

Truth

Magazine

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CHALLENGING CASUALNESS

“Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor; not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord” (Rom. 12:10-11, NASB).



Truth Magazine

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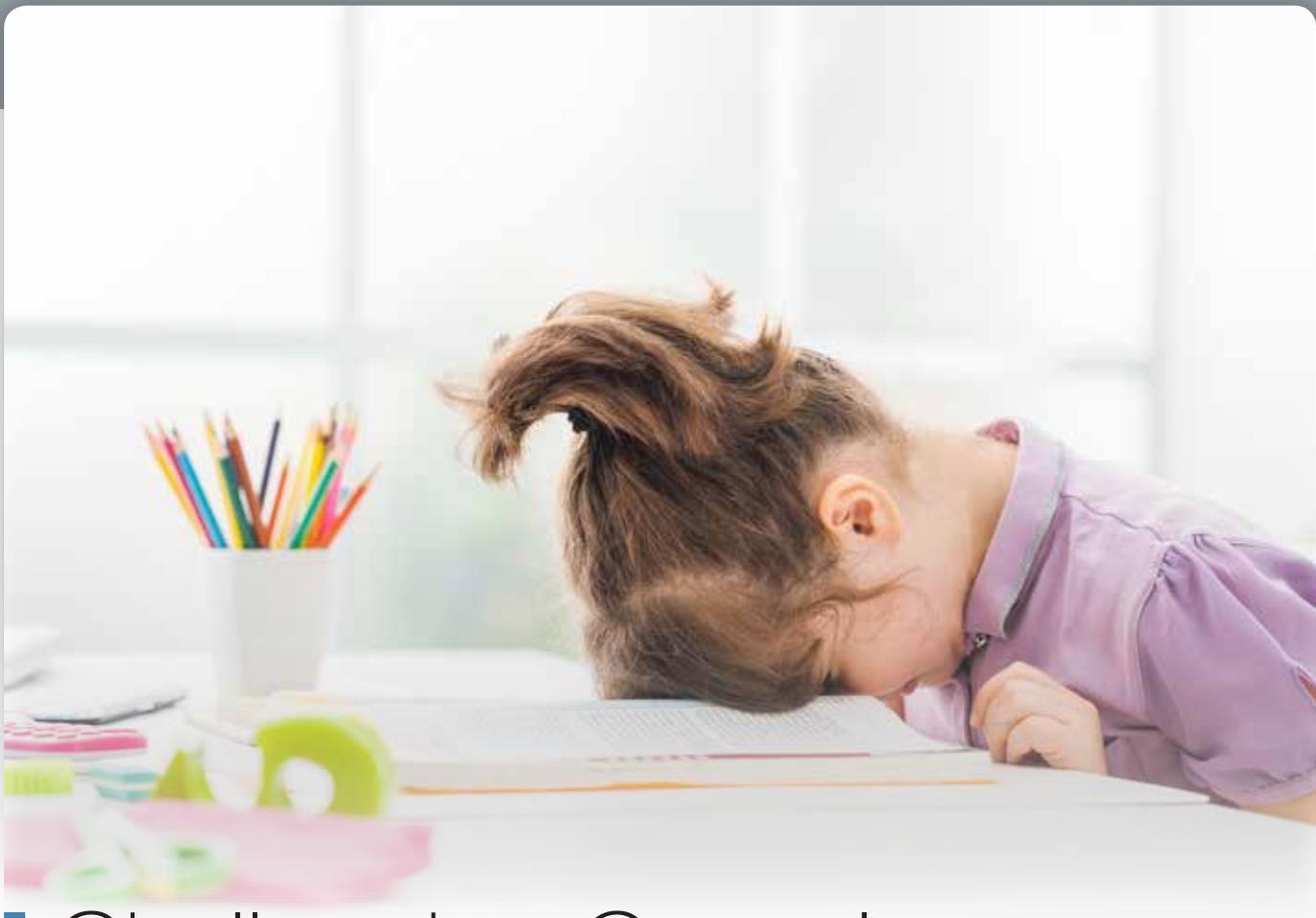
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Challenging Casualness

by Mark Mayberry

In his editorial, Mark offers an introduction to the theme section of this issue of *Truth Magazine* which focuses upon “Challenging Casualness.”

Challenging

The December 2018 issue of *Truth Magazine* focuses on “Challenging Casualness” in the monthly theme section. What is meant by “challenging”? According to the *Concise Oxford Dictionary*, when “challenge” is used as a verb, it means to “(1) dispute the truth or validity of (someone/something); Law: object to (a jury member); (of a guard) order (someone) to prove their identity; (2) invite (someone) to engage in a contest or fight; (3) make a rival claim to (a position); [usually as an adjective: challenging] test the abilities of (someone/something)...”

The Greek word *prokaleō* means “to call forth” or “challenge” (Thomas 4292). BDAG says it means “to call out to someone to come forward, frequently in a hostile sense: provoke, challenge someone.” Louw and Nida define it as “to cause provocation or irritation in someone” (88.188). It occurs once in the New Testament: Paul said, “Let us not become boastful, challenging (*prokaleō*) one another, envying one another” (Gal. 5:26). However, the concept of issuing (or accepting) a challenge is often communicated in the Bible.

My frequent Sunday lunch buddies (Maren and Doak) and I engage in a verbal warfare before playing tick-tack-toe. “You are going DOWN,” saith I. “No, YOU are going down!” is their rejoinder. Challenge games are fun to share with friends and family: In the “Chubby Bunny” Challenge, you

compete with your friends to see how many marshmallows you can fit into your mouth while saying, “Chubby Bunny.” In the Hot Pepper Challenge, you attempt to eat an entire hot pepper. My sister, Deborah, tricked me into this one several years ago, when she said, “Mark, would you like to taste a ghost pepper?” Having lived in Texas for well over 30 years, I thought, “Sure! I eat Jalapeno peppers for dessert. Although I’ve never heard of ghost peppers, how bad could it be?” Well. Pretty bad. She handed me a big slice, I ate the whole thing, and two minutes later, I began sweating so profusely, it seemed my head had turned into a lawn sprinkler! The Blindfold Lipstick/Makeup Challenge is (allegedly) a goofy and fun thing for young girls at slumber parties. Participants cover their eyes and attempt to apply lipstick, blush, eye-shadow, etc. to the face of their partner, usually with humorous results. One perennial favorite that we enjoy at our annual fall festivals here in Alvin is the “How Far Can You Throw a Raw Egg and Catch It Without Breaking and Getting Yucky Goo All Over Your Losing Face?” Challenge.

From a biblical standpoint, consider the challenge of Goliath: “I defy the ranks of Israel this day; give me a man that we may fight together” (1 Sam. 17:1-11, esp. vv. 8-10, and also v. 26). During the time of the divided kingdom, Amaziah, king of Judah, sent a challenge to Jehoash, king of Israel, saying, “Come, let us face each other.” Note also Jehoash’s humorous rejoinder, where he effectively

said, “Son, you need to stay on the porch. Lap dogs can’t run with the big dogs!” (2 Kings 14:1-14, esp. v. 8; 2 Chron. 25:1-28, esp. v. 17).

How do we properly apply this “challenging” concept? There are right and wrong ways of challenging oneself and challenging others. There is also a danger in challenging God and refusing to be challenged by Him.

We should challenge ourselves to “Grow Up!” in Christ (Eph. 4:14-16; 1 Pet. 2:1-3; 2 Pet. 3:14-18). Despite having achieved a certain level of spiritual maturity, we should “excel still more” (1 Thess. 4:1, 10). Let us humbly use our talents, each according to his ability, carefully avoiding the opposite perils of excuse making and excessive pride (Matt. 25:14-28; 26:31-34; Luke 22:24-34).

We should not selfishly or sinfully challenge others (Gal. 5:19-26, esp. v. 26). Let us avoid carnal attitudes (such as enmities, envying, and jealousy) that lead to carnal actions (such as boastfulness, disputes, dissensions, factions, outbursts of anger, and strife). In contrast, we should consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds (Heb. 10:19-25).

We should not foolishly challenge God. Remember the wisdom of Job’s declaration concerning God: “Wise in heart and mighty in strength, who has defied Him without harm?” (Job 9:1-12, esp. v. 4). Recall Peter’s warning about the folly of false teachers who presumptuously thought they could add to/subtract from/alter the

gospel message of salvation: “Now, therefore, why do you put God to the test by placing upon the neck of the disciples a yoke which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear?” (Acts 15:6-11, esp. v. 10).

On the other hand, we should accept God’s challenges. The Lord God issued a “Come now!” challenge to Moses (Exod. 3:10-12), to wayward Israel (Isa. 1:18-20), and also to distracted disciples (Jas. 4:13-17). Since God challenges us to serve Him, let us not make excuses as did Moses. Since God challenges us to repent, let us not show defiance as did Israel. Since God challenges us to seek first His kingdom and righteousness, let us not be distracted as were the disciples whom James addressed. Since God challenges us to obey, let us not neglect the blessing and opportunity of “Today!” (Heb. 3:7-11, 14-15; 4:7).

Casualness

What is meant by “casualness”? Depending on the context, the term “casual” or “casualness” can carry various meanings. When used as an adjective, “casual” is descriptive of that which is “(1) relaxed and unconcerned; made, done, or acting without much care or thought: a casual remark; (2) not regular or firmly established; (of a worker) employed on a temporary or irregular basis; (of a sexual relationship or encounter) occurring between people who are not established sexual partners; (3) happening by chance; accidental: a casual meeting; (4) without formality of style, manner, or procedure” (Oxford).

In many ways, we live in a casual age. Some of this is good and desirable. Modern lifestyles are more relaxed than formerly. Clothing is often designed for comfort. Business casual dominates in the workplace. Few of us wear starched shirts or regularly eat in a formal dining room. We enjoy our Lazy-Boy recliners, especially when kicked back into “third gear.” Yet, we run the danger of becoming

too casual, especially regarding moral, religious, and spiritual issues.

Although the word “casual” is largely absent from the English translations of the Bible commonly used by brethren, it occurs once in the New King James Version. Describing the idolatry of faithless Israel and her treacherous sister, Judah, God said, “through her *casual* harlotry,” she “defiled the land” (Jer. 3:8-10, esp. v. 9). The Hebrew word *qol*, translated “casual” (KJV) or “lightness” (NASB), refers to a spirit of “frivolity” (BDB) or “lightheartedness” (Holladay). In other words, apostate Israel had a frivolous attitude toward faithfulness and a casual attitude toward idolatry.

While the terms “casual/casualness” are not oft found in the Bible, the concept is frequently communicated. We must not be half-hearted or manifest divided loyalty. Elijah rebuked wayward Israel for being non-committal: “How long will you hesitate between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him.” Yet, the people did not answer him a word (1 Kings 18:21). Jesus said, “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth” (Matt. 6:24).

Let us not be lukewarm. The Lord condemned the disciples at Laodicea for this deficiency: “I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot. So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth” (Rev. 3:15-16). The Greek word *chliaros*, translated “lukewarm,” refers to that which is “tepid” in temperature. (Thomas). Instead of manifesting a “Whatever!” attitude, we should be “fervent (literally, boiling) in spirit, serving the Lord” (Rom. 12:11).

Many today manifest a casual attitude toward alcohol, toward modest and proper attire, toward the demands of discipleship, toward choices in

entertainment, toward speech and communication, toward the word of God, and toward worship. I encourage you to consider the good articles in the theme section of this issue of *Truth Magazine*. Read these articles carefully. Research the biblical passages that are cited. Reflect the spirit of the Bereans: “Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so” (Acts 17:11). Such an open and honest spirit yields great benefits: “Therefore many of them believed, along with a number of prominent Greek women and men” (Acts 17:12). **11**

Sources

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Editor

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Why Do We Pray?

by Kyle Pope

In asking, “Why Do We Pray?” Kyle considers the importance of taking advantage of this avenue of communication with God and emphasizes the conditional nature of acceptable prayer.

Critics of faith often appeal to prayer as a reason to reject the validity of faith altogether. The reasoning is: If we can't prove that there is some measurable benefit to prayer it must mean: (1) there is no God, (2) there is a God, but He doesn't care whether we pray to Him or not, or (3) there is a God, but He is cruel and unwilling to come to the aid of those who believe in Him. If Christians cite examples they believe demonstrate answers to prayer, the same critics argue: (1) it is just coincidence, (2) how can we know it would not have happened even without prayer?, or (3) those of conflicting world religions all make similar claims, so there is no God and prayer has no value. Let's consider biblical teachings about prayer that address these charges.

