

TAKE TWO: GIVE ONE TO A FRIEND

KANSAS FAITH AND FAMILY

MEMBER



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"WHEN ANXIETY WAS GREAT WITHIN ME, YOUR CONSOLATION BROUGHT JOY TO MY SOUL." PSALM 94:19

Flint Hills Praisefest Celebrates 15 Years with Weekend of Worship and Service

By Faith BroKar

Flint Hills Praisefest will celebrate its 15th anniversary September 24–27 at CiCo Park in Manhattan, bringing Christians together for several days of music, worship, service and fellowship.

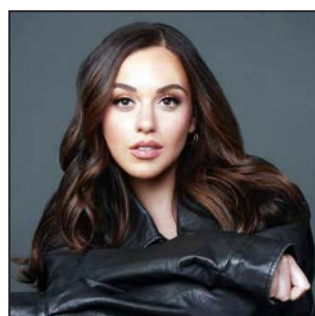
Described by organizers as the largest free Christian music festival in Kansas, Praisefest welcomes churches and visitors from across the Flint Hills and beyond. The festival is built around three guiding principles: worship, community and generosity.

This year's theme is "Bold Hope," inspired by 2 Corinthians 3:12: "Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold."

"In a world that needs hope more than ever, we believe God is calling us to live with bold faith and bold hope—together," orga-

nizers shared.

Christian recording artist Megan Woods



Megan Woods

will headline the festival Saturday, September 26. Woods has become known for songs including "The Truth" and "God of the Impossible," which carry messages of identity in Christ, faith and hope.

The Saturday festival will feature three stages with Christian recording artists, regional performers, local worship teams and acoustic musicians.

Music on the Thriver/KJIL Stage will begin at noon with Relevant Church, fol-

lowed by Bill Horn at 12:45 p.m., Next Era at 1:30 p.m., Jimmie Bratcher at 2:15 p.m., Refined Worship at 3:15 p.m., Eric Brown at 4:15 p.m. and Justin Aaron at 5:15 p.m.

Aaron, a native of Junction City, gained national attention as a contestant on Season 22 of NBC's "The Voice," where he advanced to the Top 8.

The Angel 95 Acoustic Stage will feature Tammy Barrett at 1 p.m., Ken Savy at 2 p.m., Brian Elder at 3 p.m., Keepers of the Garden at 4 p.m. and Kelly Alayna at 5 p.m.

Barrett is a contemporary Christian and gospel singer-songwriter from Andover who serves in the music ministry at MorningStar Community Church. She has written and performed more than 60 original songs.

Elder is a Christian recording artist and songwriter whose personal struggle with depression and anxiety ultimately led him back to music and a deeper sense of purpose. His songs combine elements of rock and country while reminding listeners that they are not alone and that hope can be found in Jesus.

The main Praisefest Stage will feature Presence Worship at 6:30 p.m., followed by Woods at 7:45 p.m.

The weekend will offer more than music. Praisefest's Global Impact Event will once again partner with Feed My Starving Children for a large-scale meal-packing project. Volunteer packing sessions are planned September 23–26, with a goal of preparing more than 105,000 meals for children around the

world.

In 2025, 513 volunteers packed 116,640 meals—enough to feed 319 children for an entire year. Those meals were sent to Honduras. Organizers are working toward a long-term goal of packing 1 million meals through the ministry partnership.

Activities Saturday will begin with the Praisefest 5K at 8 a.m. Participants may run, walk or attend to support the runners before returning for the day's music and family activities.

The anniversary celebration will conclude Sunday with Praisefest Community Church, bringing believers from different congregations together for a community worship service.

Praisefest's featured ministry partners for 2026 and 2027 are Broken Wing Ranch Min-

istries and Peace-Full Pantry. A portion of donations received by Praisefest will support the two organizations, which will also be highlighted during the festival.

Food, children's activities and other family-friendly attractions will be available during Saturday's festival. Admission to the music festival is free.

Additional information, volunteer opportunities and event updates are available at www.praisefest.org.



Justin Aaron

Misunderstood Scriptures: “Touch Not Mine Anointed”

By Faith BroKar

“Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm.” – Psalm 105:15

The phrase “Touch not mine anointed” is sometimes used to warn Christians against questioning, criticizing or confronting a pastor or ministry leader. Under this interpretation, disagreeing with a leader, or examining whether his teaching is biblical, is treated as an attack against someone specially protected by God.

But is that what this verse actually means?

Psalm 105 recounts God’s faithfulness to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and their descendants. The psalm describes a time when they were few in number and trav-

eled from one nation to another. Although they were vulnerable strangers, God protected them:

“He suffered no man to do them wrong: yea, he reproved kings for their sakes; Saying, Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm” (Psalm 105:14–15).

The same words appear in 1 Chronicles 16:22.

In context, “touch” refers to physically harming or oppressing God’s chosen people. The passage is not a command forbidding Christians from evaluating the conduct or teaching of religious leaders. It certainly does not give pastors immunity from correction or accountability.

David and Saul

This phrase is also fre-

quently connected with David’s refusal to kill King Saul.

Saul was pursuing David and repeatedly attempting to kill him. Nevertheless, when David had an opportunity to take Saul’s life, he refused, saying, “The LORD forbid that I should do this thing unto my master, the LORD’S anointed, to stretch forth mine hand against him” (1 Samuel 24:6).

David would not seize the throne through murder. He trusted God to remove Saul in His own time.

However, David’s respect for Saul’s God-appointed position did not prevent him from recognizing Saul’s wrongdoing. David openly con-

fronted Saul about his unjust pursuit and demonstrated that he had done nothing deserving death.

Refusing to harm someone is not the same as refusing to acknowledge sin.

Scripture Requires Discernment

The New Testament repeatedly instructs believers to examine teaching carefully.

The Bereans were commended because they searched the Scriptures daily to determine whether Paul’s teaching was true (Acts 17:11). Paul instructed Christians to “prove all things; hold fast that which is good” (1 Thessalonians 5:21). John warned believers not to accept ev-

ery spiritual claim automatically, but to “try the spirits whether they are of God” (1 John 4:1).

Even prominent church leaders were not beyond correction. In Galatians 2, Paul publicly confronted Peter because Peter’s behavior was inconsistent with the truth of the gospel.

If “Touch not mine anointed” meant that spiritual leaders could never be questioned, Paul would have been guilty of violating that command. Instead, Scripture records the confrontation because truth mattered more than protecting a leader’s reputation.

Accountability Is Not an Attack

This does not mean Christians are free to spread rumors, make careless accusations or disrespect pastors.

First Timothy 5:19 says, “Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses.” Leaders must be protected from unsupported allegations, but the following verse also says, “Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.”

These instructions establish both protection and accountability. Ac-

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Kansas Faith and Family is a monthly newspaper dedicated to sharing the Word of God and news and information that honors Christian beliefs and family traditions and values that are the cornerstone of our nation. The Publisher will not knowingly endorse nor condemn any individual denominational beliefs.

CONTENT

Press releases are welcome and encouraged from all local, regional and national Christian organizations as well as non-Christian organizations with founding beliefs in the value of the family. The Publisher reserves the right to edit or reject any submitted item that is questionable when viewed from the Christian/family perspective.

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*A Word
From
The
Publisher*



Kansas Faith & Family is inviting local writers, pastors, and community members to contribute articles for upcoming issues.

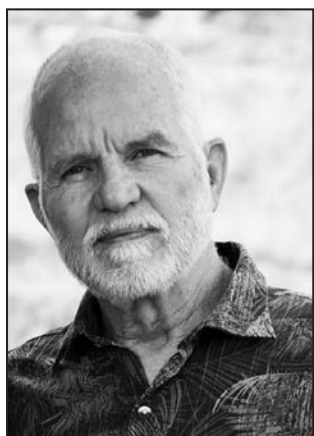
If you have a message, testimony, or faith-based topic you would like to share, we would love to hear from you.

Please submit inquiries or articles to:
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Faith BroKar

KANSAS FAITH AND FAMILY

What is the Gospel, in a Nutshell?



By Carl D. Everhart

The Gospel, in one word: "Love," or "Repentance," or "Grace," or "Mercy." Two words: "Good News," or "A mystery," or "But God." Three words: "God is holy." Four words: "The power of God," or "Obedience to God's Word," or "Not I, but Christ." Five words: "Jesus Christ and Him crucified," or "I can't, but Jesus did." Ten words: "We have a God of unlimited chances, until we die." Eleven words: "You and I broke God's law, and Jesus paid the penalty." Twelve words:

"Everlasting life that is a free gift and you cannot earn it." Fourteen words: "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what is lost." And in fifteen words: "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us."

For more words, read on.

God's Law must be preached before the Gospel is!

The Gospel's about Gods gracious and only provision for salvation through His Son's death, burial, and resurrection. It's about the foundational need for love, faith, belief, obedience, and repentance. It's about the urgency for action because we could die tonight. And it's about what Jesus Christ did on the cross for us, and now, we must do what He told us to do!

The Good News is that God loves us; He's not mad at us; He wants no one to send themselves to Hell. Because the pen-

alty for sin is the second death, God sent Jesus to rescue us from that penalty by sacrificing His sinless Son. Jesus took on the sins of the world. He was separated from the Father so we wouldn't have to be. Jesus walked out of the tomb and is now sitting at the right hand of the Father. In John 3:16, Jesus summarized His rescue mission for mankind. Just keep in mind that even the demons believe Jesus is the Son of God, they just don't believe "in" Him, or trust and obey Him (do you?).

The bad news is that our sin has separated us from God. The Gospel tells us about our sin and its consequences. Every person who hasn't allowed Jesus to pay the penalty for their sin, will pay it themselves. The Gospel records the constant failings, struggles, and doubts of those who followed Jesus, like every True Christian today. "False gospels" abound

and yield many deceived sinners! Mormonism, Jehovah's Witnesses, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Scientology, and Wicca, are just some of the big contributors to false doctrine.

The Bible says, "For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard." We cannot bribe God through good works, moral living, or religious rituals. While everyone sins, very few truly repent. The Gospel leads to repentance via our confession (admit our sin ... no "buts"), our contrition (true sorrow ... mourning), and then our change (there's no repentance without a change of behavior). Every disciple's mission is to spread the Gospel and to glorify the Father. We share the Gospel with a dead person every time we witness to an unbeliever.

Jesus is a Gentleman; He'll force no one to Heaven. The roadmap to

salvation is clearly laid out in His Word. God is a Holy Judge who will serve justice on all sinners. Our heart must ask to be rescued. The Holy Spirit is required for salvation. We must realize that salvation was never intended to be a one-and-done gift.

Inside and outside the nutshell are many other pillars. The long list includes, but is not limited to: Acceptance, born-again, commitment, confession, death (first and second), discipleship, fear, forgiveness, free will, fruit, growth, Heaven, Holiness, hope, humility, judgment, knowledge, life, prayer, redemption, relationship, respect, righteousness, soul, submission, truth, wisdom, worship, and wrath.

Don't misunderstand, the Gospel doesn't promise a "trouble-free" life on earth, but it does offer one full of faith, hope, and love.

Jesus, Jesus, Jesus ...

yes ... it's all about Jesus. How you view Him will determine everything in your life, and after it.

