

THE NEWSLETTER

A Ministry of Cornerstone Fellowship of Coatesville Pennsylvania

*The Reverend Doctor Charles H. Jensen, Senior Pastor
Mr. Peter E. Jensen, Assistant Pastor of Youth Ministries & Group Life*

610-384-1375 or 610-384-1216
610-384-6757 (fax)
email: fbccoatpa@aol.com
www.cornerstonefellowship1.org

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**COME TO
VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL
Sunday, June 28 -Thursday, July 2
6-8pm
for all children Pre-K (age 4) through 5th grade**



**WE STILL NEED YOUR HELP TO MAKE VBS A SUCCESS!
SPEAK TO MELISSA ALTON or SELINA MORROW**

THE HIGHEST VIRTUE - TOLERANCE OR TRUTH?

(from – American Family Association)

Josh McDowell and Bob Hostetler in their book *The New Tolerance: How a cultural movement threatens to destroy you, your faith, and your children*, point out that not long ago, the word “tolerance” meant bearing or putting up with someone or something not especially liked. However, now the word has been redefined to encompass all values, all beliefs, all lifestyles.

In this age of political correctness and “new tolerance” Christians are expected to conform their principles to fit our culture – just get along and don’t make waves. But look around at the devastating results of such passivity and it’s everywhere. The virtue most praised today, even in some churches, is not truth but tolerance. We are expected to be tolerant of those who believe it is acceptable to take the lives of innocent unborn babies. We are expected to revere all religions and their claims about truth. So, all religions are right and lead to God. We are expected to be tolerant of those who deny others’ basic human freedoms. And we are expected to be tolerant of those who deny God’s plan for human sexuality. All too often, **we are expected to tolerate evil.** This is the new tolerance.

Researcher George Barna reported at the close of 2010 that this postmodern insistence on tolerance is even winning over the Christian church – to the church’s shame. Barna points out that change usually happens slowly in the church, but he said last year was an exception. He then makes his case for that assessment:

... our biblical illiteracy and lack of spiritual confidence has caused Americans to avoid making discerning choices for fear of being labeled judgmental. The result is a Church that has become tolerant of a vast array of morally and spiritually dubious behaviors and philosophies. This increased leniency is made possible by the limited accountability that occurs within the body of Christ. There are fewer and fewer issues that Christians believe churches should be dogmatic about. The idea of love has been redefined to mean the absence of conflict and confrontation, as if there are no moral absolutes that are worth fighting for. That may not be surprising in a Church in which the minority believes there are moral absolutes dictated by the Scriptures... – The world, and its depravity, has rushed in to take over a vast majority of churches and Christians.

Barna continues with the charge to Christian leaders to achieve the delicate balance between representing truth and acting in love. He continues with a challenge for every Christian to know his or her faith well enough to understand which battles are worth fighting, and which stands are non-negotiable. He concludes, *There is a place for tolerance in Christianity, knowing when and where to draw the line appears to perplex a growing proportion of Christians in this age of tolerance.*

It is indeed a difficult and daily balancing act to counter this new doctrine of tolerance while acting in love. These words of Jesus establish our undertaking: *The truth will set you free* (John 8:32). The question is – *why are Christians so ignorant of the moral absolutes of God?* The answer is that most Christians never immerse themselves in God’s Word to find out. It used to be that we were taught these absolutes by our God-fearing parents, and yes, even our teachers. But, sadly, parents and teachers today, are either ignorant of their responsibility or have “bought” society’s admonition that parents and teachers should not prejudice children by teaching them right from wrong. The result is generations of adults and young people who are going to hell because they deny the TRUTH of God’s Word.

Our undertaking, as Christians who recognize the authority of God’s Word, involves teaching our children and grandchildren to embrace all people, but not all beliefs. It means showing them how to listen to and learn from all people without necessarily agreeing with them. It means helping them courageously but humbly to live and speak the truth in love, even if it earns them the label of intolerant.

The mantra of **tolerance above all else** is the DEVIL’S TOOL for corrupting and destroying the morals of all people. It is not a virtue at all!

Truth – God’s truth – is indeed the highest virtue.
AND – **GOD’S TRUTH ABIDETH STILL!**

BECAUSE YOU REQUESTED IT THE FOLDS OF THE FLAG

As we look towards the 4th of July, here is some interesting information that was contained in the July 2014 *Newsletter*. Did you know that at military funerals, the 21 gun salute stands for the sum of the numbers in the year 1776?

Did you know the following regarding the ceremonial folding of the American flag?

