

Where Does It Lead?

Ronald D. Bryant

The distance between confidence and over-confidence is difficult, if not impossible, to measure. The basis for personal confidence demands careful consideration. Length of service is not a legitimate basis for personal confidence. Longevity does not equal mastery, maturity, or security! Holding an office or having a leadership role does not ensure integrity. In the service of God, it is not the lofty but the lowly that stand on safe ground before God.

Simon Peter was an apostle of Jesus Christ, and he was a man of strong personality. However, he fell! Jesus warned him, and still he fell. Satan sifted him! From a presumptuous and heady self-confidence Simon Peter fell. He fell first to half-hearted following—at a distance (Luke 22:57). From there he fell to misrepresentation then to a course of denial underscored with cursing and swearing. Rash and over-confident, Simon Peter fell (Luke 22:57ff; Matt. 26:74)!

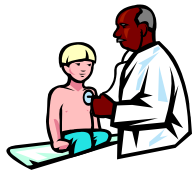
Sin never leads upward! Yet, sin is all the more dangerous for it is commonly viewed as but a slight thing — leading downward, but only slightly. Yet, sin's downward direction is ever toward destruction. Those who choose to tread sins downward course, are soon under its control. No one is wise who thinks they are strong enough to take the first downward step. No one can negotiate the slopes of sin skillfully, let alone safely. Sin works its corruption, and will do its deadly work in all that choose it. To refuse to resist its pull, is to soon be compelled, by one's own personal desires, to embrace it (James 1:13-15). Wisdom dictates that the first step of sin be avoided, for death is the destination to which sin leads (Romans 6:23).

Even though sin is not compatible with living for Christ, Christians do sin (I John 1:8-10). This knowledge is unsettling, yet it is also essential. Sin is no small matter, and the forsaking of sin is essential! Sin must be stripped of its allure and seen for what it is. It must be dealt with honestly. It is only in dealing with personal transgressions, weaknesses, failings, etc, that one can respond properly to and deal honestly with Christ. The Christian's daily confession of Christ includes daily renunciation of sin (Roman 6:11,12). Allegiance to Christ demands dying to sin daily (Romans 6:16-23). The way of Christ and the way of sin are not compatible. It is in coming to know Christ that one can truly know himself. However, it is vital to realize that living for Christ demands more than knowing or controlling self—it demands the crucifying of self (Gal. 2:20f; Col. 3:1-5). The call of Christ is an upward call!

Continue to remember in prayer:

Sick

Margaret Kratz, Miriam Majors, Betty Jenkins, Jim Dorsett, E.V. Wimmer, Martha Keith, WJ Wood, Al Furrow, Lyn Anderson, Marguerite Charles, Jo Musgrove, Isabelle Simmons, Sandra Wood, Carol & Vernon Daniels



- Sarah Cook had successful knee surgery and will return to school tomorrow!
- Ed Argabright had successful surgery last week and is now home.

Sympathy is extended to Yvette Mays in the death of her grandmother, Emmalou, in Georgia.

Happy Birthday this week to:

- Rosemary Bush—12/14
- Dotty Collins—12/17
- Eloise Faw—12/19



Happy Anniversary this week to:

- George & Bonnie Mellon—12/16
- Danny & Charlene Guard—12/18
- Paul & Eloise Faw—12/19
- Susan & Donnie Mountcastle—12/20
- Jerry & Bonnie Wood—12/20



Military

Jay Martin—Afghanistan



DECEMBER ITEMS FOR THE STAFFORDS: Poppy Seeds and Instant Swiss Mocha sugar free coffee Give your items to Jeanny and she will ship them over!



Upcoming Events:



We will be having an All Team Holiday Fellowship tonight after evening services. Bring your favorite dessert and join us for this time of fellowship. Coffee and punch will be provided.

Teens

December Dates



December 20— Cookie Exchange
December 31—New Years Devo

Bible Bowl is set for March 6
Study Guides are available!

