

SIXTEENTH ANNUAL  
"LABOURERS TOGETHER WITH GOD"  
LECTURESHIP, 2008

# WHAT ARE MY RESPONSIBILITIES AS A MEMBER TO THE LOCAL CHURCH?

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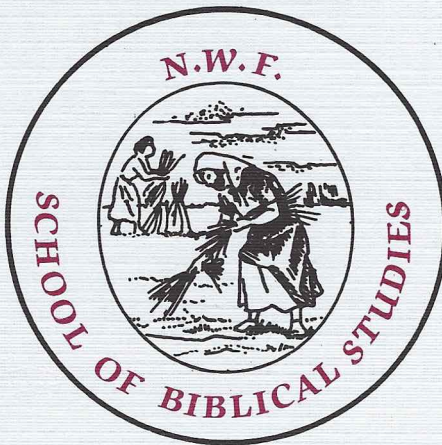
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"Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest."

(Luke 10:2)



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**SIXTEENTH ANNUAL  
"LABOURERS TOGETHER WITH GOD"  
LECTURESHIP**

February 17-21, 2008

**THEME:**

**WHAT ARE MY RESPONSIBILITIES  
AS A MEMBER TO THE  
LOCAL CHURCH?**

**Editor:  
Kenneth Burleson**

**The Church of Christ at Milestone**  
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## FORWARD

This book contains 28 lesson outlines of the Sixteenth Annual “*Labourers Together With God*” Lectureship, which was held at the church of Christ at Milestone, home of Northwest Florida School of Biblical Studies in Cantonment, Florida, February 17-21, 2008.

We selected 28 subjects under the theme, “What are My Responsibilities as a Member to the Local Church.”

So many people, after obeying the Gospel, go through the major part, if not all the rest, of their lives not fulfilling their responsibilities to the local church.

Many do not know what those responsibilities are, and others do not care. Therefore, they do not live a faithful Christian life.

It is our desire in this lectureship to outline the responsibilities of each member and to instill in those who hear or read these lessons a desire to fulfill their God-given responsibilities.

If each member of a local congregation will live up to his responsibilities, local churches will grow, and the brotherhood will be better and stronger for it.

These books are free to those who attend the lectureship. After the lectureship, the books may be purchased from: [orders@oldpathspublishing.com](mailto:orders@oldpathspublishing.com) — [www.oldpathspublishing.com](http://www.oldpathspublishing.com). The lectures will also be available for purchase on VHS, DVD, and MP3 from brother Jim Greene ([www.jgreencoc-video-ministry.com](http://www.jgreencoc-video-ministry.com)).

Audio tapes may be purchased from the school for the cost of the tapes.

—*Kenneth Burleson, Director*  
*February, 2008*

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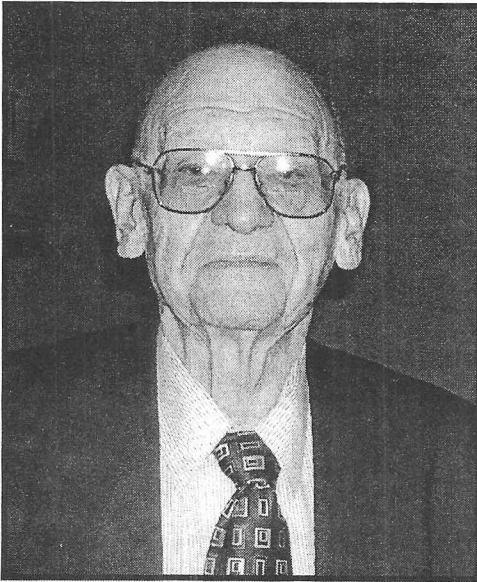
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Lenard Hogan 1922-2007

## LENARD HOGAN MEMORIAL

Brother Hogan was a Christian gentleman, lover of the cause of Christ, dedicated to family and friends. He preached for many congregations that could not support a full-time preacher, while working secular work to support his family.

Each time he had some extra money he would seek out a good faithful work and support it. He was a friend and supporter of Northwest Florida School of Biblical Studies.

After retiring from secular work he continued preaching. The money he was to receive for preaching was sent by the congregation directly to the school. The financial support he gave to Northwest Florida School of Biblical Studies will be helping to support students for many years to come.

I truly lost a great Christian friend. The family gave me the opportunity to deliver the message at his funeral, it was an honor. Time did not permit all I wanted to say.

The following was written by Brother Len Hogan, son of Brother Lenard Hogan.

"He began his preaching career on July 10, 1949 and it ended November 18, 2007 just five days prior to his passing. He preached more than 3,850 sermons during those years. He preached to as many as 300 and to as few as 3. He preached for both crowds with the same zeal and enthusiasm, because they came to hear the word and he felt obliged to preach the word.

If there was ever a verse of scripture that summed up his life as a preacher it would have to be Acts 14:7, "And there they preached the gospel." Wherever he happened to be, he preached the gospel in its simplicity and honesty as in: Duluth, MN; Hughes, AR; Dyess, AR; Whitehall, AR; Aubry, AR; Congregations in Obion County, TN; Webbs Chapel (first sermon); Cloverdale, TN (last sermon); Oak Ridge, TN; Glass and Hornbeak, TN; Pensacola, FL; and Murray, KY."

—Kenneth Burleson, Director

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# A MEMBER MUST LOVE THE LOCAL CHURCH

*Victor M. Eskew*

1. John 13:34-35, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."
  - a. Jesus stated what He refers to as "a new commandment." It was new due to the divine standard attached to it: "love one another; as I have loved you" (emp. mine, vme).
  - b. Three little words — one difficult command.
2. God must have known both the importance and the difficulty His people would have with the command to love. We find the word "love" used 180 times in 157 verses in the New Testament. "Charity" is used 28 times in the New Testament.
3. It behooves us to understand and to practice love within the local congregation.
  - a. Paul refers to it as "a more excellent way" (I Cor. 12:31).
  - b. In I Corinthians 13:13, he called love the "greatest" thing.
 

"And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity."

## DISCUSSION:

### I. THE COMMAND TO LOVE

- A. John 15:17, "These things I command you, that ye love one another."
- B. Romans 13:8, "Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law."
- C. I Peter 3:8, "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous."
- D. I John 3:23, "And this is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us a commandment."
- E. I John 4:7, "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God."
- F. I John 4:11, "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another."
- G. Abound in our love one for another (I Thess. 3:12). "And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you."



## II. THE MEANING OF LOVE

- A. In the Greek, several words are used for love. They each involve a different type of love that can be practiced.
1. *Eros*
    - a. This is erotic, romantic, passionate love.
    - b. The Bible never uses this word.
  2. *Phileo*
    - a. This is a familial love. It is the love shared between friends, family, and community.
    - b. Heb. 13:1, Let brotherly love (5360) continue.
    - c. See also Rom. 12:10 and I Thess. 4:9.
  3. *Storge*
    - a. Storge is a love of affection. It is exemplified in the love of a mother for a child.
    - b. It is combined with phileo in Rom. 12:10a. “Be kindly affectioned to one another with brotherly love...”
    - c. Its negative is found in two verses, Rom. 12:31 and II Timothy 3:3. In both places it is translated “without natural affection.”
  4. *Agape*
    - a. This is the most common word for love in the Greek New Testament.
    - b. It is an active, self-sacrificial love. It puts the needs of another before one’s own.
    - c. *Agapao* is found 142 times in the New Testament and *agape* is found 116 times.
    - d. In the KJV, *agape* is translated with the words “love” and “charity.”
      - 1) I Cor. 16:1, “Let all things be done with charity.”
      - 2) Col. 3:14, “And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.”
- B. Paul’s description of charity, or *agape* love, is one of the best, most beautiful, and most detailed which could be given. For the most part, it is self-explanatory (I Cor. 13:4-8a). “*Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, it not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth.*”
1. Sixteen qualities of love are set forth by the apostle.
  2. Each one of them would make a great lesson, much needed by the brethren.

### III. THE OBJECTS OF OUR LOVE

- A. We are to love our leaders.
  - 1. In the local church, the elders are the overseers of the church (Acts 20:28; I Peter 5:1-3).
  - 2. These men are to be esteemed and loved by the members (I Thess. 4:12-13a). *"And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake."*
- B. We are to love our brothers and sisters in Christ.
  - 1. When we obeyed the Gospel, we were born into the family of God. We immediately entered into a love relationship with other Christians (I Peter 1:22). *"Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently."*
  - 2. One of the keys to this love is that it is to be the same for all (Phil. 2:2). *"Fulfill ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind."*
- C. We are to love the work of the Lord.
  - 1. Two passages speak of a "labor of love" (I Thess. 1:3; Heb. 6:10). *"Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God our Father."*
  - 2. For some, their labor in the Lord is lackadaisical and lackluster instead of being diligent labor. They have not come to love the Lord's work.
- D. We are to love the brotherhood.
  - 1. Our love doesn't stop with the local congregation. We love all of our brothers and sisters in Christ.
  - 2. I Peter 2:17, *...love the brotherhood...*
  - 3. Question: Do we really love the brotherhood when we do not know and do not want to know what is happening within it?

### IV. THE EXPRESSION OF LOVE

- A. Love is to be without dissimulation (505) or hypocrisy (Rom. 12:9). *"Let love be without dissimulation..."*
- B. Love works no ill toward his neighbor (Rom. 13:10).
- C. Love forgives the sinner who has repented and receives him back into fellowship (II Cor. 2:6-8). *"Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many. So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him."*

- D. Love proves its sincerity in giving (II Cor. 8:8, 24). *“I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love.”*
- E. Love serves another (Gal. 5:13-14). *“For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.”*
- F. Love forbears (430), that is, puts up with others (Eph. 4:2). *“With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love.”*
- G. Love speaks the truth (Eph. 4:15). *“But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.”*
- H. Love edifies the other members of the body so that it grows (Eph. 4:16). *“From whence the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.”*
- I. Love charges others not to teach doctrines contrary to the doctrine of Christ (I Tim. 1:3-5). *“...charge some that they teach no other doctrine, neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do. Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned.”*
- J. Love covers a multitude of sins (I Peter 4:8). *“And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.”*
- K. Love causes us to greet our brethren (I Peter 5:14a). *“Greet ye one another with a kiss of charity.”*
- L. Love helps and renders assistance to those in need (I John 3:17-18). *“But whoso hath this world’s good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.”*

**V. THE IMPORTANCE OF LOVE (I Cor. 13:1-3)**

*“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and*

*though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing."*

## VI. THE REWARDS OF LOVE

- A. We have passed from death to life (I John 3:14). *"We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death."*
- B. We are born of God and know God (I John 4:7). *"Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God."*
- C. God dwells in us and His love is perfected in us (I John 4:12). *"No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us."*
- D. It proves our love for God (I John 4:21). *"And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also."*

## CONCLUSION:

1. Loving one another is not always an easy task. There are numerous obstacles that can hinder us from loving as we should.
  - a. Personalities, Indifference, Prejudices, Busyness
  - b. Indifference, Sin, Doctrinal error
2. Love, however, is essential to our spiritual life, both now and in the world to come.
  - a. Col. 3:14, *"And above all these things, put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness."*
  - b. I Peter 4:8, *"And above all thing have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins."*
  - c. I Tim. 4:12, *"Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity."*

# THE ESSENTIALITY OF LOCAL CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

*“who is one of you”*

*Alan Adams*

Colossians 4:9, 12

1. The issue of identity
  - a. Jesus gave us “rest.” Which Jesus? (Heb. 4:8,9,10,11, KJV; Col. 4:11)
  - b. Philip was an “evangelist.” Which one? (Acts 1:13; 21:8)
  - c. Mary was a part of — a “member of” — one of the “churches of Christ.” Which one? Which Mary? Which church? (Luke 10:42; Acts 1:14; 12:12; Rom. 16:6; cf. Rom. 16:5, 23)
2. The challenge and importance of identity (cf. Num. 3:17, 20; 4:1,2; et al)
  - a. A man died because of it (II Sam. 6)
  - b. A point about the high priesthood of Jesus turned/s on it (Heb. 7:14)
3. Christian identity: individual and corporate
  - a. Believers, disciples, saints, Christians, et al (Acts 5:14; I Tim. 4:12; Acts 11:26; 26:28; I Pet. 4:16; Acts 9:32; 26:10; I Cor. 1:2)
  - b. Church; body; “severally members thereof” (I Cor. 12:27)
4. Various “disconnects” regarding the identity of God’s people
  - a. No integral relationship between church and salvation (cf. Acts 20:28; Eph. 5:23)
  - b. Denominational view: different bodies, same head
  - c. Our present discussion regarding the essential identity of faithful Christians as also faithful members of a local church.
5. Absent a keen sense of the essential need to be faithful “members” of a local church, we have:
  - a. Floaters, without a sense of loyalty and devotion to anything larger than themselves.
  - b. Church is: “Where I go”; “Where I attend”
  - c. Local churches are: “they,” “them,” not “I”
6. Let us move to show that local church membership ought not be viewed as an inhibition, rather an inherent part of God’s plan for man

## DISCUSSION:

### I. EXPLICIT PROOF.

- A. Numerous references to the fact and essentiality of the local church (Matt. 18:17; Acts 13:1; 14:23; Rom. 16:1,5,16; II Cor. 11:8; Phill. 4:15; III John 9,10; Rev. 1:4,11, et al).

- B. Without proceeding, this serves as de facto proof that local churches are an integral part of God's plan?
- C. The whole is the sum of its parts
  - 1. Individual members of local churches are an integral part of the existence of local churches (self-evident);
  - 2. Local churches are an integral part of made up of God's plan; therefore,
  - 3. Individual members as integral parts of local churches is a part of God's plan.
- D. Paul visited: churches, brethren, et al

## II. IMPLICIT PROOF.

- A. Regarding "organization" of local churches (Heb. 13:17; Acts 20:28)
- B. Regarding "interdependence" of members of local churches (Rom. 14:15; 16:16; Col. 3:13,16; I Thess. 4:18; 5:11; II Thess 1:3; Heb. 10:25; et al)
- C. Regarding diverse makeup of local churches (esp. Pauline epistles): Husbands, wives, children; masters, servants; older men/women; younger men/women
- D. Regarding divine assessment and judgment of members of local churches in light of local church of which they are members (Rev. 2-3)
- E. Regarding Work of local churches: "no church fellowship... save you"

## III. INCIDENTAL PROOFS.

- A. "One of you" (Col. 4:12; I Thess 1:1; II Thess. 1:1; I Thess. 2:11; 4:4; II Thess. 1:3)
- B. "Brethren...church" (III John 10; Col. 4:15)
- C. "Gathered the church together" (Acts 14:27)
- D. "Divisions exist among you" (I Cor. 11:18)
- E. "Come together in the church...whole church be assembled" (I Cor. 11:18; 14:23)

## IV. ANALOGICAL PROOFS.

- A. Behaving in the "house of God" (I Tim. 3:15, esp. in light of context)
- B. Building on the foundation (I Cor. 3)
- C. Care of the flock (Acts 20:28; I Pet. 5:2,3)
- D. Jesus in the "midst of the candlesticks" (Rev. 1:13; 2:1)

## CONCLUSION:

- 1. We have shown that local church membership is an essential part of our relationship with God.

- a. Not uncommon for some to reject: “placing membership,” “moving membership,” et al, saying, “They are not in the Bible.”
  - b. As to our connection to local church, however we characterize our relationship with it, it must be there.
  - c. Whether we place membership, identify ourselves as members; some means of formal attachment must be there.
2. Some Christian responsibilities can only be fulfilled in the context of the local church.
  3. It is an error to convince oneself that by viewing local church membership as unessential, one is then removed from any sense of responsibility, accountability

# MEMBERS ARE TO USE THEIR TALENTS

*Matthew 25:14-30*

*Kenneth Burleson*

1. In money, a talent was over \$1,000. In, silver about \$1,500. Not positive as to the amount in this passage.
2. Today talents mean abilities.
3. In the text, one received five talents, another two and another one.
4. They were not judged based on the number of talents they had in the beginning, but at reckoning time.
5. They were all equal in the beginning.
6. The one with five talents and the one with two talents were equal in the end.
7. Judgment is based upon how our talents are used.
8. Responsibilities imposed "Going into a far country."
  - a. Jesus went into heaven.
  - b. As these servants were supposed to do their work in the absence of their master, so we, as the servants of Jesus Christ are to serve Him while he is in heaven.

## DISCUSSION:

### I. GOD HAS ENTRUSTED US WITH TIME, ABILITIES AND RESOURCES TO USE IN HIS SERVICE.

- A. Time. Job 1:21; 14:1-3; James 4:13-15
  1. Someone said, "Time is the stuff of which life is made."
  2. We must redeem the time and use it wisely. Eph. 5:16
- B. Abilities. Deut. 8:18; Matt. 25:14, 15; James 1:17
  1. Must work while it is day. John 9:4
  2. Must work out our own salvation. Phil. 2:12
  3. In the use of your talents.
    - a. You have a talent to visit and minister to the sick, put that talent to use. Matt. 25:36
    - b. You have the ability to minister to the fatherless and widows, put that ability to use. James 1:27
    - c. You have a talent to teach your neighbor the Gospel of Christ, put that talent to use. He has a soul which is worth more than all the world. Matt. 16:26
    - d. You have the ability to teach Bible classes, lead singing, lead prayers and wait on the Lord's table, and knock on doors, put it to use. Do not say, "I can't." When called upon respond with a yes.
- C. Resources. I Tim. 6:7; Luke 12:16-20



**II. ALL DO NOT HAVE THE SAME TALENTS NOR THE SAME NUMBER OF TALENTS.**

- A. First there must be an acceptance of self.
  - 1. We must accept the fact that different persons have different talents. Matt. 25:14-30
  - 2. We must accept what we have, even though we may have inferior talents and severe handicaps and use them rather than complain over what we do not have. I Cor. 12:12-27
  - 3. We should resign ourselves to the things that happen to us. Phil. 4:11 But never be content with what we are. Phil. 3:13, 14; II Pet. 3:18
- B. Faithfulness does not depend upon the amount of work a person can do.
- C. One may be just as faithful as another, though he does but half as much good.
- D. The amount of ability has to be taken into consideration.
- E. If the one talent man had gained another talent, he would have been just as faithful as the other two men.

**III. THE LORD EXPECTS US TO USE THE ABILITY OR ABILITIES WE HAVE.**

- A. Some members of the Lord's church often minimize their ability to do work for the church in order to evade their responsibility.
- B. Many go through life telling themselves and others that they cannot do certain things.
- C. The Lord knows all the time they can, if they would put forth a reasonable effort.
- D. Some will be rejected at the judgment simply because they did not try.
- E. The Lord will not demand more of us than we are capable of doing, He will not demand less than we are able to do.

**IV. USE AND ABUSE OF TALENTS.**

- A. The five talent man and the two talent man went and put theirs to use. Matt. 25:16, 17
- B. Each of them doubled their talents.
- C. The one talent man hid his talent.
  - 1. It is pathetic when one is in fear of losing that which he will not use.
  - 2. He began to make excuses by blaming his Lord. Matt. 25:24

**V. REWARDS AND PUNISHMENT**

- A. Reward of the righteous.
  - 1. The five talent man.

- a. "Well done thou good and faithful servant." Matt. 25:21
- b. "Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things." Matt. 25:21
- c. "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." Matt. 25:21
2. The two talent man.
  - a. "Well done, good and faithful servant." Matt. 25:23
  - b. "Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things." Matt. 25:23
  - c. "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." Matt. 25:23
- B. Punishment for the wicked.
  1. The one talent man.
    - a. "Thou wicked and slothful servant." Matt. 25:26
    - b. "Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Matt. 25:30
  2. He was not worth anything to his Lord.

**CONCLUSION:**

1. We have a responsibility to the local congregation to use our talents.
2. Few or many put to use in the service of God will gain others.
3. If we fail to use our talents we will lose them and be condemned at judgment.

## **FAITHFUL ATTENDANCE IN ALL ASSEMBLIES**

*Marlin Kilpatrick*

1. In my life as a Christian, I have noticed the following in every congregation in which I have been a member.
  - a. There are Christians who attend every service of the church, unless hindered by reasons that are beyond their control.
    - 1) They are present for Bible study on Sunday morning and Wednesday evenings.
    - 2) They attend both Sunday morning and Sunday evening worship services.
    - 3) When the church has a Gospel meeting, they attend every service.
    - 4) When sister congregations have Gospel meetings, they attend their services.
    - 5) They attend lectureships that are within a reasonable driving distance.
  - b. There are other Christians whose attendance is infrequent.
    - 1) They attend only once on Sunday so they can partake of the Lord's Supper.
    - 2) They do not participate in the Sunday morning Bible study class.
    - 3) They are not present for most services in our Gospel meetings.
    - 4) They seldom, if ever, attend other Gospel meetings in the area.
2. Why is there such a difference in our habit of attending our worship services?
  - a. Is it a lack of knowledge?
  - b. Is it just plain apathy?
  - c. Does it really make a difference?
3. I am of the conviction that it makes a very real difference!
  - a. It makes a difference in the spiritual life of the Christian.
  - b. It makes a difference in the spiritual life of the congregation.
4. Are there valid reasons for attending every service of the church? Yes! Let's consider the following reasons.

### **DISCUSSION:**

#### **I. THE COMMAND NOT TO FORSAKE THE ASSEMBLY. Heb. 10:25**

- A. It is a warning against abandoning the assembling with other Christians.