The 1st fold is a symbol of life.

The 2nd fold is a symbol of our belief in eternal life.

The 3rd fold is made in honor and remembrance of the veterans departing our ranks who gave a portion of their lives for the defense of our country to attain peace throughout the world.

The 4th fold represents our weaker nature, for as American citizens trusting in God, it is to Him we turn in times of peace as well as in time of war for His divine guidance.

The 5th fold is a tribute to our country, for in the words of Stephen Decatur, “Our Country, in dealing with other countries, may she always be right; but it is still our country, right or wrong.”

The 6th fold is in honor of the pledge of allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with Liberty and Justice for all.

The 7th fold is a tribute to our Armed Forces, for it is through the Armed Forces that we protect our country and our flag against all her enemies, whether they be found within or without the boundaries of our republic.

The 8th fold is a tribute to the one who entered into the valley of the shadow of death, that they might see the light of day.

The 9th fold is a tribute to womanhood, and Mothers. For it has been through their faith, their love, loyalty and devotion that the character of the men and women who have made this country great has been molded.

The 10th fold is a tribute to Fathers, for they, too, have given their sons and daughters for the defense of our country.

The 11th fold represents the power portion of the seal of King David and King Solomon and glorifies in the Hebrews’ eyes, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

The 12th fold represents an emblem of eternity and glorifies in the Christians' eyes, God the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit.

The 13th fold, or when the flag is completely folded, the stars are uppermost reminding us of our nation's motto, "In God We Trust."

After the flag is completely folded and tucked in, it takes on the appearance of a cocked hat, ever reminding us of the soldiers who served under General George Washington, and the Sailors and Marines who served under Captain John Paul Jones, who were followed by their comrades and shipmates in the Armed Forces of the United States, preserving for us the rights, privileges and freedoms we enjoy today.

There are some traditions and ways of doing things that have deep meaning. In the future, you'll see flags folded and now you will know why."
– www.ushistory.org

WHAT IF IT'S TRUE– THAT THE BIBLE HAS THE ANSWERS TO MY QUESTIONS?

For years, the game show that everyone seemed to watch was *Jeopardy*. Later it was joined by *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire*? The format of this second game show was simple: answering increasingly difficult questions brought an increasingly larger payback. Some of the questions were basic knowledge, but others were more intense. The lights flashed, the audience tensed, and the kettledrum rolled– while contestants agonized over who invented the cheese grater or pasteurized milk. The program guests carefully used their "three lifelines" as the host asked, "Is that your final answer?"

Many of us find it entertaining to watch someone else sweat in an effort to get rich quick. Yet we also know that the questions the contestants have to ponder – no matter how intriguing – are not in themselves all that important. The really important questions are those that haunt us in the darkness as we lie in bed trying to sleep – questions that eat at our hearts because we sense that our lives and relationships, our work and our health, our hopes and our happiness all hang in the balance.

But what if the most published book in the world has answers to our most troubling questions? What if the Bible offers us all three of our lifelines in a show called *Who Wants To Have Lasting Peace and Joy and Life Everlasting*?

Here is one question that many of us wrestle with in the depths of our souls and the answers that the Bible provides.

IS THERE HOPE FOR MY FAMILY?

According to Genesis, the first book in the Bible, God created the family. The rest of the Scriptures assume that the One who made marriage and parent relationships is the One who knows how to make them work. Consider chapters 5 and 6 of Ephesians. Here the God of the Bible gives clear principles for a healthy family:

Husbands (5:25-28) - They draw on the spiritual strength of God to faithfully show self-sacrificing leadership that displays character and integrity.

Wives (5:22-24) - They find security in their relationship to Christ so they can complement the strengths of their husbands.

Parents (6:4) - They learn from their own Father in heaven how to provide loving instruction and wise correction that equips children for life.

Children (6:1-3) -They honor the loving, though not perfect, example of their parents who are accountable to God for their care and development.

Such biblical principles are not rocket science. **They are more important than rocket science.** If the Bible can be trusted – and **IT CAN** – then disregarding its principles will diminish our chance for true peace and joy. Why? Because if God created the family, He is the One best equipped to tell us how to make it work!

We expect computer users who never follow the instruction manual to have lots of problems, and they usually do. What should we expect if the Bible really has God's answers for healthy relationships?

Husbands, do you want to alienate your wife and drive a wedge in your marriage? Then don't give yourself for her, don't give her the dignity and respect she deserves. Don't pay any attention to the biblical instruction to love her as Jesus loves His church.

