

Romans 14:19 - ...Let us pursue the things which make for peace & the things by which one may edify another

THE LENEXA EDIFIER

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Meeting Times:

Sunday Bible Classes	9:30 am
Sunday Morning Worship	10:20 am
Sunday Evening Worship	5:00 pm
Wednesday Bible Classes	7:00 pm

WALKING BY FAITH

by Jim Stauffer

Instead of setting your goals for the new year at such things as losing weight, saving more money or any such thing as affects the quality of our earthly life, how about being sure we continue walking by faith.

When Paul speaks the words, "we walk by faith and not by sight" in **2 Cor. 5:7**, he is explaining how the child of God endures earthly life while looking for his heavenly reward. While in our earthly tabernacle we long for that "building from God, a house, not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens."

This text follows as further explanation of **2 Cor. 4:16-18**, where Paul acknowledges the difficulties that face the child of God. An unwavering commitment to the truth of the gospel brings the affliction of persecution and the suffering of deprivation. His conclusion is the earthly indignities are seemingly small and insignificant when compared to the eternal glory of heaven. (cf. **Rom. 8:16-18**)

Many today devote their energies to avoiding these indignities by securing a prosperous and comfortable life on earth. Such a plan fails to realize the full impact of "walking by faith and not by sight." You see, when our lives are guided

by what surrounds us here on earth rather than by what awaits us in heaven, we walk by sight.

This is just one of many sections of scripture that teach us to be spiritually minded. Paul says to forget the things behind (fleshly, worldly) and stretch forward to the things before (spiritual). (**Phil. 3:13**) He tells us to put to death the things of the world or flesh. (**Col. 3:5**) We are to endure all things in order to obtain salvation. (**2 Tim. 2:10**)

Now Jesus told us it would be a difficult path. (**Mat. 7:13,14**) He went to great lengths in His Sermon on the Mount to explain the difference in spiritual and fleshly concepts. He demonstrated to us in His life how difficult it is to live that way while on earth. It will not be easy to follow in His steps, disdaining the comforts of the flesh, refusing to bow to the whims of the world, yet loving those who hated Him and for whom He died. **1 Pet. 2:21** *For hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that ye should follow his steps: 22 who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: 1Pet. 2:23 who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, threatened* **continued on page 2**



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not; but committeth himself to him that judgeth righteously: 24 who his own self bare our sins in his body upon the tree, that we, having died unto sins, might live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed.

Paul describes following Christ as conflicted in that he must always bear about in the body the dying of Jesus in order to achieve the life promised by Jesus. **(2 Cor. 4:10,11)**

We are admonished to "contend earnestly" for the faith. **(Jude 3)** And to "run with patience the race that is set before us." **(Heb. 12:1)** All this in order to be able to make a similar claim to that of Paul. **2 Tim. 4:7** *I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith: 8 henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day; and not to me only, but also to all them that have loved his appearing.*

It is no wonder the Hebrew writer repeats his call to faithfulness, openly acknowledging the temptation to fall away from the living God. **(Heb. 3:12)** To be tempted to lose the fulness of our hope even to the end. **(Heb. 6:11)** Or to waver in the face of the One who faithfully promised. **(Heb. 10:23)**

Can we, brethren, begin to comprehend the character and integrity that is both demanded and developed in the one who "walks by faith and not by sight"?

THE "SEEKER FRIENDLY" FAD

The emergence of the "seeker-friendly" church, popularized by Rick Warren's book, *The Purpose-Driven Church*, has become quite a fad in religious circles. "Seeker-friendly" is a term which sounds good on the surface, but what is usually meant is anything but good. Keep in mind that the word "friendly" in this context is not referring to being cordial. Here it is being used as a suffix in a similar way as it is in the term "user-friendly" when claiming ease of use of some

product. Thus, a "seeker-friendly" church is one that adapts to those seeking a church. It's not unusual to be asked, "Is your congregation seeker-friendly?" Who would want to say, "No" to that question?

Certainly, every congregation of the Lord's people ought to be very friendly toward anyone seeking the truth, but unfortunately that's not what is meant when the question is asked.

Churches which bill themselves as "seeker-friendly" are usually groups which have adopted a market-driven approach to church growth. Following the lead of mega-church founder, Bill Hybels, these churches survey the population to see what kind of church they want, and then form (or reform) a church to fit the desires of the people. Of course, this is not a new concept, but one that was employed by Aaron back in the foothills of Mt. Sinai, resulting in Israelites dancing and playing in "The Church of the Golden Calf" **(see Ex. 32)**. Later, King Jeroboam, claiming "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem" **(1 Ki. 12:28)**, established a "seeker-friendly" religion boasting two convenient worship centers. Both of these attempts were numerically successful, but led Israel into sin.

It should be no surprise that a good portion of the sectarian world, having long ago abandoned any claim to following the New Testament as a pattern, has embraced this concept.

