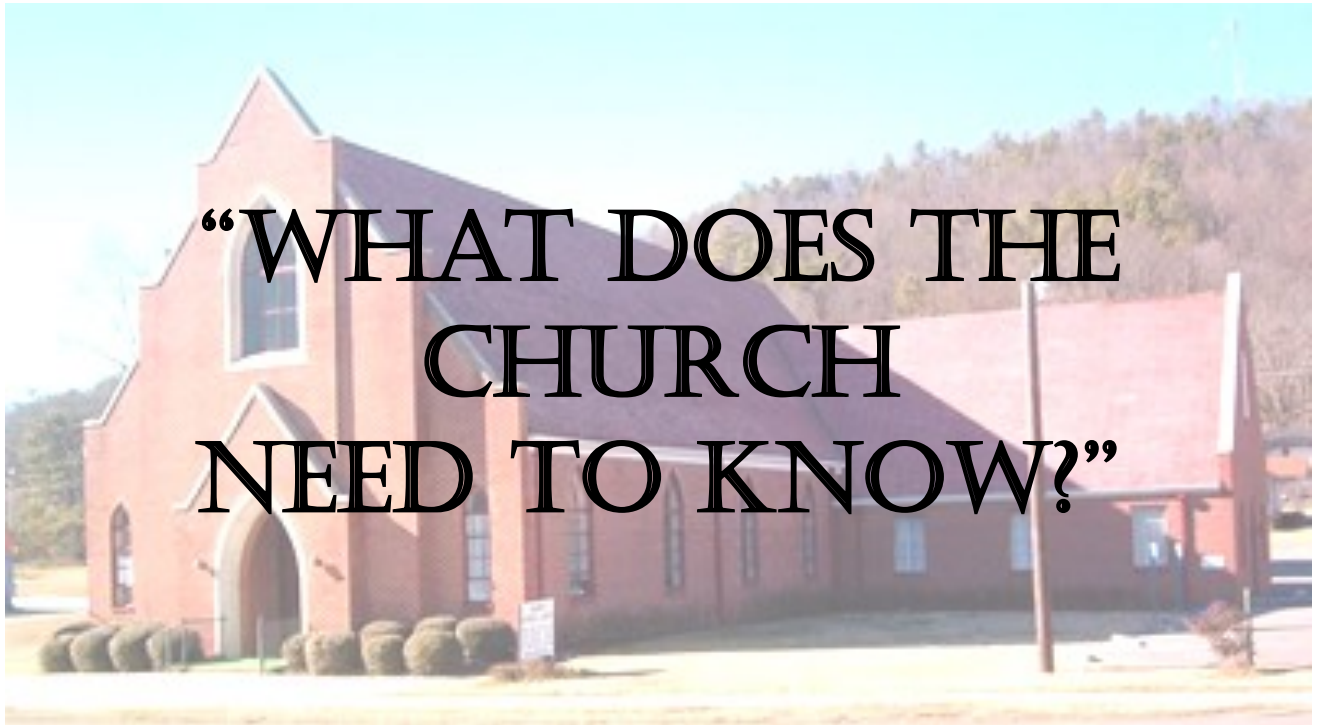


FIRST ANNUAL
SUMMER SERIES



ONEONTA CHURCH OF CHRIST

ONEONTA, ALABAMA

WEDNESDAY NIGHTS IN
JUNE, JULY, AND AUGUST



Oneonta Church of Christ

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Welcome to the first annual Summer Series hosted by the Oneonta Church of Christ. We truly hope that it will be a time of education, edification, and encouragement. We will hopefully be starting a tradition that will continue to be a blessing for the Lord's church for many years to come.

The theme of this year's lecture is very timely. "What Does The Church Need To Know?" This theme covers a variety of topics with practical lessons that can readily be applied to our daily lives as Christians.

We extend our sincere thanks to all who have had a part in making the Summer Series possible—David Bradford, Charles Hathorn, Lee Lewis and Mel Wade (our elders here at Oneonta), the preachers who have come to proclaim the pure gospel of Christ, Tim Hale who will be making the lessons available on our website, all the men who led singing, those who cleaned and prepared the building and hosted our speakers for a meal.

May God bless you in your efforts and we hope that this book will aid you in our service to our King.

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Lee Lewis, Mel Wade

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Table of Contents

<u>Title</u>	<u>Page</u>
Babes in Christ - David Courington	2
Worldliness - Tony Edwards	5
Husbands and Fathers - Bud Watson	9
Family Relationships - Kevin Smith	10
Effective Evangelism - Brandon Pressnell	15
Grief Recovery - Lonnie Jones	18
Restoring The Erring - Cliff Goodwin	20
Building Up the Church - Mike Whisenant	24
How to Live - Waymon Swain	27
Fellowship - Robert Alexander	30
Stewardship - Ken Tyler	34
Teens/Youth - Daniel Courington	35
False Doctrine - Jerry Manasco	39

**What the Church Needs to Know About
Babes in Christ
Involvement**
David Courington
Sylvan Springs Church of Christ

There are two kinds of babes in Christ. The first would be those who have recently obeyed the Gospel. Like any baby they need proper spiritual food, protection, much teaching and lots of care. There are also other babes that should have grown but have not. Paul identified the brethren at Corinth as babies in 1 Cor 3:1-12. They had not grown to spiritual maturity as they should. Our personal goal should be to grow to spiritual maturity.

Like little babies, babes in Christ are vulnerable. Do you remember when you were a small child how your parents warned you about simple things, “Don’t touch the stove, don’t get out in the road, don’t drink poison.” Hopefully you know better now! Solomon compared himself to a little child saying to God, “... You have made Your servant king instead of my father David, but I *am* a little child; I do not know *how* to go out or come in.” (1 Kings 3:7) This is how much many babes in Christ know. We should assume that they know nothing and need all kinds of help. What do they need?

I. Babes Need the Right Environment.

A. They need an environment conducive to growth. Young plants need light- not too little or too much; water- not too little or too much; the right temperature- not too hot or too cold. Likewise young Christians need a good nurturing, caring, environment where they can grow. Usually they know little, can do little, and are not going to really fit in with those church members who are mature. So right to start let me say we need to be patient. Love is required. Let’s remember what it involves, “Love suffers long *and* is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; ⁵ does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; ⁶ does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; ⁷ bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. (1 Cor 13:4-7)

II. Babes Need Exhortation.

A. Paul said, “Preach the word! Be ready in season *and* out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. ³ For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, *because* they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; ⁴ and they will turn *their* ears away from the truth,

and be turned aside to fables. (2 Tim 4:2-4) The obvious need is for teaching. Particularly exhortation is needed. In this text the word translated exhort is “parakaleo.” It is elsewhere translated “comfort” and Strong says it means to “call aside.”

- B. New Christians often need to be called aside and exhorted. A great example of this is found in Acts 18: 24-26, “Now a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man *and* mighty in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus. ²⁵ This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things of the Lord, though he knew only the baptism of John. ²⁶ So he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.”

III. Babes Need Good Examples

- A. All of us learn better by example than any other way. I have been trying to learn how to carve wood for the last year or so. I have bought several books written by some master woodcarvers. They are good, but I haven’t learned 10% as much from them as from joining Tannehill Woodcarvers and taking a couple of classes where the teachers have actually taken knives and gouges and a piece of wood and shown me how it is done.
- B. Babes need a mentor, someone to show them how it is done. Can and will you be a mentor for a babe in Christ?
The ultimate example is Jesus Christ. Peter wrote, “ For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: ²² *Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth*”;²³ who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed *Himself* to Him who judges righteously; ²⁴ who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness--by whose stripes you were healed. ²⁵ For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.” (1 Peter 2:21-25)
- C. Elders must be good examples, “The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: ² Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; ³ nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.” (1 Peter 5:1-3).
- D. Every member should strive to set the example for babes in Christ. Notice the specific instruction in Titus 2:1-15. The “sound doctrine” (vs. 1) is to

be modeled by every member, older men and women, young women and young men. What kind of a model are you?

IV. **Babes Need Encouragement.**

- A. Do you ever get discouraged? Let's note Heb. 12:1-3 "Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares *us*, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ² looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. ³ For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls." So many are lost because they sin, get tired of trying, and see few good results of their efforts. They need encouragement.
- B. We need to encourage our babes and mature saints as well. Paul said, "Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all." (1 Thess 5:14) Listen to Heb. 10:23-25, "Let us hold fast the confession of *our* hope without wavering, for He who promised *is* faithful. ²⁴ And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, ²⁵ not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as *is* the manner of some, but exhorting *one another*, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching."