"It is this Good News that saves you if you continue to believe the message I told you—unless, of course, you believed something that was never true in the first place" (1 Corinthians 15:2). Have you chosen to trust Jesus to rescue you from your sins? If not, it's never too late ... until it's too late.

Dear Heavenly Father, may these words find the heart of a true believer so that they may encourage others; the heart of a make-believer so that they may experience a Spiritual awakening to Your Truth, and the heart of a never-believer so that they may come to know You. Amen.

To read more from this lay pastor, God-fearing, born-again, sinner (saved by grace), search: everhartandsoul.com, then select "Blog."

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10 Ways to Encourage Kids to Read the Bible

By Landry Holmes, Baptist Press

Recently I went to children's camp with my 9-year-old grandson, at his request. The week began with his backpack landing on the street. As a result, a smashed juice container soaked his Bible inside the bag. I let him borrow my Bible the rest of the week while his sticky Bible, that smelled like apple juice, dried.

A couple of days later, I saw my grandson standing outside waiting for whatever came next on the schedule. He was holding my Bible, reading from Genesis 1. Matter-of-factly, he stated that his Bible study leader encouraged him to read his Bible, and he was going to read it cover-to-cover that week.

My grandson's desire to read the entire Bible like he would read juvenile fiction reminded me of when his dad, at about the same age, wanted to read his Bible from cover to cover. We made it

to the first two or three chapters of Leviticus before he gave up.

Kids want to read the Bible and aren't intimidated, at least when they start reading, by the number of thin pages or by the big words and difficult-to-pronounce proper names.

When we receive Jesus as our Savior and Lord, God gives us a desire to know Jesus better by reading God's Word. Then the reality of big words and pictureless pages sets in. And we get discouraged.

Nonetheless, research tells us that the biggest predictor of whether a child becomes a faithful believer as a young adult is whether or not they regularly read the Bible growing up. So, what can we as pastors and church leaders do to ensure kids read the Bible regularly?

5 ways families can encourage Bible reading

First, we can encour-

age families to do these five things.

1. Model Bible reading

When young children see their parents reading the Bible, they may start imitating the routine, even if they don't know how to read.

2. Make the Bible accessible

Keep a physical Bible within reach at home, and use a mobile version for answering biblical questions "on the go." Also, provide children with Bibles they can call their own. The Bible doesn't have to be new nor expensive for kids to want to read it.

3. Establish a routine

Set aside a regular day, time, and place. Reading the Bible regularly doesn't necessarily mean children read it every day. Whatever routine parents choose should be protected, similar to how parents protect the time set aside to brush teeth.

But offer kids grace by

not being legalistic about the routine. Sometimes tired children need to go to bed and read their Bible the next day.

4. Make it enjoyable

If parents want their children to develop a lifelong desire to read the Bible, the experience needs to be enjoyable. Kids enjoy bite-sized readings while being allowed to move their bodies without feeling rushed.

5. Ask questions

Parents can gauge their children's understanding of what they're reading in the Bible by asking simple questions.

5 ways the church can encourage Bible read-

ing

Bible reading is not reserved solely for the home. Here are some ways pastors and leaders can engage kids in Bible reading at church.

1. Involve kids in church-wide Bible reading emphases

Children are the church now, not tomorrow. As the authors of "Flip the Script" state, "If we want our ministries to produce kids and students who become spiritually mature adults, we must teach them to open, read, and study their Bibles."

2. Teach kids Bible skills

If children participate in congregational wor-

ship, provide page numbers for the pew Bibles. Consider printing Scripture passages in the worship guide or children's bulletin.

3. Provide Bibles

Present Bibles to early readers as an important milestone event. In addition, ensure every preschool and elementary classroom has enough Bibles for each child to engage with while at church. Finally, give kids economically priced Bibles if they don't have a Bible of their own at home.

4. Supply supplementary materials

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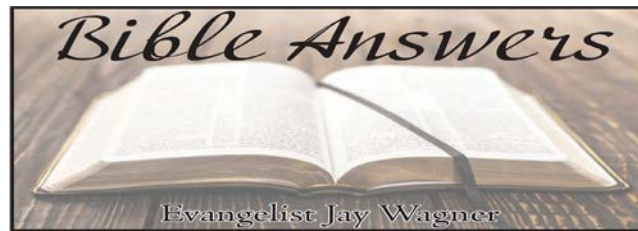
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Q: If someone loves God but is very introverted and doesn't get involved in church activities, can they still be saved?

A: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." (Ephesians 2:8 - 9). Your salvation doesn't depend on your involvement in church activities or anything else, only on your faith in Jesus Christ, so clearly you can be just as saved as anyone else without regard to what you do.

That said, as a Christian you will want to live a life that pleases God. However, even this doesn't require involving yourself in any outside activities. First you want to avoid sin, and studying God's Word helps with this. "Thy Word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee." (Psalm 119:11). This is more than just memorizing Scripture, you need to meditate on God's Word, find its meaning for your life, and then do all you can to live by it. You will fail at times, but the way to get back on track is to acknowledge your failure and work on changing the thoughts and behaviors that failed God. It is also necessary to do all you can to live a life that pleases God because other people are watching you, and the testimony you live may be the only Bible they're reading. Some of these people may even be fellow Christians who see you as a godly example that they want to follow. Paul discussed this using eating meat offered to idols as an example. He notes that we may have the liberty to do that (or other things), but it can also cause a less mature believer to stumble if they do it. He ends by saying, "Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend." (1 Corinthians 8:13).

Both Matthew and Mark contain versions of the Great Commission. Mark's version is more concise: "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." (Mark 16:15). You may feel that your being introverted makes this impossible, but it doesn't. We are not all called to pulpit ministry, but we are all called to be a witness. For some people, being a verbal witness is uncomfortable, as it probably is for you. However, every time you do something to help someone else and every penny you give to support your church and other Bible based ministries is you participating in the Great Commission. I especially emphasize the things you do for others because seeing the love of Jesus usually reaches where words are meaningless. As Salvation Army founder William Booth noted, "What is the use of preaching the Gospel to men whose whole attention is concentrated upon a mad, desperate struggle to keep themselves alive?"

I would encourage you to join into church activities as you feel comfortable and to work at overcoming your introversion in that arena. The friendships and fellowship you will develop with other believers can only help your walk with Christ, and at the same time your friendship and fellowship can only help them.

I welcome reader questions. E-mail your question to answer67547@gmail.com.

Bible

Continued from page 4

Send home devotionals and other resources to encourage personal and family Bible study. My friend Donna Peavey reminds us, "Bible study is setting aside time to study God's Word for the purpose of understanding. The best way for children to study the Bible and learn biblical truths is to read the Bible and talk about it with adults they trust."

5. Preach from a kids Bible, occasionally

By doing so, the pastor is modeling the accessibility of the Bible and removing the idea that his big, black Bible is some mysterious book reserved for serious preachers.

The value of Bible reading

One of the best examples of the value of Bible reading is found in the book of Acts. After God

miraculously freed Paul and Silas from prison in Philippi, the two missionaries made their way to Thessalonica.

When the situation there became dicey, God conducted another night-time rescue mission. Paul and Silas next found themselves in Berea with a more welcoming group of people.

Luke writes, "The people here were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, since they received the word with eagerness and examined the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so. Consequently, many of them believed ..." (Acts 17:11-12a, CSB).

The folks in Berea read the Scriptures themselves and discovered the truth of the gospel. That's why kids need to establish lasting Bible-reading habits. God uses His Word to change lives for eternity.

Anointed

Continued from page 2

cusations must be supported by evidence, but proven sin must not be hidden merely because the person involved holds a position of authority.

Christians should treat church leaders with respect, pray for them and recognize the seriousness of their responsibilities. At the same time, respect must never require ignoring false teaching, spiritual manipulation, financial misconduct or abuse.

Biblical authority belongs ultimately to God and His Word—not to any pastor, teacher or ministry personality.

The Danger of Misusing the Verse

When "Touch not mine anointed" is used to silence legitimate questions, it removes a verse

from its original context and turns it into a shield against accountability.

Faithful leaders should not fear biblical examination. A trustworthy pastor will encourage believers to read Scripture, test teaching and seek truth. He will understand that accountability protects both the congregation and the integrity of the ministry.

Psalm 105:15 teaches us about God's protection and faithfulness toward His people. It does not teach that Christian leaders are beyond examination or correction.

Believers must avoid malicious attacks and unsupported accusations. But when error or sin is present, respectfully speaking the truth is not "touching God's anointed." It is part of guarding Christ's church and remaining faithful to His Word.

WHAT IF?

What if every child and adult in our country started each day with a Bible Verse in their pocket? What if, each morning, they read the verse out loud to their children/parents, carried it all day, read it again at night and put it back in a special bowl or basket? The trip to purchase cards at a local Christian bookstore would take only a few minutes. Those who do not have a bookstore close could take just two minutes doing a Bing or Google for "Free Bible Memory Cards or Verses". It could change our lives and our families. What if people actually did this?

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"Quality Creates It's Own Demand"

The Bible is Truth

By John MacArthur

Antipathy toward God's Word inherently resides in the hearts of all sinners. Scripture is viewed as outdated, irrelevant, and primitive. It's regarded as an ancient book of suspect origin that is beneath enlightened society. This antipathy can even be present in those within the church.

If there is any doubt about this, it is worth asking why popular evangelicalism's greatest fear is being out of sync with the culture. Pastors

and leaders so chase the culture that its trends show up in their churches. They treat this pursuit as a necessary evangelistic strategy. But the only way to be in sync with the culture is to diminish the presence of the Word of God, because unregenerate culture will always be fundamentally and irreconcilably incompatible with the truth of God. By catering to the unchurched or to the unconverted in the church, evangelicalism has been hijacked by legions of carnal spin doctors seeking to con-

vince the world that Christians can be just as inclusive, pluralistic, and open-minded as any postmodern, politically correct worldling.

However, true biblical Christianity requires a denial of every worldly value and behavior, and Christians must be willing to make a commitment to the Word of God, with a full understanding of the implications of doing so. Jesus plainly tells the disciples in John 15:19 that the world will hate them because they are not of this world. God has chosen believ-

ers out of the world, and the world hates them. In Luke 6:26, Jesus says, "Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for their fathers used to treat the false prophets in the same way."

Why is the world so fixed in its animosity toward the truth of God? Jesus says in John 7:7, "The world . . . hates Me because I testify of it, that its deeds are evil." Contempt for Scripture is not intellectual; it's moral. As the Lord explained to Nicodemus, "Men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil" (John 3:19). How tragic for the church to seek to accommodate that worldly affection, since it is impossible by any human method to overcome the sinner's resistance to the truth and the gospel (2 Corinthians 3:14). The only time the church has made any spiritual impact on the world is when the people of God have stood

firm and have refused to compromise, boldly proclaiming the truth in the face of the world's hostility. In the end, seeking cultural relevance will only result in obsolescence, since tomorrow's generation will inevitably renounce today's fads and philosophies.

