

# GROW IN GRACE NEWSLETTER

Volume 46, No. 4, January 26, 2021 / Southside Baptist Church / 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 JESUS CHRIST!”***

## JESUS Builds His Church!

**Genuine Christianity is all about RELATIONSHIPS!** The primary relationship is, of course, a personal, saving relationship with Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. **The next vital relationship is that of fellowship in the body of Christ**—specifically of being together **in a local church** with other brothers and sisters in Christ. (Acts 1 & 2; 1 Cor. 12; Eph. 4) **It is primarily in a local church CONTEXT that** we are able to carry out the various ***‘one to another’ ministries which are stated over 50 times in the Epistles.***

In the Christian Home and in the local assembly of saints in Christ, Christ is our exalted HEAD and we are ‘serving members’ in His Body of which He is the Head; and in His Body we are to live in submission one to another in the fear of God. (Eph. 5:21)

**AS AN OVERFLOW of these primary relationships we are called and motivated by the indwelling compelling of the Holy Spirit to move out into our world to advance the cause of Christ.**

**As we have seen: Andrew** went to Peter; **Philip**, to Nathaniel; **the woman at the well**, back to her city. **Cornelius** went to his

household; **the Philippian jailer**, to his household; **AND we find the EX-demonic of the Gadarenes** [1] sitting at the feet of Jesus, [2] fully clothed [3] in his right mind; **AND [4] JESUS INSTRUCTED HIM to go back to his home people and tell them what great things the LORD had done for him!**

Jesus told the disciples, ***“You shall be my witnesses in [1] Jerusalem; [2] Judea; [3] Samaria and [4] to the uttermost part of the earth.”***

***‘YOU SHALL BE MY WITNESSES!’***— that is, **we are to demonstrate by our lives real evidence of Christ in our lives to the people in our world, starting with those closest to home!** This is the ‘music’ of the gospel which makes the gospel tracts, sermons, Bible Studies, etc, all the more believable!

**REALITY:** The Gospel is spread along lines of relationships.

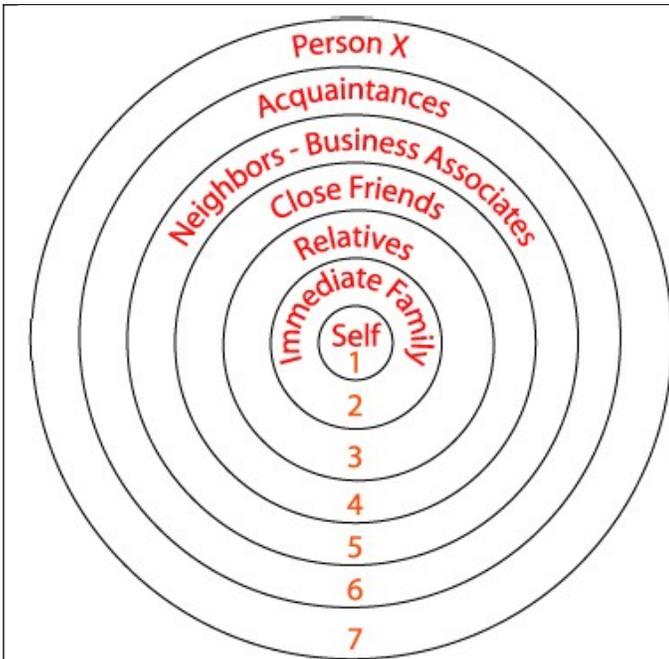
\*\*\* If we ‘close our curtains’ and live to ourselves **and/or**

\*\*\* if our relationships are ruptured and/or if our lives are unholy— then, it is very difficult for the Gospel to advance.

**Thus, all across the land, churches,** (lacking the true ‘Gospel Music’ of flowing love, joy, peace, kindness, forgiveness and holiness) **dumb down to trying to advance the gospel by means of various forms of entertainment.**

**THE GRAND TOOL OF JESUS IN BUILDING HIS CHURCH is the TRANSFORMED LIFE OF ONE WHO IS ALREADY TRANSFORMED BY THE GOSPEL—** such as the ‘Woman at the well and the now, ex-demonic: **“GO BACK HOME and**

**tell the people WHAT GREAT THINGS God has done for you!”**



**REALITY:** All too often we have hidden ruptured and/or strained relationships in our Bible believing Christian churches and homes that hinder the spread of the Gospel of Christ!

This is one reason that we find it easy to **jump past** family, relatives, friends, neighbors, business or work associates, and even acquaintances and go to Person X to evangelize!

**We run out to “Person X”** and we give them the gospel or a tract; and then, we run back to the safety of our home or church! (Rabbit holes— places where we are isolated from the world!)

**Person X may be in** the high crime streets of a big city or in a third world, poverty stricken country, or in a rescue mission or jail — **we go to them!** We evangelize. We come home. We tell others about our efforts. We go back to our business, job, home, church and/or daily routines; and every so often we repeat the cycle. Others may commend us for being willing to ‘go to the streets’ or to a foreign land and minister for a few hours, days, or even weeks.