These arguments conceive of prayer only in terms of requests to be granted—not communication as a part of an ongoing relationship. Critics ask, “Why do we need to pray if God already knows everything?” It is true that God “knows the things you have need of before you ask Him” (Matt. 6:8, NKJV), but the Bible makes it clear that making requests for these needs (and expressing gratitude for blessings previously granted) are ways of acknowledging the power and glory of God on an ongoing basis. The model prayer that Jesus offers in the Sermon on the Mount shows that in prayer we are to request what we need (“give us this day our daily bread” [Matt. 6:11]), but also that we are to acknowledge

our recognition of God's status, power, and grandeur (“hallowed be Your name” [Matt. 6:10]). This element of prayer has a daily effect on our mindset and view of our lives, but it cannot be quantified and measured in visible ways. It moves us to see life differently. It reminds us that we did not create ourselves, nor do we have the slightest power to sustain the processes of God's creation that provide our sustenance. The critic fails to see that recognition of our status and inferiority before an all-powerful God provides a continual benefit to our worldview that affects innumerable aspects of our life and interactions with daily events.

The primary benefit of prayer has nothing to do with our material condition, but with our spiritual condition—the forgiveness of sins. It is a request (“forgive us our debts” [Matt. 6:12]), and it is a necessary condition for forgiveness to be granted (cf. 1 John 1:9; Acts 8:22), but it cannot be measured by any material calculation. Someone might ask, “Is it a sin not to pray?” If we must ask for sin to be forgiven, then failure to pray is both a sin of omission (Jas. 4:17) and an action which neglects the means by which God grants forgiveness—so sin remains on our account. The critic who asks for some visible, measurable demonstration of answers to prayer overlooks this fundamental element of prayer and its immeasurable value.

It is also clear that God's willingness to grant requests is always conditioned upon whether the request falls within His will. John wrote, “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). This means several things. First, our requests cannot be things that violate God's revealed will. James demonstrates this when he speaks of those “You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures” (Jas. 4:3). John demonstrates it when he teaches that we cannot expect that God will grant prayers offered for those who commit “sin leading to death” (1 John 5:16). *Sin to death* is sin that one has committed for which he has not repented. To pray that God would forgive such sin is a prayer that is not “according to His will.”

If God does not grant prayers contrary to His will, it also means that things that are not granted may in some way be contrary to God's providential will for us in life. The smallest things that happen in life only occur by God's allowance. Jesus asked, “Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will” (Matt. 10:29). This doesn't mean that God directly kills sparrows—“time and chance happen to them all” (Eccl. 9:10). Our very life continues or comes to an end by the allowance of God's providential

will. James taught that we, “ought to say, ‘If the LORD wills, we shall live and do this or that’” (Jas. 4:15).

God is in a position to know what is and is not best for each of us. I might pray that I could inherit \$1,000,000, but God might know that this would not be best for me. Perhaps I would misuse this wealth. Perhaps it would cause me to become worldly and sinful in my attitudes and behavior. If so, by not granting that request, God actually would be showing His care for me in ways that I might not see at the time. The critic would look at this as a case of neglect, cruelty, or indifference, but this ignores God’s knowledge of things that we cannot know. If God will not allow us to be tempted beyond what we are able to bear (1 Cor. 10:13), is it possible that when our prayers are not answered as we thought best, God was actually shielding us from temptation?

So why do people the world over claim that God has answered their prayers? First, we would agree with the critic that not everything people attribute directly to prayer is an answer to prayer. God, “makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust” (Matt. 5:45). He gives to all “fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness” (Acts 14:17). So, although He does good to all, that doesn’t mean that all are in the right relationship with Him, blessings of life are just coincidence, God has no role in such things, or that receiving those blessings is a direct answer to prayer. We can never really know where God’s care ends and natural laws begin. James said that God is the source of “Every good gift and every perfect gift” (Jas. 1:17).

Beyond this, we must recognize that the Bible teaches that sin changes the degree to which God hears prayer. God told Isaiah, “Behold, the LORD’S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save;

nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear” (Isa. 59:1-2). Note that this doesn’t mean God “cannot hear” such prayer. Peter wrote, “For the eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their prayers; but the face of the LORD is against those who do evil” (1 Pet. 3:12). What does it mean that God’s eyes are “on the righteous” and His ears are “open” to them? What does it mean for Him to be “against” those who do wrong? This doesn’t mean He doesn’t see or hear them—the wise man said, “The eyes of the LORD are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good” (Prov. 15:3). God sees and hears everything, but to hear the sound is not the same as hearing within the special relationship the Christian has with God. Parents may hear other children cry, but it is not the same as hearing the cry of one’s own children.

Those outside of Christ cannot pray with the assurance of their prayers being heard as God promises to hear the prayers of children of God (1 John 5:14). The false doctrine of the “sinner’s prayer” is incompatible with Scripture. Only when one is in Christ, does Jesus act as our Advocate to grant forgiveness to those who ask for it (1 John 2:1-2). However, it is an overstatement to argue that God never hears (or can in any way respond to) the prayers of those outside of Christ. Cornelius’ prayers did not save him, but God responded to them in a way that was beneficial to him, even though he was not yet in Christ (Acts 10:4). So, the critic’s appeal to the prayers of non-Christians is not a valid criticism. The claims of non-Christians do not discredit the value of prayer for the child of God, whether their prayers actually affected God’s general blessings upon them or not.

Finally, the critic fails to recognize that prayer is one side of the communication that is necessary to a healthy relationship with our Creator, just as communication is necessary to any healthy relationship. Husbands and wives want their spouse to talk to them. The marital relationship is weakened when this doesn’t happen. Parents and children want ongoing communication—not just when we want something, need allowance money, chores done, or without thanksgiving for what has already been done. What is true for human relationships is true in our relationship with God.

In prayer we pour out our cares to God (1 Pet. 5:7). This is to be done “in everything” with “thanksgiving,” in the promise that it can bring us “peace” which “surpasses understanding” (Phil. 4:6-7). Few would question the emotional benefits that come from talking to others about problems, concerns, and anxiety. How much more benefit comes when the One to whom we express these things is our Creator? Sadly, critics who view prayer in this way have never come to see faith in Christ in terms of a relationship with One who “cares for” us (1 Pet. 5:7) more than anyone ever has. Prayer is the privilege we are granted as a result of being in a saved relationship with our Creator and Savior. What a glorious blessing we have that, at all times, we can be assured that He hears us (1 John 5:15). These are the reasons we pray. **11**



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Lessons from the Symphony

by Deborah Towles

As a lover of music, Deborah observes that a symphony orchestra is an example of a secular unit applying biblical principles to achieve harmonious unity of purpose.

I love classical music! For our anniversary, Gale recently took me to hear the Charlotte Symphony perform Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, an absolute favorite. Written over 200 years ago, the beauty and power of this enduring masterpiece performed by dedicated musicians moved the audience to a standing ovation. The symphony orchestra is an example of a secular unit unwittingly applying biblical principles to achieve harmonious unity of purpose. When we experience and observe this high-functioning team, we are reminded of many important spiritual lessons applying to our homes and local congregations.

A musical genius first conceived and labored to compose the symphony (Gen. 1; Eph. 1:3-5, Gal. 4:4), assigning to each instrument a specific role and responsibility (Eph. 1:20-23; 4:11-13; 5:22-6:4). He penned a detailed musical score, essential to the orchestra of his time but also to future musicians willing to reproduce his vision (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2:2). His masterpiece stands the test of time and touches subsequent generations (1 Pet. 1:22-25). His name continues to be known and honored as new audiences are moved by his powerful work (Eph. 1:12-14).

The conductor leads his fellow musicians with conviction and purpose (Phil. 2:5-11; Eph. 1:20-23). He understands the composer's intentions, has an intimate knowledge of the score, and is committed to following it faithfully (John 17:7-8; 7:16-18). He is passionate about his purpose, working with his team to bring out their best efforts (Matt. 28:20b; Phil. 1:25). He understands that musicians' talents develop over time, expecting, even demanding progress, and never accepting mediocrity (2 Pet. 3:18; Rev. 3:14-16). He is aware of the importance of practice (Heb. 5: 12-14), both individually and as a group, so his team is well rehearsed. The conductor is visible, aware of the impact of his gestures, which are neither unintentional nor imprecise (John 14:8-10; 1 Cor. 11:1-2). He is undistracted from his purpose (John 4:34; Heb. 10:7), and demands the same focused attention from his team (Col. 3:1-2). At the end of the performance, he shares the spotlight, honoring the contribution of his musicians (Col. 3:3-4; 2 Tim. 2:11-12).

A great orchestra is composed of individuals who have so developed their skills by diligent practice (2 Tim. 2:15) that

their performance appears effortless to the audience (Col. 3:23-24; 1 Tim. 4:15-16). Proficient with their instruments and in their roles, they contribute to a harmonious whole (Col. 3:17-21; Eph. 4:16). Though gifted musicians are often able to play more than one instrument, only one can be played at a time. They focus first on perfecting their part, not on the mistakes of others (1 Pet. 3:8-9; Matt. 7:3-5). They recognize, encourage and appreciate the contribution of others (1 Cor. 12:20-27), and learn to wait patiently, sometimes for hundreds of measures, for their turn to play (1 Cor. 14:33). They recognize the need to let others "shine," sharing the spotlight and rejoicing in the expert performance of others (Rom. 12:15a; 1 Cor. 12:26b); for they realize they are a part of something greater than the individual (Phil. 2:2-5; Eph. 4:11-13). They learn to concentrate on the task at hand, and do not dwell on past mistakes (Phil 3:12-14; Eph. 4:31-32). No one wants to be out of step or out of tune (1 Pet. 3:8-9; Phil 4:2); each must keep his eye on the conductor, and follow his lead (Eph. 5:23-24). In the end, all share in the glory of a job well done, knowing that their success was not achieved apart from the contribution of others (Rom. 12:3-8; Eph. 4:11-15). They recognize that the greatest honor belongs to the composer (Matt. 5:13-16).

An audience is rarely unmoved after an expert performance. Even those who consider themselves unmusical recognize that they have witnessed something extraordinary (1 Pet 2:12-15; Phil 2:15)! Such performances may serve to inspire future musicians (1 Pet. 3:1-4).

Let us be inspired to assimilate and share these truths regarding teamwork—to appreciate the genius of God's plan, to follow our leaders, to know and find fulfillment in our role, to function in harmony, to bring glory and others to our God. 🎵



Deborah Towles

Deborah is the wife of Gale Towles who preaches for the State Line Church of Christ in Charlotte, NC. Gale and Deborah have been married 42 years. They have four children and nineteen grandchildren. She can be reached at deborah@carolina.rr.com.

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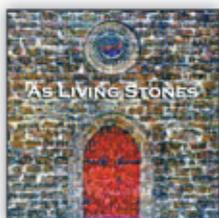
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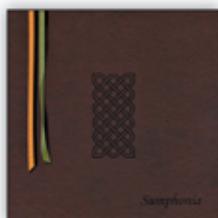
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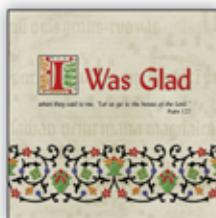
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Sermon on the Mount: Self-Righteousness

by David Flatt

Self-righteousness is a barrier that stifles our spiritual development and prevents us from sharing a right relationship with God.

As we analyze the middle part of this great sermon, we see that Jesus considers three barriers to the kingdom: self-righteousness, materialism, and anxiety. What is somewhat surprising about these barriers is that they are self-constructed, impediments which we create and put in our own path. Yes, when it comes to getting to the kingdom, sometimes we are our own worst enemy.

At an earlier point in this sermon, Jesus stated that we must exceed the righteousness of the Pharisees in order to enter the kingdom of God (Matt. 5:20). The righteousness of the Pharisees was based on self. Pride had blinded their vision, hardened their hearts, and inflated their egos. They thought they were owed the kingdom based on what they had accomplished. To make His case, Jesus cites three examples of what the Pharisees did to prove they were entitled to the kingdom.

Charity

Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily

I say unto you, They have their reward. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly (Matt. 6:1-4).

Giving alms to the poor was an honorable and needful work. The Law of Moses made various provisions for the poor and needy (Lev. 19:9-10). When we have the resources and opportunity, we should help those who are in need. Paul practiced such charity and encouraged other saints to do likewise (Gal. 6:10).

Giving to the poor is certainly a good work for anyone to do. However, what Jesus criticizes is not giving to the poor, but the motivations of the giver. Why did the Pharisees look for opportunities to give to the poor? To draw the public's attention to their "generosity." This was good public relations for the Pharisees.

If we are going to exceed the righteousness of the Pharisees, we must be properly motivated in doing good works. Charity is to be done for the simple sake of doing good. Helping those in need is not to be done as a means to advance our public perception. We must not give so that people will notice. Rather, we should go out of our way to be anonymous in our giving.

Prayer

And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him. After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen. For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses (Matt. 6:5-15).

Like giving, prayer is a right and proper activity for God's people. The Pharisees, however, used prayer as a way of advancing their public

persona. They prayed, as an act of outward piety, to demonstrate to bystanders their “spirituality.” Yes, even something as sacred as an act of private devotion can be corrupted.

Prayer is intended to cultivate humility, not inflate one’s ego. Rather than looking for a public forum, Jesus said we should find a closet in which to pray.