Wives, do you want to drive your husband away? Then don't give him the loving, supportive partnership that God's Word, the Bible, describes.

Parents, do you want your children to despise you and everything you stand for? Then be inconsistent, unfair, and unrealistic in your expectations. Try to dominate them without genuinely loving them. Ignore the biblical direction about giving them loving, consistent discipline that does not provoke them to anger. Or, better yet, try to be their friend and let them plunge into the world to experiment and "make their own mistakes" without benefit of sound biblical direction and guidance from you. Mistakes have lasting consequences that will be regretted their life-long. Just as God, our Father, has carefully given His children (us) consistent, loving direction through His Word, so, we, human parents, ought to take the care He has entrusted to us for our children seriously and protect them from harm within and without.

Children, do you want your home to be a place of anger, frustration, and constant turmoil? Then disregard and disobey your parents. Totally forget the debt of gratitude you owe them for giving you life and caring for your needs.

ON HIATUS

BIBLE STUDY for WOMEN, WEDNESDAY BIBLE STUDY at HILLVIEW and SPIRITUAL GROWTH GROUPS will be on hiatus for the summer. They will start up again in September. Watch for the opportunity to sign up for Spiritual Growth Groups in August.

HOWEVER, if you are looking for an opportunity to study the Bible this summer, Dr Jensen will hold **OPEN BIBLE STUDY** sessions on Sundays at 6pm and Wednesdays at 7pm. Why not come as a family to study God's Word? And why not introduce your friends to Cornerstone by inviting them to come to Bible study with you?! Watch your worship folder for specific dates.

CONGRATULATIONS!

To those from our fellowship who graduated from high school this year:

Nate Ekins
Daniel Mintz-Scott
Kaly Schiazza

CENTER OF THE BIBLE

This is awesome!!

What is the shortest chapter in the Bible?
What is the longest chapter in the Bible?
Which chapter is in the center of the Bible?

Psalm 117
Psalm 119
Psalm 118

FACT: there are 594 chapters before Psalm 118

FACT: there are 594 chapters after Psalm 118

Add these numbers up and you get 1188

What is the center verse in the Bible? Psalm 118:8

Does this verse say something significant about God's perfect will for our lives?

The next time someone says they would like to find God's perfect will for their lives and that they want to be in the center of His will, just send them to the center of His Word!

Psalm 118:8 "It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man" (NKJV)

THE GOOD NEWS!!!
GOD LOVES YOU, AND WANTS YOU TO
KNOW AND LOVE HIM.
HE OFFERS YOU PEACE AND JOY AND
ETERNAL LIFE.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith (Galatians 5:22)

Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you (John 14:27)

Ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory (1 Peter 1:8)

YOUR GRACE IS ENOUGH FOR ME

by Marlin Smoker,

Marlin's story was printed in *Highway News and Good News*, June 2015

Since my life changing surrender to Jesus Christ in 1992, God has steadily blessed my life in ways I never dreamed. I have been an owner-operator since 1981. Trucking has always had its ups and downs but God has seen me through, and it is by His doing I have survived all these years. The last twelve years have been the most rewarding. Thank You, Jesus!

In the spring of 2012, I began to feel the urge to update my equipment with a newer tractor. I had never bought a brand-new truck and was not considering it now, either. My goal was to get better fuel mileage and lower overall maintenance costs. I knew the risks of buying a new truck for they could not guarantee me these main objectives. After researching many options I discovered the aerodynamic model I wanted was available in a glider kit (a glider is a brand-new truck less the engine, transmission, drive line, and exhaust).

I have learned the hard way about jumping into projects too soon, so I did a lot of praying in this decision and doors began to open. I could see God letting me move in this direction. Financing came through so we ordered a brand-new 2013, 386 Peterbilt glider kit.

I had a couple of months to plan out the job of disassembling my old truck so I could use my engine and transmission for the new one. At this point, I didn't have a real clear direction on where and who I was going to hire for this job. Again, I began to pray on this and one day it came to me (I know it was God speaking to me), *Marlin, this job is yours. No one is going to do it like you want it done. You can do this. You have the experience. I wouldn't have let you go this far and not see you through. I am with you.* Great, OK, Lord, I'm in. You and me!

The day came when my new truck arrived at the dealer. I remember sitting behind the wheel looking at all the amenities I didn't have in my old truck. Excited, anxious and nervous I wished I could turn the key and drive this truck home. When I got out and looked under the hood and saw no engine, all those

loose wires and hoses, reality set in. Oh boy, what have I committed myself to? Jesus, are You with me? I heard the answer, *I am, My child, I will never leave you or forsake you.*

I had the truck towed home. I now had two trucks in my driveway. I only have a small garage in which neither truck would fit in so all work was done outside. I began disassembling my old truck. This became much more time consuming than I had anticipated, and I soon realized this project was going to take much more time than planned.

