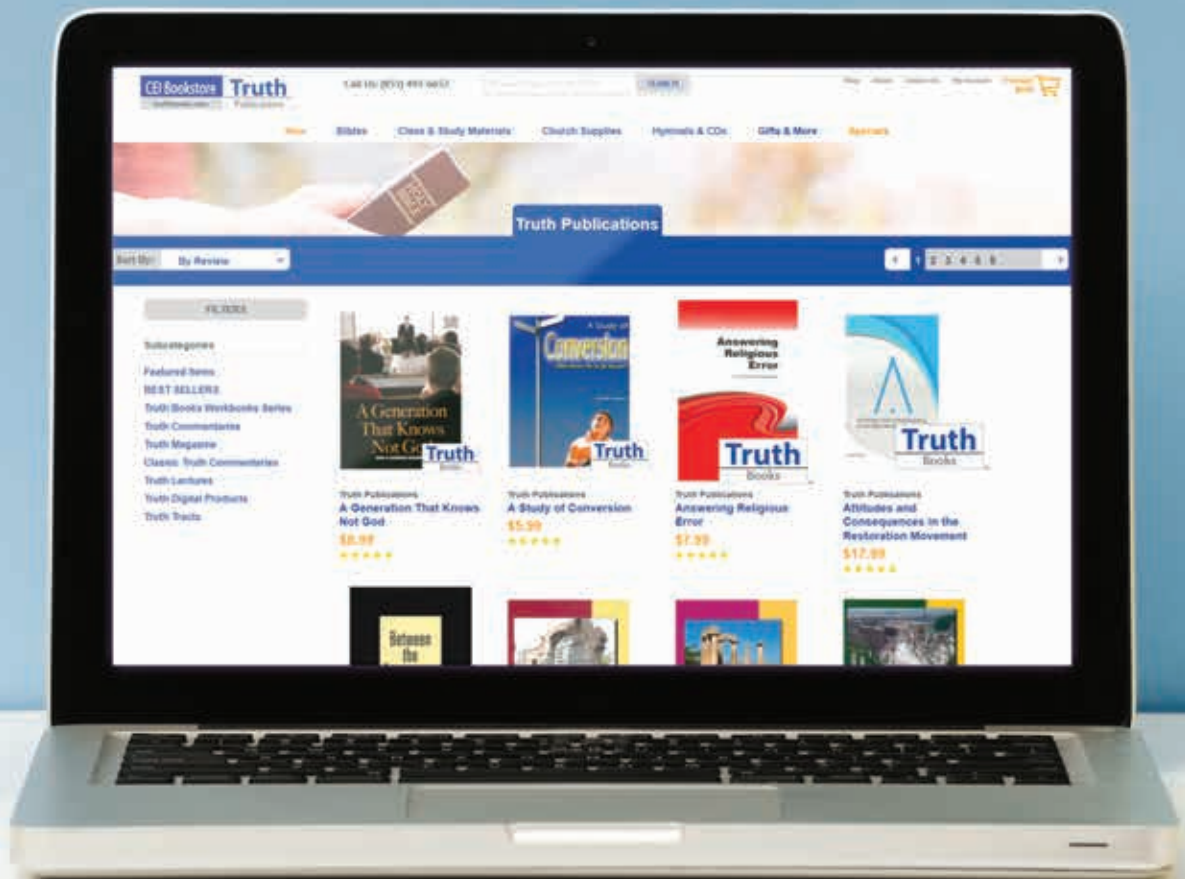
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Preaching in the United States

by John Humphries

Looking back on a lifetime of preaching, John shares his observations borne of experience and wisdom regarding the cause of Christ in our country and culture.

Introduction

Back in the early 1950s, it was during the summer when brethren (including this writer) went to a nearby town, knocked on doors, pitched a large tent, preached the gospel, and baptized enough to have a church in the town. This was repeated in other nearby towns. In the 50s, the church was experiencing growth through conversions in many places.

Much earlier in the 19th century, there were denominational churches, including the preacher, that were baptized into Christ and became a New Testament church. The church grew rapidly in those days.

However, there are deep concerns today that not all is well in many local churches. Even in New Testament times, the apostle Paul was deeply concerned for the welfare of the Lord's church: "Besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches" (2 Cor. 11:28). This statement concludes a long list of difficulties that plagued Paul as he sought to serve the Lord. It is a painful listing! Besides physical suffering and persecutions, he was concerned for the churches.

Paul had visitors and letters with news of people having serious questions and issues (1 Cor. 1:11; 5:1; 7:1; Phil. 1:27; Col. 2:1; 1 Thess. 3:5-6). Reading the epistles, we gather Paul that received news of confused brethren seeking for answers and comfort in their trials. There would be a request for Paul to settle various quarrels in the churches (Phil. 4:2). Paul would receive news

from messengers of distant churches, bringing tidings of good and sometimes not so good. Perhaps Paul receives word that some congregation has disappeared and is no longer assembling. There may be distressing news of false doctrines invading churches (Gal. 1:6). Paul may be told that some are leaving the faith and going back into the world (2 Tim. 4:9-10). He may be informed that some are spreading false accusations against him (1 Cor. 9:3). These are some concerns that would trouble the apostle.

Jesus had warned, "In the world, you will have tribulation" (John 16:33). He also stated, "It is inevitable that stumbling blocks come, but woe to him through whom they come!" (Luke 17:1, NASB). Paul himself had warned, "For there must also be factions among you" (1 Cor. 11:19). While there is true peace in the Lord, *and sincere rejoicing in the all-sufficient grace of God*, there are serious, heartbreaking trials facing the churches of the Lord. The above paragraphs are only a partial listing of the issues and challenges the people of God faced in the first century and also face in the twenty-first century. "There is nothing new under the sun" (Eccl. 1:9). These challenges would have distressed Paul and, sadly, continue to distress concerned Christians today.

Adding to the list above: Persecution, worldliness, compromise with sin and error, indifference, lukewarm faith, outright apostasy, blind guides, church bosses, word battles over opinions, impatience with brethren, unloving attitudes toward those that may differ, harshness toward those considered as

weak, pridefully looking down on those we think are less knowledgeable, and the list could go on. These destructive issues and attitudes bring serious trouble to churches, leading to division. Some churches will be completely destroyed. These problems and challenges are a source of deep concern for sincere brethren who truly love the Lord, His people, and the truth. *These problems also grieve the Holy Spirit (Eph. 4:30)*! Many passages give exhortations concerning this (1 Thess. 5:14-15; Eph. 4:1-6; Phil. 2:1-4).

As one reads the NT and learns of the various churches (Corinth, Rome, Antioch, etc.), we would look in vain today to find these congregations meeting for worship. Of course, we understand that earthquakes, geological shifts, wars, rise and fall of nations, departures from the faith, and other factors beyond brethren's control have brought about the disappearance of these local churches.

When we look about us today, we observe many local churches that, only a few decades ago, were large congregations. Yes, there are local churches that are doing very well and are growing. Yet, there are many churches that once numbered in the hundreds that now have only a few precious souls meeting in a large church building. Pews that once were filled are now empty. There are large auditoriums with only a few presently using two or three pews. Another few years and these aged saints will be gone—and that local church will be no more. This is seen in many places around the country and is a reality. Brethren in the first century did

not prevent this from happening, and it would appear that there is no stopping this in our day.

Nevertheless, we must not forget that the Lord will always have His faithful remnant at all times. Many passages teach this. We will note just one though there are many. Isaiah wrote concerning the Messiah and the new covenant:

“The Redeemer will come to Zion, And to those who turn from transgression in Jacob,” Says the LORD. “As for Me,” says the LORD, “this is My covenant with them: My Spirit who is upon you, and My words which I have put in your mouth, shall not depart from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your descendants, nor from the mouth of your descendants’ descendants,” says the LORD, “from this time and forevermore” (Isa. 59:20–21).

The inspired apostle Paul quotes verse 20 and applies it to the preaching of the gospel (Rom. 11:26), providing further indication that the passage in Isaiah is Messianic. Notice in verse 21 that from generation to generation, “descendants” will pass on the “words” of the Lord (i.e., His covenant). There will be Christians on the earth when Christ returns (1 Thess. 4:15). *Our responsibility is to seek those who will respond to the gospel of Christ.*

As noted earlier, there are churches that are growing in number because people are obeying the gospel of Christ. Obviously, these brethren are active in seeking the lost and leading them to the Lord. *We must not give up seeking the lost (1 Cor. 15:58). We will note some things that are being done by churches that are growing by converting the lost and not just by receiving brethren from move-ins!*

The growing churches have sound Bible teaching and preaching. The word is preached in love without compromise or apologies. There are people that are hungry for truth and are seeking Bible teaching. Sound, true to the Book, preaching presents a significant contrast to the pablum of soft, feel-good social gospel fare that is offered by many. Honest hearts do not desire for their

ears to be tickled, but for the truth to be accurately presented by preachers who love the Lord, the people, and the Word of God (2 Tim. 4:1-5). *Truth does not fear Bible questions, and honest hearts do not fear Bible answers.*

Another factor in growing churches is that members are encouraged to visit and get to know one another—to be a spiritual family and not a collection of cliques. It is not good when a meeting house clears out in less than ten minutes after the last “Amen.” It certainly does not encourage visitors to return, as they sense a lack of closeness, and perhaps even coldness, among the members. Members need to visit with one another, *but must never neglect visitors.* It is imperative to make visitors feel welcome to the assemblies of the church. Remember to exercise hospitality as it is a command and not a suggestion by the Lord (Rom. 12:13; 1 Pet. 3:9).

