

The Bulletin

Meeks St. Church of Christ

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February 2, 2020

“Abandon Youth Ministries”

By Frank Himmel

The Christian Chronicle carried an interview with LaGard Smith, who was at the time "Scholar in Residence for Christian Studies" at David Lipscomb University in Nashville.

One item caught my attention. Smith was asked what he would say if he had the undivided attention of every member of churches of Christ for 10 minutes. Included in his answer: ". . . I would call on the church to abandon youth ministries, which have toppled the spiritual hierarchy. Throughout Scripture, spiritual leadership is not only male, but it is elder. It's the wisdom of the years that leads and nurtures younger generations."

Abandon youth ministries. This is not the cry of some old fogey ultra-conservative who resists change at every turn. It is the counsel of one who is seeing among his peers the ripe fruit of an ill-advised tree.

Youth ministries typically feature two things: abundant recreational activities and shallow, entertaining instruction. What happens when teens who are accustomed to such things become adults? Will they immediately consider themselves too old for church-sponsored recreation, or suddenly insist on more sober worship and meatier preaching? Of course not. As a result, today's "adult church" has in many cases become just a slightly toned-down version of yesterday's "youth church." The Bible, of course, knows nothing of youth ministries, youth church, or church-sponsored recreation for any age. And it emphatically warns against ear-tickling preaching (2 Tim. 4:3-4).

This warning is timely. In recent years, increasing numbers of congregations which have stood opposed to institutionalism and church-sponsored recreation (things readily accepted by Smith's associates) are beginning to dabble in youth ministries. We don't call them that, of course, but the trend is cause for concern.

Special meetings for young people call for certain speakers, those whose presentations are more entertaining. The truth is slightly repackaged — less Bible reading and exposition, more stories and humor, and lessons that are mostly application with content limited to "relevant" (daily living) themes.

Parents provide ample food and entertainment. Do not misunderstand. No one opposes occasional sermons targeted at a particular segment of the audience, nor do we underestimate the value of young Christians getting together.

However, when meetings for young people consistently take on a more entertaining air, when the add-on recreation becomes expected, when we advertise it along with the worship (even though it is not paid for from the church's treasury), and when brethren begin to say that we may lose our young people without such events, we have gone farther than we think down the wrong path.



“His Parents Were Too Strict”

by Boyd Sellers

Have you ever heard that statement? You'll see some scraggly kid who cares about nothing and nobody, who has long ago left the Lord (though he may have been faithfully "going to church"), and who has literally broken his parents hearts. You ask a friend, "What happened to him?" And he answers, "His parents were too strict — they made him assemble when the saints assembled — they made him dress modestly — they made him keep himself clean — etc., etc., etc."

HIS PARENTS WERE TOO STRICT?? I don't believe it for a minute! They may have been inconsistent, or the child may have been rebellious, but too strict? I don't think so. It is important that we understand that God demands that parents be strict.

God commands that children obey their parents (Eph. 6:1) and honor their parents (vs 2). Fathers are commanded to "bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (vs 4). That requires strictness and discipline. It requires a decided attitude about what that father wants his child to be morally and spiritually.

Now, if you're talking about the parent who is ungodly, who wants his children to be something that he doesn't intend to be, that's HYPOCRISY. Or if you're talking about the child of godly parents who makes up his mind that he's not going to live right, that's REBELLION.

But, remember, a child doesn't ruin his life simply because a godly mother and father were "too strict." He had to go wrong IN SPITE OF all that they did for him.

God demands that parents be strict. (see also Proverbs 13:24; 19:18; 22:6, 15; 23:13-14; 29:15,17).

"Some Suggestions for Your Daily Routine"

by Greg Gwin

We all have some things that we do with great regularity. Certain activities are a part of every day — things like bathing, dressing, brushing teeth, etc. Each person will have other unique practices that are incorporated into their normal routine. And, while it is possible to "get in a rut", some of this regularity is important and helpful in making us more efficient individuals. With that idea in mind, we'd like to suggest some things that ought to become a regular part of every Christian's daily routine. Every day we should:

• Pray.

Pray daily for your fellow Christians, especially remembering the sick, the bereaved, those who are spiritually weak, those laboring under heavy burdens, and others who have special needs. Don't let these prayers be totally "general" in nature. Think of specific individuals and mention them by name in your prayers.

• Give Thanks.

In the course of your prayers, do not neglect to thank the Heavenly Father for all the wonderful blessings that He gives us. Again, be specific. Taking the time to "count your blessings" every day will help you to gain a greater appreciation for what God has done for you. Especially spend time contemplating the great spiritual blessings we have in Christ.

• Study.

Find some time each day to spend in the study of God's Word. Get up a few minutes earlier each day, break away in the middle of the day, make time in the evening — but by all means study the Word. This will help you to resist temptation (Matthew 4:1-11) and prepare you to explain your faith to others (1 Peter 3:15).

• Serve.

The Christian's life is to be a life of service (Mark 10:43,44). Instead of waiting for others to do things for you, look for some opportunity every day to do some deed of kindness for another individual. Your life will be happier if you concentrate less on self and more on others.

"Can We See The Bible Alike?"

by Johnny Polk

Moses said we could (Deut. 29:29). David said we could (Psalms 119:104). John said we could (John 20:30,31). Jesus prayed that we might (John 17:20). All of these spokesmen for God have declared that through study of the Scriptures we are enabled to see them alike.

There are some things that HINDER a clear understanding of the Bible:

- **Relatives** (Matthew 19:29; 10:34-37)
- **Pride** (Proverbs 14:12; 16:18; Revelation 3:17-18)
- **Majority opinion** (Exodus 23:2; Matthew 7:13-14, 21)
- **False doctrines** (Matthew 13:14-15; 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12)
- **Satan** (2 Corinthians 4:3-4)

If we will accept only the word of God (1 Pet. 4:11), we would not only see the Bible alike, but understand and practice it alike (1 Cor. 1:10).

News and Notes: Sick and recovering: Tim Harris Sr, Tim Harris Jr, Chad Harris, Martha Norvell (Mississippi Care), June Lawson (Lisa Busby's Mom), Debbie Keplinger, Janis Johnson, Daniel Holloway, Tammy Kilgore (Jerry's niece), Betty Hurst, Peggy Harville (cancer), Linda Harris, Hazel Corner, Clay Ford, Clois Wright, and Dan & Linda Hunt, Mollie Harris, and Danny Cottrell (Dan's Dad) his surgery will be the 13th (Feb.).

Those Who Serve:

Sunday Morning 9:00 A.M. Service:

Opening Prayer: Tim Harris Jr.
Preaching: Brian Meade
Sermon #1: *"Differences Between the COC & the Christian Church"*

Auditorium Bible Class: 9:35am:

Sunday Morning 10:30 A.M. Service: Brian Meade
The Book of Romans (Kyle Pope)
Lesson 14, Page #74 Question #7

Announcements: Fred Johnson
Opening Prayer & Scripture Reading: Doug George
Psalms 103:1-5
Song Leader: Jerry Kennemur
Lord's Supper: Paul Johnson
Assisting: Lee Busby & Jerry Kennemur
Preaching: Brian Meade
Sermon #2: *"IF — A Little Word With BIG MEANING"*
Closing Prayer: Sam Johnson

Wednesday Evening: 7:00 P.M.

February 5th:

Auditorium Bible Class: Russell Briggs
The Book of Psalms (Randy Blackaby)
Lesson 11, Page #47, Question #1
Invitation: Paul Busby
Song Leader: Brian Meade
Closing Prayer: Tim Harris Jr.