



February 2010 Nuggets

First Baptist Church XLIV No 534

The Enemy of Excellence

Our year's verse reminds us that whatever we do, do all to the glory of God. We are striving for excellence this year because we know that excellence glorifies God.

In Matthew 23:23 Jesus warns about the enemy of excellence. There are a lot of things which may hinder the pursuit of excellence in our life, but we must beware of this one enemy.

In the verse, Jesus is speaking to the religious elite of His day. The Scribes and Pharisees had a zeal to fulfill the law. Jesus however, calls them hypocrites because they were victims of the enemy of excellence. They paid their tithes even counting out leaves of mint, but they omitted the "weightier matters of the law." Jesus identifies these areas, judgment, mercy, and faith. He doesn't discourage tithing. In fact, He indicates they should not leave that undone, but they should address more important matters.

The enemy of excellence is "settling for good." Sometimes we are content to do the good thing. In Matthew 23:23 it was tithing. We may religiously practice good things, but when we are content with good things, we can be hypocrites. We shouldn't leave off tithing or other good things, but we should aspire to do excellent things because they are the things that glorify God.

Jesus illustrated this in Matthew 5:39-48. If its "good" to go a mile with someone, the excellent thing would be to go two.

For the Pharisees, the good became the enemy of the excellent and God wasn't glorified. "Good" is better than "bad." Tithing is better than stinginess. We can become so content with good things that we miss out on the best things. In our Christian walk, we engage in so many things that by themselves are not bad, but so consume our energy, time, and resources that we don't press ahead to greater things. In Philippians 1:9, 10, Paul advises us to "approve things that are excellent," and in the passage he is talking about abounding in love. He uses the same idea in I Corinthians 12:31 in a discussion on spiritual gifts he wanted them to covet the best gifts. He showed them a more "excellent" way, and then precedes, in the next chapter, to talk about love.



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Vance Havner said, "It is harder to blast church members out of a good state than to arouse sinners from their evil state." A man living in sin can be convinced of his sin, but a Laodicean believer in the local church who settles for good, says he has need of nothing. We cannot leave good things undone, but we should strive for excellence. Don't let your pursuit of good things become the enemy of excellent things.

WOMEN WHO WORSHIP



What to Wear

"But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof" (Romans 13:14).

As we move along the path of Christian growth, there should come a point at which a woman develops a sense of spiritual frustration! This Biblical frustration was expressed by the apostle Paul in Romans 7:14-25. Believers must become aware that there is a battle going on within, a battle between the "sin in my flesh" and the Holy Spirit dwelling in me. (See also Galatians 5:16-26.) That frustration and battle awareness led Paul to an important and spiritually healthy conclusion: "For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing." When we also come to that realization, true spiritual progress can be made. The discovery that we cannot win spiritual battles in our own strength will cause us to stop relying on ourselves. (Paul's solution to his frustration is revealed in verses 24 & 25!)

In Romans 13:14, Paul directs us: "But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof." The "flesh" (Greek: sarx) is the human condition under the influence of indwelling sin. According to the Scriptures, the flesh manifests itself through lusts or desires. Don't think of the word "lusts" as sexual only. As sinful humans, we are filled with all manner of desires, drives, and reactions that emanate from both body and soul. We may crave control, attention, respect, admiration, security, and a myriad of other "intangibles."



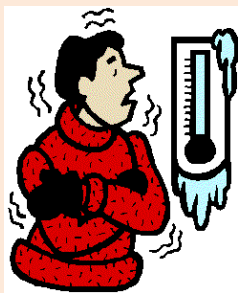
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At the center of each battle is MY WILL. I now belong to Christ, and as Paul reminded in Romans 6, sin no longer has a right to rule over me. So at any point of temptation, the question is, will I yield myself to do what the sin in my flesh prompts me to do, or will I yield myself to the empowering of the Spirit to obey God? This is the continual war in which we are engaged, with battles lost and won.

Romans 13:14 tells us what we must wear in the battle. In this daily strife with the attacks of our flesh, the Word instructs us that putting on the right garment will assure victory. Most of us know the armor of God that we are to put on against the attacks of the devil (Ephesians 6:10-18). But how many of us understand the importance of the garment that we are to put on first to subdue the enemy within, the sin that dwells in us? In the Greek, Romans 13:14 conveys this idea: "Wrap yourself in the Lord Jesus Christ as in a garment." The verse goes on to say that as we do this, the promptings of our sinful lusts will not prevail. As we abide in the life of Christ, Who is within us, we will live as He would (Galatians 2:20). His resurrection power assures victory over the sin in our flesh.