V. **Babes Need High Expectations.**

- A. Low performing schools are often the result of low expectations. Expect little and you will get little. Brethren, the church needs to raise the bar of expectation. We can't have strong churches, producing strong Christians and setting a great example for the community, with low expectations. We are the light of the world. If I am going to read, don't give me a 20 watt bulb, give me 100 watts. The goal is for every child of God to reach maturity, to pull his weight, to do his part. Have you ever rowed a boat with 3 people in it with one paddle?
- B. I recently spoke with a young lady who came forward on a Wednesday night. Her husband is not a faithful Christian. She has three young boys and I told her I was going to pray for her and that I knew it was hard to be spiritually strong when you only had one person to pull the whole load. I wish you could have seen her reaction. I have seen that same tired, worried look on the face of preachers and elders who thought they were pulling the whole load. It will not work. Listen carefully to this scripture, "We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other (2 Thess 1:3). Show you love and show the way by being an active, faithful child of God.

WHAT THE CHURCH NEEDS TO KNOW ABOUT WORLDLINESS - HOW TO DEAL WITH IT

Tony Edwards

Jefferson Christian Academy

The subject of worldliness is very important, especially considering the destruction wrought in the world and in the church. There have been so many people with much more wisdom who not only have written on this subject but have also lived among it. To their work and lives we are grateful. If I may, I would like to try to add my own observations on this subject and try to offer some practical wisdom from my own life about what the church needs to know about worldliness.

[The church needs to know...]

I. What is Worldliness

- A. Merriam Webster says worldliness means...
 - 1. Relating to, or devoted to this world and its pursuits rather than to religion or spiritual affairs.
 - 2. The quality of being worldly; a predominant passion for obtaining the good things of this life; covetousness; addictedness to gain and temporal enjoyments; worldly-mindedness.
- B. This pretty much sums up everything about worldliness and it fits hand-in-hand with the Biblical definition.
- C. Many Bible writers speak of worldliness in one form or another but in my opinion John seems to give a more precise overview of everything involved in worldliness.
 - 1. 1 John 2:14-16
 - 2. From John's words, we can sum up worldliness as being...
 - a) Our devotion to...
 - 1) Things in this world that please our fleshly desires.
 - 2) Things that we see and spend all of our life to get at the expense of our devotion to God.
 - 3) Our own self-proclaim worthiness.

II. The Reality of Worldliness

- A. We are all aware of worldliness beyond the borders of the church.
- B. However, worldliness is also present in the church and sometimes to a higher degree.
- C. This should not take us by surprise—it has always been this way.
- D. Paul was aware of many forms of worldliness being present in the early church.
 - 1. 1 Corinthians 5:1-6
 - a) Paul heard about types of worldliness that was not even heard of among non-Christians.
 - 2. Colossians 3:5-8
 - a) Paul admonishes Christian to put to death these things.

- b) They could not have put these things to death unless they expressed characteristics of these things in their lives.
- E. Even today worldliness is a reality because humanity is a reality.
- F. As much as we hate to admit it sometimes, people are not nor will ever be perfect.
 - 1. Still, we cannot use this as an excuse not to grow in Christ.
 - a) “For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.” (Galatians 5:13)
- G. And you know what, if people were perfect they definitely would not need preachers and Bible class teachers trying to help them become better servants of God.
- H. Notice this statement of Jesus: “When Jesus heard that, He said to them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. But go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy and not sacrifice. For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.’” (Matthew 9:12-13)
 - 1. Embedded in this statement is the embodiment of Christianity:
 - a) Jesus came to heal sick people—sinners.
 - b) Since all have sinned, Jesus came to heal ALL. (Romans 3:23)
 - c) Therefore, Christianity exists for the purpose of presenting the Great Physician Jesus to people (sinners, non-Christians) that NEED healing and to people (Christians) whose previous healing needs SUSTAINING.
- I. All of us at some point and time will fall prey to worldliness in some shape, form, or fashion—it is inevitable.
 - 1.1 John 1:7
 - 2. John states that the condition for a continual cleansing through the blood of Christ happens ONLY if we are walking in the light.
 - 3. Question. If we are walking in the light, why would we need cleansing anyway?
 - 4. The answer is simple. Sin or worldliness is unavoidable.
- J. Worldliness is real and God gives us instruction against worldliness.

III. **Instruction Pertaining to Worldliness**

- A. 1 John 2:14-16
 - 1. DO NOT LOVE IT!
 - 2. This is a simple but powerful command.
 - 3. You see our view of certain things determines our devotion to those things.
 - 4. I often tell a story about this mustang I once owned. To say the least, I thought it was the sharpest car on earth. After buying the car I found myself taking care of it more than the other two cars we already owned. Why did that happen? Well, I placed a HIGH VALUE on that car. I loved it

more than the other two which caused my devotion to it to increase greatly. Because of this devotion to the mustang, the other two cars were neglected.

5. There is no difference in religion. What we love will be what we are devoted to the most.
6. If we place more VALUE on pleasing our flesh above pleasing God, then the result will be that we will find a way to please our flesh, even if it means sinning and neglecting the will of God.
7. However, if we place more VALUE on pleasing God, then the result will be that we will spend more time finding ways to put God first.
8. It is simple mathematics. When God is involved in the equation you cannot love Him and something else the same. (Matthew 6:24)
9. Our love for worldly things should be replaced by the love we should have for God.
 - a) "And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This is the first commandment." (Mark 12:30)

IV. How to Deal with Worldliness

- A. First, we cannot shrug our shoulders at worldliness and act like it does not matter.
 1. This evil vice (worldliness) can destroy a local congregation.
 2. Paul condemned the church at Corinth because they shrug their shoulders at worldliness.
 - a) 1 Corinthians 1:2
 3. When addressing the church at Ephesus Jesus commended them for not looking over evil.
 - a) Revelation 1:1-2
- B. Secondly, we must realize that not all worldly people are inherently evil, they just need help.
 1. Face it, some people, even after being a Christian for many years are still babes in Christ.
 2. This definitely does not excuse their actions, but it does show their level of spiritual maturity.
 3. Paul told the church at Corinth that he had to feed them with milk because they were so worldly minded. (1 Corinthians 3:1-2)
 4. Peter was speaking to an audience that was full of malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all types of evil speaking.
 - a) His admonition to them was to "Desire the pure milk of the word, so that you can grow."
 5. Yes, we cannot overlook and put up with sin.
 6. But we also cannot look at people who make mistakes as being a lost cause and treat them as the devil incarnate.

7. Even people that may have to be withdrawn from, God tells us not to think of them as an enemy but rather admonish them as a brother. (2 Thessalonians 3:15)
- a) Why does God say this?
 - b) Because our purpose is to SUSTAIN the healing of the sick through Jesus and revive once again the body part that has become defective and not to cut it off. (1 Corinthians 1:5; 12:20-24)
 - c) Sometimes we can be successful at doing this and sometimes people go so far away from God that there is nothing left that we can do.
 - d) From that point we have to shake the dust off our feet, as hard as it may be, and move on with much sadness.

V. Conclusion

- A. Worldliness is at odds with God because it is being devoted to and loving something more than we love God.
- B. Worldliness is real. It affects the world we live in but also the church wherein we serve God almighty.
- C. God's answer to worldliness is simply-- love Me more.
- D. Whenever worldliness is present we cannot overlook it, but we must deal with it in a way that brings healing if at all possible.
- E. As I close this lesson, I'm left to ponder ALL the different situations that have arisen and still continue to arise that plague the body of Christ and it leaves me to say, "God, thank you for your Son Jesus, the Great Physician who can do all of the time what we cannot do some of the time."

**What the Church Needs to Know about
Husbands and Fathers
Bud Watson**

Introduction

- A. A disclaimer of expertise
- B. Essential ---self control

I. The Christian home

- A. Christ's superior position in the Church
- B. The father's role at home
- C. The role of children
- D. God's reasons

II. Father to child---the dynamics

- A. How to handle children
- B. Potential problem areas
- C. The mouth

III. Restraining Dad's ambitions

IV. Effective discipline

- A. Consistency
- B. Sufficiency
- C. Energy
- D. Philosophy

V. Children's needs

- A. Boundaries
- B. Parental involvement
- C. The church

***What Does The Church Need To Know About
Family Relationships***
Kevin Smith
Saks Church of Christ

Introduction:

- Someone has said that there's no place like home if you don't have the money to go out.
- Hopefully, our homes are a blessing wherein we are nurtured and fulfilled.
- Since the dawn of time, God has intended for the family and the home to be for our good.
- Yet, many of our moral and social ills can be attributed to a breakdown in the home.
- Healthy homes produce healthy citizens, and unhealthy homes produce unhealthy and dysfunctional children who grow into adults. Therefore, this topic of the family is of utmost importance to the future of the church.

