



**GROW  
IN  
GRACE**  
NEWSLETTER

**Volume 41, No. 3, January 20, 2015** / Southside Baptist Church & Christian School / P.O. Box 1594 / 1028 South Water Avenue, Gallatin, TN 37066 (615) 452-5951 / The Grow in Grace Newsletter is **a weekly Bible Study**, plus local church news notes— designed first and foremost for members and those attending services at Southside Church. It is sent forth with the desire to aid one and all, (including friends far and wide), in the experience of 2 Peter 3:18. ***"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our LORD and Saviour JESUS CHRIST. To Him be glory both now and forever. Amen."***

## **BASIC Bible Truth as to Normal New Testament Christianity!**

The saints addressed in the book of **Hebrews** had backslidden into a condition common to church folk today. They may have had Bible studies and even Bible knowledge running out of their ears; but they had grown quite dull in spiritual understanding. Why? Because they did not bother to apply, to use, to practice, to transfer to others what they learned. Thus, they began to lose even what they had! (Heb. 5:11-14)

**THOUSANDS UPON THOUSANDS** have attended Sunday School and various Bible studies for 20, 30, 40 years and yet they have never graduated into holy living! Neither are they addicted to the ministry of the saints. Moreover, they are not telling forth the gospel. **IN CONTRAST**, the New Testament Church exploded into their world with the Gospel, teaching others what they had been taught! **IT IS NO SURPRISE THAT**, (1) Philip was first set forth to help wait on tables, Acts 6; (2) But later we find him going forth with the gospel, crossing racial barriers, Acts 8:5; and we find him, (3) Being led by the Holy Spirit, Acts 8:26; (4) Preaching Christ from Isaiah 53; and (5) Parenting four virgin daughters who proclaimed Christ, Act 21:9. **This Biblical Pattern is clearly stated in 2 Timothy 2:2:**

**"What I teach you; you teach others, who in turn will teach**

**others!”**

## **I. DISCIPLESHIP STARTS WITH A LIFE OF “BEING WITH JESUS!”**

Jesus chose 12 apostles **to be with Him**. (Mark 3:14-15) He prayed with and taught these men. He sent them out to minister. He gathered them for prayer, instruction, and fellowship; then He sent them out to bear witness. **In the Acts of the Apostles** we have this same pattern. They gathered for Bible Study, Worship, Prayer, and Fellowship. They scattered for ministry and witness, (Acts 5:42; 8:1-4).

**In real and normal Christianity** folks do not gather to merely hear performances, or to critique church meetings, or to look for something for me and mine. In normal Christianity there is no mere come, sit, soak, sour, and leave to go back out into a lost world without life transformation and without indwelling compelling to take the Gospel to others.

**New Testament Christians** gather to Worship God, to Receive Teaching from God’s Word, to pray to God, and to build up one another in the most holy faith. They scatter out into the world to make Christ known by transformed life and by proclaiming the Gospel— **MOTIVATED** - [not by guilt or bribes or begging, but] - **by the love, MERCY, and grace of God: Romans 12:1-2!** ANYTHING LESS THAN THIS MAY BE RELIGION; BUT IT IS NOT NORMAL NEW TESTAMENT CHRISTIANITY.

**II. GOD IS CALLING US TO A LIFE OF SERVING / MINISTRY!** The New Testament Church was and is a body of ministers/servants of the Lord Jesus Christ. IF A STRANGER COMES INTO OUR MORNING WORSHIP SERVICE THIS SUNDAY AND ASKS, “WHERE ARE THE MINISTERS?” **EVERY CHRISTIAN SHOULD STAND UP AND SAY, “I’M ONE! MAY I HELP YOU?”** In the New Testament the **“One Another”** concept of ministering to each other is stated about 50 times! We should all be addicted to the ministry of the saints! (I Cor. 16:15)

A normal New Testament, EVERY Christian is a servant, a minister of Christ; and is sovereignly placed in a local body of believers by Christ Himself and given gifts for the profit of all. (I Cor. 12) **Each one in the body is built up in the faith by that which is supplied by others in the body.** (Eph. 4:16)

**Pastors/Teachers** are gifts to a body of believers to equip the members

for one to another ministries. (Eph. 4:11-12) **Deacons** are set forth to be examples to the body of those who are addicted to the ministry of the saints. (Acts 6:1-6; 1 Tim. 3) **In other words**, the deacon both sees what service to others needs to be done and he does it; and/or sees that it gets done! He models Jesus who came not to be served but to serve! **All Christians are to serve, to minister.** Deacons model ministry!