1. When we begin skipping services such as Sunday evening and Wednesday evening, it becomes easier to miss the Sunday morning service.
    - a. Sin has a progressive influence. cf. The drunkard who drinks until he becomes an alcoholic.
    - b. A common excuse is often offered. "Well, the Lord knows why I'm absent."
  2. Church members who are in the habit of attending all services are not likely to begin skipping services. They understand this can lead to stopping attending altogether.
- B. Some in the 1st century were forsaking the assembly — "...as the manner of some is..."

## II. THE COMMAND TO EDIFY ONE ANOTHER

- A. We have a responsibility to edify (build-up) one another. Rom. 14:19; 15:1-3; Heb. 3:12-14
- B. Our presence in the assembly is an encouragement to those who are present.
  1. Our presence in the assembly is a demonstration of our faith.
  2. Our presence in the assembly allows us to be a better "brothers keeper."
- C. Can we edify others when we're absent in almost 3/4 of our assemblies?

## III. THE COMMAND TO "...SEEK FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS..."

- A. Jesus commanded his disciples to put His kingdom first in their lives. Matt. 6:33
  1. We all have priorities, but we must put them in the right order.
    - a. Many Christians will not accept a job that requires them to miss any of the assemblies, but God still provides for their needs.
    - b. Many Christians will not miss services to play sports or engage in other extracurricular activities.
  2. Some Christians miss the assemblies of the church because of aches and pains, but they are able to rise up early on Monday morning and go to their jobs, grocery store or mall, with these same aches and pains!
- B. We must put the kingdom of God (the church) first, even before our own families.
  1. Our families can hinder our attendance in the assemblies of the church. cf. Matt.10:36-38
  2. Our families can cause us to develop a divided allegiance between them and God.

- C. Our true family consist of those who obey the Lord. cf. Matt. 12:46-50

**IV. WHY SHOULD WE ATTEND EVERY ASSEMBLY OF THE CHURCH?**

- A. To further our spiritual development. II Peter 3:18
- B. To learn that all assemblies are important, and why.
- C. To be prepared for every good work. cf. Titus 3:1
- D. To not become an occasion for stumbling for other Christians. Rom. 14:13; I Cor. 8:13
- E. To learn all we do must be done by the authority of Christ. Col. 3:17

**CONCLUSION:**

1. Our attendance in every assembly of the church may be a good barometer of our faith.
2. Our failing to make every effort to attend all of the assemblies of the church, may be the first step down a slippery slope that leads to apostasy, and eventually the loss of the soul.

# MUST HAVE AN EVANGELISTIC ZEAL

*Carl Bunn*

1. Isaiah 6:8, "*Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.*"
2. Regarding the text
  - a. God asked, "Whom shall I send?"
    - 1) There was a great work to be done
    - 2) The question implies qualifications necessary to the work
  - b. Isaiah's reply is "Here am I, send me"
  - c. What qualified him for this task?
    - 1) His purity of life, "...thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged" (Isa. 6:7).
    - 2) He had a zeal to start and finish the work
3. Isaiah was called to preach.
  - a. God provided the message and the work
  - b. Isaiah was to provide courage and ZEAL
4. How does this apply to us?
  - a. We want to show our responsibility as a Christian to evangelize.
  - b. We want to encourage the Christians to evangelize.

## DISCUSSION

### I. WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY IS IT TO EVANGELIZE?

- A. Every Christian has the responsibility.
- B. Why is this so?
  1. The Lord has given a command to "make disciples" (ASV) (Matt. 28:18-20)
    - a. We must keep His commandment (I John 2:4). And the work of making disciples would be included in this.
    - b. The works Jesus did, He also gave His disciples to do (John 14:12). He made disciples so should we.
  2. We have an examples of Christians making disciples, (Acts 8:4).
    - a. They preached the word that has the power to make disciples.
    - b. They had a zeal as is shown by their preaching in spite of persecution.
    - c. We need to learn to do the same.
  3. Persecution had the potential to stop any evangelistic work.
    - a. Lesser things have stopped evangelistic work.
    - b. Could this be a reason for the church not growing?

## **II. HOW ARE WE TO EVANGELIZE?**

### **A. Pray for God's help.**

1. Pray for wisdom (James 1:5).
  - a. Wisdom of God as to how to use the Word of God.
2. Pray for boldness (Eph. 6:18-19).
  - a. Boldness to speak as Isaiah.
  - b. Boldness to speak as Paul.
3. Pray for open doors (Col. 4:3).
  - a. We don't pray for God.
    - 1) To save apart from His will.
    - 2) Nor to do our work.
  - b. We pray for:
    - 1) An opportunity.
    - 2) For receiving hearts.
4. Pray for labourers (Matt. 9:38).

### **B. Learn from the men of God.**

1. Learn from God's Word so you can teach (II Tim. 2:2).
2. Study to be approved of God (II Tim 2:15).

### **C. Rely on the Word of God.**

1. First century Christians went everywhere preaching the Word (Acts 8:4).
2. After learning of Christ, Paul straightway went out preaching Christ (Acts 9:20).

### **D. We evangelize by example.**

1. Actions (good or bad) can speak louder than words.
  - a. We are to light the world (Matt. 5:14).
  - b. We are to act as the light (Eph 5:8).
2. While we cannot always speak of Christ, we can ALWAYS live for Christ.
3. While we cannot always know the proper words to speak, we can ALWAYS show Christ in us.
4. The word preached and the proper example shown brings forth good fruit.

## **III. WHERE DO WE EVANGELIZE?**

### **A. We evangelize at home:**

1. Mother, father, brother, or sister.
2. This is the hardest for most.

### **B. We evangelize in our neighborhood:**

1. Next door
2. Across the road
3. Down the street.

### **C. We evangelize all across our City/town:**

1. At the Quick-Mart
2. Grocery store

### **D. We evangelize the world:**

1. We may go ourselves

2. We may help to send people
3. We may send materials
4. We can always encourage the ones who have gone

#### IV. WHEN DO WE START?

- A. We start when we become Christians.
- B. We are not promised another day (James 4:14).
- C. The work is before us (John 4:35)

#### CONCLUSION

1. We have a commandment from Christ.
2. We have to study God's Word.
  - a. Pray for guidance.
  - b. Teach from God's word
3. We can start in our home.
4. We must start today.
5. As Christians, our heart should hurt for every lost soul of the world, Matt. 22:37-40



# MUST BE A GOOD INFLUENCE

Matt. 5:13-16; I Cor. 15:33

*Ryan Manning*

1. The willingness of each member to accept and carry out the responsibilities is vital to the congregation and what it will be able to accomplish.
2. There are many areas in our life in which we are given responsibilities and are expected to fulfill those things.
  - a. Work: The boss expects the employees to carry out their responsibility
  - b. Marriage: The husband and wife expects the other to fulfill their responsibilities
  - c. Parents: They are expected to take care of and provide for their children.
3. Christians have a great responsibility to their local congregation.
4. One of those areas is influence.
5. What is influence?
  - a. "To share or alter by indirect or intangible means" (Merriam-Webster's Dictionary)
  - b. "To have an effect on the condition or development of" (Merriam-Webster's Dictionary)
6. Read: Matthew 5:13-16
7. We want to notice three things in our lesson.
  - a. Christians are the *salt* of the earth and the *light* of the world.
  - b. How a bad influence affects a congregation.
  - c. How a good influence affects a congregation.
8. Christians not only influence the local congregation, but we also have affect on the people outside of the church.
9. It is the aim of this lesson to encourage us to strive harder to be a better influence in our local congregation in the future, than we have been in the past.

## DISCUSSION:

### I. CHRISTIANS ARE SALT AND LIGHT.

- A. Salt is that which provides flavor to the things we eat. Salt also has the ability to preserve things.
- B. Three Elements concerning salt
  1. Just as salt preserves, our life and conduct should have a preserving influence. (Psalm 9:17)
  2. Just as salt produces thirst, we ought to live in a manner that influences others to thirst after righteousness. (Matt. 5:6)

3. Salt is a purifying agent, we are to be pure in all that we do. (James 1:27)
- C. Light does several things for us.
  1. Light renders objects visible.
  2. It shows their true form and nature.
  3. Light shows the beauty of objects.
  4. Light shows the deformity of objects.
  5. "Light" in the Bible also represents that which is true and pure.
- D. Christians are to be people that are pure. How so?
  1. Pure in actions
  2. Pure in conduct
  3. Pure in the way we work and play.
- E. A city that is set on a hill is something everyone can see.
- F. What do your fellow Christians see when they observe your actions in the congregation?
  1. Do they see one that is working hard for the Lord?
  2. Do they see one that is always on time for services?
  3. Do they see one that is leading others by example?
  4. Do they see one that shows up to go door knocking?
  5. Do they see one with a loving and caring attitude for other people?
- G. There are all things that influence the congregation.

## II. CHRISTIANS ARE TO LET THEIR LIGHT SHINE. (Matt. 5:15-16)

- A. If you notice, it is the works that are to shine, not the worker.
- B. The things we do for the Lord are going to be noticed and they will influence the people around us for good.
- C. If we are working in the local congregation, people will see it.
  1. Letting a Christian attitude shine forth will influence others.
  2. Showing interests in the work of the congregation will influence others.
- D. Christians are to not hide or be ashamed they are Christians.
- E. Three ways people hide their light.
  1. Under the bushel of business
  2. Under the bushel of ease
  3. Under the bushel of ignorance.
- F. When our light shines, it illuminates our good works, God is glorified by those things and others will be influenced.

## III. HOW A BAD INFLUENCE AFFECTS A CONGREGATION. (I Cor. 15:33, Matt. 5:13)

- A. A bad influence affects everyone in a congregation.
- B. The apostle Paul used the idea of “evil communications” in verse 33
- C. “Communications” in this verse is the idea of companionship or communion.
- D. The people with which we associate affects us.
  - 1. If our friends are drinking or using drugs.
  - 2. If we are associating with people that use bad language.
- E. The apostle Paul goes on to explain these things, “corrupt morals”
  - 1. The word “corrupt” means to: break, separate, dissolve, destroy
- F. These are things that affect the individual that are hanging out with the wrong crowd.
- G. What about a bad attitude in the church?
  - 1. A bad attitude will be a hindrance to the work.
  - 2. It hinders church growth.
  - 3. It rubs off on other people.
- H. A lot of times, congregations stop growing or people stop coming because of the bad influence.
- I. We will answer to God:
  - 1. We will answer to God about our attitudes
  - 2. Our negative influence
  - 3. Unwillingness to give something beneficial to the congregation
  - 4. We will answer to God for our negative influence.
- J. We are our brother’s keeper.
  - 1. Cain had the wrong attitude. (Gen. 4:9)
- K. When the salt has lost its savor.
  - 1. When Christians have lost their saltiness, they lose several things:
    - a. They lose their ability to have a preserving influence.
    - b. They lose their hunger for righteousness.
    - c. They lose their influence over members of the congregation.
  - 2. The salt that has lost its savor.
    - a. It is cast out and trodden under foot.
    - b. It has lost its ability to preserve and is not useful for anything.
- L. Christians can’t afford to lose their savor or ability to have an influence

**IV. HOW TO BE A GOOD INFLUENCE IN THE LOCAL CONGREGATION.**

- A. Christians must be a good influence.
  - 1. It is vital to congregational growth
  - 2. Encouraging others

3. God is glorified by our good influence.
- B. Paul lists several areas to be a good influence when writing to young Timothy. (I Tim. 4:12)
- C. Paul tells Timothy to be an "example"
1. An example is something people can imitate.
    - a. "In word" – refers to manner of speech.
    - b. "In conversation" – refers to conduct or manner of life.
    - c. "In Charity" – refers to love for fellow man.
    - d. "In Spirit" – refers to doing things in a mild and meek manner.
    - e. "In Faith" – refers to faith in God
      - 1) "At all times, and in all trials show to believers by your example, how they ought to maintain unshaken confidence in God" (Barnes Notes)
    - f. "In Purity" – refers to how our life should be at all times.
- D. We can have a good influence by abstaining from sin. (I Thess. 5:22)
- E. Ways to be a good influence in the congregation.
1. Show up for door knocking efforts.
  2. Show love and concern for members of the congregation.
  3. Let our speech be seasoned with salt. (Col. 4:6)
  4. A humble spirit. (Matt. 23:12)
- F. Most importantly, we are to be a good influence that people may see Christ living in us.
- G. Christ is our greatest example and influence. (I Peter 2:21)

### CONCLUSION:

1. We are Christians and we are to be Christ-like.
2. We have the responsibility of being a good influence if we want to be pleasing in the sight of God.
3. We must keep in mind that "*..To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, it is sin*"
4. People are always watching and observing us. What do they see?
  - a. An example they can follow?
  - b. An example that is harmful and corrupts?
5. We are to be a good influence and the Lord demands it.
6. The local congregation has the right to expect us to be the proper influence.
  - a. In work
  - b. In love
  - c. In attitude
7. I hope from this lesson we have seen the affects of a good influence and the affects of a bad influence and will strive harder to fulfill our responsibility in being a good influence.

# **MUST NOT BRING SHAME AND REPROACH UPON THE CHURCH**

*Jared Knoll*

1. There is no doubt in your life, you have been repelled by certain actions and words of others.
2. It may have been a particular store, financial institution, school or even athletic team.
3. What we must recognize is that each individual can have the same repelling effect toward the church universal, but particularly the local church of which you are a member.

## **DISCUSSION:**

### **I. THE SOCIAL NATURE OF MAN'S EXISTENCE ON EARTH.**

- A. We live in and among people (John 17:15; I Cor. 5:9,10; 10:25-33; 15:33).
  1. Jesus had a "social life" — i.e. He lived among a society of people and took part in society (Luke 2:52; 2:1-11; 19:1-10)
  2. Yet, His social activities were governed by His spiritual life, and His devotion to the will of the Father (John 9:4; Matt. 26:39,42,44).
- B. We must be involved in the community (Mark 16:15,16).
- C. Being involved presents opportunity to the Christian for representing the church (II Tim. 4:12; John 17:20,21).
  1. Opportunity presents a fine line between being positive and being negative; being helpful or being destructive.
  2. We can present a good influence that allows for others to "glorify your Father in heaven" (Matt. 5:13-16).
  3. We can also present a bad influence that causes a "bad taste" in the spiritual mouths of the community.
  4. We live in a class-oriented society (stereotypes) and one person's bad influence can brand the entire class or segment of society which they represent.

### **II. THE BIBLE AND THE PROBLEM OF SHAME AND REPROACH.**

- A. Let us define our terms:
  1. Shame, as it relates to our subject, is a "state of disgrace or discredit; a person or thing that brings disgrace" (American Century Dictionary, 1995).

2. Reproach, "express disapproval for a fault; thing which brings disgrace" (ibid).
- B. Illustration: Four ways the Bible describes or illustrates the problem:
  1. "Occasion to blaspheme" (Rom. 2:24; I Tim. 5:14; 6:1; Titus 2:5).
    - a. Blaspheme is to speak against, speak impiously, or speak evil of.
    - b. The Bible speaks of the lives of men and women providing occasion to bring shame and reproach by not being what they ought to be, not doing what is right.
  2. "Truth be evil spoken of" (II Peter 2:2)
    - a. "Pernicious ways" is the idea of "lascivious ways" and is so translated in the ASV.
    - b. There were many false teachers who had perverted the liberty in Christ to be a license for lust (Jude 4; Gal. 5:13; II Peter 2:10-19).
    - c. The Bible speaks of the lives of men and women providing occasion to bring shame and reproach by the evil in which they engage.
  3. "Stumbling block" rather than "lively stone."
    - a. Peter described members of the church as "lively stones" which make up a "spiritual house" with the purpose to "shew forth the praises of Him who hath called..." (I Peter 2:5,9).
    - b. However, some have become stumbling blocks (I Cor. 8:9; Rom. 14:13).
    - c. The Bible speaks of the lives of men and women preventing others from following the path of righteousness.
  4. The Bible presents the problem by way of example.
    - a. The case of the Corinthian fornicator (I Cor. 5, "commonly reported...not so much as named among the Gentiles...")
    - b. The case of the Corinthian "court hearings (I Cor. 6, "...and that before believers...")
    - c. The case of Peter's hypocrisy (Gal. 2:11-14)
    - d. The case of David and Bathsheba (II Sam. 12:14, "thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme").

### III. HOW DO WE BRING SHAME AND REPROACH UPON THE CHURCH?

- A. Knowing how it happens goes a long way to preventing the problem.
- B. Speaking generally:

1. If we influence others by our words, then improper speech (i.e. cursing, filthy jokes, gossip and even speech not “seasoned with salt”) can/will bring shame and reproach upon the church (Eph. 4:29; James 3:10; Col. 3:8; 4:6)
  2. If we influence others by our actions, then immoral actions will bring shame and reproach upon the church (Rom. 2:21; Titus 1:16; Matt. 7:3)
- C. Speaking specifically but not exhaustively:
1. Public displays of intemperance bring shame and reproach (James 1:19; Eph. 4:26)
  2. Public belittling, running down or bad mouthing elders, preacher, deacons, or fellow saints brings shame and reproach upon the church.
  3. Divorce or other domestic fighting and fussing in public display brings shame and reproach upon the church.
  4. Improper associations bring shame and reproach upon the church (I Cor. 15:33).
  5. Unfriendly dispositions, snobbery, discourtesy and lack of good manners will bring shame and reproach upon the church (Prov. 18:24).
  6. An unsportsman-like attitude displayed on the field, court, stands or any other place brings shame and reproach upon the church.
  7. Vengeance seeking; unwillingness to forgive or to go the second mile brings shame and reproach upon the church (Matt. 5:38-48; Rom. 12:19-20).
  8. Even a constant frown, long face; mad-at-the-world disposition will bring shame and reproach upon the church (Phil. 4:4; I Thess. 5:16).

#### **IV. THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BRINGING REPROACH AND BEING REPROACHED.**

- A. Jesus was reproached (Rom. 15:3); He was called a glutton and winebibber (Matt. 11:19); He was called a blasphemer (Luke 5:21). Yet, He was innocent and blameless (I Peter 2:22,23; Luke 23:41; II Cor. 5:21).
- B. Paul said persecution was inevitable (II Tim. 3:12) – this is physical as well as mental.
- C. Thus, as you live a life of faithfulness and righteousness there will be those who will reproach you as they did our Master (II Tim. 2:9; I Peter 4:12-16; 3:15-17; 2:11-12).
- D. We should not confuse being reproached with, bringing reproach.

**CONCLUSION:**

1. We cannot live as hermits and still carry out the great commission, yet we must always be aware of that fine line between being helpful and being harmful; being shining lights or being shameful representatives.
2. We encourage:
  - a. "...Keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (I Cor. 9:27)
  - b. "Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart" (I Tim. 2:22)
  - c. "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul" (I Peter 2:11).



# EACH MEMBER OWES TO THE CHURCH A PROPORTIONATE AMOUNT OF TIME

*Rick Knoll*

1. The theme of this lectureship is very timely.
  - a. Responsibility is a strange word in our society.
  - b. Responsibility is a strange word in the church.
2. We as members of the church owe our undying allegiance to serve God.
  - a. This is true in carrying out the great commission.
  - b. This is true as we practice pure religion. James 1:27
  - c. This is true as we serve as members of a local congregation.
3. In this study we will attempt to show what a member's responsibility is when it comes to sharing his/her time in the work of the local church.

## DISCUSSION:

### I. A LOOK AT ONE OF THE MAIN COMPONENTS NECESSARY TO CARRY OUT OUR RESPONSIBILITIES — THAT OF TIME.

- A. Time is vital and without it we cannot do anything.
  1. Time is precious and once it is gone you cannot get it back.
    - a. Benjamin Franklin said, "Doest thou love of life? Then do not squander time, for that's the stuff life is made of."
    - b. We must use our time wisely.
  2. Only so much time is given us to do our duty.
    - a. Jesus was well aware of time constraints. John 9:4
    - b. James would tell us "...life is even as a vapor..." James 4:14
- B. Some passages regarding the use of time.
  1. Eph. 5:15-16, "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil."
    - a. Paul informs us that we are to walk circumspectly (attentively), guarding against temptation and live as we ought to.
    - b. This requires us to redeem (use) our time wisely.
    - c. Requires focused attention. Phil. 3:14
    - d. Requires determination to reach the goal.
  2. Eccl. 3:1-8, "To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up

that which is planted; A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away; A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace."

- a. Specific time to do different things.
- b. We have between birth and death to do God's will.
- c. We learn there is a time for every purpose. v.1
  - 1) Our duty is to prioritize — to use the time we have the most effectively.
  - 2) Because of worldliness and sin, many get confused as to how to properly divide their time — keeping heaven in their mind.

C. Some certainties regarding time.

1. We do not know how much we have, do know it will end.
2. We became members of the body of Christ.
  - a. Owe him our service. Rom. 12:1,2
  - b. Must demonstrate our love. John 14:15
  - c. Must be doers and not just hearers. James 1:22
  - d. Not just lip service. Matt. 7:21

## II. HOW DO WE DIVIDE UP THE TIME PROPORTIONATELY?

A. Need to break down our time.

1. One week consists of 168 hours. Let's break it down.
  - a. 50 hours working and commuting.
  - b. 56 hours sleeping.
  - c. 21 hours eating.
  - d. 41 hours remaining for everything else.
2. Do we use the rest of our time wisely?
  - a. There is worship and Bible study (4 hrs).
  - b. There are recreational activities.
  - c. There are activities of the local church.