I had peace and a lot of patience. Every day, progress was made one step toward my goal of driving my new truck out the driveway and going back to work.

Near the middle of the fourth week, I had my engine and transmission in my new truck. I had all my hoses and wires hooked up, although I was a long way from completion. I was ready to start this engine. Well, it wouldn't crank! I went back over the wiring. I could find nothing wrong. Struggling hard now to find help, I prayed again. So I got a strong urge to get in my car and go see a mechanic I never met for advice. He said he could help; he would have to come to my house and reprogram my computer to match my old engine's ECM, but he didn't have time because he had to go to Coatesville to work on a truck. I said, "What a coincidence, I live near there." So he was able to come that very night, and he got my engine running in less than an hour. What a blessing he was. His advice helped me a lot

The very next day I got up, had my devotions and prayer time. I was very encouraged and excited. I still had lots of things to fabricate and complete on this truck. All day long I could do nothing right. By the end of the day, not one thing was accomplished. The next day, I struggled with the simplest of jobs. I would get frustrated with one job and move on to something else, but had no success. On the third morning I had a lot of "why's" and "where are You, Lord?" in my prayers. Out of desperation I had to keep working. I had to finish this job. My livelihood depended on it.

In the middle of the afternoon of the third day of not having one more thing completed, a miraculous event happened. I got up into my truck to look around. Up to this point I hadn't explored too much with my instruments because I didn't have any power until three days prior when I did my wiring and hooked up my batteries. I opened up my dash and the radio began to play. I looked at my key and it was in the OFF position. As the music filled my cab and sleeper, I realized it was a Christian song I was very familiar with. It was "You Grace Is Enough For Me" by Matt Maher. I touched nothing as the stereo played beautifully. I sat there and became overwhelmed with emotion. Then I began to laugh, and I laughed with joy like I never experienced. The Lord and I had a grand ole time there for a while. I had such a peace come over me that everything was going to be alright. I let the music play and I went back to work and things began to happen and come together, and a few weeks later the job was done.

To this day the radio will not play unless the key is turned to the ON position, and I am still astonished that the radio was turned to a Christian station and that very special song was playing in my truck for the very first time when I definitely needed it the most.

In the midst of this encounter with the Living God, He told me, *Marlin, remember when I told you that you could do this job? Well, I never told you it was going to be easy.* But He never left me nor did He ever forsake me, I know this for sure. Near the

end of the seventh week, I was back in business again. I put a load on my trailer and went down the road just like I drove her off the showroom floor. I worked ten weeks straight with no complications, and it's now two-and-a-half years without any major problems. My fuel mileage is great and my maintenance expenses are lower compared to a completely new truck.

One other amazing story: When I placed the order for the truck the dealer suggested I order a complete repair manual and I thought that was a great idea, and I ordered it, except it stayed

on backorder until my truck was finished. On the seventh week the dealer called me to let me know I could come get my instructions. I replied, "OK, I'll drive my new truck up there and pick it up."

People ask me if I would do it again and I say YES in a heartbeat! With God, all things are possible. This story was written to give God, my Creator; Jesus, my Savior; and the Holy Spirit, my guide and friend ALL HONOR AND GLORY.



TRouBLING STATISTICS

DID YOU KNOW... that **EIGHTY PERCENT** of children from evangelical Christian homes forsake church in their 20's, the time when most major life decisions will be made.

...that churches report a rising prevalence of **CHURCH SHOPPERS** and **CHURCH HOPPERS** – people who come to church with no great regularity. They look for what they like and discard the rest. They are unlikely to be successful in their pursuit of being conformed to the image of Christ.

... numerous Biblically minded people learn the truth of Christ, walk with Him for a time and then **FADE AWAY** in life's discouragements.

We will never know the fullness of God until we immerse ourselves in His Word and in worshiping Him. We must conform our will to His will in order to please Him and receive His full blessing. And as steel sharpens steel, we need a body of committed believers to sharpen us for His service and for life's

walk. So, as the Apostle Paul encouraged, let us "press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of us... Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, let us press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called us heavenward in Christ Jesus."

