

GROW IN GRACE

NEWSLETTER

Volume 39, No.38, September 17, 2013 / Southside Baptist Church & Christian School / P.O. Box 1594 / 1028 South Water Avenue, Gallatin, TN 37066 (615) 452-5951 / **The Grow in Grace Newsletter**— a weekly Bible Study, plus news notes— designed first and foremost for members and those attending services at Southside Church... sent forth to aid one and all, (including friends far and wide who receive the Newsletter), in the experience of 2 Peter 3:18. ***"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our LORD and Saviour JESUS CHRIST. To Him be glory both now and forever. Amen."***

'DREAMS' for SOUTHSIDE CHURCH!

This newsletter is basically a reprint of the April 9, 1978 "Midweek Reminder"... now known as the "Grow in Grace Newsletter." The article was originally a sermon which was titled, **"Dreams for Southside!"** In the introduction was this statement:

"A church family needs to have goals! But they must be Biblical goals. Here is the path God wants us on. There must be a deep and deepening commitment to be and to become all that God desires."

We have reprinted this article before. **Why print, yet again, a 1978 article in September of 2013? — Because the Dreams [GOALS] for Southside are still the same!**

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## **I. ABOVE ALL, I BELIEVE GOD WANTS A HOLY CHURCH!**

I believe every one of us must have God and His Word search our hearts. How we need to be Judgment Day honest. We must confess every known sin. That is, we must take God's point of view against sin. **We must confess sin as "wrong, against God and that which must go!"**

Pride, Lust, Envy, Spiritual laziness, Cowardliness, Covetousness, Idolatry, self-will, resentment, loose tongues, lack of love and compassion, prayerlessness, and lives void of daily communion with God by means of His Word and prayer— **all of these and more must be dealt with.**

**Only a Church-family that is clean from sin will be a conquering and powerful church!**

**SEPTEMBER 2013 Update: I especially praise God** for each one of you who seeks to make a habit of "dealing with" the sins which so easily beset us! **Truly, in a world where spiritual darkness is everyday reality, we must be alert, vigilant and PRESSING ONWARD in Holiness and Love!** As directed by the Word of God— we must deal with our own sin first and foremost: Matthew 7:1-5; 1 John 1:7-10; James 5:16. Then, in humility we can and must be on the lookout for one another: Galatians 6:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:14

## **II. I BELIEVE GOD WANTS A SPIRIT-FILLED CHURCH!**

There is a lot of "talk" in the Christian world about being Spirit-Filled— but too little reality.

**A Spirit-Filled life** is a life where the Risen LORD by the Indwelling Holy Spirit is increasingly **living through us** in every area of our lives— all as an overflow of DAILY COMMUNION with the Father, The Son and The Holy Spirit.

**The Spirit-Filled life** is a life where we increasingly face every situation and circumstance EMPTY of our efforts and empty of self defense and available to and dependent upon the Holy Spirit. **The real evidence** of Holy Spirit fullness is love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance— all flowing through our lives. (Galatians 5:21-24)

**[SEPTEMBER 2013 Update:** Even in the "Bible Believing" churches of our time there is a growing AVALANCHE of the works of the flesh:

*“ Now the doings (practices) of the flesh are clear (obvious): they are immorality, impurity, indecency, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, anger (ill temper), selfishness, divisions (dissensions), party spirit (factions, sects with peculiar opinions, heresies), Envy, drunkenness, carousing, and the like. I warn you beforehand, just as I did previously, that those who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”* (Galatians 5:19-21, Amplified Bible) **REALITY:** These ‘works of the flesh’ are the root problems behind church splits and ‘divorces’ in homes and churches. **REALITY:** Multitudes of professing Christians REFUSE God’s diagnosis, refuse to repent, run to prescription pills to mask their problems, and proceed to blame others for their plight. Thus, there is a GROSS ABSENCE of genuine Holy Spirit fruit and of lives crucified to the flesh:

***“But the fruit of the [Holy] Spirit [the work which His presence within accomplishes] is love, joy (gladness), peace, patience (an even temper, forbearance), kindness, goodness (benevolence), faithfulness, Gentleness (meekness, humility), self-control (self-restraint, continence). Against such things there is no law [that can bring a charge]. And those who belong to Christ Jesus (the Messiah) have crucified the flesh (the godless human nature) with its passions and appetites and desires.”*** (Galatians 5:22-24, Amplified Bible)

**Let us press forward in being filled with genuine Holy Spirit FRUIT!]**

CONTINUING THE 1978 ARTICLE: **The Spirit-Filled life is also a life with an ACTIVE PASSION that all men know Christ.** When Jesus saw the multitudes, He had compassion. JESUS IN US will do no less through us. Jesus came to seek and to save the lost. **JESUS IN US will do no less than that through us. The Spirit-Filled life** is a Scripture-filled life; and also a life of PRAYER. **The Spirit-Filled life** is a life of boldness for Christ with a passion to spread the gospel! (Acts 4:23-31)

**SEPTEMBER 2013 UPDATE: Do we not need to be under great conviction for our lack in these critical areas?**

### **III. I BELIEVE THAT GOD WANTS A BODY-MINISTERING, SOUL WINNING AND MISSIONARY CHURCH!**

**God wants** us to be a church that loves expressively with need-meeting love one to another in the Body of Christ. **God wants** us to be a church that is aggressively reaching out to the lost by the supernatural compelling indwelling Holy Spirit.