Brethren must be encouraged by the elders, the pulpit, and all who teach and lead, to love the Lord, their brethren, and others (Rom. 13:8-10). According to Jesus, love among brethren is the true badge of discipleship (John 13:35). This love among brethren will encourage non-Christians to desire to learn more about the Lord, His teaching, and His people. Brethren letting their light shine in the community and the workplace, etc. by being a good example of what serving Christ is all about, gets the attention of sincere seekers and can lead to others being converted to Christ (Matt. 5:16; Phil. 2:14-16; 1 Pet. 2:11-12).

The pulpit and the classrooms must resound with Bible teaching. All the teaching and preaching must be Christ-centered. Those who hunger and thirst after righteousness do not care for pop psychology or what the denominational “scholars” have to say. They seek Bible-centered lessons, and long to hear what the Word of God reveals concerning the subject under consideration. “Preach the Word” must be the constant goal of the pulpit (2 Tim. 4:2; 1 Pet. 4:11).

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Growing congregations involve the brethren in scriptural endeavors such as handling the Bible Correspondence Courses (BCC) offered by the church. This means receiving, grading, and sending out the BCC studies. Brethren are also encouraged to invite their neighbors into their homes for Bible reading sessions once a week. A book of the Bible is read through with each one (who wishes to do so) taking a turn at reading a few verses. This may lead to a deeper study of the word of God, resulting in a conversion to Christ. Some have approached fast-food places and received permission to use a table for “meet ups” in order to read a book of the Bible. Some use the internet and other means of advertising the “meet-up.”

A men’s training class is a good way to promote orderly services (1 Cor. 14:40). Men should have instruction in making announcements, leading prayers, leading singing, managing the Lord’s table, making talks, greeting visitors, making calls, and other responsibilities. Also, a good teacher training course (children and adults) that is taught by capable teachers will improve the Bible classes.

Another helpful activity is for the church to have a small recommendation card for the brethren to give to people. The basic message (which must obviously be brief) tells the person that if they are looking for a church that loves the Lord, one another, and the Word of God, then this congregation is recommended. Also, have a brief note that the children will have good Bible classes to attend. Brethren should be encouraged to have several of these little cards on their person when they go out among the public. They will be able to hand one of these cards to someone and ask them to “come visit with us sometime.” Conversions to Christ have resulted from the generous use of these cards. Each member should try to give out several each week.

Through the years, churches have used TV, radio, and the newspapers to teach the Word of God. It is important that in these efforts, there needs to be contact information provided in each program or

article. One good contact item is to offer a Bible correspondence course with each broadcast or article. The contact address must be easy to understand and write down. It should also provide a phone number to call and request the Bible correspondence lesson.

Call-in radio or TV programs, as well as a brief “Question and Answer” articles in the local newspaper, have been used effectively by various churches.

Many use the internet for reaching out to non-Christians. If the internet is to be used effectively, it is helpful if someone in the congregation has good computer skills. In today’s world, local churches need to have a presence on Facebook and/or a well-done website with good information and teaching. Many churches post (or broadcast) sermons and Bible classes to the internet. Don’t forget to advertise a Bible correspondence course with all these programs. This is a way to have contact with people. When the course is finished, and the certificate is to set up a home study with the student.

Keeping the grounds, the foyer, the auditorium, and all the rooms in a tidy, clean condition makes a good first impression on visitors. Don’t allow the pews to become a collection of clutter.

Some churches have a certain Sunday in mind where members attempt to invite people to hear timely lessons from the God’s word. The lesson should be especially good for a non-Christian to hear for the first time. Respect for the Lord and His word, as well as the need for salvation in Christ, are excellent lessons for the non-Christian to hear for the first time.

There have been congregations that offered a “Dial a Bible Moment” for anyone to call the number and hear a brief Bible message. The message is changed each day and offers a free Bible correspondence at the end of the message. The message should be brief and basic.

Mail-outs to the neighborhood where the church building is located has

potential to find souls that are seekers. These must be well-written articles for non-Christians. The mail out should not only have clear directions and times for the assemblies of the church, but also offer free tracts and a Bible correspondence course.

Tract racks have been used effectively by congregations. Careful, mature thought must be devoted to the selection of tracts. Only attractive, well-written tracts should be selected. An untidy, ill-kept tract rack is not very inviting for visitors. Some churches also include the first lesson of a Bible correspondence course in the tract rack.

The bulletin that is printed each week should be well done. It should be attractive in appearance and well-written dealing briefly with the news and notes and containing a good teaching article.

Conclusion

Remember, as the people of God, we should not lag in our diligence, but be “fervent in spirit, serving the Lord” (Rom. 12:11). Paul’s exhortation to the Corinthians challenges saints today: “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Cor. 15:58, NASB). 📖



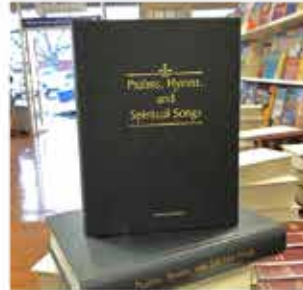
John Humphries

John has labored with churches of Christ in MD, PA, VA, NY, KY, and AL, and engaged in evangelistic efforts in numerous foreign countries, including over forty trips to India. He preached his first gospel sermon in South Carolina in 1955. He has served as an elder for churches in KY and AL. He has authored commentaries on Isaiah, Jeremiah and Lamentations for the Truth Commentary series. He currently lives in Calvert City, KY, with his wife, Edna. He can be reached at humphries.john@aol.com.

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Life in the Spirit (Introduction)

by Shane Carrington

Like that of the Father and Son, the Holy Spirit's work is central to our redemption, spiritual growth, and eternal life. In this issue, Shane begins a year-long examination of biblical teaching on "Life in the Spirit." Welcome, friend!

Introduction

Perhaps you have had this conversation. You declare your understanding of Scripture that the Holy Spirit convicts, converts, strengthens, corrects, and guides us through the written word (John 16:7-15; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; Eph. 3:1-5; 6:17; etc.). The response: "You're just scared of the Holy Spirit." Or, "I just can't limit the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives."

Lack of understanding can lead to unhealthy fears, but knowledge of "The Holy Spirit's Testimony Concerning Himself" (Elmer Moore's original title of his book on the Spirit, 1991) produces, enlightens, and strengthens our faith. The Holy Spirit gave the written word to impart life. For this we thank God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—for revealing themselves and their word which breathes life into souls weary and heavy laden (Matt. 11:28, 29). With Peter, we declare, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life" (John 6:68). Like Jesus said, "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life" (John 6:63). The same Holy Spirit inspired the apostles to preach and write that message of life for us all (John 16:7-15; 20:30-31). As Jesus said, "You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free" (John 8:32; cf. 16:13; 17:17). Again, "it is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth" (1 John 5:6b).

We have no spiritual life without the work of the Holy Spirit. He is vital to salvation from our past, transformation

in our present, and eternal glorification in our future. Minimizing the role of the Holy Spirit as described in Scripture means minimizing God, for the Holy Spirit is a divine person (next month's article). Our life in the Spirit is necessarily connected to our walk in the Spirit (Gal. 5:25). We discover this life of hope in the Holy Spirit-inspired gospel which shapes our thinking and lifestyle in Christ (Rom. 1:16-17; 12:1-2).

Sadly, some lean upon mysterious, deceptive feelings—carnal experiences—rather than the written word. What a dangerous way to live!

The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; who can understand it? (Jer. 17:9).

There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death (Prov. 14:12).

Leaning on mystical "nudgings of the Spirit" is actually relying upon personal, deceptive emotions. What some call being led by the Spirit is, in reality, being enticed by the flesh. When people claim to be "spiritual" without the revealed word of the Holy Spirit, they deceive themselves. We have no spiritual life without Him and His word (John 6:63; 8:32; 20:30-31).

