



Volume 44, No. 3 January 17 , 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."***

BIBLICAL GUIDES to EMPOWER Godly DECISIONS!

EVERY DAY we make choices and decisions! Realized or not our decisions come from the desires and motives of our heart. All too often we make decisions with **no thought of** whether or not our decisions **'square with' the Word of God**, with no thought of our **accountability to God**, and with no **fear of God! Furthermore**, we often make decisions with **NO THOUGHT** of the impact our decisions will have on family members, neighbors, co-workers, and/or **the LOCAL CHURCH** to which the Holy Spirit has joined us!

WE MAKE DECISIONS with thought, forethought, or with no thought:

- 1. We make decisions** about setting aside Quiet Times with the LORD, about family times with the LORD, about setting aside Sundays for the LORD.
- 2. We make decisions** about SUNDAY SCHOOL Bible Study Fellowship and Ministry with the Local Church to whom the Holy Spirit has joined us for us to be 'contributing members'. (1 Cor. 12:13-27; Eph. 4:16)
- 3. We make daily decisions** about being SALT and LIGHT on the job and in the neighborhood, about being ON MISSION with God in the mission

field where He has placed us. At work and/or in the neighborhood, **we make decisions** about BUILDING BRIDGES of Christ's love to the lost.

4. We make decisions about inviting/bringing folks to Sunday School Fellowship Bible Study and CHURCH WORSHIP SERVICES where the lost can witness Christians loving God, His Word, each other, and a lost world.

5. EVERY SUNDAY we make decisions... about being on time, **about** actually worshipping the LORD, **about** giving generous offerings unto the LORD, **about** praying, **about** hearing and heeding the Word of God that is preached, **about** ministering and using gifts and talents, **about** welcoming visitors, **about** caring for those who are troubled or discouraged, **about** inviting someone to sit with us during the fellowship lunch, **about** setting up appointments to team up for ministry during the coming week, **about** joining with fellow saints at church wide prayer times, And we make decisions **about** serving the LORD through various ministries.

6. Likewise, we make decisions about heartfelt participation, **about** SINGING UNTO THE LORD, **about responding to the teaching and preaching of God's Word with vocal 'AMENS!' as a Biblical way to express true worship to God.**

7. We make decisions about coming to THE LORD'S TABLE to remember Christ's death and resurrection.

8. We also make multiple **attitude decisions** as to how we respond to each other; and as to how we choose **to be or not to be** solution oriented to problems which may arise.

**** **Sadly, for many,** the decision which is made about all these matters is to live without giving much or any thought to most or any of the above!

ALL THE MORE REASON WE MUST ASK: What Guides our Decision Process? What MOTIVES lie behind our decision process?

1. There are those who make these kinds of decisions based on one or more of the following motives: * I simply enjoy doing them. * I like to participate. * I like the people. * My friends are there. * People in my age bracket are there. * I like the programs. *They have MY style of music. * I like the pastor. * I get esteem from others because of my

service. * I'm expected to do it! * Somebody has to do it, etc! OR.... I am seeking to HONOR and follow Jesus in all that I do!!

2. Others make such decisions based upon: * I don't want to. * I don't feel like it. * **I will if** I feel like it. * **If** company does not come. * **If** we do not have a trip planned. * I was too tired. * It's too boring. * Somebody hurt my feelings. * The preaching was too deep! * The preaching was too shallow. * No one spoke to me. * Things were not done my way. * I am not going to make any commitments, etc.

Here is a decision process which 'sounds good' **but may be** an excuse all covered up in religious garb: *I just don't feel led to, *I don't have peace about it'...

SERIOUS QUESTIONS FOR EACH OF US!

- 1. Is it OK WITH GOD** for us to be uncommitted or half-hearted in the work of Christ?
- 2. Is it enough** to be faithful, *just because* we happen to like the way things are done, or because friends or family will be present?
- 3. Is it right** to have to be pampered or else we will quit, won't serve?
- 4. Is it right** to give God the left-overs of our lives, to have no zeal for excellence in God's Work?
- 5. Don't we desperately need motives *higher than*** our feelings, whims, likes, or dislikes?
- 6. Is it OK to disregard the Word of God?**

IN MAKING Christian life and ministry decisions **SHOULDN'T WE TAKE INTO SERIOUS CONSIDERATION— *** The MERCY, GRACE, and LOVE OF GOD TO US; *** The Coming JUDGMENT; *** And the FEAR OF GOD?**

1. Christians are moved to make decisions in view of the amazing Mercy of God! Gratitude is the chief motivation for all true Christian living, service, loyalty, faithfulness, zeal, etc.

ROMANS 12:1 — "I APPEAL to you therefore, brethren, and beg of you in view of [all] the mercies of God, **to make a decisive dedication of your bodies** [presenting all your members and faculties] **as a living sacrifice,**

holy (devoted, consecrated) and well pleasing to God, which is your **reasonable** (rational, intelligent) **service and spiritual worship.**" (Rom. 12:1, Amp)

Beware of this DEADLY Pit fall: We faithfully labor... and it seems to us that no one cares, no one appreciates, and no one has any idea the sacrifice we made. THUS, we tend to focus on the lack of expressed gratitude from people. Then, we sink down into a pit of despondency, or resentment, or we QUIT.... GRANTED, Christian folk should have eyes and hearts open, looking for opportunity to express THANKS and GRATITUDE for the labors of others!

HOWEVER, let us remember that if others fail to give us such, we have NO LESS REASON to make our DECISIONS and CHOICES out of gratitude for His grand and immeasurable mercies to us!