Unfortunately, it is also not surprising that even some of our brethren, after gradually eroding away their loyalty to scriptural authority, have been caught up in the numbers game and have embraced some of the "seeker-friendly" tactics. One of the claims made by "seeker-friendly" advocates is that they stress the need for spiritual renewal without the negativity. I suppose that means that they preach the principle, but stop short of making the application....

Even from a few brethren who still claim to believe we need New Testament authority for all

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that we do, we hear the suggestion that maybe we ought to tone down our emphasis on authority. I've heard it suggested that visitors are turned off by preaching against instrumental music in worship, immodest apparel, divorce, etc. Evidently it's ok to preach against sin, in general, but it's a turn-off when you speak against specific sins.

Brethren sometimes justify following popular trends by claiming it's like eating watermelon. You learn to swallow the good part and spit out the seeds. It is true that something isn't necessarily wrong simply because it is practiced by those in error, but it is also true that a watermelon is sometimes rotten throughout. Then there are some brethren who wouldn't, even for a moment, compromise the truth on doctrinal issues, but have seemingly bought into another aspect of the "seeker-friendly" concept by advocating that we have to keep up with the sectarians with our places of worship. They try to convince us that unless we do, people won't seek us out. It's true that many worldly people have come to expect churches to impress them with state-of-the-art facilities and every comfort and convenience imaginable. While there may be nothing wrong with building comfortable and convenient places to meet, if we adopt a "build it and they will come" approach, we are being fooled because it is the pure gospel that must attract people to Christ (**Rom. 1:16**).

Marketing polls indicate that people won't attend churches lacking ample off-street parking, or if their attendance approaches the capacity of their building. I assume these are the same people who will park on a side street blocks away from a theater they are attending, and will even wait for a table at a crowded restaurant. I think you'll find that people will do what they want to do, and if they want to seek the truth they will not

be turned off by crowded conditions. I'm not suggesting that we purposely make it difficult for people to worship by building meeting places and parking lots which are too small, but some congregations have been convinced that, in order to keep growing, they must add on or rebuild prematurely. A few congregations, after heeding such advice, have found out the hard way that people who visit because of the comfort and convenience, "stumble" at the "foolishness" of an unaltered gospel message (**1 Cor. 1:18-25**).

Jesus said He came to "seek and to save that which is lost" (**Lk. 19:10**). He also said, "If you abide in My word, you are my disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth will set you free" (**Jn. 8:31-32**). It's the truth that is "friendly" to one who is seeking the Lord, so we do truth-seekers no favor by trying to draw them in by any other means.

by Al Diestelkamp

There'll be no blizzards in heaven
Where icy blasts never will come
To mar the perpetual springtime
In which we will worship the Son

by Grant Clothier

With the New Year there is always a fresh approach to our daily routines. While we may not actually change much, we will at least reassess and attempt to improve our performance, whatever our venture.

It behooves us, then, as children of God to commit ourselves even more to His service than before. To give greater attention to the detail of His work.

Let us vow to care for one another and see to the needs of each other as never before.

Please have a happy and *spiritually* prosperous New Year!

Jim Stauffer

News & Notes

by Jim Stauffer

Eph. 2:19-21 “So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone; in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord.”

1 Pet. 2:9 “But ye are an elect race, royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:”

Psalms 1:1-6 “Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scoffers; but his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by

streams of water, that bringeth forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also doth not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. The wicked are not so, but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; but the way of the wicked shall perish.”

Let us remember the instruction of our Lord by visiting in whatever way we can, **Jan Patrick, Alma Baumgartner,** and **Candiss Cason. J.R. Daniel** continues his recovery at Indian Creek Care Center, please provide whatever help **Meredith** may need. **Mary Czirr** will have surgery on the 10th. Remember all these in prayer and whatever else they may need.

The Church at Lenexa is a congregation of brethren who have been “justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (**Romans 3:24**).

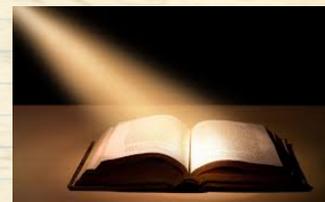
As a result of this justification we have been “delivered out of darkness and translated into the kingdom of the Son of his love, in whom we have our redemption, the forgiveness of sins” (**Colossians 1:13-14**).

We therefore respect the inspired Word of God that will

completely furnish us unto every good work by speaking only as the oracles of God (**2 Timothy 3:16-17; 1 Peter 4:11**).

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WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?

- **HEAR** the gospel, **Romans 10:17**
- **BELIEVE** in Jesus Christ, **Hebrews 11:6**
- **REPENT** of sin, **Acts 17:30**
- **CONFESS** Christ as Lord, **Romans 10:9-10**
- **BE BAPTIZED** for the remission of sins, **Acts 2:38**