The May 2021 issue of *Truth Magazine* focused upon Bible teaching about the Holy Spirit's indwelling, a fact discussed many places in the New Testament (1 Cor. 6:9-20; Eph. 3:14-19; 5:18-19; etc.). The fact of the indwelling is indisputable; the manner of the indwelling requires discernment. That issue of the magazine explored this in some detail (see note #1)

Over the next few months this column will further explore the Spirit's indwelling in the faithful (especially article 4 in this series, "Your Body is a Temple of the Holy Spirit" [1 Cor. 6:19]), but this series will also explore additional, important truths about the work of the Spirit in the lives of disciples.

Clearly, the only source of spiritual life comes through the plan of the Father (Eph. 1:3ff), the redemptive work of Jesus (Eph. 1:3ff), and the inspired word revealed by the Spirit (Eph. 1:13-14; 3:1-5, 16-19; 6:17; cf. 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 3:14-18). We rightfully emphasize the work of the Father and Son in our redemption. The Holy Spirit's labor also requires due emphasis, for He too is integral in providing our opportunity for spiritual life.

How the Holy Spirit Imparts Spiritual Life

In the NASB 1995 Update, the words "Spirit" or "spirit" occur twenty-one times in Romans 8. While debate exists regarding how many of those refer to the person of the Spirit, the word of the Spirit, or the spiritually minded disposition produced by the Spirit, we learn a great deal by studying this passage. Consider the following three related truths about the Holy Spirit's work in the lives of genuine disciples of Jesus.

He Breaks Our Bondage

"For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death" (Rom. 8:2) Spiritual

slavery to sin is everyone's problem, but the Spirit breaks that bondage through His "law" (the gospel [Rom. 1:16-17] as contrasted with the law of Moses [Rom. 7:1-8:4]). This seems backwards to some, but the gospel ("law of the Spirit") sets us free, for "it is the power of God for salvation" (Rom. 1:16). Why is the gospel described as "the law of the Spirit"? Because the Holy Spirit revealed it, confirmed it, and uses it as a scalpel to change hearts and lives for the Lord (John 16:7ff; Eph. 6:17; Heb. 4:12; Rom. 1:5, 16-17; 16:25-26). The Spirit breaks our bondage to sin by teaching us of salvation in Jesus.

He Shapes Our "Walk" (Rom. 8:4)

Paul concluded his comments about deliverance from bondage by saying, "so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit" (Rom. 8:4) "Walk" means "lifestyle." Rather than carnality, the law of the Spirit teaches us a better way of life. This is a transforming, upward lifestyle (Rom. 12:1-2; 5:1-5) that leads through trials to spiritual strength and hope. Living "according to" the word/law of "the Spirit" grows us in Jesus.

He Transforms Our Heart (Rom. 8:5-8, 15)

"For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace" (Rom. 8:5-8). All are passionate about something, but the heart of discipleship is attuned to the spiritual things taught by the Spirit in His law/word. How does the heart change? Through setting our "minds on the things of the . . . Spirit"! We are a reflection of the thoughts of our heart (Pro. 23:7; Mark 7:21). What thoughts fill your mind? Upon what are you feeding spiritually? As Jesus said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but

on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God'" (Matt. 4:4). The Holy Spirit revealed that word to transform us to be more like Jesus (Rom. 12:1-2). Consequently, "You have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, 'Abba! Father!'" (Rom. 8:15).

Conclusion

"You are just scared of the Holy Spirit. That's why you don't believe in a literal indwelling!" The Holy Spirit is a divine person, so I ponder Him, speak of Him, and live in His presence with reverential fear. I find spiritual life through loving Him, standing in awe of Him, trusting Him, and submitting to Him by following His inspired, written word. "For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God" (Rom. 8:14). Amen. **T**

Note

Briefly, stated, the Holy Spirit indwells us through the word—compare parallel passages: Ephesians 5:18-19 and Colossians 3:16-17. To "be filled with the Spirit" means to "let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with in all wisdom. . ."



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By Bobby L. Graham

QUESTION.

What is a “worship leader,” and should we use such terminology?

ANSWER.

Question:

What is a “worship leader?” To me, if anyone should be considered a worship leader, it is the elders, because they are to guide, to lead. Calling someone a worship leader, to me, sounds like the director and/or the producer on a movie set, etc.—you stand here, you do this, you walk this way—a production, a show—maybe something that denominations do, with their praise teams. It seems that some churches are leaning a bit.

Answer:

I have taken the liberty to omit some of the questioner’s comments while trying to keep those needed to express the concern manifested in the question. I fully agree that worship is not a production in the sense noted in the comments; if anyone approaches it in such manner, that one’s problem lies

first in not understanding the nature of worship. Worship is not entertainment!

God is the sole audience present in scriptural worship, and Christians constitute the worshipers. Their worship is the praise of their hearts directed to God and expressed in words sincerely reflecting the heart (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; John 4:24; Matt. 15:8-9). When this kind of worship takes place, all participants receive benefits intended by God, who designed such worship. Edification of the worshipers is one of those benefits, as stated in some passages cited. Another benefit is that the expression of such worship unto God simultaneously draws the worshiper nearer to God’s heart and character, thus fashioning him more and more like the One who is being worshiped. It is axiomatic (as well as scriptural) that we grow more like the one whom we imitate or worship. These spiritual considerations must be foremost in structuring and arranging worship.

If a “Praise Team” is involved, or if the “worship leader” takes upon himself the responsibility of “running the show,”

then it would be an unscriptural situation. Either elders or the congregation should designate one of the men to lead in such fashion, as long as what he does in leading worship conforms to the teaching of the New Testament.

Other things being equal, it is a matter of judgment that someone (or different persons) must lead in worship. It must become the responsibility of male Christians to lead in the singing, the prayers, the teaching, the eating of the Supper, and the contribution. What should we call such men? Song leaders, prayer leaders, teachers, preachers, worship leaders, or something else? As far as I know, the New Testament does not designate them unless they are teaching or preaching. Should we call the Bible reader or janitor something besides what he is? It would be scriptural, however, to call them what they are or are doing during worship. That might be song leader, song director, worship leader, or song worship leader. Neither designation is found in those exact words in the Scriptures. I have often been

part of the Oklahoma Singing School, formerly conducted by R. J. Stevens and now by Tim Stevens and others. If I recall correctly, much emphasis was placed upon being not just a song starter, but a song worship leader. Does not that description fit what should be taking place? Is it not a scriptural description of what God desires to happen?

While some designations might not be one's favorite or preferred way of describing something, all should remember that we cannot legislate in such matters, where God has not done so. It might be parallel to "Sunday School teacher" verses "Bible class teacher." Because the former once represented something undesirable in the minds of many brethren (a separate organization from the local church, having its own overseers and treasury), it was dropped by many, and replaced by "Bible class teacher." However, let us notice that neither is unscriptural in its own right.

Preference might dictate one's private usage, but private usage must not become "the law of the land for all" (Rom 14:5, 10, 13, 22-23). We should be careful not to wrangle over words in such matters, when there is no profit or usefulness in doing so (1 Tim. 1:4-7; 2 Tim. 2:16, 23-24; Titus 3:9). **TL**



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Time to Update the Cubit...

by Luke Chandler

Archaeology leads us to update our assumption of the cubit and offers an important reminder for Christians.

How long is a cubit? Different regional standards existed in the Ancient Near East, but most of us may recall hearing a biblical cubit to be around 18 inches (or 46 centimeters [cm]), derived from the typical distance from the elbow to the tip of the longest finger on a grown man. This definition, probably taken from an old dictionary, has been passed down in churches for generations. Yet more than a century of extensive archaeology shows the cubit used in Canaan, from the age of the Patriarchs through the end of the Israelite kingdoms, was in fact 21-1/4 inches (54 cm), nearly 18% longer.

Excavations show two other standard measures in use alongside the 54 cm standard cubit: a “short” 38 cm cubit (around 15 inches) and a “span” of 22 cm (8-2/3 inches), based on the distance between the tips of the little finger and thumb on a spread hand. In Canaan, builders consistently cut stones, formed bricks, constructed walls and buildings, and designed openings with these metrics. Other regions, like Egypt or Mesopotamia, had different lengths for a cubit, but the 54-cm standard was demonstrably the standard in Canaan for many centuries.

Archaeologist Prof. Jeffery Chadwick points out the 54-cm and 38-cm cubits have been found among the various peoples of biblical Canaan. In the north, archaeologists found these measurements used in the cities of Dan, Hazor, and et-Tell near the Sea of Galilee. At et-Tell, the piers that divide the tenth century BC gate into chambers range in thickness from exactly four cubits and a span (4 x 54 cm + 22 cm) to five cubits (5 x 54 cm).

Individual stone blocks in the city walls were consistently one cubit and a span (54 cm + 22 cm = 76 cm) thick.