In the face of ever-changing cultural trends, the church needs to boldly proclaim the eternal relevance and evergreen applicabil-

ity of the Word of God. In particular, Christians must embrace and exalt six truths about Scripture: its objectivity, rationality, veracity, authority, incompatibility, and timelessness. These six characteristics help us understand the essential nature of God's Word and help us better minister to a sinful world in desperate need of Scripture's life-transforming truth. And we'll examine all of them in the days ahead.

A Ballast for My Soul

*Life is like a stormy sea
That tosses to and fro,
But God's Word will ever be
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Till I reach heaven's shore
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As Michael Thielen reports in “Real Clear Politics,” after President Trump’s July 16 address on massive election corruption in 2020, “Democrats roundly dismissed the president’s speech, called him a liar, and mocked his obsession with voter fraud.” However, days after Trump’s speech, New Jersey Governor Mikie Sherrill was forced to admit that over 6,600 noncitizens had been added to the Garden State’s voter rolls – a GOVERNMENT error, not a “computer glitch” by the digital system vendor! – and 400 of them actually voted in elections stretching back to 2023. Oopsie! Homeland Security Secretary Markwayne Mullin says that DHS records show 19,500 noncitizens on New Jersey voter rolls! Thielen concludes, “the question that needs to be asked of Democrats is why do they oppose transparency in our elections?” And why all the DELAY, DENIAL and DECEIT heaped on Administration efforts at legitimate, sensible election reforms? For, based on the information Trump supplied, declassified and available online (824 documented election system failures cataloged across 800 pages of FBI forensic analysis with a MINIMUM of 18 recommended criminal investigations), cheating clearly occurred during 2020 and thereafter. As Jim Hoft writes in The Gateway Pundit, “[The FBI] report is organized by ten con-

verging vectors, proving that malfeasance occurs in almost every aspect of our election system,” including the remote takeover of live absentee ballot processing by foreign countries. Really? Yeah, it’s easy to do when you have Chinese hardware and illegal modems using Venezuelan software, with code maintained in Serbia and voter roll files from 18 states containing personal information on 220 MILLION American voters, stored by Chinese Communists in Beijing! Deny all the facts you want, American, but when we allow other countries to mess with our elections, FREEDOM is threatened so we all better start paying attention. Do you care enough about freedom to ask questions like, “Who ordered states to stop counting between 10:00 and 10:30 pm on Election Night in 2020?” Only legal prosecution will yield the answer, an action which Trump has now approved!

Why didn’t most TV networks cover Trump’s speech, then? The answer: they would incriminate themselves because the networks also were in on the steal. One of the 10 Attack Vectors Against U.S. Critical (Election) Infrastructure displayed in the report’s main diagram is Vector 5, “Information Control” (see next paragraph) which extended into social media, not merely network news. So when anyone tells you, “There was no fraud in the 2020 Election,” they are com-

mitting fraud themselves. That would include former FBI Director Chris Wray, former Attorney General William Barr, former head of the Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) Chris Krebs, and all the Talking Hairdos of the media, like the CNN anchor who at 11:09 EST on Election Night mutely watched on live TV as the cumulative vote total in Pennsylvania for Trump DECREASED by 19,958 votes while Biden’s suddenly INCREASED by the same number – a total gain for Ol’ Joe of twice the amount, or 39,916 votes. Since when do cumulative totals ever flip like that, huh? How many “computer glitches” do you want to accept?

We now must fully enumerate the aforementioned 10 different attack vectors behind this unprecedented

fraud: (1) Election Record Integrity (massive disparities between ballots and recorded votes, coupled with systematic destruction of legally mandated logs before investigations could occur); (2) Electronic Voter System Integrity (shared passwords, active cellular modems that vendors DENIED permitting); (3) Election Result Certification Integrity lacking (coercion of canvassers leading to false information transmitted to Congress); (4) Judicial Malfeasance (courts dismissed major cases on procedural grounds while ignoring undisclosed financial conflicts between judges and defendants – follow the money!); (5) Information Control (mentioned above) with the information pipeline controlled and censored by Chris Krebs’ CISA itself; (6) Politically-Biased Funding Streams

(over \$350 million in private Non-government Organization [NGO] funding injected into public election offices, controlling election officials through contractual obligations); (7) Privatized Election Operations (Unvetted private contractors exercising operational control over ballot custody, like the secret WiFi network in Green Bay, WI); (8) Seditious Conspiracy (Pre-election ‘war gaming’ between Federal and private NGO officials resulting in the January 6 obstruction of Congressional Electoral College proceedings); (9) Weaponization of Government (Law enforcement resources deployed to target WHISTLE-BLOWERS and AUDITORS like former County Clerk and Gold Star Mom Tina Peters of Colorado rather than true suspects); and (10) Foreign Interference (see above,

first paragraph of this article).

Undoing this mess, which includes as a minimum number of illegally registered voters 278K noncitizens and 400K DEAD people across 10 states (GA, OH, TN, TX, NC, ID, AL, MO, LA and KANSAS) might trigger the political chaos of a State/Federal Constitutional battle. Fully Twenty-three Blue states are currently blocking Trump’s Election Integrity Executive Order. In God’s name, why? Like the title of the old Billy Graham radio and TV program, it’s a true “Hour of Decision” for America. Have we the collective courage to “handle the truth” or not? We’d better, because the new Muslim/Socialist political bloc emerging in America (should we call them “Mo-

Continued on page 9

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A Little Bit of Laughter and Fun

Proverbs 17:22 – “Laughter is like taking a good medicine.”

FOUR IN THE FIRE

Mikey’s Funnies

An airplane encountered some turbulence. It started juddering and rocking noticeably from side to side.

The flight crew wheeled out the drinks cart to keep the passengers calm.

The attendant asked a businessman, “Would you like a drink?”

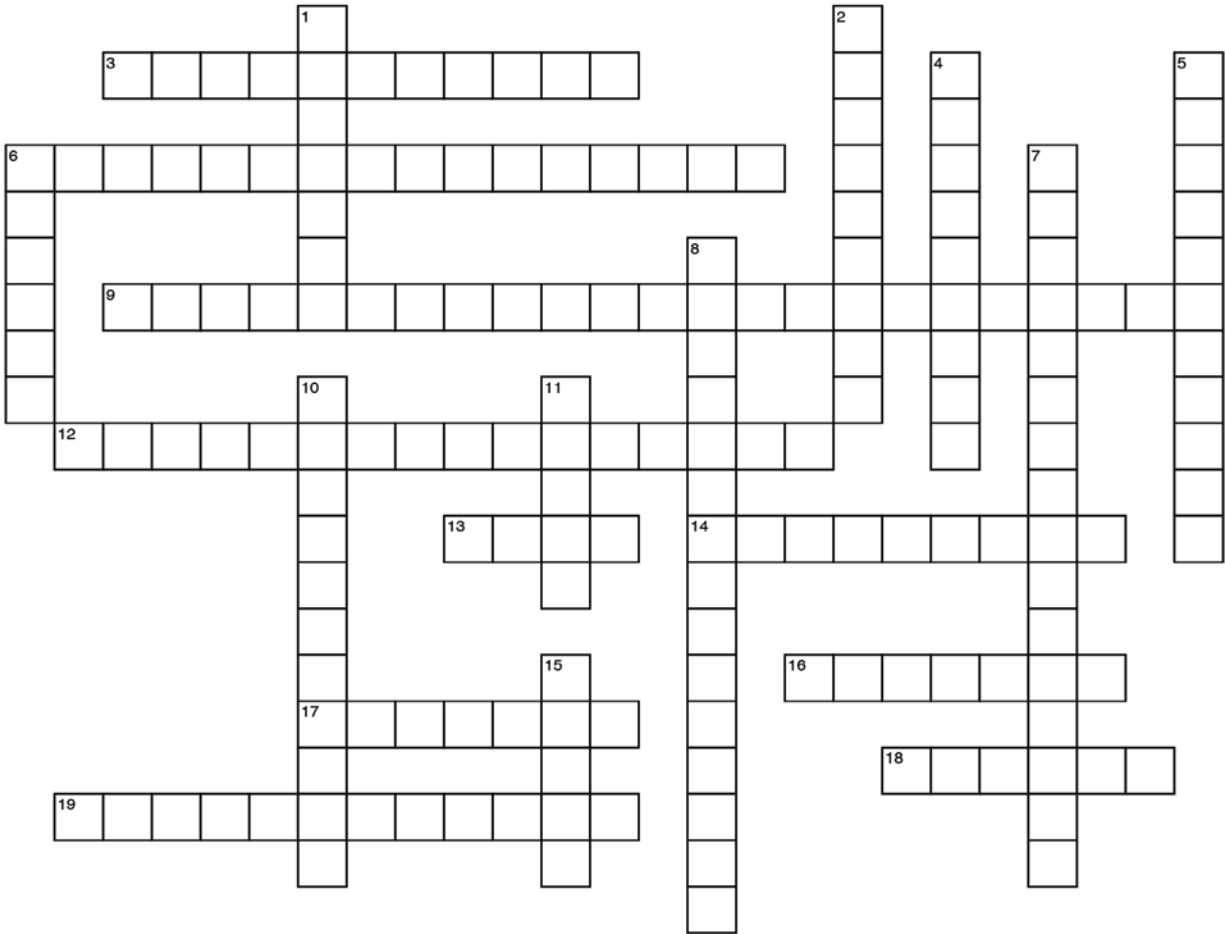
“Why not?” he replied unkindly. “I’ll have whatever the pilot’s been having.”

An apple a day keeps a doctor away only if you throw it hard enough.

One day the first grade teacher was reading the story of Chicken Little to her class. She came to the part of the story where Chicken Little tried to warn the farmer. She read, “...and so Chicken Little went up to the farmer and said, ‘The sky is falling, the sky is falling!’”

The teacher paused then asked the class, “And what do you think that farmer said?”

One little girl raised her hand and said, “I think he said, ‘Holy cow! A talking chicken!’”



ACROSS

- 3 King Nebuchadnezzar had one made of himself (3 wds)
- 6 The king ordered the furnace to be heated this way (3 wds)
- 9 They would not worship the image (3 wds)
- 12 The king decreed this would happen to anyone who spoke against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego (4 wds)
- 13 Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were brought before him
- 14 He proclaimed the king's decree (2 wds)
- 16 What the king saw in the furnace (2 wds)
- 17 Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were appointed over the affairs of the province of _____
- 18 They weren't harmed
- 19 The king did this for Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego after they came out of the fire (2 wds)

DOWN

- 1 "Our God is able to _____ us"
- 2 They came to the dedication of the image
- 4 They maliciously accused the Jews
- 5 Where the image sat (3 wds)
- 6 "The hair of their heads was not _____"
- 7 When people heard them, they were supposed to fall down and worship the golden image of Nebuchadnezzar (4 wds)
- 8 Those who would not fall down and worship the image suffered this fate (3 wds)
- 10 Height of the image (2 wds)
- 11 Before they were thrown into the furnace they were _____
- 15 The fire didn't have any _____ over Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego

Answers in next month's issue



How to Forgive Someone Who Isn't Sorry

By Russell Moore, Christianity Today

God is at work for our good. That doesn't minimize the hurt done against us, but it de-thrones it.

