

# GROW IN GRACE

NEWSLETTER

**Volume 39, No.5, January 29, 2013** / Southside Baptist Church & Christian School / P.O. Box 1594 / 1028 South Water Avenue, Gallatin, TN 37066 (615) 452-5951 / **"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our LORD and Saviour JESUS CHRIST. To Him be glory both now and forever. Amen."** (2 Peter 3:18)

**NOTE:** I rejoice in the love and peace in the fellowship at Southside. However, the nature of the war zone in which we live is that **it is easy to turn aside from love** and become agents of conflict. **So let us all take serious heed to the following article.**

## Overcoming Conflict!

**WARNING!** If or when I reject the Word of God, [By defiance or by neglect!]- I am **despising** God, **rebelling** against God, **defying** God and **hating** God. Sooner or later bad things happen when Biblical counsel/truth is rejected! **GOOD NEWS for every Christian:** The Holy Spirit resides in us to empower us to heed and embrace all the following Biblical commands!

### **BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS WHICH PREPARE MY HEART TO UNDERSTAND, DEAL WITH, AND WIN OVER UNRESOLVED CONFLICT**

**1. DO NOT LOSE HEART! DO RIGHT: Gal. 6:9-** "And let us not lose heart and grow weary and faint **in acting nobly and doing right**, for in due time and at the appointed season we shall reap, if we do not loosen and relax our courage and faint." (Amp)

**2. STRIP OFF! THROW ASIDE! RUN WITH PATIENCE AND PERSISTENCE: Heb. 12:1-** "THEREFORE THEN, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses [who have borne testimony to the Truth], **let us strip off and throw aside every encumbrance (unnecessary weight) and that sin which so readily (deftly and cleverly) clings to and entangles us**, and let us run with patient endurance and steady and active persistence the appointed course of the race that is set before us, ..." (Amp)

**3. BLESS! REJOICE! DON'T BE PROUD! CHOOSE PEACE: Romans 12:14-21-** "**Bless those who persecute you** [who are cruel in their attitude toward you]; bless and do not curse them. **Rejoice** with those who rejoice [sharing others' joy], and **weep** with those who weep [sharing others' grief]. **Live in harmony** with one

another; **do not be haughty** (snobbish, high-minded, exclusive), but readily adjust yourself to [people, things] and give yourselves to humble tasks. **Never overestimate yourself** or be wise in your own conceits. **Repay no one evil for evil**, but take thought for what is honest and proper and noble [aiming to be above reproach] in the sight of everyone. **If possible**, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.”

**4. NO PAY BACK! TRUST GOD! OVERCOME EVIL WITH GOOD:** “**Beloved**, never avenge yourselves, but **leave the way open for [God's] wrath**; for it is written, Vengeance is Mine, I will repay (requite), says the Lord. **But if your enemy** is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals upon his head. **Do not let yourself be overcome by evil, but overcome (master) evil with good.**” (Amp)

**5. WALK IN THE STEPS OF JESUS: 1 Peter 2:18-24**— “[You who are] household servants, be submissive to your masters with all [proper] respect, **not only to those who are kind and considerate and reasonable, but also to those who are surly (overbearing, unjust, and crooked)**. For one is regarded favorably (is approved, acceptable, and thankworthy) if, as in the sight of God, he endures the pain of unjust suffering.”

“[After all] **what kind of glory [is there in it] if, when you do wrong and are punished for it, you take it patiently?** But if you bear patiently with suffering [which results] when you do right and that is undeserved, it is acceptable and pleasing to God. **For even to this were you called [it is inseparable from your vocation]. For Christ also suffered for you, leaving you [His personal] example, so that you should follow in His footsteps.** He was guilty of no sin, neither was deceit (guile) ever found on His lips. When He was reviled and insulted, He did not revile or offer insult in return; [when] He was abused and suffered, He made no threats [of vengeance]; but he trusted [Himself and everything] to Him Who judges fairly. He personally bore our sins in His [own] body on the tree [as on an altar and offered Himself on it], that we might die (cease to exist) to sin and live to righteousness. By His wounds you have been healed.”

**6. REFUSE PRIDE, SELFISHNESS and STRIFE! EMBRACE HUMILITY:** Phil. 2:3-16

— **“Do nothing from** factional motives [through contentiousness, strife, selfishness, or for unworthy ends] or prompted by conceit and empty arrogance. **Instead, in the true spirit of humility** (lowliness of mind) let each regard the others as better than and superior to himself [thinking more highly of one another than you do of yourselves]. Let each of you esteem and look upon and be concerned for not [merely] his own interests, but also each for the interests of others. **Let this same attitude and purpose and [humble] mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus:** [Let Him be your example in humility:]”

“Who, although being essentially one with God and in the form of God [possessing the fullness of the attributes which make God], did not think this equality with God was a thing to be eagerly grasped or retained, **But stripped Himself** [of all privileges and rightful dignity], so as to assume the guise of a servant (slave), in that He became like

men and was born a human being. And after He had appeared in human form, **He abased and humbled Himself** [still further] and carried His obedience to the extreme of death, even the death of the cross! **Therefore** [because He stooped so low] God has highly exalted Him and has freely bestowed on Him the name that is above every name, That in (at) the name of Jesus every knee should (must) bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, And every tongue [frankly and openly] confess and acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

**“Therefore, my dear ones,** as you have always obeyed [my suggestions], so now, not only [with the enthusiasm you would show] in my presence but much more because I am absent, **work out (cultivate, carry out to the goal, and fully complete) your own salvation with reverence and awe and trembling (self-distrust, with serious caution, tenderness of conscience, watchfulness against temptation, timidly shrinking from whatever might offend God and discredit the name of Christ).**”

[Not in your own strength] **for it is God** who is all the while effectually at work in you [energizing and creating in you the power and desire], both to will and to work for His good pleasure and satisfaction and delight. **Do all things without grumbling and faultfinding and complaining [against God] and questioning and doubting [among yourselves],** That you may show yourselves to be blameless and guiltless, innocent and uncontaminated, children of God without blemish (faultless, unrebukable) in the midst of a crooked and wicked generation [spiritually perverted and perverse], among whom you are seen as **bright lights (stars or beacons shining out clearly) in the [dark] world,** Holding out [to it] and offering [to all men] the Word of Life, so that in the day of Christ I may have something of which exultantly to rejoice and glory in that I did not run my race in vain or spend my labor to no purpose.”

**7. CONSIDER:** We may have tears and tiredness! But there is no GIVING UP, BACKING UP or QUITTING! Instead there is a growing JOY— the joy of obedience, the joy of walking in the steps of Jesus! **THIS IS** the RELIEF that comes **when we only focus on letting GOD CHANGE US, yielding for GOD to be revealed THROUGH US— leaving all others and all results to our Good Shepherd! But when we lose or LEAVE that focus** and we get off track from our responsibilities and we focus on the failures of others and we resent the path that God has brought or allowed for us— **then we experience exhaustion** that is followed by discouragement and depression and just wanting to escape **and/or** we experience resentments, anger, bitterness and etc... **I may not know your SPECIFIC BATTLES and you may not know mine:** But I do know that, regardless, we are in an excellent place to MANIFEST THE REALITY OF CHRIST, A WONDERFUL PLACE, LIKE PAUL, TO FURTHER THE GOSPEL— MAY IT BE SO! **As I reflect back over about 44 years of dealing with CONFLICT** in various churches and in homes... and for longer than that in my own heart— **THIS I KNOW:** **When there is conflict, the details differ but the core problems are agonizingly similar!** NAMELY, life tumbled in and someone did or said something that was, (or at least we thought it was), wrong and against us, **and in return WE responded back with OUR OWN,**

1. Wrong deeds done and/or said;
2. Followed by denial and/or excuses;
3. Followed by anger, finger pointing and hurt;
4. Followed by more accusing words, blame-shifting, smokescreens, more wrong deeds.
5. REALITY: **Such paths of response by you or me are anti-love and anti-Christ!**

## **WHAT SHOULD/CAN BE DONE ABOUT IT?**

**If we so choose**, we can keep blasting each other. With every blast, we will give the other person MORE ammunition. **We can keep verbally shooting at each other**—pointing out each other's faults (real or imagined) **until hell freezes over!** We will never run out of ammunition. **With our hearts hardened in SELF-defense, we will FEEL JUSTIFIED every step of the way.** We can write each other off. We can refuse to seek reconciliation and leave a marriage and/or a church and/or a friendship. **MANY choose this path! AND WHEN such paths are chosen** it is also common that we **seek out those who will give us sympathy**, who will take our side! **So, we tell them our side.** We put ourselves in the best light and the other person in the worst light. **We play the role of the 'innocent' victim, etc. The end result is that, (being thus BLINDED and deceived by sin and satan), homes and churches are split— again and again and again... fueled by talebearers spreading our false reports!**

**BUT REMEMBER:** Such paths are not sanctioned by JESUS, the Holy Spirit or by God's Holy Word. **AND REMEMBER: JUDGMENT DAY before ALMIGHTY GOD will come! HOWEVER, I have very, VERY GOOD NEWS— There are EASY Biblical solutions when wrong deeds [real or imagined!] are done/said to or against us!** [Let's make it 'first person and personal!']