Cities throughout Canaan were built with these same metrics. Both Israelite and Canaanite peoples around the Jezreel Valley used this longer cubit at sites, including Megiddo, the fortress city of Jezreel, and at Beth Shean. Across the hill country and Judean foothills, these metrics were used by the Canaanites and the Kingdom of Judah in Jerusalem, Lachish, Tel-Burna (Libnah?), Khirbet Qeiyafa (Shaaraim?), Beth Shemesh, Gezer, and down in Jericho. We also find them in the southern cities of Hebron, Arad, and Beersheba. Looking at this list, one can truly say the 54 cm (21-1/4”) cubit was used from Dan to Beersheba!

The Philistines also used this measuring standard. Excavations at the city of Ekron found a large mud-brick structure from around the time of Samuel and Saul. Each brick was exactly one 54-cm cubit long and a 38-cm short cubit wide. At Gath, a city wall dated to the time of Saul and David, discovered in 2013, is exactly 4 cubits and a span in thickness. These metrics have also been found in the Philistine city of Ashdod.

This standard affects the traditional assumption that Goliath was 9 feet 9 inches tall. According to the Masoretic text of 1 Samuel 17:4, he stood at 6 cubits and a span in height, which translates to 11 feet 4 inches with the 54-cm cubit. That same verse in the Septuagint and the Dead Sea Scrolls, and in Josephus’ history, says Goliath stood at 4 cubits and a span, which comes to around 7 feet 9-1/2 inches.



Dr. Jeffery Chadwick with a pier for the 10th century BC gate at et-Tell (Geshur? Bethsaida?) by the Sea of Galilee. The pier's thickness is 4 cubits and a span. (Photo by Eric Welch).



Dr. Jeffery Chadwick standing on the city wall at Gath from the time of David. The wall is exactly 4 cubits and span in width when using the updated 54 cm (21-1/4") cubit found throughout Canaan ((Photo credit: Prof. Aren Maeir, Tell es-Safi/Gath Archaeological Project).

Whichever number was in the original text, he was a massive man who towered over the much shorter Israelites. (Archaeological evidence from doorframes suggests the average Israelite male was around 5 feet 2 inches in height, which makes for a striking contrast with the champion Goliath.)

It is time to update the old 18-inch cubit to 21-1/4 inches in our lessons and teaching materials, but this also provides a lesson in wisdom for Christians.

The definition of a cubit makes no difference in our salvation, but failing to keep growing in our understanding of God's Word, and in our ability to understand other people, is detrimental to our purpose and to our personal relationships. Let us try to increase our understanding of God's Word, and to better understand the people around us while navigating life's journey. 📖

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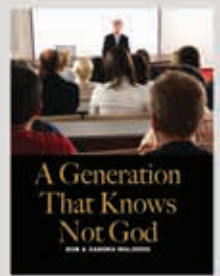
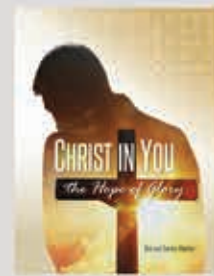
Dr. Jeffrey Chadwick measures a stone block at biblical et-Tell with a 54 cm "cubit" stick (Photo credit: Jeff Chadwick).



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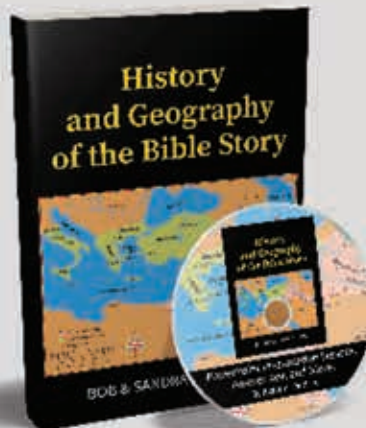
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Dealing With Disease

by Darin Henry

When illness hits close to home, will we rely upon God or question His goodness? “The spirit of a man can endure his sickness, but as for a broken spirit, who can bear it?” (Prov. 18:14). Don’t allow Satan to damage or destroy your faith.

Introduction

In reading Psalm 91, one cannot help but be comforted and strengthened in spirit, recognizing the depth of God’s love and protection that is very real and available for those that seek Him. Spiritual wounds and maladies can be avoided when we allow ourselves to be guided by God and follow His instruction for proper living. Often, the sickness and ailments we suffer in this life are self-inflicted. When sin is not dealt with properly, the damage can be irreparable.

Rather than seeking after God, the Israelites sought a remedy for their maladies amongst the enemy nations and foreign gods. This only opened the wound more and further inflamed it, causing further separation from God. The prophet asked in Jeremiah 8:21, “Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then is there no recovery for the health of the daughter of my people?” How dreadful the condition can quickly become when sin is allowed to fester without proper application of the heavenly remedy of God’s love and mercy. Turning and repenting of failure and rebellious living is the Lord’s desire for each of His children. When we allow sin to penetrate and take root in our lives rather than choosing to avail ourselves of the balm that Christ, the Great Physician, offers us, this choice will have ill effects in



our conduct. Refusing to apply medicine for a cut ignores the cure while allowing the wound to become blistered and sore. Jesus Christ is our spiritual healer and provider. No injury is beyond His ability to repair. Mark 2:17 reads, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I did not come to call *the* righteous, but sinners, to repentance.”

Our physical body is not as fortunate. To list all the serums, pills, health foods, oils, treatments, diet plans and medicines that are available for this or that sickness could easily take all the pages of this issue, and we would still run out of room. Simply stated, God has created us with a physical body that is susceptible to sickness and pain. It is vulnerable to breakdown from stress and fatigue. Sometimes, as with sin, this is self-inflicted because of our own choices and lifestyle. However, often sickness and health problems can occur through no fault of our own, with no advanced warning or knowledge. This

can be devastating and cause a major setback in one’s life. When we receive a phone call, or hear the initial announcement, that a dear loved one has come down with a sickness or fatal disease, it can be devastating. How does a Christian best deal with such news? When we ourselves have been diagnosed with cancer, or some other serious disease or illness that will require treatment, how do we cope with such news?

Check your Anchor

It is safely moored, ’twill the storm withstand,
For ’tis well secured by the Savior’s hand;
And the cables passed from His heart to mine,
Can defy the blast, through strength divine.

What an amazing gift we have in the might and security of our Lord. Fear is a powerful tool that Satan deploys, and he delights when our hearts quake and our faith becomes shaky. When that happens, let us set and secure our anchor in God Almighty! God’s desire is that we seek Him at our weakest moments. Do not rely on self, but follow Christ’s example and reach out to God as our Savior did when he knelt in prayer alone in the garden. Jesus experienced immeasurable fear as He prayed to the Father for comfort and reassurance. God answered His prayer in Luke 22:43, which says, “There appeared an angel unto him from

heaven, strengthening him.” He hears our prayers: “Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us” (1 John 5:14). Pray knowing that God hears you. As Christians, we are assured that our Creator is listening to our utterances of trepidation and our humble requests for guidance are heard in heaven.

Check your Surroundings

Learning that a loved one has become very sick with cancer or some other serious illness may cause us to second guess (or question?) God, and our enemy will surely zero in on that opportunity to plant seeds of doubt in our heart. After all, what sort of God allows such a thing to happen? At least that is a common thought process you will hear expressed in the world. If you allow it, the family of God can fill the holes and provide the encouragement needed to overcome our feebleness. Having our faith slide is never a good thing, but it can occur. If, and when it does, do not allow yourself to sink and lose buoyance as did Peter. Take cover from Satan and deflect his shots by surrounding yourself with God’s faithful servants.

The past year and a half have brought many challenges into each of our lives, and even with all that has occurred, the curse of sickness and death has not slowed. When we reflect on what the church and the body of Christ can provide during these times, it should bring tears of joy and thankfulness to our eyes. That God, in all of His goodness and wisdom, left us with brothers and sisters who can help, love, and support our needs is a beautiful example of God’s love and care for us. 1 Thessalonians 5:14 states, “Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.” Romans 12:10-13 says, “Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another; not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer; distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality.”

Institutions of men may fail us, but the church, with Christ as its head, will never fail. One of its purposes is to support the needs of the saints, not just with physical needs, but with spiritual needs as well. In Hebrews 10:24-25, the writer exhorted his readers:

Let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near (Heb. 10:24-25).

It is vitally important that we surround ourselves with God’s family. When we, or a loved one, are struggling with the frailty of life because of health issues, do not deprive yourself of the blessings that are found in the Lord’s people. Steady, consistent attendance is an absolute necessity in the uncertainty of this life.

Conclusion

The Psalmist says, “The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and he helps me. My heart leaps for joy, and with my song, I praise him. The LORD is the strength of His people, a fortress of salvation for His anointed one” (Ps. 28:7-8). The prophet reminds us in Isaiah 33:2, “Lord, be gracious to us; we long for you. Be our strength every morning, our salvation in time of distress.”

