

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



John 8:32 and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

**JANUARY**

**7**

**2018**

## CHRIST DESIGNED THE WORK OF THE CHURCH (2)

*Jim Stauffer*

There are three major areas of work Christ designed for the church. We looked at evangelism last week. A second charge given to the church is to edify or build up the saints, the body of Christ. **Eph. 4:11** *And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;*

We know the members of the Lord's body are to *....grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ....* so the evangelists, pastors and teachers are responsible for assisting in this process.

One of the primary methods of accomplishing such education of the membership is by having Bible Classes. When you travel and attend a congregation in a city where you have never been you will likely see that local group meeting for Bible Study on Sunday Morning and maybe one day during the week. They are carrying out this responsibility to build one another up.

The church, when it conducts itself in harmony with God's design demonstrates to the world *...the manifold wisdom of God* (**Eph. 3:10**). And it is easy to see the wisdom of edifying the saints as they face such bold opposition from a world led by Satan, the prince of this world. God's people will face much temptation and must be strengthened to resist it (**Jas. 4:7,8; 1 Pet. 5:8-10**).

The apostle Paul devotes a lengthy passage of Scripture to tell us how to, *Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil* (**Eph. 6:11**). He then enumerates the armor; *Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of*

*righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.* (**Eph. 6:14-17**)

Those who don the armor are those who are prepared for the fight. This is accomplished through proper spiritual diet and exercise. Scripture teaches us to desire the milk of the word and when we have done so to mature to the point we can teach it to others (**1 Pet. 2:1,2; Heb. 5:14**). Paul teaches Timothy the difference in the value of physical and spiritual exercise (**1 Tim. 4:7,8**). He then encourages Timothy to give special attention to such things as reading and study to ensure not only his salvation but that of others (**1 Tim. 4:16**).

It is evident God appointed these offices in the church for the very purpose of strengthening each member of His body (**1 Pet. 5:1,2**). By teaching members how to conduct sound worship and how to teach one another, brethren will be better equipped to conduct the work of the church, one part of which is the edification of the saints.

As children of God face a world bent on denying His existence and power, it is imperative they are strengthened in the faith.

As they attempt to do their duty in *...contending earnestly for the faith*, (**Jude 3**) they will need all the armor of God to face Satan and his angels. Churches will fail in their responsibility if they do not properly equip the saints.

## Keeping On!

Well, it's Wednesday and by now most all of us have already fallen short of perfection in keeping our New Year's Resolution, if we made any. Do not let that bother you in the least! Don't give up, either! There are two important principles that you must ingrain into your thought patterns.

First, and this is the most important, you must take the long term view. Three days into the New Year is not very long at all. In fact it is decidedly short term. If you made a resolution it is something good you are aspiring to accomplish for yourself or your family. You can't afford to give up at the first obstacle you encounter. You and your family deserve better effort than that! **(Philippians 3:12-14)**

Second, all human progress is accomplished with ups and downs. No real progress is accomplished in smooth, easy straight lines. In no war is every battle won by one side. Look at the stock market! Yes there are wide variations on a daily basis (SEE RULE ONE) but the unmistakable trend over the long term is upward. Each of those peaks and valleys serves as a learning point to make the long term growth not only possible but inevitable! (With a Free Market) God knew we were like this that is why He told us what He did in **1 John 2:1,2**. He knew we'd fall and made provision for it!

So if you have fallen from perfection in your pursuit of a better you, welcome to the human race! Do not let it discourage you. You are in the same boat as every other human being living. Only sheer arrogance or utmost stupidity thinks one will never fail!

Don't be that guy! Keep on keeping on!

**Cleveland Reddinger**

## HELPING CHILDREN GROW UP DON TRUEX

The Nickelodeon Network has begun showing episodes of the ancient sitcom, *Father Knows Best*. If you remember the show or have seen it in its latest reincarnation, you know that it focused on a family unit and, in particular, the patriarch of the clan, Robert Young. The interesting thing about that program (and others of its ilk) is that regardless of the problem that arises, it is neatly, fully, satisfactorily solved within thirty minutes! Wouldn't it be nice if real life was like that? If the challenges associated with rearing children from their cradle to their wedding were so easily conquered? But, much to our dismay, they are not.

