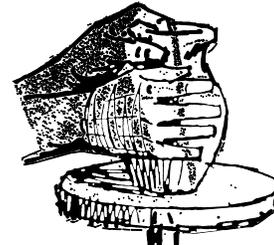


His Workmanship at Westside

*"For we are His
workmanship, created in
Christ Jesus for good works."
—Ephesians 2:10*



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Isaiah 64:8

A Look Forward (spiritual evaluation, part 2) by Dean O'Bryan

Last week we looked at the first of three ways to invest in our spiritual lives for this coming year. Our first investment is **A. Get to know God**, Jn 17:4. It is awesome to think that God wants us to know Him—and that He is knowable! The most important question we can ask of anyone is, "Do you know God?" We looked at four ways to know Him:

1. Get to know the truth about Him, by studying the Bible passages that tell about God's great character and about His mighty works.

2. Study Jesus, by looking at His life as recorded in the gospels. Read all four this year, then select one to study closely. Jot down what characteristics of Jesus you see in each chapter that you would like to incorporate into your own life.

3. Spend time with God. Make it your aim this year to spend time daily in Bible study and serious prayer. You can carve out 15 minutes a day to start.

4. Respond to God. This is perhaps the key to growth in Christ. Whenever you learn something new in the Bible—from a verse, a sermon, something you hear on the radio or in a tape—respond by obeying or applying the principle immedi-

ately, cf. Mt 4:20 (Mk 1:18-20); Mk 2:2, 12; 4:29; 5:42; 6:45; 9:15, 24; Lk 4:39; 5:13, 25; 8:55; 12:36; Ax 9:18-20, 34; 10:33; 16:10, 33; 17:10-14. God will make Himself known to you, but for a purpose—to transform you into the likeness of Christ, Rm 8:29. When God speaks to you, respond in some way. Don't take a couple of notes and stuff them in your Bible. Don't just listen or read. God will reveal Himself more fully and in deeper ways only after you have responded to His truth, Mt 13:12. **Some ways to respond:**

a. Change the way you think based on what God has said.

b. Repent when God speaks to you about your sin, whether through other people or Scripture.

c. Commit to steps of obedience. *"He who has my commandments and keeps them, he it is (he's the one) who loves Me; and he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him, and will disclose Myself to him,"* Jn 14:21; cf. 15:10. God delights to reveal Himself to people who will walk with Him and relate to Him and obey Him. He wants to be known by you. Imagine the results, at the end of this year, if you could say, **"I've come to know**

God better." Consider some steps to make that a reality.

B. Invest in your own growth.

Eph 4:15, 2 Tim 3:16-17. The Bible describes us at the start of our faith as spiritual infants. But just like with new babies born to us, we must grow. That is God's desire. Every indication in Scripture is that the growth process is not automatic. It requires response. *"[We] are to grow up in all aspects into Him, Who is the head, even Christ,"* Eph 4:15. We have to make two decisions if we're going to grow up spiritually:

1. dump my excuses. Humans are wildly creative when it comes to making excuses for ourselves. Lack of spiritual maturity gets its share of our creativity and excuses. We say things like, "I'm not motivated." "I'm too busy to do the stuff you need to do to grow." "What happened to me in the past holds me back." Or even "I'm not doing too bad compared to most people." Let's make this the year we jettison those attitudes. We won't let the year—or our life—run its course while we keep making excuses—to others, to ourselves, to God, for why we don't seek out opportunities to grow! The excuses

continued on p. 2

“Seek FIRST the kingdom of God and His righteousness...” —Matthew 6:33

we employ keep us from the rich things God wants to do in our lives. God's desire is for us to be mature in Christ. The normal walk with Christ for all Christians is a life of going on, a life of growing up into Christ. It is maturity. Will we quit with the excuses and begin moving in line with God's desires for us this year?

2. get God's Word into my life.

