



**GROW
IN
GRACE**
NEWSLETTER

Volume 40, No. 22, June 2, 2014 / Southside Baptist Church & Christian School / P.O. Box 1594 / 1028 South Water Avenue, Gallatin, TN 37066 (615) 452-5951 / The Grow in Grace Newsletter is a weekly Bible Study, plus local church news notes— designed first and foremost for members and those attending services at Southside Church. It is sent forth with the desire to aid one and all, (including friends far and wide), 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."

CHRISTIAN WITNESSING— BEING LIVING Witnesses is Foundational to Effective Witnessing!

Despite many technological advancements, the twenty-first century has entered frighteningly dark waters. **Look at the headlines**— the threat of global terrorism, the chaos of unthinkable criminal activity, the defilement of pornography, the confusion of gender roles, the seriously questionable future of the economy, the unknowns of 'the New World Order', the **Psychiatric DRUGGING of millions- ('sorceries= pharmakeia- enchantment with drugs) Revelation 18:23**, the "lostness" of our children, etc., etc. People are helplessly buckled up, strapped in, and holding on to a world careening out of control into **a future of even greater Luke 21:26 fear**, confusion, frustration, uncertainty, and isolation.

As a true Christian, walking in the steps of Jesus, you are quite a contrast— anchored in Jesus Christ, you are immovable, steadfast, and strong! Your eyes are fixed on the Word of God, a beacon that stands out like a "*lamp shining in a dark place*" (2 Peter 1:19). As you move toward that light, God changes your life by the power of the Holy Spirit. You will go forth in peace, in humility, and as bold as a lion! **The message you proclaim and the life you live guarantees you will stand out in the culture. Holy, righteous lives are the backbone of the gospel we preach.** The apostle Paul understood that. In the midst of a pagan society that did all it could to persecute Christians and discredit the Christian

faith, he wrote to Titus telling him how to instruct Christians ***“to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age”*** (Titus 2:12). As I’ve reflected on what Paul told Titus, I can see three compelling reasons we ought to live holy lives. And each reason has little to do with benefits that come from godly living, though there are grand benefits (cf. 1 Timothy 6:6). **Rather, Paul sets forth evangelism as the motive for holy living.**

**** Holy Living Honors God and God’s Word:** In chapter two, Paul instructs Titus regarding different age groups in the church. The young women, he says, are to act in such a way ***“so that the word of God may not be blasphemed”*** (Titus 2:5). The plain truth is that how we live directly impacts how people feel about God and about His Word. Christian men, women and youth who are not what they ought to be, give people reason to blaspheme God and His Word. King David was told, “... thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme!” (2 Samuel 12:14)

Sound, Biblical theology is critical; but what the lost world sees and judges is our behavior. The validity of Scripture in the world’s view is determined by how that Scripture affects us. **If unbelievers see that our lives are truly transformed, separate and distinct from the world, they are given strong evidence to conclude that JESUS, as revealed in sacred Scripture, is true, powerful, and life-changing.** Indeed, Jesus says, *“By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”* (John 13:35) **The credibility of the Christian gospel is inseparably linked to the integrity of the lives of those who proclaim it.** That’s why it is so devastating when well-known evangelists or Christian leaders or Christian families and/or Churches are caught in some gross sin of immorality or lovelessness or bitterness, etc. How do you think unbelievers react when they see such hypocrisy? They laugh at it, thus blaspheming God and His Word and short-circuiting any opportunity we have to tell them about its power to transform their lives. The impact of the lives of men and women who bear the Lord’s name is vital to the credibility of the faith and the effectiveness of personal witness and preaching. That’s ultimately what is at stake in the way we live.

**** Holy Living Silences the Opposition:** Paul's second reason for living holy lives gives us the heart of what he wants to communicate: **“so that the opponent will be put to shame, having nothing bad to say about us”** (Titus 2:8). The Greek word translated “put to shame” literally means “to blush,” emphasizing the opponent's utter embarrassment over having no just criticism. **Opponents of Christianity love to gloat when Christians cause a scandal.** Don't you think some of the unbelievers in your sphere of influence would love to see you fail significantly so they can 'claim' justification for their unbelief? They don't want to see God transform your life— that would stand as a rebuke to their sinful lifestyles. But that's exactly what you want to do— you want to embarrass them when they criticize you because there is nothing for them to justifiably criticize. But the issue is not merely to 'embarrass' them— rather it's evangelism. **The proper strategy for evangelization is not methods or religious showmanship.** **RATHER, we reach the world through manifesting and modeling virtue, godliness, holiness, love, and a purity of life that makes our faith and God's Word believable. The apostle Peter understood the way believers have impact on the godless world.** He wrote, *“Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul. **Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles [the lost],** so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation”* (1 Peter 2:11-12).