**This kind of** Body-Ministering, Soul-Winning and Missionary church will be the glorious fruit [the overflow] of a HOLY CHURCH, a SPIRIT-FILLED CHURCH!

### **IV. I BELIEVE GOD WANTS A BODY-MINISTERING, SOUL-WINNING AND MISSIONARY CHURCH THAT IS "HOME-CENTERED!"**

God is not pleased with mere "church-anity"... that is, it seems that many view the Christian life as only something which happens down at the church building. Instead: **CHRISTIANITY IS CHRIST living in and through us, 24/7!** The local Church is a visible expression of the Body of Christ.

**The collective gathered Church Family is made up of the Christianity that is being DAILY LIVED through us in our homes and in our community!**



**SEPTEMBER 2013 Update:** Take a fresh look at the "logo"... It is one that we have used for years in various communications. It is designed to convey the following:

***The Local Church and the Home UNITED together under the authority of God's Word and quickened by God's Spirit.***

New Testament Christianity always UNITES the resources

and the collective witness of Christian Homes and local Churches!

## **V. I BELIEVE THAT GOD WANTS THE "ABOVE DESCRIBED CHURCH FAMILY" TO ALSO BE "WHERE-YOU-WORK-CENTERED"**

Christ living His life and boldly giving witness through you (us) on the job is God's will. Thus, we will be giving a Holy Witness, A Spirit-Filled witness; and a Ministering, Soul saving witness. **It's called being Salt and Light!**

## **VI. I BELIEVE THAT GOD WANTS A CHEERFUL-GIVING CHURCH!**

God loves a cheerful giver. In Acts 2, the newly saved 3,000 souls **CHEERFULLY GAVE THEMSELVES** to obedience, to Baptism, to unmovable steadfastness in Bible Study, Fellowship, Worship, and Prayer! **As recorded in 2 Corinthians 8 & 9)** — although they were persecuted and poverty stricken the Macedonian Christians cheerfully gave love offerings to the LORD'S work. Why? **Because they had first given themselves to the LORD!**

**SEPTEMBER 2003 Update:** By the grace of God, in 38+ years of ministry among the saints at Southside, we have never had a series of "Stewardship Sermons" in an effort to "raise money" or to take pledges for a budget— we won't start now! **Let us continue and PRESS ON in lining up with the call of Scripture to FIRST GIVE OURSELVES TO GOD and to also be CHEERFUL GIVERS! Note:** This does not mean that there is no place for preaching and teaching the Biblical truth about finances. I am continually blessed by the GRACE GIVING of the saints at Southside.

**I ASK YOU: Is it wrong** to DREAM of such a Church? **Is it right** to settle for anything less? **Is this not** the life to which Christ has called us? **Is this not** the life and ministry upon which we can expect God's power and blessing? **If this is that** to which God has called us, dare we think to expect the joy and blessing of the LORD upon anything less?

***I PRAISE GOD for SOUTHSIDE— a congregation that is willing to embrace BIBLICAL DREAMS! Let us go forward in the power of the Holy Spirit in a lifestyle that is worthy of the name "CHRISTIAN!"***

**With THANKSGIVING to all of you!** James Bell

## **MORE SEPTEMBER 2013 UPDATES: CONSIDER WHAT GOD WILL DO IN US AND THROUGH US—**

- 1. WHEN As families** and as a church family we are **ALL seeking to** MEMORIZE Scripture!
- 2. WHEN As families** and as a church family **we are ALL** singing and/or READING and/or SAYING HYMNS!

**3. WHEN As families and as individuals, we are ALL reading the Word of God ... DAILY!**

**4. WHEN As a **CHURCH FAMILY** WHEN we gather for **OUR EARLY AFTERNOON MEETING** THAT families and individuals recite memorized Scriptures and/or read Scriptures they are learning; and join together in a time of wonderful HYMN SINGING and SCRIPTURE SONG SINGING!**

**5. WHEN As families, our homes are used as “Spiritual LIGHTHOUSES or MISSION STATIONS”... And so, we invite neighbors, co-workers or family, or church folk or a new family visiting the church, or a single parent family...**and they WITNESS your family** members quoting a few Scriptures, reading a Daily Bread’s devotion of the day and/or manifesting the FRUIT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, etc.!**

**6. CONSIDER WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF SOUTHIDE FAMILIES GAVE A NIGHT TO JESUS, 1, 2, 3 TIMES A MONTH for ministry in our mission field of Gallatin/Sumner County?**

**QUESTION:** Is your home a “Mission Station”... a “Lighthouse”... where and from whence you WORSHIP God, seek to BUILD UP SAINTS, and Evangelize the lost? IF NOT WHY NOT?

