



Green Run Tidings



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Green Run Baptist Church

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Putting Your Faith in Action

The organized church is torn with strife and distrust. Ultimately, the battle is not so much between conservatives and liberals, evangelicals and activists, or fundamentalists and modernists. The issue now is between belief and unbelief: Is Christianity true or false, real or unreal?

What is deadly to the church is when the external forms of religion are maintained while their substance is discarded. This we call practical atheism. Practical atheism appears when we live as if there were no God. The externals continue, but man becomes the central thrust of devotion as the attention of religious concern shifts away from man's devotion to God to man's devotion to man, bypassing God. The "ethic" of Christ continues in a superficial way, having been ripped from its supernatural, transcendent, and divine foundation.

Biblical Christianity knows nothing of a false dichotomy between devotion to God and concern for man. The Great Commandment incorporates both. It is because God is that human life matters so much. It is because of the reality of Christ that ethics are vital. It is because the cross was a real event that the sacraments can minister to us. It is because Christ really defeated death that the church offers hope. It is because of Jesus' real act of atonement that our forgiveness is more than a feeling.

The church's life and her creed may be distinguished but never separated. It is possible for the church to believe all the right things and do the wrong things. It is possible also to believe the wrong things and do the right things (but not for very long). We need right faith initiating right action. Honest faith—joined with honest action—bears witness to a real God and a real Christ.

Examine your heart today: Are you believing the right things, yet doing the wrong things? Are you believing the wrong things while still trying to do the right things? ~ *Dr. R. C. Sproul, Sr.*

Is It Just a Money Issue?

Several years after my father's death in 1992 I found an old shoebox among my father's belongings. Among the various items in the shoebox, I came across a stack of letters that my father had written just prior to his death. As I began to read the first letter I quickly realized he had written them to me but that he never had the opportunity to give them to me because his cancer consumed his body more quickly than the oncologist had expected. In one of the letters, my father wrote, "Learn to live with a little less."

I have never forgotten that admonition, and having often wondered what made my father's generation different from my own, I have come to the following conclusions: My father's generation knew what it was to live with a little less. My generation always seems to "need" just a little more. My father's generation asked this question of God, family, neighbor, and country: "How can I serve you with my time, money, and resources?" My generation asks, "How can you serve me with your time, money, and resources?" My father's generation was a generation of honorable, principled, and hard-working men and women who felt truly blessed by God to be alive, to have the health to give of themselves to others, and to be fortunate enough to give of their time, money, and resources so that future generations could prosper.

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Is It Just a Money Issue?

My generation is consumed with consumption. It is the generation of entitlement, instant gratification, and expediency. My generation has no understanding of what our fathers and forefathers fought for, what they sacrificed, and how much they gave of their time, money, and resources.

This is not just an issue about money but about how we worship God as stewards of all that He has entrusted to us as we live before His face each and every day. Nevertheless, we must never forget that it is the love of money that is “a root of all kinds of evils” (1 Timothy 6:10). In his book *Respectable Sins*, Jerry Bridges, one from among my father’s generation, writes, “If money wins out in our lives, it is not God but we who lose. Ultimately, God does not need our money. If we spend it on ourselves, it is we who become spiritual paupers” (p. 169). ~ *Burk Parsons - Editor of Tabletalk magazine and associate minister at Saint Andrew’s in Sanford, Florida*

Higher Criticism

About ten years ago I had the opportunity to study under the late Dr. Harold O. J. Brown (1933–2007) at the Evangelical Preacher’s Seminary in Wittenberg, Germany. Dr. Brown was known by his students for his oral examinations, wherein he generously and humorously interrogated us on a variety of doctrinal questions that we were expected to answer on the spot. During one of his oral examinations I recall one of my fellow students speaking somewhat flippantly about the Bible. Without hesitation, looking intently at the student, Dr. Brown said, “The Bible is not just some book. It is the Word of God. You would do well to regard it as such.”

To this day Dr. Brown’s words are ingrained in my mind. The Bible is not a cleverly contrived collection of fanciful tales of mythical gods and prophets, sorcerers and goblins, hobbits and elves. It is not a Judeo-Christian anthology of sixty-six ancient books that were deemed politically and ecclesiastically correct by influential Christians of the early church who coveted worldly acceptance and prestige. On the contrary, the Bible is the book of the Lord God Almighty. It is the authoritative, inerrant, and infallible Word of God, and, as Jesus taught us in His prayer to the Father: His “Word is truth.” It doesn’t merely contain truth or speak about truth; it is truth — it defines truth (John 17:17). We must, therefore, regard it as such.

Nevertheless, contrary to the popular saying, “God said it, I believe it, that settles it,” it is inconsequential whether or not we believe it. Our believing the Bible to be true, our regarding it as the Word of God, has no bearing on its veracity. It stands alone as the veritable Word of God, never returning void, always going forth to accomplish precisely what the Lord intends. The Word of God is never to be the object of our scrutiny. Rather, the Word of God is that by which the Holy Spirit scrutinizes us. By His Word, the Lord employs His own version of higher criticism as He inspects our lives, interrogates our proud hearts, and reveals our sins. His Word alone is inspired (2 Timothy 3:16), literally “exhaled” by God Almighty so that we might inhale it, allowing it to dwell within our hearts richly. In this way, we will know it, love it, proclaim it, and breathe it as we speak His Word back to Him in prayer and as we bow before Him *coram Deo*, before His face and for His glory. ~ *Burk Parsons - Editor of Tabletalk magazine and associate minister at Saint Andrew’s in Sanford, Florida*

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Jesus' Sweet Voice

Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? (Luke 24:38)

Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak O Israel, 'My way is hidden from the LORD, and my right is disregarded by my God?'"¹ The Lord cares for everything, and the smallest creatures share in His universal providence, but His particular providence is over His saints. "The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him."² "Precious is their blood in his sight."³ "Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints."⁴ "And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose."⁵ Let the fact that He is the Savior of all men but is specially the Savior of those who believe cheer and comfort you.

You are His peculiar care, His royal treasure that He guards as the apple of His eye, His vineyard over which He watches day and night. "Even the hairs of your head are all numbered."⁶ Let the thought of His special love to *you* be a spiritual painkiller, a soothing balm to your woe: "I will never leave *you*, nor forsake *you*."⁷ God says that just as much to you as to any saint of old. "Fear not . . . I am your shield; your reward shall be very great."⁸ We lose much consolation by the habit of reading His promises for the whole Church instead of taking them directly home for ourselves.

Believer, grasp the divine Word with a personal, appropriating faith. Imagine that you hear Jesus say, "I have prayed for *you* that your faith may not fail."⁹ Imagine you see Him walking on the water of your trouble, for He is there, and He is saying, "Do not fear—it is I." These are sweet words of Christ! May the Holy Spirit make you feel them as if they were spoken to you; forget others for a while—accept the voice of Jesus as addressed to you and say, "Jesus whispers consolation; I cannot refuse it; I will sit under His shadow with great delight."¹⁰

¹Isaiah 40:27 ²Psalms 34:7 ³Psalms 72:14 ⁴Psalms 116:15 ⁵Romans 8:28 ⁶Matthew 10:30 ⁷Hebrews 13:5 ⁸Genesis 15:1
⁹Luke 22:32 ¹⁰See Song of Solomon 2:3

Live As If Christ Will Appear Today

Live as if you thought that Christ might come at any time. Do everything, as if you did it for the last time. Say everything, as if you said it for the last time. Read every chapter in the Bible, as if you did not know whether you would be allowed to read it again. Pray every prayer, as if you felt it might be your last opportunity. Hear every sermon, as if you were hearing once and forever. This is the way to be found ready. This is the way to turn Christ's second appearing to good account. This is the way to put on the armor of light. ~

J.C. Ryle

Hypocrite: You Cannot Deceive God

"Of all the sins into which men can fall, none seem so exceedingly sinful as false profession and hypocrisy. At all events, none have drawn from our Lord's mouth such strong language, and such heavy denunciations. It is bad enough to be led away captive by open sin, and to serve diverse lusts and pleasures. But it is even worse to pretend to have a religion, while in reality we serve the world. Let us beware of falling into this abominable sin. Whatever we do in religion, let us never wear a cloak. Let us be real, honest, thorough, and sincere in our Christianity. We cannot deceive an all-seeing God." ~ *J.C. Ryle*

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London Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689

Christian Liberty and Liberty of Conscience - Chapter 21

1. CHRIST has purchased for all believers a liberty inherent in the gospel. It comprises freedom from the guilt of sin, from the condemnation that follows upon guilt, from the wrath of God, and from the severity and curse of God's law. It also includes deliverance from this present evil world, and from all such things as bondage to Satan, sin's domination, the hurtfulness of afflictions, the fear and sting of death, the victory of the grave, and eternal damnation. Furthermore, it includes free access to God and the yielding of obedience to Him, not as it were with the fear of a slave for his master, but with a child like love and readiness.
2. All these blessings were more or less enjoyed by believers in Old Testament days, but under New Testament conditions Christian liberty becomes more extensive. It includes freedom from the burdens imposed by the ceremonial law to which the Jewish church was subjected, greater boldness in approaching to the throne of grace, and a larger measure of the free Spirit of God than was normally granted to saints in the pre-Christian era.
3. God alone is Lord of the conscience. He has set it free from all obligation to receive or obey any such doctrines or demands of men as are in any respect in opposition to His Word or not contained in it. In deed, to believe and obey such doctrines and demands is tantamount to a betrayal of true liberty of conscience. It is against all reason, and nothing less than the destruction of liberty of conscience, when men demand of their fellows an implicit faith, in other words, an absolute and blind obedience.
4. To practice any sin, or harbour sin's evil desires, on a pretense of enjoying Christian liberty, perverts the main purpose of gospel grace, and imperils those guilty of such an offense, for thereby they destroy the very purpose of Christian liberty, namely, that the Lord's people, 'being delivered out of the hand of their enemies, might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him all their days'.

How should Christians relate to the culture around them?

1. Jesus prayed that his followers would be *in* the world but not *of* the world (John 17:11, 14-15).
2. Therefore, all of Christian cultural engagement should be pervaded with a sense that our citizenship is in heaven, our hope is in heaven, and our affections are fixed on heaven (Philippians 3:20-21; Colossians 3:1-3). We're not *of* the world, so we should not share its values and hopes and goals.
3. Yet because we are *in* the world, everything we do should be tinged with mercy, humility, compassion, and genuine desire for others' well-being, because we share in the joys, burdens, and sorrows that all people experience in life under the sun.

<http://www.9marks.org/answers/how-should-christians-relate-culture-around-them>

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Operation Christmas Child



Please pray for the GRBC team of ladies who will travel to Charlotte, NC on November 25-28 to serve at the Processing Center for Operation Christmas Child. They will work many hours to help get packages ready to be shipped all over the world to children who need to know the love of Jesus.

Going on this trip are:

*Tommie Ammons
Debbie Anderson
Teresa Bland
Alyson Crews*

*Maureen Kimbrough
Connie McCleu
Mary Preston*

Our eighth spot opened up recently, so if you would like to be a part of this great opportunity, please contact Alyson as soon as possible.

Ladies Breakfast and Cookie Exchange

**LADIES BREAKFAST and
COOKIE EXCHANGE
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2012
10:00AM
GREEN RUN BAPTIST CHURCH**

Please RSVP to Alyson by December 2nd. We will once again take cookie trays to some of our community service providers. Ladies should bring a breakfast dish to share and 3 dozen baked cookies.

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The Hope That Assures

“Faith is the assurance of things hoped for” (Hebrews 11:1).

Faith is the solid ground on which we stand as we await the fulfillment of God's promises.

An elderly man who, on his seventy-fifth birthday, received an invitation to fly over the little West Virginia town in which he had spent his entire life. Although he had never before flown, the man accepted the gracious offer.

After circling the town for about twenty minutes, the pilot safely returned his passenger to the ground. The man's grandson greeted him excitedly, asking, "Were you scared, Grandpa?" "No," he replied sheepishly, "but I never did put my full weight down."

Unlike that hesitant grandfather, true faith trusts fully in its object. For the Christian, that means resting in God and His promises. That's the primary characteristic of each faithful individual listed in Hebrews 11. They all believed God and responded accordingly.

People often confuse faith with a wistful longing that something, however unlikely, will come to pass in the future. But "assurance" in Hebrews 11:1 speaks of essence and reality-- the real thing, as opposed to mere appearance. Faith, then, involves absolute certainty.

For example, the Old Testament saints had the promise of a coming Messiah who would take away sin. They believed God, even though their understanding of Messiah was incomplete and somewhat vague. They knew their hopes would be fulfilled, and that assurance dominated their lives.

It's the same for New Testament believers. Peter said, "Though you have not seen [Christ], you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls" (1 Peter 1:8-9).

Man's natural tendency is to trust only in the things he can see, hear, touch, or taste. But our physical senses may lie, whereas God cannot (Titus 1:2). Far better to believe God and trust in His promises. ~ **Dr. John MacArthur - Pastor-Teacher**

Proving You Are Wise

“Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom.” - James 3:13

Divine wisdom produces a changed life.

The one who possesses godly wisdom will show it in his life. That's why James says, "Let him show by his good behavior his deeds" (3:13, emphasis added). The phrase "let him show" is a command to demonstrate one's wisdom and understanding. That is the thrust of James 2:14-26, summarized in verse 26: "Faith without works is dead." A person's claim to have faith will be validated by his works. Similarly, James is saying that if you claim to be wise, you need to demonstrate it. From God's perspective, wisdom is made manifest by the way a person conducts his life.

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Proving You Are Wise

How will a person show he has true wisdom? By his “good behavior” (3:13). The Greek word translated “good” means “lovely,” “beautiful,” “attractive,” “noble,” or “excellent.” The term translated “behavior” speaks of one’s lifestyle or activity. If a person truly has divine wisdom and living faith, he will show it by his good conduct and excellent lifestyle.

James becomes specific when he says, “Let him show by his good behavior his deeds” (v. 13, emphasis added). He is focusing on the details. The wisdom of God alters not only your general conduct, but also what you do specifically. Every act within a person’s life is consistent with how he conducts his entire life. If it’s a life based on the wisdom of God, each aspect of his life will reveal that. The general pattern of his life and the specific things he does will reflect the work, the way, and the will of God. Take time to examine your life and see whether your conduct proves that you possess the true wisdom of God. ~ ***Dr. John MacArthur - Pastor-Teacher***

Inward Trembling

My soul, do you feel this holy trembling at the sins of others? For if you do not, you lack inward holiness. David's cheeks were wet with rivers of waters because of prevailing unholiness. Jeremiah desired eyes like fountains that he might lament the iniquities of Israel, and Lot was deeply troubled by the conduct of the men of Sodom. Those upon whom the mark was set in Ezekiel's vision were those who sighed and cried for the sins of Jerusalem. Gracious souls cannot help but be grieved to see what pains men take to go to hell. They know the evil of sin experimentally [experientially], and they are alarmed to see others flying like moths into its blaze.

Sin makes the righteous shudder because it violates a holy law that it is in every man's highest interest to keep; it pulls down the pillars of the nation. Sin in others horrifies a believer because it makes him think of the baseness of his own heart: When he sees a transgressor he is reminded of his own frailty and vulnerability: "He fell today, and I may fall tomorrow." Sin to a believer is horrible because it crucified the Savior; he sees in every iniquity the nails and spear. How troubling it should be when the Christian learns to tolerate rather than shrink from it in disgust.

Each of us must examine his heart. It is an awful thing to insult God to His face. The good God deserves better treatment; the great God claims it; the just God will have it or repay His adversary to his face. An awakened heart trembles at the audacity of sin and stands alarmed at the contemplation of its punishment. How monstrous a thing is rebellion! How dreadful a doom is prepared for the ungodly! My soul, never laugh at sin's fooleries, lest you begin to smile at sin itself. It is your enemy, and your Lord's enemy: Learn to detest it and to distance yourself from it, for only then can you give evidence of the possession of holiness, without which no one can see the Lord. ~ ***Alistair Begg - Senior Pastor - Parkside Church near Cleveland, Ohio***



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GREEN RUN BAPTIST CHURCH - SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION

Anniversary and Birthday Celebrations for November 2012!

Anniversary

Birthday

Fred and Mary Preston - 11/7
L.J. and Shirley Beasley - 11/12
Brian and Lamanda Tooley - 11/18

William Stephen - 11/1
Jackie Darrah - 11/5
Carrie Sowell - 11/5

Walt Lawrence - 11/20
Denise Blount - 11/24

Training in Righteous

All Scripture is . . . profitable for . . . training in righteousness" (2 Timothy 3:16).

We conclude our study of the character and benefits of God's Word by focusing on the benefit that ties all the others together: training in righteousness. Everything the Word accomplishes in you through teaching, reproof, and correction is aimed at increasing your righteousness so you'll "be thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Tim. 3:17, NIV).

"Training" refers to training or educating a child. The New Testament also uses the term to speak of chastening, which is another important element in both child rearing and spiritual growth (Hebrews 12:5-11). The idea is that from spiritual infancy to maturity, Scripture trains and educates believers in godly living.

Scripture is your spiritual nourishment. Jesus said, "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). Peter exhorted us to be like newborn babes, longing "for the pure milk of the word, that by it [we] may grow in respect to salvation" (1 Peter 2:2).

You should crave the Word just like a baby craves milk. But Peter prefaced that statement with an exhortation to put "aside all malice and all guile and hypocrisy and envy and all slander" (v. 1). That's the prerequisite. James taught the same principle: "Putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word" (James 1:21). Attempting to feast on Scripture without confessing your sin is like attempting to eat a meal while wearing a muzzle.

Either the Word will keep you from sin or sin will keep you from the Word. Deal with sin immediately so it doesn't spoil your appetite for God's Word. And even if you know the Bible well, be regularly refreshed by its power and reminded of its truths. That's the key to enjoying spiritual health and victory. ~ **Dr. John MacArthur - Pastor-Teacher**



The Green Run Tidings is a monthly publication of Green Run Baptist Church.

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Submit information to Walt Lawrence by the second Sunday of the month preceding publication by e-mail, in person or at the church office. The editor reserves the right to edit for content or space. May the Father be glorified in every word.nia

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