I. The Family, As God Would Have It, Is Under Attack

A. By School, Religion and Society

1. School: *"The demand that marriage should entail sexual monogamy may have made sense in an era when contraception was largely impossible and questions of lineage were of considerable moment."* (Sociology: Concepts & Characteristics)
2. Religion: *"Even the most hard-and-fast moralists of our day have surely come to see that the sex relationship has too many sacred potentialities to be locked up in any human institution."* (An Open End To Christian Morals)
3. Society: The Homosexual Movement. Homosexual marriages being recognized and homosexual couples being allowed to adopt children.

B. By The Influence Of Television

1. Is there any single thing that has more influence upon us and leaves more of an imprint on our values than TV?
2. If you believe that TV does not shape our society then you are fooling yourself. And whatever shapes society also has a remarkable influence on our homes.
3. How many Christian young people are being raised by television?

4. I do not believe that it is my job to tell you what you should or should not watch. I would probably lose any credibility that I might have if I did that. But, I do believe that I would not be worth my salt if I did not tell you that you will have to one day give an account of what you watch and what you allow your children to watch.
5. Jeremiah 8: 12; *“Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore shall they fall among them that fall: in the time of their visitation they shall be cast down, saith the LORD.”*
 - a. As a society there is not much that causes us to blush anymore.
 - b. What about in our homes? Have you and yours become desensitized to evil?
6. Let me encourage you to supervise what is watched on the television in your home or resign yourself to having your children adopt the values it teaches in regard to sexuality, marriage, love, and God.
 - a. How many television programs exhibit a family as God would have it? I can’t think of any.
 - b. How many television programs have a homosexual individual or couple among its main characters? There are many.

C. By Latch Key Kids or Absentee Parents

1. Who is shaping the values of our children?
2. Ephesians 6: 4 and I Timothy 5: 14 places the responsibility upon parents to train and discipline their children.
3. Without sounding too harsh; How can this responsibility be met when parents hardly ever see their children?
4. I guess we could word this point another way: The home is under attack by the pursuit of certain lifestyles and standards of living.
5. Regardless of the time restraints that may exist or the schedules that may conflict, always make time to spend together. It will be worth the effort.

D. By Divorce

1. *“Current divorce statistics in America is estimated at 50%. This data is not accurately correct, however, it is reasonably close to actual. The*

Americans for Divorce Reform estimates that 'Probably, 40 or possibly even 50 percent of marriages will end in divorce if current trends continue', which is actually a projection." (www.divorcestatistics.org)

2. Alabama has the 3rd highest divorce rate among men and the 4th highest among women in the country.
3. "Till death do us part" has no meaning to a vast majority of people, even Christians.
4. Someone has said that; "*divorce is a form of martial suicide, and like all suicides it is a permanent mistake in reaction to a temporary problem.*"
5. Is Matthew 19: 6 still God's word? "*...What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.*"

E. By A Lack Of Sound Teaching

1. When it comes to the home and responsibilities of husbands and wives and fathers and mothers, I am afraid that we may be guilty of raising a generation of biblically illiterate children.
2. Because of all of the things that we have talked about thus far, children have difficulty knowing what God's intentions are for the home and family relationships.
3. It is not just the fault of the church. While Bible class is intended to be a supplement to the teaching that children get at home, it has become for many, the sole instruction.

II. **Prepare To Battle For The Family**

A. By Being Committed

1. Ephesians 5: 31; "*For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.*"
2. We use this verse when it comes to marriages but really it teaches an essential lesson in regard to what the church needs to know about family relationships.
3. This verse teaches commitment and dedication...something that for the most part is missing in the home today.

4. For families to overcome the attacks against the home and to be what God intends them to be they must be dedicated to one another and to the will of God.

B. By Displaying Love and Submission

1. Ephesians 5: 21-25; *“Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;”*
2. Submission is not a just a woman thing...it is a Christian thing.
3. Love and submission are not mutually exclusive but they compliment one another perfectly within the dynamic of the home.
4. To be able to counter the attacks against the home then love and submission must be practiced by each member of the family.

C. By Being Respectful

1. Ephesians 6: 1-4; *“Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.”*
2. These verses really touch on more than children obeying the parents. They touch on respect.
3. Proper respect is going to motivate children to be obedient but also respect is what will motivate parents to raise their children in accordance with God’s will.
4. In the family there must be respect for one another as well as respect for God and for His authority in all matters.

D. By Having Proper Priorities

1. Matthew 10: 37; *“He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.”*

2. Our love for the Lord must come before our love for family.
3. Otherwise we are not worthy to be called His disciples.
4. If we are going to be able to overcome the attacks against our family then we must put Jesus above all else - Matthew 6: 33.

Conclusion:

- The American family is in danger. It is being attacked from without and within.
- But, the attacks need not be fatal. The antidote is a healthy dose of commitment to God's word.
- What all families need is to love one another and God; practice consistency which provides security in standards and morals; be the kind of example that instills deep faith in God; be the kind of family that places God first in all of its decisions.

What the Church Needs to Know About Effective Evangelism

Brandon Pressnell
Madison Church of Christ

INTRODUCTION:

Fear is the great immobilizer. Fear causes us to magnify our personal weaknesses. Fear causes us to minimize our abilities and retire our capabilities. Fear creates insecurity. Fear generates doubt. Fear replaces responsibility. Fear in heavy doses overcomes courage. Fear paralyzes. Fear causes us to question. Fear causes us to lose faith. Fear produces silence.

When it comes to evangelism, we have allowed fear to dominate our greater responsibility to share God's message. Fear of not knowing enough. Fear of being "holier than thou." Fear of offending someone. Fear of losing friendships. Fear of what others might think. These fears have overshadowed the concern we should have for those outside of Christ. Our love for those who are lost must be the driving force of why we do what we do. Consider the words of Paul to Timothy in 2 Tim 1:7-14.

- God has not given us to fear but to **POWER, LOVE, DISCIPLINE**
- We should have confidence because **HE** has saved **US** through Christ
- Jesus has brought life and immortality through His resurrection
- We have this treasure in our hearts
- We must not be ashamed of this testimony

WHY HAVE WE ALLOWED FEAR TO KEEP US FROM OUR PURPOSE?

Fear should actually be the motivator for our love for others – 2 Cor. 5:10-21
Our fear in God should give us boldness to share the gospel – Hebrews 12

THE CHURCH NEEDS TO KNOW THAT . . .

I. Evangelism begins at home

- A. Deuteronomy 6:1-9; Psalm 78:1-8; Eph. 6:1-4
- B. "Jesus cut off a man's ear, Daddy" illustration
- C. Keep our spiritual eyes open to see opportunities.
- D. Being comfortable at home as a spiritual leader will open up more doors in the world.

II. Evangelism is "Good News"

- A. 1 Corinthians 15
 1. Christ died for **OUR** sins
 - a. We've all sinned (Rom 3:23)
 - b. The penalty for our sins is death (Rom 6:23; Isaiah 59:2)
 2. Christ was raised from the dead
 3. People saw Him alive – proof of the resurrection
 4. Since He is the first, we will be raised in like-manner
 5. This is **GREAT NEWS!!!**
- B. "Roll Tide" commercial illustration of speaking to strangers

1. Good news is to be shared, not concealed – 1 Cor. 1:18-24; Matt 13
 - a. The good news is powerful
 - b. Every person will choose whether or not to receive it.
 - c. The Sower sowed seed in every field, prepared or not
2. Good news is not threatening – Romans 1:16

III. Evangelism is who you are, not something you do.

- A. Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16
- B. The insinuation is this is a part of you as you go about your journeys
- C. Evangelism comes in the natural conversation of who you are and what God has done for you.
- D. Consider the stories of Paul, Peter, Legion, Zaccheus, others
 1. Christ had an impact on all of them
 2. The change he made in each of them became their story to share
 3. How has your relationship to God through Christ changed your focus?
 4. Each person has a story to tell – My Story, Your Story, God’s Story
 5. Strong convictions coupled with courage inspire others! 1 Peter 3:15

IV. Evangelism can seem a little like warfare if ALL you carry in your holster is an Axe and Two 38’s.

- A. Acts chapter 2 is essential, but is not the starting point for evangelism.
 1. Too often we try to “gel” our teaching into small nuggets to simplify things for both us and the person we are trying to reach.
 2. This approach can limit our effectiveness in reaching hearts
 3. To be baptized into Christ, people must understand Christ
 4. To be willing to repent, people must first be shown how sin impacts their relationship to God.
 5. If we are not careful, our studies with others can appear as though we are picking a fight, dueling with our best argument, putting people on their heels.
 6. Defensive people often do not make for people with open hearts.
- B. Acts 2 is a “response” text
- C. The story of Christ must be shared and understood before the response seen in Acts 2 makes proper application.
 1. Jesus’ mission – to fulfill the law and the prophets, save the world from sin
 2. Jesus’ message-
 - a. Love the Lord with all your heart, soul, mind, strength
 - b. Love your neighbor as yourself
 - c. On these two things hang all the law and prophets
 3. Jesus lived a perfect life for us to see God in the flesh
 4. Because of their stubbornness and misunderstandings, the Jews accused Jesus of blasphemy and had him tried and put to death
 5. All of this was to complete Jesus’ mission
 6. Jesus was crucified, buried, and raised from the dead, giving us confirmation that He was the Son of God
- D. The Jews had to be made aware of their sins – Acts 2