We are committed at Cornerstone to present the Word of God and the **WHOLE WORD OF GOD**. We are committed to each other as family and the importance to learn the truth of Christ. Sometimes, it may feel as if

we are in the **HOT SEAT** or that our toes are being stepped on, (when we feel that way it is generally because we have bought the world's opinion rather than God's) but that is because we love each other and are committed to helping each other **Trust and Obey – for there is NO OTHER WAY** to be happy in this life or in the next!

So... don't miss a Sunday worship, or Sunday school, or Bible study, or mid-week worship or Spiritual Growth Group. These are all opportunities to stay in the Word.

SINS THAT AFFECT US ALL!

In the late 20th century and the beginning of this 21st century, political, government and even some religious leaders have tried to justify their immoral and unethical behavior by saying that, "what happens behind closed doors is no one's business." Unfortunately, what we do behind closed doors impacts everything we do and our "private" sin has far-reaching consequences. Below are just 5 areas in which private sin impacts all of society:

Pornography - The explosion in the use of pornography is a perfect example of the intersection between individual sin – in this case, lust – and the subsequent impact on the lives of others. While there are other channels of porn consumption – such as DVDs and magazines - it is the internet that has fueled America's growing love affair with pornography. More than half of Americans use the internet and about 20-33 percent of users go online to pornographic sites and purposes – that's roughly 34-57

million people.

Many label pornography a victimless crime. Really?

Online pornography destroys marriages. This is especially true because the largest demographic of people struggling with these behaviors is married men. And the marital relationship is a logical point of impact to examine because it is the foundational family unit. Research indicates that the use of pornography is associated with dangerous marital trends, including an increased risk of separation and divorce, a decrease in the sense of marital intimacy and satisfaction and an increased risk that one spouse will be unfaithful. These trends reflect a cluster of symptoms that undermine the foundation upon which successful marriages and families are established. Add to this the "sexting" epidemic among American teenagers and is it any wonder that our young people grow up not understanding the importance of right and wrong and the boundaries that must be kept by Christians.

Substance Abuse - According to the US Department of Justice nearly 36% of convicted offenders had been drinking alcohol when they committed their offense, in other words, nearly 4 in 10 violent victimizations involve use of alcohol.

Regarding drug-related crime, studies find that 26% of drug offenders commit crimes in order to get money to support their drug habits – and that number is rising.

One prosecutor indicates that 80-90% of cases, including homicides and robberies, involve some link to illegal drugs or alcohol. They have some kind of nexus to drug use or trying to obtain or sell illegal drugs. Victims are robbed and burglarized because someone is trying to support his or her drug habit.

Crime - Few people fail to understand that the commission of a crime involves the breaking of man's laws, but how many understand that most crimes are also a violation of God's law? This is one of the clearest examples of how sin carries a heavy social cost.

The personal and property costs associated with crime are extremely high due to things like arson, robbery, aggravated assault, motor vehicle theft. The costs to society as a whole are also very high with law enforcement and private security costs, and reaches even to secondary effects such as lost employment time and counseling costs due to the psychological aftermath of being victimized. The cost is estimated at hundreds of billions of dollars a year. In fact, in a one year period crime statistics indicated that robberies reported to the police cost \$456 million; arson crime cost \$585 million and internet fraud cost \$560 million.

Abortion – Sometimes the costs are not so easily perceived. The societal price tag for abortion, for example, goes far beyond the murder of innocent children or the personal destruction of the mothers and fathers of those aborted lives. The ongoing slaughter of millions of innocents has robbed us as a culture of much more. Did you know that since 1973 there have been more than 53 million abortions? These are the very people who would have become consumers, productive workers and taxpayers. A third of all the young people conceived in America are not in America today because of abortion. We are depopulating this country, and we're seeing the birth rate drop below replacement rate for the first time in history. In allowing millions of legal abortions we have also brought serious social and economic consequences on ourselves, not only depriving ourselves of the energy, the industry, and the ideas of those we have aborted, but also eliminating a significant portion of the tax base that funds government programs like Social Security and Medicare. You can't lose 53 million lives and not expect it to have a serious economic impact. And, of course, the other dynamic involves God's judgment on those who shed innocent blood.

Fatherlessness - Even when children survive the womb and are born, sin casts its shadow over individuals and society alike. One of the most serious and fundamental problems in our culture is "failing fathers," defined as fathers who are absent or essentially absent from the home. Some studies indicate that almost 40% of America's children are put at severe risk by father failure.