FURTHER APPLICATION: All around us are those who are deceived and blinded by sin, self, satan, and society. As a Christian, by the mercies of God you/we have been set free from this deception and blindness. LET US REMEMBER:

After the woman at the well encountered Jesus Christ, she went back to her town FREE from her bondage and in GRATITUDE crying out, "Come see a man..." **Unless we grieve and quench the Holy Spirit this week—we will also go into our world rejoicing in Christ and inviting others to Him!**

2. LET US ALL make decisions in view of the Love of God! "For *the love of Christ compels us*, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again!

Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new... Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ..." (2 Cor. 5:14-21, NKJV)

Application: What an astounding miracle! Every Christian now has an INDWELLING COMPELLING, (by the Holy Spirit who floods us with His love), to cease selfishness and to live to please Christ.

Moreover, we have the most SIGNIFICANT calling in the world: We are ambassadors for Christ, with a ministry of reconciliation! Thus, there is no greater Christ revealing testimony than when we love one another! (John 13:34-35)

CHRISTIAN: God proved His love to you while you were an unlovable, undeserving, and unresponsive GOD HATING rebel. (Romans 8:7) When He mercifully and lovingly saved you by His amazing grace, (Ephesians 2:1-10) — He FLOODED your heart with His love: Romans 5:5. You now love God because He first loved you, (1 John 4:10). Therefore, you are supernaturally empowered to love the unlovable, the undeserving, and the unresponsive! ARE YOU MISSING THIS MIRACLE?

Are you refusing to so love; and are you excusing yourself by pointing to how horribly bad your spouse, neighbor, co-worker, or your fellow church member is?

Then, hear the Word of God, 1 John 4:7, 8, 20: *Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.*

He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love... If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother [his sister, wife, husband, etc.], he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?

3. LET US ALL make decisions in view of the DAY of JUDGMENT!

*** “So then **every one of us shall give account** of himself to God.” (Romans 14:12) “For **we must all** appear before the judgment seat of Christ; **that every one** may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. (2 Cor. 5:10)

*** **“Every man’s work** shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is. **If any man’s work abide** which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. **If any man’s work shall be**

burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.” (1 Cor. 3:13-15)

JUDGMENT DAY: “For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, **and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.** Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: **but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.**” (Heb. 4:12-13)

JUDGMENT DAY: “**Nothing in all creation is hidden from God.** Everything is naked and exposed before his eyes, and he is the one to whom we are accountable.” (Heb. 4:13, New Living Translation) “**He knows about everyone, everywhere.** Everything about us is bare and wide open to the all-seeing eyes of our living God; **nothing can be hidden from Him to whom we must explain all that we have done**” (Heb. 4:13, Living Paraphrase)

APPLICATION: Making decisions and choices based on remembering that we are going to have to give an account will keep us from a ton of unnecessary trouble! We waste time and energy and **QUENCH AND GRIEVE THE HOLY SPIRIT BY** judging others and/or confessing **THEIR** sins rather than our own. And often such judgment is done in a **SLASHING** fashion that wounds others. **O happy day when we focus on confessing/ judging OUR OWN sin and not the sin of others!**

4. LET US ALL make decisions in view of the FEAR OF GOD! “**The LORD taketh pleasure in them that FEAR HIM, in those that hope in His mercy.**” (Psalm 147:11) “By mercy and truth iniquity is purged; and by the fear of the LORD men depart from evil.” (Prov. 16:6) “The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death.” (Prov. 14:27) “The fear of the LORD tendeth to life: and he that hath it shall abide satisfied; he shall not be visited with evil.” (Prov. 19:23)

THE FEAR OF THE LORD: “The fear of the LORD is the continual awareness that I am in the presence of the Holy, Just and Almighty God; and that every thought, word and action is open before Him and is being judged by Him.”

“The fear of the LORD is affectionate reverence by which the child of God humbly and carefully bends himself to the Father’s will and law.”

Application: We will either live in the bondage of the fear of man or we will live in the freedom and joy of a life lived FEARING GOD!

SERIOUS QUESTIONS TO ASK MYSELF:

- 1. Will my decisions stand** and be accepted on the Day of Judgment?
- 2. Do my decisions** ‘square with’, agree with the Holy Word of God?
- 3. Are my decisions** clearly in the steps of the compassion and humility of Jesus? Are they the OVERFLOW of a heart FLOODED WITH the love of God?
- 4. Am I making** decisions, holding attitudes, and establishing priorities **in light of** the mercies of God, **in light of** the compelling love of God, **in light of** JUDGMENT DAY, **and in light of** the Fear of God?

“So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.” (Romans 14:12, KJV) “Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.” (Heb. 4:13, KJV)

“He knows about everyone, everywhere. Everything about us is bare and wide open to the all-seeing eyes of our living God; nothing can be hidden from Him **to whom we must explain all that we have done.**” (Heb. 4:13, Living Paraphrase)

Abundant Grace to Each and 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! ... NEXT MEETING: TUESDAY, *January 31, 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! {*STUDYING the Epistle of First John*} AT THE back of Church building... Come in under the drive-thru awning, walk forward, coffee & biscuits WAITING!

Sunday Services, January 22

9:30am - Sunday School

10:45am - Worship Service

Noon Covered Dish meal and 1pm afternoon service

Sunday Services, January 29

9:30am - Sunday School // 10:45am - Worship Service

NO... Noon Covered Dish meal and 1pm afternoon service

5:30PM - 7:30PM FAITHFUL MEN'S MONTHLY

FELLOWSHIP/STUDY/EQUIPPING RESUMES (Normally 4th Sunday; 5th this month) Study resumes on the 16 TESTS of an AUTHENTIC New Testament Church.

In 2016, we covered the first 7 tests. Because we have taken a 2 month break, on 1/29/17, we will review the first 7 Tests. **BEFORE COMING...** PLEASE REVIEW the first 7 TESTS! Come PREPARED with that which STANDS OUT to you as the most important TRUTH from each of the TESTS!