***CONSIDER WHAT GOD WILL DO IN US AND THROUGH US—***

**7. WHEN AS A CHURCH FAMILY TOGETHER we purposely bring GOD IN THE MIDST of our Personal, Marriage, Family, Church, Neighborhood and Workplace relationships, as well as to worldwide mission fields! A BOTTOM LINE PURPOSE:** That we avoid being BRANDED by the world’s culture! **AND that, instead, we are BRANDED BY AND FOR CHRIST!** (Galatians 6:14, 17)

**8. CONSIDER WHAT WOULD happen if we prayed and worked together in A VISION to Upgrade our Sunday School ministry?**

**What would a Growing Sunday School (GSS) look like?**

**A GSS** is one that is helping **all ages of Christians** to grow in Christ-likeness! **A GSS** is one that will help **lost people** to see and hear the gospel! **A GSS** is one that has an **ACTIVE** vision to help more and more Christians to grow in Christ and more and more lost people to see and hear the Gospel! **STRANGE QUESTION: Is it a sin for a Sunday School to grow?**

No! **A GSS** would be well pleasing to the LORD!

**BASIC COMMITMENTS for SS Teachers and Associate Teachers and for SS Class members which will encourage real growth in our Sunday School.** (There’s nothing new in the following list. However, it requires great VIGILANCE to go forward in the faith in each and every one of these:

A fresh **commitment** to personally walk in close fellowship with Jesus. A fresh **commitment** to pray for one's Sunday School Class. A fresh **commitment** to excellent class lesson preparation.

A fresh **commitment** to consistency in attendance and on time attendance in both Sunday School and in worship services. A fresh **commitment** to participation before class, during class, between SS and the worship service and after the worship service.

A fresh **commitment** to weekly ministry one to another in the class. A fresh **commitment** to availability to REACH OUT to those who need to be in Sunday School!

### **THERE MUST BE FRESH VISION!**

A vision that what we are doing is God's Kingdom **work**  
and therefore important beyond words!  
BUT KINGDOM work requires — WORK and TIME!

## **WHAT WILL HAPPEN AS We EMBRACE the Awesome Power of Positive Testimonies!**

**The Psalmist said**, "I will remember the works of the LORD...I will meditate also of all thy works, and talk of all thy doings." (Psalm 77:11-12) "Come ye and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what He hath done for my soul." (Psalm 66:16) **The early disciples of Jesus said**, "For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." (Acts 4:20) **The Woman at the Well**, after her saving encounter with Jesus Christ, went into her town proclaiming, "Come, see a man who told me all the things I ever did...!" (John 4:29)

**Positive, God-honoring testimonies are powerful instruments in the hands of God to,**

(1) Encourage our own hearts, (2) Lift up the spirits of other saints, and (3) Bring others to Christ!

**Our hearts and minds are continually filled with thoughts of some sort. Negative, doubting, unbelieving thoughts discourage us and bring us down into pits of despair.**

**Psalm 73 is a powerful example:** The Psalmist began to THINK about the apparent prosperity of the wicked. The more he let his mind run with these thoughts, the more despondent he became. He was beginning to conclude that it was but a vain and useless thing to live for God's honor. But thankfully, he realized that if he opened his mouth and spoke all of his murmuring that many of God's children would be led astray. **So he kept his mouth shut!**

And he made a choice to "go to church" and hear the Word of God. There he was reminded of the present fears and of the dreadful later end of every person who is not saved. He was also freshly envisioned of the abundant blessings that he possessed as God's redeemed child. Thankfully, Psalm 73, concludes with a powerful testimony of praise to God.

**By the way, as Psalm 40 and Psalm 51 so powerfully demonstrate, when we give testimonies of praise for God's Amazing Grace dealings with us, the lost **and** the**

saved will "... see it... and shall trust in the LORD... and sinners shall be  
 converted unto God!"

**Truly one of the most effective tools God has given us for encouragement and for seeing the Kingdom of God built up is the power of godly, positive testimony.** It is very encouraging, faith-building and Kingdom-building to speak well of God, of one another in Christ, and to speak well of the local church to which God has joined you.

**(Suggestion: If you are not directly involved in the following ministries, then personalize the following to the local church to which you are joined!)**

**\*\*HAS GOD GRACIOUSLY BLESSED YOU in some way through some of the ministry of**

**Southside Baptist Church and/or through the ministry of Southside Christian School?\*\*\***

**If so, tell it! Speak it! Write it! Tell the Good news!** Your story may be short and simple. It may be longer and more detailed. But only God knows just how powerful and how far will be the godly influence of your "SPEAKING WELL" TESTIMONY!

**Would the LORD be pleased for you to share your "Speaking Well" Testimony with others; and email, bring or mail it to us?!**

**To God be the GLORY! / James Bell / [www.southsidegallatin.org](http://www.southsidegallatin.org)**