**Now there is no doubt about it:** Person X needs the Gospel and they are a part of the world that we are called upon to evangelize! **Ministry to Person X is valid and needed! **HOWEVER,****

**The question in this article is— WHY is it that all too often we do not GO TO THE FOLKS IN CIRCLES 2-6?**

**Well, it could be because they know us— they know our salty language, lustful looks, greedy grasping, anger, business deceit, gossip, immorality, gluttony, ‘fussin and feudin’, etc.** They see how we are at work, or at school, or in our home.

**WAKE UP CALL:** We might need to, first of all, ask for their forgiveness or give forgiveness. (Which if that is what we need to do— just do it! That is powerful witnessing!)

**Also, with Person X, we don’t have to deal with our ‘hang-ups’ and we can ‘love them and leave them!’** We make a ‘quick trip’ to a third world country, (Or even stay 45 days as I have!), but then we come home. Again, yes, there is need and a place for such endeavors. **But frankly, such labors** are usually **simple and easy** as compared to witnessing to those in circles 2-6!

**With missions/evangelism right in our own town, or with outreach efforts toward neighbors just down the street— it’s different and far more difficult! Why? How so?**

Again, the folks around us KNOW us— warts and all! BUT ALSO, with ministry in Circles 2-6, it’s week after week, month after month, year after year. **Ministering to those in Circles 2-6 is much like the career missionary: we are there for the long haul—** planting, watering, praying, and waiting for the LORD to

give the increase! We can't leave them. We can't just do Sunday School, or ministry to a neighbor, or to a co-worker once or twice a year.

Rather, we minister to them week after week and year after year—or at least maintain availability to minister, being alert for the next opportunity!

We can't just 'walk by on the other side' nor can we 'love them and leave them'— leaving the hard work of 'on-going follow up' ministries to others.

**To folks in our Circles 2-6, we are THEIR career missionaries or their full-time Rescue Mission Ministers, etc. Thus, we have to stop and give sacrificially of ourselves and our time.**

## **HAVE WE SERIOUSLY CONSIDERED THIS—**

**If** we find an 'open door' with a family, with an individual— **do we not have to be prepared** to follow-up week after week and even beyond?

**If** at Church services, we discover a need in someone or that a visitor is present— **doesn't the S.S. class or you have** opportunity/responsibility for follow-up ministry?

**OR... AM I / are we** content to just do 'rabbit-hole' evangelism... **or to do no evangelism or other outreach ministries?**

Over the years a good number of dear ones have told me that they felt **it was so much easier to minister the Gospel in a particular foreign land, than here at home:** "God is obviously at work in such and such place or nation— that's where I want to be!" In contrast, they proclaim that gospel

ministry can be so hard here in America. Besides, Americans have already heard the gospel.

**But here is some larger reality: If we were the actual ones living in and ministering in that ‘third world’ country or in a big city Rescue Mission every day, 365 days a year and year after year— we would not think it easy and we would see and experience their intense spiritual warfare!**

Years back I had spent 2 weeks in India, and about 2 years later, one month in India; but it was not until after spending 45 days in India on a third trip... that I began to feel just a little of what it would be like to be called to minister in India 365 days a year! **All of those folks were in my Person X! But all who were Person X to me— those same folk were the people of Circles 2-6 to the Indian pastors and gospel workers— 365 days a year.**

On three different occasions I, along with others, walked the streets of major cities in India all day for a week at a time, passing out tracts and doing street preaching. In years past, a number of our folk did good ministry in Mexico, or at the Jail, or Rescue Mission, or Nursing Home. **These are all ministries to our Person X group. Praise the LORD!**

But our ‘Person X’ group is the Rescue Mission’s and India’s pastors; and/or the Mexico pastor’s or Christian worker’s **Person 2-6 Group!** That’s where most of the real work is done. Yes, we can have a valid ministry to Person X, especially when we leave them connected to local churches and ministries. But the farmer knows that he must do more than scatter a bunch of seed and then leave town!

Yes, whatever we do among Person X is a ‘piece of cake!’ when compared to the labor required from the native pastors or from the Rescue Mission Staff!

***BUT, again, the PRIMARY QUESTION of this article is— WHO IS GOING TO TAKE THE GOSPEL TO THOSE IN OUR ‘2-6’ WORLD?***

**And the answer is that I MUST!**

**AND SO MUST YOU!**

**But, we protest:** “The people in my “2 to 6” world are not responsive to the gospel!” ... ‘And, it’s so hard... and what if it requires me to spend time with them every week...?’”

**YOU KNOW: It is amazing the amount of time we spend EVERY WEEK on STUFF that does not have ETERNITY written on it! ... But we hold back on spending quality and quantity time with SOULS who do have eternity written on them!**

**Moreover,** we are poor judges as to what is really happening. Many a great harvest has come after a number of apparent crop failures! Let us keep planting, watering. God will give the increase!

