

Gospel Power



"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it is the power of God unto salvation..." (Romans 1:16)

The Gospel Power is published in interest of New Testament Christianity and to enhance the work of the Anderson church.

**Anderson
church of Christ**
5900 Highway 207
Anderson, Alabama

Visit Us On The Web

Anderson-church.org

Men Priviledged To Serve:

Sunday, July 13th

Bible Classes

Song Leader

..... Phil Pressnell

Bible Reading (Psalm 119:1-16)

..... Rodney McCrary

Prayer

..... Michael Clemmons

Morning Worship

Song Leader

..... Phil Pressnell

Prayer

..... Brian Word

Presiding Claus Martel

Serving Larry Whitel

..... Aric Butler

..... Daniel Clemmons

Closing Prayer

..... James Word

Evening Worship

Song Leader

..... Daniel Clemmons

Bible Reading .. (Psalm 119:17-32)

..... Jimmy Glass

Prayer

..... Jim Phillips

Lord's Supper

..... Michael Clemmons

Closing Prayer

..... Rocky Rose

Volume X

July 13, 2003

No. 28

How To Reach The Prodigal

W. Frank Walton

In Jesus' parable of the prodigal son, no one went to the pigpen to reach this lost boy. Yet, there are many erring prodigals today that are struck in the muck of sin, who need someone to go help nudge him or her back to God.

We all can try reaching the erring child of God wandering in the wasteland of sin before it is everlastingly too late: "My brethren, if any among you strays from the truth and one turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins" (James 5:19-20). All sensitive, faithful Christians should be concerned about their erring brethren, who have been seduced by the glittering bright lights of the far country of sin. It is literally a matter of eternal life or death!

1. Urgency. We must go "save others, snatching them from the fire" (Jude 23). In too many cases, a brother or sister at church becomes erratic in their attendance. This is a warning signal that their faith is faltering. Then, they often stop attending altogether. Then, how long does it take for us to miss them? How long does it take for brethren to go try to reach them? On different occasions, I've had unfaithful Christians tell me that no one else from church has contacted them or tried to persuade them to return to the Lord. We need a sense of urgency to turn a sinner from the error of his way and save a soul from death!

How many elders, who will give account to God for whether they were diligent or negligent in their shepherding of souls (Hebrews 13:17), wait far too long to do anything, if at all, about the

erring member? Remember the blistering woes the prophet Ezekiel pronounced on the unconcerned spiritual shepherds of Israel (Ezekiel 34:2-16)?

2. **Love and Compassion.** The father in Jesus' parable had loving "compassion" (Luke 15:20) for his erring son. Compassion moved God to send His son Jesus to teach lost sinners about the way of salvation (Luke 1:78-79). Love is seeking the highest good of our brother. To ignore their sin is not love but a lack of love for their soul and for the truth! Love moves us to speak the hard truth, as Jesus did to the rich young ruler, about what they need to change in their lives (Mark 10:21). Tough love is stronger than our fears of rejection.

Sometimes if a person has gone astray for a long time, we might give up on ever reaching them. Periodic contact to admonish them as an erring brother, even after they have been marked and disfellowshipped, shows loving concern for their soul (2 Thessalonians 3:15; 1 Thessalonians 5:14).

3. **Wisdom.** We all have responsibility, as opportunity and contact permits, to reach wandering brothers mired in the pig pen of sin. Paul says, "Concerning you, my brethren, I myself also am convinced that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able also to admonish one another" (Romans 15:14). "Admonish" means to warn and exhort an erring brother to turn from sin. I think most "out of duty" Christians, if their conscience isn't hardened, appreciate you taking the time to sincerely talk to them about their soul.

Empathize by putting yourself in their shoes (Galatians 6:1-2), to help you use wisdom in "having your speech seasoned with salt" (Colossians 4:3). Some become defensive and try to turn the tables and criticize "how" you approach them. Don't let their self-justification intimidate you.

A loving Christian will speak "the truth in

love" from the goodness" of a kind and tender heart (Ephesians 4:15; Colossians 3:12). We must have "knowledge" of the scriptures to apply it to their situation. Some may have rationalized that their immorality is okay with God. Think of some pertinent verses that speak clearly to their situation and ready to read them with the erring.

It may be good to ask them, "Have you thought about what will happen to you if you die in sin?" You can try to persuade them by appealing to God's "goodness" — all a loving Father has done to save us through the gracious sacrifice of his Son (Romans 2:4). When I first began preaching in college, I preached a sermon on Jesus' crucifixion that shows God's hatred of sin and his love for the sinner. A brother came forward and was restored to God, after having been unfaithful for over 30 years! The old, old story of God's grace is ever fresh and powerful to touch and turn the heart!

Those who are more hardened need to be reminded that hell is as real as heaven, and they don't need to be lost in hell, but that heaven can be regained (Romans 2:5-11). If they think their sin is worth such impenitent behavior, read with them, as I have, the terrifying description of "the lake of fire" and the fate of the damned (Revelation 20:11-15). Tell them God still loves them. He wants them to come back. Tell them that you still love them and continually pray for their soul's welfare. Thoughts of eternal separation from God and heaven, as well as the pain of eternal torment, can influence them to repent and return to God.

