



**GROW
IN
GRACE**
NEWSLETTER

Volume 44, No. 1, January 3 , 2017 / 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; and 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."*** [NOT THAT IT REALLY MATTERS, BUT 5/2/2017 should be the start of Volume 42... years back, we got 'off track'... but 'it is what it is!']

2017: MODELING THE WAY OF LOVE IN A WORLD OF HATE!

John 13:35— "By this shall all men KNOW that YOU are MY disciples, IF YOU HAVE LOVE ONE TO ANOTHER!"

CIRCUMSTANCES: There are circumstances over which we have NO CONTROL. There are circumstances we can positively or negatively impact by the choices, decisions, attitudes, and/or actions which we personally take. **PEOPLE: We can influence people; but we cannot change them!** However, if we are Christians— we can experience God's enabling grace so that we are personally being transformed and changed more and more into Christlikeness— regardless of what 'they, he, or she is or is not doing! WE CAN and we MUST MODEL the love of Christ to our hate-filled world!

THE FIRST PLACE we must DEMONSTRATE that we are truly born again, Disciples of Jesus Christ is IN THE HOME! The assembly of saints will only experience and spread THE LOVE OF CHRIST, if the love of Christ is OVER-FLOWING FROM OUR HOMES! Husbands and Wives: For many years I have been privileged to engage in discipleship-counseling with many couples.

I have witnessed many sin-wrecked marriages healed— to God be the glory! I have witnessed many others proceed into destruction.

In every case where couples continued down the road to deepening destruction, the following was always true:

1. One or both insisted on embracing, confessing, and justifying anger, bitterness, resentment, and/or a refusal to forgive. They justified their refusal to obey God’s Word by pointing to the real or imagined failures of their spouse.

2. They would protest: “The reason I do not love my WIFE (with Christ’s redemptive, forgiving, sacrificing, serving, unselfish love) **is because she does not submit, etc.” OR:** “The reason I do not submit to my husband as unto the LORD is because of all his love failures, etc.”

BOTH FEEL JUSTIFIED in rebelling against the clear word of God— which is directed to their own behavior and attitudes. Their position is one of rebellion or WITCHCRAFT! (1 Samuel 15:23)

3. MOREOVER, those who continued to refuse to deal with their own heart needs would look for sympathy. They would speak negatively against their spouse to others. Sometimes they would even ‘demonize’ their spouse to others, as they sought to hide or justify their own sinful attitudes and actions.

GLORIOUS CONTRAST— in every case where HEALING in the marriage developed, the following was true:

1. The healing usually started with just the husband or the wife— either the husband or the wife embraced this mind-set: ***“From the Word of God I will discover and embrace my God-given responsibilities and do them as acts of worship to Jesus! I will leave the results with God! What my spouse is or is not doing does not change MY God-given ASSIGNMENT to live to please Jesus! I am to be a channel for His supernatural life— EVEN FOR the unloving, the unresponsive, and the undeserving!”***

Demonstrating love in a world of hate!

2. Those on God’s HEALING WAY, always deal with ‘percentages’ in this fashion: It matters not who IS MOST to blame. It only matters

that I deal with MY failures and that I yield to the Word of God and the empowering Holy Spirit to embrace my God-given responsibilities.

a. Unless the couple submits to godly counsel, because, ‘everyone proclaims their own goodness’... openly admitted or not, the husband will place most of the blame on his wife and the wife will place most on him. With this strategy, hell will ‘freeze over’ before such ones run out of ammunition to shoot at one another!

b. In contrast, in the HEALING WAYS OF GOD, each will simply deal with their own contributions to their marriage failure as if it were 100%... while forgiving the failures of their spouse. In other words, each one must deal exclusively with their own sins of commission, sins of omission, sins of attitudes, etc. ... and begin to fully embrace God given responsibilities; and leave their spouse’s failures (real or imagined!) with God!

BELOW IS AN UNFOLDING OF THE HEALING WAYS OF GOD IN MARRIAGE! Embrace them and BE HEALED! Embrace them and be re-kindled in love!

Embrace them and be strengthened with a God-given ‘Hedge’ of Protection! **Embrace them** and MODEL Jesus to a watching world! **Embrace them** and MODEL and TEACH them to a needy world! **Embrace them** model Christ to your children/grand children! **Embrace them** and DEMONSTRATE that you are GENUINE CHRISTIANS! **Embrace them** and the spiritual temperature of the Local Church to which the Holy Spirit has joined you will mightily rise! **Embrace them, MODEL, and proclaim them** to any who attempt to seek sympathy from you as they attempt to UNLOAD ON YOU the failures of their spouse.

