

2007 Proclaimer

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, .. to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord!" - Isa.61:1-2

A teaching and exhortation medium by members of the Carmichael Church of Christ, meeting at 6044 Sutter Ave. Carmichael, CA 95608

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Helping Others to Heaven in 2007

by Vern Wilson

Isn't that what serving the Lord is all about? Using every present moment as a challenge to get closer to God's expectations of His faithful people? And haven't we learned that in order to be close to God we must be close to His Family here on earth? That requires efforts that are expended when we are "distributed" ~ as well as when we're "assembled" ~ don't you think? So the question arises: "WHAT ARE WE DOING to get closer to God's family during the week when we're not assembled together? Do we seek opportunities away from this building to visit, or help, or assist, our brethren of this local church family?

How do things work in our physical family? Don't we feel a special relationship to and an affinity for those in our immediate fleshly families? Don't we go out of our way to aid or help or encourage them every way we can to improve their assets (both physically and spiritually) in every way we can that would be beneficial to them?

The question relegates itself to "How can I be most productive in glorifying the Lord in my relationship with my brethren IN CHRIST?" A poignant consideration in answering this question is to meditate on the personal observation, "What's the best thing I've got going for God's cause?" or, "What's my checklist for "Things to get done in the next 90 days for God? These are important topics that we often don't want to consider, for different reasons. ---Cont'd. on page 2

ONE REASON may be that we don't have ANYTHING, tangible or specific, going on right now that demands our attention, our continuing interest, our efforts, and/or our communications with those of like purposes! Isn't that a terrible thought? ***Nothing really specific being done or even PLANNED for the cause of my Crucified Savior in my life right now?***

ANOTHER REASON may be that we have the WRONG THINGS going in the priority slots in our schedules! We're often forced to deal with "URGENT" things instead of the truly "IMPORTANT" things of life! It's the old idea that *"the wheel that's squeaking gets the grease," isn't it?* And we just get so caught up in our busy lives that we don't really realize that we need to be making important plans regarding activities God expects of us!

FINALLY, if we've been living such a "rum-dum" existence, we may have reached the point where **WE DON'T EVEN CARE WHAT'S GOING ON IN OUR LIVES!** And this is certainly the regrettable condition of too many of us (even one is too many!).

GOD CARES what's going on with me and my influence and actions for good! My loving brethren care about that, too! And I REALLY OUGHT TO CARE about myself! The best way to obtain such a goal is to be around someone who's already practicing that "spiritual life-style"! That's the best stimulation we can get to help us stay focused on serving God productively!

The condition of the Lord's church in Carmichael doesn't depend on the next generation – it depends on THIS generation and how we're NOW encouraging and training that next group who'll be the leaders of the congregation here. Are we fulfilling the NEED? ---clw

Focus! Focus! Focus!

I recently read a story about a bloodhound that started chasing a beautiful deer until a fox ran across his path. Distracted, the hound took off after the fox until a rabbit crossed his path, so he chased the rabbit instead, that is, until a mouse ran across the path and into a hole. You got it: The hound that started chasing a magnificent deer ended up staring down into a mouse hole!

That's kind of humorous and we may chuckle at the easily diverted dog. But if we stop and think, we may realize that we too are sometimes easily distracted. Those who have believed the gospel, turned from sin, confessed our belief in Christ and were baptized into His life-giving death have begun a noble journey like the bloodhound, except we're not after deer, we're after heaven. But just like the hound, it's too easy to begin well and then be detoured from the prescribed way by things that "run" across our own paths.

Listen to the apostle Paul: *"Suffer hardship with me as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier."* (**2 Tim 2:3-4**) Paul reminds young Timothy that if he is to serve the Lord in an acceptable manner, he must stay focused on the task at hand; that is, living a life everyday that is pleasing to God. For this reason, Paul encouraged Timothy to keep the sincere, genuine faith that he began with by "kindling afresh the gift that is within you." (2 Tim 1:5-6) It may be that Paul is speaking of some spiritual gift that he imparted to Timothy, but what about our own gift? Each one of us who has submitted to Christ in baptism has received the greatest gift of all: Salvation.

Like the bloodhound in our story neglected to do, we must keep the "scent of heaven"

fresh within us so we do not turn aside from the road that leads to our goal. We are warned not to be one of those who *"will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths."* (**2 Tim 4:4**) We study the Bible so that we will be wary of those who teach error, but consider the myths of everyday life that so easily distract us: The pursuit of more money, the "scheduling conflicts" that require our time and presence away from the assembly, the excuses of 1,001 other things that keep us from studying God's Word, daily prayer, and encouraging our brethren.

We too often forget that being a disciple of Christ is a life of enduring hardship in a variety of ways. We may lose friends for the cause of Christ, or we may miss a television show, or miss out on some sleep, or we may even lose out on making money because we choose to put spiritual things ahead of material, worldly things. Unfortunately though, too often we allow the conveniences and temptations of this world to influence us and cause us to lose our devotion to what was at one time the most important thing to us. Instead, being diverted from the path, we relegate spiritual things to 2nd, 4th, 10th, or 25th place in our lives as we chase after life's "rabbit trails."