B. We must recognize the real priorities so as to use the time we have properly.

1. We as members are to work with our local congregation to build up the brethren.
  - a. Heb. 10:24 instructs us to "consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:"
  - b. How can this be done when we refuse to spend the time with our brethren?

- c. Shame to spend more time with the world in their endeavors than the work of the church!
  - 2. When the opportunity arises for work to be done around the church grounds (work day), do you make yourself available to do what you can?
    - a. One of the best ways to learn each other is “sweating together.”
    - b. Relaxed atmosphere encourages an increased bonding opportunity.
  - 3. When the opportunities to gather together for a common meal, do you take advantage.
    - a. A great opportunity to learn about other members in the congregation, perhaps talk about ways to improve efforts to further the cause of Christ.
    - b. In the business world many good ideas, problems solved, etc. have resulted from such a casual setting.
- C. Too many members have become spiritual hermits (strangers, recluses, loners) when it comes to spending their fair share of time in the efforts of the local congregation.
  - 1. Generally speaking, it is the same few members that do the majority of the work.
    - a. We can not pay others to do our part.
    - b. The recluse shows up for worship, classes and sneaks out the side door so no one will notice.
  - 2. Fulfilling your duty and responsibility by paying what you owe to the congregation is the honorable thing to do.
- D. Lessons from the first century church.
  - 1. Acts 2:42, “And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.”
  - 2. Acts 2:46,47, “And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.”
  - 3. Acts 8:4ff, “Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word. Then Philip... preached Christ unto them. ...They believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized...”
- E. Learn from the geese.
  - 1. Fly in a V formation. Makes flying together easier, gives them uplift, greater flying range.
  - 2. If a goose falls out of formation, drag is felt and quickly gets back into formation to take advantage of the lifting power of the other geese. Gal. 6:2

3. Lead goose gets tired, he falls back and another goose flies point. Gal. 6:9
4. The geese honk from behind to encourage those up front to keep up their speed. Heb. 3:13
5. If a goose gets sick and falls out, two geese fall out and follow him down to help protect him. They stay until he is able to fly or until he is dead. Eccl. 4:9-12

### **CONCLUSION:**

1. We owe it to our local congregation to give freely of our time.
  - a. Not just the left-overs.
  - b. It should be on the minds of every member to do all they can to help the congregation grow numerically as well as spiritually.
2. The church needs to get back to the first century mentality if we expect to grow.
  - a. Do not need spectators, we need members who work to develop others as well as themselves.
  - b. Workers who faithfully use their time proportionately in service of the lord.
3. Consider seriously how you spend your time helping in the work of your home congregation, compared to time used in other activities.
4. Is the Lord pleased with the portion of your time you devote in his service.

# MUST KNOW, ESTEEM, AND SUBMIT TO THE ELDERSHIP

*Roger D. Campbell*

1. For any organization to be successful, it needs structure, people to work in recognized positions of authority, and someone to be responsible for the actions taken.
2. At the same time, there is a need for cooperation between the leaders and those whom they lead.
3. God's church is made up of autonomous congregations — someone must lead and rule (I Peter 5:1-3; I Tim. 5:17).
4. It is God's will for each local church to have faithful brothers serving as elders over it (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5). What a great occasion it is when a congregation is able to appoint faithful overseers.
5. From Paul's meeting and conversation with elders from Ephesus, we learn that elders are overseers, and their role is to serve as shepherds (Acts 20:17, 25-31).
6. The word "eldership" is found in the text of I Timothy 4:14 in the NKJV (KJV has "presbytery").
7. What about the flock? What is my responsibility to the shepherds of the flock of God where I am a member?
8. This is a lesson addressed to the specific needs and obligations of those members who are in congregations that already have elderships in place. Every child of God needs to know the truth about such matters. Why is that?

## DISCUSSION:

### I. KNOW THE ELDERS.

- A. *"And we beseech you, brethren, to know [recognize, NKJV] them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you" (I Thess. 5:12).*
- B. Why do we conclude that this is talking about elders?
- C. The word "know" in I Thess. 5:12 is from the Greek word "eido." It is used 317 times in the N.T., being translated as "know" or "wist" 287 of those times [*Greek-English Concordance to the New Testament*, J. B. Smith, p.101, word 1492a].
- D. *"Eido" means "...to perceive by any of the senses...to perceive, notice, discern, discover...to see, i.e., to turn the eyes, the mind, the attention to anything...to pay attention, observe...to experience.... ...Hebraistically...to have regard for one, cherish, pay attention to: I Thess. 5:12" [Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, Joseph H. Thayer,*

pp.172-174, word no. 1492]. (cf. John 3:2; Rev. 2:2,9,13,19, etc.).

- E. When members properly "pay attention to" their elders, they are not searching for some flaw, but noting their life, character, example, and role. These men are special shepherds, and they ought to be treated as such.
- F. Pastors need to conduct themselves in such a way that members feel comfortable with them and are proud to have them as their overseers (cf. Eph. 5:22,25,28).
- G. A congregation is blessed when there is a genuine close relationship between the flock and its shepherds.
- H. Shepherds lead, comfort, admonish, and in general, see to the flock's needs (Psalm 23:2-4).

## II. ESTEEM THE ELDERS.

- A. "*And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake*" (I Thess. 5:13). This points to verse 12.
- B. The word "esteem" in I Thess. 5:13 is from the Greek word "*hegeomai*": "To go before; to be a leader; to rule, command; to have authority over...to consider, deem, account, think" [Thayer, p.276, word no. 2233].
- C. "*Hegeomai*" is used a total of 28 times in the N.T. [Smith, p.165], and only in two other instances is it translated as "esteem" (Phil. 2:3; Heb. 11:26).
- D. Should there not be a real appreciation for all the work that faithful elders do?! (I Thess. 5:12,13; Heb. 13:17). We are to esteem them, esteem them highly, esteem them in love, and do so due to their diligent work.
- E. We need to have a healthy respect for those elders that labor with our spiritual health/well-being in mind.
- F. What about providing financial support for elders who rule and teach well? (I Tim. 5:17,18).

## III. SUBMIT TO THE ELDERS.

- A. To "rebel" means "to oppose or disobey one in authority or control" [*Webster's 9<sup>th</sup> New Collegiate Dictionary*]. Would you agree that we live in a day when many in our society rebel against authority?
- B. "*Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves*" ("*be submissive,*" NKJV, Heb. 13:17).
  1. The Greek word for "submit" in this verse is "*hupeiko*." This is the only time which it is used in the entire N.T. [Smith, p.358, word no. 5126].
  2. What does it mean? "To resist no longer, but to give way, yield, (prop. of combatants); metaph. to yield to authority and admonition, to submit" [Thayer, p.638, word no. 5226].

- C. Consider the REALITY of elders' authority.
1. Acts 20:17,28; I Peter 5:1-3; I Tim. 3:4,5; 5:17; Heb. 13:17.
  2. Note: God-given authority resides in an *eldership*, not in one individual elder.
- D. Consider the REALM of elders' authority.
1. They do not have authority to establish doctrine.
  2. They cannot overrule God's restrictions, nor can they remove freedoms that God allows.
  3. In what areas, then, do shepherds have authority?
    - a. On the one hand, Jesus possesses all authority in heaven and on earth (Matt. 28:18).
    - b. At the same time, we are commanded to submit to those (plural) that rule over us (Heb. 13:17).
    - c. Their authority is in the realm of judgment, opinion, or expediency.
- E. Consider the ABUSE of elders' authority/position.
1. Some act as tyrants or lords (I Peter 5:3). "Lord" (*"katakurieoo"*) means "to bring under one's power, to subject to one's self, to subdue, master . . . to hold in subjection, to be master of, exercise lordship over" [Thayer, p.332, word no. 2634].
  2. Never consider the desires of the congregation.
  3. One elder dominates the eldership (due to his personality, his experience, or his wealth).
  4. Truth: in some congregations, one brother is often generally known to be "the head elder."
  5. One elder makes important decisions without consulting any of the other shepherds.
  6. Use position of leader/ruler to take revenge against those with whom they had conflict in the past.
  7. Refuse to "step down" when no longer qualified.
- F. Consider the ACCEPTANCE of elders' authority.
1. True shepherds are God-ordained (Acts 20:28).
  2. The N.T. speaks clearly about their authority.
  3. To reject the authority of scriptural leadership is to reject the plan of God (Num. 16:1-11).
  4. Support them in their choices in judgment matters.
    - a. Is it a good idea to have overseers? A: "Yes, until they make a decision that I don't like!"
    - b. The church is not a democracy. Someone is invested with authority to make decisions: it is not by members voting to show their approval.
    - c. If elders need approval for every decision they make, then why have elders in the first place?!
    - d. Have your elders done all that you requested or suggested? If not, what was/is your attitude?

**CONCLUSION:**

1. God's plan for the organization of His church includes shepherds over local congregations.
2. Are we confident that God knows what is best? Let us all be grateful for God's arrangement and gladly accept it.
3. As we have seen, when we are under an eldership, we need to *know* these men — cherish having such good men lead us. We need to *esteem* them — be grateful for their toil in trying to help us get to heaven. We need to *submit* to them — accept and yield to their God-given authority.



## **ELDERS MUST BE WILLING TO TAKE CARE OF THE CHURCH OF GOD**

*Ben F. Vick, Jr.*

1. When Paul met with the elders of Ephesus at Miletus on his third missionary journey, he rehearsed his labors with the church at Ephesus and reminded the elders of their responsibilities to the flock (Acts 20:17-35).
2. The subject assigned to me is threefold:
  - a. It involves an understanding of the church of God.
  - b. It entails considering the care of the church of God.
  - c. It means elders must be willing to serve in the way God intended them to serve.

### **DISCUSSION:**

#### **I. THE CHURCH OF GOD.**

- A. "Church" is translated from a Greek word *ekklesia* which means "the called out ones." The Greek word is found 116 times in the New Testament. Three of those times it is translated in the KJV as "assembly."
- B. The word "church" is applied in three basic ways:
  1. Universally (Matt. 16:18; Acts 2:47).
  2. Local congregations (Rom. 16:16; Rev. 1:11).
  3. The worship assembly (I Cor. 14:34).
- C. As used in this lesson, "church of God" is used in reference to the local congregation.

#### **II. TAKING CARE OF THE CHURCH OF GOD — THE LOCAL FLOCK (I Peter 5:1-4; Acts 20:28-32).**

- A. The role of a shepherd as depicted in the Bible:
  1. He knows his flock, calls each by name (John 10:3, 14).
  2. He leads his flock (John 10: 3-5; Psa. 23). He does not drive them, but leads them.
  3. He feeds them (I Peter 5:2).
  4. He tends them, cares for them (Acts 20:28).
  5. He protects them (I Sam. 17:34-36; Acts 20:28-32; Titus 1:9).
  6. He lays down his life for the sheep (John 10:11,15; Gen. 31:38-40).
- B. "Rule"
  1. *proistemi* — "to be over, to superintend, preside over." I Tim. 5:17; I Thess. 5:12 (Thayer's).
  2. *hegeomai* — Heb. 13:17 "1. to lead, i.e., a. to go before; b. to be a leader; to rule, command; to have authority

over: in the N.T. ...leading as respects influence, controlling in counsel... Acts 15:22 [KJV "chief men"]; with gen. of the pers. over whom one rules, so of the overseers or leaders of ...churches (Heb. 13:7,17, 24).

- C. "Overseers" — *episkopos*, "An overseer, a man charged with the duty of seeing that things to be done by others are done rightly, any curator, guardian, or superintendent – Thayer, p.243. (Acts 20:28; Phil. 1:1; I Tim. 3:2).
- D. "Take care" *epimeleomai*, I Tim. 3:5. "signifies to take care of; involving forethought and provision (epi, indicating the direction of the mind toward the object cared for) Luke 10:34-35, of the Good Samaritan's care for the wounded man. Do what is needed under the circumstances. Good Samaritan delegated some of the work.
- E. Steward, *oikonomos* – "The manager of a household or of household affairs; esp. a steward, manager, superintendent, (whether freeborn or as was usually the case, a freed-man or slave) to whom the head of the house or proprietor has entrusted the management of his affairs, the care of receipts and expenditures and the duty of dealing out the proper portion to every servant and even to the children not yet of age. Titus 1:7" (Thayer).
- F. "What Do Elders Do? They:
- check to see that the truth is preached
  - counsel with those having spiritual problems
  - encourage new converts
  - decide on the policy the church will follow [regarding matters of judgment]
  - are involved in financial planning
  - listen to the complaints of members
  - teach Bible classes
  - praise those who do good works
  - spend time with children
  - pray
  - worry when someone quits attending worship
  - visit the sick
  - try to help people who don't want help
  - investigate sticky problems
  - administer the funds of the church
  - cry with the brokenhearted
  - manage difficult to handle people
  - sit through long meetings
  - model Christianity
  - greet visitors
  - conduct home Bible studies
  - catch a lot of flack
  - hear the appeals of missionaries

- look for new areas of service
- wonder why they feel lonely
- go and see the elderly
- don't sleep well at nights
- work for a living
- try to restore the unfaithful
- counsel young couples
- read and study their Bibles
- face special temptations
- know they will be judged severely
- smile when their efforts pay off
- go on to the next problem
- train others to take their place
- and 1001 other daily tasks.

G. Love them. Pray for them. Back them in their work. Defend them when you hear them criticized. And be thankful that God gave them to us.

Nick Hamilton, —Edited

### **III. MUST BE WILLING TO SERVE.**

A. Peter addresses this very point from both a negative and positive standpoint:

1. Not by constraint; i.e., not forced. One who is pressured into service, like Simon of Cyrene, would not be serving out of a pure heart. His motive for service would not be right (I Cor. 13:1-3); more than likely, he would be a very poor servant.
2. But willingly – Christianity is not something that can be forced upon another (Rev. 22:17). See the words “busy-body in other men’s matters,” *allotriepiskopos*, “one who takes the supervision of affairs pertaining to others and in no wise to himself (a meddler in other men’s matters): I Peter 4:15 (the writer seems to refer to those who, with holy but intemperate zeal, meddle with the affairs of the Gentiles — whether public or private, civil or sacred — in order to make them conform to the Christian standard)....” (from Thayer’s Greek Lexicon, Electronic Database. Copyright 2000, 2003 by BibleSoft, Inc. All rights reserved.)

B. “Desire” *oregomai*. “To stretch one’s self out in order to touch or to grasp something, to reach after or desire something: with a gen. of the thing, I Tim. 3:1; Heb. 11:16...” Thayer, p.452.

C. This is really the first qualification to serve as an elder: One who desires to serve.

1. Not to have his name on the church letterhead or bulletin.

2. Not to be seen or heard of men.
3. Not for filthy lucre – ill-gotten gain. This may imply that elders were paid (I Tim. 5:17). Thus, they were not to desire to serve just to be paid.

**CONCLUSION:**

1. Thus, the office of an elder in the Lord's church is an awesome responsibility which demands qualified men to serve.
2. The greatest reward possible awaits the faithful elder — a crown of glory that fadeth not away (I Peter 5:4).

## **ONE MUST GIVE AS HE HAS BEEN PROSPERED**

*Walter Pigg, Jr.*

1. I was invited to speak on lectures, but due to circumstances did not speak.
2. I'm thankful for the opportunity to have a part in such a vital theme this year.
  - a. For the church to fulfill its God-intended purpose, every member has responsibilities.
  - b. These responsibilities need to be seen as opportunities, as well as responsibilities.
3. We should view *giving* not only as a "must" but as a great opportunity.
  - a. If we view our responsibilities only as a "must," we are not likely to give our best to them.
  - b. A man I knew years ago, said, "I don't have to attend Wednesday night services."
    - 1) That is true, but it shows a bad attitude and a lack of desire to please God.
4. It has always been a problem to me to select the appropriate subject for speakers.
  - a. I don't know how Ken knew that I had been so effective in preaching on giving.
  - b. But I preached on giving one time and one brother doubled his contribution.
  - c. Maybe Ken has what Barney Fife called "tel-a-pathy."
    - 1) To cause one to double his contribution is what I call being effective.
    - 2) I'm not guaranteeing that my lesson will have that same effect here.

### **DISCUSSION:**

- I. **GIVING HAS IMPROVED OVER THE YEARS, BUT THERE IS STILL ROOM TO IMPROVE.**
  - A. We should be thankful when any aspect of serving our Lord is improved.
  - B. I can well remember when it didn't take long to count the contribution.
    1. People didn't prosper as much then as now, but giving could have been better.
    2. When in school at Freed-Hardeman in the 1950s, my family and I drove about a hundred miles for me to preach.

- a. The brethren gave me the whole contribution. If I remember correctly that amounted to \$4.35. This may have been more than I was worth.
- b. But that \$4.35 went much farther then than now. I could have bought ten gallons of gas and my wife and I could have had a can of pork and beans and the children a couple of Moon Pies.
- C. Brethren at one place I preached said that when one of the elders was also the treasurer, that he put the same dollar in the collection plate each Sunday.
- D. One reason for such poor giving was that brethren were not taught to give as they should.
  - 1. With some, if you want to get next to their heart, mention giving.
  - 2. Decades ago, if a preacher preached on giving, he was likely to be charged with wanting a raise by some of the brethren.
- E. Brother V. P. Black published three books on giving in the 1960s: My God and My Money; Giving Our Way to Prosperity, Rust as A Witness.
  - 1. Where these books were studied, giving almost always increased considerably.
  - 2. This showed the value of teaching on a vital subject.

## II. GIVING AS PROSPERED INVOLVES MUCH MORE THAN JUST THE COMMAND.

- A. God's plan of salvation is based upon giving.
- B. God gave His only begotten Son (John 3:16)
  - 1. What greater gift could God have given?
- C. Christ gave Himself for man, the ungodly and undeserving sinner.
  - 1. Paul said, "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8).
  - 2. Christ's death was unusual, in that "...he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phil. 2:8).
- D. The apostles and others gave their lives in order that we could have God's plan of salvation for our benefit.
  - 1. Paul tells of his varied sufferings for the cause of Christ (II Cor. 11:21-33).
    - a. Though not revealed by inspiration, Paul most likely died as a martyr.
  - 2. Of Herod, a persecutor of the church, it is said, "And he killed James the brother of John with the sword" (Acts 12:2).
  - 3. Stephen shed his blood as a martyr (Acts 22:20)

4. Antipas was a faithful martyr (Rev. 2:13).
  5. As far as we know, nearly all the apostles were put to death as martyrs.
  6. Many of the prophets of old gave themselves that God's plan might be propagated.
- E. Man is to reciprocate by his giving in many ways.
1. There is no way that we can measure up in giving to what has been given for us.
  2. We often sing, "I gave, I gave, My life for thee, What hast though giv'n for Me?"
    - a. We would do well to remember that line of truth every day.
    - b. But we can strive to do that which we are able and willing to do.
  3. Giving of our money is just one of the ways we can serve the Lord by giving.
    - a. The parable of the talents is a powerful lesson on making use of our abilities (Matt. 25:14-30).
    - b. If our hearts are right, we will want to give of our abilities, and not only that, but we will want to improve our abilities that we may give more.
    - c. Some have said that ten percent of the members of a congregation do ninety percent of the work done in the congregation. Some times it looks that way.

### **III. WE MUST BE WILLING GIVERS TO PLEASE GOD.**

- A. We must be willing to give what we give, otherwise it is not pleasing to God.
- B. God loves a cheerful giver (II Cor. 9:7).
1. This rules out giving "grudgingly, or of necessity" (II Cor. 9:7).
  2. When we give grudgingly or of necessity, this is not what God wants.
- C. When we truly see giving as an opportunity, we will not see giving as a "must."
1. If we would desire the love of God, our giving will be "cheerful."
- D. Paul said, "For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil" (I Tim. 6:10, ASV).
1. Materialism has been a great hindrance to giving in the lives of many.

### **IV. GIVING OURSELVES TO THE LORD SOLVES MANY PROBLEMS ABOUT GIVING.**

- A. Paul said, "...ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (I Cor. 6:19,20; 7:23).

1. God and Christ paid a great price for us. We are deeply indebted to them.
  2. We are only stewards of what God has so graciously given us.
- B. The churches of Macedonia serve as a great example for us to emulate.
1. "...in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality" (II Cor. 8:2).
  2. Paul said, "beyond their power they were willing of themselves" (v.3).
- C. Paul hits the key to giving in his example of the churches of Macedonia.
1. "And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God" (II Cor 8:5).
  2. If we are willing to give ourselves to the Lord, we will give freely.
  3. Jesus said to his disciples, "If any man come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me" (Matt. 16:24).
    - a. This rules out our keeping for ourselves that which belongs to the Lord.

## V. THINGS WHICH HINDER OUR GIVING AS WE SHOULD.

- A. The influence of materialism in our society.
1. We've never seen brethren so materially minded as they are now.
  2. We are so obsessed with things, that the things have us.
  3. We fail to realize that "...a man's life consisteth not in the things which he possesseth" (Luke 12:15).
- B. A lack of faith in God that He will provide our needs (Matt. 6:33).
- C. Some are skinflints who dare not "beware of covetousness."
1. It appears that some people think they can take their bank accounts with them.
  2. Bro. W. B. West posed the question, "When did you ever see a hearse with a U-haul behind it?"
  3. Some old time preacher has been quoted as saying: "If they could take it with them it would be burned up."
- D. The failure to study God's word on the subject of giving as prospered.
- E. Failure to see the need when congregations have and keep a big bank account.



