

GROW IN GRACE NEWSLETTER

Volume 39, No.20, May 14, 2013 / Southside Baptist Church & Christian School / P.O. Box 1594 / 1028 South Water Avenue, Gallatin, TN 37066 (615) 452-5951 / **"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our LORD and Saviour JESUS CHRIST. To Him be glory both now and forever. Amen."** (2 Peter 3:18)

NOTE: The gifts of which we speak in this article are exceedingly **COSTLY** to our screaming flesh! The power and desire to **GIVE THESE GIFTS** is **FREELY** given by **GRACE** to every Christian husband and/or wife. Read the following prayerfully— in many instances you will find Bible-based APPLICATIONS to other relationships in life.

Expensive, FREE Marriage-transforming Gifts

*Let **nothing** be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. (Phil. 2:3-4 KJV)*

***Do nothing** from factional motives [through contentiousness, strife, selfishness, or for unworthy ends] or prompted by conceit and empty arrogance.*

***Instead, in the true spirit of humility** (lowliness of mind) **let each** regard the others as better than and superior to himself [thinking more highly of one another than you do of yourselves].*

***Let each** of you esteem and look upon and be concerned for not [merely] his own interests, but also each for the interests of others. (Phil. 2:3-4, Amplified)*

To the degree that the above verses are embraced and obeyed there will be harmony and love in Christian homes and local church fellowships!

For the glory of God and in order to BUILD UP GODLY MARRIAGES and in order to build up other family members and fellow saints in Christ and so as to RADIATE A POWERFUL GOSPEL WITNESS TO A WATCHING WORLD— let us adorn the Gospel of Christ by,

I. GIVING ACCEPTANCE!

As I die to my selfishness this can actually become an easy choice! In fact, it is a good

thing to accept my mate and/or others in my world as being **perfect— that is, he/she is perfect for me!**

Instead of having a mental list of things that I just cannot tolerate in others, it is a wonderful day to simply receive others, just as they are, **as ‘perfect’ gifts from God — divinely designed in God’s grand plan to conform me more in the likeness of Christ!**

Giving ACCEPTANCE is a choice in my own heart and not dependent upon anyone else changing anything (Romans 15:5); **and it is a choice to live to be a godly blessing to others for Christ’s sake rather than expecting to be pleased!** (Romans 15:1-7)

There are times when my mate or others may SEEM to be perfect sandpaper! **But have you ever noticed that qualities we can’t tolerate in others often reveal our own carnality?**

Ouch! REST ASSURED, the Holy Spirit will focus on changing us and not them!

Later, He may change my mate, the co-worker, the neighbor or fellow church member — but that’s His business for Him to work in His own time. It is not my business!

By the way, mental and/or verbal criticism of others is not a God-given Spiritual gift!

NEITHER he/she nor ‘they’ are the cause of your misery and unhappiness. You are most likely wallowing in the filth of evil concoctions put together by your own flesh. Know this: satan, the slanderer, is always ready to offer you help and suggestions as you do his work!

“BUT, YOU DO NOT UNDERSTAND— I am a genuine, Holy Spirit-filled Christian and I AM BEING PERSECUTED FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS SAKE!” Wonderful! Jesus has a special word just for you:

“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. “Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake.

Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.” (Matthew 5:10-12)

Submitting to this divine process places me right in the center of God’s will and frees me up to maintain an attitude of acceptance (and not rejection!) toward family members and saints in the assembly.

HOW CAN I COMMUNICATE THE GIFT OF ACCEPTANCE TO OTHERS?

1. **By** facial expressions;
2. **By** patience with failure;

3. **By** tone of voice;
4. **By** listening, looking eye to eye;
5. **By** being shock-proof!

(When I **show shock at** the failures of others, I reveal that I have vastly underestimated the depth of my own heart's wicked capacities!)

WHY IS ACCEPTANCE IMPORTANT? Because while rejection separates and breeds hate; acceptance builds bridges of love, enhances forgiveness, keeps us from bitterness and ministers encouragement and edification (Rom. 12:17-21; 15:1-7).

HOW DO I PRACTICE GIVING ACCEPTANCE?

1. Thank God for the person or circumstance.
2. Simply obey Rom. 15:7 – “. . . Receive ye one another, as Christ also received us...”
3. Trust the Holy Spirit.
4. **Cultivate intimacy with Christ:** for out of intimacy with Christ, Christ will flow through us to others by His Spirit. (John 4:14; 7:38)
5. **Serving others is the key to being a happy servant!** (John 13:13-17)

II. GIVING GRATITUDE!

Appreciation, thankfulness/gratitude prevent neglect and presumption in my heart and it encourages others— spouse, children, neighbors, fellow saints, etc. I Thessalonians 5:18 says, **“In everything give thanks for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.”**

Where the simple kindness of thankfulness toward others is neglected, discouragement is bred, giving dries up, and love dies. **MANY GREAT “HOME-DESTROYING” SINS WERE PRECEDED BY YEARS OF INGRATITUDE** by both husband and wife! Many times we claim to be grateful, yet we fail to prove it with words and deeds!