Our Lord teaches us how to pray simply and straightforwardly. First, He exalts the name of our Father. Prayer is an act of worship, a means of boldly declaring the name of our Creator to bring Him glory. God is not to be treated as common or our equal.

Also, we are to call for the kingdom and will of God to come on earth as it is in heaven. Unfortunately, this phrase of Jesus’ prayer is often explained with a caveat: “the kingdom has already come in the form of the Church; therefore we do not need to pray for this.” This is mainly a reactionary explanation to the false teaching of premillennialism; yet, this explanation misses the point of this phrase.

This prayer seeks to open the heart to God’s preeminent authority. Seekers of the kingdom must submit to the rule of the King in their lives. Kingdom language is used throughout the Bible with reference to God’s plans for creation. For example, the second Psalm describes God using the Messiah to crush the kingdoms of men like a rod of iron crushing a clay pot. God’s purposes will be accomplished with or without our consent. The only hope anyone has in this passage is to kiss the Son; thus, averting God’s wrath (Psa. 2:12). With this in mind, praying for the kingdom to come helps soften our hearts to the authority of the King.

As Jesus continues, He petitions our daily bread. Despite what we have been cultured to think, we are not self-made. We are made and

sustained by God. Petitioning God for the most basic of necessities, mainly bread, helps reinforce our awareness that even our food comes from Him.

Next, more valuable than our physical necessities is forgiveness. Self-righteous men do not beg forgiveness. On another occasion, Jesus spoke of a Pharisee praying on the street corner. This Pharisee was glad he was not like other men; not like the sinner standing next to him (Luke 18:11-12). Of course, this Pharisee was a sinner, just like the tax collector, and just like us. We cannot atone for our sin through good works. Forgiveness is only given by God’s grace through our faith.

Lastly, in this prayer, Jesus asks for God’s guidance and deliverance. The poor in spirit realize they cannot guide themselves through life. Such self-reliance is a major part of our problem. When we become entangled in the consequences of our selfish, short-sighted decisions, we need a Deliverer. Thankfully, God sent His Son, Jesus, to rescue and lead us.

Fasting

Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly (Matt. 6:16-18).

The Law of Moses established the act of fasting (Lev. 16:29-31). The act was not about inflicting pain on the one fasting, but was designed to create deeper devotion and dependency on God. Of course, the Pharisees used fasting as another way to advance their public persona. If others noticed they were fasting, they would be impressed by their commitment to

God. Like with charity and prayer, Jesus encourages fasting but states that anonymity is to be pursued when practicing this expression of piety.

So, What’s the Point?

It is amazing how we can take activities sanctioned by God and turn them into ways to exalt ourselves instead of Him. This is what the Pharisees did then and what we can do now if we are not careful. Yes, we can turn charity, prayer, fasting, and other activities into vehicles for our pride.

Christians are sometimes criticized for being self-righteous. Rather than becoming defensive toward such accusations, we would be wise to consider the motivations of our hearts. As difficult as it may be to admit, there are valid reasons why people often criticize Christians for being self-righteous. We may obsess over our appearance and image. Public persona is all too often what is most important. One critical element of Jesus’ teaching is how He brings together method and motive. In the kingdom of God, method and motive are of equal value. What happened with the Pharisees, and what often happens to us, is that we give greater value to method and lesser value to motive. Yes, assessing methods is much easier than assessing motives. However, Jesus attributes all methods to motives (Matt. 15:16-20).

Were the Pharisees to be charitable to the poor, pray, and fast? Yes, but Jesus emphasizes the motivation of each. If our methods are not properly motivated, what we do is worthless. Paul famously wrote,

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give

away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing (1 Cor. 13:1-3).

For the Pharisees, their motivations were self-serving and self-righteous. They valued the praise of men more than the praise of God. Yes, the Pharisees had the wrong set of values. Jesus attributed this to a fundamental lack of love for God (John 5:42-44). We must heed the warning of this sermon: if our motivations in the works we do are to be seen and or esteemed by others, this will be the total of our reward.

Conclusion

By this point in the Sermon on the Mount, we are beginning to see the profile of a kingdom citizen. The image forming might be a bit surprising. As far as Jesus is concerned, the kingdom is for the poor, grieving,

and meek. The kingdom is for those who suffer injustice and love their enemies. The kingdom is for the humble. From another perspective, we are starting to see the kind of person who is unfit for the kingdom: one who is prideful, self-reliant, and self-righteous. The apostle Paul would later explain this when he wrote,

For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. And because of him, you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God,

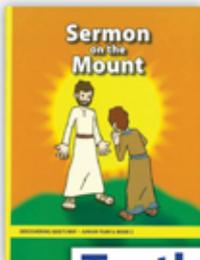
righteousness and sanctification and redemption, so that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord" (1 Cor. 1:26-31).

Wisdom demands that we evaluate ourselves according to the standard that Jesus sets forth. Too often, the world influences the way in which we appraise greatness. The Pharisees were looking for a kingdom of worldly values and goals. Jesus offered the kingdom of heaven. What Jesus offered was so shocking, that His own rejected Him. If we are not careful, we can follow the same pattern of disbelief and rejection. In so doing, we will be left standing outside the kingdom. 🙏



David Flatt

David Flatt and his family have labored with the Thayer Street congregation in Akron, Ohio since 2008. He can be reached at dflatt85@yahoo.com.



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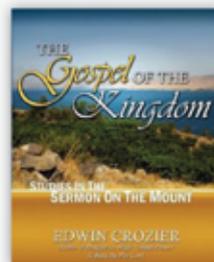
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Broken Homes in Modern America

by Steve Wolfgang

Steve considers “Broken Homes in Modern America” and concludes there is hope for struggling families in our culture!

In Matthew 19:4-6, Jesus connects the formation of new families through marriage to God’s intentions “from the beginning.” Quoting both Genesis 1:27 and 2:24 (and asking, “Have you not read?”), Jesus links them together as expressions of God’s intentional design. Though some modern readers of these texts profess to see contradictory creation accounts, our Lord seemed unaware of any such incongruities between the two.

In 21st-century America, the situation regarding families looks nothing like what God intended – though there is some good news in recent statistics: The majority (69%) of America’s 73.7 million children under age eighteen live in families with two parents, according to U.S. Census Bureau statistics released in November 2016.¹

“Despite the rise of childbearing outside of marriage, the majority of children in the United States still live with two married parents,” according to Jonathan Vespa, a demographer in the Fertility and Family Statistics Branch at the Census Bureau.

In some ways, there is more good news in a recent analysis of divorce rates which demonstrate that, rather than a generic 50% divorce rate, in fact, 72% of people who have ever been married are still married to their first spouse.^{2,3} True, while a 28% divorce rate is better than 50%, it is still

disturbing. Yet, one can take heart in the fact that most marriages in America make it—especially those where religious faith is a strong component.

The bad news is that, historically, things have been in a state of decline for decades: Between 1960 and 2016, the percentage of children living in families with two parents decreased from 88% to 69%. Of the 50.7 million children living in families with two parents, 47.7 million live with two married parents and 3.0 million live with two unmarried parents. This is compared to other types of living arrangements, such as living with grandparents or having a single parent.

The second most common family arrangement is children living with a single mother, at 23 percent. During the 1960-2016 period, the percentage of children living with only their mother nearly tripled from 8 to 23 percent and the percentage of children living with only their father increased from 1 to 4 percent. The percentage of children not living with any parent increased slightly from 3 to 4 percent.

It is significant that, both in cases of divorce and family statistics, the numbers are in some ways distorted by the increasing number of individuals living together, and raising children, without ever having married, a phenomenon that has been on the rise for decades.

The data from the 2016 Current Population Survey Annual Social and Economic Supplement, which has collected statistics on families for more than sixty years, also reveals that:

28 percent of households have just one person living in them—an increase from 13 percent in 1960.

Married couples make up 68% of all families with children under age eighteen, compared to 93% in 1950.

In 2016, almost one-third of all adults (32%) have never been married, up from about one-quarter (23%) in 1950.

About 38% of opposite-sex unmarried couples have a child under age eighteen living with them.

Of the 11 million families with children under age eighteen, and no spouse present, the majority are single mothers (8.5 million). Single fathers comprise the remaining 2.5 million single-parent families.

More than 8 million opposite-sex couples live together without being married.

As these statistics show (and as many observers have pointed out), there are tremendous economic and social costs inherent in this situation—without even considering the spiritual “costs.” Analysis of social science literature demonstrates that the root causes of poverty and income disparity are linked undeniably to the presence

or absence of marriage. Broken families earn less income, and experience lower levels of educational achievement. Furthermore, the prospects of meager incomes and family instability are often passed on to their children, ensuring a continuing if not expanding cycle of economic distress.

Simply put, whether or not a child's parents are married and stay married has a massive effect on his future prosperity and that of the next generation. Unfortunately, the growth in the number of children born into broken families in America—from twelve for every 100 born in 1950, to fifty-eight for every 100 born in 1992, to the numbers cited above.

Is there a common thread connecting these numbers? In many ways, it would be easy to conclude that much of the responsibility for this abysmal situation seems to rest with men who have abdicated their responsibilities. Too many men have physically, financially and emotionally abandoned their children and the mothers who bore their children, leaving those women to raise the children as best they can.

Too many other fathers are spiritually absent—sometimes “justified” by the need to make more money to provide what modern society dictates as “necessities.” The failure to heed the command to raise their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Eph. 6:4), instead, often provokes sons and daughters to wrath, and the disastrous results of disobedience, or discouragement (Col. 3:21).

The spiritual disengagement of many men may also explain why, in far too many local congregations, so many men show virtually no interest in Bible study, or in learning to cultivate abilities to teach Bible classes or lead the Lord's people in hymning the praise of Almighty God in song. In many ways,

it has made the “family of God” (using the metaphor congregationally) into a “broken” and dysfunctional family.

Families are broken in other ways, of course: Wives as well as husbands commit adultery, and are in other ways unfaithful to each other and their marriage vows, and shatter the trust which can be a bulwark against familial brokenness. Teenagers rebel and disobey their parents, and God, too often plunging their families into heartbreak and brokenness.

Still, in the midst of the brokenness which confronts our “enlightened” society, hope is ever-present and can be seen in many biblical examples. Despite the brokenness of Jacob's family, one result was the deliverance God granted through the betrayal of Joseph and ultimate perseverance of Joseph (Gen. 50:19-21). Through David and his sins with Bathsheba, and the ensuing coverup, Solomon was able to build the temple and the ultimate fulfillment of the throne of David and the “temple” of Christ's earthly body, which was raised, and ultimately to His church

God can turn brokenness into redemption; mourning into joyful fulfillment. He can create praise out of despair and bind up the wounds of the brokenhearted. God can restore families and use the tragedies that wound so deeply, using their imperfections to accomplish the purposes for which He created us. Let us pray for our Father's mercy on our families! He who sent His only Son to die and rise again to forgive our sins is our hope in all the brokenness we face in this world! **TI**

Endnotes

¹ The statistics presented here are from the 2016 *Current Population Survey Annual Social and Economic Supplement*. The Current Population Survey, sponsored jointly by the U.S.

Census Bureau and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, is the primary source of demographic statistics for the population of the United States.

- ² Shaunti Feldhaun, *The Good News About Marriage: Debunking Discouraging Myths About Divorce and Remarriage* (Colorado Springs, CO: Multnomah Books, 2014).
- ³ Feldhaun's conclusions are derived from data including “Number, Timing, and Duration of Marriages and Divorces: 2009” in *Current Population Reports*, 2011, p. 19, Table 10; and other statistics drawn from the Census Bureau *Survey of Income and Program Participation* (SIPP), 2009; the University of Chicago General Social Survey, 2012, and Barna Group surveys, 2008.