**VI. THINGS WHICH ENCOURAGE GIVING AS WE HAVE BEEN PROSPERED.**

- A. Laying up treasure in heaven, where “neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal” (Matt. 6:20).
- B. Coveting the love of God as a “cheerful giver” (II Cor. 9:7).
- C. Realizing it is both a privilege and an opportunity to give as prospered.
- D. Think of all that God, Christ, and others have given for us.
  - 1. We should be willing to give as much for the truth as some give to error.
  - 2. Many false religions give more that we do for the cause of Christ.
  - 3. The story is told of a goose that laid an egg in the chicken pen. The rooster jumped upon a stump and said to his hens, “I want you to take a look at what others are doing.”
- E. Most of us are prospering more now than ever in our lives. We have more to give.

**CONCLUSION:**

- 1. Let us realize how much has been given for us to make salvation possible.
  - a. If we give all that we are able, it can never measure up to what has been given for us.
- 2. Giving as we have prospered is a clear command (I Cor. 16:1-2).
  - a. God’s word has not given us a certain percentage to give.
  - b. Some say the Jews gave a tenth, but all told, they gave perhaps 30 percent.
- 3. We must be willing givers. God loves a cheerful giver.
  - a. The love we have for God will help us know how much to give.
- 4. If we give ourselves to the Lord as did the churches of Macedonia, how much we give will not be hard to determine.
- 5. If we give as we have prospered, we will be repaid many times over.
  - a. As we often sing, “Heaven will surely be worth it all.”

# KEEP UNSPOTTED FROM THE WORLD

*Aaron M.M. Purvis*

1. Christianity, however rewarding it may indeed be, is fraught with fearsome responsibilities.
  - a. The fact that we constitute the means by which a soul may be either saved or damned ought to stagger the mind and stir the heart.
2. As children of God, we are responsible for the kind of reputation and influence we have upon the rest of society (Rom. 14:16-18; Matt. 5:13-14).
  - a. Unfortunately, myriads of misguided individuals purporting to profess the Christian faith have evaded this duty, making the "way of the truth...evil spoken of" (II Peter 2:2).
  - b. Indeed, religious hypocrisy has always rendered one's faith useless (James 1:26).
  - c. Yet it is precisely this that has permitted and even provoked the increasingly apparent anti-Christian sentiment infiltrating our nation.
3. In light of such grave responsibilities, it is safe to say that moral purity and personal consecration is the greatest need of our time. But how do we achieve this? James offers a two-fold solution:
  - a. Do good, "visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction" (1:27b).
  - b. Refrain from evil, "keep oneself unspotted from the world" (1:27c).
4. We shall consider: 1) what this latter expression means; 2) why it is important; and 3) how it may be applied.

## DISCUSSION:

### I. AN ANALYSIS OF THE LANGUAGE OF OUR TEXT.

- A. World. *kosmos* is employed 187 times in the New Testament. It denotes "an apt and harmonious arrangement or constitution, order, government" (Thayer). While New Testament writers employed this word most frequently, using it variously in diverse contexts, there were other words at their disposal, which may indeed be translated "world," but which carry with them far more specific meanings.

#### 1. Amoral Usages.

- a. The Material Universe – (cf. Rom. 1:20).
- b. The Earth Itself – (cf. Acts 17:24).
- c. The Human Population – (John 3:16). Also, the word *oikoumene*: referring to the inhabited world, the Roman world or humankind.

- 1) May allude to everyone, as in Luke 4:5, where Satan offered Christ “all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.”
  - 2) May allude to everyone within a specified jurisdiction, as in Luke 2:1, where Caesar Augustus sent out a decree “that all the world should be enrolled (taxed).” This was limited, of course, to those under Roman occupation.
- d. Time, *aion* – age.
- 1) When the term “world” is used in this sense, it is invariably used to refer to a distinct dispensation of time.
  - 2) More often than not, it marks a distinction between the current world order (i.e., time) and that which will inexorably follow (i.e., eternity).
  - 3) Luke 20:34-36, “And Jesus said unto them, The sons of this world (current sphere of time) marry, and are given in marriage: but they that are accounted worthy to attain to that world (eternity), and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: for neither can they die any more...”
2. Moral Usages.
- a. That segment of humanity that is, because of their iniquities, alienated from their Creator. Of this sort, Jesus said, “If the world hateth you, ye know that it hath hated me before it hated you” (John 15:18).
  - b. That segment of this world that stands in opposition to God, embracing things that are devilish and sensual in their nature. cf. I John 2:15-17. It is to this latter usage that James refers.
- B. Unspotted
1. *aspilos* – spótleſs, metaphorically: 1) free from censure, irreprouchable, 2) free from vice, unſullied.
  2. It is ſignificant that Jeſus is deſcribed as “a lamb without blemiſh and without ſpot” (I Peter 1:19), indicating that He was perfect and untainted by ſin (cf. Heb. 4:15).
  3. Yet, Chriſtians are inſtructed to emulate our Maſter in this reſpect!
    - a. Paul charged Timothy: “That thou keep this commandment without ſpot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt” (I Tim. 6:14).
    - b. Peter ſays: “Wherefore, beloved, ſeeing that ye look for ſuch things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without ſpot, and blameleſs” (II Peter 3:14).

4. How, then, in light of the fact that Scripture affirms that "we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousness are as filthy rags..." (Isa. 64:6) can we possibly achieve this?
  - a. It is possible (cf. I Cor. 6:9-11).
  - b. We must do something (II Cor. 6:17-7:1). James said, "cleanse your hands ye sinners; and purify your hearts ye doubleminded" (4:8).
  - c. Repent and be converted (Acts 3:19)
  - d. Walk in the light (I John 1:7-9).
  - e. Washing of water with the word (Eph. 5:26).
5. Although we may never be perfect as was our Master, we may nevertheless be pure. And, having been purified of our spiritual defects, we may be presented to God as a pure virgin (II Cor. 11:2), "a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5:26-27).

#### C. Keep

1. *tereo* (present active infinitive) – to attend to carefully, take care of (continuously)... "metaphorically to keep one in the state in which he is" (Thayer).
2. That is, "keep on taking care to refrain from ungodliness."
3. We must be a people literally obsessed with cleanliness. We bring "every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ" (II Cor. 10:5).

## II. WORLDLINESS AND THE CURRENT STATE OF THINGS.

### A. A Present Problem

1. We are facing a moral crisis in our time unparalleled in recent history and a sense of urgency must increasingly be felt.
2. Some have suggested that "time heals everything." But time did not heal worldliness! It is still here.
3. Time is no friend to morality.
  - a. Three of the first four major sins recorded in the Bible began with a lapse of time.
    - 1) Cain & Abel (Gen. 4:3,8).
    - 2) The Antediluvian People (Gen. 6:1ff).
    - 3) The Tower of Babel (Gen. 11:2).
  - b. All of this is indicative of the fact that time, when improperly used, will spread worldliness rather than impede it (cf. II Tim. 3:13).
4. Is it any wonder, then, that we are instructed to "walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil" (Eph. 5:15-16).

- a. Redeem: to buy back. Make the most proper use of time as is possible in an attempt to maintain our moral purity in an otherwise morally impure world.
- B. A Pervasive Problem
  - 1. Worldliness is everywhere. John said, “the whole world lieth in wickedness” (I John 5:19).
  - 2. Consequently, in what direction shall we turn? Where shall we look for solace and safety?
  - 3. If we will overcome the pervasiveness of immorality, we must look within, to the spirit realm, having the Gospel of Jesus as our inward guide.
    - a. Does this not give greater significance to our Master’s affirmation that “the kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo here! Or, lo there! For behold, the kingdom of God is within you” (Luke 17:21)?
    - b. Or to Paul’s assertion that “the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost” (Rom. 14:17)?
  - 4. Since “the whole world lieth in wickedness,” we must come out of it (Rom. 12:2), be separate from it (II Cor. 6:17) and deny it (Titus 2:11-12).
- C. A Pernicious Problem
  - 1. Physical Effects
    - a. Think about the danger posed by such worldly activities as smoking, drinking or homosexuality.
    - b. “The way of transgressors is hard” (Prov. 13:15).
    - c. Worldliness:
      - 1) Makes the strong weak (as in Samson).
      - 2) Makes the wise foolish (as in Solomon).
      - 3) Makes the great common or ordinary (as in David).
  - 2. Mental Effects
    - a. It is easy, if we are not careful, for our attitude toward immorality to become desensitized by the constant bombardment of worldliness around us.
      - 1) In characterizing the unrighteous in I Cor. 6:9-10, Paul prefaced that list with this warning: “be not deceived.”
      - 2) Too often we minimize the pernicious effects ungodliness has upon the mind – it is deceiving, even to the strongest of Christians.
    - b. We may, furthermore, grow despondent by the abundance of immorality around us.
      - 1) Jesus, in discussing the destruction of Jerusalem, talked about a time like ours: “And because

iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold" (Matt. 24:12).

- 2) When ungodliness is rampant, it will crush our spirits; cause our zeal and love for the Lord to grow cold.
  - 3) Some of this discouragement may even come from those who mean no harm.
    - a) Reconstruction of the temple: much rejoicing on the part of the younger generation – but weeping on the part of the older (Ezra 3:11-12). Why? Longing for the "good old days" of Solomon's temple (Haggai 2:3). Haggai told them to stop weeping and "be strong" (Hag. 2:4).
    - b) Today's older generation may long for yesterday and weep over the current state of things, but they forget how discouraging this can be to the generation following.
    - c) Phil. 3:13-14; I Cor. 16:13.
3. Spiritual Effects
- a. This is, quite obviously, the most pernicious problem of worldliness.
  - b. Eph. 2:1; Rom. 6:16-23; Rom. 7:14-21; Isa. 59:1-2

### III. HOW TO KEEP UNSPOTTED FROM THE WORLD.

- A. Make up your mind to abhor ungodliness and love God (Dan. 1:8).
  1. Psa. 119:104; Titus 2:11; II Chron. 19:3; Ezra 7:10
- B. Team up with other faithful children of God (Dan. 1:11).
  1. In worship (Heb. 10:25).
  2. In private Bible study (Acts 18:24-28).
  3. In wholesome secular activities (John 21:1-3).
- C. Go on the offensive (Dan. 1:12).
  1. Ask your co-worker politely to refrain from vulgar language or sexual innuendos.
  2. Train your children to walk decently, uprightly and godly in this present world (Eph. 6:4).
  3. Remove any opportunities in your life that may lead you to sin (I John 5:18).
  4. Pray, study and obey (I Thess. 5:17; I Tim. 4:13; Matt. 7:21ff).
- D. You don't have to become a hermit or isolate yourself to guard yourself against evil influences (cf. I Kings 19:9ff).
  1. We are the salt of the earth and the light of the world (Matt. 5:13-14) and must therefore remain in it. However, it is heaven's ordination that we are kept from the

evil thereof (John 17:15). This is done through the sanctification of the truth (John 17:16-17).

**CONCLUSION:**

1. Remember: our reputation, and thus the reputation of our faith, is always being observed by the people of the world.
2. It is therefore imperative that we act as God's children, different from the world – and better off because of it.
3. Let us, then, persistently draw to close to God (Matt. 11:28-30)!

# EACH MEMBER MUST GROW IN KNOWLEDGE

*Adam Comeaux*

1. Jeremiah 4:22, Hosea 4:6; 6:6, are descriptive passages of erring children of God. While the Jews are the recipients of the context, it is no less descriptive of this age.
2. The Bible teaches we have a responsibility to grow in knowledge, but if we are not concerned about obtaining biblical knowledge, this is a principle that will go unlearned.
  - a. II Peter 1:3, 2:13
  - b. Hebrews 5:11-14
  - c. Not just a "preacher thing"
3. Lack of knowledge can be seen in the pews, in the leadership (or lack thereof), and in the pulpits.
  - a. People complain when challenged or presented with truths concerning passages whose meanings may conflict with poor traditional interpretations.
  - b. This is manifested in the irony of II Timothy 2:15.
4. Clearly, the Bible teaches we must grow in knowledge, but we rather approach this study by explaining what it takes to obtain the proper knowledge.
  - a. Knowledge's Reputation – Show the reputation of the church through the years and its connection to Biblical knowledge.
  - b. Knowledge Procurement – What it takes to obtain biblical knowledge.
  - c. Knowledge Proposed – Practical ways of obtain biblical knowledge.
5. As a result of this lesson, I hope to spark an awareness of the problem, our personal responsibility to obtain knowledge, and encourage a deeper understanding of scripture.

## DISCUSSION:

### I. KNOWLEDGE'S REPUTATION.

- A. Church in the 1st century
  1. Acts 2:47, "Favor with all the people"
  2. Acts 3-4, Took advantage of teaching opportunities
  3. Acts 5, Esteemed highly, Boldness manifested
  4. Acts 6:7, Word of God spread, number increased
- B. Church in past decades (known for knowledge of scripture)
  1. Men in the past were considered some of the hardest men to challenge in biblical discussions or debates.
  2. Men known for memorizing the whole New Testament.



3. People were able to give book, chapter, and verse. Considered walking Bibles.
  4. Sectarian preachers would turn down other streets rather than engage preachers from the church.
  5. People knew the church was different, and generally the church was well respected by all.
- C. Church in present day
1. It is unfortunate that such words will be spoken at this occasion concerning the present day reputation of the church.
  2. We are no longer vastly known for being walking Bibles, we are now more known as another denomination, a cult, or “those people who think they are the only ones going to heaven.”
  3. The church has become its own worst enemy.
    - a. Brethren are turning the church into a political battle field in desiring more to “cast off” than restore the erring.
    - b. The task of obtaining knowledge has been given to the preacher alone by those in the pews.
    - c. Lack of true leadership which has resulted in many congregations erring from the truth.
    - d. Criteria for preaching is a pulse. We are asleep behind the pulpits as in the pews.
    - e. Gone are the days when true exegetical teaching was desired.
  4. All the above mentioned is a direct result from a lack of biblical knowledge.

## **II. KNOWLEDGE PROCUREMENT**

- A. In order to restore the church to its former reputation, every member needs to understand exactly what it will take to obtain the proper biblical knowledge.
1. CONVICTION
    - a. A fundamental problem that must be addressed is the lack of true conviction.
    - b. Christianity has become to some a “weekend adventure.”
    - c. The reason why so many Christians become lackadaisical, indifferent, and fall away is because Christianity is not REAL to them.
    - d. Faith is that which makes Christianity real to us (Heb. 11:1). Faith is obtained from the hearing of scripture (Rom. 10:17) and it is from scripture we grow in knowledge (I Peter 2:2).
    - e. Must be convicted of death, heaven, hell, sin and its consequences, the Bible and the church.

## 2. DESIRE

- a. Without conviction there will be no desire.
- b. While we sometimes do things because they must be done, what we do is the ultimate manifestation of our desires.
- c. Proper knowledge will not be obtained unless it is sought. It will not be sought unless we have a desire to obtain it.
- d. Biblical knowledge is that which helps bring us closer to God by learning more about Him and what He wants us to do.
- e. Must desire to "hear the word of God" (Luke 5:1). Must desire to humble ourselves to it (James 1:22-25)
- f. This must be a desire for all those who "diligently seek after Him" (Heb. 11:6).

## 3. PASSION

- a. Needs to be something that is like a "fire in our bones" (Jer. 20:9)
  - b. Proper zeal will not exist without proper conviction or desire, and it takes proper knowledge. (Rom. 10:2,3; Gal. 1:13,14; Acts 26:9-11)
    - 1) Proper knowledge of God's scheme of redemption (Eph. 3:10,11)
    - 2) Proper knowledge of the church.
      - a) It's establishment (Matt. 16:18; Acts 2:47)
      - b) Blood bought institution (Acts 20:28)
      - c) The church is Christ – body over which He is the head (Eph. 1:22,23; 5:23)
      - d) The church is the body of the saved (Eph. 5:23)
      - e) How to get into that body (Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27)
      - f) How to stay in that body (I John 1,2)
  - c. When we know and understand the truth, should we not have a desire to show others. That desire will be fueled by our passion.
- B. By obtaining more knowledge, our conviction, desire, and passion will be strengthened.

## III. KNOWLEDGE PROPOSED

- A. Practical methods of obtaining knowledge
  1. Prayer helps make our relationship to God real. Its likened to the communication between a parent and a child and shows our dependency on Him.
  2. Consistent Reading Schedule
  3. Ask Questions
  4. Meditate, Memorize
  5. Get good wholesome material to read (*Seek the Old Paths, Laborers Together With God, Christian Courier,*

*The Christian Reader*, most if not all can be found online as well)

6. When you find yourself carousing on the internet, spend time at wholesome church and other Christian websites.
  7. Listen to audio sermons, audio Bible, etc.
  8. Ask for homework, asked to be challenged.
  9. Attend or initiate congregational Bible studies.
  10. Do correspondence courses to put your knowledge in check.
  11. Get the leadership to study with you.
  12. Need to be held accountable
- B. Give an account
1. Do I really know the Bible as I should?
  2. Am I spiritually minded?
  3. Am I able and willing to defend the Gospel?
  4. Can I teach the truth about the church and salvation?
  5. Can I explain the difference between the New Testament church and denominations?
  6. Do my co-workers and friends know that I am a Christian?
  7. Do I try to engage in biblical conversations with non-Christians when possible?
  8. Have I invited anyone to a Bible study?
  9. Am I different from a non Christian? In what way?
  10. Do you have the proper knowledge to do all the above mentioned?

**CONCLUSION:**

1. We have shown where we have been, where we are, and where we need to go.
2. We have presented what it will take to become who we need to be.
3. We have been given practical methods of obtaining this knowledge.
4. While this had been done, it is up to us to utilize this information in such a way to bring about change in order to fulfill our individual responsibility to obtain knowledge.

# MUST STRIVE TO BE ROOTED AND GROUNDED IN THE TRUTH

*Jacob Campbell*

1. "Rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving." (Col. 2:7)
2. "If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel..." (Col. 1:23)
3. "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love..." (Eph. 3:17)

## DISCUSSION:

- I. **WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE "ROOTED AND GROUNDED IN THE TRUTH?"**
  - A. Grounded – built up upon; erect; standing up; on foundation of...
  - B. Settled – sedentary; immovable... ("not moved away")
  - C. Rooted – to cause to strike root, to strengthen with roots, to render firm, to fix, establish, cause a person or a thing to be thoroughly grounded...
  - D. Established – stable...
  - E. "In the truth"
    1. Not just a reference to Bible knowledge.
    2. Living with "Christ in our hearts" (Eph. 3:17)
    3. Abiding in "the hope of the gospel" (Col. 1:23)
  - F. "Rooted and grounded in the truth," like "sound in the faith," is not given its full meaning in many instances.
    1. More than "not liberal."
    2. Requires first a love for truth.
    3. Then, a proper approach to truth.
    4. Next, a correct and balanced understanding and knowledge of truth.
    5. Finally, a consistent application of truth.
  - G. Truth takes over our lives because we have given ourselves over to the truth. If an object is firmly planted or rooted in a substance, the qualities of the substance will permeate the object. So it is with truth. Being grounded and rooted in the truth will so affect us that we "cannot sin, for we are born of God" (I John 3:8-9).

## II. WHY IS IT NECESSARY?

- A. Not rooted and grounded = fall away (Luke 8:13).
- B. The perfecting of the saints, the work of the ministry, and the edifying of the church depend on the stability of its members (Eph. 4:12-16).

## III. HOW IS IT ACCOMPLISHED?

- A. Note the close connection of miraculous to establishing a firm foundation in the first century (cf. “earnest,” “assurance,” “full-grown,” etc.)
- B. We must have assurance of the integrity of the Gospel and Christian system (“the faith”). Personal conviction/faith.
- C. The basis/foundation itself must be solid — apostles and prophets, Christ (Eph. 2:20).
- D. For us to be embedded in truth, the truth must be embedded in us (Psa. 119:11).
  - 1. How can Christians expect to remain faithful in the truth if they don’t have the truth inside of them?
  - 2. How can we be surprised when children grow up and fall away, when their roots are in sports, entertainment, and money?
  - 3. In other words, what makes us think our fate will be different from that of the rocky soil in the parable of the sower if we do nothing more than believe and obey the Gospel at the start?
  - 4. Psalm 1:1-4 – answer: delight in and meditate in God’s law is the way to be like a tree planted by deep waters.
- E. By associating with others who are rooted and grounded in the truth (Prov. 13:20).
- F. By making and being committed to strict guidelines (Dan. 1:8).
- G. Weeds, compromise, and competition must be removed.
- H. By recognizing threats to our steadfastness.

## IV. HOW WILL IT AFFECT THE LOCAL CHURCH?

- A. Think about the church at Corinth, churches in Galatia, Jerusalem, etc.
- B. Will strengthen Bible class programs. Teachers will do more for their students; students will encourage and excite their teachers and fellow students.
- C. Our worship will be more God-pleasing and edifying.
- D. Relationships in the congregation will be improved.
- E. Work will be accomplished with dependable and consistent Christians.
- F. Elders will be able to do more than just checking up on the weak and shaky members.