1. I must make NO excuse for my own wrong responses.
2. Walking in the steps of Jesus, I must be gracious, long suffering, kind and merciful toward those who may have wronged me.
3. I must **confess only my own sin**— my response was wrong, it was against God and against others, etc. I must get in step with Jesus!
4. **HENCEFORTH, I will not point out the sins of anyone else.**
5. I must ask for God's forgiveness for all my wrong attitudes and responses.
6. If I have wronged someone, I must ask the forgiveness of the person I wronged.
7. **Even if those who wronged me do not [or never!] seek my forgiveness,** I must forgive them [between me and God, vertically] even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven me! (Ephesians 4:29-32) Moreover, I must grant forgiveness to the person asking for my forgiveness. (Luke 17:3-5; Matthew 18:21-35)
8. Where forgiveness has been sought and granted, I need to reaffirm fellowship in Christ and seek to go forward in a path of reconciliation, together serving Christ.

**9. Regardless of what others may do,** I must walk in the steps of Jesus and **VALUE TO THE EXTREME my 'ministry of reconciliation' calling— 2 Corinthians 5:17-21!!**

**BUT WHAT ABOUT those occasions when I have already RESPONDED TO WRONG DEEDS WITH MY OWN WRONG WORDS/DEEDS? AGAIN, there is an EASY solution:**

1. I must confess my sin— not the sins of someone else.
2. I must confess my sin— not justify my anger because you may have wronged me.
3. I must ask for forgiveness of my sin— wholly without blaming anyone else!
4. I must carefully, wholeheartedly and as an act of worship to Jesus Christ take the specific action of Romans 12:14-21— as they may apply to the situation.
5. I must make sure that going forward in restored fellowship will not be hindered by me; and that, at the very least, by the grace of God I will go forth in fellowship with Jesus, walking in His steps— even if no one else does! **[Jesus modeled this way! Thus, the joy of JESUS was never hindered, although He was deeply hated and wronged by others!] In the steps of Jesus, this same joy is ours!**

**PRAISE GOD! HIS WAY IS REALLY EASY! OBJECTION:** “You keep using that word EASY! It is NOT easy. My flesh hates it!” “Yes, I understand; my flesh screams also! **But Jesus said, “My YOKE IS EASY!”** And that is the path I am unfolding— **the path of the EASY YOKE of Jesus!**” TRAGEDY: MANY have very little experience with the EASY YOKE and light BURDEN of Jesus! (Matthew 11:28-30)

**The Bible and life reveal to us that the path of sin is one of the binding, blinding, grinding BONDAGE of sin.** As with the life of Sampson, what little pleasure sin offers is on the front end! However, once you are HOOKED on lust or porn or drugs or selfishness or resentments or whatever— **the binding, blinding, grinding BONDAGE begins.** BONDAGE is what is being experienced when or if I SPEW OUT THE VENOM of self justification and finger pointing! And it won't get better until I YOKE UP WITH JESUS!

**DO NOT BE A MOUTHPIECE FOR SATAN'S SLANDER AGAINST OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST! 1. Here is a LYING SLANDER that satan stands ready to whisper in your ear: “O, the Christian life is so hard!”** That is a demonic lie! 2. THE TRUTH: (1) The way of sin is hard! (Proverbs 13:15) (2) The YOKE OF JESUS IS EASY! (Matthew 11:28-30)

### **WHEN THEEASYSTEPS OF JESUSARE NOT TAKEN—**

1. We deny... even lie... cuddling up to the author of all lies, satan.
2. We get mad... even mad at God! We start and/or continue shooting DEFENSIVE, NON EDIFYING WORDS at each other and blasting one another to our friends.
3. We break off relationships, friendships, marriages, Church membership, you name it.
4. Instead of submitting to one another (Ephesians 5:21) and/or to GOD ORDAINED LEADERSHIP IN THE CHURCH— we rebel and go our own independent way;
5. **And we may even turn to the WORLD to defend our case—** just like the carnal Corinthians who took each other to the courts of man, while rejecting the judgment/justice and mercy that God ordains through the church. (1 Corinthians 6:1-8)

**EXAMPLE: The divorce courts of men are increasingly filled with Pastors and other church folk who reject denying self, who reject the way of the Cross, who reject love and reject forgiveness and reject reconciliation and instead choose self justification and self gratification, etc.**

6. And so **in self will** we choose any path, ANYTHING OTHER THAN humbly coming to the cross.

7. **IN PRIDE**, we become TOTALLY BLINDED to the fact that we are grieving the Holy Spirit, **breaking the heart of Jesus and pointing people toward hell and not toward heaven. (REALITY: America's chief problems are in the churches— not in the White House or in Congress! JESUS IS SERIOUS ABOUT: Matthew 5:13)**

### **HOW DOES ONE GET OFF THESE ROADS OF DESTRUCTION?**

**In spite of** all the evil which we may have thought, said and/or done thus far, (all of which pleases satan greatly!)— **what we now have is a WONDERFUL opportunity to defeat our flesh, to defeat the devil, and to experience GRACE greater than our sin.** And as a result we will bring glory and honor to Jesus Christ and give a powerful witness to a lost world that desperately needs to see JESUS!