As with acceptance, gratitude must be communicated with words and consistency. Expressed gratitude toward one's spouse will doubtless help keep us from taking them for granted and will help keep our hearts warm so as to nourish and cherish our bride and/or honor, respect and encourage our husband (Eph. 5:22-33)

In reality, gratitude is positively powerful for both the giver and the recipient.

LET US ONE AND ALL CAMP HERE:

Ingratitude (or a lack of ‘thankfulness’) is one of the primary roots of all the unspeakable sin listed in Romans 1:21-32!

Christian families and churches are built up by gracious words and deeds of gratitude and appreciation. Christian families and churches are **TORN DOWN** by the lack of gracious words and deeds of gratitude and appreciation.

III. GIVING AFFIRMATION!

AFFIRMATION can be expressed by *finding a 'strength' in our spouse, child or fellow saint and complimenting him or her!* Simple sayings like— “Good job!” “You look great!” “What a blessing you are!” “I know that with God’s help you will do well!” “I thank God for _____ (this quality) in you!” etc. — all these and many more edify and encourage.

SADLY, we often find it easy to be masters at destructive criticism/confrontation, and strangers to any ministry of affirmation. **It is reported that** the average parent makes ten negative to every one positive comment; and that it takes four positive to offset one negative comment!

Granted, the negative (if it is Biblical) has a place. There are times when we need loving, firm rebuke, and/or correction. However, it must be given in humility: Galatians 6:1. However, we also need positive encouragement. **Affirmation feeds love!** And we are commanded by God to do it! (Rom. 12:10; Eph. 4:29; I Thess. 5:11-14)

HOW DO I GET STARTED WITH AFFIRMATION?

1. Go back and apply Phil. 2:3-4!
2. Look for and seize opportunities to offer sincere compliments to your mate, or child, or brother in Christ.
3. BEWARE! Do not use false affirmation, such as a deceiver who offers compliments out of insincere, evil or selfish motives.

IV. GIVING CONSIDERATION!

CONSIDERATION is continuous and careful thoughts regarding the rights and feelings of my mate or others. Consideration is loving humility in action, seeing needs and meeting them regardless of the failings of others toward me in the past or present.

For an example of this, study the account of Jesus washing the feet of the disciples. (John 13:4-17)

You doubtless won your spouse’s love, at least in part, through deeds and words of consideration. In the same way, we can keep the fires of love going. **TO CEASE TO BE CONSIDERATE IS TO LEAVE “FIRST LOVE.”** The Church at Ephesus (Rev. 2:1-5) was busy doing “church work”; but they had forsaken loving the person of Jesus.

Even so, **many husbands and wives are often busy ‘making a living’...** doing all manner of ‘stuff’... and have forsaken consideration and/or loving each other in a thousand little ways.

V. GIVING COMMUNICATION!

COMMUNICATION is verbal and non-verbal means by which two people express their ideas and feelings to one another, honestly and in a

responsible way! What communication level are you on with your mate or with others in the Body of Christ?

- 1. Shallow:** “Hi, how are you?” “Fine.”... etc.
- 2. Third Person Level:** Here you talk about facts, happenings in the world, the weather, etc.
- 3. Opinions:** Here you still have your guard up. This can also be cool and formal.
- 4. Feelings:** This is deeper. You are getting personal.
- 5. Total Communication:** Here you feel so safe with a person that you share openly and honestly without holding back reality and still feel safe that you will not be rejected or become the topic of gossip.

To have total communication we must be honest, open, vulnerable, responsible, a good listener, not a critic, not a grudge bearer, and not a gossip or talebearer. A great hindrance to total communication is the fear of rejection.

If your mate, friend, or child on some occasion hears you react harshly, judgmentally, or unforgiving to someone, they will find it hard to open up.

Sadly, many Christians kick their wounded, stir up grudges and when they open their mouths it is the next chapter in, “As the knife turns!”

What if every time you opened your Bible or closed your eyes to pray or opened your lips to sing unto the LORD, the HOLY SPIRIT KICKED YOU DOWN WITH A SPIRIT OF CONDEMNATION?

What if God kept bringing up your forgiven past with words like, “I’ve forgiven you but I want to remind you again how much you hurt Me.”... “I don’t know if I can trust you.”... “I just want you to know that in spite of all you have done to me, I am willing to love you.” “I’ve forgiven you, but I don’t want to be around you or to be seen in public with you.”

The bottom line: Total communication requires genuine forgiveness and reconciliation—the kind that God, for Christ’s sake, has given us! (Eph. 4:31-32) **He remembers our past against us NO MORE!** (Isa. 43:25; Ps. 103:12)

VI. GIVING AFFECTION!

AFFECTION, in marriage, is anything from sweet words, to a touch, to sacred sex. In the area of sex, husbands and wives must not steal or defraud one another. (1 Cor. 7:1-5) The grand, open secret set forth in the Word of God when it comes to sex is to give your body to God and to your spouse. Plus, focus on total needs, not just sex! In other words, giving all of the other ‘gifts’ noted in this article, sets the stage for this one! To fail to do the others is to throw cold water on this one!