**Second,** we are called to be faithful.

**Third, look in the Bible— very often God has His servants in ‘gospel-hardened’ places! Just ask Noah! And then remember, that Jesus says that the last days will be like the days of Noah!**

***Forth, beware of modeling after the apparent success methods of the entertainment oriented religious harlot! Our lost world does***

*not need PLAY ACTING visuals! They need REAL VISUALS—Christians who genuinely love and forgive, who are manifesting joy and hope in trials and tribulations, who manifest the COMPASSION of Jesus and who are walking in holiness.*

**A MASTER KEY:** With the folks in our “2-6” world, life tumbles in for all of them. They have both good and ‘bad’ things that happen to them. **And the same things happen to saints in Christ!** They do not have resources to help them deal with the trials and troubles. BUT YOU DO!

**As they WITNESS you winning the battle** over bitterness, revenge, hate, fear and resentments— the Gospel is being seen in Circles 2-6! **The MUSIC of the gospel is flowing from you. You are making them ‘THIRSTY’ and HUNGRY for good news, for GRACE to handle life!**

Thus, when life does tumble in, we often have FRESH OPPORTUNITIES or “points of contact” to sow seeds of kindness and love! Love is, after all, meeting real needs.

***Thus, real ‘2-6’ evangelism/missions/witnessing starts with how I treat my wife, my family, those closest to me, those who are neighbors, those I work around and/or those I may casually meet in the town/county where I live.***

**Real ‘2-6’ evangelism/missions/witnessing starts with being a congregation that loves, that forgives, and that seeks to live holy and pure!**

IF WE CANNOT OR IF WE REFUSE TO manifest love, forgiveness and holiness in these settings— we become guilty of hypocrisy; we grieve the Holy Spirit; and ZEAL for TELLING the gospel shuts down! ***Psalm 51 prescribes great healing medicine for this***

***common spiritual disease!*** (Concepts for this article are edited from and the diagram is from ***Concentric Circles of Concern***, by W. Oscar Thompson, Jr.)

**Grace to each one in Christ!** James Bell // [jwillie123@aol.com](mailto:jwillie123@aol.com)  
[www.southsidegallatin.org](http://www.southsidegallatin.org)

## **NEWS NOTES:**

**EVERY Saturday, \*\*\* 8:00am — Men's Bible Study: *THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS!* (Doors open by 7:30am... coffee, juice, donuts, and Hardee's Biscuits are available!)**

**\*\*\* NEXT Ladies Bible Study— Tuesday, February 9, 11:00am: Women of the Bible!**

**SUNDAY— January 31, 2021 \*\*\* Sunday School at 9:30am:** Nursery, Children's classes, Youth, and Adult classes. **\*\*\* WORSHIP SERVICE at 10:45am!**

**Sunday Evening: January 31, 5:00pm-FIFTH SUNDAY Church-wide SINGING/PRAISE to the LORD; SCRIPTURE READING from Dean Baney; and PREACHING the WORD from Luke Haskins!**

***TUESDAYS: WEEKLY Youth Group Meeting, ages 12 and up ... Tuesdays a 7:15pm... at Jaden and Rhi's home...***

## **WEDNESDAY NIGHTS @ SOUTHSIDE:**

***6:30pm— Come in by the back 'double doors' under the Drive Thru awning! \*\* Adult Prayer Service \*\* Young FAMILIES Prayer Service***

**\*\*\* HEALTH REMINDERS as to CHURCH SERVICES**

**1. IF YOU ARE SICK... [OR if** you are presently in a state of high immune deficiency **or if** (at home or work) you are caring for one who is sick; **or if** you have • **Fever;** • Coughing; • • Chills; • Headache; • Sore throat; etc.], **please stay home!**]

**2. IF YOU ARE HEALTHY and well... you may or may not choose to wear a mask... or gloves... WE do not require; we WILL NOT provide such. WE CONTINUE to encourage FREEDOM... as to 'social distancing'— 6ft apart... give sensitivity and respect one to another.**

***ADDED NOTE: In addition to carefulness, and good hydration, good nutrition, and sleep— ALSO: so as to SEEK TO HAVE A STRONG IMMUNE SYSTEM... I PERSONALLY TAKE ELDERBERRY, VITAMIN C, ZINC, GINGER, VITIMIN D, Quercetin, and a good multi-vitamin that includes fiber.***

**3. LET each of us DO OUR PART IN personal hygiene. *IF you use the restrooms— please wash your hands with SOAP; and use nearby SANITIZER.***

**IT IS A MATTER OF SAFETY for all, (ESPECIALLY for SENIOR ADULTS), CHILDREN ANY WHERE IN THE CHURCH BUILDING — No unsupervised Children!**

**\*\*\*\*\*FOR THOSE AT HOME: TO RECEIVE THE 10:45am LIVE STREAMING of the worship service of January 31... GO TO: [www.southsidegallatin.org](http://www.southsidegallatin.org) [You can also connect to our YouTube page for past messages & Bible Studies!]**

**\*\*\**LOVE OFFERINGS UNTO THE LORD BY MAIL or ONLINE GIVING:* SUCH funds, (if checks), make out to Southside Baptist) —**

**MAIL TO: Southside Baptist Church, P.O. Box 1594, Gallatin, TN 37066**

**OR, you may choose to GIVE, via ONLINE GIVING:**

**<https://southsidebaptist.breezechms.com/give/online>**

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