- G. Preachers will be able to be more flexible in their preaching and teaching – not limited only to that which is “most needed” or simple enough for the unstable to understand.
- H. Basically, every aspect of Christian service and development can be traced to our attitude toward and knowledge of the truth.

**CONCLUSION:**

1. Those who remain in the “congregation of the righteous” are men and women who, because their delight and meditation is in the law of the Lord, are like trees planted by rivers of water (Psalm 1:1-5).
2. “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord” (I Cor. 15:58).

# **PROMOTE PEACE, HARMONY, UNITY AND GOOD WILL**

*Charles Blair*

1. Before we entered World War II, voices were raised in this country about peace and how that we needed to stay out of the troubles in Europe and Asia. December the 7th, 1941 changed that kind of thinking. During the time of our last President, America was attacked several times resulting in death and suffering to our people. Once more the thoughts were that those events were removed from us. "911" changed that kind of thinking. Now on our nightly news we see a continued presentation of the absence of peace in Iraq and other places as well.
2. There is one place where men can find peace and that is in the body of Christ. Our theme in this lectureship is about my responsibility and what I can do to help the local body. May God bless our study to see our responsibility, our need for action and what it is that we must do to promote peace, harmony, unity and good will.

## **DISCUSSION:**

- I. **GOD DESIGNED THE CHURCH TO BE AN INSTITUTION AND BODY WHERE PEACE WOULD BE PRESENT:**
  - A. "In the last days" God, through His Son Jesus, would bring about a different nation and people than what had been under the law of Moses.
    1. In the last days, the mountain of the Lord's house would be established. Isa. 2:2; I Tim. 3:15; Heb. 3:6
    2. All nations of the earth would flow unto it, that is the church.
      - a. The church would be the support of truth in any community where it was established. I Tim. 3:15
      - b. The church then has the responsibility to teach and support the truth so that the world can have access to that truth which is taught.
    3. The Lord would teach us of His ways — Isaiah 2:3
      - a. Eph. 4:20; Luke 22:42
      - b. The Lord's way or my way, it cannot be both.
    4. He will rebuke many people — Isaiah 2:4
      - a. How will He judge and rebuke many people?
      - b. Isa. 11:4; Eph. 6:17; II Tim. 4:2

5. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruninghooks.
  - a. Who would do this?
  - b. Those who had been judged and rebuked by the Lord.
  - c. Israel would not lift up sword against Judah
  - d. They, the people of God, would learn war no more against each other.
  - e. War and peace are direct opposites.
- B. This peace would come through Jesus Christ the Lord.
  1. Isaiah 9:6,7
  2. He would be called the "Prince of Peace"
  3. Micah 5:2 – He would be called Governor and Ruler among God's children.
  4. The Lord would teach us of His ways; if we accept Him as Governor and Ruler, it is because we have applied those things which He taught us through revelation. James 1:22
- C. That peace could not come apart from justification.
  1. Rom. 5:1; I Cor. 6:11
  2. One cannot have peace until they are right with God
  3. Phil. 4:7; Heb. 8:10; 10:16

## II. THINGS WHICH PROMOTE PEACE, HARMONY, UNITY AND GOOD WILL:

- A. Understanding what is most important.
  1. Matthew 23:23
    - a. They were correct in their tithing practices.
    - b. They were wrong to omit judgment, mercy and faith. Judgment, mercy and faith are said to be the "weightier matters of the law".
    - c. Both needed to be done but some were more important than other things.
  2. Matthew 6:33
    - a. The kingdom (the church) must be sought first above all else.
    - b. Not only the kingdom but also the righteousness of God.
    - c. The Lord will teach us of His ways.
    - d. Romans 1:17 reveals that it is in the Gospel wherein is revealed the righteousness of God.
- B. We need to learn how to change our thinking about many things.
  1. Col. 3:7 – once lived in them, that is, in sin.
  2. Verse 8 – we put off the things which are not about the right attitudes which we should possess: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communications out of our mouth, lying not to one another.



3. Ephesians 4:21-24
  - a. We have been taught the truth which is in Jesus.
  - b. As a result of that teaching (and accepting it) we put off the old man with his lusts.
  - c. We are renewed in our minds.
  - d. We put on the “new man” which is renewed in righteousness and true holiness after God.
4. verses 25-29
  - a. We quit lying and speak honestly with each other.
  - b. We do not stay angry.
  - c. We do not give place to the Devil.
  - d. We cease to do the things which are wrong and do the things which are right.
  - e. We bless the lives of others.
  - f. We allow no filthy communication out of our mouths.
- C. See the affects of the Gospel in the lives of those in the New Testament.
  1. Acts 2:46 – gladness and singleness of heart
  2. Acts 4:32 – one heart and one soul
  3. Acts 11:23 – purpose of heart, cleave unto the Lord

### **III. THINGS WHICH DISRUPT PEACE AND HARMONY:**

- A. Those in possession of bad attitudes. III John 9,10
- B. Those who murmur. Acts 6:1
  1. Once the solution was found, the saying pleased the whole multitude.
  2. Those who would not accept the solution become part of the problem.
- C. Those who are more concerned with themselves rather than what is best for the church.
  1. Barnabas sold some land and without question brought the price of the land sold and gave it to the church. Acts 4:36,37
  2. Ananias and Sapphira likewise sold land.
  3. Instead of bringing the money to the church, they lied about how much they sold it for and how much they gave to the church.
  4. They wanted praise, but not from God.
    - a. Acts 5:1-3; John 12:42,43

### **IV. MY RESPONSIBILITY:**

- A. That which “every” joint supplies. Eph. 4:16
- B. I will be judged on what I have done and not on the standards of what others have done.
  1. We are all baptized into one body. I Cor. 12:13
  2. The foot and the hand are all part of the same body. v.15

3. Likewise the ear and the eye. v.16
4. Many members but only one body.

**CONCLUSION:**

1. The church will enjoy strength or weakness based on what I do with my life. We are all to be at peace with God, be in harmony with Him, be united together on His Word and have good will toward all our brethren.
2. Gal. 5:13-15; Rom. 14:19

# **EACH MEMBER MUST BE WILLING TO BE CORRECTED AND DISCIPLINED**

*Tom House*

1. The premise to the discussion is apropos to the theme of this series of studies.
  - a. Without doubt, every member of the church has a responsibility to the church.
  - b. The premise under consideration for this discussion correctly presumes that certain members of the church will, on occasion, need to be corrected or disciplined.
  - c. The presumption may be affirmed from two vantage points:
    1. One might need corrected or disciplined if there is open sin which needs correcting, and corrected openly.
    2. And, if there is no open sin, but yet there is private sin; even mental sin; correction is also warranted.
2. It is, however, incorrect to presume that the means or methods of correction are the product of man's device. II Tim. 3:16-17
3. The premise that one should be "willing" to receive correction or discipline is difficult for most to perceive. (Ex.— It seems similar to the foolish question we ask our children: "do you want me to spank you?")
4. Yet, an honest appraisal of human behavior will reveal that there is intrinsic value in being corrected and disciplined; for without it, our existence would be at best, chaotic.
5. A review of Bible history clearly reveals a prudent approach to the proper disposition which should be possessed regarding the need for our correction.
6. This approach might be better appreciated by taking note of those who refused correction and righteous counsel:
  - a. What happened to those who failed to listen to Noah's preaching?
  - b. What course did God take when Israel would not walk in "the old paths?" Jer. 6:16
  - c. Those who refuse to hear instruction and accept correction will wallow in the consequences of their own calamities. Prov. 1:23-32
7. It should seem obvious to the casual observer, that a thorough examination of the Christian's responsibility in this respect will reveal a wealth of considerable thought.

## **DISCUSSION:**

### **I. THE WILLINGNESS TO BE TAUGHT.**

- A. Part of the process of teaching involves the dispelling of preconceived notions which may be incorrect.

1. Paul's preconceived notion was that Jesus was a fraud and Christianity was worthy of eradication. Acts 26:9-10
  - a. He would first need to be taught that Jesus was the Christ. Rom. 10:14
  - b. The record of Acts 9 shows that Ananias teaches him the Gospel, which in Paul's case is the means of procuring his correction.
2. At one time, Apollos was of the persuasion that the teaching of John's baptism was effectual to one's justification.
  - a. Apollos held this view in a time when the covenant of Christ had come into effect. Acts 18
  - b. Upon hearing, Aquilla and Pricilla took him aside and taught him "more perfectly," i.e. they would correct Apollos' teaching.
- B. Some occasions when correction is merited, the process of dispelling incorrect notions will require one to be reprovved.
  1. The word "reprovved" is from the Greek word *elegcho*, which is defined, "to admonish, to tell a fault, or to rebuke."
  2. Simon the sorcerer falsely believed that he could purchase the power of the Holy Spirit with money. Acts 8
    - a. He was promptly reprovved by the apostle Peter for such a notion. Acts 8:20
    - b. The text reveals that he repented; but what would have been the result if he had refused Peter's admonition?
    - c. The answer is also revealed; he would have not been forgiven, and would have remained in the bond of iniquity. vs. 21-23
  3. As well, the apostle Peter was subjected to being reprovved by the apostle Paul. Gal. 2:11-14
- C. The willingness to be instructed is well to one's advantage in any matter involving the soul. James 1:21

## II. THE CHRISTIAN MUST BE WILLING TO BE CORRECTED.

- A. This premise correctly presumes that a Christian can sin so as to be lost; else why correct?
  1. Some will cite I John 3:9 as a proof-text for the Christian not sinning.
    - a. The avid Bible student will know that the grammatical structure of the phrase "doeth no sin," is in the present active indicative tense, which means that one does not perpetually make a practice of sin.

- b. If it were to mean that a child of God could not sin, it would stand diametrically opposed to the statements that the same apostle made in I John 1:8-10.
2. The fact is that if the “seed,” which is the word of God, is stored up and kept in the Christian’s heart, it will serve as the source of discipline and correction which the Christian needs. Psalms 119:11; II Timothy 3:16-17
- B. The apostle Paul would suggest that our willingness to be spiritually corrected and disciplined is our response to God’s love. Hebrews 12:5-11
  1. The apostle quotes Solomon’s words from Proverbs 3:11-12 when he admonished his own son to appreciate the chastening which the Lord would occasionally provide when he would fail.
  2. The primary reason for receiving the Lord’s rebuke is for “our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.” v.10
- C. Since it is God’s love which compels Him to correct us, to reject spiritual correction is to reject God.
- D. Likewise, to hate reproof is to hate God who administers the reproof.
- E. The truly righteous will, when apprised of his sin, accept the correction and seek forgiveness. Jeremiah 10:24; I John 1:9; Acts 8 – Simon
- F. One might be prompted to ask what reasons would there be for submitting to correction and discipline?
  1. First, it might be presumed that the one, or ones, doing the correcting are objectively knowledgeable of the error, as well as the path of right. Psalms 94:10; James 5:19; Galatians 6:1
  2. Secondly, one submits to being corrected in order to maintain fellowship with the faithful saints. Ephesians 4:1-3
  3. Thirdly, one submits to corrective instruction to avoid further discipline. II Thessalonians 3:6,14
  4. The primary reason to heed the correction is to maintain hope of eternal life. Hebrews 12:9
- G. There is a designed means of correction and discipline authorized by the Lord.
  1. Jesus outlined the design for dealing with private sin in Matthew 18.
  2. The apostle Paul clearly noted the method for dealing with those who “walk disorderly;” implicating the sin has become public. II Thessalonians 3:6,14
  3. There is a designed method of correction to be applied to the false teacher as well. Romans 16:17-18

- H. It is important to note that the unwillingness to receive correction is to result in discipline, whether the erring one accepts it or not.

### III. THE DISPOSITION AND CONDITION OF THE UNWILLING.

- A. Jesus provides some indication of the disposition of those who are unwilling to be reprov'd or corrected; it seems that they have a greater affinity to evil. John 3:19-21
- B. But what would otherwise prompt one to possess such a disposition?
1. One reason is likely a result of pride and arrogance.
    - a. The nation of Israel is a prime example. Jer. 5:3; 7:28; Zeph. 3:2
    - b. Solomon would advise against such an attitude. Prov. 22:17
  2. Some refuse correction because they presume that they are completely innocent of wrong. Jer. 2:35
    - a. When one walks disorderly, it is because he either has no knowledge of what is right, or refuses to accept the righteous standard.
    - b. Those who refuse righteous instruction or righteous correction will only find themselves deeper in error and further from the way of right. Prov. 10:17
  3. One who will not be reprov'd hates instruction, for he is of the impression that he knows it all! Prov. 5:12-13; 12:1; I Cor. 5:1-2
- C. What is the condition of those who are of the disposition to refuse correction and discipline?
1. As noted earlier, they will suffer the consequences of their self-made calamities. Prov. 1:23-33
    - a. If the sinner will not repent, what is the result? Luke 13:3,5
    - b. What results of the sinning Christian who fails to confess his sin? I John 1:9
    - c. What became of Ananias and Sapphira when given the opportunity to correct their sin, and didn't? Acts 5
  2. Jesus clearly specified some of the consequences which would come to those erring Asia-Minor congregations who would not follow His terms of correction. Rev. 2,3

### CONCLUSION:

1. If one is unwilling to be corrected, he is already subject to be disciplined, for it is a process which is authorized by God.
2. Oddly enough, there are those, even some known by this writer, who allege that it is wrong to correct and discipline, on the

basis that it is considered to be unloving and judgmental! Matt. 7:1; John 7:24

3. When Paul stated that there were those who “walk disorderly,” was he judgmental and unloving?
4. What would become of those who “walk disorderly,” if left to their errant walk?
5. The fact is, those who “walk disorderly” are corrected because they are loved.
6. It is their responsibility to lovingly reciprocate by accepting corrective instruction, and repent!

# A MEMBER HAS THE RESPONSIBILITY TO BE DEPENDABLE

*Kevin J. Flowers*

1. We want to focus our attention on responsibilities we have as a member of a local congregation.
  - a. We have discussed numerous topics that fall into the class of personal responsibility for each of us.
  - b. There will continue to be discussions on other topics once I sit down and zip the lip.
2. The responsibilities for one person alone in life are vast in number.
3. We want to focus our attention on the responsibility of being dependable. That is a responsibility that all of us have.
4. We recognize that in a number of areas of life, it is important to be dependable.
5. Our goal is to show the importance of one's responsibility to be dependable, especially in his/her Christian life.
6. With that being said, what does it mean to be dependable?
  - a. Webster: "Capable of being depended on or reliable".
  - b. That means what ever task is given you in life, you should be reliable enough to accomplish that task.
  - c. This is especially true if that task be given by God through His word.
7. Let us now set forth our goal to show the importance of being dependable, and we will do so by showing four areas in which we are to be dependable; then, look at some examples from the Bible that fall into these categories.
  - a. To God
  - b. To My Local Congregation
  - c. Towards Other Christians
  - d. To Benefit Self
  - e. Two Examples

## **DISCUSSION:**

### **WE HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITY TO BE DEPENDABLE**

#### **I. TO GOD**

- A. Before we become children of God, we first make the commitment to ourselves and to God Almighty to be dependable.
- B. That is, dependable or reliable to be obedient to the desires or commands of God.
- C. Isn't that how we show our love to God? John 14:15
- D. Luke 6.46



1. We cannot just give lip service and then avoid actually carrying out those commands.
- E. We make the commitment to be faithful unto death; Rev. 2:10
  1. Of course we know that does not mean we are never to sin again.
  2. We know that is impossible. Rom. 3:23
  3. We also know that our sins will separate us from God. Isa. 59:1-2
  4. And that the wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23) but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.
  5. We have not only made a commitment to God in becoming a child of His, but God also has made a commitment to His children. I John 1:9
  6. We now know that being dependable to God doesn't mean not to sin ever again, because we have reconciliation to God through Christ when we confess our sins and turn from them.
  7. We are always to keep God and His law at the top of our plans in life, always working in His kingdom. I Cor. 15:58
- F. We are also to be dependable fishers of men. Mark 1:17
  1. Like Simon and Andrew, we should be fishing for the souls of men.
  2. Saving them from their lost estate is our goal. This happens when the Gospel takes place in their life.
  3. They become children of God, and then in turn become fishers of men as well.
  4. The case is, though, we are not throwing a line and then pulling one in as to think, "Well, another one took the bait."
  5. Rather, we throw the word of God to show its light of truth to them.
  6. We teach them from the word as we have been commanded. Mark 16:15; Matt. 28:18-20
  7. Lest we forget, we also teach by our example of how we let the word of God abide in us, letting our light shine forth. Matt. 5:16

## **II. TO MY LOCAL CONGREGATION.**

- A. You may be asking yourself, in what ways am I to be dependable to my local congregation?
- B. The case is that everyone has a role in which they are to fulfill, both men and women, and they should be able to be depended upon to accomplish that role given them.

- C. For instance, one member of your local congregation, a deacon, has asked or given you the role of serving on the Lord's Table.
1. You should be dependable enough that you will accomplish that task given you, or if incapable, make prior arrangements to have it completed.
  2. The same would go for leading a prayer or any other task.
  3. The same for a woman teaching a Bible class.
  4. She should be dependable to be on time and fulfill that role.
- D. We are to be dependable to our local congregation in our giving as well.
1. We are commanded to give on the first day of the week. I Cor. 16:1-2
  2. We should be dependable enough to not only give as commanded, but in a way we could be loyal to the congregation in which you are a member.
  3. The reasoning behind that is, if you start giving to other congregations, that becomes a hindrance to your local congregation's work they're involved in.
  4. Especially when more than one family does so, the funds of that congregation begin to diminish to where it is below their prior obligations to support other works in the kingdom.
  5. I know often-times in traveling, we don't think of that, we just give.
  6. It is not wrong to give to the Lord, but it should be after we have already taken out our allotment for our home congregation.
  7. Be dependable givers. Monetary things have no place in heaven and we certainly will not need them there.
- E. We are to be dependable to our local congregation in our attendance also.
1. It once again comes back to us being dependable to God first in that through obedience to His commands we attend faithfully.
  2. It is God's command that we forsake not the assembling of the saints. Heb. 10:25
  3. Therefore it is a sin not to come to the assembly of the saints.
  4. That is where authorized worship from faithful brethren is taking place.
  5. But when worship is completed as prescribed by God, He is with those saints.
  6. Also, like giving, we should be loyal to our home congregation in that attending other congregations often, takes

from the giving as well as the attendance at services back home.

### **III. TOWARDS OTHER CHRISTIANS.**

- A. We have the responsibility to be dependable to other Christians in the giving of encouragement.
  - 1. Sometimes we need to encourage the weak member that is struggling and to encourage the strong member to carry on.
  - 2. This can be done through comforting words from the scripture because it is able to build us up. Acts 20:32
- B. We should be dependable enough that people could count on us in a time of need.
  - 1. Paul asked the brethren in Philippi to help others that labored with him in the Gospel. Phil. 4:3
  - 2. We should be ready and more than willing to help others, especially those that labor with us in the Gospel.
- C. We should likewise be dependable to exhort one another as fellow laborers together. Heb. 3:13
  - 1. We should help one another by exhortation to shun sin that it may not enter our heart.
  - 2. That is one of the reasons we come on Wednesdays for worship to God and to give and receive exhortation from other brothers and sisters in Christ.
  - 3. Another reason we attend service is to have that extra bit of help to get through the week as strong faithful Christians.
- D. We also must be dependable to other Christians in the trials of life.
  - 1. When one falls prey to the trials of life, we lovingly show them their condition and bring them back to the fold once more.
  - 2. We help them to find the sin in their life and encourage them to repent before it is everlastingly too late.
  - 3. One soul is worth more than the whole world.
  - 4. The Lord wants none to perish, but that all would come to repentance. II Pet. 3:9

### **IV. TO BENEFIT SELF.**

- A. When we are dependable, it not only helps others, but ourselves as well.
- B. For instance, to be dependable to God in teaching, we first must know ourselves what we are teaching, therefore our study allows us to be more knowledgeable of God's word.
- C. We are to be dependable to read God's word to uncover the vast depths of His word.

- D. There is nothing unattainable that has been given the effort of diligence toward it whatever it may be from God's word to becoming a pilot.
- E. That is what we are to do with God's word: give diligence toward the learning and attaining of understanding of it to inevitably obtain knowledge, which will lead to humble wisdom in the end. II Tim. 2:15
- F. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge and wisdom, and those that despise wisdom are counted but as fools. Psa. 111:10; Prov. 1:7
- G. We also must be dependable to God and to ourselves to take up our cross daily and follow after Christ, if we want heaven as our home. Luke 9:23
- H. Only complete obedience = salvation. Matt. 7:21-23
- I. Let us not only help others but ourselves make it to heaven.
- J. We must apply the word of God to our lives.
- K. After all it will judge us. Psa. 119:11; John 12:48

## V. TWO BIBLE EXAMPLES OF DEPENDABILITY.

### A. The Master Teacher

1. Jesus was always dependable.
2. Jesus was dependable in many things and ways.
  - a. Jesus was always dependable to help others when He saw a need;
  - b. Like the sheep who had not a shepherd, Jesus had compassion on them. Matt. 9:36
  - c. Jesus had compassion on the blind and He restored their sight. Matt. 20:34
  - d. And many more things as well Jesus saw and had compassion and helped.