Do you long for the Lord? To long for something means to have a strong feeling or a need for something or someone. We will have fears when loved ones are stricken with sickness or disease, but let us remember that this fleshly tent is only temporal (2 Cor. 5:1-5), and our heavenly home awaits those that are longing to be there. **TL**



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Dealing with Death

by Don Hooton

How do we handle the sorrow when a loved one dies? Though hope exists for our tomorrow, we must allow ourselves (and others) to grieve now to get to tomorrow's hope. [Note: Don lost his father during the COVID pandemic.]

Introduction

Job said, “Man, who is born of woman, is short-lived and full of turmoil” (14:1), because life under the sun is punctuated with loss and grief. Though grief is caused by other things, death is the most common for us all. Christians know that Jesus broke “the power of him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—and [has] free[d] those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death” (Heb. 2:14-15). Indeed, His resurrection and victory over death have set this certainty in our hope. For, “God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power” (Acts 2:24). Christians *know* the grave is not final. We *know* that believers will always be with the Lord (1 Thess. 4:17), and with that, we can “therefore comfort one another with these words” (1 Thess. 4:18).

And yet, though we know hope exists for our tomorrow, today we grieve.

Grief Is Real

It was felt by King David at his son's side. No doubt it was felt by Mary at her son's cross. It is a wholly natural and healthy response, whether we believe or not. We should expect to experience surprising difficulties and uncomfortable emotions: shock, confusion, anxiety or even depression. Of course, this will make our lives feel messy and complicated. Still, through it all, Christians can learn to cope with hope. To get to that hope, however, we must work through the

arduous process of grief, a very hard road that must be traveled, or we will face residual damage. I know grief. Like many, I lost someone this year to the pandemic—my dad. Recently, I lost a very close friend, a young preacher intern, to cancer. The notices of death do not slow down as our age goes up. While death will be swallowed up in victory on the Great Last Day, Death still stings. Christ is the hope—the only hope—for victory over death (1 Cor. 15:50ff). So here we stand, dealing with death and grief as we walk on to hope.

The journey from grief to hope takes time. For those who grieve, there is never enough time. For those outside, impatience often grows against the grieving so that they are told, as I was once, “just get over it.” If it is true that love takes time, it will also be true that

letting go of that bankroll of love now stolen will take at least a complementary amount of time. If we “don't hurry love,” we should also say, “don't hurry grief.” Grief is the price we pay for love. It is the confusion caused by not knowing how to love someone who is gone. It is love's frustration, bitterness, anger, and resentment at death's destruction. It only exists where love once lived. Grief is love's unwillingness to give up. *It will take time.*

Further, grief is just one manifestation of life as a human. As free moral agents, our choices may lead to blessing—or suffering. James certainly saw that tests could bring endurance, even joy (1:2-3), and there certainly could be “higher purposes” that are often realized after the death of a loved one in our “acceptance.” Sadly, though, it is often the very first thing that we “comforters” try to say to



“comfort” the griever. In their grief, they don’t need to find the greater purpose; they need to grieve through these stages of grief: (1) shock or disbelief, (2) denial, (3) bargaining, (4) guilt, (5) anger, (6) depression, and finally, (7) acceptance and hope (medicine.net). As noted above, everyone will move through them in their own way and timeline. So, when Paul says, “that you may not grieve” (1 Thess. 4:13), he is not telling Christians to never grieve; but to handle grief as those who are informed from a gospel perspective. Christians should experience grief but without prolonged despair, experience sorrow but without prolonged defeat, and experience sadness but without prolonged hopelessness. Whether it is episodes of anger or comfort, solace or busyness, everyone will process their healing in the way that brings comfort. Remember, to get to hope, *we still must start with grief*. We need to let people do the same.

If grief threatens to overwhelm, though, try saying with the psalmist, “My soul weeps because of grief; strengthen me according to your word” (Ps. 119:28). Don’t forget to keep communing with God in Scripture—even one little verse at a time—to work through grief. For “those who wait for the Lord will gain new strength” (Isa. 40:31). So, how do we get to hope?

Accept the Loss

The first task is accepting the reality of the loss, even if it was quick, as well as overcoming the shock and denial. “Seeing is believing” truly facilitates grief. It’s no use “not looking” and it’s even less useful—even harmful—to “not talk” about it. Talking about the deceased or the circumstances surrounding their death can help everyone. While the stark reality of their absence may painfully grip our hearts when we do this, it is the best step closer to hope.

Experience the Pain

We must also allow ourselves to experience grief’s pain. Some bottle up emotions or reject thoughts, while others pour their emotions from bottles or reject people they love. The only way to move through grief to hope is to experience fully that pain—most often through tears. Jesus wept over the loss of His friend Lazarus, even though He knew He would raise him from the dead. This permits us to weep (and we should allow those who grieve to weep). Experience the pain of grief—don’t suppress it.


Adjusting Is Coping

We must then adjust our environment. Sometimes we assume some of the social roles performed by the deceased, or we find others who will. For example, a grieving spouse may need help with household chores and cooking. Someone who never learned to drive must find other forms of transportation. Even though the widower or widow is no longer sitting home alone, her/she will regularly be reminded of the deceased. Yet, it is still the better alternative to get us from grief to hope. The goal is not to forget the person who died; it is finally to reach the point where you can remember your loved one—even with sad longing—but without experiencing disabling grief.

Don’t be discouraged if things get worse before they get better. If our knee is going to heal after a sports injury, we’re going to have to do the painful work of rehab. If we’re going to get stronger, we’re going to have to experience the soreness that comes from work outs. If a broken bone is going to heal, we’re going to have to endure the pain of setting the bone. The same is true in grief; pain precedes healing and restoration. Even as it was for Paul and his thorn, God’s grace will help us withstand the tides of sadness (cf. 2 Cor. 12:9). In the depths of grief, God’s presence and grace will allow us to feel the sadness and lament without ultimately being consumed by it. With each tear we cry, we move closer to healing by the sufficiency of His grace.

God told Israel, “In repentance and rest you will be saved, in quietness and trust is your strength” (Isa. 30:15). We must rely on God’s healing grace so that we can finally move on to hope through the comfort and strength grace brings. We cannot mend our hearts alone; but God can. So utilize His help!

Conclusion

Then, you can “*move on*.” This is the last step beyond grief. It is where we can step forward and live again with the memories—even when the painful longing remains—yet without the grief. While it will not unfold the same as it does for a widow like it does a parent—or like it does a child or a friend, the process will bring healing from the difficulties that death brings. When we follow these processes after death, we will once again see and feel that there is reason again for hope. Remember, “hope does not disappoint” (Rom. 5:8). 



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Dealing With Disobedience

by Alan Finley

Jesus's parables in Luke 15 provide guidance for Christians who are dealing with disobedience in the church and also with their children.

Introduction

Although we know from Scripture the power of godly instruction and influence, no church or family is immune to disobedience among its members. Whether it is within the church or among our own family, there are godly attitudes that we should have toward one who is living in disobedience.

Luke 15 describes how the self-righteous Pharisees and scribes complained that Jesus interacted with tax collectors and sinners. In response to their complaint, Jesus spoke three parables with the common theme of something of value that was lost and was then found. These parables describe a lost sheep, a lost coin, and a lost son. The spiritual message for this Jewish audience is that God places tremendous value on a single lost soul and he rejoices tremendously when a lost soul returns to him. These parables can apply to the conversion of an alien sinner to the Lord or they can apply to restoring an erring Christian to the Lord. For our purposes, we will focus on the latter application.

The Lost Sheep

The first parable regarding the lost sheep (vv. 1-7) tells of the shepherd (representing God) who had one hundred sheep (representing individual souls), but one had wandered off. When he finds the lost sheep, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices, a level of rejoicing that would likely seem unreasonable to this Jewish audience. Jesus then draws a parallel lesson, from the lesser to the greater, of

the rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents.

Another message of this parable is the extreme steps that the shepherd takes to restore a single lost sheep that strayed away from the many. We learn that every single soul is precious, even among many. Notice also that Jesus mentions how the shepherd carried the sheep on his shoulders. The scribes and Pharisee generally had a low opinion of shepherds because of their handling of sick or dead animals. They might be tempted to ask why the shepherd was willing to go in search of one lost sheep and why was he willing to carry him on his shoulders. To be so close to a dirty animal would likely be seen as degrading to a scribe or Pharisee. After all, he still had ninety-nine that were safe. Yet, the lesson is clear. God does not see us as a group; He sees us as individuals (Matt. 10:30) and sent His Son to save us as sin-sick and condemned individuals. A faithful Christian will feel deeply the value of a single disobedient soul and will seek to fill the role of a faithful shepherd, even making great sacrifices to restore a disobedient brother to the Lord.