Here is just the pure Word of God, unfolding foundational attitudes and actions for husbands and wives to carry out one toward the other. **It is utterly impossible to walk in these paths and not experience miracles from God!**

Let us carefully read and apply these Scriptures— to fail to do so is to invite DISASTER! **Faith responses** to God’s Word will yield miracle fruit! **Excuses, rejection and/or rebellion against the pure Word of God** will yield increasing heartache and coming judgment.

WIVES: Ephesians 5:22-24— “Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, **as unto the Lord.** 23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the savior of the body. 24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.” **Ephesians 5:33b— “... and the wife see that she reverences** her husband.” **Colossians 3:18— “Wives,** submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.”

1 Peter 3:1-6— “In the same way, you wives must accept the authority of your husbands. Then, even if some [husbands] refuse to obey the Good News, your godly lives will speak to them without any words. They will be won over by observing your pure and reverent lives. Don’t be concerned about the outward beauty of fancy hairstyles, expensive jewelry, or beautiful clothes. **You should clothe yourselves instead with the beauty that comes from within, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is so precious to God.** This is how the holy women of old made themselves beautiful. They trusted God and accepted the authority of their husbands. For instance, Sarah obeyed her husband, Abraham, and called him her master. You are her daughters when you do what is right without fear of what your husbands might do.” (New Living Translation)

HUSBANDS: Ephesians 5:25-31— “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, **and gave himself** for it; 26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, 27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. 28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loved his wife loved himself. 29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but **nourished and cherished it, even as the Lord the church:** 30 for we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. 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.” **Ephesians 5:33a— “... nevertheless let every one of you in particular** so love his wife even as himself...” **Colossians 3:19— “Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.” 1 Peter 3:7— “Likewise, ye husbands,** dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as

unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.”

REALITY: I must not only read these Scriptures, I must APPLY them in faith. **Faith is acting upon the Word of God in obedience!** Faith that is not expressed with obedience is not Christian faith. Jesus is very clear when He speaks: *“And why call ye me, LORD, LORD, and do not the things I say?”* (Luke 6:46) *“If ye love me, keep my commandments.”* (John 14:15) True Christian faith issues forth the fruit of obedience to the Word of God by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

REALITY: As we can see in the following verses, ALMIGHTY GOD does not allow for any ‘loop-holes!’ He gives no place for excuses. My required loving faith obedience to Jesus as LORD is not altered or lessened just because my spouse may not be obeying his/her God-ordained responsibilities.

In reality, when a spouse is in rebellion against Jesus— the other spouse must not flinch from their own ASSIGNMENT!— “JESUS has given me an opportunity to manifest life transforming miracles TO THE REBELLIOUS ONE by me heeding and obeying the following Scriptures!”

Matthew 5:44-48— “Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; 45 That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. 46 For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? 47 And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? 48 Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” Note: Since this is God’s standard for how to treat enemies, how we are to treat family could not be less!

ROMANS 12:14, 17-21— “Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not. 17 Recompense to no man evil for evil... 18 If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. 19 Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath {Leave

the field clear for God's wrath!}: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. 20 Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. 21 **Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."**

Walking in faith-obedience to these Scriptures by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit will yield much good fruit! Life will be simple! For you only have one thing do to— LIVE TO PLEASE JESUS! Keep yourself in the love of God, in the steps of Jesus and leave the results to Him! In spite of tears and pain, **your life will have joy, rejoicing, and song.** 'He', 'She' and/or 'They' will not be able to shut your mouth from praise! They can't steal your joy! They can't cause you to be angry, resentful, bitter, or depressed! **They can't rile up any aspect of your Galatians 5:19-21 'WORKS OF THE FLESH POTENTIAL!'**

WHAT 'HE/SHE/THEY' can do and often do is to give you (us) an opportunity to respond in the Spirit or to respond in the flesh— to manifest Galatians 5:19-21 (the bondage of the flesh) or Galatians 5:22-25 (the fruit of the Holy Spirit)!