Someone once came up to me, almost shaking in fear over one of Jesus' Beatitudes. The one that troubled her was "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy" (Matt. 5:7, ESV throughout). Her problem was that she had once experienced what she considered betrayal from a friend—and that friend seemed not the least bit sorry. The woman said she wanted to forgive, but she had tried and tried and couldn't. She couldn't will away the hurt she still felt. What was she supposed to do?

Forgiveness, of course, can mean many things. Some people use it as a

synonym for reconciliation: Whatever breached the relationship is considered a thing of the past. And many times that's exactly what forgiveness entails. But that's not what I mean here. Some people use forgiveness to mean a lack of accountability, and that's not what I mean either. What I mean here is the grace it would take for this woman to be free of the power her friend still held over her. In her case, as with many others, I don't detect a desire for revenge. People consumed with vengeance usually are not those grappling with how to forgive.

Sometimes the problem is that a person confuses forgiveness with a feeling he or she associates with forgiveness. We may assume forgiveness happens in one dramatic act—and afterward we see the for-

given person just as we would if the hurt had never happened. Sometimes that's the case. But often forgiveness is a choice we repeat over and over. Even then, it is not necessarily a warm feeling. The most forgiving people I know often pray something along the lines of "Lord, I'm remembering again what

Fraud

Continued from page 7

hammunists"? promises further to complicate election reform just as much as it threatens Democratic party unity!

As the Biblical prophet Joel proclaimed, God has no shortcuts to national restoration; blessing would come to sinful Judah only AFTER judgment and repentance involving ALL nations, including God's own people: "Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the LORD is near" (Joel 3:14). We cannot police the whole world, as we are finding out in the Persian Gulf, but we better police our own country! "Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any people" (Proverbs 14:34, NIV). Perhaps a hefty dose of earthly justice – including strong legal penalties for the major election fraud criminals -- will remind us of the One who will Judge us all eternally. And maybe THEN more Americans will return to God. Democrats, we need your help and so does your own party; time is short!

they did to me, and I am feeling angry. Help me."

As countless philosophers have taught us over the centuries, our most dangerous moral problems often come not from valuing some vice but from having a misordered value for some virtue. People who grapple with forgiveness often do this not because they are bloodthirsty or want to see the other person harmed. Rather, they are trying to uphold something good and right: justice.

That impulse is good and right in and of it-

self. In fact, one of the charges against unfaithful Old Testament Israel is that it concluded, "The way of the Lord is not just" (Ezek. 18:25). After Cain's murder of Abel, God told Cain, "The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground" (Gen. 4:10). At the very end of the Bible, the souls of the martyrs in heaven cry out, "How long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" (Rev. 6:10).

Neither cry for justice is pictured as the least

bit sinful. As a matter of fact, a central question resolved in the apostle Paul's writings on the Cross is the moral quandary of how God can be just if he forgives sin (Rom. 3:21–26). Your desire for justice is not wrong.

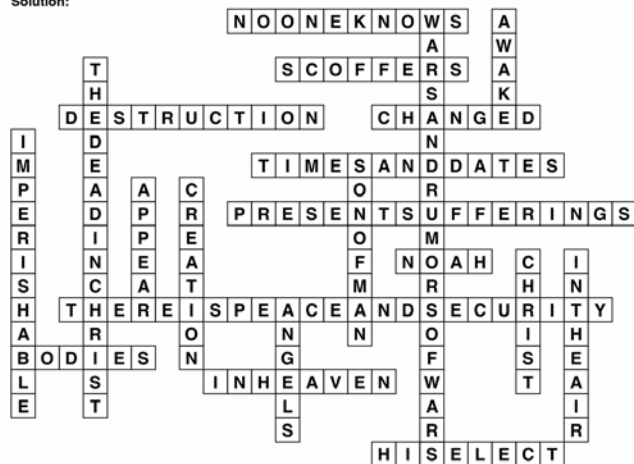
The problem comes with the way we want to experience that justice—and that is usually because our time frame is by definition short-term, meaning the span of our trackable lives. Even when we do see

Continued on page 18

Answers to last month's Crossword

END TIMES

Solution:



A Disciple's Journey: The Mission and the End

By Micah Powell, Grace Community Church, Great Bend

We've come to the end of this series and the beginning of our ongoing story. Acts opens with a simple scene: disciples gathered around Jesus, questions in their mouths and hope in their eyes. He answers them, lifts their gaze beyond their plans, and sends them into the world. Then He ascends—and two angels nudge them back to earth: don't just stare; get moving. That's the balance we need—eyes up, feet moving.

1) Disciples Trust the King's Timing (vv. 6-7)

"Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"

It's not a foolish question. They've seen the cross, touched the wounds, and eaten with the risen Christ. Of course, they ask, "Is now the time?"

Jesus doesn't scold their longing; He redirects their focus.

"It is not for you to know times or seasons

that the Father has fixed by His own authority."

The calendar is above our pay grade. The Father holds the schedule. Our job is not to decode it but to trust Him.

That trust is hard when prayers feel unanswered and timelines seem to stretch on forever. But readiness beats speculation. Scripture doesn't forbid watchfulness; it forbids presumption. When you cannot trace His hand, you can trust His heart. So we trade restless guessing for steady faith, and we leave the clock in the Father's hands.

2) Disciples Witness in the Spirit's Power (v. 8)

Here's the pivot:

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be My witnesses..."

We don't know the timing, but we do know the calling. Jesus shifts them from "when" to "what."

This power isn't politics, personality, or self-help. It's the Spirit's strength for the Spirit's

mission. In Acts, that power manifests as bold proclamation, resilient joy in the face of pressure, unity within the church, and perseverance in the face of suffering. Miracles appear, but always as servants of the message. The headline is Jesus, crucified and risen, announced with courage and love.

"You will be My witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the Earth."

Start where you are. Cross the lines you'd rather avoid. Keep going until the whole world hears. The circles overlap; the scope is global. Our role isn't to engineer outcomes but to testify faithfully and trust God with the harvest.

So embrace your identity: witness. Depend on

the Spirit: pray before you speak, and while you speak. Share from rest, not pressure: salvation belongs to the Lord. And lift your eyes beyond your zip code—the same Spirit who came at Pentecost lives in you for the sake of the nations.

3) Disciples Live Toward His Return (vv. 9-11)

"As they were looking on, He was lifted up, and a cloud took Him out of their sight."

The cloud isn't just weather; it's glory. Jesus is received into the Father's presence, enthroned as King.

The disciples stand gazing until two angels say,

"Why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus... will come in the same way as you saw Him go."

That's a gentle correction and a great comfort. Don't freeze. Don't forget. He is coming—visibly, bodily, surely.

Scripture doesn't invite timetable charts so much as long obedience in the same direction. The uncertainty of the date is designed to produce constant expectation, not constant speculation. We live on mission with hope, not anxiety.

The Church Between Two Certainties

Acts 1 places us between two anchors: "You will be My witnesses" and "This Jesus will come." That's where

disciples live. We trust the Father's timing, we depend on the Spirit's power, and we keep our eyes on the returning King.

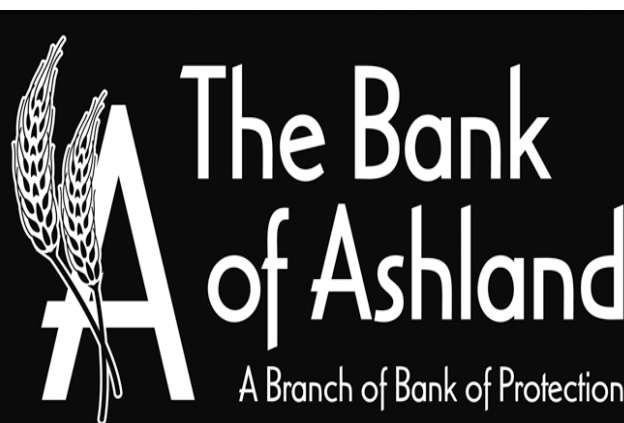
And all of it rests on the gospel. Jesus left glory, took on flesh, lived without sin, died for ours, rose in power, ascended to reign, and sent His Spirit. The mission isn't about us proving we're worthy; it's about proclaiming that He is. The Spirit's power is blood-bought. Our hope of His return is resurrection-secured.

So how will you live

Continued on page 11

Why didn't Jesus wear jewelry?

**Answer:
Because He breaks
every chain**



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What Does the Bible Mean by “the Heart”?

By A. Craig Troxel, Ligonier Ministries

We call those white flakes that appear in the winter snow. Whether the texture is flaky or crusted, thin or deep, fine or wet, soft or heavy, it's simply “snow.” But the tribal Yup'ik people in northern Alaska and Canada employ many words to describe these different kinds of snow. Snow is one simple thing in English, and yet snow has different qualities (no matter what language you speak). The same is true of the word heart in Scripture. The heart reflects both the simplicity and the complexity of our inner self. It is one, and yet it has different functions.

Our Inner Unity

Put simply, the heart in Scripture conveys the

totality of our inner self. We are governed from this one point of unity. From it “flow the springs of life” (Prov. 4:23). It is the control center—the source of every thought, the seat of every passion, and the arbiter of every decision. All of it is generated from and governed by this one point of undivided unity. That is why everything vital to the Christian life—your speech, repentance, faith, service, obedience, worship, walk, and love—must be done with “all your heart” (Deut. 10:12; 30:2; 1 Sam. 7:3; Ps. 86:12; 119:34; Prov. 3:5–6; 4:23; Isa. 38:3; Jer. 24:7; Matt. 22:37). The heart is the helm of the ship. It takes a bearing and then sets the course of your life. As goes the heart, so goes the person.

Our Inner Complexity

Put comprehensively, the heart encompasses various functions, including the mind, the desires, and the will. The mind of the heart includes what we know: our thinking, ideas, memories, and imagination. The desires of the heart include what we love: what we want, seek, yearn for, and thus feel. The will of the heart refers to what we choose: whether we will resist or submit, whether we will say “yes” or “no,” and whether we are weak or strong in our resolve.

Mind. Although we moderns tend to think of the heart primarily in terms of our emotions, the Bible associates the heart with our ability to think. For example, Paul prayed “May [God]

give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened” (Eph. 1:17–18). Jesus said, “Out of the heart come evil thoughts” (Matt. 15:19). Psalm 139:23 draws the parallel:

Search me, O God, and know my heart!

Try me and know my thoughts! (emphasis added)

Often, English versions of the Bible will translate heart with words like understanding, sense, or, most often, mind, which shows how strong the connection is between the heart and thinking (Ex. 14:5; 1 Kings. 3:9; Ps. 26:2; Prov. 19:21; Jer. 17:10; Matt. 22:37).

The heart dwells upon what it holds most dear-

ly. Its choices are motivated and reflect how it is emotionally invested.

Desires. For good or for ill, the heart desires satisfaction, security, comfort, happiness, and so much else. Desires can be for sinful things (like fleshly passions) or for good things (like Jesus' desire to eat the Passover with His disciples) (Deut. 12:15; Ps. 45:11; Isa. 26:9; Matt. 5:28; Rom. 1:24; Gal. 5:24; 1 Tim. 6:9; 1 John 2:16). The word Paul uses for the desires of the flesh is the same one he uses for the desires of the Spirit (Gal. 5:16–17). In essence, desires reveal what we crave and ultimately love, or what Christ calls our treasure (Matt. 6:21; see also Ps. 63:1; Isa. 55:2; Matt. 5:6; John 4:10;

Heb. 5:14; 1 Peter 2:2). Depending on whether our desires are satisfied or denied, our heart feels anger, joy, envy, rage, anxious fear, sorrow, lovesickness, anguish, despair, and many other emotions. Our emotions bring out what lies at the core of who we are, not just what we feel.