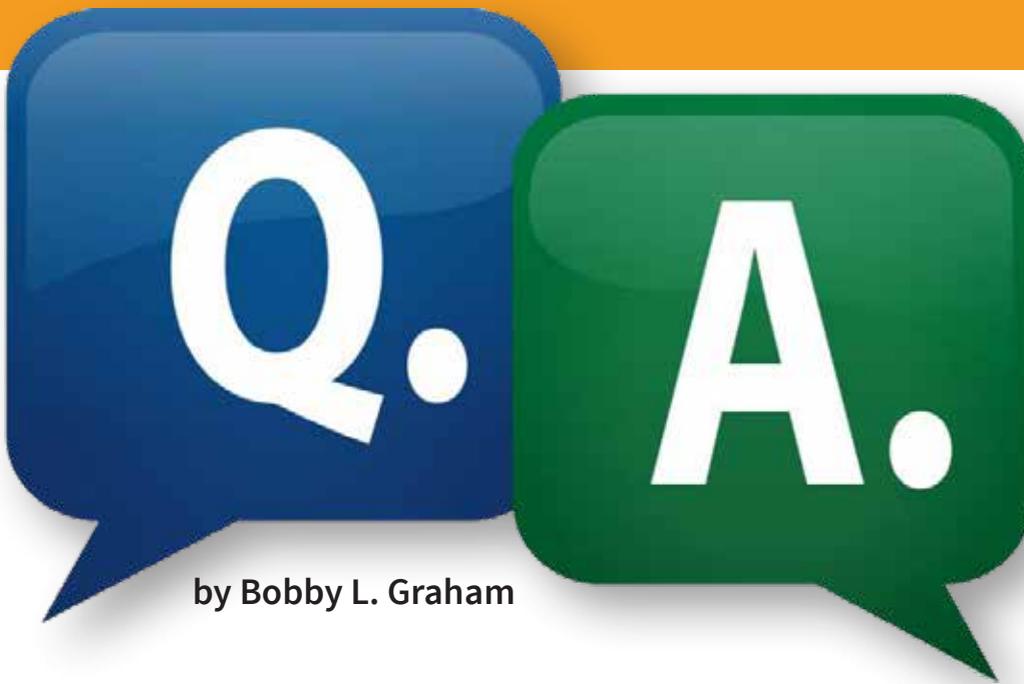


Steve Wolfgang

Steve has worked with the church in Downers Grove (suburban Chicago) since 2008. He and his wife, Bette, have two adult children and three grandchildren. His blog, *eklektikos*, can be read at stevewolfgang.wordpress.com.

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by Bobby L. Graham



Bobby L. Graham

Bobby participates in fill-in preaching, Belize trips, teaching at Athens Bible School, and in gospel meetings. He and his wife, Karen, have three children: Richard, Mary Katherine Winland (Darren), and Laura Paschall (Jeremy). He can be reached at bobbylgraham@pclnet.net.

QUESTION:

Are there different degrees of punishment in hell and different degrees of reward in heaven?

Answer:

This question arises from the following passage in Jesus' teaching, as well as some other passages:

And that servant who knew his master's will, and did not prepare himself or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with few. For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more (Lk. 12:47-48).

As the reader might observe, the two verses quoted above are part of a larger section where Jesus considers what it means to be a faithful and wise steward (servant); or its opposite, an unfaithful and unwise one, including the punishment due the latter. It might appear to some that Jesus here implied varying degrees of punishment in hell as he spoke of the many stripes and the few stripes, but such an implication is not necessary.

"Stripes" refers first to the temporal punishment given to the servant, and then, by implication, to the punishment suffered in the fire of hell by others. Is there perhaps another explanation which better fits the whole of biblical teaching about eternal punishment?

When asked a similar question concerning degrees in heaven, David Lipscomb answered many years ago:

We do not know. Christ came to this world to break down middle walls of division and to make the different families, tribes, and nations of earth one new man. We do not think that he has erected divisions or barriers between the redeemed in the world to come. If there be difference there, it will arise from different capacities for enjoyment. Some of the elite, the polished, the cultivated, think it a little hard to have to associate with the uncultivated clodhoppers and unpolished working women of the country and the town in the world to come; and so the idea has become rather prevalent that they will have a higher sphere nearer the heavenly throne than the horny-handed mechanics of the cities and the country boors who are Christians. But we have never found any Scripture authority for such an idea. It has its origin in the foolish ambition of some who have but little chance for a home in the better land. If there be differences in capacity for enjoyment there, the higher capacity will not be measured by any intellectual culture, by polished manners or cultivated taste or high family there, but by self-sacrificing, self-denying devotion to the honor of God and the good of man here (*Questions Answered* by Lipscomb and Sewell, 173).

Brother Lipscomb spoke of a different time and culture, but captured something of the spirit which still energizes and motivates some to view fellow-Christians as rivals.

Whether with or without the same motivation for the idea, some still see in Jesus' teaching the basis for varying degrees of eternal punishment operating in hell, so that the hottest section is reserved for the worst offenders and the other sections for those of less degrees of offense.

I find it more reasonable to conclude that the differing degrees refer to degrees of enjoyment in heaven or punishment in hell. People who have known of the joys of serving the Lord, but then deserted Him, shall experience even more conscience-imposed suffering than those who never served Him, because they know what they are missing! Likewise, those who have truly matured over many years in sacrificing themselves of the Lord shall be better prepared to enjoy the bliss of heaven than some others. Their capacities for such enjoyment, and their awareness of what they could have enjoyed are greater. This does not mitigate the fact that all of

the saved will enjoy their blessings and all of the lost will be punished.

Another passage where some find justification for their conclusion is Matthew 11:21-24:

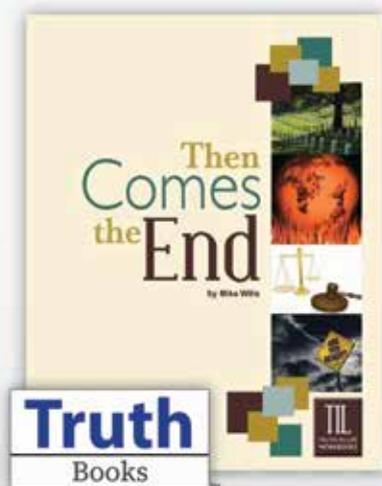
Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you. And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades; for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say to you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you.

Here Jesus taught that those with greater opportunities, which they spurned, will be judged by a stricter standard than Sodom, though even Sodom will suffer judgment.

This same principle might also be involved in the Parable of the Wicked Servant in Luke 12:47-48.

It is certain, nevertheless, that all who go to heaven will be blessed of the Lord, so they enjoy it as fully as their ability allows. Their preparation in this life, however, will determine how much they can enjoy heaven. It is likewise just as certain that all of the lost in hell will suffer eternal punishment, with some suffering more than others, possibly because of their recognition of rejected opportunities.

I cannot be certain about this matter, but I have presented another possible explanation. While we might differ about this question, we all must agree that hell's punishment will be excruciatingly and eternally painful and that heaven will surely be worth it all! No one wants to go to hell, but all want to go to heaven. Don't allow such speculations to waste your time and opportunity to prepare for heaven and to avoid hell. **T**



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Bet She'an

by Trent and Rebekah Dutton

Trent and Rebekah Dutton discuss Bet She'an, an ancient city strategically located at the crossroads of culture and history.

The ancient city of Bet She'an (Beit Shean, Beth Shean, Beth Shan, Bethshean, etc.) first appears in the biblical narrative of the conquest, when the city was given to Manasseh as part of her allotted territory. The tell is beautifully strategic, located at the junction of the Jezreel and Jordan Valleys, commanding a fantastic view of the surrounding countryside. However, Manasseh allowed this fortress city to slip through her fingers due to the iron chariots of the Canaanite inhabitants.

What Manasseh gave up, the Philistines were happy to acquire. In 1 Samuel 29, the Philistines prepare at Aphek for another episode with

the Israelites. This is where David was sent away, their supposed ally. The battle against Israel was brutal, and, in 1 Samuel 31, the royal family falls at Mt. Gilboa. In triumph, the Philistines hang the headless bodies of Saul and Jonathan on the fortress walls at Beth Shean.

Recalling Saul's kindness, the men of Jabesh Gilead removed the bodies in the night—a valiant deed, as they covered miles of open territory and scaled the side of a fortified and guarded city. David would go on to take Beth Shean, and Solomon would place the city under the administration of Baana.

That is the core biblical story of this timeless city. Afterward, it was destroyed by the Assyrians and not occupied again until coming under the control of Alexander the Great. He settled his garrison of Scythians here, thus changing its name to Scythopolis.

The city would later be caught in the crossfire between the Ptolemies and Seleucids, and Josephus gives the account that High Priest Jonathan was kidnapped there and later murdered—one of the events leading to the Maccabean Revolt.

In 63 BC, Pompey gathered Beth Shean under his wings as a city of the Decapolis. It was beautified, with



View from the Iron Age (David/Solomon era) summit of Beth Shean looking east toward Gilead



Greek and Roman era lower Beth Shean, known as Scythopolis

theaters, amphitheaters, a cardo, bathhouses, and a rather nice public toilet. All of these items garner the most photos by visitors at the site today.

Whether a crossroads of trade routes and water, such as Ashkelon or Tyre, or those landlocked focal points of trade routes, such as Megiddo or Hazor, cities such as these, and Beth Shean, boast

a historical and archaeological record that is often hard to comprehend. These cities provide an archaeological profile that complements the biblical text and provides insight into the landscape and material culture of the inhabitants. This is one more site to tuck away for use as a geographical and archaeological reference point for the textual narratives that touch it. 📖



Trent & Rebekah Dutton

Trent and Rebekah Dutton both hold Master's degrees in Biblical Archaeology from Wheaton College in the Chicago, IL area. They have participated in four full excavation seasons with the Leon Levy Expedition to Ashkelon, Israel, and two seasons

at Tel Shimron in the Jezreel Valley. They can be reached at trentdutton@gmail.com.



Remains of an Iron Age fortress at the summit of Beth Shean

Toward Alcohol

by Jesse Flowers

Recognizing the perils of alcohol, Jesse exhorts us to think soberly and seriously about relevant biblical principles that should govern our conduct.

“Wine is a mocker, strong drink is a brawler, and whoever is led astray by it is not wise” (Prov. 20:1). Numerous warnings and condemnations of strong drink are found in the Bible (Lev. 10:9-10; Prov. 23:29-35; 31:4-7; Isa. 5:11, 22; Hos. 4:11; Rom. 13:12-14; 1 Cor. 6:10; Gal. 5:21; Eph. 5:18; 1 Pet. 4:1-4). Despite this fact, there exists a casualness toward alcohol, even among the people of God.

When some saints privately drink alcohol in their homes, partake of beer and wine on business trips, make it available for others to drink at weddings, and certain brethren defend and argue for its moderate consumption, then it is quite apparent that some take a far too casual view of alcohol.

I recently attended my son’s *Boy Scouts* meeting, and they had invited a local Justice of the Peace as a guest speaker. Listening to him for close to an hour, one could easily see that this was a God-fearing man with strong moral convictions. He offered great advice to live by and warnings to heed. At one point, he asked, “Do you know what the number one problem is that I have to deal with the most?” The answer, “Alcohol.” Many individuals mess their lives up with drugs, but alcohol has ruined the lives of more people than anything else.

“An estimated 88,000 people (approximately 62,000 men and 26,000 women) die from alcohol-related causes annually, making

alcohol the third leading preventable cause of death in the United States” (*National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism*). According to the *Centers for Disease Control*, six people die every day from alcohol poisoning, the effect of drinking too much alcohol too quickly.

The following statistics come from the website for *Mothers Against Drunk Driving*: “Drunk driving is still the #1 cause of death on our roadways,” “every two minutes, a person is injured in a drunk driving crash,” “on average, two in three people will be involved in a drunk driving crash in their lifetime,” “over 40% of all 10th graders drink alcohol,” and “Every day in America, another twenty-nine people die as a result of drunk driving crashes. That’s one person every fifty minutes.”

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration’s position on the relationship between blood alcohol concentration and driving is that driving performance degrades after just one drink!

An interesting and “sobering” article by *Yahoo! News* stated that, “Even an occasional glass of wine or beer increases the risk of health problems and dying, according to a major study on drinking in 195 nations that attributes 2.8 million premature deaths worldwide each year to booze. ‘There is no safe level of alcohol,’ said Max Griswold, a researcher at the *Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation* in Seattle, WA and lead

author for a consortium of more than 500 experts. Despite recent research showing that light-to-moderate drinking reduces heart disease, the new study found that alcohol use is more likely than not to do harm. ‘The protective effect of alcohol was offset by the risks,’ Griswold told *AFP* in summarizing the results, published in medical journal, *The Lancet*, on Friday. ‘Overall, the health risks associated with alcohol rose in line with the amount consumed each day.’”

Of course, we could go on and on listing statistics and giving warnings about the grave dangers of alcohol, as well as the havoc and destruction it continues to bring to the lives of countless individuals. So, how is it even possible that a professed child of God could maintain a casual attitude toward alcohol, or worse, even defend the moderate consumption of it?

Honest Misunderstanding

Why is there casualness toward alcohol among Christians today? For some, there may be an honest misunderstanding of the Bible word “wine.” When some come across the word “wine” in the Bible, they automatically equate it with wine today. However, doing so becomes problematic for a couple of reasons. First of all, Bible wines and modern wines are not equal in comparison of alcoholic content. It is a well-documented fact that ancient wines were mixed with water. Many historians recorded that it was three parts

water to one-part wine, and that figure is definitely on the lower ratio end. Secondly, the different Hebrew and Greek words that are translated “wine” in our English Bibles range in meaning from simple grape juice to intoxicating drink. So the actual word and the context must always be considered to rightly divide the word of truth (2 Tim. 2:15).