It is often said that children arrive sans an owner's manual. That, of course, is not entirely true. After all, a bewildering array of "child rearing" books can be found in any local bookstore. But more importantly, He who knit our children together in their mother's womb **(Psalm 139:13)** provides ample instruction so that they

might eventually *"increase in favor with God and man"* **(Luke 2:52)**. But much of that is left to the discretion and direction of Moms and Dads. Perhaps that's why the psalmist observed, *"Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, So are the children of one's youth"* **(127:4)**. Like the arrow, our children need purpose and direction. David lived that principle after realizing that he would be denied building the temple. From that day forward, his passion—the focus of his life—was to prepare his son, Solomon, to fulfill the will and work of God for his life **(1 Chronicles 28:2)**. To that end he dreamed, planned and provided **(1 Chronicles 29:1)**. Can the same be said of us regarding our relationship with our children? Are we as dedicated to our kids being godly as we are to them being academically successful, musically inclined, athletically talented and socially acceptable?

I am somewhere near the middle of the process of "raising my kids." My daughter, Heather, is 12 and my son, Josh, is 8. Like most parents, I feel inadequate for the job God has entrusted to me **(Psalm 127:3; Ephesians 6:4)**. I struggle with not letting my work make an absentee father of me. I wonder if my influence testifies to the importance of the kingdom. And I wonder if the concepts of their Heavenly Father that my children develop by living with their earthly father are what God desires. I wonder what I can give my kids that will help them the most as they grow up; as they navigate their way from earth to heaven. As I contemplate the last of these issues, my mind continually returns to four areas; four things we need to give our children to help them successfully mature.

**1. Respect for the word of God.** Yes, I want my children to be sensitive to what others think. Yes, I want them to have an awareness and appreciation of the cultural milieu. But the bottom line, in every issue is the will and word of God. Moses' counsel is still timely.

*"These words which I command you today shall be in your heart; you shall teach them diligently to your children ..."* **(Deuteronomy 6:6-7a)**. You see, our kids are going to know whether we think more of what the brethren think, what the tradition says, what the family thinks rather than what God thinks. One of the greatest gifts we can give our children is to let them see that when decisions are made, when advice is given, when the rubber of faith meets the road of reality—above all else, at all cost, we respect the word of God.

**2. Belief in the power of God.** Wouldn't it be nice if we could tell our children that if they just follow the Lord, nothing will ever go wrong? But, of course, that would be contrary to the word of God (e.g., *"In this world you shall have tribulation,"* **John 16:33**). The question is: How will we face the troubles, the vicissitudes of life that inevitably arise? Do our children see us respond with drink, depression or despair? Or do they see us respond with faith and prayer? Do they hear us speak of confidence in the care and providence of God? Or do



they see us live our faith that God is not tired or retired? We must illustrate in our lives—and in so doing, teach our children—that Jehovah is still able to do *“exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think”* (Ephesians 3:20).

**3. Awareness of the reality of spiritual warfare.** To merely float downstream in the moral, ethical, spiritual pollution of this world is not an option. Our kids need to understand *“in the days of [their] youth” that “we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places”* (Ephesians 6:12). They must know that with sagacious subtlety our enemy seeks to *“steal, kill and destroy”* (John 10:10). He seeks to destroy our families, our churches, our lives. To bury our heads in the sand is to commit spiritual suicide. To recognize the reality of the warfare, to effectively wield the sword of the Spirit, and to put our trust in God is to win the victory.