The Lost Coin

The second parable (vv. 8-10) tells of a woman who had ten coins, but lost one. So great is her joy when she finds the coin that she calls her friends and neighbors together, saying, "Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I lost!" Again, Jesus's audience would likely be tempted to ask why such a dramatic celebration over something so insignificant. However,

this woman obviously placed great value on this single coin. The lost coin is restored to the woman, but the message of the parable is that a precious lost soul is restored to God.

In Matthew 16:26, Jesus describes a transaction wherein a man might exchange his soul for the whole world. Yet, He declares that exchange would be wholly unprofitable. A single soul is of greater value than the entire world. If that is the case, how should we value a single soul, and to what extent should we go to rescue a soul from hell? The clear implication is that we should be willing to go to great lengths.

The Lost Son

The third parable (vv. 11-31) speaks of a father who had two sons, the younger of which tells his father that he wants his inheritance before the customary time. After wasting his inheritance with sinful living, the son then makes his mind up to return to his father and ask to be as one of his servants.

Although we know that the heart of the father must have been broken, he did not allow his son's disobedience to drag him into a foreign country. In fact, the son knew that the father would be at home, where he had always been. Like the father in this parable, we must be an anchor to which the unstable can find stability, and a home to which the disobedient can return. Too many times, we see parents follow the disobedient child "into a foreign land," unwilling to stay at home like this faithful father. All too often, we see

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parents, or other Christian associates, drawn to compromise on previously held convictions, or even engage in the same acts of sin as the disobedient child. Our allegiance should be to God and not a disobedient child or Christian associate.

If the disobedience of a child, or other brother in Christ, has occurred, and the disobedient is unwilling to repent, we must stand firm in our faith and set clear boundaries for association. The disobedient should feel the pain of separation that they have brought on through their own choices. (1 Cor. 5:5) Sometimes the disobedient will have to face hard times to understand the terrible consequences of their sin, and we may be tempted to rescue them from their poor choices. Remember; the father of the prodigal did not save his son from the hard consequences of his bad choices. Although it may seem counterintuitive to us as parents, letting the son feel the full force of his sin was the loving thing to

do. It was better for the disobedient son to come to his senses in the pig pen than to come to his senses in torment like the rich man in Lk 17:23-24.

Yet, the disobedient should not be treated as an enemy (2 Thess. 3:14-15). They should know that we love them so much that we will go through this pain with them to save their souls. Parents and Christian associates must make godly judgements about how they handle these situations and there should be a clear difference in the social interactions before and after the disobedient has left the Lord.

As we move through the parable, and the penitent son journeys back to his home, we find the father feeling compassion for his son, running to him, hugging and kissing him, and celebrating his return. Like in the first two parables, the scribes and Pharisees would be tempted to ask how this father could so degrade himself to celebrate the return

of this disobedient son. In fact, later in the parable, we see the elder brother, who represents these self-righteous Jews, very unhappy that the father is rejoicing over the return and repentance of this disobedient son. The older brother does not love and value the younger brother the way the father does. The attitude of the older brother is of the world. In contrast, we should have the attitude of the father. As we close Luke 15, we hear the father expressing the ultimate hope that we should all have for any disobedient soul, "It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found" (v. 32). **IN**



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Dealing with Division

by Robert Harkrider

Without question, it can be affirmed that, when division occurs, the devil has wormed his way into the hearts of some, if not all, of those involved. Let's not give him that opportunity!

Introduction

Sincere Christians know that division among believers is contrary to the will of God. Jesus prayed for unity among believers "that the world may believe that You sent Me" (John 17:21). Without question, it can be affirmed that, when division occurs, the devil has worked his way into the hearts of some, if not all, of those involved. Participants on both sides will justify themselves; the devil has deceived them. Division always serves the purpose of the devil.

Division! How can that occur among believers? An easy answer says that some taught false doctrine, and opposition to that resulted in division. When Paul met the Ephesian elders at Miletus, he warned:

Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves (Acts 20:28–30).

The danger against which the inspired apostle cautioned came to pass when changes were adopted in the organization of the church. Elders became Bishops then Cardinals; soon there was a Pope claiming to be the universal head of the church on earth.

History has repeated itself in our modern era as schism has occurred over issues regarding the organization of the church. Failing to see the importance of Bible authority and how to establish it has resulted in the addition of human institutions that are maintained by the church. Initially, the Missionary Society became the focus of division. This human institution for evangelism supplanted God's designed plan for the church to carry out its own work. Similar patterns of human institutions for benevolence and edification have supplanted God's designed work for the church. These additions without biblical authority have led to much division.

While these issues over the organization and work of the church have caused a major division in the

Lord's church, there are other issues that have disrupted local churches. Attitudes unbecoming sincere children of God have led to separations. Instead of loving one another as brethren, these attitudes have led to ungodly gossip and strained feelings.

Attitudes that Lead to Division

Let's briefly examine a few attitudes that lead to division, with a view to avoiding such perils and pitfalls.

Itching Ears

It has been said that one can prove anything by the Bible. That is true, but only if the Scriptures are taken out of context. The apostle Peter said that some things Paul had written were "hard to understand which untaught



and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures” (2 Pet. 3:16). If one sets his heart to justify a practice, and then keeps searching, he will find someone who agrees. If you doubt that, just consider how many different positions are found on the subject of marriage, divorce, and remarriage. Is there any question why Paul exhorted Timothy to “preach the word.” He warned that some will turn their ears away from the truth and be turned aside to fables. “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers” (2 Tim. 4:2-4). “Itching ears” are not content with the simple Word of God; they keep scratching until they leave the inspired revelation.

Intellectual Arrogance

Intellectual arrogance searches for new explanations and applications of Scripture that the average Christian would not easily comprehend. Perhaps the easily understood Scriptures become boring and the elevation of a person’s intellect is praised if one can espouse an idea not easily comprehended by others. Try following the muddled explanations of someone who proclaims that all prophecy was fulfilled in AD 70. You will soon discover a different approach to handling passages that once seemed easily understood. The appeal to find something new and different is not unique to our generation. Only a few years after Pentecost, John wrote that some “went out from us but they were not of us” (1 John 2:19). John was dealing with the gnosticism of his day. “Gnostic” comes from the Greek verb, *ginosko*, i.e., “to know.” They thought they knew more than the apostles about the deity of Jesus Christ. Their doctrine denied His humanity. Paul exhorted Timothy to remind his brethren “before the Lord not to strive about words to no profit, to the ruin of the hearers” (2 Tim. 2:14). Furthermore, Timothy should humbly “correct those who are in opposition if God perhaps will grant them repentance so that they may know

the truth and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will” (Tim. 2:25-26).

Preacher-i-tis

Elevation of your favorite preacher can lead to many problems. The church at Corinth certainly had this problem. Apollos was an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures (Acts 18:24). Whether true or not, Paul was accused of weak bodily presence and contemptible speech (2 Cor. 10:10). Yet both men preached the same gospel—the power of God to salvation. Therefore, jealousy of men who preach the gospel must be set aside (1 Cor. 1:10-13).

Hurt Feelings

It was a strange Gospel Meeting when I learned that a couple sitting near the front of the auditorium would not speak to a couple who sat near the back. I was told to watch how they carefully avoided each other when services were over. I am not sure what caused this rift, but it did not matter. Both had an obligation before God to heal this schism. Jesus plainly set forth how this can be resolved. If you are the one who has been sinned against, then go to the offender. If he will not make it right, then take one or two more, and if that does not resolve the problem, take it before the church (Matt. 18:15-17). On the other hand, if you are the offender, then get busy and go find the offended brother and make matters right (Matt. 5:23-24). Perhaps both parties will meet each other on the way in their effort to serve the Lord!

Do not let bitterness overtake your heart nor allow pride to prevent forgiveness (Eph. 4:31-32).

Me First

Elders have a serious responsibility as they “watch out for your souls, as those who must give account.” Consequently, in order to have unity, Christians are commanded, “Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive” (Heb. 13:17).

Nevertheless, the word “submit” has become offensive to some. In fact, a member who refused to submit made the comment, “I just don’t see that verse in Hebrews the same as you do.” Another member said, “I know the elders are not asking me to obey false doctrine, but I am leaving simply because I do not agree with their judgment.” This “me first” attitude will selfishly follow the leadership of the elders only so long as one agrees with them. Therefore, who really is leading? Must the elders take a survey to find out which way the wind is blowing and make a decision only after feeling the pulse of the congregation? If so, they become followers, not leaders.