### B. The Certain Man in Luke 15:11.

1. He had two sons, the one son that obeyed his command and the younger one that didn't.
2. The younger son ran off with his inheritance and wasted it on riotous living.
3. Yet his father had compassion on him and was dependable to take him back.
4. This story you cannot help but make analogous to our heavenly Father which if we become separated from Him by sin in our lives we have a way to come back to Him.
5. He will receive us again if we will be obedient to His commands and faithfully take up our cross and follow Him daily.

## CONCLUSION:

1. We can see how being dependable is so very important, to God and to the world in which we live.

2. We also must work diligently to be dependable in the right way.
  - a. I mean we should be dependable in the sense of being reliable.
  - b. The sad case is, though, that there are some that are dependable to leave you hanging in a time of need.
  - c. And some that will not fulfill their duties of life as they should and they are dependable in that their reputation precedes them and they will not complete the task given or asked of them even though they may even agree to it.
3. It is important to be noted as a person that was and is dependable in the right kind of way.
4. Let us be dependable members of our home congregation, to our society, and more importantly, to God Almighty as we work diligently to serve Him.

# MUST HAVE A BENEVOLENT SPIRIT

*Edward White*

1. The Lord's church has a much greater work to do than any human organization; indeed, it has a work which no human organization can do.
2. The mission of the church is *evangelism, edification and benevolence*.
3. While much attention has been and is placed on evangelism and edification, and rightly so, is it not true that we have failed to be as active as we should in the area of benevolence?
  - a. We have evangelistic seminars and spend money on means and ways to edify.
  - b. But how long has it been since you heard of a benevolent seminar?

## DISCUSSION:

### I. LOOK AT THE BENEVOLENT SPIRIT OF JESUS:

- A. The word "benevolent" or "benevolence" means "disposition to do good; an act of kindness; generous gift." (Webster).
- B. Jesus was the greatest benevolent worker of all times.
  1. Jesus left a perfect example of benevolence, I Pet. 2:21; Heb. 4:15
  2. Jesus left a perfect record of a perfect example, Jas. 1:25.
  3. Example is one of the most powerful ways of teaching.
  4. Jesus went about doing good, Acts 1:1; 10:38.
  5. Even the miracles of Jesus was a manifestation of His mercy and kindness toward the needy, helpless, down-trodden, etc.
  6. We must follow His perfect will and examples, Matt. 7:21; Luke 6:46.
  7. Thus the benevolent works of Christ were both physical and spiritual in nature.

### II. THE TEACHING OF JESUS ON BENEVOLENCE:

- A. Jesus taught that the poor are always with us. Mark 14:7
  1. Jesus said: "call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind" to the feast. Luke 14:12-14
  2. Those who refuse to help the needy will be condemned. Matt. 25:31-46
- B. Jesus uses the example of a Samaritan to teach a lesson on benevolence. Luke 10:25-37
  1. The question was asked by a certain lawyer: "who is my neighbor?" Luke 10:29. The answer would be anyone in need. Luke 10:37; Gal. 6:10

2. Christians cannot sit back and depend on the Red Cross, Salvation Army, and such like, to do our benevolent work for us. If so, then we are no better than the priest and Levite in Luke 10:31,32.
- C. Jesus taught that if we expect to receive mercy, we must show mercy. Matt. 5:7

### **III. THE CHRISTIAN AND BENEVOLENCE:**

- A. There are two ways of having a benevolent spirit.
  1. Caring for the physical needs of others.
  2. Caring for the spiritual needs of others.
- B. Christians are commanded to have a benevolent spirit, cf. Acts 20:35; Gal. 2:10; Eph.4:28; I John 3:17-18
- C. We are not to support those who are able to work. I Tim. 5:8; II Thess. 3:10
- D. Some practical ways of benevolence.
  1. Support those without mother and father in orphan homes.
    - a. Sometimes we are so self-centered we don't even think about homeless children.
    - b. Instead of building play-grounds and entertainment centers, we need to be taking care of homeless children.
    - c. Note James 1:27. The word "visit" means "to visit for the purpose of comfort and relief."
      - 1) The same word "visit" is used in Luke 1:68 and Luke 7:16.
      - 2) God visited His people in supplying relief — relief from sin.
      - 3) Is this an individual responsibility? Can individuals practice "pure religion and undefiled before God?" YES!
      - 4) Is this a congregational responsibility? Can a congregation practice "pure religion and undefiled before God?" YES!
  2. We are to help take care of widows in need (I Tim. 5:16); feed the hungry (Matt. 25:34,35); cloth the naked (Matt. 25:36); visit the sick (Matt. 25:36); visit those in prison (Matt. 25:36).
    - a. Are we limited to those who are Christians? NO!
    - b. The apostle Paul wrote that we are to help ALL people — Christians and non-Christians. Gal. 6:10
    - c. On the word "all" look at I Thess. 5:15; 3:12; Tit. 2:11

**IV. REASONS TO HAVE A BENEVOLENT SPIRIT:**

- A. It is not for personal glory but to glorify God. cf. Matt. 5:16
- B. God blesses those who have a benevolent spirit. II Cor. 9:8-10
- C. Having a benevolent spirit follows the example of Christ. Acts 10:38
- D. We manifest a benevolent spirit because of our love for our fellowman. I John 3:17
- E. We demonstrate a benevolent spirit because the Lord commands it. Gal. 6:10

**CONCLUSION:**

- 1. Christ was the greatest benevolent worker.
- 2. We must have the spirit of Christ within us. Rom. 8:9
- 3. If we have the spirit of Christ, we will be benevolent minded like Christ.
- 4. We must have a benevolent spirit to be pleasing to God.



# **MEMBERS MUST SHOW MUTUAL RESPECT**

*Clint Harper*

1. What is Respect?
  - a. "a: to consider worthy of high regard: ESTEEM b: to refrain from interfering with" (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary)
  - b. Gen 4:4, "And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering:"
2. How does a person gain respect?
  - a. First, to gain respect, a person must be respectable, I Tim. 4:12
  - b. Second, if a person is going to gain respect, he must give respect.
    - 1) Prov. 18:24, "A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly..."
    - 2) If I expect to be forgiven, I must forgive (Matt. 6:14-15)
3. We must show mutual respect in...

## **DISCUSSION:**

### **I. THINGS IN WHICH WE SHOULD HAVE CONTROL.**

- A. Occupations
  1. Because people do not have the same likes, dislikes and abilities, they do not all do or have the same kinds of occupations.
  2. Some occupations should not be a part of the Christian's life.
  3. Acts 19:24
- B. Recreation
  1. I Tim. 4:8
  2. Everyone needs one or more ways to allow the body and mind to recover from the more important things of life.
- C. Decisions / Opinions
  1. Acts 15:36-41
  2. Paul and Barnabas differed in their opinions about John Mark accompanying them.
- D. Mistakes
  1. Rom 3:23, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;"
  2. Matt. 6:14-15

**II. THINGS IN WHICH WE MAY NOT HAVE CONTROL.**

- A. Families, Eph. 6:1-4; Matt. 10:36-37
- B. Personalities
  - 1. Personality differences can cause strife if proper respect is not shown.
  - 2. Rom. 12:8; Phil. 2:3-4
- C. Disabilities
  - 1. Many prominent people of the Bible had (what we would call) disabilities: Isaac, Jacob, Eli, Ahijah the prophet
  - 2. Because of disabilities, some today cannot do all the same things as others.
  - 3. I Cor. 12:14-22
- D. Age, I Tim. 4:11; I Tim 5:1-2

**III. THINGS THAT DIRECTLY AFFECT THE WORK AND WORSHIP OF THE CHURCH.**

- A. Knowledge, II Peter 3:18; Heb. 5:12-14
- B. Talents / Abilities, Matt. 25:14-30; II Tim. 2:2
- C. Fears, I Cor. 2:1-5; Rev. 21:8

**CONCLUSION:**

- 1. Mutual respect in every facet of our relationship with brethren is necessary if edification is to be effective.
- 2. Perhaps the most important place to begin is with respect for self.

## DEACONS MUST HAVE A WILLINGNESS TO SERVE

*Tom Snyder*

1. The concept of responsibility implies at least two things:
  - a. Obligation
  - b. Accountability
2. To suggest deacons are responsible is to say deacons have an obligation, i.e., a work to do, and that they will be held accountable for this work.
3. To whom are they accountable?
  - a. The local congregation who appointed them to the work
  - b. The eldership who oversees their work
  - c. First and foremost to God

### DISCUSSION:

#### I. LET US CONSIDER RESPONSIBILITIES.

- A. Where do responsibilities come from? They come from several sources:
  1. They come from an inherent position we hold in this world before God
    - a. A baby has no responsibilities
    - b. On the other hand, an adult has basic responsibilities, Rom. 1:20, 21
    - c. All accountable persons have a responsibility to make correct moral decisions. Sadly they do not, Rom. 3:23
    - d. Such will be held accountable for this, Rom. 6:23
  2. Fortunes of birth bring certain responsibilities
    - a. Male-female
    - b. Rich
    - c. Even the country in which one is born affords not only blessings, but responsibilities
  3. Some responsibilities of birth I am able to denounce
    - a. I can give up a claim to power or money and even a nation
    - b. I cannot give up my humanity nor gender
  4. So many of the problems of life, from the masses to the individual, stem from issues of responsibility
- B. Many responsibilities come from the choices we make
  1. Some choices we make
    - a. We choose to love God
    - b. We choose to marry
    - c. We choose to do that which may produce children (We may have a choice to conceive or not to conceive.

But, once conceived, we do not have the choice to have the child or not.)

2. There are some choices to which we must qualify
  - a. Marriage
  - b. Certain jobs
    - 1) Computer programmer
    - 2) Teacher
    - 3) Welder
    - 4) Doctor
3. Within the Lord's church there are works to which we must be qualified
  - a. Preacher, teacher
  - b. Elder
  - c. Deacon

## II. WITH THE NAME COMES RESPONSIBILITIES.

- A. Can you imagine
  1. One who calls herself a mother who has never had children
  2. One who calls himself a doctor who has no ability to heal
  3. One who calls himself a mechanic with no knowledge of cars
  4. One who calls himself a Christian with no morals
- B. A name means something, Jer. 2:7,8; 5:30,31; Matt. 23:13ff
  1. What did the name "priest" in the Old Testament mean?
  2. What did the name "prophet" in the Old Testament mean?
  3. What did the name "prince" in the Old Testament mean?
- C. Names denotes things that can be very appealing to some people
  1. The name "teacher" can be prestigious to some, Matt. 23:5-7
  2. The name "rich" is something to flaunt, I Tim. 2:9
  3. The name "good" is desirable, Acts 5:1ff
  4. The name "popular" is enjoyed, III Jn 9
- D. To seek the name without the work brings about another name – "hypocrite"

## III. DEACONS ARE CHOSEN TO DO A WORK, NOT JUST TO WEAR A NAME.

- A. Acts 6:1-7
  1. There was a needed work
  2. Men were chosen who could handle the responsibility
  3. Their qualifications to the work are seen in verses 3 & 5
  4. They were to exercise these qualifications in fulfilling their responsibility

- B. I Tim. 3:8-13
  - 1. The deacons were first to be “proved”
  - 2. Then to “use the office” (vs.10,13)
    - a. This term means to serve, to attend to
    - b. This word was used of Jesus. He came “not to be ministered unto, but to minister”
- C. The word “deacon” means “one who executes the commands of another, especially of a master. It speaks of one who is a servant, an attendant, or a minister
  - 1. We know what authority is; but what of the recipient of this authority?
  - 2. Consider the centurion (Matt. 8:9) that came to Jesus and what he said concerning the one who exercises authority and also the one who exercises “deaconship”– “...Go and he goeth...come and he cometh...do this and he doest it.”
  - 3. This is truly the “good and faithful servant”

#### **IV. HOW TO SERVE: AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORD WILLINGNESS.**

- A. There are those who are compelled to serve, Matt. 5:41
- B. Other may serve but with little desire, I Pet. 5:2
- C. The ideal servant is one who serves “willingly”
  - 1. Desire to serve
  - 2. Love to serve
  - 3. Sense of duty and devotion
  - 4. Wanting to do good
- D. Think of the word “willingness”
  - 1. It works because something needs to be done
  - 2. It works in spite of hardships
  - 3. It works through drudgeries
  - 4. It works through problems
- E. Are these not the things which make for a good father and mother and a host of other relationships?
- F. They are so necessary to being the deacon God would have him to be

#### **V. THE WILLINGNESS TO SERVE, SERVES AS A HIGHER EXAMPLE FOR OTHERS TO FOLLOW.**

- A. The deacon is placed into the office based upon a number of things
  - 1. His willingness to serve
  - 2. His meeting the qualifications which call him out to a lofty place
  - 3. His being chosen from among his people that have come to know and respect him

- B. A deacon is not a mere "flunky" that takes out the garbage without pay
  - 1. While it is true that a deacon is not an elder nor junior elder
  - 2. While it is true that the word deacon is simply "servant"
  - 3. This in no way makes the office of a deacon unimportant
- C. The office he occupies is of God and therefore part of God's grand scheme to make the church what it ought to be
- D. This makes the deacon a natural example
  - 1. "If the deacon of all people will not serve why should I serve"
  - 2. On the other hand, if the deacon serves and we are also to serve, his faithful service serves to inspire zeal in others to serve
- E. The greatest of examples have been faithful SERVANTS
  - 1. Jesus, Matt. 20:28
  - 2. Paul, II Cor. 12:15
  - 3. Stephen, Acts 5
  - 4. Philip, Acts 8:5ff
  - 5. Timothy, I Tim. 4:12

#### CONCLUSION:

- 1. The church of Christ upon this earth is made up of local individual congregations
- 2. Each stands before God with talent and a great work to do
- 3. God has given to us the makeup of the church, Phil. 1:1
- 4. We must seek to fulfill these works; but not only fulfill them, but fill them with men who will with willingness serve that we as a body of people may serve God.

# MUST HAVE A WILLINGNESS TO YIELD IN MATTERS OF JUDGMENT

*Sidney White*

1. The subject at hand is dealing with matters of Biblical authority and how to establish Biblical authority.
  - a. Things, which are bound, we cannot loose. Matt. 16:19a
  - b. Things, which are loosed, we cannot bind. Matt. 16:19b
  - c. Some things are in the realm of human judgment, and in those areas we must exercise liberty.
2. Romans 14 deals specifically with the Christian, his attitude and conduct toward his brethren who might not be as strong and well grounded in the faith.
3. Remember, much of this comes out of the Jew/Gentile background.
  - a. The Jews were trying to bind certain observances on the Gentiles.
  - b. They were slow in turning loose of some of them.

## DISCUSSION:

- I. **VERSES 1-12 ADDRESS THE USE AND ABUSE OF CHRISTIAN LIBERTY.**
  - A. The basic observation in these verses is “receive the weak”.
    1. “Receive” means to take to oneself; and signifies a special interest on the part of the one doing the receiving.
    2. Such instruction involves much more than merely tolerating someone!
  - B. Paul’s first illustration involves eating of all things (vs.1-4).
    1. He is obviously speaking to those who are strong as to how they must deal with those who are less mature.
    2. “Doubtful disputations” – Don’t keep arguing about it because such just creates more division, confusion and hurt.
    3. Neither the strong nor the weak should sit in judgment of the other (v.3a).
    4. Those God accepts, we had better accept (vs.3b-4).
  - C. Paul’s second illustration involves the observing of days (vs.5-6).
    1. The Lord’s appointed day is not included here. Acts 20:7; I Cor.16:1-2
    2. One’s conscience must be clear.
  - D. Paul then notes that every servant is accountable unto the Lord (vs.7-12).
    1. Our life is not our own.

2. We must at all times remember our responsibility toward others and our influence on others.
3. So whatever we do, observing days, eating meats, etc., we must be sure the object of it all is to please God (Rom.12:2; I Peter 4:11b)
4. Verse 12 sums sit up very well.

## II. THE LAW OF BROTHERLY LOVE IS BROADER THAN THE LAW OF PERSONAL FEELINGS (vs.13-23).

- A. Brotherly love is commanded (Heb.13:1; I Peter 2:22; I John 2-4) and is described in I Corinthians 13:4-8.
- B. Such love would cause us not to put stumblingblocks before our brethren (v.13).
- C. No meat is unclean to the strong, but all meat may be unclean to the weak (vs.14-15).
  1. "Nothing unclean of itself" – We must keep this statement in its context.
  2. Christ gave up heaven, then His life, that we might live. Is it asking too much for us to give up something if it causes a weak brother to stumble or lose his soul?
- D. Even our "liberty" may call for self denial (vs.16-18).
  1. "Good" in the context is that which the strong has the right to do.
  2. One's faithfulness in the kingdom is not determined by eating or not eating certain meats.
  3. One's faithfulness in the kingdom is determined by righteousness, peace and joy.
    - a. "Righteousness" – right conduct toward others.
    - b. "Peace" – conducting ourselves in such a way as to promote peace.
    - c. "Joy" – contentment in this life, doing all things without murmuring.
  4. Those who strive for these virtues please the Lord (v.18).
- E. Brotherly love will cause us to be helpful to our brethren (vs.19-23).
  1. Two things are listed here for which we must strive: peace and edifying one another.
    - a. Rom. 12:18; 15:2; I Cor. 8:1; I Cor. 14; II Cor. 12:19; I Thess. 5:11; Matt. 5:9; Isa. 9:6
    - b. Following personal desires will make for contention and division.
    - c. We should never be guilty of wrecking another's faith, nor hindering the work of the Lord.
    - d. The weak must be taught, and not remain weak; nor should he try to impose his opinions on others.
    - e. But the weak must not follow the strong in doing something he (the weak) believes is wrong.



2. Liberty is not absolute!
  - a. One must consider the conscience of others.
  - b. One must consider if the matter is expedient.
  - c. One must consider if the matter will edify or destroy.
  - d. “Edify,” we must build up, strengthen and encourage, rather than antagonize and provoke one another.
- F. The law of love is further enforced by the example of Christ in chapter 15 (not our study at this point).

**CONCLUSION:**

1. There are limitations of liberty (J. Noel Meredith).
  - a. All things are lawful, but not all things edify (I Cor. 10:23).
  - b. All things are lawful, but not all things are expedient (I Cor. 10:23).
  - c. We must not be brought under the power of any (I Cor. 6:12).
2. The instructions of Romans 14, if followed, would solve many of the problems that arise among brethren today.

# EACH MEMBER IS TO REVERENCE AND PARTICIPATE IN CORPORATE WORSHIP

*Virgil L. Hale*

1. "Worship" (*proskuneo*) "to adore" "reverence homage paid"
2. First time in the Bible (Gen. 22:5) Abraham
3. Word "worship" 191 times in the Bible: 113 times in the Old Testament, 78 times in the New Testament.
4. No one can do our worshiping for us any more than they can do our living for us.
5. Everyone is individually responsible for worshiping.

## DISCUSSION:

### I. IMPORTANCE AND NECESSITY OF WORSHIP.

- A. One of first things mentioned in the Bible.
  1. Cain and Abel (Gen. 4)
    - a. "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain" (Heb. 11:4).
      - 1) "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17)
    - b. Abel did what commanded — Cain substituted something else.
- B. After the flood Noah worshiped (Gen. 8).
- C. Psa. 29:2, "...worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness"
- D. The wise men said that they had "...come to worship him" (Matt. 2:2)
- E. Jesus said, "...Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God..." (Matt. 4:10)
- F. Jesus left us an example (Luke 4:16) "...as his custom was..."
- G. Must be a worshiper and do God's will to be able to pray (John 9:31).

### II. KINDS OF FALSE WORSHIP MENTIONED IN THE BIBLE

- A. Ignorant — (Acts 17:23; Rom. 10:1-3)
  1. Not excusable — (Acts 17:30; II Thess. 1:7-9)
- B. Vain — (Matt. 15:8-9; Mark 7:7; James 1:26)
- C. Will — (Col. 3:23) self-devised; self-chosen
  1. Cain — (Gen. 4:1-8)
  2. When questioned about what doing in worship, some answer "We like it."
- D. Creature worship — (Rom. 1:25)
- E. Idol worship — (Acts 17; Acts 19)

### **III. TRUE WORSHIP (John 4:24)**

- A. "Must" — modifies both "in spirit" and "in truth".
  - 1. Means same as (Heb. 11:6) "must believe"
- B. Object of worship — "God" — (not saints, relatives, etc.)
  - 1. (Eph. 5:19) "making melody in your heart to the Lord" (Col. 3:16) "singing with grace in your heart to the Lord."
- C. Attitude — "in spirit" (from the heart) — the mind on what is being done.
  - 1. If our heart is not in it — it is vain worship (Matt. 15:8-9)
- D. Standard — "in truth" (John 17:17; I Peter 4:11; John 8:32)
  - 1. Suppose it is part truth and part error? Will God accept it?
  - 2. What about a little poison in a glass?
- E. "Must" — absolute — nothing more or less will suffice.
- F. "The father seeks such to worship him." Nothing else will suffice.