This tragic absence of the father from the home dramatically increases the probability that children will suffer from sexual abuse, mental illness, incarceration, illiteracy, suicide, homicide, the inability to hold down a long term job and early mortality, and will repeat the cycle of parental failure themselves toward their own children. This not only devastates the people who suffer individually, but the social costs are staggering as well. And these problems are growing significantly in size, scope and cost every year.

Sin, then, isn't simply a personal issue. While it is a matter between the individual and God, it is not always only a private matter. It has consequences that ripple out beyond a person's life and affect family and friends, communities and nations.

Grace and Healing

SO... WHAT CAN CHRISTIANS DO?

We must continue to **preach the gospel** to individuals, that they might come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. And we must encourage our fellow citizens to **consider God's Word when ordering their lives and their culture, that God's grace and healing might flow from heaven.**

Standing up for Judeo-Christian principles is not grabbing for power, but tossing a life preserver. Ignoring God and God's laws makes a nation hopelessly sick and feeble. Like any diseased body left untreated, weakness leads ultimately to death.

The Christian is commanded to love his neighbor as himself (Matthew 22:39). As a result, we promote Biblical values because they are more than simply God's suggestions, they are His prescription for life abundant. That goes for cultures as well as individuals.

WHAT FOLLOWING JESUS REALLY MEANS

based on Luke 9:51-62

Every Christian's desire should be to follow Jesus. Unfortunately, few believers seriously consider what following Jesus really means. In this passage Jesus' words and actions shed light on the high expectations He holds for all those who truly seek to be obedient to Him. In particular, Christ reveals three qualities necessary to be counted as a faithful disciple.

A CONSISTENT PURPOSE

The time had come for Jesus to begin the journey to Jerusalem (9:51); a journey that would conclude in a cruel death on a Roman cross. He had tried to prepare His disciples, telling them that He would suffer this execution but would be raised on the third day. In fact, He said the coming events "must" take place (v 22) and that it "is going to" happen (v 44). The truth and Jesus' foreknowledge of it demonstrates the sovereignty of God in the life of Christ.

God had one plan for His Son: to die on the cross for the sins of all who will believe. Jesus willingly submitted and allowed God's will to unfold. In the same way, God has a consistent purpose for our lives: to follow His Son and to share Him with others. Every ministry, activity, and thought should reflect this goal. When Christians lose sight of the example Christ gave, they sidetrack God's purpose. Consistently pursuing this mission is the first step down the path of discipleship.

A CHRIST-CENTERED PERSPECTIVE

The second quality necessary to be a faithful follower is having a Christ-centered perspective. When the disciples went ahead of Jesus into Samaria to find a place to spend the night and were rejected, they asked Jesus if they should call down fire from heaven to destroy them (v 54). Jesus rebuked them because they did not understand His perspective: love your enemies, pray for those who mistreat you, turn the other cheek, and on and on (6:27-31). Maybe some of those same Samaritans would come to believe in Jesus through the evangelism of the early church (see Acts 8:1, 4-25; 9:31; 15:3). Christ was on His way to die for humankind, and yet they wanted to kill the very ones for whom He would shed His blood.

When human "obstacles" seem to prevent us from accomplishing God's will, a Christ-centered perspective enables one to view them with love and compassion rather than hatred and anger. Allowing Jesus to change hearts and lives rather than resorting to worldly means requires His point of view.

Seeing the lost through the eyes of Christ refocuses the true follower on a Christ-centered perspective.

A CONSIDERABLE PRICE

As Jesus and His disciples walked down the road, three people had the opportunity to follow the Lord (Luke 9:57-62). However, each individual offered an excuse to delay their compliance. Why did Jesus respond so harshly toward their procrastination? He was attempting to disclose a third quality about discipleship: the first priority must always be obedience to Him.

When a person accepts Jesus as Savior and Lord, a radical shift in priorities should occur so that following Him becomes the primary objective. One's relationships, job, social life – all diminish in comparison to the quest of loyalty to Christ. As maturing Christians know, placing Christ at the top ensures that every other concern will fall into its rightful place.

To be a true follower, Jesus demands that we recognize a consistent purpose, reorient our thinking to a Christ-centered perspective, and pay the considerable price of placing obedience to Him as our top priority. Most Christians claim to follow Jesus. But when you seriously consider the requirements, one wonders how pleased He is with our response.

In the parable of the sower (Matthew 13:3-8), Jesus tells about a farmer who scatters seed on four different types of soil – packed, shallow, thorny and fertile. In this parable, the seed refers to the Word of God and the soil refers to those who hear the Word. Most of us fall into one of the last two types of soil. We desire God's Word to grow on fertile ground and produce a bountiful crop, but we seem to continually battle the thorns.