Lack of Teaching

There also seems to be a lack of teaching on the subject of alcohol in general. How much teaching is being done in the home by Christian parents regarding the sin and the great dangers of alcohol (Prov. 22:6; Eph. 6:4)? Of course, parents must first possess a good knowledge, understanding, and conviction on this vitally important topic before they can diligently instruct and warn their sons and daughters (Deut. 6:6-9). How often are Bible class teachers addressing it in the junior high and high school classes? What about gospel preachers? How frequently, when preaching the Word, are evangelists convincing, rebuking, and exhorting with all longsuffering and teaching (2 Tim. 4:2) as it pertains to the subject of alcohol? Are we really preaching the *whole* counsel of God, as did Paul, or do we avoid declaring certain aspects of it that we deem too controversial (Acts 20:27).

Compromise

A compromise by some elders, preachers, and brethren has led to a casual attitude toward alcohol by many. When the shepherds of the flock who have been charged with watching out for the souls (Heb. 13:17) do not insist and ensure sound teaching on this Bible subject (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:9), then a casual attitude among some will eventually develop, if it is not already present. Sadly, some preachers avoid the topic altogether or speak in such generalities that none can be either offended or convicted

of the truth (2 Tim. 4:3-4). Some preachers go further and tell us that such things as social drinking belong in Romans 14, and therefore, we can and should receive one another in fellowship. Such individuals twist the Scriptures to their own destruction (2 Pet. 3:16), ignore the obvious context of Romans 14, as well as the verses just preceding it which condemn “revelry and drunkenness” and exhort saints to “make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts” (Rom. 13:13-14). Some continue to point to our Lord’s first miracle when He turned water into wine (John 2:1-11), Paul’s instruction to Timothy to use a little wine for his stomach’s sake (1 Tim. 5:23), and the instruction that deacons must “not be given to much wine” (1 Tim. 3:8). This serves as their biblical evidence for drinking alcoholic beverages, all the while ignoring the context, various meanings of the word “wine,” as well as ancient wines versus modern wines.

Rebellion

Some Christians stubbornly rebel against God’s revealed will. Just like King Saul, some brethren are fully aware that both the Old and New Testaments condemn the drinking of alcohol, but will continue to defend it and partake of it regardless. They have hardened their hearts to the truth through the deceitfulness of sin (Heb. 3:13). As the prophet, Samuel, said to disobedient Saul, “Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He also has rejected you...” (1 Sam. 15:23). The apostle Peter penned: “We have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles—when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries” (1 Pet. 4:3). When one takes the time to research and study the various Greek words used in this Bible passage, they will discover that

any and all consumption of alcohol is condemned in the New Testament. Yes, even what is commonly referred to as “social drinking” (i.e., “drinking parties”) is condemned as well. The Greek word *potos* denotes drinking “not of necessity excessive, but giving opportunity for excess” (Trench, 225). For some saints, it will not matter how many clear and pointed Bible passages that you show them condemning alcohol, they have made up their stubborn, willful minds and will not be persuaded with truth and reason.

Conclusion

We would do well to remember that we are a people called upon *not* to be conformed to this world, but transformed by God’s perfect will (Rom. 12:2). We are called upon to be holy as our God is holy; holy in all of our conduct (1 Pet. 1:15-16). We must ever be mindful of our influence in this world of sin and wickedness (Matt. 5:13-16). Perhaps, we also need to be reminded of how alcohol is an ingredient in the works of the flesh that will keep us out of heaven and send us to a devil’s hell (Gal. 5:19-21)! Brethren, for the sake of our soul and the souls of others, we cannot afford to take a casual approach toward alcohol. 📖

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Toward Attire

by Bruce Reeves

While immodesty is rampant in today's culture, Bruce exhorts us to recognize the need for modest and proper attire.

It is impossible to change a life, family, or congregation that is permeated with immodesty by merely beginning with guidelines; such transformation must begin with God, Christ, and the gospel. Until God has become your treasure and the word of God is the most precious thing to you, there will be struggles with your attire. We must come to see that the gospel of Christ is what changes everything. Neither rebellion nor formalism is an acceptable approach to our sanctification and holiness when it comes to our clothing. We must preach and pray for submission to Christ, the rich indwelling of His truth, and a genuine concern for others.

Many pulpits today are silent regarding the holiness of discipleship, especially as it relates to issues surrounding modesty of dress. Yet, we must present biblical teaching on this and every issue confronting our spiritual lives. Primarily, this is due to the pressure of an ungodly culture, but we must press on in our pursuit of Christ. It is important for us to realize what we are missing out on when we fail to demonstrate modesty in our attitudes toward our clothing.

Neglecting Purity of Heart

To miss out on modesty is to miss out on purity of heart. We pursue holiness and spiritual renewal through being “transformed by the renewing of our mind,” rather than being “conformed to this world” (Rom. 12:1-2). The apostle warns of the danger of allowing worldly attitudes to shape

our thinking and conduct (Col. 3:10; Eph. 4:23). Jesus said, “Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God” (Matt. 5:8). Paul encourages us to recognize that our bodies are a temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:14-20).

Modesty is rooted in godliness (1 Tim. 2:9). In this context, the term “modest” describes that which is respectable, honorable, well-arranged, and decent. This speaks, not only of our outward behavior but also of our inner spiritual character and life. It is worth noting that the “modesty” of this passage is a natural expression of a “claim to godliness” (1 Tim. 2:10). Your choices in clothing offer an opportunity for you to present a godly example or to denigrate your influence. Immodest dress can lead to other sins, such as sensuality and lascivious acts. Are there not parts of your body that are off limits?

Paul also uses the term “shamefacedness,” referring to an attitude of reverence and respect for God within one’s conscience. This indicates a sense of shame rooted in character that has been shaped by Christ. Have we lost the ability to blush (Jer. 8:12)? The term “sobriety” speaks of discerning judgment and self-control. Since modesty has several definitions, we draw ours from the biblical material—modesty is the inner self-government rooted in an understanding of one’s self before God, which displays humility and purity, rather than self-glorification or self-advertisement.

There are some important questions we should ask if we will make good choices about how we dress. “Can I stand, walk, sit, kneel, and bend over, etc., in this attire without being naked by biblical standards?” “Does my clothing elicit sinful thoughts in others?” “What does my dress reveal about my character?” “What type of influence will my clothing have on those who are not Christians, or on those who are immature in the faith?”

Too often, Christians will attempt to argue that there are certain places where they can be casual about their dress, such as the gym, school functions, swimming pools, vacations, or weddings. Yet, principles of Scripture should lead us to serve God in all circumstances.

It is one thing to deal with general principles, but it is something else to make specific applications. There are multiple ways one can be immodest – such as clothing that is too short (revealing the thighs), too low off the shoulders (showing the chest and back dresses), too low in the front (showing cleavage), too sheer (revealing the underlying body), too short (such as mini-skirts, short dresses), or too tight (such as leggings that are often worn with short skirts), or too revealing (such as split dresses, backless dresses, sundresses, swimsuits, etc.).

One does not have to be completely nude to be considered naked by biblical standards. In Scripture, the phrase, “uncover nakedness,” references sexual immorality (Lev.

18:6-7; 20:18). However, it also speaks of one being “scantly clothed” in the revealing of the thigh (Exod. 20:26; 28:40-43; Isa. 47:2-3; Nah. 3:5; John 21:7). While I am not saying that all of these passages serve as a rigid and authoritative dress code, I am saying that they reveal biblical principles regarding the concept of nakedness in the sight of God.

Cultural standards never serve as the proper foundation for followers of Christ. Paul’s teaching in 1 Timothy 2:9-10 and throughout the New Testament was as counter-cultural in the first century as it is now. Immodesty was a staple behavior for those engaged in paganism and idolatry, but it was not acceptable behavior for Christians.

Neglecting Brotherly Love

To miss out on modesty is to miss out on brotherly love. Immodesty prevents us from effectively sharing the gospel with unbelievers, it prevents us from modeling for our brethren the attitude Christ desires, and it serves as an obstacle to us leading our family in a godly way. Brotherly love makes every effort to avoid being a stumbling-block to others (Rom. 14:13; 1 Cor. 8:9-13). Jesus encourages us to strive to control our thoughts (Matt. 5:28). While I cannot control every thought in the mind of my fellow man, I can at least do my part to help him serve the Lord, rather than discourage him from the kingdom life.

The hyper-sexualized environment in which our young people live is challenging enough without believers presenting unnecessary temptations to them. Provocative clothing is meant to allure and entice others to sinful behavior (Prov. 5:3; 6:25; 7:10), but brotherly love leads us away from such conduct. Moreover, research has linked the sexualization of women with three of the most common health problems young women face: eating disorders, low self-esteem, and depression.

Neglecting to Honor Marriage

To miss out on modesty is to miss out on the honor of marriage. There is a bond between nudity and sexuality which is to exist in marriage (Heb. 13:4; cf. Gen. 3:8, 21). To reveal one’s body publicly is to betray the intimacy, holiness, and purity that is reserved for marriage. The intimacy of marriage is ordained by God and should be diligently protected by all, whether one is married or not (Matt. 19:4-6; Eph. 5:28-33; 1 Cor. 7:1-4).

Neglecting Parental Leadership

To miss out on modesty is to miss out on an opportunity to lead our families in the ways of God. Husbands must take the initiative in the moral sphere of their family. All of the training of our children should not be on the shoulders of “mom,” nor should she be the only one who is expected to set standards for them. It is crucial that “Dad” does not check out on his family when it comes to the spiritual directions of his children. Your family needs you to celebrate when they get it right, but they also need you to be willing to say “no.” As parents, we must start early, take the lead, teach our children both by our words and conduct, strive to be consistent, and point toward Christ in all things.

Social media presents some unique challenges to our young people and their parents. There must be accountability and transparency regarding conduct via social media and in life in general. You cannot have a meaningful relationship with your children if you allow them to manipulate you into tolerating conduct that lies outside of biblical teaching. Being casual about modesty leads to being casual about God’s truth in other areas.

Neglecting Biblical Principles

Missing out on modesty is missing out on an opportunity to uphold the principles of Christ. It is beneficial for us all to see the opportunity before us when it comes to our attitude regarding modesty in our clothing and dress. It offers an opportunity to put God’s word before our desire to fit in with the world around us (1 Pet. 1:13-18)! It is an occasion to glorify God in all we do (Col. 3:17). It is a situation in which we can demonstrate love for God, the purpose of God’s grace, and love for others (1 John 4:19; John 14:15; 15:14; Rom. 13:10 Titus 2:11-14). 📖



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Toward Discipleship

by Shane Carrington

As followers of Jesus Christ, let us look to His teaching and example to better understand the demands of discipleship.

Laid back. Casual. Lackadaisical. Blasé. Nonchalant. A dabbler. Can you conceive any of these descriptors as applying to Jesus? Hardly. Rather, “you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps” (1 Pet. 2:21). Jesus left large footprints into which we are to step, and they were not laid down casually. Throughout His ministry, Jesus exemplified and instructed concerning the commitment God gives, and expects in return, from His people. The following vignette makes this crystal clear:

Now large crowds were going along with Him; and He turned and said to them, “If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple” (Luke 14:25-27).

Such startling words take time and thought to unpack, but when deciphered, these teachings of Jesus get to the core of discipleship: Family relationships are defined through our commitment to Jesus (Eph. 5:22-6:4). He exemplified complete and loving surrender to His Father (and for our sake) through crucifixion, and discipleship means imitating His love for God and others through complete surrender to God’s will. Through both

words and example, Jesus declared discipleship a matter of conviction, not convenience. Consider three teachings illuminating these.

Words of Jesus

In a world where talk is cheap, Jesus gave many powerful, challenging sayings concerning the kind of people His Father wants us to be. These sometimes cut deep. Consider three areas.

Commitment to God’s Teaching

Concerning this, we read, “So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, ‘If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free’” (John 8:31-32). Casually approaching Jesus’ words, intending to take what we want and leave the rest, leaves us far short of the challenge laid down by our Lord. Those who believe must commit to—and continue in—His teachings to be set free by the truth. This means a commitment to intense Bible study with intent. True disciples want to know Him, His word, the lifestyle of true discipleship, and the freedom that results.

Commitment to Serving

Jesus taught disciples a servant spirit. In discussion with a lawyer (Luke 10:25-29), they discussed the importance of loving God and one’s neighbor. Attempting self-justification,

the lawyer replied, “And who is my neighbor?” (Luke 10:29). Jesus responded with the story of the “good Samaritan,” which was an oxymoron to Jewish listeners (Luke 10:30-37). The servant spirit of the Samaritan caused the lawyer to realize the true neighbor in the story was that Samaritan. Of this Jesus said, “Go and do the same” (Luke 10:37). True disciples learn the importance of love, committing themselves to lives of service.

Commitment to Forgiveness

When Peter asked about the extent of the forgiveness we extend to others (“Up to seven times?”), Jesus responded, “. . . up to seventy times seven” (Matt. 18:21-22)! That is quite challenging for many of us—we are more adept at justice than forgiveness. After a powerful, telling story about an unforgiving servant who was forgiven an extraordinary debt, but refused to show similar compassion to a fellow-servant, and was accordingly punished (Matt. 18:23-34), Jesus said, “My heavenly Father will also do the same to you if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart” (Matt. 18:35).

Casual disciples struggle with this command, thinking it applies to others, but not to themselves. Yet, Jesus’ teachings are the core of discipleship. Do you want to follow Jesus? Then listen, learn, and adhere to our Lord’s teaching.

Jesus' Example

Jesus did more than instruct with words; He left a powerful example. In a world of "Do as I say, not as I do," Jesus showed, in every way, what it meant to commit to His Father. His example stands as a powerful, challenging illustration that moves us to make the same kind of commitment to our heavenly Father.

Commitment to God's Teaching

Jesus not only instructed disciples about commitment to God's word (John 8:30-32), He also lived it. In the garden of Gethsemane, He prayed the same basic prayer three times: "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will" (Matt. 26:36-44, esp. vv. 39, 42, 44). As difficult as it was for Jesus to follow the teaching of His Father about His impending death, our Lord did more than say, "Your will be done" (Matt. 26:42). By going to the cross, Jesus *did* the will of the Father. Our Master did more than instruct with words; He embodied the Father's teaching.

Commitment to Serving

Jesus did not just instruct us with words about developing a servant's spirit (Luke 10:25-37). He took a towel and a basin of water, stooped down, and performed the job of a household slave: He washed the disciples' feet (John 13:5-20). When Jesus concluded this—after some struggle with Peter to bring him along—He said, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call Me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a slave is not greater than his master, nor is one who is sent greater than the

one who sent him" (John 16:12-16). Our Lord did not simply talk about a servant spirit—He showed humility and service, and through His example, urges us to do the same.

Commitment to Forgiveness

Jesus taught a lot about forgiveness (Matt. 18:21-35 above). Yet, His most powerful teaching about this came in the form of a cross. Jesus did not idly stand by, waiting for people to respond; He took the initiative. Jesus did not shout for personal justice (Isa. 53); He died to give the unjust opportunity for new birth (Rom. 5:6-11). Suspended between heaven and earth, Jesus cried from the cross, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34). Many of us find forgiving to be excruciating; yet, Jesus was willing to die an excruciating (Latin, literally, "of the cross") death to give everyone an opportunity for forgiveness—even those who cried out for His blood that day (Acts 2:36-37).

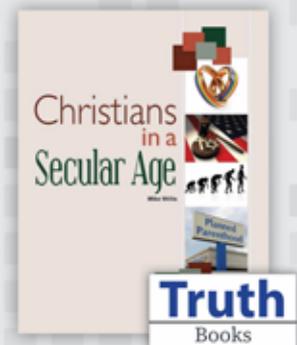
Conclusion

Laid back. Casual. Lackadaisical. Blasé. Nonchalant. A dabbler. Is that how you would describe Jesus? Absolutely not! As disciples of the Lord Jesus, we must be like Him. We must be committed to walking with Him, exemplifying Him to a world that does not know Him. Peter said, "You have been called for this purpose... to follow in His steps" (1 Pet. 2:21). May we do exactly that: placing one committed foot in front of the other. 🦶



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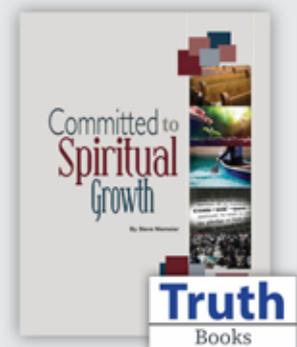
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Toward Entertainment

by Sean Cavender

While entertainment is a modern obsession, Christians have a higher calling and noble purpose that is centered upon a shared relationship with God.

It will not take long for someone to notice how casual our society has become. Clothes that are often worn to formal events today (such as weddings, funerals, and worship services) would have been considered casual attire twenty-five or more years ago. Our attitudes have shifted, and we have become a very casual society. One definition of casualness is “lacking a high degree of interest or devotion” (*Merriam-Webster*).

Casualness toward God is a spiritual disease affecting our hearts, minds, and attitudes. We must search within ourselves for the causes of casual attitudes. Lacking an interest in and devotion to God is a problem that will keep us from making godly choices in our lives.

One of the causes of spiritual casualness is the way we allow entertainment to affect us. Many people, even in the Lord’s church, have been affected by casual attitudes, and have abandoned godliness and holiness. Lacking a high level of interest in spiritual matters, many give little thought to their entertainment choices.

Entertainment is defined as “amusement or diversion provided especially by performers” (*Merriam-Webster*). Our attention may be diverted, and we can be amused by reading books, watching *Netflix*, cheering for our favorite sports team, listening to our favorite band, keeping up with the latest current events, listening to podcasts, playing video games, or spending time on the latest

gadgets. Entertaining ourselves is not inherently sinful, and we should not feel guilty for taking some time to enjoy these forms of entertainment.

However, we must recognize the spiritual dangers in front of us. With entertainment, it is easy to focus on ourselves and our pleasure, which can introduce a spirit of casualness into our lives. Jesus warned about this problem, looking back to the days of Noah when people were “eating and drinking” but were callous to the warnings of God’s judgment (Matt. 24:38). Paul wrote about the Israelites who ate, drank, and rose up to play (1 Cor. 10:7; cf. Exod. 32:6). For the Israelites, entertainment revealed a casual attitude toward God by turning to idolatry (Willis, 296-297). A casual, lackadaisical attitude toward God is seen in every generation; yet, we must not allow it to invade the church of our Lord or destroy our souls.

Impact Upon Our Devotion

How does entertainment affect our spiritual devotion to God? Jesus taught that citizens in the kingdom of heaven should have a passion for righteousness. In the Sermon on the Mount, He emphasized the disciple’s need to yearn and live for righteousness:

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied (Matt. 5:6).

But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you (Matt. 6:33).

Christ expects His followers to abandon self-centeredness and manifest a desire to live for Him. We must examine whether or not entertainment consumes our lives, or if we are truly living for the kingdom of God.

Attending sporting events and concerts, or going on vacation, are just a few ways that people entertain themselves. While there is nothing sinful with vacations or sports, Christians must search for the joy that is found in spending time with God in worship. Many people reveal their casual attitude by choosing entertainment over attending the worship services and personal devotion and study. However, it is foolish to neglect worshiping the Lord and studying His word for the sake of entertainment (Ps. 119:16). Being present in God’s house is where Jesus found delight and satisfaction. The disciples saw Jesus’s love for being in the place of worship: “‘Zeal for Your house will consume me’” (John 2:17). Our Lord desired to be in a place of worship to give glory and honor to God.

Sadly, entertainment often promotes ways on which we can focus inwardly and selfishly. We display a spirit of casualness when we desire to please ourselves, rather than choosing to give glory to our heavenly Father. Entertainment does not bring everlasting satisfaction and delight. True, eternal delight is found in God.

In an entertainment-driven society, it can be hard to retreat and spend

time in prayer or reading God's word. It seems finding time to do what we want to do is not nearly as difficult. Do we spend more time binge-watching our favorite *Netflix* series than spending time with God's word in meditation and study? Have we lost interest in our Creator? If so, then entertainment has become our idol, causing us to be casual and lukewarm, lacking a fervency for God (Rev. 3:16).

Impact Upon Our Homes

How does entertainment affect our homes? Entertainment is invited into our homes every time we turn on a TV, laptop computer, tablet, or phone. How do such constant forms of entertainment affect relationships with our family? In-stead of gathering around the dinner table, people eat around the TV. Today, families rarely spend time in prayer, song, and Scripture reading, but, instead, watch *Netflix* and *Youtube*. If we would turn off the gadgets and spend time talking with our families about each other's day, or spend more time together in prayer, then our families would be much stronger.

Parents have the responsibility to know how their children are entertained. While we may not be able to control every situation our children might be involved in, we do control what is viewed on a television screen, a tablet, or phone, especially within the walls of our homes. Be involved and know what your children are watching or hearing. Teach them to make good choices.

Parents must also look at the example they set for their children. They grow up fast, but that does not mean we should treat them as adults before they are ready for adulthood. Children are young and impressionable. Stop and think about the language that is being used in the movies and shows that come on the TV. Should you subject your children to hearing cursing and sexual

innuendo? For that matter, should you watch that kind of entertainment?

Parents must train up their children in the teachings of God (Eph. 6:4), not in the ways of Hollywood. Music, movies, and TV shows will not help protect your children from sin. Sin is often promoted through song lyrics and TV shows. We should not invite sin into our homes in such a glorified way.

Conclusion

The apostle Paul warned of the dangers and influences of worldliness. He said, "If the dead are not raised, let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die. Do not be deceived: 'Bad company corrupts good morals'" (1 Cor. 15:32-33). The world exhibits a spirit of casualness and has low regard for godly living. Therefore, it is essential for Christians to be cautious in their choices of entertain-ment. We must not mimic the same casual spirit. Instead of giving little regard to God, we are called to be highly devoted, serving Him with our entire heart, soul, and mind (Mark 12:30). **1**

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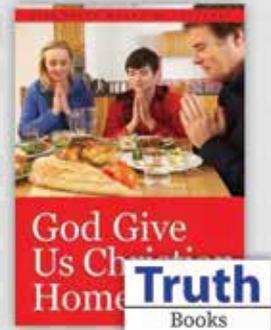
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Toward Speech

by Shawn Chancellor

If the tongue is unbridled, its influence is destructive and demonic; accordingly, Shawn challenges us to use this great gift to glorify God and build up one another.

The Ephesian epistle presents a clear and concise view of God's plan for the redemption of His people. In the opening paragraphs, we learn that redemption and its associated blessings are found "in Christ" (Eph. 1:3-8). No man could conceive of or enact such a plan, and so it is "by grace you have been saved" (Eph. 2:5). This gracious act must be met by faith to be effective for salvation (Eph. 2:8). Salvation is not a self-gratifying goal to be achieved. Instead, the redeemed are "His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works" (Eph. 2:10). Salvation grants us life "in Christ," and so we belong to Him to serve His purposes. Thus this life is not to be lived haphazardly, but intentionally.

Paul emphasizes the need for such an intentional approach, by contrasting the Gentile lifestyle, with one of faith and godliness. In Ephesians 4:17-19, he describes the mindset of the Gentile world as "futile" and marked by willful ignorance and stubbornness to the point that they became "callous" (literally, a loss of sensitivity). Paul's use of phrases, such as "the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness," reminds one of Romans 1:21-32, where he describes a way of life that did not consider the moral, spiritual, or social consequences of any action deemed pleasurable. The contrast between these two lives is seen in the emphatic statement, "but you did not learn Christ in this way" (Eph. 4:20). By exhorting

the saints to "lay aside the old self" (v. 22) and "put on the new self" (v. 24) in the "likeness of God" (v. 24), Paul makes it clear that the gospel calls for a recognition of what is righteous and holy and that certain behaviors must be developed or abandoned. This calling demands serious and thorough self-examination and discipline in every word and deed. In the final verses of chapter 4 and in the beginning of chapter 5, Paul highlights three areas where casualness in language reveals callousness rather than godliness.

The first area Paul highlights is conversation regarding salvation and fellowship in Christ. Paul calls on those who have "put on the new self" to lay aside falsehood and speak truth each one of you with his neighbor, for we are members of one another (Eph. 4:25). The last phrase of the verse connects this statement to the overall theme of the book, i.e., both Jews and Gentiles are redeemed and made one in Christ (Eph. 2:11-22; 3:4-6). Considering the intensity of the debate over Gentile inclusion and the obvious sensitivity over this issue, Jewish brethren would have needed to be very cautious about the language they used in addressing Gentile brethren and in dealing with questions of salvation and fellowship in Christ. Likewise, a casual approach to the way in which we speak of, and teach the gospel may lead to unnecessary conflict and even to the development of false concepts.

Terms such as grace, faith, works, etc., must be used precisely, so as not to leave room for misunderstanding.

Furthermore, we should be careful how we speak of the lost, recognizing that we have all been "dead in our trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1). While error is taught in denominational churches, we must take care that our speech attacks the error, rather than those deceived by it. Also, when we have disagreements with brethren, we must take care not to assign motives flippantly and thus cause the schism to deepen.

In Ephesians 4:29, Paul makes a more general statement about the impact of our language in everyday interactions. He states that we must "let no unwholesome word proceed" from our mouths. The Greek word translated "unwholesome" refers to that which is "rotten, putrefied... corrupted by one and no longer fit for use, worn out... of poor quality, bad, unfit for use, worthless" (Strong 4550). In the context, it contrasts with words that are "good for edification according to the need of the moment." So, "unwholesome" words refer to language that is harmful in any way. Such language would be used to express bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, slander, and malice (Eph. 4:31).

On the other hand, our words should give "grace to all those who hear," and express kindness,

tenderness, and forgiveness (Eph. 4:32). We might make an application here to our public discourse and consider how a casual approach to conversations about social ills and politics can become unwholesome. In our current environment, we have a dangerous mixture of political division and the ability to broadcast our thoughts to the world instantly. As those who have “put on the new self,” do we contribute to the hostility? Do we casually spread dishonest and hateful speech by pushing “like” or “share” without considering the truth of the message that we endorsed? Do we consider the tone of the language used? Christians should be aware of the impact that such speech may have on our ability to share the gospel with others. If we cannot speak graciously and keep a kind tone while speaking of something as fleeting as who is currently in office, how can we be trusted to speak kindly and graciously about something as delicate and essential as salvation and eternal life?

In Ephesians 5, Paul continues the same theme, reminding his audience of their need to be more like God and less like the world around them. This is accomplished by turning away from immorality, impurity, and greed (Eph. 5:1-3). He goes on to say, “There must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks” (v. 4). These terms refer to the vulgar and obscene expressions of a dirty mind. There are two ideas that we should consider about this instruction. First, we should be very aware that our words are the fruit of our hearts. As Jesus warned, the “mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart” (Matt. 12:34). James illustrates the same principle by pointing out that a fountain does not “send out from the same opening both fresh and bitter water” (Jas. 3:9-12). Thus, the key to taming the tongue is to purify the heart.

In light of this, we must consider the potential impact of the world around us on our hearts. The destruction of morality has become the entertainment of our society, and our society is uniquely focused on entertainment. Such an environment will undoubtedly influence the unguarded heart toward the very self-gratifying impurity that Paul has under consideration. At best, a casual approach to the words we use and the subjects we choose to joke about reveals a heart that has not been guarded (Prov. 4:23). Worse, such casualness may indicate a callousness toward the wickedness of the immorality that resonates in our words. Worse still, such language may inadvertently reveal a heart that has already been given over to immorality and is in danger of having no “inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God” (Eph 5:5).

As those who have “put on the new self” and seek to “be imitators of God,” we must be intentional in our efforts to separate ourselves from the world. This begins by turning our hearts toward God, which in turn produces words and deeds consistent with our confession. Failing to be intentional with our words may cause harm to our brethren, hamper our efforts to spread the gospel, and perhaps even cost us our souls. Our words must be “seasoned with salt” (Col. 4:6) so that we might be able to speak the truth, “edify according to the need of the moment,” and be busy in “giving of thanks.” **T**

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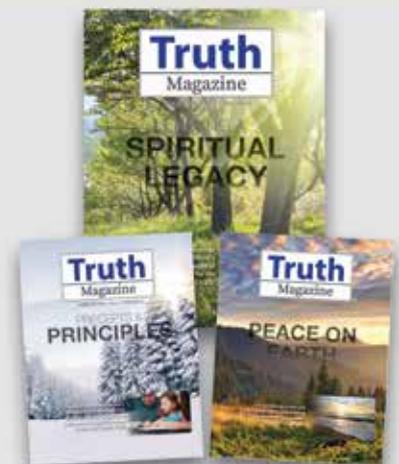


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Toward Worship

by Jason Lankford

One of the worst characteristics of contemporary culture is the casual attitude many manifest toward worship; Jason calls us back to the biblical pattern.

One mark of Jesus' earthly life was the great compassion that led Him to heal all who came to Him. He opened the eyes of the blind man, made the lame to walk, and even raised people from the dead. Some had been disabled from birth, but Jesus gave them life that they had never known. They never knew what it was to be well, yet this Man gave them complete restoration. Having been healed, it is no wonder why they sought to follow Jesus like the two blind men whose eyes were opened (Matt. 20:34). After all, why wouldn't you stick as closely as possible to One who opened your eyes to see all the things that you could never see before?

Throughout the Bible, we read stories of God saving people, but they turned their backs against Him. The cycle of salvation and rebellion that permeates the book of Judges causes us to stand in disgust toward a people who were seemingly blind to God's goodness. We can't help but be angry when we read of how Jesus healed ten lepers, yet only one returned to Him in thankfulness.

The problem that we often face is our ability to forget things so easy. When we forget, we lose sight of who we are. God saved us; He sent His Son to redeem us because we were lost. We were held captive in our sins, and death was our only expectation until Jesus stepped in and by his blood bridged the gap between God and us. Brothers and sisters, that is the

greatest salvation story that has ever been known. Yet, so often we forget.

An obvious indicator of a people who have forgotten their story is a casual attitude toward coming together to worship. Our coming together is a staple of who we are as the adopted children of God. How great a blessing it is for us to have opportunities to assemble with our brethren. Such occasions allow us to encourage one another, and also to honor the God who redeemed us.

We are introduced to the early church at the beginning of Acts. They were committed to being with one another (Acts 2:42-47). In the book of Hebrews, the author writes to a group of people who are being heavily persecuted for their faith. They endured hard struggles with sufferings, were publicly exposed to reproach and affliction, were put in prison, and had their property plundered (Heb. 10:32-34). This group of people experienced the tests of faith to degrees you and I have never known. Can you imagine being in the early church, and when you woke up each morning, wondering what you would have to endure for your faith that day? Yet in this difficult context, the author says, "Let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet 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). In such difficult and trying circumstances, there was

to be a continual commitment to assembling with the saints. It puts us to shame and gives occasion for embarrassment when we forsake the assembling of our brethren for the sake of a kid's ball game, hobbies, work that doesn't have to be performed, a job schedule over which we have a degree of control, etc. In light of the commitment of those early disciples, we start sounding pretty pathetic.

God speaks this same message through the prophet Isaiah regarding the Sabbath:

If you turn back your foot from the Sabbath, from *doing your pleasure* on my holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight and the holy day of the Lord honorable; if you honor it, *not going your own ways, or seeking your own pleasure, or talking idly*; then you shall take delight in the Lord, and I will make you ride on the heights of the earth; I will feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken (Isa. 58:13-14, ESV).

Isaiah exposes the real problem that leads to a casual approach to worship. It is not that the church is bogged down in tradition, or that it is filled with legalists who think that it is a sin to miss a church service. The problem is having a heart that does not desire to worship or be with God's people. The problem is with people who have forgotten what has been done for them in Christ. The problem is people who don't remember the domain of darkness and doom in which

they once walked and that they've been transferred from that into the kingdom of light (Col. 1:13-14). The problem is that I have chosen not to give any thought to how I can stir up my brethren to love and good works and to thus encourage them. The problem is not someone else's—it's mine. I'm doing the things I want to do and putting myself and my desires above all else and everyone else.

The answer to the problem of casualness toward worship is nothing short of a change of heart and attitude. May we remind ourselves who we are and from where we've come. God is to be praised in all of life's moments, because He has healed us in a way that is completely life-altering. He gives us hope of eternity in heaven when what we deserved was far from that. Additionally, God has given us a

community that He saved and joined us to one another as a body in Christ. When we come together, we remind each other that the world in which we live is not the one to which we belong. With all of the distractions of the day-to-day, it is easy to forget such truths. Yet, when we come to worship, we are uplifted and reminded by our Father of our heavenly belonging.

When we forsake those precious moments, we show a similarity to the nine lepers who didn't turn back with thankful hearts to their Healer. Whatever our excuse, I imagine they will sound pretty hollow in front of the Judge who gave His life blood on our behalf. Surrounded by witnesses who have endured persecution like those experienced in the early church, I would be ashamed to offer any excuse at all.

Worship is a gift from God. Our greatest distraction is always ourselves. Once we cease focusing on ourselves, we start to see worship for what it is: a blessed opportunity to praise our Redeemer and love our brethren. When we make the Lord our delight and raise Him to the highest place, we will find ourselves blessed. A casual approach to an eternally enthroned Father who paid the highest price for our salvation simply does not make sense. Rather, let us stand in absolute awe of who He is and what He has done, and worship Him with reverence (Heb. 12:28-29). **✠**



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Toward the Word

by Mark Mayberry

Although many evidence a casual attitude toward Sacred Scripture, Mark encourages us to develop a hunger for the truth, to eagerly hear and readily heed heaven's message.

The expression, "Truth or Consequences," is a part of our collective consciences. Truth or Consequences (T or C) is the name of a small city located in Sierra County, New Mexico. It has frequently been noted on lists of unusual place names, along with Rough and Ready, CA; Boring, OR; and Bug Tussle, TX. *Truth or Consequences* was the name of a goofy American game show that first aired on radio (1940-1957) and later on television (1950-1988).

Truth or Consequences also communicates an important biblical message. Paul described God's gracious message of salvation as "the word of truth, the gospel" (Col. 1:5-6). Coming to a knowledge of the truth is a vital part of the salvation process (1 Tim. 2:3-4). According to the Lord Jesus Christ, entrance into the kingdom of heaven is conditioned upon one's willingness to be "born again," i.e., of water and the Spirit (John 3:3, 5). James describes this birth process, saying, "In the exercise of His will He brought us forth (Greek: *apokueō*—brought into being) by the word of truth" (Jas. 1:18). During His earthly ministry, Jesus was saying to those who believed Him, "If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free" (John 8:31-32).

Contrasting Attitudes

Those who believe and know the truth gratefully share in the physical and spiritual blessings that God

bestows upon humanity; those who pay attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons forbid the same (1 Tim. 4:1-5). Seeking divine approval instead of self-justification, faithful Christians endeavor to accurately handle the word of truth (2 Tim. 2:15). In the original Greek, the word *orthotomeō*, translated "accurately handle," means "to cut straight" (Thomas 3718). BDAG points out that it is found elsewhere, outside of the New Testament, only in Proverbs 3:6 and 11:5, where it is used with *hodos* (a way, road), and "plainly means 'cut a path in a straight direction' or 'cut a road across country (that is forested or otherwise difficult to pass through) in a straight direction', so that the traveler may go directly to his destination." In this context, it probably means "guide the word of truth along a straight path (like a road that goes straight to its goal), without being turned aside by wordy debates or impious talk." In contrast, wicked individuals (such as Hymenaeus and Philetus) go astray from the truth and upset the faith of some. Such worldly and empty chatter leads to further ungodliness and spreads like gangrene (2 Tim. 2:16-18).

Contrasting Approaches

Wicked men will face the consequences of not loving or believing the truth (2 Thess. 2:7-12). Lacking a love for eternal and enduring truth, such individuals accumulate teachers who will condone their sinful desires. In so doing, they "turn away their

ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths" (2 Tim. 4:3-4). What is a myth? It is a fictional narrative of human contrivance standing in opposition to *logos*, i.e., the truth of divine revelation. Those who pursue this course experience the temporal consequences of exchanging the truth of God for a lie, suffering perceptual impairment and moral depravity (Rom. 1:24-25). Furthermore, they will face the eternal consequences of not obeying the truth: storing up for themselves wrath, indignation, tribulation and anguish (Rom. 2:5-11).

What about the righteous? Adopting the characteristics of *agape* love, faithful Christians do not rejoice in unrighteousness but rejoice with the truth (1 Cor. 13:6). Removing sin from their fellowship, faithful Christians must celebrate the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth (1 Cor. 5:6-8). Recognizing the value of truth, the prudent acquires knowledge (Prov. 23:23). He buys the truth and refuses to sell it, counting it as a very long-term investment (Prov. 23:23; Matt. 13:44).

Casual Disregard

Some, like the Pharisees and scribes, invalidate it by adding to or subtracting Sacred Scripture (Matt. 15:3-6). By denying the all-sufficiency of the gospel and binding circumcision on Gentile converts, the Judaizers adulterated it (2 Cor. 4:1-2).

Some demonstrate a casual and callous attitude toward the Word by persistently refusing to hear and heed heaven's message; like ancient Israel, they abandon the Lord, to their shame and ruin (2 Chron. 24:17-19; Isa. 28:9-13).

Others manifest a casual attitude toward the Word by loving error more than truth, accepting man's authority above that of God, and refusing to walk in God's ways. "An appalling and horrible thing has happened in the land: The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests rule on their own authority; and My people love it so!" Such rebellious behavior leaves one without defense in the day of judgment: "But what will you do at the end of it?" (Jer. 5:30). Again, thus says the Lord, "Stand by the ways and see and ask for the ancient paths, Where the good way is, and walk in it; and you will find rest for your souls. But they said, 'We will not walk in it'" (Jer. 6:16).

Some demonstrate a casual attitude toward the Word by hating those who faithfully proclaim God's

message. Wicked King Ahab said to Elijah, "Have you found me, O my enemy?" (1 Kings 21:20). Concerning Micaiah, he said, "I hate him, for he never prophesies good concerning me but always evil" (2 Chron. 18:4-7).

Others demonstrate a casual attitude toward the Word by being wearied by worship; Malachi denounced those who disdainfully sniff at God's table, offering the lame and the sick, saying, "My, how tiresome it is!" (Mal. 1:12-14).

Some demonstrate a casual attitude toward the Word by having itching ears and lustful hearts; they accumulate teachers who tell them what they want to hear (2 Tim. 4:1-5). The peril of having closed ears, blind eyes, and dull hearts is to become insensitive and unresponsive to the warnings of Sacred Scripture (Jer. 6:10; Matt. 13:13-15).

