

Rom. 14:19 So then let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another.

# THE LENEXA EDIFIER

John 8:32

“And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free”

April 23, 2023

## OBEDIENCE FROM THE HEART

by Jim Stauffer

Everything we know about God, Christ and the gospel message emanates from the heart. From the love of God (John 3:16) that led God to graciously offer His Son as an act of mercy for those who were dead in their trespasses came from His heart. Therefore, the very desire He has for us to become righteous through the justification provided by that great sacrifice is furnished by His plan to change our hearts from those of lust guided fleshly beings to spiritually minded disciples of His Son.

When Ezekiel spoke of the renewal God planned for a sinful nation He had sent to captivity at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, He said God would clean them with fresh water and then He would put within them a new heart. This heart would be one of flesh to replace the one of stone that had led them to follow the idolatrous nations around them. A further definition of his new heart is that he would put His Spirit within them leading them to obey His statutes (**Ezekiel 36:24-27**).

Jeremiah also spoke of the day when God would change the heart of His people. He describes it as a new covenant. He says, *...I will put my law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God and they shall be my people. They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them....* (**Jeremiah 31:33,34**). The writer of the book of Hebrews tells us this is the covenant Jesus mediated with His own blood (**Hebrews 8:8-12**).

The wise man said in the **Proverbs 23:7**, *For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he: Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart is not with thee.* Jesus taught this principle concerning the Pharisees, *THIS PEOPLE HONORS ME WITH THEIR LIPS, BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR AWAY FROM ME.* (**Matthew 15:8**)

Jesus and His apostles taught the gospel of the kingdom and the gospel of salvation to come from the heart of a man. To illustrate the insincerity of the Jewish leaders, Jesus devoted John 5:33-46 to demonstrate four separate examples of witnesses to His Deity, John the Baptist, the miracles He had performed, God the Father and the Scriptures given to them by Moses. Yet in the face of all these they still sought to kill Him.

Paul teaches two separate audiences the importance of the heart in obedience to God. In the letter to the Romans, he says, *Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.* (**Romans 12:1-2**) He then describes his own service of obedience to the Galatians. *“I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.* (**Galatians 2:20**) He also says it is with the heart man believes in God (**Romans 10:10**).

We cannot simply try to be obedient by memorizing laws and striving for perfect compliance. We must have a true desire in our heart to obey God and Christ and then we can emulate them in our lives here on earth. *Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.* (**Ephesians 5:1,2**).

## **Insecurity**

### ***Matt Bassford***

The other night, I dreamed about my high-school crush. This was strange; I haven't had any contact with her for a quarter century. Perhaps my life is passing before my eyes in slow motion.

It did remind me, though, of the way things went with her. She was interested in me and would have gone out with me if I had asked, not only in high school but for years afterward. I never did ask because of my insecurity.

Insecurity sounds like a small problem. People who are insecure need to get over themselves, grow a spine, etcetera. I have not found it to be so. It is no exaggeration to say that in combination with my chronic depression, insecurity has cast a pall over my life.

I know that this will astonish many of my readers. After all, I have held an honored place among my people as a preacher of the gospel. God in His kindness has given me many gifts. My writing is read and my hymns are sung across the world. However, none of that has ever made a dent in my negative self-image. I used to blame the relentless bullying I endured as a child for my problems, but I see the same struggle in my daughter, who has not been bullied. I now think it is simply an inborn thorn in the flesh.

I don't say all this to provoke sympathy, as though I needed more. Rather, I know I'm not alone, and I wanted to share with my fellow sufferers some of the things that have helped me.

The first of these is understanding God's love for me. Sometimes, we perceive God's love as impersonal. He loves everyone, so His love for each of us has nothing to do with any of us.

This is far from the truth. God doesn't love wholesale; He loves retail. The same One who is concerned with the fall of sparrows is deeply concerned with every single one of us. He knows everything there is to know about each of us, and He does not love us despite this knowledge. He loves us because of it. As an individual, I am uniquely lovely and precious in His sight, and so are you.

Second, I am reassured by the grace of Christ. All my life, I have yearned for perfection and been tormented by my failings. In Christ, I am perfected in all the ways that matter. I may cringe as I think about past failures, but God doesn't. In one of the greatest mysteries of all, He in His omniscience has chosen to forget them. I place no confidence in myself, and I never will be able to. However, I can put all of my confidence and all of my hope in the redeeming power of grace.

Third, I have found intense joy and profound peace in loving and serving others. Believe me; I know how hard this is! By nature, I am inwardly focused, a true navel-gazer. Others assemble vast libraries to help them learn about God, but I generally have relied on the Bible, meditation, and prayer. Some of my friends have asked me where all of my ideas come from, but I have never had to work to come up with them. They come bubbling up within me. In fact, especially of late, I have many more ideas than I have time and opportunity to put them into writing.

This is a gift, but it's also a trap. Meditating on the things of God is good, but an inwardly turning habit of mind is dangerous. The more I think about myself, the more lies the devil is able to feed me. It leads to the downward spiral of depression.

By contrast, focusing on others sets me free. Even praying about myself and my problems can lead me to despair, but I always benefit from praying about others. When I seek to serve others, not from the hope of anything for myself but out of disinterested love, I can paradoxically find great self-satisfaction.

If you are depressed or insecure, love people. Love especially the unlovely, the difficult, the overlooked, and the vulnerable. Love the people who are most in need of love. When your life is full of people like this, they will leave no room for the demons of self-doubt.

I mourn for all of the victims of the devil's oppression. I think there is no earthly way to quell that vicious inner voice. However, if we trust in what God has given and planned, we can struggle onward to joy with Him.

