

New Caney
Church of Christ

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Assembly Times

Sundays
Bible Class 9:30 a.m.
Worship 10:30 a.m.
Wednesdays
Bible Classes 7:00 p.m.

Retaining The Standard
Of Sound Doctrine

Evangelist: Charles Willis
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Know Your Bible: Answers

1. Asenath, mother of Manasseh and Ephraim (Gen. 46:20)

2. Hagar (Gen. 21:10–14)

3. Naomi (Ruth 1)

4. Rhoda (Acts 12:13)

This Week's Assignments & Events

Sunday Worship

Greeter: Gobi Warner
Announcements: John Franks
Encouragement Talk: Arturo Orozco
Opening Prayer: Sandon Spyker
Scripture Reading: Aaron Heald
Luke 17:22–37
Song Leader: Kevin Buckner
Table Talk: Josh Emerson
Contribution: Gary Tuttle
Helper: Corwin Richardson
Fruit of Vine: John Van Baale
Helper: Aaron Emerson
Helper: Jordan Thomas
Closing Prayer: Scott McDearman

Sunday Afternoons

Jan 4 Nothing
Jan 11 3PM Devotionals
Jan 18 Nothing
Jan 25 Classroom Quarter Change

Wednesday Evening

Song Leader: Corwin Richardson
Speaker: John Franks



Standing Firm

“Take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm”
Ephesians 6:13

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How To Avoid A Spiritual Failure

In his final hours in Rome, awaiting an inevitable execution, a very lonely apostle Paul suffered some additional heartbreak. “Demas,” he wrote, “*bath forsaken me, having loved this present world*” (2 Timothy 4.10). We are left to speculate as to the particulars — what dread fears or powerful allurements led this faithful friend and co-worker to abandon the kingdom of God and to forsake his burdened brother. It was not as though he had fled the field at the first approach of trouble. During Paul’s first imprisonment in Rome, Demas had evidently been a steadfast companion (Philemon 24; Colossians 4.14). Now, unexpectedly, this heart-mauling betrayal and desertion.

Paul said that Demas “*loved this present world.*” The “*world*” is many things. John describes it as a way of thinking where lust, materialism and pride abound (1 John 2.15-16). What was it that got to the faithful Demas? Was it fear of death or imprisonment? Or was it something more subtle like a nostalgic longing for the old easy ways free of constant warfare? We are not told which one of these undid Demas but one of them found its mark.

Breaking points can come to us too if we are not very careful. A deep hurt we cannot find it in ourselves to forgive. A disappointing marriage. Failures with our children. Lost health or prosperity. Anything we had never imagined happening to us. And often it’s just plain prideful stubbornness. At any rate, don’t ever say you’d never do what others have done. You’ve never been all the places you could be. Peter learned a valuable lesson about that (Matthew 26.31-35). It is far better that we know our own weaknesses and watch and pray that we enter not into temptation (Matthew 26.41). Satan loves an arrogant and self-confident man.

Another lesson to be learned from the failure of others is that those who at last go back, at first look back. Departures of apparent suddenness are really the end of a process. Our Lord warned that those who put their hand to the kingdom plow and look back longingly at the world are not fit for the kingdom of God (Luke 9.62). The

disciples who go back are those who first begin to cultivate again the values of the world and like the Israelites in the wilderness grow nostalgic amidst their trials for the fleshpots of Egypt. They forget, of course, the galling bondage that accompanies the life of sin. These are the ones who gradually cease to meditate upon God's word (Psalm 1.1-2), then become prayerless (James 4.1-2) as God and Christ seem far away. First men cease to study, then to pray, and, finally, to care.

Sometimes this all begins as a casual flirtation, a few little compromises dismissed as harmless. Too much time with worldly companions (1 Corinthians 15.33), too much interest in a job (1 Timothy 6.9-10), too much concern with being accepted and making our mark in the world (1 Peter 5.5). Finally, it becomes a passionate love affair that makes us heedless of the injury we do to our Savior, ourselves and others.

Satan is the master of the "short step" method. Slow change is more effective in producing spiritual collapse than sudden departure. The danger of alerting the victim to what is happening is eliminated. We can be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin (Hebrews 3.12-13). Warning flags need to start flying the moment we feel the slightest ebb in commitment. Beware the spiritual slow leak.

The unflinching answer to this kind of spiritual failure is the daily discipline of an uncompromising dedication which admits of no exceptions and makes quick and humble redress for every transgression. Burn all your bridges and press on to the heavenly mark (Philippians 3.7-14). And if, in spite of everything, you happen to stumble badly, don't let despair destroy you. Remember that everyone who has faltered has not ultimately fallen. We can all thank God for that. John Mark's disgraceful desertion in Pamphylia (Acts 13.13) was not the end of him because he didn't allow it to be. Paul sent for him during his last hours (2 Timothy 4.11) and the Holy Spirit chose him to record the gospel story. We don't have to be like Demas. In the mercy of God we have the privilege of being like John Mark or Peter, and, yes, even Paul.

By Paul Earnhart

Know Your Bible

Women

1. What Egyptian woman was the mother of two of the tribes of Israel?
2. What servant woman was ordered out of the house by Sarah?
3. What Israelite woman lived in Moab but returned to Israel after her husband's death?
4. What servant girl in Jerusalem came to the door when Peter escaped from prison?

Answers On Back

Sunday Sermon

Point your phone camera at the square below, then click on the link to hear the sermon. Recordings will change mid-week.



Habit

by Donald Willis

Everyone has habits. There are good and bad habits...and they play an important role in one's life. Habit is defined as an "habitual or characteristic condition of mind or body... a things done often and hence, usually, done easily; practice; custom; act that is acquired and has become automatic; hence, a tendency to perform a certain action or behave a certain way..." (Webster).

I will forever appreciate some of the habits instilled by my mom. I was taught to brush my teeth daily... and still do; attend school every established day (and only missed when sick); treat my brothers and sisters with respect. Mom took us to church serves every Lord's Day;;;as this was the command of God (Hebrews 10:25) "*...not forsaking our own assembling together, as the custom*" (could we say habit?) "*of some is, but exhorting one another; and so much the more, as ye see the day drawing nigh.*" God is first in our lives, or God is not in our life! God will not accept second best!

I worry about some of the habits we have learned. You know, some do not attempt to attend scheduled Bible Study (I certainly pray that they are studying at home while they are missing... but rather doubt it). Do you attend Bible class? Why? Do you attend Wednesday Bible Study? Why? Do we fail to attend because of a commandment from God... or has this become a habit in our lives? Remember: God first! "*seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things will be added unto you*" (Matthew 6:33).

Someone observed that water cannot rise above it's source. How de we expect out children, grandchildren, bothers and sisters, neighbors and friends to put God first in their life while we fail to put Him first in our own life? Think about it. Change to please God.

ADDENDUM (by Charles Willis)

We all know that habits can be broken and replaced with a different habit - but this takes a lot of work. Generally it takes 7 repetitions to establish a habit, and 30 repetitions to break a habit - so 37 repetitions of the new thing to break the old and establish the new. Most people see the value of this when dieting or investing. We need to see the importance of creating good habits in our lives of serving God, reading His word, studying His word, sharing His word. As the New Year begins, determine if you need to change a habit.