**4.** Having done our best to teach and model the aforementioned, we must **give our children freedom.** Through the multiple passages in childhood, adolescence and young adulthood, we struggle to balance between appropriately releasing our grip and holding on to protect, direct and love. Every ounce of discretion and wisdom, bathed in prayer, is required. To loosen the grip is, admittedly, a painful process. Our hearts rail against it. And yet, *“as the eagle stirs up its nest”* (Deuteronomy 32:11), how rewarding it must be to see our children spread their wings and fly. How rewarding to say with Paul, *“For though I am absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ”* (Colossians 2:5). May God help us to make it so.

*~via Christianity Magazine; Sept.-Oct. 1992, Vol 9  
No. 8. Taken from the Market Street Messenger*

## Social Drinking:

### "Are You An Individual, Or A Part Of The Crowd?"

Are preachers and “old fashioned” folk the only people who are against social drinking?

Just recently I read an article in the McAllen Monitor (by Chelse Benham, May 23, 2004, page 1G), under the title: **“Cocktails & Contacts: Do They Mix?”** The author said in the lead paragraph: “Social drinking is the number one acceptable drug of choice among Americans and it is the most commonly used and widely abused psychoactive drug in the country, according to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism.” She also pointed out (quoting Health magazine): “Americans have a long history of ambivalence about the role of alcohol in their society.” Then this: “...the

business environment all but pours it (alcohol, web) down the throats of professionals in social settings.”

Next, citing a CNN report: “...many professionals use alcohol to ease into business conversations and transaction.” One CEO said: “There is tremendous pressure to indulge in alcohol on business-social occasions...It is a factor in building business relationships, or bonding.”

Michael Judge, reporter for the Wall Street Journal (WSJ.com) Web site: “Drinkers mind if one among them is not drinking. Like death, drink is a great leveler. Sobriety immediately introduces a hierarchy. So that your attitude may be adjusted to fall in line with theirs, sometimes other people all but require you to drink.” (Notice, “sobriety ... introduces a hierarchy.” Indeed, a hierarchy of character!)

Miguel Lopez, program coordinator for the University of Texas-Pam American’s Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program said: “Alcohol helps create a sense of belonging in a group, but this can also create a false sense of security. People lean on alcohol when they have less confidence in their social skills. They turn to ‘liquid power’ to be the type of person they may want to be, but don’t feel they are.” He calls this an **“artificial sense of empowerment.”** Further: “By saying ‘no’ to drinking alcohol in a social setting you’re not participating, so you’re an individual and not part of the crowd. This can make the people around you self-conscious and they may apply pressure on you to drink. It takes someone who is well centered with themselves to say ‘no’ against social pressures!” Mr. Lopez is not a gospel preacher just repeating the “traditional line.” He has experience as a witness of what social drinking is about in reality, in the business world and on the college campus.

*So are you an individual, or a part of the crowd?*

Long before Mr. Lopez made these observations, Solomon directed us to the wise course: *“Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler, and whoever is intoxicated by it is not wise,”* (Prov. 20:1). And Habakkuk saw what Mr. Lopez saw: *“Woe to you who make your neighbors drink, who mix in your venom even to make them drunk so as to look on their nakedness!”* (Hab. 2:15). Peter showed no interests in preaching what is popular when he said: *“...we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles – when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries. In regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with them in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of you. They will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead,”* (1 Pet. 4:3-5). Are you an individual, or a part of the crowd? God knows.

**By Warren E. Berkley via Monday Messages  
May 31, 2004**

**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**

**Elders Ron Peck and Jim Stauffer**

**Deacons:**

**Bill Miller**

**Brandon Jimison**

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SICK IN PRAYERS AND VISITS.

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STEVE WIMP, JOANN MEYER, LINDIA  
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BAUMGARTNER

SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE CLASS:  
EPHESIANS THRU COLOSSIANS  
BILL MILLER TEACHER

WEDNESDAY BIBLE CLASS: CHRISTIAN  
STEWARDSHIP  
RON PECK TEACHER

SUNDAY MORNING SERMON:  
TWO TREES



## **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