Conclusion

How do we approach the word of God? Some self-serving individuals peddle it; others, like Paul, sincerely proclaim it (2 Cor. 2:17; Col. 1:25-29).

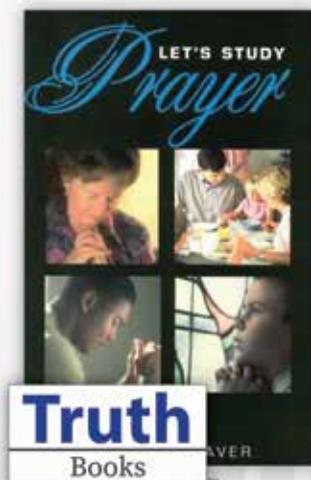
Some skeptically scoff and ignore it (2 Pet. 3:3-7); others are willing to suffer so that the word of God might be shared with a lost and dying world (2 Thess. 3:1; 2 Tim. 2:8-10). Some, like Sergius Paulus, proconsul of Salamis, seek to hear it (Acts 13:6-7); others, like Bar-Jesus/Elymas the magician, attempt to turn honest seekers away from the truth (Acts 13:8). The open-mindedness of the former starkly contrasts with the manipulateness of the latter (Acts 13:9-12).

What is your attitude toward the word of God? Do you hear and obey it (Luke 11:27-28)? Do you honor—or dishonor it (Titus 2:4-5)? Like believers in the New Testament era, will you obey it (Acts 8:14), accepting it for what it really is, "the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe" (1 Thess. 2:13)? **T**



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

FORT SMITH

South 46th St. church of Christ
2323 South 46th Street
Bible Study 9:45 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: John Hagenbuch
Bldg: (479) 782-0588

HARRISON

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

JONESBORO

StoneRidge church of Christ
514 Airport Road
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Dick Blackford (870) 933-9134
rlb612@aol.com

LITTLE ROCK

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

MARVELL

Marvell church of Christ
Highway 49 • Marvell, AR 72366
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 6 P.M.
(870) 714-1452 or (870) 338-1833

PINE BLUFF

Highway 79 South church of Christ
4341 S Camden Road
Bible Study 9:45 A.M., Worship 10:45 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Clarence W. Sell (870) 879-2097

POCAHONTAS

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

TEXARKANA

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

ARIZONA

GLENDALE

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

TUCSON

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

CALIFORNIA

BELLFLOWER

Rose Ave. church of Christ
17903 Ibbetson Ave.
Bible Study 9:45 A.M., Worship 10:50 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
(562) 866-5615, <http://www.roseavenue.org>

FOLSOM

church of Christ
900 E. Natomas St. • P.O. Box 492
Sunday Bible Study 9:30 A.M.,
Sunday Worship 10:30 A.M.,
Sunday Bible Study 5 P.M.,
Wednesday Bible Study 7 P.M.
Evangelist: David Posey
(530) 676-9514 or (916) 608-4866
www.folsomchurch.com

LONG BEACH

church of Christ
3433 Studebaker Road
Bible Study 9:50 A.M., Worship 10:45 A.M.
Evening 5:30 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
JP Flores (562) 420-2363
Mark Reeves (562) 377-1674
www.JustChristians.org

OCEANSIDE-VISTA

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

COLORADO

FORT COLLINS

Poudre Valley church of Christ
2926 E. Mulberry St., Unit B
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Afternoon 1:30 P.M.
Evangelist: Richie Thetford (970) 215-5797
www.poudrevalleychurchofchrist.org

GRAND JUNCTION

Western Slope church of Christ
2923 North Ave., Unit 3
Grand Junction, CO 81504
Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M.
www.churchofchristwesternslope.org

MONTROSE

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

DELAWARE

MILTON

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

FLORIDA

DESTIN

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

FORT LAUDERDALE

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

FORT MYERS

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

FROSTPROOF

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

GENEVA

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

KEY LARGO

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

MARY ESTHER

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

MIAMI

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

MIAMI

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

MIAMI

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

OCALA

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

ORLANDO

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

ORLANDO

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

ORLANDO

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

PALMETTO

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

PANAMA CITY BEACH

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

SEFFNER

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

GEORGIA

CENTERVILLE

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

COLUMBUS

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

CONYERS

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

PINE MTN. VALLEY

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

SAVANNAH

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

VALDOSTA

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

IDAHO

BLACKFOOT

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

IOWA

DES MOINES

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

GRINNELL

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

ILLINOIS

CHICAGO

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

DOWNERS GROVE

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

GLEN ELLYN

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

MATTOON

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

SOUTH HOLLAND

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

INDIANA

CLARKSVILLE

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

GREENWOOD

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

HOBART

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

INDIANAPOLIS

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

JAMESTOWN

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

OOBITIC

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

PEKIN

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

PLAINFIELD

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

SAINT LEON, IN

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

SALEM

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

TRAFALGAR

Spearsville Rd. church of Christ, 6244 S. 500W.
(1.2 mi. S. of Hwy. 135)
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Charles Wright
(317) 878-5969 or (317) 300-8790
www.trafalgarchurch.com

KANSAS

TOPEKA

17th Street church of Christ
5600 SW 17th St.
Bible Study 9:15 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Wednesday 7 P.M.
(785) 235-8687 or 273-7977
www.17thstreetchurchofchrist.org

KENTUCKY

AUSTIN

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

BEAVER DAM

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

BRANDENBURG

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

CAMPBELLSVILLE

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

CANEYVILLE

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

DANVILLE

church of Christ
385 E. Lexington Ave.
Worship 10 A.M., Bible Study 11:15 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Scott Vifquain (859) 236-4204

FRANKLIN

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

HODGENVILLE

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

LEITCHFIELD

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

LOUISVILLE

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

LOUISIANA

GONZALES

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

MANY

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

STONEWALL

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

MARYLAND

SEVERN

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

MAINE

PORTLAND

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

MICHIGAN

CEDAR SPRINGS

W. Michigan church of Christ
Sr. Citizen Center, 44 Park Street
(Grand Rapids Area)
Worship 11 A.M., Bible Study 12:30 P.M.
Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Joseph Gladwell, (616) 975-2778
westmichcof10@yahoo.com

MINNESOTA

DULUTH

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

ST. CHARLES

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

MISSISSIPPI

BOONEVILLE

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

CLINTON

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

MERIDIAN

Grandview church of Christ
2820 Grandview Ave.
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Wednesday 6:30 P.M.
Ron Cooper: (601) 934-3675
roncooper@bellsouth.net
Ricky Ethridge: (601) 737-5778
[rickymarsha@bellsouth.net](mailto:ricky-marsha@bellsouth.net)

MERIDIAN

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

SOUTHAVEN

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

MISSOURI

BLUE SPRINGS

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

BRANSON

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

CAPE GIRARDEAU

North Cape church of Christ
121 S. Broadview St. Suite 2,
Cape Girardeau, MO 63703
Sunday Bible Study 9:15 A.M. & 10 A.M.,
Worship 11 A.M., No Evening Service
Wednesday 6 P.M./CST, 7 P.M./DST
Evangelist: Jerry Lee Westbrook (573) 334-9673

DONIPHAN

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

FAIR GROVE

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

KENNETT

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

LILBOURN

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

RAYTOWN

Sterling Ave. church of Christ
5825 Sterling Ave. (Near Sports Complex)
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Justin Berss
(816) 356-3096 or (270) 320-6157
www.sterlingavechurchofchrist.org

ST. JAMES

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

ST. JOSEPH

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

NEBRASKA

BEATRICE

church of Christ • 7th and Bell
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 10 A.M.
Evening 6:30 P.M., 233-4102 or 228-3827
www.churchofchrist7bell.com

NEW JERSEY

VAUXHALL

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

NEW MEXICO

ALBUQUERQUE

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

NEVADA

RENO

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

NORTH CAROLINA

CHARLOTTE

Charlotte church of Christ
5327 S. Tryon Street
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Sun. Worship 10:30 A.M.
Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
(704) 525-5655
www.charlottechurchofchrist.org

OHIO

BEAVERCREEK

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

CINCINNATI

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

CLEVELAND

Lorain Ave. church of Christ
13501 Lorain Ave.
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
(330) 723-0111 or (330) 590-0227
or (216) 322-9392
www.lorainave-churchofchrist.com

COLUMBUS

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

DAYTON

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

FRANKLIN

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

FREMONT

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

HAMILTON

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

HILLIARD

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

MANSFIELD

Southside church of Christ
687 Mansfield-Lucas Road
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 10:45 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 5 P.M.
James Bond: (419) 526-2868
Leon Bond: (419) 525-3684
church: (419) 522-8982

NEW LEBANON

New Lebanon church of Christ
1973 W Main Street
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.,
Evening 5 P.M., Wed. Bible Study 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Bruce Hastings (937) 687-7150
or (937) 478-0367

MARIETTA-RENO

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

NORTHWOOD

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

UHRICHSVILLE

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

OKLAHOMA

MCALESTER

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

OKLAHOMA CITY

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

OREGON

SWEET HOME

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

PENNSYLVANIA

PHILADELPHIA

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

SOUTH CAROLINA

COLUMBIA

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

SUMTER

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

WEST COLUMBIA

Airport church of Christ
4013 Edmund Hwy. (Hwy. 302)
**OUR WEB SITE DISPLAYS OUR
CURRENT ASSEMBLY SCHEDULE.**
Evangelist: Terry W. Benton, Bldg. (803) 834-6978
<http://airport-church-of-christ.com>

TENNESSEE

COLUMBIA

Mooresville Pike church of Christ
417 Mooresville Pike
(.8 mi. N. of Hwy. 50/Jas. Campbell)
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 3:30 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
(931) 388-5828 or (931) 381-7898
www.moorevillepikecoc.com

COSBY

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

JACKSON

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

JOHNSON CITY

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

JONESBOROUGH

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

KINGSTON SPRINGS

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

MT. PLEASANT

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

KINGSFORT

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

MARYVILLE

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

MEMPHIS

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

MURFREESBORO

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

MURFREESBORO

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

NASHVILLE

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

NASHVILLE

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

PIGEON FORGE

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

SHELBYVILLE

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

SHELBYVILLE

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

TEXAS

ALLEN

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

ALVARADO

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

ALVIN

Adoue St. church of Christ
605 E. Adoue St
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
Evangelist: Mark Mayberry (346) 216-1707
www.ascoc.org & www.markmayberry.net

AUSTIN

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

BAYTOWN

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

BEAUMONT

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

CONROE

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

CLEVELAND

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

CORPUS CHRISTI

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

DICKINSON

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

DALLAS

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

DUNCANVILLE

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

EDNA

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

EL PASO

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

FORT WORTH

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

GRANBURY

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

HOUSTON

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

HOUSTON

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

IRVING

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

LANCASTER

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

LUBBOCK

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

LUFKIN

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

MANSFIELD

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

NACOGDOCHES

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

PLANO

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

SAN ANTONIO

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

SAN ANTONIO

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

SHERMAN

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

TEMPLE

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

WACO

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

THE WOODLANDS

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

VIRGINIA

CHESAPEAKE

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

CHESTER

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

NEWPORT NEWS

Harpersville Rd. church of Christ
315 Harpersville Road
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Wednesday 7:00 P.M.

RICHMOND (METRO)

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

RICHMOND

Forest Hill church of Christ
1208 W. 41st Street
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Evening 6:00 P.M., Wednesday 7:00 P.M.
Evangelist: Jack Bise, Jr. (804) 233-5959

RIDGEWAY

church of Christ
2970 Old Leaksville Road
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Evening 5:30 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
(276) 956-6049
www.churchofchristatridgeway.com

ROANOKE

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

VIRGINIA BEACH

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

WASHINGTON

BELLINGHAM

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

SEQUIM

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

TACOMA

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

WEST VIRGINIA

CHARLESTON

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

CLARKSBURG

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

FAIRMONT

Eastside church of Christ
1929 Morgantown Avenue
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 10:45 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
(304) 363-8696 or (304)844-2437

GLADESVILLE

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

MOUNDSVILLE

Moundsville church of Christ
210 Cedar Street
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6:30 P.M., Mid-week 7:30 P.M.
Evangelist: Tony Huntsman (304) 845-4940

PARKERSBURG

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

WYOMING

RANCHESTER

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

CANADA

CALGARY, AB

Northside church of Christ
803 20A Avenue NE
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday Bible Study 7 P.M.
+1 (403) 452-5116
www.churchofchristcalgary.com

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Redesigning ceibooks.com into truthbooks.com!

Website redesign project

To better serve you, we're in the process of creating a new design for our CEI Bookstore/Truth Publications website.

Our goal is to bring an easy-to-use, mobile-friendly, intuitive framework, with excellent content.

The redesign will take a few months to complete, but we are very excited about revealing the new site in early 2019!