

Powerful Instruction

by Robert Notgrass

Mankind is lost in sin. A truth we must not forget (Rom. 3:23). The history of man reveals a history of sin. Even those who have given their life to Christ are guilty of sin. For John said, "If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us" (1 Jn. 1:10). Therefore, men need a savior and we need an instruction manual which is why Paul penned, "for the grace that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us" (Tit. 2:11-12).

The law of the Lord is perfect and converts the soul (Psa. 19:7). It is the power of God unto salvation (Rom. 1:16). It is sharper than swords and divides the soul and spirit of a man (Heb. 4:12). And so, since His word lives and abides forever (1 Pet. 1:23), there is no area of man's activities that God's word does not direct.

The Word of God does so much for us. We should be as the psalmist who loves God's law and meditates on it (Psa. 119:97-104). But, when was the last time you meditated on God's Word? Or, have you ever? You must know that only the pure word of God is powerful enough for man and God's use. And, it cannot be changed (2 Jn. 9). One who does not live up to this word cannot expect to be pleasing to God. But, perhaps you do not know what the word of God does for us?

Consider the following: (1) It gives life (Jn. 6:63). (2) It converts the soul (Acts 11:13-14). (3) It saves. James tells us that the engrafted word is able to save the soul (Jam. 1:21). How is that? Because faith comes by hearing the word of God (Rom. 10:17). (4) It procreates the new life in Christ (Jam. 1:18). Paul gives further information on this by saying that we are born through the gospel (1 Cor. 4:15). (5) The word cleanses us (Jn. 15:3). (6) We are sanctified through the word (Jn. 17:17). (7) The word of God enables the Christian to make spiritual growth (1 Pet. 2:2).

Each of us is responsible for how we hear for we are to be doers of the word (Jam. 1:22) and not dull of hearing (Heb. 5:11). Therefore, we must grow from babes to eating strong meat (Heb. 5:12). We are expected to grow spiritually strong (1 Pet. 3:18) and not be like those in Heb. 5:12 who were rebuked because of their lack of growth. May we put the truth in our hearts. May we live by and teach it without adding or subtracting from it (Rev. 22:18-19) and may we declare the whole council of God (Acts 20:27).

We must give heed to the power of God's Word. We must have receptive ears and hearts because we are hearing as we look at the horizon of eternity. May we ever teach the powerful, everlasting word of God and may we ever hold on to it.

Meaningless Repetition

by Doug Dingley

We've all seen it. Sometimes when a person is nearing their physical death, there are several fairly predictable things that will happen. Their speech often gets quieter and somewhat more difficult to understand; there is no life, excitement, or enthusiasm left in their voices; and they might even sometimes mumble the same phrases and/or semi-sentences over, and over, and over again – often without much conscious thought as to those phrases' meaning or the impact they might have on those whom they love who might hear them – simply because these oft-used phrases are so familiar to them, and their repetitive but thoughtless familiarity brings some false sense or semblance of security. But sadly, similar can be said to be true in the spiritual world at times as well.

We are all probably pretty familiar with the fact that in the "sermon on the mount" Jesus said, "And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words" (Matthew 6:7). The Greek word translated for the "vain repetitions" which the Son of God said we are not to use in prayer if we want our prayers to possess the power to truly reach our heavenly Father's ears, only occurs once in the entire New Testament, and means "to repeat the same things over and over," or "to use many idle words." Our Lord and Savior's instruction is translated in other versions as, "do not heap up empty phrases" (ESV); "do not use meaningless repetition" (NASV); and "use not vain repetitions" (KJV).

Jesus then went on to give a very precise, word-efficient but effective example of what humble, sincere, and heart-felt prayer should be like. Incredibly, and in complete contradiction to the very instruction of Jesus in uttering it, some religious groups today will still thoughtlessly, ignorantly, and automatically repeat the same, surface, automatic and meaningless words and phrases in prayer, over and over... and over again. For most of us, probably the "Hail Mary's" of corrupt Catholicism come to mind as the inevitable crescendo of this complete contradiction of divinely-inspired and delivered instruction.

But let us consider our Lord and Savior's teaching from a slightly different angle and application when it comes to praying with "meaningless repetition," or, with repeating the same things over and over and over. Who says it all has to be at the same time? When one seeks to lead the Lord's saints into the very awesome presence and throne room of the grace of almighty God (Revelation 5), and utters pretty much the same, exact, word for word, mechanical and memorized, automated and uninspiring words

and prayer phrases that they have every time they've led prayer for the past weeks, months, years and/ or decades in order to just simply "do their duty" by leading a prayer someone assigned them to, doesn't that, too, fall under the "don't use meaningless repetition" instruction of our Lord and Savior? Shouldn't we, instead, be leading grateful, thoughtful, meaningful and insightful, significant and heart-felt, specific and humble, reverent and exuberant, 'new every morning like the Lord's tender mercies' (Lam. 3:22-24) prayer?