Do you see how imperative it is that we live godly lives? We want unbelievers to examine us. They come initially to **criticize**, but if our behavior is Holy Spirit empowered and excellent, the criticism of some just might turn to **curiosity**. And if that curiosity turns to **CONVICTION and conversion**, they'll glorify God because of their salvation. Thus we've done our part in bringing God glory. **Christian:** When you and I are walking in Holy Spirit fullness, the Holy Spirit can use us to lead people to the **credibility of Christianity** and **ultimately to conversion** by the virtue of our lives. **Holy living EMPOWERS our Gospel Tracts and soul-winning, personal witnessing efforts!** So, let us stay away from fleshly lusts and maintain excellent behavior.

**** Holy Living Makes the Gospel Attractive:** Paul states his third reason for holy living in Titus 2:10, ***“That they will adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in every respect.”*** “Adorn” is from the Greek word *kosmeō* and refers to making something beautiful. **What is our primary message to this world about God?** Do we want the world to know that God is omnipotent? Omniscient? Omnipresent? Immutable? Sovereign? Eternal? The Creator and the Sustainer of the universe? Yes, we do. **But by far the main attribute of God we want the unsaved to understand is that He is the Saviour. How will we ever make the good news about God as Savior beautiful in every respect if our behavior does not reveal clear evidence that we’ve been saved?** When we live in obedience to God that in itself will be a testimony against wrong. When those around us see us loving and forgiving and showing mercy rather than hating; and when they see us helping rather than exploiting, when they hear us talking with purity instead of profanity, and when they observe us speaking truthfully rather than deceitfully, **our example will itself be a rebuke of selfishness, unwholesome talk, and falsehood.** Simply refusing to participate in a dishonest business or social practice will sometimes be such a strong rebuke that it costs us our job or friendship. Dishonesty is terribly uncomfortable in the presence of honesty, even when there is no verbal or other direct opposition. **Often, of course, open rebuke is necessary.** Silent testimony will go only so far. Failure to speak out against and to oppose evil things in practical ways is a failure to obey God. Believers are to expose them in whatever legitimate, biblical ways are necessary. **Unfortunately,** many Christians are not keeping their own spiritual and moral houses in order. Thus they lack the discernment, inclination, or power to confront evil in the church or in society at large. That’s why it is imperative that we be so mature in biblical truth and in obedience, holiness and love that the natural course of our lives will be to expose, rebuke, and offer remedy for every kind of evil.

Making salvation attractive is a high calling, and we will fail in that endeavor unless we can demonstrate that we have indeed been delivered from sin. Rebuking sin in others without an accompanying lifestyle of righteousness is the greatest hypocrisy. But lives characterized by ‘agape’ love, purity, power and joy reflect the order,

beauty, and power of a saving God. Instead of causing the Word of God to be blasphemed, maligned, slandered or suffer reproach, our lives are a living advertisement for the faith! We adorn the doctrine of God! We are living testimonials of God and His grace. We don't actually add anything to God's beauty— but we let the light of the glorious gospel shine and JESUS IS SEEN! (Titus 2)

To convince a person that God can save, I need to show him a man, woman, youth whom He has saved! **To convince a man** that God can give hope, I need to show him a man with hope. **To convince a man** that God can give peace, joy, and love, I need to show him a man with peace, joy, and love. **To convince a man** that God can give complete, total, and utter satisfaction, I need to show him a satisfied man. When the world sees people who are holy, righteous, peaceful, joyful, and fulfilled, they see the evidence of God's transforming power. **Likewise, to convince a man** of the miracle of God's love and forgiveness, I need to demonstrate God's love for the unlovable, the undeserving and the unresponsive; as well the spirit of Jesus, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do!"

Christians who are unholy, unforgiving, and unloving lead unbelievers to slander God; those who are holy, loving, and forgiving lead them to glorify God. The central issue in evangelism is holy living. A truly powerful expression of the Bride of Christ is not built on carnal strategy, but on the virtue and holiness and manifestations of love of its people. What we believe is linked to how we live, and how we live is directly linked to the effectiveness of our gospel proclamation. So, Christian, it's imperative that you and I be "*blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world*" (Philippians 2:15). **Yes, it is true, that the unrepentant who remain lost do so because they love their sin and darkness (John 3:19-21); but it is also true that Christians are commanded to adorn the gospel with holiness and love. Jesus warns in the strongest of terms against offending, against causing others to stumble and against becoming 'saltless' salt, Mark 9:42-50. [This article is drawn from John MacArthur with some additions]**

LOVE— How Christ is Made VISIBLE in Gallatin! (1 Corinthians 13:1-7; John 13:34-35; Ephesians 4:11-16)

Love One Another: John 13:34-35; 5:12, 17; Rom 12:10; 1 Thess 4:9; John 3:11, 14, 23; 4:7, 11, 12:2; II John 1:5 and 1 Peter 1:22. (You get to look these up!) We are also to **increase** our love one for another (II Thess 1:3); **abound** in love for another, (I Thess 3:12).