Godly touching in marriage includes **‘touching’ with the other ‘gifts’ listed in this article:** Acceptance, Gratitude, Affirmation, Consideration and Communication. **Affectionate touching is emotional, mental, physical and spiritual. (For a**

powerful presentation on these 4 aspects of ‘touching’— read chapter 11 of Dr. Ed Wheat’s *Love Life for Every Married Couple!*) It is good and wise for there to be lots of non-sexual touching/affection; but in marriage sexual affection/expressions should not be neglected.

AFFECTION INSULATES MARRIAGES FROM OUTSIDE ATTACKS! (Every couple should have and read and APPLY the abundant Biblical truth found in Dr. Ed Wheat’s two books: *“Love Life for Every Married Couple”* and *“Intended for Pleasure”*.)

A clear Word of SERIOUS WARNING from God: If a husband or wife withholds sexual intercourse from their mate, **they unite with satan as a team to tempt their mate to sin!** How selfish, satanic and deadly is such action. (See I Corinthians 7:3-5)

This is also true: If for a genuine physiological problem a spouse cannot participate in the ‘act of marriage’ — how selfish, satanic and deadly it would be for the other spouse to leave or claim an excuse for being unfaithful! You have a grand opportunity to prove the grace of God and to demonstrate the unconditional, sacrificial, unending love of Jesus Christ!

VII. DEFINING LOVE

LOVE is, (as an act of worship to Jesus who is always worthy), the meeting the actual needs of another and meeting them sacrificially, unselfishly, and unconditionally WITHOUT DEMANDING a response! LOVE is seeking to meet MY MATE’S NEEDS OF

- (1) Acceptance, (2) Gratitude, (3) Affirmation, (4) Consideration,
(5) Communication and (6) Affection.

LOVE IS GIVING THE GIFTS OF (1) Acceptance, (2) Gratitude, (3) Affirmation, (4) Consideration, (5) Communication and (6) Holy, appropriate affection to family members and to one another in the body of Christ.

Love is meeting these needs in the lives of others sacrificially, unselfishly, and unconditionally, as an act of worship to Jesus who is always worthy!

As I give myself in seeking to meet these needs in my mate, I love her (or him) with the expressive love with which Jesus loves me.

I must remember that the way I treat my spouse and/or others who are in Christ— this is the way I actually treat Christ! (Acts 9:1-5)

QUESTION: Do I love JESUS or do I hate and persecute and speak evil of JESUS? THE TRUE ANSWER IS FOUND IN HOW I AM TREATING MY SPOUSE... or my fellow saints in Christ!

“Beloved, let us love one another. For love is of God, and everyone that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God for God is love.” (1 John 4:7-8)

Grace to all in Christ! James Bell

SOUTHSIDE NEWS NOTES for May!

1. WEDNESDAYS: PRAYER SERVICE at 7:00PM! / YOUTH: Wednesdays, 6-8pm @ Southside Church building

2. Thursdays @ 6:30pm: OUTREACH

3. Saturdays @ 8am: Men’s Fellowship/Bible Study

Congratulations to Graduates!

1. Mary Head- Mercer University School of Law

2. Carlee Watson and Nathaniel Hulme- United Christian Academy (Graduation is at Grace Baptist Church, Hartsville, TN, Saturday, May 18, 2:00PM)

3. Autry Stanley- Southside Christian School

Sunday Schedule for MAY 19— NOTE SPECIAL SCHEDULE!

1. 9:30AM— SUNDAY SCHOOL 2. 10:45AM—WORSHIP/Children’s Church

{AT THE BEGINNING OF THE WORSHIP SERVICE WE WILL RECOGNIZE AND HONOR ALL GRADUATES— HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE!}

NOTE: At the conclusion OF THE WORSHIP SERVICE, in the auditorium, we will observe THE LORD’S SUPPER.

3. NOON— Covered Dish, FELLOWSHIP MEAL

4. 1:00PM— SPECIAL AFTERNOON SERVICE with Aidan McKenzie

May 24— Senior Banquet, Southside Christian School Awards Night and Graduation! {IN THE CHURCH AUDITORIUM:

(1) EVERYONE is invited beginning at 6:30PM, as we honor Autry Stanley.

(2) 7:00PM is Kindergarten Graduation;

(3) Followed by AWARDS for SCS students.

(4) The climax will be Autry’s High School Graduation.}

SUNDAY SCHEDULE FOR MAY 26

1. 9:30am- Sunday School

2. 10:45am- Morning Worship / Children’s Church

3. Noon Fellowship Meal {Covered Dish}

4. 1:00pm Early Afternoon Service: A church family Conversation II:

SPECIAL NOTE: We need to have a FOLLOW UP on our Recent Church-wide CONVERSATION. There were several important matters we did not get to discuss.

1. A suggestion coming from our deacons' meeting of better CARING for all members and those attending... especially making sure that widows/widowers/shut-ins, etc... are cared for. **2. A servant team to lead us in the care of the church facilities.** 3. A follow-up as to Sunday service options. 4. Some are wondering as to whether or not there is a vision for a re-start of AWANA or something similar?