## **In the Service**

Your body has 60,000 miles of veins, capillaries and arteries. Put them together end to end and they would wrap around earth nearly three times. But if one small vein around your heart gets blocked you are in a life-threatening situation. Systems like the human body rely on every part doing its function.

This is one reason Jesus chose to call the church His body. Certainly it describes His intimate relationship with us, but it also illustrates the vital necessity of every member doing its part. God saved *you* so His body could experience the benefit of *you* being a part of it. One of the keys to advancing the gospel is for the church to be made up of individuals who consider it

their task to do the work of ministry, rather than having a group of people who expect the paid workers to minister to them. In healthy churches every member is a minister.

### ***Every Member A Minister***

Peter put it like this, *“As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God” (1 Peter 4:10)*. God’s grace is seen in so many different ways in our lives. His grace is seen in the way we learned the gospel, the experiences we had, the talents and opportunities we were given, and the resources God provided. “Now,” Peter says, “Be faithful to dispense those gifts in a way that serves the body.” We have gifts not to erect our own kingdom but to magnify His.

The early believers did not order their salvation “take out” style to be consumed in the darkness of their living room. Their life had a new priority, not to self, but to the saints. Those freed from the slavery of sin, then became servants of something more meaningful and eternal, the body of Christ (**Galatians 5:13**).

May we never be content with surface relationships with God’s people. It’s only when every member is a minister that our potential for **growth** will be realized.

Some people envision the church as a pyramid with one person at the top meeting the needs of those below. This limits the effectiveness of the kingdom to the gifts of the few. The church is to be more like a circle where we all minister to each other. You grow, not by adding people to the bottom of the pyramid, but by adding more servants to the circle. When “every part does its share, it causes the growth of the body” (**Ephesians 4:16**).

In addition, when every member is a minister it enhances the **unity** of the body. Many people feel isolated from the fellowship. They say, “We’re not close.” “I don’t know anyone.” “I feel so alone here.” The unity of believers is deepened through service. Jesus is our example. He restored our fellowship with the Father by coming in the form of a servant. If we are going to maintain a vibrant, loving fellowship we must first become servants.

### ***Every Leader an Equipper***

Even with all the blessings of service it remains difficult to give up our time, pleasures, and money for the body of Christ. Maybe that’s why the New Testament teaches that every leader is to equip the believers to serve. Paul wrote, *“He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.” (Ephesians 4:11-12)*.

Some leaders are driven people who want to do all the work themselves so it’s done right, or so they think. Others just find it easier to do the work themselves to escape the effort of recruiting and training. Whether they are driven or lazy they are not doing the work of godly leaders if they are not equipping the saints to do works of service. As a result the church’s potential is limited to what only a few can do, and the spiritual growth of the body stagnates.

Healthy churches have leaders who involve as many members as possible. They recruit new workers and instruct them in what to do. They encourage the workers with words of praise. Leaders do not just ask for volunteers. They find people who can do the task, train them and put them to work.

Moses had his Joshua, Jesus had His disciples, Paul trained Timothy and Titus, and every leader since has the responsibility to train others to do the work. The possibility of production in the body of Christ is astounding, but people are desperate for leaders who will equip the saints to serve (**Neh.1-6**).

### ***Every Minister A Lover***

The real key to using your gifts in service to God and His people is love. Paul ends the great chapter on Christian service with these words, *“Yet I want to show you a more excellent way.” (1 Cor. 12:31)*. That way is the way of love (**1 Cor. 13**). If you try to serve without love you will either become disillusioned and give up or become self-centered and do more harm than good. Genuine love for God and people is the real key to service.

Love must come first before the service will be effective. This truth is contained in the most familiar verse in the Bible, *“God so loved the world!”* that’s where service starts, *“that He gave His only Son” (John 3:16)*. When you start with love no act of service is too great. When you are prompted by love no act of service is more joyful or effective.

So, go ahead and do it. Boost your love level for the imperfect, roughhewn body of believers of which you are a part. Participate in the service with all your might.

**Tim Jennings**

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*But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. (Ephesians 2:4–7)*

**Psa. 1:1** 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 scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.

## HOURS OF WORSHIP

Sunday A.M. 9:30 Bible Study  
Sunday A.M. 10:20 Assembled Worship  
Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship  
Wednesday P.M. 7:00 Bible Study and Worship

**Visitors welcome**

**We conduct in home Bible Studies**

**We offer Correspondence Courses**

**Evangelist and Editor Jim Stauffer**

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### Elders:

Ron Peck  
Jim Stauffer

### Deacons:

Bill Miller  
Troy Armstrong

## NEWS AND NOTES:

### THOSE IN NEED OF PRAYERS:

ALMA BAUMGARTNER, DENESE GORING, BROOKLYN BOYER, TRACY RICHARDSON, MATT BASSFORD, WAYNE MOODY, DAVID AND JOANNE BECKLEY, MARK WALKER, PAT MFCLOUD, JAN PATRICK IS AT NOTTINGHAM IN OLATHE. JORDAN SHOUSE, CAROL MILLER.

**FREDA WALKER PASSED AWAY WEDNESDAY. REMEMBER HER FAMILY IN PRAYER.**

Bible Classes: Sunday Morning  
**Prayer - Ron Peck**

Wednesday Evening - **Minor Prophets** - Jim Stauffer

Sunday Sermon: **From Death to Life**



## **What Must I Do To Be Saved?**

**Hear** the gospel - Romans 10:17

**Believe** in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

**Repent** of sins - Acts 17:30

**Confess** Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

**Be Baptized** for remission of sins - Acts 2:38

**Be Faithful** unto death - Revelation 2:10