Will. As the seat of volition, the heart decides whether we submit to or resist what we desire and think. It will either say “yes” or “no.” Here is where the battle for control of the heart is fought. How it goes will depend upon the will's strength or weakness, its callousness or brokenness, its hardening by sin or renewal by grace. The heart of sinful unbelief is

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Journey

Continued from page 10

between commission and consummation? Will you stare at the sky, or step into the work—praying, loving, speaking, sending, going? Your home, your neighborhood, your work-

place, your city: these are your Jerusalems and Judeahs. The Lord may send you further; He will certainly use you where you are.

The day is coming when staring will be fitting—when faith becomes sight and the King fills the sky. Until then: trust, witness, endure.

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It Was Written for You

By Van Yandell

Has anything ever been done especially for you? Did it make you feel special, important, or that you really meant something, or to someone?

The Declaration of Independence was written by Thomas Jefferson, assisted by Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, Roger Sherman, Robert Livingston and declared the separation of the United States (13 colonies) from Britain. The declaration was adopted July 4, 1776.

It was signed August 2, 1776, by fifty of the fifty-six signers. The other six signed later that year. Those men signing knew they may be signing their own death warrants because the signing was considered treason by the British crown. This fact alone makes a statement as to their sincerity and determination.

The first paragraph reads as follows: "When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have

connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation."

The second paragraph begins with, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

The Declaration listed twenty-seven violations of humanity by King George. Freedoms of the people of the colonies were virtually none and the oppression of the king was beyond reason.

The separation from Britain became vital. The king was imposing on the colonists the oppression they had come to the new world to escape.

The Revolutionary War began April 19, 1775, with the battles of

Lexington and Concord. The war ended officially September 3, 1783, at the signing of the Treaty of Paris.

About 6,800 colonist's soldiers died in battle and another 17,000 died of diseases or froze to death. Losses on the British side are unclear, but one estimate is that as many as 24,000 died.

The Constitution of the United States was written over a four-month period in 1787, four years after the end of the war. It was written to protect the people, not the government.

The Constitution separates the government into three branches thus establishing a system of accountability and checks and balances. The citizens have the power of the ballot box to control the politicians. They represent the people.

The three branches of government are the executive (president and cabinet), the legislative (house and senate), and the judicial (supreme court). As long as those adhere to the Constitution the purposes determined by the founding

fathers will prevail.

The Constitution is preceded by a preamble. Being a brief statement of purpose, the preamble should be memorized by all; including those in government positions.

"We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, ensure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."

We must never forget the revolutionary soldiers that suffered and died; died for us! Those penning the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution wrote those for us; for the protection of American citizens.

A much older document (or series of documents/books) written for us is the Holy Bible. Many believe the Bible was written by men and they were inspired by our Creator God.

The Bible contains six-

ty-six books (thirty-nine in the Old Testament and twenty-seven in the New Testament) written by over forty men over a period of 1600 years. In three languages, Greek, Hebrew and Aramaic, the Bible is mostly consistent in its teachings.

Even with these differences in language, time span and writers; the eternal salvation teachings are totally consistent.

The Bible teaches there is only one eternal salvation. That is by a faith-based belief (Ephesians 2: 8) that Christ Jesus was crucified (Matthew 27: 35) for the remission of sin (Romans 4: 25), resurrected (Matthew 28: 6) and ascended alive into Heaven (Acts 1: 9).

Romans 15: 4 "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope."

It is such a great honor and privilege to know that our Creator provided us with a book that is in its entirety, a set of instructions for our existence. I will continue

to believe one reason for the chaos in the world is because the people of the world do not consider God's rules.

The Apostle Paul wrote 1900 years ago a description of mankind that definitely applies in today's world. 2 Timothy 3: 1-5 "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boast-ers, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away."

Those that govern, citizens and non-believers alike, must pay attention to these characteristics of mankind. Those words of God and Paul paint a perfect picture of the world today. Isaiah 5:

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By La Rena Hildebrand, Ellinwood, Kansas

Romans 12:2

And to not conform to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

When we are driving down the road, we all want our car to drive so smooth that we can take our hands off the steering wheel for a few seconds and it will drive perfectly straight. We also want our tires to be in balance and have enough air pressure for a smooth ride. We don't want our car to pull to the left or to the right because when this happens, we know that we should call an auto repair shop and schedule an appointment. When our Christian lives get off track and we tend to turn to the left or to the right getting off the straight path, or our tires are out of balance, we need to run to Jesus, confess our sin, read His Word for guidance, bringing our lives back into alignment with Him.

You

Continued from page 12

20a also makes a connected statement, "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil"

Both individually and collectively, we are a very blessed people. To have a Constitution and a Holy Bible to guide our lives, our goal must be to follow these instructions issued centuries ago by men and God. They were written for us!

Van Yandell is a retired Industrial Arts teacher, an ordained gospel evangelist and missionary. His email is vmy3451@gmail.com.

Heart

Continued from page 11

stubborn and unyielding to God, and yet it is weak and unable to resist temptation (Ex. 4:21; Deut. 1:28; Rom. 2:5; 2 Cor. 3:14). In direct contrast, the heart made new by the Spirit bows before God in humility but is also resolved to obey the Lord by dying to sin, the world, and devil (1 Sam. 2:1; Dan. 1:8; Acts 4:13; 2 Cor. 7:10-12; James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:9).

Our Inner Unity and Complexity

Our mind, desires, and will are distinct but inseparable as they work together as a cooperative network. Our thinking always has an agenda. The heart dwells upon what it holds most dear-

ly. Its choices are motivated and reflect how it is emotionally invested.

This alliance of mind, desires, and will reveals itself in its deep entanglement with sin. As Paul says, the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God and cannot submit to God's law (Rom. 8:7). But it is also true of a Christian's "new heart," which he or she gains when born again by the Holy Spirit. There

is nothing in the Christian's heart—whether in the mind, desires, or will—that is untouched by God's grace. Our hearts are enlightened, made pure, and established in the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ. We know God truly, love Him sincerely, and follow Him resolutely. We are more and more able to believe, serve, obey, worship, walk and love our God with all our heart.

God-fidence
KNOWING I CAN'T BUT He CAN



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What Is Lust?

By Todd Pruitt

It may well be that the first appearance of the sin of lust happened in the garden just as the man and woman made their tragic choice. As Eve considered the enticements of the serpent, she observed that the fruit was, among other things, “a delight to the eyes” (Gen. 3:6). Of course, there is nothing inherently wrong with something being pleasing to look at. But Genesis 3 is the record of history’s most infamous sin. So, we may safely conclude that Eve’s longing look upon the fruit in delight was done with a lustful eye. It was a covetous glance; a longing to have something that was not proper for her to possess.

Because Eve was born without a sin nature, her sin of lusting for the fruit (or more specifically what she believed the fruit could give

her) was a deliberately chosen sin in response to an external source of temptation. We call that a “temptation from without.” We, however, are in an even more difficult predicament than our first mother. Having been born with a natural preference for sin, we are quite capable of producing lustful desires on our own without any external source egging us on. We call that “temptation from within.” Consider the words of James 1:14–15: “But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death” (emphasis added).

The New Testament word for lust is *epithumia*, which means “desire.” Of course, not all desires are bad. Indeed, there are examples in the New Testament of *epithumia* being used

positively, such as when a qualified man appropriately “desires” the office of elder (1 Tim. 3:1). But *epithumia* is often used to refer to sinful desires, so *epithumia* is also rendered as “lust” and “passions,” as well as “desires.” Lust is the desire for anything that is sinful, such as illicit sex, intoxication, ill-gotten gain, revenge, or anything else that God forbids.

Lust may also be applied to the way in which we desire something that is not in and of itself sinful. In other words, we may lust when we desire a good thing in the wrong way or for the wrong reasons. It is not sinful to desire a spouse. But it is sinful to desire another person’s spouse. It is not sinful to desire to be compensated justly for legitimate labors. But it is sinful to desire riches to satisfy our materialistic appetites or because we crave

worldly security. It is good to rest. But the sin of sloth is what happens when that desire becomes twisted. You get the picture. Lust is both a desire for the wrong thing and a wrong desire for an otherwise good thing. Lust, in all of its forms and expressions, is without exception sinful and, therefore, represents a sort of mutiny against God.

Lust, in all of its forms and expressions, is without exception sinful and, therefore, represents a sort of mutiny against God.

In Ephesians, Paul lists *epithumia* as belonging to those sins that characterize life outside of Christ when we “once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of our body” (Eph. 2:3, emphasis added). In Titus, we are told that prior to our conversion we were “slaves to various passions and pleasures” (Titus 3:3,

emphasis added). A life given over to such sinful desires is wildly inconsistent with the Christian life.

Peter refers to lust (passions) as a way of contrasting the life of the Christian with that of the unbeliever: “As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance” (1 Peter 1:14, emphasis added). “Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul” (1 Peter 2:11, emphasis added). He tells us we must no longer live for “human passions but for the will of God” (1 Peter 4:2, emphasis added).

In rebuking the religious leaders who opposed Him and His mission, Jesus said that their “desires” (lusts) were the same as their father Satan (John 8:44). Jesus locates the origins of lust within the evil heart of

Satan. Not surprisingly then, lust, or worldly desires, often choke out the seed of the gospel in the human heart (Mark 4:19). So lust takes aim at the church’s efforts to gain a hearing for the gospel.

Lust deserves our aggressive opposition. We must flee from it when it comes from outside of us and kill it when it gurgles up from our hearts. Lust is bad for us the way all sin is bad for us because it tells us that poison is sweet and dying is living. May we make full use of the God-given means of grace (Scripture, the sacraments, Christian fellowship, and prayer) to wage war against lust just as surely as lust wages war against us. May we look to Jesus and treasure Him in our hearts. His power and loveliness are far greater than anything with which the world can

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Adam Hamilton: Christian Faith, Democratic Politics and the Authority of Scripture

By Faith BroKar

The Rev. Adam Hamilton, founding pastor of Resurrection, a United Methodist Church based in Leawood, has won the Democratic nomination for the U.S. Senate in Kansas.

Hamilton received approximately 76,229 votes, or 34.9 percent, in the August 4 primary. He will face Republican incumbent Sen. Roger Marshall in the November 3 general election.

His candidacy has attracted national attention because Hamilton is not simply a politician who occasionally mentions faith. He has spent more than three decades in ministry, written numerous Christian books and built one of the

Lust

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tempt us. Jesus' promises are better by far than the mocking promises of worldly desire:

If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory (Col. 3:1-4).

largest United Methodist congregations in the country.

Hamilton identifies himself as a Christian and says his faith is central to his campaign. However, some Christians have questioned how a pastor can represent a political party associated with legal abortion, same-sex marriage and other positions that appear contrary to Scripture.