In Matthew 13:22, the one who received the seed that fell among the thorns is the one who hears the Word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful. We have more opportunity to hear God's Word today than at any other time in history. We can hear preachers in church, on radio or tape, and over the internet. We can read God's Word in a variety of Bible translations, commentaries and devotionals. Our soil is definitely receiving seed. However, the challenge is to keep our lives free of the distractions which hinder the seed's growth.

Here's a simple test of our soil. Jesus said the number one commandment is to "love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your mind," (Matthew 22:37).

When was the last time your heart overflowed with love for God? When was the last time we thought about Jesus and nearly bubbled over with, "Thank You!?"

God wants us to love Him. If we have a hard time with this most basic command, it's no wonder we're confused about where He's leading. When God's Word comes into our life, we should concentrate and receive it as a precious gift – not process it through the distractions of deadlines, appointments, bills, and worldly pursuits.

Is the Word growing in your life, or is it being choked by the demands of the world? "The world and its desires pass away" (1 John 2:17), but the things of God are eternal. It's time to do some gardening – it's time to remove some distractions so the seed of His Word can grow and bear fruit. God is calling us to live a life dedicated to Him – calling us to develop fertile soil which is free of thorns.

HOW CAN WE DO THAT?

Author, Eugene Peterson has developed a useful metaphor from the garden to help us answer that question. Peterson compares our souls to soil. He says that soil has a constant need for water, fertilizer, and sun if it is to support life. For our souls to support spiritual life they constantly need Scripture, worship and prayer. Here is the simple formula for developing fertile spiritual soil.

Pour in large measures of Scripture, worship and prayer. For Christians this is not news. We all know that if we are to be spiritually healthy we need large measures of Scripture, worship and prayer in our lives. And our intention is to get all of these things in large measure. We intend to eat three square meals of Scripture, worship and prayer every day. But then other things crowd in and we are forced to compromise.

The alarm clock sounds to call us out of bed to spend some time early each day reading God's Word. But we were up late the night before and so we hit the "snooze" button and there goes our daily dose of Scripture. There is an opportunity to go to the beach this Sunday and there goes our measure of worship. We have appointments to keep and miles to go before we sleep and there goes our measure of prayer. We all know the truth. If you don't eat, you won't be able to maintain good physical health. Well, it works the same way when it comes to spiritual health. Without large measures of Scripture, worship and prayer we can't be spiritually fit. If you want the soil of your soul to be fertile, pour in large measures of Scripture, worship and prayer. And remember that if you don't fertilize the soil of your soul, nothing will grow!

READ YOUR BIBLE

Continuing to provide suggested passages to help you toward achieving the discipline of studying God's Word, please use the following as your guide for the month of July. We will never understand how to walk the Jesus way unless we immerse ourselves in the guidebook He has provided – the Bible.

July

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|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Luke 6:27-36 | 16. Jeremiah 3:11-22 |
| 2. John 15:5-17 | 17. Hosea 14:1-9 |
| 3. Matthew 25:31-46 | 18. Luke 3:1-20 |
| 4. Ephesians 5:21-6:9 | 19. Luke 23:32-43 |
| 5. James 2:1-13 | 20. Numbers 21:4-9 |
| 6. Matthew 5:1-12 | 21. John 3:14-21 |
| 7. Matthew 6:1-8 | 22. Matthew 9:18-31 |
| 8. Luke 6:37-42 | 23. Mark 9:14-29 |
| 9. Matthew 13:1-9 | 24. Hebrews 11:1-10 |
| 10. Matthew 13:31-52 | 25. Hebrews 11:17-26 |
| 11. Luke 12:13-21 | 26. James 2:14-26 |
| 12. Mark 12:28-34 | 27. Genesis 12:1-9 |
| 13. Nehemiah 9:5-21 | 28. Numbers 20:1-13 |
| 14. Isaiah 1:10-20 | 29. Deuteronomy 4:5-14 |
| 15. Isaiah 55:1-13 | 30. Joshua 1:1-9 |
| | 31. Joshua 24:1-15 |

SPECIAL BLOOD DRIVE

On Thursday, July 30, 2015, TIME: 2-7 pm

Please make an appointment NOW!

Summer is a particularly hard time for the blood supplies needed for surgeries and accidents as more is needed and less is donated because of vacations, etc. Please consider giving the gift of life this year. You can make an appointment NOW by signing the appointment schedule found in the worship center, by emailing the church office (fbccoatpa@aol.com) or by going to the American Red Cross website, clicking on the link for the drive at Cornerstone and selecting a donation time. THANK YOU very much.

