

Family & Friends..... September 15, 2021

Do you remember what you were doing and where you were on 9/11? It was a time that changed our lives and country forever. Americans in their innocence were witness to a horrible tragedy in our country twenty years ago. Evil made an unforgettable appearance. Americans came together in great numbers in time of crisis and sorrow. Everyone pulled together, held tight to their families and friends, but most of all drew closer to God. Many people went to church and began to let God heal them and to make a better life. I think it made us all think what was most important in our lives. It brought people together in many ways. I still get a smile on my face when I remember traveling through town or making a long trip and seeing all the flags blowing in the wind on homes and cars after 9/11. God's great commandment of love was starting to surface across the country. We were listening to each other, loving one another, and loving our country. Then we started to let things slide and became a divided nation in the worst way. I love my faith and love for God, the freedom to worship God and love Him like no other country, our God given rights, and I love this nation. I love the men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice to protect those freedoms. We are so fortunate to be able to read God's Word every day! God bless America! To God Be the Glory!

*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. Matthew 22:37*

We welcome and love our visitors: Addie & Alivia Bockholt, Taylor & Alison Moore, Nathanael Green, Brad & Kelli Homeyer (Bella Vista), Aliene Gregoire and Debra Lewis (Rogers), Carrie Stewart (Centerton), Judy Hackworth (Moore, OK), Tona Fleener (Battleground, IN), and Josh & Kelly Sweeney, Avery, Rick, & Lisa Hendrix and Cory & Ashley Spruiell.

Those on our prayer list: Our heartfelt sympathies go to several in loss of family members: Carolyn Watson in the loss of her sister Judy Davis. Ava Sailors in the loss of her sister. Joyce Hurst in the loss of her uncle Hugh Sawyer. Wanda Coffee's cousin, Brent. Monica Klingman's cousin, Brenda Robinson. Please keep all these families in your prayers. Vickie Schuster's parents and brother have Covid. Mike Lacey is still not well and having dialysis. Pat Musson will have surgery at the end of the month. Susan Duffy and her dad both need our prayers. Priscilla Paugh, Mary Jane Harrington's sister had another stroke. Continue to remember and pray for Andrew Albers, Judith Carmical, Robbie Arnold, Connor Evans, Bob Musson, Chris O'neal, Chuck Pippin, Loisell Tyler, our missionaries, our military and police force, our country and elected officials, and a cure for the Covid virus.

The items needed for Fair Haven Children's Home: vegetable soups, olives, peanut butter, snacks, pickles, and pancake mix & syrup. For our Food Pantry: oatmeal, spaghetti sauce, black & pinto beans, pickles, ketchup, chili seasoning, and pancake syrup.

If we depend on Christ for everything, we can endure anything. Love you, stay safe.

Karen

Bella Vista Church of Christ

Highway 71 and County Road 40  
989 NW McNelly Road  
Bentonville, AR 72712

Return Service Requested

ELDERS

Tracy Bowman.....479-899-3089  
Don Butcher.....636-548-0458  
Dallas Dobbs.....479-640-49439  
Pery Johnson.....913-707-8379  
Ray Reiss.....903-908-0203

DEACONS

Mark Bagwell John Bowman Chris Johnson Bryan Busbee Joe Hott Robert Horton  
Randall Hunt Harold Phillips Terry Roberts Aaron Sloan Mitchell Whittington

MINISTERS

Jeff Grisham.....479-531-9135  
Parker Willis.....615-587-3208  
Selwyn Nel.....Cape Town, South Africa  
Javier & Helmer Rosero.....Bogota, Colombia

LORD'S DAY

Early Worship 8:15 AM  
Bible Class (Livestreamed) 9:30 AM  
Worship (Livestreamed) 10:30 AM

WEDNESDAY

Ladies' Class 9:45 AM  
Bible Classes (Livestreamed) 7:00 PM

Phone: 479/273-2434

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Bella Vista

Decisions, Decisions, Decisions

Decisions come every day - decisions about college, relationships, finances, a new job, or how to raise our children in a fallen world. When we come to these crossroads, where do we go for help?

**Take it to God in prayer.** *If any of you lacks wisdom he should ask God, who gives generously to all.* Seek God's guidance. He promises that when we ask, He will give His wisdom generously. James adds an important reminder: *But when we ask, we must believe and not doubt.* We must never come to God asking for His wisdom if we have no intention of heeding it; we must never ask God to bless a decision we have already made out of our own selfishness; we must never lump God into worldly options such as psychic hotlines or astrology. Be like Jesus: Go to a quiet place and talk with the Father, seek His wisdom, and then follow that wisdom no matter the cost!

**Look to the Word.** *Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.* Some of us continue to make poor decisions simply because we are never in the Word! The Bible should be the primary means by which God pours His wisdom upon those searching for guidance. When we find the answer there, we must seek no further guidance! James says, *we must not only know the Word, we must be doers of the Word.* A good portion of my time is spent in counseling, and most of this is in *rescue counseling*, when someone knew to do right and chose to do wrong anyway. We must decide that when God's Word gives clear guidance on a decision, that we are going to just do it!

LIFELINES



**Consult with wise people.** *In the abundance of counsel there is much wisdom... The way of the fool seems right to him. But a wise man listens to advice (Proverbs 11:14 & 12:15).* God frequently works through the wisdom of His people. I am always amazed at how He works through the wisdom of the Eldership. I've come to realize that when Randall needs some direction and that direction is not apparent to me, I take it to our Eldership. I am amazed at the number of folk, including preachers, who do not use this source of wisdom, or even rebel against it altogether! If you do not have godly people in your life to give you wisdom at the crossroads of a decision, let me recommend that you seek the wise counsel of an Eldership.