Growth largely depends on our time in and saturation by Scripture. It's God's Word which will change us, shape our thinking, transform our hearts, and change our lives. Scripture is God's resource to teach us, equip us, and make us effective for any kind of good work, 2 Tim 3:16-17. We can get Scripture into our lives five different ways. Hearing includes listening to teaching and preaching or Scripture on tape or CD. Or we can read Scripture. Reading it gives us the big picture. Studying the Bible is more intensive. We can study a topic or a book of the Bible. We can study on our own, or with our roommates or spouse, or in a small group. Memorizing verses and passages is a good way to get God's own words into our thinking. Obviously, God's Word stays with us constantly when we do that. Scripture memory pays huge benefits that don't come any other way. Meditating on what we've read or memorize takes time and discipline. Meditation involves considering the truths of Scripture deeply for the purpose of application. Let's add at least one of these methods to whatever we do now. If we're consistently coming to worship and hearing God's Word, add another. If we're spending time reading, then add another method. Most Christians are just hearing—and many Christians aren't even doing that consistently.

Our culture is becoming increasingly electronic and decreasingly a people

who look at the written word. Some experts say we are literally becoming illiterate. We as Christians are people of the written Word—*faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God*, Rm 10:17. We cannot afford the kind of illiteracy that our culture is embracing. We cannot afford a future without learning the Book. That only means we'll be spoon fed culture's tripe and be grossly malnourished. Make a choice—against another activity and for adding a new method to get into Scripture. Imagine the payoff. Dump those old favorite excuses and determine 2013 will be the year we consistently get God's Word into our hearts, minds, and lives.

3. Invest in building Christ's

church. Mt 16:18, 6:33. Jesus said, *"I will build My church, and the forces of Hell will not prevail against it,"* Mt 16:18. We occupy the time frame of earth's history when Jesus is working to expand the borders of His kingdom (His church) by driving back the gates of Hell. The battle for that expansion will continue until He returns. He now summons followers to join with Him where He's working to add people to His church. There's no limit to the opportunity, there is no limit to what kind of people He will use. There is only limited availability on the part of His people. *"Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness and all these things shall be given to you,"* Mt 6:33. He was responding to His followers who got their priorities confused. They were thinking about the stuff they needed for everyday life: food, fashion, finances, fitness. Material beings naturally pursue material stuff! But Jesus told them, and us, "That's not why you're here. Will you stop investing your life primarily in things that won't matter in the long run and invest them in what will?" He commanded us to pursue the expansion

of His kingdom. That means buying up opportunities in anything and everything which will lead to building up the church. It means reserving our time and energy and creativity (and money) for people who don't know Christ. It means re-directing some time which we have already committed elsewhere.

Jot down today five people who do not know the Lord. Begin to pray for them every day. We can bring them to church meetings or a home study with us; we might figure out some creative ways in which we can share life with them. Go somewhere together, invite them over. Get to know them. Ask them if there is something going on in their lives that we could pray about! And every day, ask God to open doors for us to share Jesus Christ with them. Do we have time for the things on God's heart? For His kingdom? For His church? Will we, this year, nail down with the elders what our unique gifts and abilities are and commit to using them? Will we throw our hearts and days and funds into eternal values?

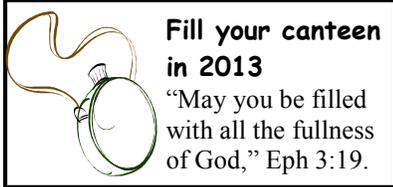
Where are we investing our lives?

Imagine having the great goal of knowing God well—the goal that He would often speak to me, show me Himself, press me closer to Him. What a powerful thing to be at the heart of my life! Imagine the goal that I grow well, that I grow up spiritually... and that I invest whatever God puts in my hand to further His kingdom and build up His church. If we want to be challenged and stretched, this is the way to go.

By God's amazing grace, we're going to respond as Christians and as a church who say "yes" to God. This is the year for us to grow intentionally. It doesn't matter where we've been. It's a new year. It's a new day. Let's not end up where we are. Let's go for it!



Psalm 133:1



Fill your canteen in 2013

“May you be filled with all the fullness of God,” Eph 3:19.