### **IV. FIVE AVENUES OF PUBLIC WORSHIP.**

- A. Singing — (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16)
  - 1. All are to sing — not some sing for the rest — reciprocal — "one another"
  - 2. Not microphones in audience
  - 3. Not humming — but "speaking"
  - 4. Are to sing like we pray — "spirit and understanding" (I Cor. 14:15)
- B. Prayer
  - 1. Remember — talking to God.
    - a. Can sing and pray anytime (James 5:13; Rom. 12:12; I Thess. 5:17)
  - 2. Addressed to our heavenly Father — (Matt. 6:9)
  - 3. In whom "we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17:28)
  - 4. How addressed (Prov. 1:7) "fear of God is the beginning of knowledge"
    - a. "...with reverence and godly fear" (Heb. 12:28; Eccl. 12:13)
- C. Giving — (I Cor. 16:1-2; II Cor. 9:7)
  - 1. As prosper — purpose — cheerfully.
    - a. Do we sacrifice or try to "tip" God?
  - 2. Are to give regularly — individually — liberally — purposefully — cheerfully. No one can do our giving for us.
- D. Lord's Supper
  - 1. Greatest memorial of greatest event
  - 2. It looks in all directions
    - a. Back — to the death of Christ
    - b. Forward — to fact He will come again
    - c. Up — to where Christ is now

- d. Within — as we examine ourselves
- 3. The Lord's Supper is:
  - a. A Communion
  - b. A Commemoration (Memorial) (I Cor. 11)
  - c. A proclamation (I Cor. 11:26)
  - d. An examination (I Cor. 11)
- 4. If not taken in the right way — "damnation to himself" (I Cor. 11:29)
- 5. When is it to be taken? "...upon the first day of the week" (Acts 20:7)
- E. Teaching — this is God speaking through His Word
  - 1. Are to listen attentively — not with our mind pre-occupied with other things.
  - 2. Do we have the proper respect for God's Word?

#### V. THE LORD'S DAY IS A SPECIAL DAY

- A. "Lord's day" (Rev. 1:10)
  - 1. Day Christ arose from the dead — "the first day of the week" (Acts 20:7)
    - a. Every week has a first day — like under the old law each week had a Sabbath day.
- B. Some say, "I can get close to the Lord on the lake."
  - 1. How can one get close to the Lord by disobeying Him?
  - 2. Recreation is no substitute for worship.

#### VI. WE PREACH A SERMON BY OUR ABSENCE

- A. Some are unable to attend — they would like to be present.
- B. Many become careless:
  - 1. Do not get up in time — too many things to do.
  - 2. Are telling family and friends — not really important
    - a. Wonder why others don't take seriously
- C. Many plan to be absent.

#### VII. PREACH SERMON BY PRESENCE

- A. Show interest by presence — (Matt. 5:6)
- B. Show by example what is really important to us.
- C. Christ is always present — (Matt. 18:20)

#### VIII. SOME QUESTIONS — FOR SELF-EXAMINATION

- A. Does worship stand in the way of "fun things?"
  - 1. Had you rather worship God or watch TV?
- B. What is your attitude toward worship?
  - 1. Do you look forward to it or dread it?
- C. Singing — praying — preaching
  - 1. Do you look for mistakes so you can criticize?
- D. Lord's Supper — do you examine self or others?
  - 1. Do you partake in "remembrance?"

- E. Do you resent giving? Do you love money?
  - 1. Do you earn money to live? Or live to earn money?
- F. Example is powerful — cannot deny this fact.
  - 1. Can turn people to God or away from God.
  - 2. Some are “led away by the error of the wicked” (II Peter 3:17)
  - 3. We are to “adorn the doctrine” (Titus 2:10)
  - 4. We are “...a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, and holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light” (I Peter 2:9)

**IX. HEBREWS 10:25-31**

- A. “Not forsaking” “as the manner of some is”
  - 1. Wilfully missing — “not” means same as “not lying, stealing, etc.
  - 2. Some were making it their practice.
- B. Are to “exhort” — encourage others.
- C. Note: “sin wilfully” — plan to miss.
- D. Note verse 27 — “But a certain looking for of judgment and fiery indignation...”
- E. What we do when we wilfully miss services:
  - 1. We have trodden under foot the Son of God.
  - 2. Counted His blood an unholy thing.
  - 3. Done despite unto the Spirit of grace.
- F. Will receive the vengeance of the Lord.
  - 1. The Lord will judge His people.
  - 2. Who are “his people?”

**X. WHAT DOES “FAITHFUL MEAN?”**

- A. Remember — (I Peter 4:17-18) “time is come”
- B. What is “faithfulness?” What does “faithful” mean?
  - 1. Is a paper boy “faithful” who misses you most of the time?
  - 2. Is a car “faithful” if it starts one out of every three times you try to start it?
  - 3. Is a refrigerator “faithful” if it runs part of the time?
- C. Worship is not the only gauge — but it is a good one.
  - 1. Can attend every service — not be faithful in life.
  - 2. If come “when it is convenient” — if nothing else to do — are we faithful?
- D. What does “faithful” really mean?
  - 1. “God is faithful” (I Cor. 1:9,10,13; I John 1:9). Suppose we could not count on God? (Acts 17:28)
  - 2. “Faithful Abraham” (Gal. 3:9). He obeyed God without question—God’s will came first.
  - 3. “Faithful men” (II Tim. 2:2) — loyal to God.

4. Note: (Prov. 25:19). "Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble is like a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint."
- E. Are you willing to face God with your excuses?
  1. Apply to job and boss.
    - a. "Friends came by unexpected." Suppose on way to a wedding or the funeral of a family or friend?
    - b. "We went to the mountains; or lake, or were visiting friends."
    - c. "Children were sick — stayed home to help the wife care for them."
    - d. "I was with you in spirit."
- F. Elders are to feed the flock (Acts 20:28) — "watch for your souls" (Heb. 13:17)
  1. They are to be "ensamples to the flock" (I Peter 5:1-3)
  2. Flock can't be fed if not present.
  3. Early church continued "daily" (Acts 2:46)
  4. When the elders set the "time" for worship — it becomes God's arrangement.
    - a. Illustration: speed laws — set by man — becomes God's arrangement (Rom. 13)
- G. Comes down to attitude — toward God and worship
- H. A car starts missing before it quits.

## XI. ARE OUR PRIORITIES WHERE THEY SHOULD BE?

- A. Must be "faithful" in LIFE and WORSHIP.
- B. God has always expected people to worship Him.
  1. 2500 years – family affair – head of family – Patriarch.
  2. Next 1500 years – Mosaical – written law – details given.
  3. This side of the cross – Christians congregate together to worship.
  4. "Forsaking" means wilfully missing services,
  5. We are to "exhort one another" means to help, encourage each other.

## CONCLUSION:

1. Hopefully, all of us realize the importance of worship.
2. Remember, heaven will be a place where the saved will worship God forever.
3. Let us be sure that we are among that number.

# **YE ARE MEMBERS IN PARTICULAR**

*Bob Carey*

I Corinthians 12:12\_27

1. The back ground of this lesson is the condition of the church at Corinth as revealed in the preceding chapters of the letter to the Corinthians.
2. Without question, the church at Corinth was the most carnal church of the New Testament.
3. Our purpose in this study is to show that every member of the church is important.

## **DISCUSSION:**

### **I. PAUL PRESENTED A MARVELOUS METAPHOR OF THE SPIRITUAL “BODY”, THE CHURCH AND THE HUMAN BODY.**

- A. “For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ.”
  1. The human body is a fitting example of the church, the spiritual body of Christ.
    - a. The human body was created by God. (Gen. 2:7)
    - b. David said, “I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made, Marvelous are Your works, And that my soul knows very well.” (Psa.139:14)
  2. The body is fashioned so as to allow every member to function for the good of the body.
  3. If one member of the body is injured, the whole body suffers.

### **II. THE CHURCH, THE SPIRITUAL BODY, WAS ALSO BUILT BY CHRIST.**

- A. Its head is Christ (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18).
  1. “For as the body is one but has many members.” (I Cor. 12:12a)
  2. But all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. (I Cor. 12:12b)
- B. Just as the members of the physical body work together to the good of the body, so also the spiritual body of Christ.
  1. If one member of the spiritual body cannot, does not, work, the whole body is affected. Thus every member individually is important to the body.

### III. THINGS ALL MEMBERS HAVE IN COMMON.

- A. They are members of the one body.
  - 1. "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body."  
(I Cor. 12:12)
  - 2. "For in fact the body is not one member but many."
- B. When each member is saved, he is added to the body (Acts 2:41, 47).
- C. Each member enhances and makes the body larger and stronger (Rom. 12:5-8; Eph. 4:11-16).
  - 1. Every member is important (Eph. 4:15-16).
  - 2. Therefore, "God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased." (I Cor. 12:18)
  - 3. Thus making use of every talent that each member possesses.

### CONCLUSION:

- 1. Just as every member had to obey the Gospel to be saved, every member has a place in the body.
- 2. Like a healthy human body, the spiritual works together for the good of all of the body.



## HELP OTHERS BEAR THEIR BURDENS

*Paul Curless*

1. Most people's lives revolve around a certain center of activity.
  - a. The faithful Christian's life must be centered around Christ (Matt. 6:33).
  - b. As Solomon of old has said: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man" (Eccl. 12:13).
  - c. Therefore, the Christian life is more than just being taught the Gospel and being baptized and having your name in a "church directory."
2. The Christian Life is a: (Matt. 4:1-11).
  - a. "Life of faith" (Matt. 4:4).
    - 1) Faith is obtained one way (Rom. 10:17).
    - 2) One's soul depends upon one's faith in the unseen.
    - 3) The Psalmist wrote in Psalm 119:105 "Thy word is a Lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."
  - b. "Life Not of This World" (Matt. 4:4).
    - 1) Far to many professed Christians find themselves not only *in* this world but also *of* this world (James 4:4).
    - 2) As a faithful Christian, one must realize:
      - a) He is "In Christ" (Gal. 3:27).
      - b) He is not of this world (Rom. 12:2).
  - c. "Life of Service" (Matt. 4:10).
    - 1) Which brings me to my lesson topic, "HELPING OTHERS BEAR THEIR BURDENS."
    - 2) After all, are we not our brother's keeper (Gen. 4:9)?
3. Let me make one thing perfectly clear, whatever we do in helping others bear their burdens, whether in time of sickness, distress, loneliness, or encouraging weak members in the faith, one must have Bible authority (Col. 3:17) for everything we say and do.
4. As we who are here today already know the Bible is complete (II Tim. 3:16,17); and provides all things pertaining to life and godliness (II Peter 1:3).

### DISCUSSION:

1. **HELPING OTHERS BEAR THEIR BURDENS REQUIRES A LOVING, CARING PERSON.**
  - A. A caring person must put others first.
    1. The Golden Rule concept must be adhered to (Matt. 7:12).

2. "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2).
  - a. In order to fulfill the law of Christ one must help others bear their burdens.
  - b. However, every member of a congregation must share the load and is responsible for himself (Gal. 6:5).
  - c. One who is self-centered and concerned only for himself, cannot be pleasing to God.
3. So often the case today is that we're so busy with our own families and jobs that we do not take the time to be concerned about many within the congregation who are sick, distressed, lonely and even the lukewarm members who need our prayers, visits, and encouragements.
  - a. Let us take some time from our busy schedules and remember to show love, joy and true Christian concern toward those in need of such.
  - b. As Paul told the Christians in Galatia, "As we therefore have opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Gal. 6:10).
  - c. James enlightens us about true Christianity, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world" (James 1:27).
    - 1) I fear that some think this is only the preacher's responsibility or maybe the elders.
    - 2) But in reality, this applies to every individual and congregation.
4. I am sure each of us can think of someone within our own congregation to whom we could bring much joy and happiness if we would take a few minutes to run by and visit. When you take the time to visit someone, you are doing a good deed. Usually your gift of time will be considered priceless and cherished beyond measure.
  - a. Let us not forget, it could be us who are distressed, lonely, or about to give up our faith.
  - b. As James points out, "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted" (Gal. 6:1).
    - 1) As we go about doing good, are we not letting our lights shine (Matt. 5:16)?
    - 2) Who knows, your visit of encouragement just may be the solution in saving a soul (James 5:19-20).

5. Remember, Jesus came to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10). We are to follow in his steps (I Peter 2:21).
  - a. Therefore, each Christian must be concerned and show that concern by our actions (James 1:22).
  - b. As Peter stated in Acts 10:35, “But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness is accepted with him.”
    - 1) Certainly all want to be accepted with him.
    - 2) Remember, a Christian is a seeker and finder of opportunity to do good (Matt. 7:7-8).
    - 3) By showing our love and concern for the sick (both physical and spiritual), distressed, lonely, as well as the weak members, we will be involved in a good work (Rom. 15:1-2).

## **II. HELPING OTHERS BEAR THEIR BURDENS REQUIRES ONE TO HAVE KNOWLEDGE FOR A CURE.**

- A. What is the cure for the distressed, lonely, and of a troubled heart?
  1. In John 14:1-3, we have words of comfort and encouragement extended to the apostles first before Jesus was to be crucified.
  2. It is evident from reading John 14:1 that their hearts were troubled.
    - a. The original meaning of the word “troubled” is to agitate, as water; to terrify; to perplex with doubt.
    - b. Of course, we can see why the apostles were troubled.
      - 1) In chapter thirteen Jesus had announced he would be leaving soon, and this caused bereavement.
      - 2) The traitor had been announced, and the apostles ask, “Lord, is it I?”
    - c. Also, Jesus had informed Peter that he would deny him three times before the cock crowed.
  3. The emotions of bereavement, perplexity, fear, and doubt had agitated their hearts and Jesus gives them comfort.
    - a. Is it not wise to use His word to comfort the lonely, distressed, and down-hearted today?
    - b. John 14:1-3 records three comforting remarks of Jesus.
      - 1) He advises them to have an unwavering faith in God and himself (v.1);
      - 2) To have hope for a future life (v.2);
      - 3) To faithfully wait for his second coming (v.3).
  4. The Bible has much to say about these three things as being a source of comfort for all Christians who are troubled in heart.

- B. All realize that Christians are not exempt from the troubles of life.
1. Job of old said, "Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble" (Job 14:1).
  2. Let us not forget that the Christian's troubles are to be looked upon as trials of our faith (I Peter 1:6-7).
  3. At all times we are faced with the troubles of death, temptation, fear, doubt, disappointment, discouragement and loneliness.
  4. Our trouble may be different from the apostles, but the Lord's advice to them is also a wonderful source of comfort to us.
  5. Helping others bear their burdens requires an unwavering faith on all parties.
    - a. A strong faith is essential to Christian living (Heb. 11:1).
    - b. Faith is necessary to please God (Heb. 11:6).
      - 1) It is the foundation upon which all Christian virtues are built (II Peter 1:5-10)
      - 2) Every step of the child of God's life is by faith (II Cor. 5:7); which comes only one way, "So then faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17).
    - c. The popular teaching in the religious world that faith comes by feelings, emotions, traditions of men, or congregational traditions is just not true.
  6. It also requires trust in God to bring our troubles to Him.
    - a. We must let our requests be made known to God (Phil. 4:6-7).
    - b. "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you" (I Peter 5:7).
- C. A Christian who has doubts that God can help is only compounding his trouble (James 1:5-8).
- D. "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think" (Eph. 3:20).

### III. WE HELP OTHERS BEAR THEIR BURDENS THROUGH REASSURING THEM OF THE HOPE OF LIFE AFTER DEATH IN HEAVEN.

- A. In John 1:14, in speaking of Jesus, the Bible says, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us...."
- B. Also in John 6:38 Jesus says, "For I came down from heaven not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me."
- C. Christ longed to return to heaven. "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again, I leave the world, and go to the Father" (John 16:28). "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou

gavest me to do. And now, O father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was" (John 17:4-5).

- D. We must instill in the minds of the faint-hearted the wonderful hope of heaven, encouraging them to hang-in there and be faithful (Rev. 2:10).
1. "Blessed be the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively (living, ASV) hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you" (I Peter 1:3-4).
  2. Jesus spoke of heaven to instill in his followers a desire to go there, by telling them, "...I go to prepare a place for you..." (John 14:2-3).
  3. It will be a place of eternal comfort and rest (Rev. 21:4).

#### **IV. WE ENCOURAGE THE DISTRESSED, LONELY, AND FAINT-HEARTED BY REMINDING THEM OF THE SECOND COMING.**

- A. Jesus often speaks of his second (final) coming.
1. He will come in the clouds (Acts 1:9-11).
  2. Every eye shall see him (Rev. 1:7).
  3. There will be a general resurrection of the dead – both of the just and the unjust (John 5:28-29).
  4. All will be judged by his word (John 12:48).
  5. Jesus will be the judge (Acts 17:30-31).
  6. The earth and the works therein shall be burned up (II Peter 3:10).
  7. The righteous will go to heaven and the unrighteous or unfaithful will go away into everlasting punishment (Matt. 25:46).
  8. All those written in the book of life will be in heaven (Rev. 20:12-15).
- B. As we visit and encourage other members of the congregation, let us remind them, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (II Peter 3:9).

#### **CONCLUSION:**

1. All Christians should be actively involved in helping others bear their burdens, which would include:
  - a. Loving them as we love ourselves (Matt. 22:39).
  - b. Restoring them with love when they fall (Gal. 6:1).
  - c. Sharing their burdens and joys (Gal. 6:2).
  - d. Doing good for them (Gal. 6:10).

- e. Being available when they are in need (Eph. 4:29).
  - f. Treating them the way you want to be treated (Matt. 7:12).
  - g. Praying for them (I Thess. 5:17).
2. In helping them bear their burdens, one must:
- a. Love God before self (Matt. 22:37).
  - b. Bear the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22), who love one another fervently (I Peter 1:22), and who love not just in word or with the tongue (I John 3:17).
  - c. Before all else and above all else, God wants people who love the truth and precious souls. This will knit everything together (Col. 2:2), give peace (Col. 3:14-15), and will cover a multitude of sins (I Peter 4:8).

# A MEMBER HAS THE RESPONSIBILITY TO HAVE A SENSE OF MUTUALITY

*Robert L. Alexander*

Romans 1:12

1. When we think about the idea of “Mutuality,” we may have various thoughts concerning this concept, especially as it relates to our responsibilities as members in the local church.
  - a. “What does that have to do with me?”
  - b. “What does that have to do with the church?”
  - c. “Why should I care?”
2. Whether we choose to accept it or not, mutuality plays a vital role in...
  - a. The God given responsibilities of each Christian.
  - b. The strength of the Lord’s church universally, but in particular, the local congregation.
3. Why is mutuality such a vital topic?
  - a. Mutuality defined<sup>1</sup>
    - 1) “Mutual” 1. “Feelings or affection directed by each toward the other or the others.” 2. “Have the same feelings one for the other.” 3. “Shared in common.”
    - 2) “Mutualism” 1. “The doctrine or practice of mutual dependence as the condition of individual and social welfare.” (emph. mine-RA) 2. “Mutually beneficial association between different kinds of organisms.”
    - 3) “Mutuality” “The quality or state of being mutual.”
    - 4) The primary focus of this lesson is on the importance of dependability – intrinsically, every aspect of the term plays a crucial role in regards to the area of dependability.
  - b. Mutuality developed (Rom. 1:12, “That is, that I may be comforted together with you by the MUTUAL faith both of you and me.”)
    - 1) Principle
      - a) Paul desired to go to Rome to strengthen the Roman Christians (v.11) (i.e. to impart spiritual gifts)
      - b) Paul desired to go to Rome to be strengthened by these same Christians (v.12) (i.e. to be comforted, but also for them to be comforted by him).
    - 2) Practicality
      - a) The affection of Paul toward the brethren at Rome was strong
      - b) The fact Paul wanted to strengthen and be strengthened shows a responsibility we, as members, have one toward another.

- c) The terminology implies a dependence one is to have toward another.
- 3) Pertinence
  - a) v.6 identifies all who are in Christ are the called out, that is, the church universally.
  - b) v.7 identifies those in Christ at a specific locale – the church at Rome.
  - c) v.12 ties back into the fact that these members of the local congregation had a responsibility to reciprocate the affection and comfort Paul desired for and from them.
- c. Mutuality is sorely lacking among many Christians and congregations today.
  - 1) "Independent" rather than "dependent"
  - 2) Rely upon self, rather than upon one another
  - 3) Some just do not want to do anything
  - 4) Some say they will do something but never do anything.
  - 5) Identity crises (forgetting who we are and what we are to do)
- 4. This lesson will examine the practicality and importance of mutuality by looking at:
  - a. The mutual (common) identifications of being in Christ.
  - b. With this association we shall see...
    - 1) The mutual (common) obligations of our God-given duties as individual members, which will show the importance of our dependability, our dependence upon, association with and affection for each other as we serve God.
    - 2) The mutual (common) connotations of our responsibilities pertaining to the area of dependability.
- 5. This lesson will show that when each member has a sense of mutuality/dependability.
  - a. Each individual will benefit.
  - b. The local congregation will benefit as a whole.
  - c. With stronger local congregations, the Lord's church universally will benefit.