- 1 The day of Pentecost was a perfect setting for Peter to deliver the first “gospel” sermon
2. God poured out the Holy Spirit to confirm His presence among them
2. Peter’s message convicted them of their wrong doing and they asked what could be done to remove their guilt and to be saved.
- E. A person with a heart “pricked” by this message will ask the same question today, “What should I do?”
- E. The response today is still as simple as Peter’s statement then (v.38). . .
“Repent and be baptized for the forgiveness of sins”

V. CONCLUSION

- A. Evangelism begins internally
 1. Our own hearts must be touched by what God has done for us
 2. To be effective, we must see the urgency in delivering the Good News
 3. We must be courageous to allow God to work through us
 4. We must seek to please God rather than man.
- B. Evangelism is who we are, not what we do
 1. Our families must be the fruit of works
 2. When we become comfortable in our own spiritual skin, we can influence others by the way we live.
- D. Evangelism is not arguing for truth, it is truth at work destroying all arguments – 2 Corinthians 10:3-5
- E. Evangelism is our responsibility – Romans 10:13-17
- F. Cast fear aside and be no longer silent. As Jesus promised His own followers, “Lo, I am with you always.”

What The Church Needs To Know About Grief Recovery

Lonnie Jones MS, LPC, NCC

“When life doesn’t turn out like we expect we suffer loss. Humans grieve all losses. The sad part is that society does not always recognize all losses.”

“Grief is an experience rather than a feeling.”
C.S. Lewis “A Grief Observed”

“We must deal with all our losses or we will be confronted with cumulative grief.”

Operational Definitions

Grief: The normal, appropriate emotional response to an experience of a loss. It is unique to the individual experiencing it and there is no timetable for completing it.

Mourning: is the “expression” of grief.

Shadow Grief: Occurs in the weeks just prior to and after the anniversary of loss. Some bereaved persons experience a lethargy, depression and anger similar to their first grief.

Bereavement: Describes the event of the loss and is derived from the Old English word “berafian” meaning to rob or be robbed.

Three Phases of Grief

Intellectual or Shock Phase- Resides in the head

This is a critical 72 hour period. Getting stuck in this phase makes one vulnerable to aftershocks later. In children this can cause a domino effect have children fail to deal with reality. Symptoms include numbness, disbelief, alienation from others. This is nature's way of protecting the griever against pain to severe to handle all at once. Loss is dealt with on a very rational level. The bereaved is able to talk about the death in an almost clinical manner. It is also common to find people using religion as an emotional blanket, as if it is betrayal of faith to mourn for someone who has died. Any hint of sorrow is swept away as nonexistent.

Emotional or Suffering Phase- Resides in the heart

Longest phase. Symptoms include disorganization, pain, tears, riding the emotional roller coaster: anxious, irritable, angry, guilty. Strong emotions such as anger, fear and guilt come into play. The bereaved experiences bouts of uncontrolled weeping. This is a difficult phase for the griever and those around the griever. There is often little or no provocation for the emotional outbursts.

Reconciliation or Recovery Phase- Is in the gut

Carrying on as if nothing happened is a danger signal. There will be a new focus and possibly the start of a project in a new found area. Beginning to rebuild life. If the recovery process is delayed, another problem can set in. Emotional swings slow down.

An emotional scar forms and is no longer painful to touch. The deceased is never forgotten. Focal point in life now shifts. Life begins again with renewed vigor and love.

Warnings Signs of Emotional Aftershocks

Insomnia or excessive sleeping, nightmares, diet changes (+ or -), feeling of numbness and unreality, overwhelming anger, frenetic activity, tendency to take on symptoms or characteristics of the deceased, alcohol or drug abuse, avoidance of speaking of the deceased, stiff or wooden posture, increase in physical symptoms or illness, conversion reaction.

What Can WE do?

Listen. Many people say, "I don't know what to say..." THANK GOD! You aren't supposed to talk you are to listen.

Observe. Watch for signs, symptoms, cues. Recognize that they are hurting, healing, healing slow or still mourning.

Validate. Let them know that we are a safe environment of permissiveness. They are allowed to cry, scream, be sad in our presence. We validate that anything they can feel is okay to feel and express. We want them to do what it take to heal.

Empower. You are going to recover. Recovering does not mean forgetting or never grieving again. There will be moments of grieving and moments of missing the love one for the rest of your life. The crucial difference is that these feeling no longer disrupt the bereaved's life or interfere with their capacity for growth, discovery and joy.

Four Tasks of Grieving

Accept the Reality

Experience and Express the Emotions

Adjust to the new norm

Withdraw all the emotional energy and reinvest it into something else

Final Words:

Once there has been some time it is always important to do an analysis of what we FEEL and test it against what we KNOW.

I Thessalonians 4: 13-14. Do not grieve as those who have no hope.

II Corinthians 4:16-5:5 I used to teach my daughter, "Everything that lives dies---but the bible teaches that everything that dies---LIVES.

WHAT DOES THE CHURCH NEED TO KNOW ABOUT RESTORING THE ERRING

Cliff Goodwin
Ironaton Church of Christ

Introduction:

1. The work of the church not only involves “*getting* folks saved” (evangelism), but also “*keeping* folks saved.” Compare Matthew 28:18-20 and John 21:15-17.
2. Though Calvinism has influenced the minds of many to believe in the “impossibility of apostasy,” the Bible clearly teaches otherwise.
3. When an alien sinner is saved by the gospel of Christ, a precious soul is rescued out of the clutches of Satan. However, man’s great adversary does not give up concerning that individual soul. Instead, “as a roaring lion, [he] walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Pet. 5:8). [**Note:** *Keep in mind that Peter wrote these inspired words to Christians!* Cf. 1 Pet. 1:1-2; 2:9].
4. Satan’s assaults against the saved, and even his occasional success at drawing church members back into the world, cast **no** reflection whatsoever upon the Lord or His power to protect and retain His sheep (cf. John 10:27-30). It is not that Satan is simply wresting them out of the Father’s hand *by sheer force*. Rather, he appeals to the will (volition) of the individual, *persuading* him/her to stray from the Father’s commands, and thus, from the Father’s care. [**Note:** *Jesus stressed the individual responsibility of the sheep in v. 27, namely, their hearing His voice and following Him*].
5. God is more than capable of doing His part to protect and retain His sheep. By God’s grace and power, man is likewise capable of doing his part (cf. Php. 4:13; 1 The. 2:13). However, man must *choose* to do so. Satan seeks to tempt and persuade man to choose otherwise. This is *how* and *why* apostasy is possible (cf. Jas. 1:13-16).
 - ♦ *Satan uses the love of money to tempt and wrongly persuade...*
“But they that are minded to be rich fall into a temptation and a snare and many foolish and hurtful lusts, such as drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil: which some reaching after have been **led astray from the faith**, and have pierced themselves through with many sorrows” (1 Tim. 6:9-10, ASV; emp. mine, CG).
 - ♦ *Satan uses false science to tempt and wrongly persuade...*
“O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane *and* vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called: Which some professing **have erred concerning the faith**. Grace *be* with thee. Amen.” (1 Tim. 6:20-21; emp. mine, CG).
 - ♦ *Satan uses religious error to tempt and wrongly persuade...*
“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane *and* vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; Who **concerning the**

- truth have erred**, saying that the resurrection is past already; and **overthrow the faith of some**” (2 Tim. 2:15-18; emp. mine, CG).
- ♦ *Satan uses fleshly lusts to tempt and wrongly persuade...*
 “For when they speak great swelling *words* of emptiness, **they allure through the lusts of the flesh**, through lewdness, the ones who have actually escaped from those who live in error. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage. For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are **again entangled in them and overcome**, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known *it*, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them” (2 Pet. 2:18-21, NKJV; emp. mine, CG).
6. In light of the foregoing scriptures, can there be any doubt regarding the possibility of apostasy? The apostles Paul and Peter wrote the above by inspiration, and all of these texts were addressed to Christians—folks *already* saved but in need of *keeping* themselves saved!
 7. But what if? What if Satan is successful in wrongly persuading and drawing away a member of Christ’s church? What are the faithful to do? The balance of this present study will address this very matter.