**HERE'S HOW:** [Again, let's make it first person, personal!]

1. I must get alone with Jesus and His Word and ask the HOLY SPIRIT to guide me **according to the pure Word of God...** and not according to my emotions or selfish desires.

2. It will likely be helpful for me to get pen and paper; and make myself aware that JESUS IS PRESENT, humble myself before Him! **JESUS IS CALLING:** Matthew 11:28-30— **Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.**

3. **NOW, I need to PRAY something like this:** “LORD JESUS, guide my pen to write down any and all that I and I ALONE have done or said that was not pleasing to you, that was not according to your Word. [Make the list...]”

4. **I must make NO excuse.** “LORD JESUS, I confess MY own sin, only— it was wrong, it was against God. LORD JESUS, I refuse to point out the sins of anyone else. Father in heaven, I ask for your forgiveness. LORD JESUS, I will go and ask the forgiveness of the person or persons I wronged.”

5. “IF SOMEONE COMES ASKING FOR FORGIVENESS— I WILL grant forgiveness to the person asking for forgiveness.”

6. “LORD JESUS, even if they never ask for forgiveness of what I believe to be their sin against me, **I will still deal with my sin; and in my heart I will forgive them and**

**I will invest in them according to Romans 12:14-21— just as your Word commands!”**

**7. “LORD JESUS, I now humbly confess that the real truth is that I have been responding to the real or imagined wrong deeds of others with MY OWN WRONG WORDS AND DEEDS— I NOW EMBRACE YOUR easy solution, thus, dealing a death blow to my PRIDE, SELF and SATAN! I now take my position and calling, to walk in the steps of Jesus!”**

**BOTTOM LINE: I can nurse my wounds. I can justify my sins. I can think and gossip the worst about others. I can blame shift. I can feed my anger, resentments and bitterness; and I can withdraw from friendships, family, marriage and/or the local church to which God had joined me and so much more. **OR: I can HUMBLE myself. I can submit to the WORD OF GOD. I can bow down and receive the EASY YOKE OF JESUS and be healed and lead others toward HEAVEN and not toward HELL!****

**IN THE LIVE SITUATIONS I AM FACING AT HOME, AT WORK, AT CHURCH, and/ or WITH OTHER FRIENDSHIPS/RELATIONSHIPS, ETC— which shall it be??**

*Beloved, let us love one another, for love is (springs) from God; and he who loves [his fellowmen] is begotten (born) of God and is coming [progressively] to know and understand God [to perceive and recognize and get a better and clearer knowledge of Him]. **He who does not love has not become acquainted with God [does not and never did know Him], for God is love.** (1 John 4:7-8)*

With Love in Christ for you! James Bell / [www.southsidegallatin.org](http://www.southsidegallatin.org)

## **SOUTHSIDE NEWS NOTES!**

**1. Ladies Bible Study— ‘LORD, HEAL MY HURTS!’— Tuesdays @ 10:30AM! Call the church — 615-452-5951**

**2. WEDNESDAYS: PRAYER SERVICE at 7:00PM! / YOUTH: Wednesdays, 6-8pm @ Adam and Bethany’s home.**

**3. Thursdays @ 6:30pm: OUTREACH VISITATION**

**4. EVERY SATURDAY @ 8:00am: Men’s Fellowship and Bible Study**

### **Sunday Schedule for February 3, 2013**

**1. 9:30am- Sunday School**

**2. 10:45am- Morning Worship / Children’s Church**

**3. Noon Fellowship 'Covered Dish' Meal**

**4. 1:00pm- Early Afternoon Service**

### **Sunday Schedule for February 10, 2013**

1. 9:30am- Sunday School /
2. 10:45am- Morning Worship / Children's Church
3. Noon Fellowship 'Covered Dish' Meal /
4. 1:00pm- Early Afternoon Service

### **Sunday Schedule for February 17, 2013**

1. 9:30am- Sunday School /
2. 10:45am- Morning Worship / Children's Church
3. Noon Fellowship 'Covered Dish' Meal
4. 1:00pm- Early Afternoon Service [LORD'S SUPPER SERVICE!]

### **Sunday Schedule for February 24, 2013**

1. 9:30am- Sunday School /
2. 10:45am- Morning Worship / Children's Church
3. Noon Fellowship 'Covered Dish' Meal /
4. 1:00pm- Early Afternoon Service