The answer requires looking beyond his political affiliation and examining what Hamilton actually believes.

Can a Christian Be a Democrat?

The Bible does not identify either major American political party as God's party. Christians may legitimately disagree over taxation, tariffs, health-care policy, immigration procedures, environmental regulation and the proper size

of government.

Republicans and Democrats can both support policies that deserve biblical scrutiny. Therefore, Hamilton's decision to run as a Democrat does not, by itself, prove or disprove his Christian faith.

Hamilton says he initially considered running as an independent. After visiting 18 Kansas communities, however, he concluded that an independent campaign offered little realistic path to victory. He also said people repeatedly asked why he was not running as a Democrat.

He describes himself as independent-minded and says he wants to build bridges between Republicans and Democrats. He believes his experience pastoring a politically diverse congregation has prepared him to work with people who disagree.

Hamilton connects his Democratic politics to biblical commands concerning compassion, poverty, immigrants, health care and the treatment of vulnerable people. He has criticized what he considers cru-

elty, polarization and indifference toward those harmed by government policies.

Christians should take those concerns seriously. Scripture repeatedly commands God's people to care for the poor, de-

fend the vulnerable and treat foreigners justly.

However, compassion cannot be separated from truth. A policy does not become biblical merely because it is described as

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FIRST-PERSON: Cultural Insanity Invades the WNBA

By Adam Dooley

Sometimes the easiest way to expose a bad idea is simply to take it seriously. For years, the transgender movement has promoted a false distinction between biological sex and gender identity that has become commonplace in society. Consequently, the intrusion of men into female spaces, whether it be bathrooms, athletic competitions, or beauty contests, is left to the whims of individuals and their chosen identities. All of this is perfectly normal, or so we are told. The absurdity of such thinking is obvious, yet many are afraid to speak out.

Until recently, that is.

Last week, former NBA center Enes Kanter Freedom shocked the world when he stated

his intention of entering the 2027 WNBA Draft. The 34-year-old, 6-foot-10 veteran played eleven seasons professionally, averaging 11.2 points and 7.8 rebounds per game. Now, he wants another opportunity to step on the court – this time in the Women's National Basketball Association.

Not long after Freedom's announcement, another former NBA player, Royce White, waded into the fray. As a former first-round draft pick, White seemingly joined the protest to intentionally expose the reckless logic behind the whole gender identity scam. Currently, the WNBA's position on eligibility is that "only players who are women are eligible to play in the [league]." Nothing

wrong here. But if the same league is unwilling to limit the definition of a woman to biological realities, these words are not worth the paper they are written on.

Sports commentator Bob Costas weighed in with refreshing common sense. "There is a reason why the high school champions don't compete with the college champions," he said. "There is a reason why no trans-man who was once a woman and become a man has ever competed successfully with men in the Olympics."

"If Caitlin Clark could play in the NBA, everybody would applaud

it," he continued, but everyone would see the absurdity if a mediocre NBA player went to the WNBA and "started averaging 40 points a game." While stressing that transgender people deserve dignity and respect, Costas concluded, "Common sense is not transphobic."

Indeed.

These questions were not born last week, though. In July, Indiana Fever star Sophie Cunningham sparked controversy by simply saying, "I am here to extend love. But I also think with that love is truth, being honest. And I want to protect young girls in a locker room, or

young girls in sport who shouldn't have to go against biological men." Her observation hardly seems radical. Yet, days later, Minnesota Lynx coach Cheryl Reeve protested by wearing a "Trans Kids Belong" shirt on the sidelines.

Claiming to value and protect women without being able to clearly define what women are is a blatant contradiction. Strangely, many of the most ardent feminist voices remain silent. The champions of Title IX rightly celebrated the distinctions between the sexes as important and valuable. These modern reinterpretations of gender, however, jeopardize

every previous gain.

If the roles were reversed, and these were women pretending to be men, how many do you think could earn a spot on an NBA roster? Women's basketball exists because the physical differences between the sexes are undeniable.

Are these conversations really necessary? Or are they just more evidence of our cultural unwillingness to embrace common sense? Freedom and White have exposed the inconsistency by following the argument to its logical conclusion.

Thankfully, the Bible

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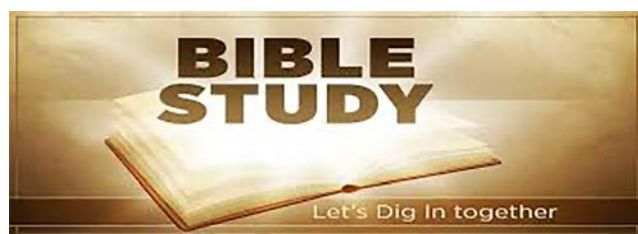
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Faithful Through Every Season

Key Scripture

"To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven."

—Ecclesiastes 3:1

Introduction

September brings a noticeable change. Summer begins to fade, children return to school, and the first signs of autumn appear. The changing world around us reminds us that life also moves through seasons.

Some seasons bring happiness and growth. Others bring waiting, disappointment or loss. Although our circumstances continually change, God remains faithful through them all.

Teaching

Ecclesiastes 3 teaches that there is a time and purpose for every season. We may not understand why God allows certain circumstances, but we can trust that He sees what we cannot.

A tree appears lifeless when its leaves fall, yet important work continues beneath the surface. In the same way, God may be working in our lives even when we cannot see evidence of progress.

Scripture assures us, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever" (Hebrews 13:8). Our circumstances may change, but Christ does not. His character, promises and love remain secure.

We must also resist becoming discouraged when a difficult season lasts longer than expected. Galatians 6:9 tells us, "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."

God does not ask us to control every outcome. He asks us to trust Him and remain faithful.

Application

Consider the season you are currently experiencing. Are you celebrating, grieving, waiting or beginning something new?

If this is a season of blessing, thank God and use what He has given you to serve others. If it is a season of difficulty, continue praying and obeying His Word. Do not mistake waiting for abandonment or silence for absence.

Ask God what He wants to teach you where you are today instead of focusing only on what you hope will happen next.

Closing Thought

Every season eventually changes, but God never does. The same Lord who carried you through yesterday will remain faithful today and tomorrow. You may not know what the coming season holds, but you can trust the One who holds it.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for Your faithfulness through every season of my life. Help me trust You when I cannot see what You are doing. Give me patience while I wait, strength when I grow weary and wisdom to recognize Your work around me. Teach me to remain faithful and to rest in the promise that You never change. In Jesus' name, amen.

3 Things to Remember When Parenting Feels Crazy

By Meredith Lee Myers,
Ligonier Ministries

It's not just you; parenting is crazy. For some it comes naturally, like a realized dream—a grace to taste and see the good. For others it feels like uncharted territory, requiring a faith that hopes for things not yet seen. No matter how we feel, we can remember that parenthood is a calling. The Lord gives and the Lord takes away, and this calling is not dependent on our feelings of readiness, competencies, or even on

our preparedness.

When we recognize our inadequacy as an example, provider, or loving caregiver, let us turn to the Lord who is not simply a metaphor of the perfect Father; it is who He is. The calling of parenthood is not a human institution that we project onto God; it is a divine reality that God has graciously extended to us. Every tender instinct we have as parents—to teach, to heal, to lead with conviction, to run toward our child in compassion—reflects

the One from whom all fatherhood is named. When we are caught up in a wave of uncertainty or exhaustion, we can turn time and again to the Lord whose "steadfast love . . . never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning" (Lam. 3:22–23). With this promise, here are three things to remember when parenting feels crazy.

1. We are shaped by our experiences.

Parenthood is often surprising in the way it draws out our past experiences while we're in the middle of creating new ones. Sharing and interpreting these experiences is important. For many of us, it is vital that we address our sorrows in order to truly embrace new joys. Moses reminds the Israelites as they stand on the edge of the promised land:

Take care, and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things that your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. Make them known to your children

and your children's children. (Deut. 4:9)

Their losses and God's manifold provisions were not meant to be left behind them but to interpret their experiences in the wilderness and to inform their parenting for this generation and the next.

In this way, we should be diligent to use practical wisdom without fearing that history is doomed to repeat itself. When parenting feels crazy, we need to consider how our experiences have shaped our understanding of ourselves and how we see God because He uses parenthood to shape and sanctify us for our good and His glory.

2. We can pray imperfectly.

As the Lord equips us, He does not equip us to be perfect in the way we often hope—with greater speed, accuracy, confidence, and success. Parenthood offers many opportunities to be humbled in how little we have to offer and how little we can affect. Try as we might, we cannot

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WNBA

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speaks with refreshing clarity about these matters. Every human being possesses innate, immeasurable worth because God created each of us in His image (Genesis 1:26–28). Cruelty, hatred, and mockery of those who suffer from gender dysphoria is not a Christian virtue. God calls believers to love our neighbors even when we strongly disagree with them (Matthew 22:39).

Doing so does not, however, compel us to be untruthful. Jesus affirmed that from the beginning, God made human beings male and female (Matthew 19:4–5). Both the unique roles for the sexes (Genesis 2:18–25) and the gender specific curses that fol-

lowed humanity's fall (Genesis 3:16–19) reflect God's purposeful design for men and women. Rebelling against the gender of our birth is akin to mocking the image of God that is stamped on every human soul. Biology confirms what Scripture so plainly declares. Despite being equally valuable, men and women are not biologically identical.

Our culture increasingly forces objective truth to yield to the personal preferences and feelings of individuals. Such confusion is simply not sustainable. Truth is not hateful because someone finds it offensive. Neither does compassion become loving when it demands dismissing reality. Calling good evil or evil good is never the Christian thing to do (Isaiah 5:20).

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someone who hurt us get some comeuppance, it will still leave us empty, because no amount of justice seems to rise to our level of hurt. Again, the impulse is normal—but normal things can make us stumble into something else.

Ernst Jünger wrote in the middle of last century that bitterness and resentment don't really settle in because of a sense of having been

hurt. Rather, he wrote, they come from a sense of an ongoing debt we are owed—perpetual suspense that the hurt will be rectified personally and the wrong undone. And because that almost never happens—indeed, almost never can happen—the person who was hurt often seeks redress in some other way. Sometimes that's just internal rumination that governs the person's life. Sometimes, without the person even noticing it, that's choosing a scapegoat on

whom to pour out anger and disappointment.

To be free, though, you have to know the difference between what you lost and who you are. You can genuinely mourn what was lost and still realize that freedom will ultimately mean being defined by something other than what you lost. That's hard to do. Peter told Jesus, in what reads like almost-palpable frustration, "We have left everything and followed you" (Mark 10:28). If you believe you are noth-

ing beyond what can be seized—a church home, for instance, or a tribe—then whoever controls those conditions controls you completely.

Another obstacle to forgiveness is the desire for some sense of narrative closure. You might not think the hurt will be redressed, but you want it to make sense in the story of your life. Again, that's not wrong in and of itself.

In the Book of Genesis, Joseph's brothers attacked him and trafficked him into slavery. They encountered him years later after he had become a ruler over Egypt, running a famine food-storage program that ultimately saved their lives as they sought relief from potential starvation. After the death of their father, Jacob, the brothers quite legitimately worried that Joseph would take his revenge. They even workshopped some

rather manipulative talking points, saying the father had told them on his deathbed to ask Joseph to forgive them.

Joseph famously said, "As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today" (Gen. 50:20). Few Bible verses are as abused by unmooring them from context as this one. If the brothers had said, Look how this has all turned out for good! that would have been morally repugnant self-justification. Joseph—the one harmed—is the one who said this, and he never classified what they did as anything but evil. He did not justify their means by the end. He simply acknowledged that he trusted God and that he was not clamoring for vengeance for what was past.

The problem, though, is that it is very rare to

find that kind of retroactive meaning. To forgive, you must trust that God is at work for your good—mostly in ways that are invisible and incomprehensible to you. That doesn't minimize what was done, but it dethrones it from its power as the central story of your life. Sometimes you get the apology you've always wanted to hear, but often you don't. People move on with their lives as though they've forgotten what they did. Sometimes they even die without acknowledging it. That means not that the story ended unresolved but rather that you can't see to the end.

Yet another obstacle to forgiveness can be a sense of powerlessness. Again, if you define power as the ability to undo what was done wrong, you will never get it. At the same time, if you try to just "move on," you

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will never overcome the loss. But you can redirect that longing for power.

Frederick Buechner wrote years ago about a man who told him, "You have had a good deal of pain in your life, and you have been a good steward of it." Stewardship is power too. Even when you can't undo what's been done against you, you can prevent those same things from happening to others—or you can be the consoling presence you needed but never had. If nothing else, you can resolve to do your best never to hurt anyone else the way you were hurt. The

most forgiving people I've known are not those who deny the pain, nor those who are defined wholly by it, but those who steward it—as a kind of monastic vow to pay attention to others with similar stories.

A final obstacle is another kind of powerlessness, this time over the forgiveness itself. Panicked frustration that we are not immediately sanctified rarely produces that sanctification. Rather, it pushes us to its opposite. The prophet Jeremiah said that the people's conclusion over their pull to idolatry—"It is hopeless" (Jer. 2:25)—is what drew them closer to it. You don't need to go that way.

The recognition of a

need for grace is itself a grace. The desire to forgive is itself an essential first step to forgiveness. Just because you stumble back into bitterness or resentment does not mean your initial forgiveness was a sham. Indeed, you will need ongoing grace to forgive—not just one charge of it.

God is more forgiving than we are. He doesn't view our forgiveness as a feat to please him. He is a Father who wants the best for us. He knows forgiveness is hard for us. It is not hard for him.

So when you find forgiveness difficult, pray as the man with Jesus once did about his unbelief (Mark 9:24):

I forgive; help my unforgiveness.

Crazy

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be all things to our children. It is important that we remember our higher calling: "But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God" (John 1:12). Our children's greatest need is not for us to be the answer or solution, but to see our dependence on the Lord and the blessing that they have to call on Him as well.

When parenting feels crazy, we can remember we are not only raising children but also proclaiming hope.

When parenting feels crazy, we can pray imperfectly: quickly and often, through the long watches of the night, and in all seasons. Our calls to prayer are a lifeline and a witness. Do we believe the Lord watches over us while we sleep? We can pray with our children when they wake with nightmares and illnesses. Do we believe the Lord provides our daily needs? We can give thanks for our food and find practical joy in counting our blessings together. Do we believe

the Lord provides wisdom? We can ask trusted friends for prayer, sharing our burdens while also receiving practical suggestions.

3. It's never too late to start doing the right thing.

The hardest part of any commitment is faithfulness in the small, unseen, and unpraised things. We all often want to move on to greater things, but if we are not faithful in the mundane, we will not fulfill our calling. Jesus reminds us:

Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock . . . And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. (Matt. 7:24, 26)

Recognizing this, we then understand the importance of how we respond to mistakes. Parenting is filled with mistakes—ours and those of our children. When we build carelessly or ignore the cracks, the structure will inevitably suffer. When parenting feels crazy, we can remember that it's never too late to start doing the

right thing because we are building for eternity and the Rock will withstand every storm. Any effort to build upon the Rock is for the good of our children and God's glory.

Conclusion

Contrary to the popular motivational statement, we do not all have the same twenty-four hours in a day. People and situations are complicated. We don't all have the same resources, time, needs, or commitments. These things are sovereignly administered and not necessarily indicative of our inner life, outward behavior, or favor with God. Our times, and the times of our children, are in His hands.

With that in mind, we should remember that faithfulness is not measured by comparison to others or by the absence of problems, but by obedience to Jesus Christ and His Word. Building on the Rock requires honesty and consistency, but it is because of the hope that is within us that we remain steady in the face of the hard things of parenting. The Proverbs remind us, "Discipline your son, for there is hope" (Prov. 19:18). We see the complexities of things so much more clearly in the rear-view, yet the Lord calls us to trust Him in the steps along our way. He knows the way; He goes before us; He knows we are broken vessels. When parenting feels crazy, we can remember we are not only raising children but also proclaiming hope.



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Hamilton

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loving, and the sincerity of a religious leader does not make all of his conclusions sound.

What Hamilton Affirms

Hamilton affirms several foundational Christian beliefs. He teaches that Jesus is divine, that Christ reveals God to humanity and that the resurrection is central to the Christian faith.

He speaks openly about prayer, repentance, grace, worship and following Jesus. He encourages Christians to read Scripture, serve others, make disciples and live lives shaped by Christ.

Hamilton's church says it believes in "the radiating hope of Jesus Christ" and seeks to reflect His truth, love and

grace. Hamilton has also spent decades inviting people who were disconnected from church to consider Christianity.

These are not insignificant affirmations. It would be unfair to portray Hamilton as a secular politician who merely borrowed Christian language for a campaign.

Nevertheless, Christians are instructed to examine every teaching by the Word of God. The Bereans were commended because they "searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11).

When Hamilton's beliefs are compared with a traditional understanding of Scripture, several serious conflicts emerge.

His Understanding of Scripture

The foundational concern is Hamilton's view of the Bible.

Hamilton calls Scripture authoritative and believes God speaks through it. However, he does not accept the traditional evangelical understanding that the Bible is uniquely inspired and trustworthy in everything it teaches.

In explaining his approach, Hamilton has said that the Bible "wasn't dictated by God." That statement alone is not necessarily troubling; many conservative Christians recognize that God worked through the personalities and writing styles of human authors rather than mechanically dictating every word.

The greater concern is Hamilton's belief that biblical writers sometimes recorded their own cultural assumptions and mistaken understandings of God.

He sorts biblical passages into different cat-

egories. Some reveal God's timeless will, while others contain instructions for a particular time or reflect the limited culture and understanding of their human authors.

This approach allows Hamilton to conclude that certain biblical commands do not accurately represent God's enduring will.

Second Timothy 3:16, however, says, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."

The issue is not whether every Old Testament command applies directly to Christians today. Scripture itself distinguishes the old covenant from the new and provides principles for interpreting commands within their proper context.

The danger comes when the reader assumes authority to decide that a biblical teaching is mistaken because it conflicts with modern values or personal experience. At that point, human judgment can become the final authority over Scripture.

Same-Sex Marriage and Ordination

Hamilton once held a traditional Christian position on homosexual relationships, but his views changed.

He now affirms committed same-sex relationships and supports allowing same-sex couples to marry. He also supports the ordination of gay and lesbian clergy who are considered qualified and committed to ministry.

Hamilton compares biblical prohibitions against homosexual conduct with passages concerning slavery, the treatment of women, warfare and severe Old Testament punishments. He believes those prohibitions reflect ancient cultural assumptions rather than God's timeless purpose for human sexuality.

In 2024, Hamilton welcomed the United Methodist Church's removal of restrictions against same-sex weddings and practicing gay clergy. Pastors at Resurrection may now perform same-sex weddings, although individual pastors are not required to do so.

This position does not align with the straightforward and consistent

teaching of Scripture.

Genesis describes God creating humanity male and female and establishing marriage between a man and a woman. Jesus affirmed that pattern in Matthew 19:4-6. Romans 1:26-27, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 and 1 Timothy 1:9-10 continue the biblical prohibition against same-sex sexual relationships.

Christians must treat every person with dignity, compassion and love. Mockery, cruelty and hatred are incompatible with following Christ. But biblical love does not require redefining what God has called sin.

Jesus welcomed sinners, but He also called people to repentance. Grace does not affirm us in everything we desire; it forgives and transforms us.

His Position on Abortion

Hamilton's position on abortion appears personally conflicted but politically pro-choice.

He has shared that his mother considered abortion after becoming pregnant with him as a teenager. He recognizes the moral seriousness of the issue and has counseled women facing painful pregnancies, including those resulting from rape.

Nevertheless, Hamilton voted against the 2022 Kansas constitutional amendment that would have allowed lawmakers to enact stronger abortion restric-

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Hamilton

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tions. He has said legislators should not act as the “ethicists and spiritual guides” of women facing pregnancy decisions.

That position leaves unborn children without the legal protection Hamilton seeks for other vulnerable members of society.

Psalm 139 describes God’s involvement in forming human life within the womb. Jeremiah was known by God before his birth. John the Baptist responded to the presence of Christ while both were still unborn.

Human life does not gain its value from whether it is wanted, healthy or convenient. Its value comes from being created by God and bearing His image.

Christians may debate how best to help women experiencing difficult pregnancies, but compassion must extend to both the mother and her

unborn child. A biblical concern for the vulnerable cannot exclude the child whose life is at stake.

Salvation and Hell

Hamilton teaches that salvation comes through Jesus, but he appears open to an inclusivist understanding of salvation.

Under that view, Christ remains the means of salvation, but God may save people who never knowingly placed their faith in Jesus. Hamilton has questioned whether people should be condemned because they were raised in another religion or never received a meaningful opportunity to hear the gospel.

He has also explored whether hell must be an irreversible condition, suggesting it may be a separation from God that people continue to choose.

Christians should acknowledge that God alone perfectly judges every person. He is both just and merciful, and

no human being knows everything God knows about another person’s heart or opportunities.

Yet Scripture repeatedly calls people to conscious faith in Christ.

Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6). Peter declared, “Neither is there salvation in any other” (Acts 4:12). Paul asked how people could believe in One of whom they had not heard and emphasized the necessity of preaching the gospel (Romans 10:13–17).

We must not claim knowledge God has not given us, but neither should we soften the urgency of Christ’s command to repent, believe and make disciples of all nations.

Sincerity Is Not the Final Standard

Only God knows Adam Hamilton’s heart, and it is not our place to declare with certainty whether another professing believer is saved.

Hamilton may sin-

cerely believe that his theology reflects the love and character of Jesus. Sincerity, however, is not the final measure of truth. People can be sincere and still be sincerely mistaken.

The proper question is not simply whether Hamilton uses Christian language, performs charitable work or belongs to a particular political party. The question is whether his teachings agree with the full counsel of God’s Word.

Hamilton affirms Christ’s divinity, resurrection, grace and call to discipleship. Those beliefs should be acknowledged honestly.

At the same time, his understanding of biblical inspiration gives him a method for setting aside teachings that conflict with contemporary values. That method is especially visible in his affirmation of same-sex marriage and practicing gay clergy. His political support for legal abortion also conflicts with the biblical obligation to

protect innocent human life.