If we respond in the Flesh—that's our choice to resist, grieve, and quench the Holy Spirit. It is our choice to please and listen to our carnal flesh and satan himself. If such is one's continuing lifestyle, such ones are not saved! (Gal. 5:21; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; Eph. 5:3-6)

IN CONTRAST, when we respond in the Spirit — which is the Christian's responsibility, privilege, choice, and power by the indwelling Holy Spirit — God is glorified as we DEMONSTRATE HIS LOVE IN A WORLD OF HATE!

Moreover, like our LORD JESUS CHRIST and like saints throughout the ages **our lives will be especially marked with joy, rejoicing, and with supernatural resilience! RESILIENCE:** The ability to bounce back after being pressed or stretched; the ability to recover strength, spirit, good humor! Don't miss this: 2 Cor. 4:7-18.

BY THE WAY, LET US FEAR INIQUITY! One definition of iniquity is GROSS INJUSTICE. The most **GROSS INJUSTICE ever committed on earth is to say that Almighty God is wrong in any decision, judgment or command He makes.** Now, we may say, “O, I would never think of such a horrible thing at that!”

Yet, that is precisely what we do whenever we excuse or cover our sin! **When we cover our own sin, excuse our sin, or rationalize our sin, or blame others for our sin or fail to agree with God that our sin is sin— we turn that sin into iniquity.** Adam's sin of eating the forbidden fruit ‘turned to iniquity’ when he said in Gen 3:12 ...,“The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me...”

Realized or not, that *blame-shift*, that *smokescreen* was a subtle accusation that God had mismanaged his life. Adam was really saying that his rebellion was God’s fault! **Verbally or ‘under my breath’— if I criticize and/or back-bite others,** ultimately I am blaming the good providence of God who permitted their ‘wrongs’ to be dumped on me!

When I deny, hide, and justify my carnal responses by pointing to ‘their’ failures— I may convince a whole army to sympathize with me. However, in GOD’S SIGHT, I am adding iniquity to my own sin. I am refusing to walk in humility. I am refusing to walk in the steps of Jesus, who responded to wrong done to Him with, **“Father forgive them for they know not what they do!”**

A MAJOR FIRST STEP it to do as King David finally did— CONFESS OUR SIN!

Psalm 38:1, 4— Even a real Believer may be heavy laden with iniquity. “O LORD, rebuke me not in thy wrath: neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure. **For mine iniquities** are gone over mine head: as a heavy burden they are too heavy for me.” For quite some time, **David had hid/excused his sin.** But praise God, there came a day when David was troubled by his own iniquity. Hope, Forgiveness, JOY and usefulness in God’s Kingdom revived! (Ps. 32, 51) LET EACH OF US diligently SEEK to see if we have covered or made any excuse for any sin. Let us join with David in praying, **“For I will declare mine iniquity;** I will be sorry for my sin.” (Ps. 38:18)

So be it in each of our lives! Grace to all! James Bell

www.southsidegallatin.org

SOUTHSIDE NEWS NOTES: MONDAYS: Jail Ministry— First and Second Monday of each month at 7:30pm. Questions? Contact Mike Munday at 615-681-7533

TUESDAYS: Come and sing every Tuesday night at Gallatin Health Care nursing home. Meet at the front door at 5:30PM. Contact Bradley at 615-804-3054.

WEDNESDAYS: ☐ **6:30pm— Children** Ministry/activities; ☐ **6:30pm— Youth** Activities and Bible Study— (For both of these... enter via double doors by gym)

☐ **6:30pm— Wednesday CHURCH PRAYER SERVICE...** Come in side entrance, iron steps... meet in Ladies Sunday School Room

LADIES BIBLE STUDY— Studies in the Gospel of Luke! TAKING A BREAK... NEXT MEETING: January 17, 2017 @ 11:00am; Cindy Bell teaching. [Front door open at 10:45 till 11:05am; or come in Iron Steps side entrance!]

MEN: EVERY SATURDAY MORNING @ 8am: Men's Fellowship/Bible Study! {January 7—STARTING in the Epistle of First John} ... Come to back of Church building... Come in under the drive-thru awning... walk forward... till you smell the coffee and biscuits!

Sunday Services, January 2017:

Sunday, January 8, __, 22, 31

9:30am - Sunday School

10:45am - Worship Service

Noon Covered Dish meal and 1pm afternoon service

Sunday, January 15

9:30am - Sunday School

10:45am - Worship Service // No meal. No 1pm service

HOME GROUPS MEET IN THE EVENING