Fill Your Canteen in 2013

Would you be willing to commit to these three broad goals for 2013?

A. Share, serve, and sustain relationships within this local church.

B. Become a godly gospel presence in our community.

C. Become a praying and evangelistic church, cf. Ax 2:42; 4:23-33; 8:4; 11:20-26; Phil 4:15-19.

How would you consider reaching these goals? Which of the following do you think would be good objectives to help us reach our goals? which can be your personal goals?

1. Sustain 100 or more average at worship by May as God gives the increase, 1 Cor 3:6. 80% of Sunday morning worshippers in Sunday Bible study by April; 65% of Sunday morning worshippers at Sunday afternoon worship by July; 55% Sunday morning worshippers at Wednesday night Bible study by fall.

2. Welcome guests at our assemblies weekly, repeatedly and consistently, Col 4:10; Mt 5:47; Ax 28:2; Rm 16:16.

3. Make a list this month of 5 people you know who do not know the gospel of Christ. Review it and add to it each month. Pray daily and specifically for those on your list. Join in prayer with others weekly for all who do not know the message of salvation, Mt 9:37-38.

4. Pray and confess to God each day, 1 Jn 1:9.

5. Invite at least one person on your

list each week to “come and see” our assembly or come to a home study, Jn 1:39-46. Mention something good about the Westside church to 3-4 people on your list each week, Ax 5:42.

6. Commit to meet face to face with at least one other brother/sister of church once a week other than Sunday morning. Write, phone, text, or contact at least one other brother or sister of this church during each week, Gal 5:13; Ax 2:46-47.

7. Sit to the front of the assembly room so guests and late arrivers have a place to sit. Worship whole-heartedly, Ps 9:1.

8. Memorize a Bible passage each month. Learn a Bible book’s chapter topics each month, e.g. Ruth, 4 chapters: 1) Naomi returns to Bethlehem with Ruth; 2) Ruth gleanes in Boaz’s field. 3) Boaz arranges to be Ruth’s kinsman-redeemer. 4) Boaz redeems Ruth, they are married and bear children to comfort Naomi in her old age]; to see overall picture and find passages.

9. Read the Bible each day or listen to someone read it.

10. Apply one new command of God to your life each month, e.g., pick out 1 or 2 commands from each New Testament book to obey, such as Gal 5:13; 6:6; Eph 4:17-32; Rm 13:13-14; 1 Cor 10:14; 2 Cor 9:6-7; Phil 2:14; 4:6-7; Col 3:5-17; 1 Thes 4:11-12; 2 Thes 3:5; 2 Tim 2:2.

Will you commit to your personal spiritual growth this year? Will you commit to Westside’s growth as a church? What will you do differently?

Travel Brett Witherington in MD for work. Kim and Kaysha Howell, and Tracy Corray return from NYC this evening. Lilian Kok is in Wyo, back next Sun. Pat Campbell will go Thurs to her parents in AR. The Wilkeses will leave Sat for a week’s street evangelism in San Bernardino, CA.

Discipleship Here At Home

PRAY FOR healing, protection, help, and comfort here & away

Chris Hayes’s mother Cathy Hayes—brain cancer tumors have spread

Judy Sartin—flu, upper respiratory

Madge Wallace—chemo, lung cancer

Lazar Gintchin’s uncle—heart

Brittany Tope’s mother Gayle Shrull

—return of breast cancer; 3 weeks of radiation ahead

Jeremy Green—new dermatitis meds

Judy Sartin’s son David—endocrine testing. Judy’s aunt Vallie Ek, age 86 in CA—uterine cancer gone, but now lungs