**Never forget the providence of God.** There is no doubt that God allows situations and circumstances in our lives to help provide us with wisdom and direction. Remember when Elijah was living by a brook and the brook just dried up? Elijah was upset and complained to God. God said, *Elijah, the reason I dried it up is because I don't want you at this brook any more.* Sometimes God dries up the brooks in our lives because He wants us to change our situation. God asked Jonah to go to Nineveh. Nineveh was to the east and Jonah got on a ship going west to Tarshish. So God had to redirect his life. David said, *It was good for me to be afflicted, so that I might learn your decrees, and that I might know your will in my life.* How many of us feel that we are where we are today because of direction provided by the providence of God? Don't ignore God's divine providence; be sensitive to it.

**Decide and trust God.** Sometimes the clouds won't part and the road map for our lives won't be spelled out. In these cases, God may be saying... *You make the call! You decide! And then TRUST ME!* In other words, make the best decision we can, with the amount of guidance we are able to receive. This is a part of what it means to *live by faith!*

So, when we sense God leading us to do something: reflect on it, pray about it, test it against the teachings of Scripture, talk to godly people about it. And when that leading becomes clear, follow it *and enjoy the adventure.*

One other thing: Some of us have made poor, bad, even disastrous decisions in the past. Just remember God loves to forgive. He is indeed the God of second chances. Praise Him for His love, mercy and grace.

-RANDALL CASELMAN  
from *Lifelines*, May 24, 2006

## An Audience of One

We would like to think that we behave the same no matter where we find ourselves, but the reality is that we don't. As much as we would like to think that we are always consistent, always the same person, there are times when we act very differently from other times. That's not necessarily hypocritical. In reality, it is perfectly normal.

Allow me to illustrate. It is perfectly acceptable to cheer and yell at the top of your lungs while watching the ballgame. If you exhibit that behavior in the library, however, you will probably be asked to leave. It is a good thing for married couples to be very affectionate with one another at home. That affection displayed very graphically in the grocery store will probably leave you looking for a new place to shop. The problem is not varied behaviors per se, but behavior that is inconsistent with one's surroundings that can cause trouble.

So what is it that determines the acceptability of behavior? Context. Social context, to a large degree, determines the acceptability of our actions. In other words questions like "Where are we?" or "Who is in our immediate area?" or "Who is watching?" have a huge impact on our actions. Paying attention to where we are and who is watching is incredibly important, not just for our own sake, but for the sake of others as well.

Paul understood this very well. Over and over in his letters to those young churches to whom he writes, he includes instructions and encouragement for how to live in ways consistent with their new standing as children of God. We find one example of this in Ephesians 5, where he writes:

*Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. (Ephesians 5:15-17 ESV)*

There is a lot to see in these three short verses. The first thing, as we have already noticed, is that wisdom should dictate how we live. Wisdom can be defined as applied knowledge and this applied knowledge is usually gained by experience and through the counsel of others. Often times we know how we ought to act because we have learned by observation or by practice that there are appropriate and inappropriate ways to behave.

I believe this is why Paul instructs his readers to understand what the will of the Lord is. Paul brings God into the

conversation to remind us that in addition to the social context in which we find ourselves that we are always in the presence of God. In the words of the author of Hebrews, *"And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account."* (Hebrews 4:13) No matter who else may be present; no matter where we happen to find ourselves; even when we seem to be all alone, God is watching. Paul reminds us that not just social context, but the will of the Lord should govern our steps.

As we follow the narrative of the Bible we see that the will of the Lord is to redeem humanity and reconcile all things to himself. We see that he is very interested in the lives of his people, not just for their sakes, but also for the sake of those around them. He wants all people to know who he is and that he can make a difference in the lives of his people for their ultimate good. As his people, as those who have come into the Kingdom of His Son, we get the opportunity to demonstrate what a life devoted to following him looks like in whatever social context we happen to be.

We understand this, and for the most part, strive to navigate this successfully. But what happens in those unguarded moments? What happens when we forget where we are or who is around us or who is watching? God, who is always watching, is also always ready to forgive and provide us with another opportunity to get it right. He's not watching and waiting to pounce when we get it wrong. He is rooting for us, encouraging us to look to his Son and the life that he led, and extending grace to help.

-JEFF GRISHAM

SUNDAY SERVANTS: 9/19/21			
First Service			
Welcome, Prayer & Scripture .....	Aaron Sloan	Song Leader .....	Marquis Elliott
Greeters .....	Phil Ward, Joe Hott	Communion Scripture & Prayer .....	Chad Dobbs
		Closing Prayer .....	Harold Phillips
		Nursery Workers .....	Janet Alumbaugh, Jennifer Stephens
Second Service			
Welcome, Prayer & Scripture .....	Mike Spencer	Song Leader .....	Lee McCain
Greeters .....	John Bowman, Don Cope	Communion Scripture & Prayer .....	Kirk Franklin
		Closing Prayer .....	Perry Johnson
		Nursery Workers .....	Deb Reiss, Shannon Mitchell
		Van Driver .....	Mark Bagwell
September Worship Coordinators			
Worship Coordinator .....	Mark Tucker	Streaming Coordinator .....	Abby Willis
Audio Coordinator .....	Jim Caylor	Video Coordinator .....	Chris Johnson