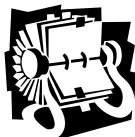
WOW

The next regular meeting will be on January 12 at 10:30.



Church assignments for 2010 are now being planned. If you have not returned a pink or blue involvement sheet please do so ASAP. If you would like to update your sheet, please see Jo Ann!

Directory Update



Eddy & Jeanny no longer use a house phone - Contact Office for their numbers. Numbers removed to protect privacy.

January and February Calendars

All events for the months of January and February need to be in the office by December 23. You can place these events in the box on the media door or email me at office@westsidecofc-salem.com.



Announcements	Paul Mays
Song Leader (AM)	Charlie Gwaltney
Opening Prayer (AM)	
12/6	Bobby Martin
12/13	Eric Earnhart
12/20	Jim Harrington
12/27	Fred Altizer

Preside at Communion	David Brown
Serve Table	Josh Whitlow John Black Mitch Jearls Norris Gearhart

Closing Prayer	
12/6	Tom Rogers
12/13	Barry White
12/20	Glenn Gabbard
12/27	Herb Baker

Song Leader (PM)	Jeff Durham
Opening Prayer (PM)	
12/6	Charlie Gwaltney
12/13	Collin Gregory
12/20	Luke Guard
12/27	Kirk Gilpin

Scripture Reader	Jimmy Harrington
Closing Prayer (PM)	
12/6	Glen Hartman
12/13	Jim Bush
12/20	Nathan Pelfrey
12/27	Jeremy White

Serve Table (PM)	Sam Valentine Ben Munsey
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Song Leader (Wed)	Eric Earnhart
Prayer (Wed)	
12/2	Bob Garby
12/9	David Brown
12/16	Jerry Anderson
12/23	Greg Edwards
12/30	Mark Brooks

Open/Close Bldg	Jerry Anderson
Greeters	R. White/Bakers

Nursery Attend	Kim Brown Melissa Oldham
Ushers	Bob Garby Curtis Oakes
Handouts	Mitch & Chandler Jearls Marc & Noah Laplante

Prepare communion	Jeanny Gilpin Bonnie Wood
Cards & Pencils	Austin Whitlow

Last weeks attendance 12/6&9/09

Bible Class—	149	Worship Service—	172
Sunday Eve.—	131	Wednesday Eve.—	125
Contribution—\$12352			

We have begun a study of the word “except.” It is found 74 times in 72 verses in the King James Version. It is a very important word because it points out the exception(s) to the rule or statement given. And, in most cases, unless the exception(s) had been stated, the result(s) or consequence(s) would have been devastating.

When the children of Israel, under the leadership of Joshua, crossed the Jordan and captured the city of Jericho (in a most unusual way- Joshua 6:1-20), there was tremendous joy, relief and confidence among the Israelites. However, in the taking of Jericho there was an individual who took a portion of the spoils of the city for himself, an act God had strictly forbidden (Josh. 6:17-19). Achan’s sin caused the Israelites to fail against their next enemy, Ai, and cost the lives of 36 men (Josh. 7:1-5). Not knowing what had happened, Joshua appealed to the Lord. God informed him that someone had sinned by taking that which was forbidden (Josh. 7:6-11). God then made the following statement to him: “Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they were accursed: neither will I be with you any more.” However, note the exception that God gave as the statement continues: “except ye destroy the accursed from among you” (Josh. 7:12). The exception made it possible for the Israelites to be in God’s favor once again; but, only through the exception did they avoid the penalty of the main statement.

In the war between David and Saul, Abner originally sided with Saul (II Sam. 3:6). However, later he sought to be aligned with David. David made the statement to Abner, “Thou shalt not see my face.” However, notice the exception to this rule: “except thou first bring Michal Saul’s daughter, when thou comest to see my face” (II Sam. 3:13). Without Michal, Abner would not be allowed in David’s presence. With her, he would. The exception makes this clear.

(To be continued.)

-Eddy