Conclusion

What must be done when division occurs? First, look in the mirror of God’s word and determine your role. Are you standing for sound doctrine and with God-fearing attitude? If so, division is not always bad. You may be standing faithfully, like the apostle John, when some who departed had turned away from the truth. Second, if you find yourself on the side of wrong attitudes, then repent and make matters right. Third, pray for all who are involved. Even if they have acted like enemies, pray for your enemies (Matt. 5:44-48). Finally, let the mind of Christ, described in Philippians 2:3-11, be the guide for your attitude. **T**



Robert Harkrider

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Dealing with Brethren in Doctrinal Error

by Kyle Pope

How should Christians handle circumstances in which a brother or sister in Christ promotes doctrinal error? What biblical principles should guide and govern our behavior?

Introduction

Few conditions are as challenging to our relationship with fellow-Christians than those times when we must confront brethren who have embraced error. In most cases, they do not see their choices as unsound. In fact, they may well imagine that they have reached an understanding of an issue that is deeper, fuller, or truer to the teachings of Scripture than they previously held. How must we approach such situations? What guidance from God's word can we follow through these difficult times? In this study, we will consider five principles that should direct our words and actions in dealing with brethren in doctrinal error.

"A little leaven leavens the whole lump."

The easiest course when facing a task that is difficult or undesirable is to do nothing. That's why we put off cleaning the garage, repairing that broken fence, or organizing our storage shed. We know the work will be hard and the choices difficult, so we choose not to act until circumstances demand it. In spiritual matters, this can be devastating. On two occasions,

the apostle Paul cited the practical warning, "a little leaven leavens the whole lump." The first is in a question to the Corinthians urging them to recognize the danger posed to the congregation by allowing sexual immorality to go undisciplined (1 Cor. 5:6). The second is in the closing chapters of his letter to the churches of Galatia who were wrestling with the false teachings of the Judaizing teachers (Gal. 5:9). In both cases, just as a small amount of yeast can work through an entire batch of dough, so unaddressed sin and error can quickly influence others to accept and practice the same things. Certainly, "the prudent considers well his steps" (Prov. 14:15b), but we must never confuse patience and thoughtfulness with neglect and inactivity. A failure to confront a brother in error may quickly

lead to a much bigger problem that is even harder to resolve.

"Admonish him as a brother."

I am the youngest of three brothers. As a child, it was not uncommon for my older brothers to be left in charge if my parents had to be away from the house for an hour or so. During that time, I had to do what they said, but they had to answer to mom and dad for *what* they said and *how* they said it! In 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15, Paul instructed the church to discipline some who were taking advantage of the generosity of others while refusing to work. They were to "withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us" (3:6). Paul ended his instruction with this caution, "Yet do not count him as an

enemy, but admonish him as a brother" (3:15). Our brothers and sisters who have wandered into sin and error do not stop being our brethren. Although they are erring brethren, they remain children of God in need of restoration to a faithful relationship with Him. While the nature of our association with them must change, we both remain accountable to the



same Father in heaven. Jesus taught, “for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment” (Matt. 12:36). As we confront their error, let us remember that we will answer to God for what we have said and how we have said it to them. The word translated “admonish” in 2 Thessalonians 3:15 literally means *to call to mind*. In the emotion and stress of admonition, we aren’t shouting down an enemy but reminding fellow-children of our heavenly Father what He has called us to be.

“Considering yourself lest you also be tempted.”

In a laboratory setting, great caution must be used in dealing with hazardous chemicals. The wrong combinations can become toxic or explosive. Rigid safeguards and protocols are followed to protect lab workers against these dangers. Only a few verses after Paul’s warning to the Galatian churches about leaven (Gal. 5:9), he wrote, “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” (Gal. 6:1). Confronting error is a dangerous thing! What if I am influenced to accept and believe error? Am I grounded enough to distinguish truth from error? What if I sin in the way I speak to or treat a brother I am trying to draw away from sin? Like the lab worker, it is important to go into these situations fully aware of the many dangers that could arise. In correcting the Galatians, Paul asked, “Have I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth?” (Gal. 4:16). A very real danger in confronting error is that it can change former friends and co-workers into enemies. True love and friendship, “does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth” (1 Cor. 13:6). If a brother does not recognize that, alienation may be unavoidable, but we must take every precaution to avoid personal sin in our efforts to address the situation.

“Resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother’s way.”

In Romans 14:1-23, Paul instructed the Christians in Rome on how to deal with issues of conscience that arose when new converts from Judaism still felt compelled to follow the Mosaic religious calendar and dietary restrictions. While those requirements were no longer binding under Christ, he taught them that acting in doubt was sinful (14:23). That created a challenging situation. How should those who were fully convinced of their liberty in Christ respond to those who had doubts? Paul commanded, “let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother’s way” (14:13). This principle has application to our topic. As we confront sin and error, we must never put a “stumbling block” in our brother’s way. We might do this by humiliating him. Discipline is intended to make one feel ashamed (2 Thess. 3:14), but Paul warned that one can be “be swallowed up with too much sorrow” (2 Cor. 2:7). We must leave open to those we confront an honorable way to forsake their error. Pride can lead souls to remain stubbornly in conditions they recognize to be wrong rather than yielding to those they feel have mistreated them. Charges of mistreatment are often unfounded, but we must never act in ways that actually make it harder for brethren to come back to faithfulness to the Lord. If it would not restore us if it were done to us, we shouldn’t do it to someone else (Matt. 7:12).

“He who greets him shares in his evil deeds.”

While these cautions are important, John warns of another danger we must not overlook. Through the Holy Spirit, he wrote, “Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son” (2 John 9). The “doctrine of

Christ” represents sound teaching about Christ but also His general teachings while on earth and through His apostles. It is the gospel. John warns that turning away from the truth of the gospel ultimately sacrifices one’s relationship to God. This is serious business. Souls are at stake! John further writes, “If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds” (2 John 10-11). The word translated “greet” means *to rejoice, be well, or be glad*. This is not the same word Jesus used to urge His disciples to “greet” or “salute” (KJV, ASV) those beyond simply our friends and brethren (Matt. 5:44-47). John is talking about wishing erring brethren happiness and joy in their error! No, we must not treat them with rudeness, as if they were our enemies (2 Thess. 3:15), but neither can we act as if everything is fine. If it is not clear to the brother we confront (and to those who observe our interaction with him) that we consider him to be in sin and error, John says we share “in his evil deeds.” Just as inactivity can allow a dangerous influence to spread, a treatment of those in error that is too accepting can actually stain us with the guilt of their error. May God help us avoid such dangers and lovingly bring souls back to faithfulness to Him while guarding against the destructive consequences which sin and error pose to God’s people. **■**



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Dealing with Distractions

by Melvin Curry

Christians must try to keep focused on Christ, but we cannot completely avoid distractions; however, we can separate them into categories of right or wrong by the prism of God's word and yield only to the beneficial ones.

Introduction

Distractions are commonplace; we cannot avoid them. Most of them are not significant. If, while I am studying, a nearby mockingbird begins to sing, I may hear the pleasant sound, but not lose my train of thought. However, if I stop what I am doing to listen to the bird sing and lose my train of thought, then I have let the noise seriously distract me. Some distractions are far more serious. They can even be deadly. For example, a slight distraction while driving a car at high speed on an interstate may result in a crash. Hopefully, only the cars involved would be damaged, but, sadly, serious injuries, even deaths, might result. Our primary concern in this article centers on distractions that affect us spiritually.

The LORD used the Israelites to defeat the Syrian army, despite the fact that King Ahab was out of favor with him (1 Kings 20:1-43). God had devoted Ben-Hadad to destruction (v. 42), but Ahab allowed him to live. An unknown prophet disguised himself and appeared to the king of Israel. The prophet used himself as the principal character of a parable. He related that he had been ordered to guard a prisoner but became "busy here and there" and let the prisoner escape. Ahab quickly pronounced a death sentence on the man, only to be told that the parable was about Ahab's own action. The phrase *busy here and there* well describes an individual who is distracted from what he should be doing. *Whatever directs our attention away from an important task at hand is a distraction.*

Not all distractions are sinful, but many of them may lead to dereliction of duty; they may even become doorways to sin. A Christian's focus is to be on doing the will of God (Matt. 7:21), and Jesus's prayer in Gethsemane perfectly exemplifies what it means to center one's attention on the Father: "Not as I will, but as You will" (Matt. 26:39, NASB update).

Allowing a Good Thing to Become a Distraction

Prayer is representative of all devotion to God, but we must consider the possibility that even it could become a distraction from spreading the gospel to the lost, an excuse for not letting our lights shine in the world (Matt. 5:16). We are commanded to pray frequently and fervently (1 Thess. 5:17), but it would be wrong to isolate ourselves entirely from the world in order to pray repetitiously to the Father all day long, day after day, year after year, for a lifetime. We must not allow ourselves to fall into the trap of thinking that *not* being "of the world" means that we are to live in spiritual cocoons. We live "in the world" (John 16:33) and are duty-bound to teach and preach outside the four walls of a church building. We must be about our Father's business and share the good news with those who need it most.

Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians chapter seven some suggestive and beneficial answers in response to the Corinthians' questions. Although his remarks were aimed at the Corinthians, they have value for us today. If heeded, they will help us better to "serve the Lord without

distraction" (v. 35). The apostle indicated that prayer and fasting may even become a distraction from fulfilling our conjugal responsibilities in marriage (read 1 Cor. 7:3-5), which in turn might create a situation (one of Satan's "schemes," see 2 Cor. 2:11, NASV) in which either the husband or wife loses "self-control" and becomes involved in some form of fornication. Especially notice that a "limited time" is suggested for prayer and fasting (v. 5, ESV).

Martha, who set a gold standard for making the home a place of hospitality, allowed herself to be "distracted with much serving" (Luke 10:40, NKJV). We should learn from her mistake not to lose our focus. We cannot let ourselves lose the time we should spend with Jesus. If we become distracted, we need to admit our mistake to ourselves, unless it is pointed out to us by others, and strive to get back on track quickly, as painful as the process may be. Spiritual discipline, especially *self-discipline*, is difficult (read Heb. 11:11). Retraining our minds to resist being drawn away by distractions is even harder.

The Relentless Increase of Distractions

Genesis 4:17 records that Cain's son, Enoch, built a city. Presumably, it was the first city founded by a human being. The people who lived there became exposed to and enticed by more and more distractions. Later, a descendant of Enoch named Jubal is described as "the father of all those who play the harp and the flute" (4:21, NET). The wave created by persons



like Enoch and Jubal has developed into a global tsunami of gadgets.

Each succeeding generation has witnessed an astounding increase in technology; thus, we now live in much larger cities that offer more amenities and have at our disposal more and more products to distract us. I am not suggesting that the rural population has no distractions. Our natural inclination is to desire things, and temptation causes us to crave them (Jas. 1:13-16). Edward J. Carnell has a brilliant analysis of the pleasure principle in his book *A Philosophy of the Christian Religion*. Our desires are insatiable; they demand immediate satisfaction. Solomon confessed, “Whatever my eyes desired, I did not keep from them. I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure” (Eccl. 2:10). He tried every pathway of pleasure he could travel: wisdom (1:13-18); sensual pleasures, such as wine (2:3) and women (1 Kings 11:1-4); music and musical instruments (Eccl. 2:8b); possessions of all kinds (2:4-7); and wealth (2:8). Read the historical account of Solomon’s life in 1 Kings 2:11-11:43 and 2 Chronicles 1:1-9:31. To some extent, we all seem to follow in Solomon’s footsteps. Even if we set moral boundaries, we seem to have an infinite number of

choices to make. We get *bored* with the old and want the new. Soon we become *frustrated* because we cannot have all we want. If during the process that moves from distraction to desire to fulfillment we cross the red line from right to wrong, we experience *guilt*. Only when we become *worn out* by old age, do many of the desires subside, but not all of them. Unless our minds are gone, we still think about what we would like to do.

Electronic Technological Distractions

Lastly, consider a few other technologies that distract us. TV has been around for quite some time, but now we have smart TVs. The data analyzed from some surveys suggests that Americans, on the average, spend 3.1 hours a day watching TV. That adds up to a little over 1,160 hours a year. Another recent survey found that we spend five to six hours a day using our smartphones, in addition to the time we spend on them for work-related usage. Five hours a day eats up 1,800 hours. Of course, there would be some overlap because of the ultrasophisticated ability of the gadgets on the market. Each year, Americans collectively spend 70,000,000,000 hours

behind the wheel of an automobile. The list goes on and on. Sadly, the moments described in each of the above categories may be occasions of distraction; most of them are neither productive nor constructive, but others may be moments of harm and death (even spiritual death).

Conclusion

We must train ourselves to filter distractions, follow the guidance of God’s word in reacting to spiritual distractions, act on the ones that are compatible with our purpose to serve the Lord, and rely on His grace and mercy to forgive us when yield to the wrong impulses. May we all seriously contemplate Paul’s alarming statement, “I am afraid that just as the [serpent] with his cunning seduced Eve, your minds may be led astray from single-minded devotion to Christ” (2 Cor. 11:3, New Jerusalem Bible). **TL**



Melvin Curry

Melvin retired in 1997 from teaching at Florida College, Temple Terrace, FL. Following retirement, he spent fifteen years preaching and teaching in Crystal River, while working with the West Citrus church of Christ, and made numerous trips to Ethiopia to preach and teach. He and his wife, Shirley, have five children. His email address is melvin.curry@gmail.com.

Consider also the story of Polycarp (AD 69-155), a Christian bishop of Smyrna, who, according to tradition, died a martyr, bound and burned at the stake. According to post-apostolic *The Martyrdom of Polycarp*:

As he was brought forward, the tumult became great when they heard that Polycarp was taken. And when he came near, the proconsul asked him whether he was Polycarp. On his confessing that he was, [the proconsul] sought to persuade him to deny [Christ], saying, "Have respect to your old age", and other similar things, according to their custom, [such as], "Swear by the fortune of Caesar; repent, and say, Away with the Atheists."

But Polycarp, gazing with a stern countenance on all the multitude of the wicked heathen then in the stadium, and waving his hand toward them, while with groans he looked up to heaven, said, "Away with the Atheists." Then, the proconsul urging him, and saying, "Swear, and I will set you at liberty, reproach Christ"; Polycarp declared, "Eighty-six years I have served Him, and He never did me any injury: how then can I blaspheme my King and my Saviour?"

Conclusion

In times of societal crisis, let us remember the words of the psalmist: "In God I have put my trust, I shall not be afraid. What can man do to me?" (Ps. 56:11). In times of personal crisis, let us remember the words of Isaiah: "Say to those with anxious heart, 'Take courage, fear not. Behold, your God will come with vengeance; the recompense of God will come, but He will save you'" (Isa. 35:4). If persecution arises, let us remember the words of the Lord Jesus:

Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a cent? And yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So do not fear; you are more valuable than many sparrows (Matt. 10:28-31). **IM**

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 | marketstreet-church.com

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 Hwy. 31)
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 Evangelists: Zack Lee | (205) 822-0018

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 Bible Study 7:00 pm
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 0990 | sandlinroadhchurch.com

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 336-0052 | hwy65churchofchrist.org

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 9104 or (870) 741-5151 | cappsroad.org

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 9134

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 3634 | churchofchristtucson.org

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 866-5615 | roseavenue.org

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 JP Flores | (562) 420-2363 or Mark Reeves
 | (562) 377-1674 | justchristians.org

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 leychurchofchrist.org

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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
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 | 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
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
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
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 | Wed. Bible Study 7:30 pm
Evangelist: Ron Halbrook & Connie W. Ad-
ams | (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 | 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)
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 | northernmichi-
ganchurchofchrist.com

MISSISSIPPI

CLINTON

McRaven Rd. Church of Christ

301 McRaven Rd. (120, 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 | roncoo-
per@bellsouth.net
Ricky Ethridge: (601) 737-5778 | ricky-
marsha@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 | Building (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 | swcofchrist.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 | eaglerockroadchurchofchrist.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 | westsidechurchof-christ.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
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
233-4102 or (402) 228-3827 | churchof-christ7bell.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
525-5655 | charlottechurchofchrist.org

Winston Salem

Winston Salem Church of Christ

2800 South Main St., Winston Salem, NC 27127
Sun. Bible Class: 9:30 am | Sun. Worship 10:45 am | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
784-5058 | wschurch.com

OHIO

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 or 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 | vangelist: 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 | mariettareno-churchofchrist.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

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
388-5828 or (931) 381-7898 | mooresvillepikecoc.com

ChurchDirectory

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 & (972) 727-5355 | twincreeksoc.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 | 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 | 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 or 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 | 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 | ednachurchofchrist.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
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 | bacliffchurchofchrist.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
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. (77084)
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship 10:20 am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:30 pm
Evangelist: Mark White | 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
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 | northsidecofc.us

NACOGDOCHES

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 (yourfriendjigar@gmail.com) or (leonvalleychurch@gmail.com) | (254) 939-0682 | leonvalleychurch.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
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

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
956-6049 | churchofchristatridgeway.
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) | 242-3098 | tacomachurch@
gmail.com | tacomachurch.com

WEST VIRGINIA

CLARKSBURG

Westside Church of Christ

7 Old Davisson Run Rd
Sun. Worship 9:30 am
622-5433 | westsidechurchofchristwv.
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
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
+1 (403) 452-5116 | churchofchristcal-
gary.com

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