-via *Biblical Insights*, Vol. 3 No. 7



Remember Our Bible Class Periods

Sunday at 9:45 a.m.

Wednesday at 7:00 p.m.

Peering In The Mirror

Aaron Beard

Hanging on the wall in the bathrooms and bedrooms of most Americans is a large mirror. When we wake up in the morning, one of the first things we do is to look into one of these mirrors. This can be a very frightening experience. It can be amazing how much change we undergo in our physical appearance while asleep. Almost immediately, we do something about our "rough" appearance. It would be ridiculous for someone to see his appearance needs attention, but walk away and do nothing about it. While we find this absurd with our physical appearance, we often do the same thing with our "rough" spiritual appearance.

James tells us that it is not enough to just hear the word of God. We have to make its application to our lives. He describes the man who hears and does not apply it as being "like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was" (James 1:23-24).

The word of God is a perfect mirror for our spiritual lives. God left us His word so his children could look into it and see where they stand before God. James continues to say, "But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does" (James 1:25). When we look into His word and see there are changes that we ought to make, we cannot just casually walk away. Do not be deceived, just walking away fixes your spiritual appearance just as much as it fixes your physical appearance. This solves none of our problems; they are still there. It takes a sincere and humble heart to admit there are problems and to take action against them.

1 Peter 1:22-23 tells us that we are born again through the word of God which comes to us

through His Spirit. It is the Spirit who has revealed God's word, our spiritual mirror, to us. "The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God" (Romans 8:16). When we look into God's mirror we measure reflection against that which the Spirit reveals. His Spirit is thus bearing witness with our spirit. When this happens, do we reflect children of God? If so, we are told in verse 17 that we are "heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ..."

We need to take a long look into the word of God and see where we are in our quest for becoming spiritually perfect. Do we see a man that needs to be "groomed?" We never reach a state of perfection while here on this earth, but it is certainly the goal toward which we must strive. There will always be something in our spiritual lives on which we need to work. Do we work on those things or do we just walk away, forgetting what kind of person we are?

-via *Perry Hill Road Bulletin* ; Montgomery, Alabama

News & Notes

THE SICK: *Mary Best* continues in the Centennial Hospital in Nashville. She plans to be dismissed on Monday... *Billy Haraway* continues at home ... *Hubert Goode* continues at home ... *Eddie Hammond's father, Berl Hammond*, is at home and was not able to take his chemo therapy treatments this week ... *Cindy Pressnell's aunt and Billy Haraway's cousin, Corine Carter*, with stomach cancer... *James Albert McConnell's mother, Della Mae McConnell*, who is at home... *Eddie Hammond's cousin, Ricky Davis*, is continuing his treatments for his cancer ... Remember *Mattie Blanche Word*

continues at home... *Marcia Cooper's and Brian Word's uncle, Paul McCafferty* who is at the SunBridge Nursing Home in Lawrenceburg ... *Mary Best's nephew, Shannon Johnson*, who is at home ... *Faye Hammond* continues at home ... *Tisha Thomas' grandmother, Nellie Hunter*, who is in the Meadow Brook Nursing Home in Pulaski ... *Freda McConnell's father, Alton Wray*, who is at home... *Janice Glass' grandmother, Emma Ray*, who is at home.

OUT OF TOWN: *The Thomas's: Tisha, Ashley and Aylssa* are away this weekend in Florida ... *Claus Martel* has been away this week with his work.

COMMUNICATION GROUPS: Tonight will be the time for Communication Group two to meet after our afternoon service. If you are in group two, plan to meet this evening.

GOSPEL MEETINGS: The *Northside church* in Lexington is beginning a meeting today and it will continue through Friday with services each evening at 7:30. The speaker in the meeting will be *David Hartsell of Auburn*.

THE RECORD: *Averages for 2nd Qtr. of 2003*
Sunday:

Bible Classes 86
 Morning Worship 105
 Evening Worship 70

Wednesday:

Bible Classes 69

Gospel Meeting

Sept. 28 – Oct. 1

Jeff May, Speaking

Anderson church of Christ

Highway 207 South
 Anderson, Alabama

Schedule of Services

Sunday

Bible Classes 9:45 a.m.
 Morning Worship 10:45 a.m.
 Evening Worship 6:00 p.m.

Wednesday

Bible Classes 7:00 p.m.

Elders

Michael Clemmons (256) 247-0836
 Scottie Goode (931) 565-3391

Deacons

Phil Pressnell (256) 232-8509
 Rocky Rose (256) 247-0011
 Larry White (256) 247-0988

Evangelist & Editor

David A. Cox (256) 247-1049
 Office-(256) 247-5539
 E-mail address: dacox@hiwaay.net

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Anderson church of Christ
 P.O. Box 66
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