I mean, how does it make us feel when we receive some automated, mechanical, repetitiously and mass-produced message from someone? Like the company or contingent contacting us loves us deeply and has some great personal love, respect, gratitude or loyalty for our benevolent efforts on their behalf? Hardly! What about when the bored to tears cashier at the local grocery store counter voices the obligatory "Did you find everything okay?" or, "How are you tonight?" when you know down deep inside that they're only mouthing those words and saying those sentences because they have to, and that they really couldn't care less whether you did or did not "find everything," and/or what you may or may not be struggling with. They're just "putting in their time."

And after all God has done for us, He certainly deserves far better than that in all of our communication with Him! We are to pray constantly and continually (1 Thess. 5:17; Lk. 6:12; Acts 2:42), in order that we might lose heart (Lk. 18:1). We are to pray for our enemies and so that we do not fall into temptation (Lk. 6:28; 22:40-46). We are to pray with the proper spirit and understanding (1 Cor. 14:15). We are to pray for others personally and specifically, bringing them up before the throne of God for individual strengthening (Ro. 15:30; Phm. 1:22). Prayer is serious! And it should be taken thus!

Let us always be a grateful people who challenge ourselves to give God our absolute best in all things, just as He gave Heaven's best to secure our eternal salvation. Brothers, let us never settle for taking the lead in leading God's people in prayer into His very and most awesome and awe-inspiring presence, with anything less than our absolutely most heartfelt, humble, sincere, and well-thought out and prepared prayers and petitions. While it's true that long, lengthy, hypocritical and pride-filled prayers just to impress people are not honored by God whatsoever (Matt. 23:14), neither are those prayers which feature the same, automated, mechanical and mumbled "meaningless repetition." Let us remember that those often indicate dying bodies – whether physical or spiritual!

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Mission Works

Westhill Works

Benevolence Program

Local Works

Cherokee Children's Home - www.chc4kids.org

House to House, Heart to Heart

In Search of the Lord's Way

Preaching Students - Southwest School of Bible Studies

The Truth in Love - www.ttil.tv

WVBS Online School - school.wvbs.org

Prison Works

La Poynor Prison Ministry - Steve & Carrie Handley

Foreign Works

Four Seas Bible College, Singapore - Peter & Pooi Fun Chin

New Zealand Harvest Missions - James & Emily Cammock

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Cory Myers - 512.627.6672 (Youth & Family)

Tim Cooke - 903.641.5515 (Seniors)

Prayer List

Cooper Webster is doing much better. He is still scheduled for pre-op on Nov 29 to clear him for oral surgery on Dec 2. But, due to his recent illness, his surgery may be postponed.

Bud Moore has left the hospital, and is now staying with his daughter, Tracy. A mass has been found on his lung. A biopsy has been performed to determine future treatment options.

Judy Baumgartner's surgery to remove cancer was successfully performed last Tuesday.

Ellene French has moved to a new location at Brookdale for assisted living. She needs our prayers and encouragement. Her new address is on pg. 3.

Continue to Remember: Julie Dilbeck, Meagan Gould, Wanda Horner, Patty Williams, Garnette Russell, Velma McDougald, Carolyn Bennett, Bobbie Roberts, Helen Strange, and Sandra McCullough

Service Men: Clay Bayes, Jason Book, Alston Compton, Robert Johnson, Ryan Payne, Douglas Ramsey, Ryan Stewart

Announcements

Special Contribution for the end of the year will be on Sunday, Dec. 4. This is the perfect time to give a little extra to help sustain our work in the community and abroad. Please plan accordingly.

Youth Group please mark your calendars for a **Christmas Party** Dec. 18th at the Roughton's.

Westhill Family, I wish to thank my family at Westhill for all the prayers, calls, and cards for my recent surgery and recovery. I am blessed to be a part of such a loving and faithful family as you. May God bless us all. In christian love, **Beverly Heim**

Young at Heart Seniors Group meets every Tuesday morning at 10:30am for Bible Study. Everyone is welcome!

Birthdays This Week

November 28 - April Myers

November 30 - Cynthia Baumgartner

December 1 - Eula Parrish & Patty Williams

December 3 - Linda Blackmon & Otis Perryman

Next Week's Adult Class

"The Life of the Apostle Paul"

Records for November 20, 2016

Bible Class	173
AM Worship.....	234
PM Worship.....	126
Wednesday	
Contribution	\$7,140.00

Privileged to Serve

Song Leader	Zach Drain
Opening Prayer	Paul Slaughter
Communion Leader	Rusty Owens
Communion Servers	
Scott Barham	James Olsen
Lynn Webster	Robby Thomas
Mike Wylie	Kyle Slaughter
Greg Olsen	Buck Murphy
David Dilbeck	Wade Hall
Tanner Bearden	Thomas Saunders
Closing Prayer	Ken Green
Nursery	Nancy Sloan & Dayanara Sosa
PM Song Leader	Joshua Haden
PM Opening Prayer	Brian Hand
PM Closing Prayer	Billy Roughton
Wed. Song Leader	Tyler Baumgartner
Wed. Devotional	Paul Ross
November Contact Elder	Paul Slaughter