### **III. God's Work through His Church Can and Will Be Done With Blessing Only By Those Who Are Born Again and Being Filled With The Holy Spirit!**

The Early Church excelled because they were **born again and Spirit Filled**. Every new born Christian is baptized in/by and with the Holy Spirit into Christ and His Body, of which Christ is the Living Head. **It is unthinkable that Jesus would birth Christians ill equipped! He doesn't!** And there is abundant evidence that every new born Christian is also simultaneously filled with the Holy Spirit. And as we see unfolded in the Acts of the Apostles, saints are often filled again and again, as they go forth in faith/obedience. No one had to beg or plead with the **Woman at the well or the Ex-demonic or the Acts Christians before they manifested a transformed life and a spontaneous zeal to tell out the gospel!**

### **IV. MORE BASICS IN ORDER FOR THE LOCAL CHURCH TO FUNCTION AS A BODY!**

The New Testament teaches us **that Christ is THE HEAD** of the church and we are members in vital union with vital ministry to each other: 1 Corinthians 12; Ephesians 4:11-16. But reading something in the Bible does not mean "experiencing" it. **For the most part, churches today do not function as bodies in which all the members are connected to the Head and to one another in vital union and ministry. Frankly, I'm glad my own PHYSICAL body is not in the shape many churches are in— if it were: My mouth might start talking against my ears. My feet might stop listening to my head.**

Sadly, for many, church is **just meetings and activities**. But a meeting is not a body. My body does not get together once a week if nothing better comes along! The parts/members of my body are in a ministering relationship all the time. For the local church, being a body does not mean merely being together, in the same place; but it does mean being properly related to one another. **There is a difference between a rock pile and a building! Without committed relationships, the church is just a collection of arms and legs, hands, and feet, etc.** It is the connection with the head and the other members that make the parts a body. **There has to be submission to the head; there have to be joints.** As to a local Church, the only true and enduring basis of unity is to be found in being savingly UNITED TO CHRIST and in our submitting to the will of JESUS CHRIST OUR HEAD! Certain principles come into play when we begin relating as members of a body. These PRINCIPLES are like the law of gravity— they work whether we understand and honor them or not!

**1. A person cannot be part of TRUE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST until he receives and confesses Jesus Christ as Saviour and LORD.** You cannot come into CHRIST'S body unless you receive JESUS CHRIST the Head of the body, because JESUS CHRIST won't have subversion in HIS body. We could call this the "door principle." Jesus said, *"I am the door."* HE is the door into the church.

**EARTHLY EXAMPLE: If I am going to have fellowship with a family, I need to acknowledge and honor the husband and father of the family.** If I have fellowship with a man's wife and I do not acknowledge and honor his headship, my fellowship is going to cause trouble. If I develop a relationship with the children and I do not acknowledge that the parents have responsibility for them, my relationship with the children is going to make them worse, not better children, because it will be at odds with their parents' training them.

**Not only is it ESSENTIAL that all be related properly to the one head, Christ, but it is IMPORTANT that the members of the body be properly related to one another in the local body.** (1 Corinthians 16:15-16)

**2. Staying in Fellowship in a Local Church Requires Walking in the Light.** Walking in the light means walking in the truth with each other, living honestly with each other: GOD SPEAKS to us in 1 John 1:7— *“If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.”* That means that if we walk in the truth and in openness with each other we become cleansed. Where there is real fellowship there is truth and honesty and WALKING IN THE LIGHT and there is the SUFFICIENCY OF THE BLOOD OF JESUS for all needed cleansing!

**Watch a Christian who is beginning to backslide— BETTER YET, REMEMBER YOUR LAST BACKSLIDDING... OR TAKE A LOOK AT WHERE YOU ARE NOW:** One of the things that you will notice is that THE BACKSLIDER will begin to drift out of honest fellowship. **The brother won't show up at meetings.** When you talk to him he does not really communicate with you. **Poison is setting in** and deadly poison toward others... OR... he may be ignorant of the contamination that comes from gossip, slander, tale-bearing, and discord sowing.

**Staying in fellowship requires walking openly and honestly with one another.** In beautiful, healing reality, GOD CALLS us to, *“Confess our faults to one another. Pray for one another.”* (James 5:16) We cannot really know how to pray for each other if we do not confess our own faults to one another. We say, *“Forgive us our sins.”*... But that is not a confession; that's a generalization... a CONSCIENCE SOOTHER!

**BEAUTIFUL, HEALING REALITY looks like this:** **“Forgive me for THOSE EVIL, WICKED, LOVELESS WORDS I SPOKE TO MY WIFE... IT WAS SIN... IT WAS WRONG... IT'S GOT TO GO... O GOD IT WAS EVIL IN YOUR SIGHT!”** In that prayer THERE WAS NO EXCUSE. It is an example of a genuine confession. **“AND, NOW LORD, I AM GOING TO ALSO ASK MY WIFE FOR HER FORGIVENESS!”** We need to take this seriously.

**3. Fellowship in a Local Body Requires Humility. Humility of heart is required for harmony and success.** Romans 12:10: *“In honor prefer one another.”* 1 Peter 5: 5, 6: *“You younger men, be subject to your*

*elders. Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you at the proper time."*

Humble yourself, and he will exalt you. **Exalt yourself, and He will humble you. You do your job, He will do his. You do His job, He will do yours!**

**As Proverbs 13:10 tell us, strife is directly traceable to pride.** A working body is one where each member serves the body and not merely itself. Serving other members is direct evidence of humility. Humility destroys selfish individualism.