This is not some spiritual theory or babble; this is life reality! As women of God, you and I must begin each day by "putting on Christ" in our thoughts, attitudes, will, and desires. We must abide in Him by faith throughout the day, moment by moment. "The just shall live by faith." That is what wrapping ourselves in Christ means. If He is to be Lord of your life and mine, HE is what we need to wear!



Winter Schedules

Our winter schedule will end on February 14th. It has been very successful this year in providing fellowship during the dinners and afternoon services. The Bible Quiz that put the men against the women was widely participated in and will be decided at the last meeting.

Winter walking, which opened the gym for walkers Monday through Thursday drew several committed walkers who testified they also enjoyed the fellowship. We will continue the walking program for several more weeks.



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Valley Classics - February 1

Our first Valley Classic's meeting of 2010 will take place at noon on February 2nd. We will be showing the DVD of Louie Giglio in his passion talk series entitled, "How Great Is Our God." Valley Classics is a great way to introduce people to our church. Do you know of someone that would enjoy having lunch with you and others here at First Baptist? Invite them to attend. Our next meeting will be March 2nd and will feature Pastor Bob McGehee as the speaker. Don't forget to sign up in the office for these senior luncheons and to help with the expenses by leaving a donation.

Valentine's Day Missionary Speaker

Dave and Ruth Ann Rogers, our missionaries to Chile, will be with us on February 14th for our morning and afternoon services. Take your sweetheart out to dinner at the last of our fellowship dinners in the gym and then take them to the afternoon service. It is great way to say "I love you." Let's encourage the Rogers with our presence and with a Valentine love offering.



Buddy Davis
at the
Men's Adventure
FEBRUARY 19-20, 2010
Binghamton
Central Baptist Church
1606 NY Route 12

Buddy Davis is the speaker for the 2010 Men's Adventure in Binghamton. Sign up. The registration fee is \$23.00 and includes meals. Our church will once again be doing food preparation. If you can assist, talk to Susan O'Donnell.



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Annual Meeting Results

At our Annual Meeting this year, we approved a \$211,802 budget. We also elected to the deacons, Syd Massey, Mer Barrett and Jesse Barrett. Testimony was given to God's faithfulness this year in many ways. Our income exceeded our expenses and besides, we were able to complete some major facility improvements. We took in 17 new members and had a great year.

Pastor's Desk

Pastor has joined the walkers. Every morning he leaves me just when I'm getting ready for the day to walk round and round with others in the gym. The group doesn't seem to be getting anywhere, but Pastor says they're having a good time.



Someone has started playing music to keep up the pace. I reminded Pastor that in the Bible when God's people were walking round and round and the music started, the walls came tumbling down. He assures me that there is no danger of the gym walls caving in.

Pastor has been working on Bible quizzes for both the kids and the adults. He gives the questions during the afternoon services and the contest is the men against the women for the best average. Scores haven't been too good, but Pastor is convinced that it is because everyone ate too much at the dinner. They could all use a little exercise. Pastor is giving the congregation some exercises to do during the morning services. He thinks he is the personal trainer. Last Sunday he got his whistle on but I convinced him that it wasn't appropriate for Sunday morning. He shouldn't be wearing his sweats either. He says he is teaching a whole workout. Some aren't too much into the exercise routine, but they like his abominable messages on Sunday afternoons.



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A Voice from the Pew

Transition is a scary word. It speaks of change and uncertainty. Most of us prefer life to go on as usual but we live in a changing world. As things change, the church must deal with the challenge change brings without compromising its doctrinal foundation and without changing our message but at the same time staying relevant in today's society.

How is this possible? Our first act as a church is to reaffirm our doctrinal statement which is based upon the unchanging Word of God. This action reiterates our loyalty to God's Word and not the influences of the world in the proclamation of our message. Secondly, we need to realize it is possible to change our methodology without compromising our beliefs. A church that refuses to adapt its methods will grow old and die. There is no room for a "we haven't done it this way before" or "we tried that before and it didn't work" attitude. We do not do church the same way they did it in the 1st century and we cannot do church in the 21st century the way we did it in the 20th century. Thirdly, we must not let individual personal preferences keep us from effectively confronting the world of change in which we live.

Transition is a scary concept but as we are faced with changes, both leadership and people need to have courage to confront the need for change and move forward. If we believe God is leading, we then need to step out in faith trusting God to supply all the resources necessary to accomplish our goals. At my age transition scares me but in order to be relevant, transitions must take place in all phases of my life. That's my view. What's your view? Write me at [hopetriumphant@frontiernet.net](mailto:hopen triumphant@frontiernet.net).

By Bob Flatt