Adam Hamilton represents a progressive form of United Methodist Christianity. It retains important Christian language and several historic doctrines while reinterpreting or rejecting other biblical teachings.

Christians should neither dismiss him solely because he is a Democrat nor accept his teaching solely because he is a pastor. We should follow the command of 1 Thesalonians 5:21:

“Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.”

Political parties, pastors and personal feelings must all remain subject to the authority of God’s Word.



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Deepen Your Delight with Holy Fear

By Clinton Manley, *Desiring God*

Do you delight to fear God?

The servants of the Lord on earth do. The saints before the throne of God do. Even Jesus does.

Scripture makes it clear that, for those in right relationship with God, the fear of God is a particular kind of delight in God, a full-proof pleasure that ruins us to the allurements of sin and leaves us in quaking awe before the King of all things. To fear God is to be fully alive. It is the treasure of the saints (Isaiah 33:6; Proverbs 15:16).

Yet so often Christians treat the fear of God as if it were a relic of Old Testament piety, as if God were to be feared then but now all fear is gone. To many, the fear of God is the equivalent of a drizzly,

gray autumn day. But this is not the picture we find in Scripture.

I want to entice you toward the fear of the Lord. Holy fear is a delight we dare not neglect. It is not only the beginning of wisdom; it is also the chief reward of the difficult discipline of joy. So what is the fear of God?

Awestruck Adoration

Scripture differentiates holy fear, the fear of the saints before God, from the fear of unbelievers. Those who have not hidden themselves in Christ should be terrified at the prospect of his wrath (Revelation 6:15–17). They are right to be afraid of God. But those in Christ are safe from eternal condemnation and wrath (Romans 8:1; 1 Thessalonians 1:10). As we'll see, they are not afraid of God, but they do

fear. We can summarize this holy fear in three statements.

1. Holy fear is the fitting response to seeing God in his majesty.

Fear is the fitting response to the full-orbed revelation of God. Surprisingly, when the saints experience the fear of God in Scripture, it is most often in response to God's goodness, grace, and mercy, rather than his judgment and wrath. Consider Psalm 111. In this poem, the psalmist studies the great works of God. There is no hint of judgment or wrath in this psalm, only overwhelming greatness and goodness. And yet, the poet concludes his tour of God's works by saying, "Holy and awesome [fearful] is his name! The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Psalm

111:9–10).

We see this pattern throughout Scripture (e.g., Jeremiah 33:8–9; Hosea 3:5; Luke 7:14–16). As God's people witness the greatness of his grace, mercy, and majesty in his works, the fitting response is holy fear, which is a kind of quaking wonder in the face of his staggeringly good glory. This fear causes us to dread departing from such goodness, violating it in any way, or belittling it by preferring something else. Thus, holy fear, in awe of God and aware of his fatherly discipline, acts as a bulwark against sin and folly (Romans 11:20).

It comes as no surprise then that holy fear is the exuberant song of the saints before the throne of God in Revelation 15:

Great and amazing are

your deeds,

O Lord God the Almighty!

Just and true are your ways,

O King of the nations!

Who will not fear, O Lord,

and glorify your name?
(Revelation 15:3–4)

They sing fear and glory in response to God's amazing deeds. It comes as no surprise, then, that Solomon concludes his exploration of God's ways and gifts to man with this:

The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. (Ecclesiastes 12:13)

Literally, this is "the whole of man"—the heart of what we were made for. But what about "The chief end of man is to glorify God by enjoying him forever"? Which is it: Fear and obey or glorify and enjoy? Rightly understood, there is no contradiction here. In calling us to fear God, Solomon (just like the poet of Psalm 111) invites us into the same kind of astonished enjoyment of God that most glorifies him, which is the chief end of man. When we are awake to God, we cannot help but be thrilled with God. And God in turn is thrilled with our thrill (Psalm 147:11). Fearing God and glorifying him are not two pursuits in Revelation 15:4; they are one. Our God looks good when his people respond to him in the heightened joy of

holy fear.

2. Holy fear is the affection of awestruck adoration.

For the saints, the fear of God is not the same as being afraid of God (see Exodus 20:20 for this contrast). Instead of distancing us from God, holy fear attracts us to God. It fits us to be friends with God (Psalm 25:14). As we see the overwhelming goodness and greatness of God, we balk at the thought of straying from the fountain of living waters (Jeremiah 2:13, 19). We turn from sin to him to be satisfied (Job 28:28; Proverbs 16:6). Yet this fear endures forever, growing deeper and fuller long after we are free from sin and its consequences (Psalm 19:9).

In this sense, the fear of God is a particularly poignant kind of joy in him. Thus, Nehemiah calls God's servants those "who delight to fear your name" (Nehemiah 1:11). Perhaps the most important passage for understanding this holy fear comes in Isaiah 11, which is a prophecy about the coming Messiah:

There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.

And his delight shall

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Fear

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be in the fear of the Lord. (11:1-3)

Notice the Holy Spirit, the great Comforter, is called the Spirit of the fear of Yahweh, and God's Messiah will delight in this fear. This fear cannot be terror or dread or else he wouldn't delight in it. This is our King's thrilled pleasure in his Father. It should come as no surprise that the fear of God is an explicit blessing of the new covenant, for we have this Spirit within us so that we may share in Christ's own tremendous joy in God (Jeremiah 32:38-40).

For the saints, as for Christ, holy fear is the affection of awestruck adoration; it keeps us fixated on him. The word fear qualifies the kind of affection we should have in the presence of God. In his

book *Rejoice and Tremble*, Michael Reeves explains how holy fear relates to love and joy:

The living God is infinitely perfect and quintessentially, overwhelmingly beautiful in every way: his righteousness, his graciousness, his majesty, his mercy, his all. And so we do not love him aright if our love is not a trembling, overwhelmed, and fearful love. In a sense, then, the trembling "fear of God" is a way of speaking about the intensity of the saints' love for and enjoyment of all that God is. (*Rejoice and Tremble*, 52)

In other words, fear specifies the kind of love and joy we should have for God.

An acronym may help draw these first two points together:

F – Focus: Holy fear is the proper response to seeing the glorious goodness of the great God.

E – Evaluate: Holy fear rightly evaluates the worth of God as the source of all goodness, truth, and beauty.

A – Adore: Holy fear is the adoring response of a child to his heavenly Father, an affection that draws the saints toward God.

R – Revere: Holy fear is the experience of awe and trembling thrill in the presence of a Being who is overwhelmingly holy, just, and good.

Holy fear begins by focusing on God and evaluating his worth and results in the affectionate response of adoring and revering him.

3. Holy fear is the foundation of all wisdom and happiness.

We all know the mantra of biblical wisdom: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." In other words, awestruck adoration is the founda-

tion of true wisdom, which is the ability to see and respond to God's designs in the world. As Solomon says, "The wise person has his eyes in his head" to see the patterns of God's ways in the world (revealed in his word) and go with the grain of reality (*Ecclesiastes* 2:14).

But why is the fear of the Lord the foundation of wisdom? Because without an awestruck awareness of God, you don't know the most fundamental thing about anything. Watch almost any nature documentary, and you'll find assiduous study paired with laughable folly. Have you heard charming, sophisticated voices like David Attenborough's marvel at the design of some animal, and then attribute that great work to natural selection? They see the wondrous works of God but do not fear the God behind the wonders. If you don't

marvel that all things are from him and through him and to him, you can never be wise.

Moreover, awestruck adoration is also the foundation of happiness. Psalm 112, a poem celebrating the wonderful well-being of those who practice awestruck adoration, begins,

Happy is the man who fears the Lord, who greatly delights in his commands. (112:1)

Here we see another dimension of the happy man: He fears God. Holy fear is the foundation of his happiness. And that fear is explained as delight in God's words — great delight. This is not lukewarm affection for God but delight that threatens to burst the bounds of our capacity, like a flooded river buffeting a flimsy dam. To fear God is to be alive in the fullest sense — to be happy and wise and to tremble

before the majesty of our King.

Invitation to Fear

Given the way many Christians orient toward the fear of God, as a gray and dreary thing, a wet blanket on our otherwise warm affections for God, it is easy to be left asking, Do I dare to fear God? But if we take seriously how the Bible speaks about holy fear as a pleasure to God, as the blazing affection of awestruck adoration, as the bedrock of wisdom and happiness, the better question is, Do I dare not fear God? Reeves reveals the stakes in no unclear terms:

The living God is not moderately happy but fearfully happy, and when we have [holy] fear, we enter into the joy of our Master.

(*Rejoice and Tremble*, 59)

So, do you delight to fear God? How could you dare do otherwise?

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Kidnapped U.S. Missionary to Niger Released Safely, Sending Ministry Confirms



Kevin Rideout, kidnapped by militants in Niger in October 2025, has been released.

By Diana Chandler, Baptist Press

Kevin Rideout, a U.S. missionary to Niger kidnapped by militants in October 2025, has been released in good health, Serving in Mission International (SIM) publicly confirmed Aug. 14.

"We are grateful to confirm that our good

friend and brother in Christ, Kevin Rideout, has been released after over nine months in captivity," SIM said. "Kevin is in good health in the care of U.S. officials. He will soon be reunited with (his wife) Krista, his children, and his extended family."

Three men suspected of being jihadists had

taken the a 50-year-old pilot from his home in Niamey Oct. 21. Rideout is believed to have been released Aug. 13, but no group has claimed responsibility for the crime.

SIM, which previously made no public comments on Rideout's ordeal, thanked Christians for their prayers preceding his release.

"Krista and the rest of Kevin's family are profoundly grateful for the prayers offered on their behalf by people around the world throughout his captivity, and in particular for the deep level of prayer and support offered by our SIM family," SIM said. "We ask that you respect the privacy of

the family while they reconnect after this time apart."

Rideout is safely in the U.S., President Donald Trump announced today on Truth Social.

"I am proud to announce that Kevin Rideout, a wonderful Christian missionary, is back in United States Custody," Trump said in a post. "Kevin was kidnapped by Jihadi terrorists in West Africa – the epicenter of Islamist terrorism, where there have been more deadly attacks in the past year than anywhere else on Earth. Kevin, the United States of America looks forward to welcoming you home. Glad to have helped!"

The U.S. State Department had worked for Rideout's release, the New York Times reported, referencing two anonymous sources.

"Details of how and precisely where Mr. Rideout was released were unclear late Thursday (Aug. 13)," the Times reported, based on the sources. "It was unclear which terrorist or criminal group held Mr. Rideout at the end of his captivity, as he may have been moved recently, one of the two officials said."

Rideout had been in FBI custody, the Times credited the sources as saying and was in good health based on proof-of-life images.

Many Christians

hailed Rideout's release, including evangelist Franklin Graham.

"We thank God that American missionary Kevin Rideout has been freed and is on his way home!" Graham posted early today. "This is an answer to prayer! I know that his wife and four children are so grateful and excited to finally have him back."

Only 0.3 percent of Niger's nearly 29 million people are Christian, Open Doors U.S. said in its 2026 World Watch List of Christian persecution, ranking Niger as 26 among the 50 nations where it is most difficult to practice the faith. Islamic oppression is the main driver of persecution.

Worry will not get you anywhere, but prayer and faith in the Lord can help you at any time.



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