Discussion: *Restoring the erring involves...*

I. ATTITUDE

- A. The Bible clearly teaches the importance and necessity of having the proper attitudes coupled with the proper actions. For example, worship unto God must be in both spirit (proper attitude of heart) and in truth (proper action, cf. John 4:24). Likewise, winning back a fallen brother begins with proper attitudes.
- B. An overall spirit of **love** must prevail (1 Cor. 16:14; 2 The. 1:3; 1 Pet. 4:8).
 1. An apostate soul is a lost soul. That pitiable condition must touch the heart of every spiritually-minded child of God (cf. 2 Cor. 5:10-11a; Heb. 10:31).
 2. Our love for the Lord is directly reflected in our love for His people. If we do not truly love the brethren, then we do not truly love the Lord (1 Jn. 4:20-21).
 3. Great and marvelous deeds might be undertaken and achieved—but without sincere love as the motive—they prove to be useless and void (1 Cor. 13:1-3).
- C. The faithful brother must approach the apostate in **meekness** (Gal. 6:1).
 1. This is a complex and beautiful word in the *koine* Greek language. It denotes an inner strength that is quiet and well-harnessed—never brazen or boisterous.
 2. It also involves an humble gentleness towards others. It is mild and gentle in its dealings.
 3. The would-be soul-winner must approach the apostate in this manner, not “brow-beating” the delinquent into a forced submission, but rather gently entreating the wanderer to come home.
- D. Paul further commanded an attitude of **introspection** (Gal. 6:1).
 1. One considers himself as he approaches and engages the fallen. He is mindful of his own weaknesses and frailties (cf. Matt. 26:41). In this way, haughtiness and condescension are avoided.

2. Today he is saving his brother. Tomorrow his brother might be saving him!

II. ADMONITION

- A. The Greek word often translated “admonish” means “to put in mind; to warn.” Erring members of the church need to be warned of their perilous state and their fearful future (cf. Heb. 10:26-31).
 1. Elders have the responsibility to warn God’s people (1 The. 5:12-13).
 2. Likewise, it is the duty of preachers to warn and admonish (Acts 20:31; Col. 1:28).
 3. In fact, it is the duty of every member to warn their brothers and sisters as needed (Rom. 15:14; 1 The. 5:14).
- B. The “unruly” members mentioned in the previous verse (1 The. 5:14) are “out-of-step” with the Lord and with faithful brethren. They need to be warned—gently but firmly—of their hazardous course. There were many of this ilk in ancient Corinth, but Paul wrote in order to warn them (1 Cor. 4:14).

III. ACTION

- A. There are cases, however, in which all the teaching, encouraging, warning and even praying seem to be unsuccessful—the delinquent refuses to return. When all other corrective measures have been exhausted, the church must withdraw her fellowship from the apostate (cf. Titus 3:10).
- B. There is an example of this action in First Corinthians 5.
 1. Withdrawal of fellowship is a **congregational** undertaking, not an *eldership* or *preacher* undertaking. It is enacted when the church is gathered together (5:4). All faithful members of the church are to honor and enforce the withdrawal.
 2. It is a **social** withdrawal. This fact is indicated by the commands “not to company” (5:9) and “not to eat” (5:11). The offender has already withdrawn himself *spiritually* from the faithful by means of his impenitent sin. The church must now react to his rebellion by means of this prescribed *social* withdrawal (cf. 5:13b).
 3. The withdrawal of fellowship is enacted only on impenitent **members of the church**, not *alien sinners* in the world (5:9-13).
 4. This corrective action is to be done in **love**—both for the soul of the *offender* (5:5) and for the welfare of *the church as a whole* (5:6-7). It is never to be enacted out of motives of malice, spite, vengefulness, etc. (5:8).
- C. More can be learned about this soul-saving action from the Thessalonian epistles.
 1. The **progressive nature** of church discipline is clearly seen from these two epistles. When Paul penned First Thessalonians, he commanded that the “unruly” be warned (1 The. 5:14). When he later wrote Second Thessalonians, the time had come that the “disorderly” (same Greek word as “unruly” in the previous epistle) be further disciplined by the withdrawal of the church’s fellowship (2 The. 3:6).
 2. The **kind intent** of withdrawal is also seen (2 The. 3:14-15). Withdrawal is never grounds for being rude or ugly; neither is it grounds for simply ignoring the delinquent. One can speak and be kind to the offender, but with the

forthright understanding that his sin is protested and therefore social interaction is withheld.

Conclusion:

1. It has been said that congregations would double in number if all the erring returned.
2. May every member of the church see this potential and take seriously this duty!

**WHAT THE CHURCH NEEDS TO KNOW ABOUT
BUILDING UP THE CHURCH**

Michael Whisenant, MA
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Going the Second Mile ~ Matthew 5:41

"And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles."
(ESV)

Jesus taught so many powerful lessons in the Sermon on the Mount. Not only were these lessons applicable to the people of that time, but they also are useful for us today. One powerful, yet short, lesson is our text. What was Jesus telling the people of his day? What is the lesson we can grasp from this text for our lives today? Are these lessons the same?

If a Roman soldier saw a Jewish man or boy, he could command the person to carry his backpack or burden for a mile. The Jewish boy or man was required by law to carry this soldier's burden for a mile. It was a law that was not popular and done with a lot of resentment. The people of Jesus' day did not wish to go the first mile, so the idea of going the second would have been shocking to say the least.

The lesson being taught was simple. The first mile was the duty of each person forced to carry the burden. The second mile was a choice to go beyond what was required and serve in a way that was unexpected. It was a service that was done not by compulsion, but because of desire. I am convinced that the lesson is the same for us. The second mile is about going beyond what is commanded and doing more.

1. What is NOT Second Mile Service

The second mile is not doing what is required of us as the children of God. When we do as God commands, we are ONLY doing what is required of us like the Jews carrying the pack of the Roman soldiers one mile.

- A. Church Attendance, Hebrews 10:24-25.
- B. Evangelism, Matthew 28:18-20.
- C. Giving Back, Like 6:38.
- D. Being an Example, Philippians 3:17.
- E. Serving Each Other, Galatians 5:13
- F. Doing Good Works, Galatians 6:9-10; Ephesians 2:10.

We could continue on, but we must realize that the first mile is doing what is required of each of us to be God's children. We must remember

the words of Jesus in Luke 17:10 "So you also, when you have done all that you were commanded, say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty.'"

2. Understanding the Attitude of Second Mile Service

- A. The majority of the Sermon on the Mount reflects the attitude of the second mile. We often compare ourselves with others around us as the standard by which we judge our righteousness.
- B. Look at the phrases and context of the last parts of Matthew 5.
 - 1. Anger v. 21-25 – from not murdering to not being angry.
 - 2. Lust v.27-30 – from not committing adultery to not looking to lust after a woman.
 - 3. Oaths v. 33-37 – from swearing by an earthly object to your word being sufficient.
 - 4. Retaliation v. 38-42 – from revenge to turning the other cheek.
 - 5. Enemies v. 43-48 – from hating your enemy to loving him.
- C. It is about changing the way we think and feel, Romans 12:2

3. What IS Second Mile Service?

- A. Finding joy in following the commands of God, 1 John 5:3
 - 1. The reluctant servant obeys the command, but we do our service with love as our motivation.
 - 2. The work of God is something we long to perform.
 - a. Christ is our life, Colossians 3:4.
- B. We desire to be better servants!
 - 1. We seek to develop new abilities and assume other roles.
 - a. Elders, deacons, Bible class teachers, etc.
 - 2. We desire the meat of the word after we finish the milk.
 - a. We go to the deep subjects of the Bible and are not satisfied with what we already know; hungering and thirsting for righteousness.
- C. When we have done what was expected, we seek to do more!
 - 1. When we have met their physical needs, we look to meet spiritual needs, 2 Peter 1:3.
 - 2. We seek to help them grow to maturity, Colossians 1:28.

The second mile is a simple doctrine to explain, but difficult to put into practice! The question posed at the Mount, however is always appropriate for the Christian: What do you more than others? Serving Christ means being more and doing more — this is the essence of second mile service — and this is the dividing line between His true disciples, the would - be disciples and the world. Through His word, Christ directs men in the way of second mile service to a righteousness that exceeds.

**What the Church Needs to Know About
How to Live**

Waymon Swain
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"If Ye then be risen with Christ..."
Colossians 3:1-7

The word "IF" does not mean doubt. It means since, or because you have been, or now that you have been. Because you have been risen with Christ, there is a way that you should live. There is a way that those who wear the name Christian should act, and live. Their manner of life should be fitting of that name.

There are two points that need to be discussed in the lesson tonight. (1) What does it mean to be "risen with Christ"? and (2) How should a person live after he has been risen with Christ? Let us discuss the first of these two points briefly:

I. To Be Risen in Christ means...

A. Let us look back a few verses from Col. chapter 3, and notice Col. 2:9-12.

1. Note the word "risen" in verse 12.

B. To be risen with Christ is to be "Buried with him in baptism", Col. 2:12, which will make one a "new creature". (2 Cor. 5:17)

II. Responsibilities that Accompany being "Risen with Christ"...

A. **Seek those things which are above.**

1. To "Seek" is used in the sense of coveting after, striving for.

2. Since the Bible speaks about "heaven above and earth beneath" : "And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you, for the Lord your God, He is in heaven above, and in earth beneath" (Joshua 2:11), things above are heavenly or spiritual things not earthly or material things.

3. We need to be spiritually minded as Paul said, "Set your affections on things above, not on things of the earth" (Col. 3:2)

4. Note the reasons that are given for seeking the things above: (1) for you are dead (2) Your life is hid with Christ in God (3) because Christ will appear (4) We will appear with him in glory.

B. Mortify Your members which are upon the earth.

1. What does the word "mortify" mean? "Put to death" in the NKJV.
2. Note the things Paul said we are to "Put to death" - "the things affecting your members upon the earth" (ESB)
 - a. Fornication, Uncleaness, Inordinate affection, Evil concupiscence, Covetousness - which is idolatry.
3. Also note the reason for mortifying these things. Because the wrath of God is coming on the children of disobedience.
4. We are to "Put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to deceitful lusts" (Eph. 4:22)
5. Paul reminded the Romans of the same thing, Romans 6:6, "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." HAVE YOU PUT OFF THE OLD MAN?

C. Put on the New Man.

1. Paul always does a good job in telling us what we should fill our lives with when we empty the bad out of our lives.
2. A responsibility of being risen with Christ is "that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." (Eph. 4:24)
3. Note in Col. 3:12-14 what Paul said we are to put on: "Bowels of mercies, (tender-heartedness) Kindness, Humbleness of mind, Meekness, Longsuffering, Forbearing one another, Put on Charity (love)."

D. Let the Peace of God Rule.

1. Peace is Something we all desire. And something we all can have.
2. Phil. 4:6-9

E. Be Ye Thankful.

1. Thankfulness is something each of us should not only feel, but be willing to express to God.
2. Too often we are not filled with gratitude that we should feel after all God has done for us.

F. Let the Word of Christ Dwell in you Richly.

G. Do all in the Name of the Lord.

1. Those who are risen with Christ have surrendered their will to his will and must do all by his name or by his authority.
2. If you are have not been risen with Christ, we urge you to be "buried with him by baptism into death" to rise to "walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:3-4)
3. If you have been risen with Christ, seeking things above, mortifying your members, putting off the old man and putting on the new, letting peace rule and the Word of Christ dwell in you, doing all in the name of the Lord - you are one of the blessed ones. May the God of heaven bless you to that end.

What the Church Needs to Know About Fellowship

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Introduction

- A. The church of Christ is the most important institution that exists
 - 1. Important because of what it is---the called out of Christ (2 Thess. 2:14)
 - 2. Important because of whom it belongs to—Christ Jesus (Eph. 1:22,23)
 - 3. Important because of its purchase price—Christ’s blood (Acts 20:28)
 - 4. Important because of its constituents---the saved (Acts 2:47)
 - 5. Important because of what is found therein (Eph. 1:3--→Acts 4:12--→Jn. 14:6)
- B. The members of the church of Christ are “heirs according to the promise” and as “heirs” enjoy benefits, blessings and privileges that come from being God’s children
- C. The most precious of privileges members of the church of Christ enjoy is fellowship.
- D. The most misunderstood privilege among members of the church of Christ is that of fellowship.
 - 1. Do not understand what it is
 - 2. Do not understand with whom it is with
 - 3. Do not understand the value/significance of it
 - 4. Do not understand the obligations entailed therein
 - 5. Do not understand the possibility that fellowship can be maintained or even broken
 - 6. Do not understand the fact that fellowship can be restored when broken.
- E. One responsibility we have as members of the church of Christ is to understand the fundamentals of fellowship

Discussion

I. The Definition of Fellowship

- A. “Chabar” (cf. Psa.94:20)—“*To unite, join, bind together, be joined, be coupled, be in league, have fellowship with.*” (**Brown, Driver and Briggs**)
- B. “Koinonia” (cf. Acts 2:42,Eph. 3:9; 1 Jn. 1:3,6)—“*Fellowship, communion, joint participation...*” (Thayer)
- C. “Metoche” (2 Cor. 6:14)—“*A sharing, communion, fellowship*” (Thayer)
- D. “Sugkoinoneo” (Eph. 5:11)—“*To become a partaker together with others, or to have fellowship with a thing*” (Thayer)

II. The Foundation of Fellowship

- A. The Foundation Being God
 - 1 A principle—“Not good for man to be alone”—needs companionship, friendship, fellowship
 - 2 A desire—God desires fellowship with mankind, His creation (2 Pet. 1:4)
 - 3.A scripture—1 John 1:1-4

- B. The Foundation of Creation
 - 1. Man created in God's own image (Gen. 1:26)
 - 2. Man enjoyed fellowship with God in the garden—continual if he did not partake of the one tree God had prohibited
 - 3. Man ruptured fellowship with God when He sinned (Gen. 3:1-ff)
 - 4. Man provided hope (Gen. 3:15)
- C. The Foundation of the Scheme of Redemption
 - 1. Ephesians 3:1-ff—A Encompassing Summary of God's Eternal Purpose—shadowed by the OT
 - 2. Ephesians 3:1-ff---Redemption and Fellowship Depicted in God's Eternal Purpose

III. The Limitation of Fellowship

- A. God's law of inclusion
 - 1. God recognizes fellowship with those who belong to Him.
 - 2. God establishes fellowship when individuals obey His will
 - a. Sin separates man from God—severs fellowship
 - b. Salvation from sin is through/in Christ (Acts 4:12)
 - c. Salvation is in the one body of Christ—the church of (belonging to) Christ (Eph. 2:16)
 - d. Salvation is conditional—terms of entrance (Rom. 10:17; Heb. 11:6; Jn. 8:24; Rom. 10:9,10; Matt. 10:32,33; Gal. 3:27; Jn. 3:3-5; Rev. 1:5; Rom. 6:3,4)
 - e. Salvation and fellowship are attained when men obey the Gospel (Rom. 1:16; 2 Thess. 2:14; 1 Cor. 1:9)
 - f. Salvation and fellowship are forfeited when God's children depart from the true and the living God
 - g. Salvation—eternally—and fellowship conditioned on our walking in the light (1 Jn. 1:7)
- B. God's law of exclusion
 - 1. A question—Amos 3:3
 - 2. An affirmation—there are some that are not in fellowship with God and that the faithful cannot fellowship because they are not in agreement with God (2 Cor. 6:14; Eph. 5:11)
 - 3. An identification—who are excluded from fellowship?
 - a. Those who are not IN Christ (Acts 4:12; Gal. 3:27; Acts 2:47; Col. 1:13)
 - b. Those who are in Christ BUT....
 - 1) Disorderly (2 Cor. 3:6)
 - 2) Divisive (Rom. 16:17)
 - 3) Doctrinally bankrupt (2 John 9)
 - 4) Devilishly immoral (1 Cor. 5:13)
 - 5) Do not repent (Matt. 18:15-17)

V. The Obligation of Fellowship

- A. Obligated to honor God's laws of exclusion and inclusion
- B. Obligated to endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Eph. 4:3-6)

- C. Obligated to differentiate between matters of faith and of opinion
 - 1. Bible authority—a must (Matt. 28:18; Col. 3:17)
 - 2. Bible authority—classified
 - 1. Specific authority and generic authority
 - 2. Matters of obligation and matters of expediency
 - 3. Matters of faith and matters of liberty/opinion
 - 3. Bible authority demonstrated
 - 1. Matters of faith/obligation
 - a. Worship God in spirit and in truth (Jn. 4:24)
 - 1) Preach (Mark 16:15)
 - 2) Prayer (1 Thess. 5:17)
 - 3) Sing (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16)
 - 4) Give (1 Cor. 16:1,2)
 - 5) Observing the Lord’s supper (Acts 20:7)
 - b. Assembling together to worship (Heb. 10:25)
 - c. Worship on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7)
 - d. Baptism for/unto the remission of sins (Acts 2:38)
 - 2. Matters of expedience/opinion/liberty
 - a. The order of the worship service
 - b. The time of the worship service
 - c. Place to worship (Heb. 10:25)
 - d. Songbooks
 - e. Overhead charts, powerpoint
 - f. Baptistries/pools/pools
 - g. etc...
 - 4. Bible authority must be respected
 - 5. Bible authority—balance (2 Kings 22:2)
- D. Obligated to engage in fellowship with the faithful of God
 - 1. Love one another (1 Jn. 5:2; 4:10,11 read)
 - 2. Encourage one another (Jn. 16:33)
 - 3. Exhort one another (Heb. 10:25)
 - 4. Consider one another (Heb. 10:23-24)
 - 5. Serve one another (Mk. 10:44,45; Phil. 2:3,5)
 - 6. Bear one another’s burdens (Gal. 6:2)
 - 6. Be with one another (Acts 2:42)
- E. Obligated to keep ourselves in fellowship with God and His faithful (1 Jn. 1:7)
- F. Obligated to maintain our identity/distinctiveness—be separate (Rom. 12:2)

VI. The Restoration of Fellowship (When Broken) (A glimpse of the parable of the prodigal son—Lk. 15: 11-24)

- A. Possibility/Reality of departure from the Father(v12-13a)
- B. Debauchery of sin (v13b)
- C. Temporary pleasures of sin (v14)
- D. Captivity of sin (v15-16)
- E. Accountability recognized (v17)
- F. Godly sorrow working repentance (v18-19)
- G. Journey back (v20a)
- H. Joy of the Father (v20b)
- I. Necessity of confession (v21)
- J. Receptivity of the Father (v22-24)

Conclusion

- A. Fellowship is established when man obeys the perfect will of God
- B. Fellowship is maintained when man continues in that will
- C. Fellowship is governed by God
- D. Fellowship is fractured when man departs from the will of God
- E. Fellowship is restored when man returns to God and His will for Him
- F. Fellowship is valued by God and must be valued by those who are His children
- G. Fellowship will be enjoyed eternally in Heaven with God and the faithful of all the ages if we are faithful to God in this life.

BENEFICIAL MATERIAL FOR EXTRA STUDY

- 1) ***“Christian Fellowship”*** Vol. 5, Jan. 1974 **“Spiritual Sword”** Editors: Thomas B. Warren and Garland Elkins
- 2) ***“The Extent and Limits of Christian Fellowship”*** Thomas B. Warren ***“Current Issues”*** Vol. 3, Oct. 1971 **“Spiritual Sword”** Editors: Thomas B. Warren and Garland Elkins
- 3) ***“Fellowship”*** N. B. Hardeman **“Hardeman’s Tabernacle Sermons: Vol. 5”** pgs. 80-87 Gospel Advocate Publishing Co.
- 4) ***“God’s Word and Fellowship”*** Dean Buchanan **“God’s Word: The All Sufficient Guide: 7th Annual Garfield Heights Lectureship”** pgs. 184-194. Editor: Kenneth McClain. Sain Publications. 1988
- 5) **“The Bible Doctrine of Christian Fellowship”** Robert R. Taylor, Jr. Sain Publications. 1980
- 6) **“Do You Understand Fellowship? 28th Annual Florida School of Preaching Lectureship”** Editor: Jackie Stearsman. Sain Publications. 2003
- 7) ***“The Boundaries of Fellowship—Now and Eternally”*** Andrew Connally **“In Hope of Eternal Life: 14th Annual Bellview Lectureship”** pgs. 289-299. Editor: Bobby Liddell. Firm Foundation Publishing. 1989

**There is so much material put out on this topic, this is just some of the material I found helpful in my own personal study—RA.

**What Does the Church Need to Know About
Stewardship**
Ken Tyler
Arab Church of Christ

I am A Steward of Money

Purpose: To point out the importance of properly managing money.

- I. The Lord's comes off of the top (Proverbs 3:9,10).**
 - A. Many are robbing God just like Israel did in Malachi's day (Malachi 3:7-10).
 - B. It seems that many members of the church do not purpose their giving (II Corinthians 9:7).
 - C. Many are missing the blessedness of giving (II Corinthians 9:6,7; Acts 20:35).

- II. I must learn to live within my income (Romans 13:8).**
 - A. One of the major causes of divorce is overspending.
 - B. We are enticed every day to buy more than we can pay for.
 - C. We must be good managers.

- III. I must learn contentment (Luke 3:12-14).**
 - A. Most people are never satisfied.
 - B. Paul emphasized to Timothy the importance of godliness with contentment (I Timothy 6:6-8).
 - C. How much is enough?

- IV. I must not become a lover of money (I Timothy 6:10; Ecclesiastes 5:10).**
 - A. Loving money will get you into all kinds of trouble (I Timothy 6:9,10).
 - B. The great tragedy is that those who love money do not realize where their blessings come from (Luke 12:15-21; Luke 16:19-31).
 - C. We seldom hear anyone admit that they have been covetous.

Conclusion: The truth of the matter is that many will be lost because they were not good stewards of money. I pray we will not be in that group.

**What the Church Needs to Know About
Teens/ Youth**
Daniel Courington

Roebuck Parkway Church of Christ

What Every Teenager Wants You to Know but Doesn't Know How to Tell You

There is no time in life that is more conflicting than the teenage years. You're constantly told you are a "young adult" but still told "you're not old enough". You're sometimes told that you're the "Church of the future" by the same person who hastily fusses at you for texting in worship (when you were really taking notes on your phone). You're told "NO SEX!" but it seems your body and your friends are telling you something completely different. People tell you "wait until you get out in the real world" while you're faced with more "real world" everyday than the person telling you has seen in 30 years. You'll be told that you are not the "Church of the future" but the "Church of today" by some of the same people that don't want the teenagers leading in worship on Sunday morning. When it boils down to it- being a teenager is confusing. You struggle with times that are so confusing that most adults can no longer relate. It's not that they didn't face the same things- it's that most of them have chosen to forget about it.

But this lesson isn't for teenagers. Sure, teenagers may read it and will hopefully gain something from it but it's not directed at teens.

This one is for the sweet old man who gives out peppermint, the deacon that greets at the door, the grumpy woman who chooses to ignore teenagers exist, the "cool" mom, the "boring" dad, the 24 year old who is idolized, the 8 year old who idolizes, the youth minister, the youth intern, the school resource officer, the minister, the elder, the teacher, the principal, and even the Wal-Mart greeter. It's written to you because you have an important part in the lives of teenagers and you may not even know it. It is you- all of you- who mold the teenager into the person that they are going to be. It's in the early ages of life that children mold into the people that their parents want them to be. They like the same things that their parents like (Yes, I once listened to country music), go to the places their parents go, have the hobbies their parents choose for them, and eat the food that their parents cook for them. It is in the teenage years where they begin to mold in a different way- a shift to being their own person with their own thoughts, ideas, patterns and beliefs. No, mom and dad, it doesn't mean all your work was for nothing- they will remember the principles that you taught them. They're just trying to transform the person you've made them into something that is their own personality.

So where do you, the person reading this, fit into this equation? Well that's not near so complicated. You have a place and a purpose in the lives of the teens of the Church. How can you be better? Here are a few tips that will help you fit in a little better with the teenage crew.

1. They don't want you to be one of them.
 - a. Within the Church, many congregations who transform their worship and thought process into something more "entertainment" based see an immediate spike in attendance and membership. Almost every time, these congregations begin to drop from that point in time and never see those attendance numbers again. People are intrigued by the progressive nature but quickly realize that the Church- no matter how

liberal- will never be able to entertain as well as the denominations who have been progressing an entertainment agenda for decades and centuries. The same is true of teenagers. As an adult, pre-teen or elderly member- no matter how “cool” you try to be- you’ll never be able to “out-teenage” a teenager. Sure- you’re coolness will intrigue them at first- but you’ll never maintain that image and it’ll be a huge struggle to shift into someone they take seriously. There is a church on every block that can entertain you better. There’s a teen on every corner that can be better at being a teenager than you’ll ever be. Be yourself.

- b. Teenagers want adults around them who can be genuine and act comfortably. You’ve seen people who you can tell that are uncomfortable around different racial, ethnic and age groups. You can usually see it from a mile away. Teens are no different. Don’t try to be someone you’re not. Don’t try to be more than you are by pretending to have a big personality when you are really very timid and don’t hide under a rock if you have a big personality. Kids will appreciate you for being yourself. Sure, you will “click” with some better than others but trying to be something you are not will get you nowhere fast with the teen crowd. Be yourself.
 - c. Teenagers are better than anyone at sniffing out those who care and those who pretend to care. Romans 8: 9-10 says it best: “Don’t just pretend to love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what is good. ¹⁰ Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other. (NLT)” I’ll never forget the time that I got pulled over for speeding in high school. I got pulled into the school parking lot and the Alabama State Trooper approached the car. I checked off all the boxes for getting out of a ticket. I said yes sir and no sir, I was cordial but remorseful, and I told him that I realized I was doing something I shouldn’t have been. No luck! He had already made up his mind and I was getting a ticket. I wasn’t happy about it but what made me even angrier was that he began to try to make small talk about my tennis season after he gave me the ticket. In my mind, he didn’t care enough to cut me a break so why was he trying to make small talk with me? Teenagers don’t want to be “given a ticket” from you all the time followed by the small talk of concern. Teens will need guidance and instruction but don’t expect a teen to open up to you when you want them too if you spend all of your time letting them know what they do wrong. Teens will respond to your correction better when you’ve put in the time required to get to know them ahead of time and let them know you have real concern for them.
2. They do pay attention to you and need your attention.
 - a. I love my dog but sometimes I just want her to look in the other direction. She craves my attention more than anyone in the world. To be

honest- it can get a little annoying when you have something that watches every step you take and every move you make. Teens are not dogs but they, like my dog, just simply don't miss much. If you are doing something wrong they will be the first to let you know (even if they are participating in the same wrong doing). If they don't have a relationship with you already- they likely never will. It's important you watch every step because someone else is.