** **We are to** have **fellowship** one with another (I John 1:17); **Forgive** one another (Eph. 3:13, 4:32 & Col. 3:13); **Bear** one another's sufferings (I Cor. 12:26) ** **We are to** serve one another with the gifts each has received (I Peter 4:10); **Serve** one another in love (Gal. 5:13); **Be kind** to one another (I Thess. 5:15); **Care for** one another (I Cor 12:25); **Bear** the burdens for one another (Gal. 6:2); **Wash** each other's feet or humbly serve one another (John 13:14); **Work with** one another (I Cor 3:9; II Cor. 6:1); **Teach** one another (Col. 3:16); Instruct one another (Rom. 5:14) ** **We are to Lovingly Edify/ Encourage** one another (Col 3:16, Heb 10:25); **Exhort** one another (Heb. 3:13); **Speak** the truth to one another (Eph 4:25); **Lay down** our lives one for another (I John 3:16); **Spur** one another to love and good deeds (Heb. 10:24); **Edify** (strengthen, build up) one another (I Thess. 4:18 & 5:1, 11; I Cor. 14:26); **Confess** our sins one to another (James 5:16); **Pray** for one another (James 5:16). ** **We are to honor** one another (Rom. 12:10) Be of **one mind** one with another (II Cor. 13:11; Rom. 12:16, 15:5); **Submit** to one another (Eph. 5:21); **Be clothed with humility** toward one another (I Peter 5:5); **Have patience** one with another (Eph. 4:2); **Live in peace** one with another (Matt. 9:50); **Receive one** another with hospitality (Rom. 15:7, I Peter 4:9); **Glorify God** together (Rom. 15:6) **We need each other!**

** **Receiving Must Precede Giving!** *"For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you"* (1 Cor. 11:23). **We simply cannot give what we have not received.** Receiving requires humility. Once we admit our need and freely receive from God and/or others, we will be overcome by gratefulness. In 430 B.C., a historian wrote, **"It was from those who had recovered from the plague that the sick and the dying found most compassion."** Because we must first receive before we can give, we are simply stewards of **"God's grace in its various forms"** (1 Peter 4:10). **We simply give to others what he has given to us.** Understanding this principle of stewardship should eliminate our pride—we are simply distributing God's resources, not our own. (1 Chronicles 29:9-14)

** **We Are To Give The One Anothers Freely/Generously!** *"Freely you have received, freely give"* (Matthew 10:8). The one others are to be given freely. We should never give with the expectation of a pay back

or with a required condition. **We never pay for what we receive from God. So, let us give freely.** Paul told Timothy, "The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly" (1 Timothy 1:14). God is not stingy, and neither should we be. He does not dispense his grace in small quantities, and neither should we.

We have an unlimited supply of comfort from the God of all comfort. (2 Cor. 1:3-4) Interestingly, we cannot fully comprehend all that God has given to us until we begin to give to others. In Philemon 6, the apostle Paul said, "*I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith, so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ.*"

**** We Are To Give The One Anothers Indiscriminately!** "*My brothers, as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, don't show favoritism*" (James 2:1). What's the point? Don't be selective in which one another you give.

Don't have the attitude that says, "I'll greet you, but I'm not going to accept you. I'll admonish you, but I'm not going to encourage you." Minister all of the one another to every person, as opportunity comes.

We can't have the attitude that says, "I'll comfort my children, but not my spouse. I'll accept people who look like me, but not anyone who is different. I'll encourage fellow Christians, but not unbelievers." We must be willing to minister all of the one another to all people.

For sure, some people are more difficult to love than others, but that challenge may be the "test" of whether or not **we** truly love as Christ loved us! "*Love your enemies. . . **If you love those who love you, what do ye more than others. . .do not even pagans do that?***" (Matt. 5:43-47) In short, "Give all to all!" The Lord Jesus himself said: "*It is more blessed to give than to receive.*" (Acts 20:35).

"*As I have loved you, so you must love one another*" (John 13:34). The command to "love others" was not new because part of the Old Testament law was to "love your neighbor as yourself" (Lev. 19:18). **It is the qualification to "love others as I have loved you" that is so radical!**

**** The One Anothers Are A MAJOR Key To Effective Evangelism:**

As we minister God's love to ONE ANOTHER in Christ and to others—some of the lost will be deeply touched and drawn to the source of so great a love: "*All men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another*" (John 13:35).

This is similar to the strategy that Peter gives **to wives who have unbelieving husbands**: "Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives" (1 Peter 3:1).

[Note: Much of this material was drawn from "*The 11th Commandment: Experiencing the One Another of Scripture*" by Don McMinn]

SOUTHSIDE NEWS NOTES! TUESDAYS: Come and sing every Tuesday night at Gallatin Health Care nursing home. Meet at the front door at 5:30PM. Questions call Bradley Pennington at 615-804-3054.

*** **WEDNESDAYS:** PRAYER SERVICE at 7:00PM! NOTE: Jody Allen is ministering to young Children, up to about age 10 during Prayer Service. Older children, but not old enough for the Youth Group... will be with their parents in the Prayer Service. YOUTH GROUP: Wednesdays 6-8pm... led by Byron Smith

NEXT LADIES BIBLE STUDY— Thursday, June 19, 11:00AM, led by Cindy Bell

* **SATURDAY MORNINGS @ 8am:** Men's Fellowship/Bible Study! *

*** **SUNDAY SCHEDULE FOR JUNE** ***

REGULAR SCHEDULE FOR JUNE 8, 15:

1. **9:30am-** Sunday School Bible Study and Small Group Fellowship
2. **10:45am-** Morning Worship / Children's Church
3. **NOON-** Covered-dish Fellowship Meal 4. **1:00pm-** Early afternoon Service

[June 15, Father's Day, give Gideon Bibles!]

*****SPECIAL SCHEDULE FOR JUNE 22 and 29:**

1. **9:30am-** Sunday School Bible Study and Small Group Fellowship
2. **10:45am-** Morning Worship / Children's Church

**** JUNE 22— LORD’S SUPPER;** no meal or afternoon service at church.
HOME MEETINGS!

**** JUNE 29—** No meal or afternoon service at church. CHURCH-WIDE SINGING, PRAISE, SCRIPTURE READING, TESTIMONIES AT 6:00pm

~~~~~

**SOUTHSIDE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL!** Children are like young plants in a garden— while young and tender they must be protected. Southside Christian School works in harmony with the local Church and empowers parents!

<http://www.aceministries.com/curriculum/?content=presentingACE>

**COMMITMENT TO JESUS CHRIST:** “If my commitment to the health and well-being of my physical body and physical health was on the same level as my commitment to Christ and His church— **WOULD I BE HEALTHY, VERY SICK, or DEAD?**” **In the following, let each of us make the kinds of decisions and commitments which we will be glad we made when we stand at the Judgment Seat of Christ to give an account of our stewardship!**

**1. \*\*\* OUTREACH MINISTRY— NEEDED:** 4 Teams with combinations of 2 couples; and/or a couple and 2 men; and/or a couple and two ladies. (We will ‘team up’ individual Outreach Ministry folk with others, as needed) **1. TO BE ON CALL** for ministry... one week every month. In other words, seek to be AVAILABLE for ‘sudden, unexpected needs; **2. SET ASIDE ONE EVENING and/or one daytime segment of time** to actually MAKE VISITS to widows; shut-ins, elderly, local hospital, a family who may have visited the church, and/or a church member needing encouragement; and/or SOMEONE with whom there may be an open door to share the gospel, etc.

**2. \*\*\*SUMMER CAMP: July 6-11**

**3. \*\*\* MEN: Elders; Deacons; OTHERS: EQUIPPING and/or preparation for PRESENT and/or possible future ministry:**  
**1. Commit to** specific studies; **2. Engage in** various ministries; **3.**

**Cultivate** personal walk with God. Tailored to each person's needs, gifts, time availability, sense of calling, etc. At the end of the way, ***participants may or may not be led/called*** to specifically serve as a deacon or as an elder; but ALL will be far better equipped for ministry unto the LORD through the local church.

4. \*\*\*\*The New Testament calls us **to church-wide prayer Meetings!** WHO WILL SEEK TO BE FAITHFUL TO WEDNESDAY NIGHT PRAYER SERVICE?

5. \*\*\* **FIFTH SUNDAY EVENINGS** filled with those from our local assembly SINGING (Individuals, families, duets, trios, quartets, families, Choir, etc.); Reading/Quoting SCRIPTURE; TESTIMONIES **THE FIRST ONE: JUNE 29, 6:00 pm**

**FINAL NOTE:** Let each of us make the kinds of decisions and commitments which we will be glad we made when we stand at the Judgment Seat of Christ to give an account of our stewardship!

Grace to all! James Bell