Gary Boyd’s sister Gail Storatz—no

Cancer in bones, but thru body; fatigue

Alexander Gintchin’s classmate, Jack

Miller—2 brain tumors; age 6

Frank Savarese—pneumonia recovery

Frank’s mother—PRAISE! lung cancer

surgery got all nodules, no cancer

Tracy Corray’s best friend Meghan

O’Donnell’s aunt Kathy Dewey—lung

cancer; daily chemo

Mina Gonzalez’s uncle Charles

Hawkins—colon cancer

CHRONIC CONDITIONS

Logan Corray; Carter Hayes; Rocco

Sangellino Jr; Addison Tope—asthma

Autumn Hadders—epilepsy; good test

results

Pearl Chapman—leg pains; pancreatitis

Nell Free—heart; spinal pain

Kirk Johnson—worsening MS; house-

bound in cold weather and needs help

Menards—age; Lloyd, diabetes, ear;

Virginia, eye problems

Jonathan Hadders—RA

Giles Free—seizure free; can drive Feb

Cheryl Reames—diverticulitis; fibro

Lynda Szymanski—COPD, lung

Job concerns Andrew Tope and

Frank Savarese are seeking jobs.

Expecting Marie Carlson—late June



Exposing current thoughts & trends

Jonah Faces Whale of Lawsuit *by Tony Perkins*

The Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) is determined to cement its status as the homosexual movement's greatest ally by bringing a lawsuit against groups who help and counsel gays to repent. SPLC is following the money to the gay community, where it hopes the partnership will turn "gay rights" into "civil rights." This lawsuit, aimed at destroying the ex-gay movement, is its latest attempt to regain its status. Last month, SPLC announced that it is suing a Jewish organization called JONAH (Jews Offering New Alternatives of Healing) for consumer fraud. They allege that the therapy, which is designed to bring homosexuals out of bondage and into healthy behavior, failed. That's as ridiculous as suing Weight Watchers because they promised you'd lose weight and you didn't! The only people guilty of fraud are the ones who claim people with same-sex attractions can't change, but the reality is transformation in Christ, 1 Cor 6:9-11.

Like California liberals, who outlawed sexual reorientation counseling for teenagers, SPLC and allies are frantically trying to shut down therapy like this because it disproves their entire false argument that homosexuality—like race—is innate (inborn) and thus healthy and natural. If men and women with same-sex attractions can be freed, it destroys the Left's foundational concept that gay rights are civil rights. To keep that from happening, SPLC-like groups are doing what they can to shut down any research or therapy that contradicts their case.

In its lawsuit, SPLC says that reorientation therapy "has no basis in scientific fact." As Family Research Council's Peter Sprigg says, there's an abundance of scientific and anecdotal evidence that the therapies *do* work—although critics are reluctant to acknowledge it. NARTH (National Association for Research and Therapy of Homosexuality) has cited "600 reports of clinicians, researchers, and former clients—primarily from professional and peer-reviewed scientific journals" which show that "reorientation treatment has been helpful to many." The same people who say this research is inadequate also adamantly oppose doing more studies on the topic!

In this lawsuit, SPLC suggests that reorientation therapy is not only ineffective, but harmful. Their evidence is entirely anecdotal—the same kind of evidence the APA refuses to accept with regard to the effectiveness of the therapy! If the Left truly had homosexuals' best interest in mind, it would recognize that for many, same-sex attractions are unwanted. For those who struggle, hope is not in limiting avenues for change—but in encouraging change.

Westside church of Christ

meets at

13789 W. 8th Avenue
Golden, Colorado 80401
(303) 233-5683

Pastors

Larry Campbell
(303) 462-4987

DeWayne Howell
(303) 973-7283

Preacher

Jim Reingrover
(303) 973-5102

Assembly Schedule

Sunday

Bible classes	9:00 am
Morning assembly	10:00 am
Afternoon assembly	1:30 pm

Wednesday

Bible classes	7:30 pm
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Grounded in Authority Series

this afternoon at 1:30 PM:

"Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth" by Joel Walker

GOALS: Will you invite 2 people to church this week? Will you participate in a Bible study with other Christians this week? Will you pray for 5 people who need the gospel this week?

Memory verse, *beautiful feet of messengers:*

"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who proclaims peace, who brings glad tidings of good things, who proclaims salvation, who says to Zion, 'Your God