## **DISCUSSION:**

### **I. MUTUAL IDENTIFICATIONS THAT NECESSITATE DEPENDABILITY.**

- A. Members of the local church should have a sense of mutuality because we wear the most regal and noble of names: CHRISTIAN.
  - 1. Christians are IN and ONE IN Christ (cf. Gal. 3:27,28)
  - 2. Christians are members of the church OF Christ (cf. Matt. 16:18; Acts 2:47)
  - 3. Christians are members of local congregations of the church of Christ (cf. Rom. 16:16; Rev. 2 and 3)



4. Christians, though of different races and backgrounds, have a mutual identity.
- B. Members of the local church should have a sense of mutuality because as Christians the Bible describes us as being....
  1. “Fellows” (*metochos* – “Sharing in, partaking, a partner in a work, office” – Thayer)<sup>2</sup>
    - a. Fellow heirs (cf. Eph. 3:6)
    - b. Fellow servants (cf. Rev. 6:11; Col. 1:7; 4:7)
    - c. Fellow soldiers (cf. Phil. 2:25; II Tim. 2:4)
    - d. Fellow citizens (cf. Eph. 2:19)
    - e. Fellow helpers (cf. I John 3:18)
  2. “God’s family” (cf. Gal. 3:26; Acts 2:47; I Tim. 3:15)
    - a. Terms of familial importance (“brethren”, “brothers”, “sisters”)
    - b. Terms of import: we are spiritually related one to another through Christ, as a family we “stick together”, we “rely/depend upon each other.”
  3. “Labourers Together” (*sunergos*) (cf. I Cor. 3:9)
    - a. Thayer, “A companion in work, fellow worker.”
    - b. Strong, “A co-laborer, companion in labor, helper, laborer together with, workfellow.”
  4. “Members one of another” (Rom. 12:5).
- C. Members of the local church should have a sense of mutuality because as Christians we have many commonalities.
  1. Common identity.
  2. Common faith (consider the Greek reading of Romans 1:12: “That is, to be comforted together among you, through the IN ONE ANOTHER faith, both yours and mine.”)
  3. Common love: for God, for the truth, for the church, for the souls of mankind.
  4. Common hope: eternal life (Titus 1:2; I Cor. 15:24)
- D. As members of the local church we should have a sense of mutuality because of who we are!

## **II. MUTUAL OBLIGATIONS THAT NECESSITATE DEPENDABILITY**

- A. As members, individually, we have different roles or functions within the congregation, (cf. the responsibilities of the eldership, preachers, Bible class teachers, etc...)
- B. As members, collectively, we all have mutual obligations to fulfill. Therefore, each individual must show their mutuality/dependability in fulfilling these obligations.
- C. As members, we show our dependability by fulfilling our...

1. Mutual obligation to love one another (cf. Phil. 1:9; 4:1; Rom. 12:10; I John 4:7)
  2. Mutual obligation to build each other up and grow in faith/edified (cf. Rom. 1:12; I Thess. 5:11; Rom. 14:19; Phil. 1:3)
  3. Mutual obligation to exhort one another (Heb. 10:24,25)
  4. Mutual obligation to comfort one another (I Thess. 4:18)
  5. Mutual obligation to stand for the truth (cf. Phil. 1:17; Jude 3; II Tim. 4:2)
  6. Mutual obligation to maintain faithfulness (cf. Eph. 1:1; Col. 1:2)
  7. Mutual obligation to be involved in evangelism (cf. Rom. 1:16; Mark 16:15; I Cor. 3:9)
  8. Mutual obligation to minister one to another (cf. I Peter 4:10)
  9. Mutual obligation to do good one to another (cf. Gal. 6:10; James 1:27)
  10. Mutual obligation to set the proper example before one another (cf. I Peter 2:21; I Tim. 4:12)
  11. Mutual obligation to have the right attitude toward one another
  12. Mutual obligation in helping each another prepare for eternity.
- D. As a member of the local church, we need to take the "dependability litmus test."
1. Can I/WE be depended on to be there when someone is in need?
  2. Can I/WE be depended on to help in furthering the Gospel?
  3. Can I/WE be depended on to help build each other up?
  4. Can I/WE be depended on to be involved in whatever work needs to be carried out?
  5. Can I/WE be depended on to set the proper example before others?
  6. Can I/WE be depended on to have the proper attitudes?

### III. MUTUAL CONNOTATIONS THAT NECESSITATE DEPENDABILITY.

- A. The practicality and essentiality of having a sense of mutuality.
1. Each member is vital to the local church; therefore, mutuality is essential and practical. (cf. I Cor. 12:12-25)
  2. Each member having this sense results in....
    - a. Stronger individual Christians
      - 1) Will lean and depend upon others
      - 2) Will show self to be dependable
    - b. Stronger congregations

- 1) Each member loves and depends upon one another.
  - 2) Each member knows that their role and contribution in the local church is vital.
  - 3) Each member will do his or her part to make sure the congregation remains strong.
- B. The responsibility of having a sense of mutuality.
1. Extends from the eldership, to deacons, to preachers, to Bible class teachers, to everyone else in the congregation.
  2. EVERYONE MUST make the personal application.
    - a. The apostle Paul: an example of personal application as seen in our text
    - b. Comments:
      - 1) Albert Barnes: “He sought the communion of the saints; *he expected to be edified and strengthened; and to be comforted by seeing their strength of faith...*” (Emph. mine, RA)<sup>3</sup>
      - 2) McGarvey:<sup>4</sup> “Because their faiths (personal, RA) were essentially the same, Paul here acknowledges the ABILITY of ALL disciples, even the humblest, to comfort, i.e., to encourage and help him by a strengthening of his faith; because their steadfastness would react on him.”
      - 3) Kenneth S. Weust:<sup>5</sup> “It is a mutual strengthening, brought about by Paul’s ministry among them and their association with him....”
      - 4) F. F. Bruce:<sup>6</sup> “He hopes to RECEIVE help as well as to GIVE it during his purposed visit to Rome.”
    - c. Paul knew his responsibility of being dependable to others; likewise, he expected reciprocation and what better way to show this attitude than by personal demonstration.
- C. Some illustrations of the principle of mutuality.
1. A chain
    - a. A chain is as strong as its links
    - b. A chain with a weak link is easily broken.
    - c. A chain with each link pulled together is strong. Its strength is dependent on the strength of the individual links.
  2. A team
    - a. Sports teams succeed when they work together, depend upon each other
    - b. Sports teams succeed when they each collectively work to reach their mutual goal.
    - c. Sports teams do not succeed when each member does not do their part in order to ensure success.

- d. Sports teams do not succeed when each member is not looking out for the common interests of the team, when they are not dependent upon one another, but rather self.
- 3. A unit of soldiers (cf. Eph. 6:10-17)
  - a. A soldier must follow his marching orders (cf. I Tim. 1:18)
  - b. A unit as a whole must follow these orders in order to be pleasing to the commander.
  - c. A unit, in order to achieve victory, must follow these orders and depend one upon another in order to ensure these are carried out. (cf. II Tim. 2:4)
  - d. A unit, in order to achieve victory must have each individual doing their own part to carry out the battle plan.
  - e. A unit that does not follow its orders or have these characteristics is bound for defeat.
- 4. My/our membership in the local church
  - a. The local church is only as strong as what I/WE, as a member(s), make it.
  - b. If I, as a member of the local church, do not have a sense of mutuality, then what good am I to God? To the other members?
  - c. If, I, as a member of the local church, do not have a sense of mutuality, then I am not fulfilling my responsibilities.
  - d. If WE as members collectively, do not have this sense of mutuality, the local church of which we are a part will not be as God would have it.

### CONCLUSION:

1. Mutuality is an attribute and mind-set certainly manifested throughout the entirety of God's inspired and inerrant word.
2. Mutuality is...
  - a. Vitally important
  - b. Demanded by God
    - 1) God **DEPENDS** upon us to carry out the work He has ordained.
    - 2) Can **YOU/I** be considered dependable in the sight of God? Our brethren?
  - c. Consider...
    - 1) **IF** every member in every congregation had this sense, think of how much stronger the Lord's church and her members would be.
    - 2) **IF** every member in every congregation had this sense, think of how fewer problems would be facing the Lord's church.

- 3) IF every member in every congregation had this sense, think of how much more would be accomplished for the cause of Christ.
- 4) Will WE as members of local congregations accept this God-given responsibility and fulfill it?

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# MUST HAVE AN UNWILLINGNESS TO BE OFFENDED

*Joel Wheeler*

1. The church is both human and divine. It is divine because it is from God. It is human because it is made up of people.
2. As a Christian, we strive to maintain integrity, dignity and unity among the brethren.
3. With any organization or group of people there will often be conflict, disagreement and differences of opinions.
4. Too many times congregations are torn apart, not by false teaching, but that two people cannot get along. Someone had their feelings hurt and everyone is going to pay.
5. Paul wrote to the church at Corinth to correct a problem of division among the members.
  - a. *"Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment"* (I Cor. 1:10).
  - b. There is only one Gospel, therefore there should be no division in the church.
6. Each person is an individual and may have a different idea in matters of opinion. No one should divide the church over opinion.
7. How do you avoid being offended or wearing a chip on your shoulders?

## DISCUSSION:

- I. **REMEMBER OUR OBLIGATION TO THE LORD.**
  - A. The Lord requires that we live in peace. Eph. 4:1-4
    1. It may take a real effort to maintain peace. "Endeavouring" v.4
    2. Our obligation is to the Lord, our Christianity is a reflection on the church.
  - B. Peace and harmony can be maintained with forbearance and long suffering.
    1. Agape love is Longsuffering (I Cor. 13:7)
    2. God is longsuffering to us, therefore we must be long-suffering. (II Peter 3:9)
  - C. Living in peace is a symbol of God's love.
    1. *"Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you"* (II Cor. 13:11)

2. *“Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God” (I John 4:7).*
3. *“Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil” (I Cor. 13:5).*

## **II. REMEMBER HOW TO TREAT OTHERS.**

- A. Many problems are solved early by simple steps.
  1. “Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets” (Matt. 7:12).
  2. Not some things but all things!
  3. Treat others as you want to be treated will prevent minor situations from getting out of control.
- B. Putting others ahead of self will keep problems of hurt feelings from arising.
  1. “Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others” (Phil. 2:3-4).
  2. Christ is our example in humility and lowliness of mind (Phil. 2:5-8).
  3. A haughty spirit often is trouble.

## **III. REMEMBER THE SUFFERING OF THE LORD.**

- A. Jesus suffered and endured great affliction to save us from our sins.
  1. “He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed” (Isa. 53:5).
  2. Jesus never wore his “feelings on his shoulders”, he endured to the end.
- B. If Jesus is our example for suffering, shouldn't we guard against trite offences?
  1. “Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf” (I Peter 4:16).
  2. “For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God” (I Peter 2:20).

## **IV. REMEMBER, WE ARE ALL HUMAN AND ARE SUBJECT TO MAKING MISTAKES.**

- A. Perhaps we have all said or done something that might be taken the wrong way.

1. No one has ever lived a perfect life except Jesus. (I Peter 2:22).
  2. "...Neither was there any deceit found in his mouth" (Isa. 53:9).
- B. Usually when words or actions are taken the wrong way, when the intent was not so, it is blown out of proportion.
1. More conflicts arise from taking statements the wrong way. Accusations are made to the point that brings chaos to the church.
  2. Sometimes innocent people are hurt and they quit the church.
- C. Often people say things they regret and wish they could take the words back.
1. James warned of the dangers that arise from a tongue out of control.
  2. "And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell" (James 3:6).

#### V. REMEMBER TO THINK POSITIVE.

- A. Our state of mind determines our reaction to different situations.
1. Most often, if a person has low self esteem, he reacts in a negative way.
  2. On the other hand, if a person is positive about himself, he reacts in the same way.
- B. The inspired writers evoke us to guard against negative thinking.
1. "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things" (Phil. 4:8).
  2. Some people are "down in the mouth" about everything. They have nothing good to say about anything.
- C. Prayer can help us think positive and pure thoughts.
1. "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God" (Phil. 4:6).
  2. "Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds" (Col. 4:3).
  3. Paul did not get his feelings hurt because he was in jail, he edified others and encouraged them to pray.



- D. With Christ's help, we can overcome hurt feelings – chip on the shoulder attitude.
1. "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:13).
  2. "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2).
  3. We can be a help to others instead of being a hinderance.

**CONCLUSION:**

1. There are many problems the church faces.
2. Satan attacks the church with minor and childish reactions and attitudes.
3. We should never give place to Satan in our lives.

# WE OWE THE CHURCH OUR FAMILIES

*Garland M. Robinson*

1. The church of Christ is the eternal purpose of God.
  - a. It was conceived in the mind of God before he created the universe. cf. I Peter 1:20; Eph. 1:4
  - b. We read of its promise as early as Genesis 3:15.
2. The church is the bride of Christ.
  - a. The Lord is coming to save it. Eph. 5:23
  - b. Those who are members of it will be saved and those who are not members of it will be lost.
  - c. Are YOU a member of the church of Christ?
3. It behooves us to learn about it and concern ourselves with being faithful members of it.
  - a. We each have responsibilities in this regard.
  - b. This entire lectureship concerns itself with helping us prepare ourselves as faithful servants in the Lord's church/kingdom.
  - c. One major area of concern is our home and family.
  - d. We owe not only ourselves, but also our families, to be faithful servants in the Lord's house.

## DISCUSSION:

- I. **FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES SHOULD BE TAUGHT IN THE HOME.** The home is the first school the child attends.
  - A. **Church attendance**
    1. Heb. 10:25, *"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some [is]; but exhorting [one another]: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."*
    2. Children are taught that Bible study and worship is not optional.
      - a. We do not attend service only when its convenient.
      - b. Church services are not canceled because of sports, school plays, vacation, out of town visitors, etc.
      - c. To instill in them this principle from their earliest memories will save a lot of heartache when they get older.
    3. Attendance at Gospel meetings and lectureships is a part of church attendance.
    4. The church needs families it can count on and don't have their names constantly on the visitation list.
  - B. **Bible study**
    1. Bible study is vital! II Tim. 2:15
    2. The Bible is the book from which we will be judged. John 12:48

3. Studying for Bible lessons is a must.
  - a. See that children get their lessons.
  - b. Be prepared. Participate. Ask questions.
  - c. Memorize, drill, talk about the lesson and the principle involved.
  - d. Instill in everyone the desire to know their personal responsibility in obeying the Lord's will.

**C. Love for God and his Word**

1. Speak often of spiritual things – holy things.  
*Malachi 3:16, "Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another..."*
2. Speak of how much we love the Lord and doing his will.  
*Psa. 119:97, "O how love I thy law! it [is] my meditation all the day."*  
*Psa. 119:113, "I hate [vain] thoughts: but thy law do I love."*  
*Psa. 1:1-2, "Blessed [is] the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight [is] in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night."*  
*Luke 10:27, Jesus said, "...Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself."*

3. It is a joy and delight to serve God!

**D. The importance of spiritual things**

1. The emphasis should not be on recreation, but salvation!
  - a. There is a place for recreation that is uplifting and invigorating to the mind and body. However, the emphasis should not be placed here.  
*I Tim. 4:8, "For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things..."*
  - b. Children should be taught there's more to life than enjoying yourself and finally going to the grave.
2. We should instill in each member of the family that loving the Lord, his Way, his Truth and doing His Will is the most important thing in life.  
*Matt. 6:33, "seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness"*  
*Matt. 13:44-46, "...the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field. <sup>45</sup>Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: <sup>46</sup>Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it."*

### E. Morally pure and upright lives

1. Living for the Lord requires holy living – righteous lives.
 

Luke 9:23, *"And he said to [them] all, If any [man] will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me."*

Titus 2:11-12, *"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world."*

Acts 24:25, *"And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee."*

Rom. 6:12, *"Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof."*
2. It matters not what others are doing nor how they live. We teach and show that our family lives unto God.
3. What we do for fun every day and every night is being able to get up in the morning and not be ashamed of what we did the night before.
  - a. We remember where we were and what we did and we're not ashamed nor embarrassed by it.
  - b. We live so as not to be afraid the law will come and take us away.
  - c. We live so as not to be afraid the Lord will come and find us to be wicked and slothful servants.

## II. WE OWE THE CHURCH OUR FAMILIES TO BE INSTRUCTED IN ALL THE WAYS OF THE LORD.

This involves so many things.

### A. Respect

1. For God, Christ, and the church. I Peter 2:17
  - a. Parents, do not criticize or magnify the faults of the elders, deacons, preacher, members of the church.
  - b. If this is done, you will hinder and lessen their zeal to become Christians and zealous workers in the church.
2. For adults and the aged. II Kings 2:23-24; Prov. 16:31
3. For parents. Eph. 6:2
  - a. If they are not taught to respect them when they are growing up, they will tend to disrespect them in latter life.
  - b. Mark 7:10-13
4. For authority: of their parents, of the law, teachers (both in secular school and Bible school). Eph. 6:2; I Peter 2:13-16
5. For the rights of others, their wishes, their property.

- a. Unselfishness and thoughtfulness (even in small matters) should be both taught and practiced by all.
- b. Self-denial is taught by Jesus. Rom. 15:3; Luke 9:23

**B. Responsibility**

1. Children must be taught that all must give an account unto God Rom. 14:12. Accountability implies responsibility.
2. They must be taught responsibility around the home. Girls to cook, clean house, sew. Boys to clean up, fix.
  - a. An old saying: “All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy.” We may well turn it around and say: “All play and no work makes Jack a lazy and irresponsible boy.”
  - b. One judge said he gave the “thimble test” to those young women who came to him seeking a divorce and many of them did not know what a thimble was.
  - c. No wonder so many marriages fail. Boys and girls grow up in body, but not in how to assume the responsibilities of life and home-making.

**C. Humility**

1. This is a vital principle for Christians.
2. It is essential to success in this life as well as in the next.
3. James 4:10, *“Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.”*  
Prov. 29:23, *“A man’s pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit.”*

**D. The choice of a marriage partner**

1. To avoid all the problems discussed thus far, this principle must be taught.
2. Marry someone like-minded. Marry a Christian (not one in name only, but in truth).  
II Cor. 6:14, *“Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present [us] with you.”*
3. Teach our sons and daughters to find a mate that will help them go to heaven, not hinder them from going to heaven.
  - a. Choose someone you can **DEPEND** on — you can **TRUST**.
    - 1) They will be there when the chips are down.
    - 2) If all the world goes wrong and everyone turns against you, you can always go home to someone that cares, someone upon whom you can depend, someone you know will stand up for you and that you can lean on and support you in doing right.
  - b. Choose someone that will help you go to heaven, not discourage you from going to heaven.

**CONCLUSION:**

1. We owe it to the Lord, ourselves, our family, and the church to be faithful servants of the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. This takes commitment and determination to see it through.
3. What a joy it will be when someday we'll hear the Lord say, "well done thou good and faithful servant."

# **YOUNGER RESPECT THE OLDER AND THE OLDER TEACH THE YOUNGER**

*Melvin Sapp*

1. Every generation has had to deal with the complexities of a “generation gap.”
2. The younger sees the older generation as old-fashioned, out-dated, inflexible and grouchy.
3. The older see the younger as irresponsible, lazy, rebellious and resistant to instruction.
4. The Bible bridges that gap and teaches each their responsibility to the other.

## **DISCUSSION:**

### **I. THE YOUNGER PEOPLE ARE TO RESPECT THE OLDER PEOPLE.**

- A. God requires the younger to respect the older (Lev. 19:32).
  1. It takes wisdom to advance from youth to old age (Prov. 20:29).
  2. Vices like drugs, violence, guns, and STDs, make reaching old age a challenge.
  3. Proper training will drive young people to respect older people (I Tim. 5:1-2).
- B. The older deserves respect because of age and experience (Prov. 16:31).
  1. Being older does not always mean wiser, but generally (Job. 32:1-12).
  2. It is foolish for young people to mock older people (II Kings 2:19-24).
  3. Be respectful even if you don't agree with those who are older.
- C. The younger should yield to the older because of maturity and responsibility.
  1. Elihu waited for the older men to speak before he spoke (Job 12:1-12).
  2. Children are to obey their parents to live long (Eph. 6:1-3; Prov. 23:22).
    - a. Yield to your parents if their advice is different from your opinion.
    - b. They care for you and have your best interest at heart.
- D. There are serious consequences for disrespecting the wisdom of older people.

1. Rehoboam foolishly rejected the counsel of the older men (I Kings 12:1-15).
  - a. The eyes of experience are better than pride of youth.
  - b. Seeking to prove the established authority wrong often leads to rebellion.
  - c. Satan uses the "generation gap" to convince young people to rebellion to their own destruction.
2. There should be a "bridge" between the young and the old, not a "gap" (I Pet. 3:8).

## II. THE OLDER PEOPLE ARE TO TEACH THE YOUNGER PEOPLE.

- A. The best way to teach young people is by example (Titus 2:3-5).
  1. Older women are to manifest behavior from which the younger ones can learn.
  2. Older women are to use hands-on methods instead of criticism.
- B. Do not manifest a negative, pessimistic attitude toward young people (Psa. 71:17-18).
  1. "This generation is the worst ever!"
  2. "All young people are lazy, irresponsible, rebellious and ignorant!"
  3. "The church will be in bad shape in the hands of this generation."
- C. Older people need to remember their formative years (I Pet. 4:3-4).
  1. Despite our mistakes, we turned out all right.
  2. Our generation saw war, heroin, LSD, hippies, music revolution and other cultural shocking fades.
- D. Do not be afraid to try new methods that were unavailable when we were young (Mark 16:15-16).
  1. Learn about the Internet, CDs, MP3s, IPODs, Power-Point and lively new songs.
- E. Teach by precept and in everyday situations (Titus 2:1-2; Psa. 78:1-8).
  1. Teach about the One True God (Acts 17:24-26).
  2. Teach about Sin and Salvation (Rom. 6:17-18).
  3. Teach about personal responsibility (Gal. 6:7-8; Matt. 11:28-30).

## CONCLUSION:

1. Despite the differences between the young and the old, we are obligated one to another.
2. Let us not allow Satan to separate us based on cultural differences, but let us unite on the Gospel!



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