- b. Teens need attention. They want to feel important. Yes, a public prayer for the teens is important but a private "I'm praying for you" goes so far in developing relationships. Teens want to feel that you go out of their way for them. It's especially important that they have avenues to talk to you about real problems. Provide those avenues. Unfortunately, the Church celebrates the sinner coming home but doesn't want to know the specifics. We don't want to know that the deacon is struggling with pornography or the minister is struggling with a prescription drug addiction. We've taken to heart the verbiage of James 5:16 (Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working (ESV)) but too many times we've lost the heart. Because the Church has this attitude so frequently- teens struggle to find someone to talk to about their real struggles with sin and temptation. They feel they can say "I have a problem" but too ashamed to seek real help with what the problem is. They can find plenty of people to tell them about the sin of premarital sex (I Corinthians 6) but very few people who are willing to sit down and talk openly about the struggle their having with their boyfriend or girlfriend. Giving a teen the attention they need may lead to them opening up to you and saving them from a world of hurt and sin.
3. They really do care about God
 - a. Almost indefinitely they care about God. No different than anyone else, teens will make mistakes. Sometimes their mistakes are more visible or vocal and it makes some think that the kids are "up to no good". Prepare yourself for breaking news- most kids are not out to do wrong. That's right, teens actually care about the way that act, the way they talk and the things they do.
 - b. I've talked with kids who claimed to not believe in God (but are normally just in a time of rebellion) and in those conversations you can derive that most teens who don't even claim to believe in God still care deeply about what God thinks about them.
 - c. Some people use the statistics of kids leaving the Church and they will typically talk about the fact that these kids were not taught enough about the unique nature of the Church and the fundamentals of the Bible. I believe those are somewhat valid points but I'm afraid that too many times it's that they have been taught about the unique nature of the

Church and the fundamentals and they see so many people sitting in the pews beside them that just don't match up with the nature of Christ. It's not as much about a disillusionment of God as it is about a disillusionment of His people. Which brings us to the absolute most important thing a person can do for a teenager:

- d. Imitate Christ. Let them see in you not only the checklist of what a New Testament Christian should be but also the nature of who The Christ was. Know 1st Corinthians 11: 1 (Be Imitators of me as I am of Christ) but even more so make it the purpose and passion of your life. That'll make you not only relate to teenagers better but it will get you to heaven in the process. True definition of a win-win.

So it's really not all that hard- It's almost too simplistic. Be Genuine, Be Available, Teach the Truth, and Model the King. Teens need you now more than ever. Respond by being to them the supporter, father, mother, brother, sister, friend, teacher, or Church leader that they so desperately need in a conflicting world.

**WHAT THE CHURCH NEEDS TO KNOW ABOUT
FALSE DOCTRINE**

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INTRODUCTION

1. The very mention of the concept of false doctrine conjures up several responses.
 - (1) Many immediately assume the speaker is going to start attacking everyone who differs with him.
 - (2) Many think that the speaker is about to condemn everyone and everything.
 - (3) Many think that we have no business in even bringing up the subject!
2. The fact is, it is false doctrine to say that we should not defend against false doctrine!
 - (1) Jude 3 tells us to “earnestly contend for the faith once delivered unto the saints.”
 - a. The phrase “earnestly contend” means exactly what it says. The expression means “to struggle for.” Paul and others did this very thing in Galatians 2:5, when they refused to give way to error.
 - b. “For the faith” means that Jude is not talking about current philosophical ideas, sectarian dogmas, or personal opinions or feelings. “The faith” is a substantial, concrete, objective truth.
 - c. “Once delivered” means that the faith is not something man has devised. It is not something that has been decided by a council of men. It is “delivered” from God through the inspired writers (Jn. 16:13; 1 Cor. 14:37; 2:6-13). God has not given any man or any set of men or any church the authority to vote on doctrinal beliefs or church organization or anything else upon which he has provided a revelation in the Bible. All authority belongs to Jesus (Eph. 1:22, 23).
 - (2) Philippians 1:27 tells us to “stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel.”
 - a. The phrase “stand fast” means to be stationary, to persevere. It does not allow for variation from the revealed word of God. It is difficult, in fact impossible, to comprehend how Christians are to stand with one mind and strive together for the faith of the gospel if one belief is as good as another.
 - b. “The faith of the gospel” is singular in nature.
3. False doctrine is a very real threat.
 - I. FALSE DOCTRINE—ERROR—IS DANGEROUS AND DEADLY.
 1. It is dangerous because it does not present itself as false doctrine.
 2. It is dangerous because it causes Christians to fall from their own steadfastness (2 Pet. 3:17).
 3. It is dangerous because those who teach it are leading people into the ditch (Matt. 15:13, 14).

4. It is dangerous because it is persuasive (Rom. 16:17, 18).
 - (1) It sounds good,
 - (2) It appeals to the wisdom and intellectualism of men.
5. It is dangerous because it provides a sense of false security (Prov. 14:12).

II. FALSE DOCTRINE IS AS OLD AS MANKIND!

1. All false doctrine is essentially the same old stuff that the serpent used in the beginning but it wears different dress to accommodate current thinking.

III. THERE IS SUCH A THING AS FALSE DOCTRINE.

1. We tend to want to deny this in order to defend friends, family, and others for what they teach and believe.
2. False implies what is true; and there is a distinction.
 - (1) Jesus makes a plain statement about truth (Jn. 8:32).
3. There are false prophets and false teachers (2 Pet. 2:1-3).
4. There are false apostles (2 Cor. 11:13).
5. There is heresy that must be rejected (Titus 3:10, 11).
6. We simply cannot live by the “let’s agree to disagree” concept.

IV. FALSE DOCTRINES MUST BE IDENTIFIED AND MET WITH BIBLE TRUTH.

1. The church is always plagued with false teaching and has been since the beginning!
2. First John deals with the false doctrine concerning the identity of Jesus: some were teaching that he did not come in the flesh.
3. First & Second Timothy and Titus are instructions to preachers on refusing to tolerate error.
4. Think of some false doctrines that are prevalent:
 - (1) Women leading in worship.
 - a. Jesus chose no female apostles.
 - b. The instructions in the new testament forbid women in leadership in the church: 1 Tim. 2:11-15; 1 Cor. 14:34, 35).
 - c. There were women who prophesied (Acts 21:9; 1 Cor. 11:5), but to lay leadership responsibilities on them is to stretch the text.
 - (2) Modern “contemporary worship.”
 - a. This is the new fad.
 - b. John 4:23, 24 tells us that God and not man directs how God wants to be worshipped.
 - c. There is no rationale for rock bands, orchestras, etc. The general reasoning behind this is that it appeals to the new generation, etc.

- (a) Ephesians 5:19 & Colossians 3:16 do not make allowance for this.
- (b) Worship is to honor God and not please men.
- (3) Theistic evolution, which is a compromise with Genesis 1.
- (4) “All good people are saved” is a doctrine that disagrees with Jesus:
 - a. Matthew 7:13, 14.
 - b. Romans 3:23-27. We need the blood and no one is saved for being good without the blood of Jesus.
- (5) Baptism is said by some to be only a sign or symbol. Others that baptism simply the identification of one’s self with Jesus.
 - a. Baptism is for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38).
 - b. Baptism is the point of transition into Christ and his benefits (Rom. 6:3, 4; Gal. 3:27).
- (6) Direct leading of the Holy Spirit is a frequently held idea but if we have the revealed word of God we have the word of the Spirit to guide us.
 - a. John 16:13.
 - b. Ephesians 3:1-4. We come to understand through reading what the inspired men wrote.
- (7) It is a false doctrine that asserts that you can prove anything by the Bible.
 - a. The Bible is not a book that contradicts itself.
 - b. The Bible is the word of God to men for man’s guidance (2 Tim. 3:16, 17).
 - c. The Bible must be carefully studied and rightly divided to be understood properly.

CONCLUSION

1. These are but a few things relative to false doctrine.
2. We must be faithful students of the word of God to be led by the truth.