Let us be reminded to *"seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness"* (**Matt 6:33**), knowing that if God is in FIRST place, our priorities have not been lost. Let us continue in the things we have learned and become convinced of, knowing that we must *"Take pains with these things, be absorbed in them, so that your progress will be evident to all. Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for as you do this, you will ensure salvation for yourself and for those who hear you."* (**2 Tim 3:14, 1 Tim 4:15-16**)

(Zeke Flores)

THOSE NEEDING PRAYERS

Logan & Julie & Jackson Agee

Jason & Marie Anderson

Frank & Tina Ayers

(Tina's sister passed in NY)

Edith Ayers

Jack & Dorothy Bailey

Margie Buchanan

Bill Cain

Larry Cain

Robert (Bob) Erickson

Helen Gray

Margaret Holcomb

Chuck House

David & Jerica & Samantha Lovett

Jean McCarty

Jeffrey & Kaye Pennant

Wendell and Irma Rapier

Rosa Reagan

Glenn & LaurieAnn Reagan

Andy & Liz & Eli Roadman

Caleb & Jacob Robertson

Taylor Romine

Ray Rude

The Rusk Family

Bill & Rena Schultz

Brad & Shawna Shuck

Chantalle Shuck

Ola Thornburg

Nancy Valine

Shirley Watkins

Bill & Sue Westphal

Ellie Williams

Gordon & Glenda Wilson

TRAVELING IN THEIR WORK

Karen Daly

Rick Rittenhouse

Aaron Robertson

David Lovett

Gordon Wilson

IN THE MILITARY

Jason Anderson

David Lovett

Aaron Robertson

Trent Walsh

ALL OF THIS AVAILS ME NOTHING

Esther 3:1-5

INTRODUCTION:

- A. In the book of Esther we read of a man named Haman.
 - 1. The king had commanded all his servants to bow before him and paid him homage.
 - 2. Materially, Haman had everything going for him, but spiritually he was depressed.
- B. When we're neglectful about our blessings, we can be just like Haman was.
 - 1. In our spiritual bank account we can also be *"broken and bankrupt"*!
 - 2. In our mental good judgments we can be *dejected and sorrowful!*
 - 3. In God-given abilities we can be *insolvent and without resources!*

I. THE EXAMPLE (of a disgraceful collapse, or downfall)

- A. One of the first attitudes leading to downfall is DISCONTENTMENT
 - 1. Haman becomes significant in the book of Esther just after Esther becomes the queen, as wife of King Ahasuerus. Esther 3:1-5
 - 2. Haman was jealous of Mordecai, so his wife suggested that he hang the Jew.
- B. Others have also manifested the problems of Discontentment:
 - 1. KING DAVID, as seen in 2 Sam 10-11
 - 2. KING AHAB AND QUEEN JEZEBEL. 1 Kings 21:1-14
 - 3. KING HEZEKIAH. 2 Kings 20:12-17
- C. Summing up thus far
 - 1. These were men and women who had so much, but it just wasn't enough, was it?
 - 2. One thing always stands in the way when contentment and happiness are measured with NUMBERS and SCALES and PRIDE.

II. YEARNING AND DISCONTENTMENT

- A. Our physical Wealth will never give spiritual satisfaction
 - 1. Saul of Tarsus was wealthy in prospect: Phil 3:3-6
 - 2. But he abandoned that to serve Christ and make Him first in his life! Gal 6:14
 - 3. We have everything that really matters. 1 Pet 1:3-5; 2 Pet 1:2-4
 - 4. It is the promise of instant gratification that makes people trade 20 years worth of annuities in for an immediate, but smaller percentage of their blessing.
- B. Envy of TEMPORAL things dilutes the focus needed to follow God. "1 Jn 3:7; Pr 12:28
 - 1. In spite of seeing our blessings, envy challenges us to lust after things others have.
 - 2. Envy makes us waste time seeking what others have! Pro 23:4; 1 Cor 13:4.
- C. Covetousness
 - 1. There is not much to add when it comes to covetousness, except that greed does not always need an object to envy in order to get its power: Eccl 5:10-17
 - 2. War breaks out in the covetous man's heart: James 4:1-5
- D. Lust, as in the heart of King David. Matt 5:27-28
- E. Satisfaction ~ What Haman wanted from Mordecai was satisfaction -- the knowledge that Mordecai had humbled himself and submitted his will to Haman's.

SUMMARY:

- A. Contentment is a Learned Asset. But it's to be LEARNED PROPERLY!
 - 1. DON'T BE CONTENT if you're not in a right relationship with God.
 - 2. DON'T BE CONTENT if you're leading others toward eternal destruction.
 - 3. **DON'T BE CONTENT** thinking all is well & in order, unless you're on your death bed!
- B. OBEY THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST. OFFER THE LORD YOUR SERVICE AND YOUR INFLUENCE FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE!