



Green Run Tidings



Volume 3, Issue 10

Green Run Baptist Church

October 2012

The Regulative Principle

“Nadab and Abihu ... each took his censer and put fire in it and laid incense on it and offered unauthorized fire before the Lord, which he had not commanded them. And fire came out from before the Lord and consumed them, and they died before the Lord” (vv. 1–2). Leviticus 10:1–3

Deuteronomy 5:8-11, the second commandment, tells us that we may not make an image of God (the divine nature) or create an image of anything else with the intent of bowing down and serving either it or the being it is supposed to represent. Clearly, this statute is concerned first and foremost with worship, telling us that there are limits to what constitutes the right worship of our Creator. Human hearts are idol factories, as John Calvin once said, and we are prone to making God in our image. Yet, we also tend to shape the worship of the one true God in our own image, after our view of what we find acceptable (Rom. 1:18–32). To keep us from sinning against the Lord, Scripture establishes boundaries that we dare not cross when we come before Him.

Many biblical texts clearly teach that our holy Creator takes His worship very seriously. In today’s passage, for example, we read of the occasion on which God struck Nadab and Abihu dead for offering “strange fire” (Leviticus 10:1–3). Commentators are not sure about the exact nature of their infraction, but they do agree that the seriousness of the offense is related to their worshipping God in a manner that He had not commanded. They sought to be innovators in worship, and they paid the price for it. Lest we think that the Lord no longer takes His worship as seriously as He did back then, consider 1 Corinthians 11:27–30. Many of the Corinthian Christians were taking part in the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper inappropriately, and some of them died for their unworthy partaking. These passages, and many others, make it clear that it is “a life-and-death matter to worship God according to his command,” as one Reformed theologian has put it.

The notion that we must follow Scripture in organizing our worship and are not permitted to introduce practices that God has not approved is known as the regulative principle. It is drawn from several biblical texts, including today’s passage, and it is reflected in answer 96 of the Heidelberg Catechism. As the catechism states, we may not “worship [the Lord] in any other way than has been commanded in God’s Word.” What we do in worship must be found explicitly in Scripture or deduced by good and necessary consequence from its teaching. ~ *Dr. R.C. Sproul, Sr.*

Repelling Discouragement and Doubt

“Take the helmet of salvation” (Ephesians 6:17)

The Roman soldier's helmet was a crucial piece of armor designed to deflect blows to the head--especially the potentially lethal blow of a broadsword. Soldiers of that day carried a swift and precise dagger designed for close- quarter hand-to-hand combat. But they also carried a giant broadsword, which was a two-edged, three to four-foot long sword. It had a massive handle that, similar to a baseball bat, was held with both hands. With it they could take broad swipes from side to side or deliver a crushing blow to an opponent's skull.

-Continued on Page 2-

Green Run Tidings

Repelling Discouragement and Doubt

To protect us from Satan's crushing blows, Paul tells us to "take the helmet of salvation." Now considering all he's been telling us so far, he was not saying, "Oh, by the way, go get saved." Paul was addressing believers. Unbelievers don't have to put on spiritual armor. They aren't even in the battle. Satan doesn't attack his own forces.

In 1 Thessalonians 5:8 Paul describes the helmet of salvation as "the hope of salvation." That implies Satan's most fierce and powerful blows are directed at the believer's assurance and security. Therefore Paul was encouraging believers to have confidence in the salvation they already possess. He knew that doubting their security in Christ would render them ineffective in spiritual warfare--just as a blow to the head renders one's physical body incapable of defending itself.

As a believer, you should have the assurance that you are secure in Christ. If you don't, you haven't put your helmet on, and that makes you vulnerable to discouragement and doubt. Romans 8:29-30 assures us that all whom God justifies He sanctifies and glorifies. No one is lost in the process.

Jesus said, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand" (John 10:27-28). That's a wonderful promise. So don't let your enemy rob you of the joy and assurance of knowing you belong to Christ, for the Lord will never let you go (Hebrews 13:5). ~ **Dr. John MacArthur**

Fulfilling God's Law

"In order that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit." - Romans 8:4

If the Holy Spirit resides within us, we will be able to fulfill the demands of God's law.

Augustine once said, "Grace was given, in order that the law might be fulfilled." When God saves us He, by His Spirit, creates within us the ability to obey His perfect law. Because we now live "according to the Spirit"—walking by the Spirit and being filled with the Spirit—we are able to do the righteous things God's law requires.

Isn't it wonderful that the Lord no longer expects His law to be lived out only by means of an external code of ethics? Now holiness, righteousness, and obedience to the law are internal, the products of the indwelling Holy Spirit (see Ezekiel 11:19-20).

God's salvation is more than a spiritual transaction by which He imputed Christ's righteousness to us. It is more than a forensic action by which He judicially declared us righteous. As great and vital as those doctrines are, they were not applied to us apart from God's planting His Spirit within our hearts and enabling our lives to manifest the Spirit's fruit: "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" (Galatians 5:22-23). We need to remind ourselves regularly that God's purpose for us after He redeemed us was that we might live a holy life filled with good works (Ephesians 2:10; Titus 2:14). Whenever you are disobedient to God's will and purpose, you are quenching the Holy Spirit and fighting against yourself and what you know is right. Such disobedience makes about as much sense as the person who holds his breath for no reason and therefore makes his lungs resist their natural function. The believer who disobeys, especially one who persists in a sin, prevents the Spirit from naturally leading him along the path of holiness. We are not perfect after our salvation—that won't happen until glorification (1 John 3:2-3)—but the Holy Spirit will empower us to live in ways pleasing to God, which is the kind of righteousness that fulfills His law. ~ **Dr. John MacArthur**

Green Run Tidings

Butter Fly, Botanist or Bee?

"Take . . . the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Ephesians 6:17).

I remember enjoying the observations of a perceptive man who was gazing at a beautiful garden. First he saw a butterfly flitting from flower to flower. It spent a few seconds on the edge of each, but derived no particular benefit from any of them.

Next he saw a botanist with large notebook and microscope in hand. As the botanist carefully observed each flower and plant, he made copious entries in his book. But after hours of meticulous study, most of what he learned was shut up in his book. Very little remained in his mind.

Then came a little bee. When it entered a flower, it emerged laden with pollen. It had left the hive that morning empty, but would return full.

When it comes to Bible study, some people are like butterfly's, going from one favorite verse to another, one seminar to another, or one book to another. They're very busy and expend much energy but have little to show for their efforts. They remain unchanged in any significant way because they never really delve into the Word wholeheartedly. They're content to simply flutter around the edges.

Others, like the botanist, may study in great depth but never apply it to their lives. I know of entire commentaries written by unbelievers. In some cases their grasp of Scripture is exceptional, but they know nothing of true love for God and obedience to biblical truth. What a tragedy! But you don't have to be a biblical scholar to make that mistake. You need only to fail to apply what you learn to your life.

Rather, strive to be like the bee, spending time in the Word--reading, studying, taking notes, then emerging fuller than when you began. Your mind will be filled with wisdom and biblical insights. Your life will be sweeter and purer because the Word has done its work (1 Corinthians 2:13).

Are you a butterfly, a botanist, or a bee? ~ *Dr. John MacArthur*

The Source of Wisdom

Man's intellect seeks for peace and by nature seeks it apart from the Lord Jesus Christ. Men of education are apt, even when converted, to look upon the simplicities of the cross of Christ with too little reverence and love. They are trapped in the old net in which the Greeks were taken and have a hankering to mix philosophy with revelation.

The temptation with a man of refined thought and high education is to depart from the simple truth of Christ crucified and to invent, as the term is, a more intellectual doctrine. This led the early Christian churches into Gnosticism and bewitched them with all sorts of heresies. This is the root of unorthodoxy and the other high-sounding notions that in the past were so fashionable in Germany and are now so enthralling to certain classes of divines. Whoever you are, good reader, and whatever your education may be, if you are the Lord's, rest assured that you will find no peace in philosophizing divinity.

All attempts on the part of Christians to be content with the systems that Unitarian and liberal-church thinkers approve of must fail; true heirs of heaven must come back to the grandly simple reality that makes the plowboy's eye flash with joy and rejoices the pious pauper's heart—"Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." (1 Timothy 1:15) Jesus satisfies the most elevated intellect when He is believably received, but apart from Him the mind of the regenerate discovers no rest. "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge." (Proverbs 1:7) "All those who practice it have a good understanding." (Psalm 111:10) ~ *Alistair Begg*

Green Run Tidings

The Need for Understanding

“These things I have spoken to you in figurative language; an hour is coming when I will speak no more to you in figurative language, but will tell you plainly of the Father.” - John 16:25

Jesus’ teaching in figurative language revealed the need for further enlightenment by the Holy Spirit.

Jesus left His disciples a storehouse of valuable information that would require additional teaching from the Holy Spirit to make it understandable. The “figurative language” our Lord sovereignly used was made up of many veiled but pointed statements, filled with rich meaning. Even Christ’s closest followers, when they first heard Him, often understood only the basics of His teachings. Jesus used various veiled statements whose deeper meanings were not revealed until the Holy Spirit gave believers special insight. One such statement is *John 2:19*, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” The truth that Jesus was teaching—His death and resurrection—became clearer later on. *John 6:53-58* speaks of eating Jesus’ flesh and drinking His blood. Many of the Jews took this teaching literally and did not understand that Jesus was referring to believers’ intimate, spiritual communion with Himself.

In addition to those and other figurative expressions (*see John 6:35; 8:12*), the Lord knew His disciples would not understand certain truths right away (*John 16:12*). They were spiritually ignorant and unable to grasp every teaching prior to Christ’s death. But once He died and rose again and the Holy Spirit came, they would understand Jesus’ teaching about His relationship to the Father, as the end of today’s verse indicates.

Whenever Christ used figurative language, it was clear enough to make it meaningful, but veiled just enough so the Spirit could reveal more profound truth later on. Having access to that unveiled truth is the blessed privilege we have today, thanks to the indwelling Holy Spirit who has come as our teacher, just as Jesus promised in *John 14:26* and *16:13*. We need to take full advantage of the Spirit’s teaching ministry every time we hear the Word expounded or read or study it for ourselves. ~ **Dr. John MacArthur**

The State of Our Soul on Sunday

Let us never forget that our feelings about Sundays are sure tests of the state of our souls. The person who can find no pleasure in giving God one day in the week, is manifestly unfit for heaven. Heaven itself is nothing but an eternal Sabbath. If we cannot enjoy a few hours in God’s service once a week in this world, it is plain that we could not enjoy an eternity in His service in the world to come. Happy are those who walk in the steps of her of whom we read today! They shall find Christ and a blessing while they live, and Christ and glory when they die. ~ **J.C. Ryle**

The Slippery Slope of Forgetting God

“Begin with not honoring God’s day, and you will soon not honor God’s house; cease to honor God’s house, and you will soon cease to honor God’s book; cease to honor God’s book, and by-and-by you will give God no honor at all. Let a man lay the foundation of having no Sabbath, and I am never surprised if he finishes with the top-stone of no God.” ~ **J.C. Ryle**

The All Seeing Eye of God

In all our duties, whether giving or praying, the great thing to be kept in mind is, that we have a heart-searching and all-knowing God. Everything like formality, being artificial, or mere bodily service, is abominable and worthless in God’s sight. He takes no account of the quantity of money we give, or the quantity of words we use. The one thing at which His all-seeing eye looks at is the nature of our motives, and the state of our hearts. Our Father sees in secret. ~ **J.C. Ryle**

Green Run Tidings

What is Conversion?

Conversion is a U-turn in a person's life. It is turning with one's whole person away from sin and to Christ for salvation. From idol worship to God worship. From self-justification to Christ's justification. From self-rule to God's rule.

Conversion is what happens when God awakens those who are spiritually dead and enables them to repent of their sins and have faith in Christ.

When Jesus calls us to repent and believe, he's calling us to conversion. It's a radical change in what we believe and do. (Mark 1:15)

When Jesus calls us to take up our crosses and follow him, he's calling us to conversion. (Luke 9:23)

In order for us to repent, God must give us new life, new hearts, and faith (Ephesians 2:1, Romans 6:17, Colossians 2:13, Ezekiel 36:26, Ephesians 2:8, 2 Timothy 2:25).

Conversion is not:

A one-time event with no implications for how we live. Conversion does happen at one moment, and it is a moment of radical change. Life should look different thereafter. A new battle begins.

A journey with no destination. Conversion may be preceded by a long process for some, but it always involves a committed decision to repent of sin and trust in Christ, which is the immediate result of God giving new life to a spiritually dead sinner.

Optional. Acts 17:30 says that God commands all people everywhere to repent. Conversion can never be forced, but it is absolutely necessary in order to be saved.

A conversation. While Christians should communicate the gospel humbly, our goal is not merely a pleasant exchange of information. We must call everyone to repent of their sin and trust in Christ for salvation.

Saying a formulaic prayer. Conversion certainly involves praying, but we must be careful not to tempt people toward placing their trust in some special set of words.

<http://www.9marks.org/answers/what-conversion>

Testing Your Conversion with Humility

Would we know whether we are really converted? Would we know the test by which we must try ourselves? The surest mark of true conversion is humility. If we have really received the Holy Spirit, we shall show it by a meek and childlike spirit. Like children, we shall think humbly of our own strength and wisdom, and be very dependent on our Father in heaven. Like children, we shall not seek great things in this world; and having food and clothing and a Father's love, we shall be content. Truly this is a heart-searching test! It exposes the unsoundness of many a so-called conversion. ~ *J.C. Ryle*

Green Run Tidings

The Dawn of Reformation

It is one thing to believe that the Bible is the Word of God, but it is another to believe, or trust, the Bible as the Word of God. We're called not only to believe in God and His Word but to believe God—to trust God—and His Word. Throughout history, the visible church has always professed her belief that the Bible is God's Word. Yet, a cursory study of church history reveals that many popes, priests, and parishioners neglected to read the Bible themselves, and many didn't believe, or trust, the Bible as the final, authoritative Word of God.

Such widespread unbelief didn't happen all at once, but gradually. As men gained political and ecclesiastical power throughout the medieval period, they established themselves as the only authoritative interpreters of God's Word and, eventually, albeit inevitably, as authoritative equals with God's Word. As a result, God's Word was deemed superfluous, chained to the pulpit, and recited solely in Latin, ensuring that common, uneducated (poor and powerless) Christians could never access God's Word for themselves and, therefore, never question the authority of the powerful elite. Nevertheless, men cannot silence God's Word, nor can they contain the Holy Spirit or extinguish the power of the gospel. God's truth will always shine, however dark the age.

The light of the sixteenth-century Reformation was the reflection of the light of the Word of God as our final, infallible authority. The great Reformation slogan, *post tenebras, lux* ("after darkness, light"), captured the heart of the Reformation—the light of God's Word and the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ, who is the light of the world. This light of the gospel that shone brilliantly in Wittenberg and Geneva and throughout Europe in the sixteenth century had been steadily shining throughout all of history through the faithful remnant of those whom God had raised up to proclaim His Word and His gospel to His people.

We can trace the dawn of the Reformation back through the centuries, from John Hus in the fifteenth century to John Wycliffe in the fourteenth century to Peter Waldo in the twelfth century. Waldo preached the authority of Scripture and worked diligently for a common translation of the Bible and its use among all people; for the ability of all Christians, not just the clergy, to teach the gospel to their children; and for the right of all men to obey God and His Word as their final, infallible authority for all of faith and life. By God's grace, he strove to live all of life *coram Deo*, looking to God's Word as the lamp to his feet and the light to his path, a path that led to excommunication but, eventually, to reformation. ~ *Burk Parsons - Editor of Tabletalk Magazine and Associate Minister at Saint Andrews - Sanford, Fla.*

Comprehending the Decretive Will of God

God's decretive will is sometimes described as the sovereign, efficacious will by which God brings to pass whatever He pleases by His divine decree. An example of this may be seen in God's work of creation. When God said, "Let there be light" (Genesis 1:3), He issued a divine imperative. He exercised His sovereign, efficacious will. When He did so, it was impossible for the light not to appear. It appeared by the sheer necessity of consequence.

The decretive will can have no other effect, no other consequence than what God sovereignly commands. He did not request the light to shine. Neither did He coax, cajole, or woo it into existence. It was a matter of absolute authority and power.

No creature enjoys this power of will. No man's will is that efficacious. Men issue decrees and then hope they will bring about their desired effects. God alone can decree with the necessity of consequence. ~ *Dr. R.C. Sproul, Sr.*

Green Run Tidings

London Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689

The Gospel and its Gracious Extent - Chapter 20

1. As the covenant of works was broken by man's sin and was unable to confer life, God in His mercy promised to send Christ, who would be woman-born; and by means of the promise the elect would be called, and faith and repentance wrought in their hearts. In this promise the very substance of the gospel was revealed as the effectual means for the conversion and salvation of sinners.
2. This promise of Christ and of salvation by Him is revealed to men by the Word of God alone. Neither the works of creation and providence, nor the light of nature, reveal Christ and His grace to men, not even in a general or obscure way; much less is it possible by their means for men who lack the revelation of Christ by the promise of the gospel to attain to saving faith or repentance.
3. The revelation of the gospel to sinners, both to nations and to certain persons, together with the promises and precepts which belong to gospel obedience, has been made at various times and in a variety of places, according to the sovereign will and good pleasure of God. The promise of the making known of the gospel has not been made contingent upon any good use made by men of their native abilities developed by means of light common to all, for such a development has never taken place, nor can it do so. Hence in all ages the extent to which the gospel has been proclaimed, whether to wider or more confined areas, has been granted to persons and nations in greatly varying measures according to the all-wise will of God.
4. The gospel is the only external means of making Christ and saving grace known to men, and it is completely adequate for this purpose. But that men who are dead in their sins may be born again—that is to say, made alive, or regenerated—something further is essential, namely, an effectual, invincible work of the Holy Spirit upon every part of the soul of man, whereby a new spiritual life is produced. Nothing less than such a work will bring about conversion to God.

Looking through the Mirror

When Paul declared the mysterious and breathtaking promise that “all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose” (Romans 8: 28), he was musing in teleology. He was dealing with the realm of the remote rather than the proximate. This suggests that the proximate must be judged in light of the remote.

Our problem is this: We do not yet possess the full light of the remote. We are still looking in a dark mirror. We are not utterly devoid of light, though. We have enough light to know that God has a good purpose even when we are ignorant of that good purpose.

It is the good purpose of God that gives the final answer to the appearance of vanity and futility in this world. To trust in the good purpose of God is the very essence of godly faith. This is why no Christian can be an ultimate pessimist.

The world in which we live is not a world of chance. Its beginning was not an accident, its operation is not an accident, and its telos, or goal, is not an accident. This is my Father's world and He rules it without caprice. As long as God exists, vanity is a manifest impossibility. ~ *Dr. R.C. Sproul, Sr.*

Green Run Tidings

Running in the Rain

A little girl had been shopping with her mother in Wal-Mart. She must have been 6 years old, this beautiful red haired, freckle faced image of innocence. It was pouring outside! The kind of rain that gushes over the top of rain gutters, so much in a hurry to hit the earth it has no time to flow down the spout. We all stood there, under the awning, just inside the door of Wal-Mart.

We waited patiently, others irritated because nature messed up their hurried day.

I was always mesmerized by rainfall. I got lost in the sound and sight of the heavens washing away the dirt and dust of the world. Memories of running, splashing so carefree as a child came pouring in as a welcome relieve from the worries of my day.

Her little voice was so sweet as it broke the hypnotic trance we were all caught in, “Mom, let’s run through the rain.” “What?”, Mom replied. “Let’s run through the rain!” She repeated. “No, honey! We’ll wait until it slows down a bit,” Mom replied.

This young child waited a minute and repeated: “Mom, let’s run through the rain.” “We’ll get soaked if we do,” Mom said. “No, we won’t, Mom. That’s not what you said this morning,” the young girl said as she tugged at her Mom’s arm. “This morning? When did I say we could run through the rain and not get wet?”

“Don’t you remember? When you were talking to Daddy about his cancer, you said, “If God can get us through this, He can get us through anything!”

The entire crowd stopped dead silent. I swear you couldn’t hear anything but the rain. We all stood silently. No one left. Mom paused and thought for a moment about what she would say.

Now some would laugh it off and scold her for being silly. Some might even ignore what was said. But this was a moment of affirmation in a young child’s life. A time when innocent trust can be nurtured so that it will bloom into faith.

“Honey, you are absolutely right. Let’s run through the rain. If God let us get wet, well maybe we just need washing.” Mom said.

Then off they ran. We all stood watching, smiling and laughing as they darted past the cars and yes, through the puddles. They got soaked!

They were followed by a few who screamed and laughed like children all the way to their cars. And yes, I did...I ran...I got wet...I needed washing.

Circumstances or people can take away your material possessions...they can take away your money...and they can take away your health. But no one can ever take away your precious memories...so don’t forget to make time and take the opportunities to make memories everyday. ~ *Anonymous*



Green Run Tidings

GREEN RUN BAPTIST CHURCH – SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION

Anniversary and Birthday Celebrations for October 2012!

Anniversary

Trena and William Stephen - 10/1
Richard and Marti Lipscomb - 10/16
Gregory and Avanti Benson - 10/24

Birthday

Susan Ellis - 10/6
Steve Watkins - 10/8
Sandra Gwynn - 10/10
Victor Brown - 10/11
Brian Tooley - 10/18
Millicent Notyce - 10/19
Moses Culbreath - 10/20
Kenneth Butler - 10/21
Avanti Benson - 10/27
Christina Jones - 10/28
Tommie Ammons - 10/31

Getting Old

I very quietly confided to my best friend that I was having an affair. She turned to me and asked, “Are you having it catered?”

Just before the funeral services, the undertaker came up to the very elderly widow and asked, “How old was your husband?” “98,” she replied: “Two years older than me”. “So you’re 96,” the undertaker commented? She responded, “Hardly worth going home, is it?”

Reporters interviewing a 104 year-old woman: “And what do you think is the best thing about being 104?”, the reporter asked. She simply replied, “No peer pressure.”

I’ve sure gotten old. I’ve had two bypass surgeries, a hip replacement, new knees, fought prostate cancer and diabetes, I half blind, can’t hear anything quieter than a jet engine, take 40 different medications that make me dizzy, winded and subject to blackouts. Have bouts with dementia, poor circulation, hardly feel my hands and feet anymore. Can’t remember if I’m 85 or 92. Have lost all my friends but thank God, I still have my driver’s license!

I feel like my body has gotten totally out of shape, so I got my doctor’s permission to join a fitness club and start exercising. I decided to take an aerobics class for seniors. I bent, twisted, gyrated, jumped up and down, and perspired for an hour but, by the time I got my leotards on, the class was over.

An elderly woman decided to prepare her will and told her preacher she had two final requests. First, she wanted to be cremated, and second, she wanted her ashes scattered over Wal-Mart. “Wal-Mart?” the preacher exclaimed. “Why Wal-Mart?” Then I’ll be sure my daughters visit me twice a week.



Green Run Baptist Church

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

Office: 1201 Rosemont Rd, Virginia Beach, VA 23453; **E-Mail:** info@greenrunbaptist.com;

Website: www.greenrunbaptist.com; **Phone:** 757-427-5087 **Fax:** 757-430-1040

Teaching Pastor: Rick Crews

Editor: Walt Lawrence, gwlclfl@cox.net

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.