**4. Fellowship in a Local Assembly Requires Faithfulness in Everyday Serving.** Luke 16:10-12: *"Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else's property, who will give you property of your own?"* When we see people in the body who have jobs in which they are not functioning properly, we will see that these laws were broken in little things. **The scripture says, "Do not lay hands suddenly on anybody - on a novice - lest he be lifted with pride and fall into the snare of the enemy."**

**A person should start by serving.** Every new Christian ought to be given a few things to do, and little things. For example, a person WHO HAD just met the Lord... WAS ALL EXCITED... AND WANTING TO TESTIFY AND PREACH... AND WAS ALREADY LOOKING DOWN HIS NOSE AT SOME BACKSLIDDEN CHURCH MEMBERS...

**AND SO THE PASTOR SAID:** "Wonderful, you've met Jesus. You're on fire for the Lord. You believe you are full of the Spirit. That's good... **Now, would you straighten up the chairs for next Sunday morning?"** "Chairs?" he says. "I feel the call of God. I'm ready to stand in the pulpit and preach!" **"Would you fix up the chairs?"** "The world is lost and dying. I want to go somewhere and preach, Glory to God!" **"Brother,**

**let's do the chairs and straighten up the hymnals!"** "Praise God, if we had faith, we wouldn't need hymnals!" he replies.

Well, the PASTOR CAME to the church meeting on Sunday and the chairs WERE not arranged and the hymnals WERE all messed up. AND THE PASTOR SAID TO THE ON FIRE BROTHER, "**Brother, what happened to the chairs?**" "**Well, I didn't feel led to do it.** I was listening to a famous Evangelist all day, Glory to God!" Now, what if later the pastor has a meeting with the elders and somebody says, "**We need somebody to do this big job.**"

**What about him... THE YOUNG BROTHER WHO'S SO ON FIRE?"**

**"NO, he didn't do the chairs,"** SAID THE PASTOR. "Well, maybe he wasn't challenged by that... Let's give him a bigger job. Maybe he'll do that." **Will he? Luke 16:10:** *"If you are faithful in little things, you will be faithful in large ones. But if you are dishonest in little things, you won't be honest with greater responsibilities. **Faithful over little things, faithful in large ones. Unfaithful in little things, unfaithful in large ones.**"*

When Jesus chose his disciples he started them out at the bottom not at the top. He sent Peter to get the tax money from the fish. He told the disciples to distribute the fish, to fetch the donkey and get the room ready for the meal. He taught them about 'washing feet!' **They served!**

**5. In the Local Church: Grace is the oil that makes things go smoothly.** When Mary broke her alabaster box at Jesus' feet, Jesus rebuked her critics. In the Lord's eyes, her lavish love deserved to be remembered wherever the gospel would be preached. Proverbs 11:25 says, "The generous man will prosper." Liberality is part of the Christian way of life, in which we ought to train the people we are caring for. Paul sent Titus to the Corinthians "to finish this grace" in them, to work graciousness in them (2 Cor. 8:6).

**When there is meagerness, miserliness, meanness in the church the wheel turns, but there's friction. Grace is the oil that makes things go smoothly.** Those who share and are gracious are those WHO WILL have the greatest revelation of Jesus Christ. GOD IS CALLING us to

graciousness in all the relationships. [Note... IV of this is edited from an article I saved from years back; and I do not have a clue as to who wrote it! ]

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**Grace to one and all in Christ!** James Bell

[www.southsidegallatin.org](http://www.southsidegallatin.org)

## **SOUTHSIDE NEWS NOTES!**

**TUESDAYS:** Come and sing every Tuesday night at Gallatin Health Care nursing home. Meet at the front door at 5:30PM. Questions call Bradley Pennington at 615-804-3054.

**\*\* WEDNESDAYS:** PRAYER SERVICE at 7:00PM; **IN Ladies Sunday School Room**

**\*\* NOTE:** Jody Allen is ministering to **young Children**, up to about age 10 during Prayer Service. Older children, but not old enough for the Youth Group... will be with their parents in the Prayer Service. **YOUTH GROUP:** Wednesdays 6-8pm... led by Byron Smith

**☐ LADIES BIBLE STUDY— January 22, 11:00am**, The Life of David! - 1 Samuel 16:14-23 - Cindy Bell, teaching. {Meet in Ladies Sunday School Room: Come in FRONT doors of the church auditorium or the SIDE door at the top of the IRON STEPS!}

**\* EVERY SATURDAY MORNING @ 8am: Men's Fellowship/Bible Study!** {Study in 1 Thessalonians}... Come to back of Church building... Come in under the drive-thru awning... walk forward... till you smell the coffee!}

**SUNDAY, JANUARY, 25—**

1. 9:30am Sunday School
2. 10:45am Worship Service
3. Noon— Fellowship, Covered-dish lunch
4. 1:00pm— Early afternoon worship service