YOUTH NEWS

DON'T FORGET!!

YOUTH FELLOWSHIP (grades 6-12) - WEDNESDAYS, 7-8:30 pm weekly (following the Mid-Week Worship Celebration)! Come and experience it! Bring your friends!!

YOUTH SPIRITUAL GROWTH GROUP - THURSDAYS at 7pm (EVERY YOUTH is invited!) This group is on hiatus until fall.

YOUTH BIBLE FELLOWSHIP - for Jr & Sr High - 9:30 am Sunday mornings

Worship Celebrations - Sundays at 8:15 and 10:45 am and Wednesdays at 6:30pm

PLEASE HELP US OUT!

EMPTY INKJET PRINTER CARTRIDGES

Please donate your empty inkjet printer cartridges to the youth group to be recycled. A container is placed in the **coat room** to receive your donations. KEEP THOSE CARTRIDGES COMING!

We appreciate every bit of help we receive.

EVENTS:

Sunday, June 28 - Thursday, July 2 - Our youth are encouraged to volunteer to help with **VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL** - See Melissa Alton to find out how you can help!

Friday, July 10 - **ATKINSON SHELTER** & mini-golfing (weather permitting)

Saturday-Sunday, August 1-2 - **BEACH TRIP and OUTDOOR CONCERT**

Saturday, August 8 - **POOL Party** at the Howell's home
 Saturday, August 22 - **RAFT TRIP**
 Watch for dates in September/October for a youth trip to Bushkill Falls and one more beach trip.

RAFTING TRIP

The youth team invites the entire church family to sign up for a summer rafting trip on the Lehigh River. Save the date – Saturday, August 22. Sign up is now available. Cost – \$55. Everyone is invited for this FUN day! This is a “dam-release” weekend so the river will be full of water!!! Much more fun than carrying your raft through ankle deep water.

CHILDREN'S NEWS

COOL KIDS - Children, 4 years old up through grade 3 are invited to participate in COOL Kids on Sunday mornings at both the 8:15 and 10:45 celebration services. Following the praise time and the reading of scripture in the Worship Center, kids are dismissed to ROOM 108. COOL Kids (Children Of Our Lord Kids) helps kids learn to celebrate Christ in a way they enjoy and become excited about.

SAVE THE DATE!!

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2pm til dusk
SOULED OUT 2015

Remember, SOULED OUT is a festival of song and spoken word in praise of our Creator - God Almighty. Start inviting your friends NOW! Block out this date so you won't miss this wonderful day. Line up of musical groups will be announced at a later date They will lead us in worship & praise all afternoon & evening. Special prayer events and activities for children and DINNER on the grounds– What a GREAT day this always is!!

Watch for posters & flyers to use to invite your friends and family. Bring your lawn chair and stay ALL DAY! ALSO, be ready to sign up to donate food and volunteer to help with cooking, clean up, etc. We will have a GREAT TIME – RAIN or SHINE!

And don't forget that we will again have the **BIZARRE BAZAAR**. What an added treat this was last year.

Deb Logan, Karen Shade-Leamy and Karen Farkas are signing up vendors for this additional bonus to SOULED OUT 2015. If you know someone they should contact, speak to Deb as soon as you can.

FIND THE PARABLES OF CHRIST

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E	B	U	I	D	I	L	E	W	O	T	Z	R	A	I	E	E	R	J
W	R	D	O	L	E	N	I	V	I	R	R	I	L	N	G	T	U	U
O	E	E	I	N	B	R	O	R	P	I	R	D	A	G	R	P	S	S
S	V	S	T	M	E	U	A	M	A	R	I	R	G	L	E	R	A	T
T	L	S	P	E	U	M	P	G	M	N	C	A	E	E	A	O	E	S
E	I	N	W	O	A	S	E	D	G	O	M	A	H	A	T	D	R	T
N	S	O	E	S	U	F	T	T	N	T	V	S	E	V	S	I	T	E
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|-------------------|-----------------------|
| barren fig tree | pearl |
| building tower | pharisee and publican |
| draw net | pounds |
| good Samaritan | prodigal son |
| great supper | rich fool |
| hidden treasure | sower |
| importunate widow | talents |
| laborers | tares |
| leaven | ten virgins |
| lost sheep | two sons |
| lost silver | unjust steward |
| marriage feast | unmerciful servant |
| mustard seed | |



HAPPY FOURTH OF JULY!