



“The Vine”

Growing Together in Christ

Newsletter for New Hope Christian Fellowship

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From Pastor Dennis

“I’m So Tired!”

Sometimes we just get tired, don’t we? Many get up at sunrise, commute to their jobs where they work hard all day with few breaks, and then commute back home. They arrive home after dark, eat a late dinner and fall exhausted into bed, without much time for family and no time for themselves. There’s little time to pray or study God’s Word in the morning or evening, and even less time to serve the Lord in ministry. Sometimes even our weekends are so jam-packed with activities, they become a blur, and before we know it, we’re back on the job Monday morning.

One of the greatest dangers to Christians is burnout. In writing to the churches at Galatia, Paul warns them about burnout, while encouraging a lifetime of giving - investing our money and our time in the more important eternal concerns - Galatians 6:6-10 (NIV) - 6) “Anyone who receives instruction in the word must share all good things with his instructor.

7) “Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. 8) The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. 9) Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. 10) Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.”

There are times when even the most dedicated, committed disciple of Jesus suddenly wakes up and realizes he or she is tired - tired of giving, doing, serving. The joy of service is gone. What causes burnout? Often it’s because we don’t take enough breaks - we forget the great value of rest. Our body, mind and spirit need time for recovery and renewal.

Sometimes when we experience “failure,” or receive criticism, we feel like giving up. At times I feel this way when a member leaves our church after many years. Or a married couple that I have spent many hours counseling gets a divorce. Or a young

person who had been a leader in our youth ministry, falls into a lifestyle of sin, after he or she leaves home.

Perhaps we burnout when we see others quit trying and we feel we’re the only ones left. Elijah was burned out, discouraged and felt he was the only one left doing God’s work in I Kings 19. He even asked God to take his life, and that’s when God came to Elijah and revealed that there 7,000 other loyal servants, that Elijah didn’t even know about.

How can we heal from burnout? By coming into the presence of the Holy One. Jesus encourages us when we are weary to come to him for rest and renewal (Matthew 11:28-30). It’s as if He is saying: “Slow down, relax, time out! Come and sit with me for awhile and let’s just talk. What’s on your mind? What’s troubling you? Tell me about it. I want to help. I will help you. I love you.”

Jesus is our hope and the source of our strength - Isaiah 40:31 - but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint. Take heart, my friends, you are joined to that Source; He lives in you. Keep your eyes on Jesus, the “author and perfecter of our faith!” (Hebrews 12:2)

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The Tongue



T-Shirt Wisdom?

T-shirts and methods of communication have sure come a long way. One used to be an item of clothing and the other, air passing over the vocal chords to make discernible sounds. The two have now merged. One does not need to turn on an electronic device to view the latest advertisements, discover political news and learn the newest slang. It's all in plain view on the backs and fronts of T-shirts.

If you're like me, you've been amused, educated and probably shocked by the slogans sported by young and old alike. And be careful: a man in New York was not allowed to board a plane because of his T-shirt. I've wondered aloud why someone would put or wear certain things on their shirts. We used to have to wait for a person to speak before we could ascertain anything more than their outward appearance, but now we have only to read their clothing.

Someone once said, "Better to remain silent and be thought a fool, than to speak out and remove all doubt." The author of this quotation is uncertain, but it probably originated with Solomon who said in Proverbs 17:28, "Even a fool is thought wise if he keeps silent, and discerning if he holds his tongue" (NIV throughout).

It might be time to update it to something like this: "Better to wear a plain T-shirt and be thought intelligent, than to wear your ignorance on your back."

I don't know about you, but I don't need another way to get in trouble with errant words. No one can tame the tongue (James 3:8) and I can certainly attest to that in my own life. James' words of so long ago are more relevant now than when they were written.

"Likewise the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the

whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell" (James 3:3-6).



What a different world this would be if we could tame the tongue! It seems less likely every day, as technology offers new avenues of spontaneous expression and less opportunity to think about what we say before we say it. E-mail, websites, text messages, cell phones and T-shirts - all seem to promote off-the-cuff, impulsive ramblings.

With all these ways to put one's foot in one's mouth, it might be best to heed the words of King Solomon, who said: "Do not be quick with your mouth, do not be hasty in your heart to utter anything before God. God is in heaven and you are on earth, so let your words be few" (Eccl. 5:2). And I'm sure he would add, including on your T-shirt. - *By Tammy Tkach*

The Wise Tongue

We as women in God's church can use our tongues for edifying and uplifting our neighbours, friends and those we come in contact with. We should be wise in our speech and especially know how to say kind words, which will have a good lasting effect on others. Let it be said of us. "She openeth her mouth with wisdom and in her tongue is the law of kindness." - *Esther Edwards from a Woman's Club Speech*



The Boneless Tongue

"The boneless tongue, so small and weak, Can crush and kill", declared the Greek
 "The tongue destroys a greater horde,"
 The Turks asserts, "Than does the sword."
 A Persian proverb wisely saith,
 "A lengthy tongue - an early death";
 Or sometimes takes this form instead,
 "Don't let your tongue cut off your head."
 "The tongue can speak a word whose speed,"
 Says the Chinese, "Outstrips the street";
 While the Arabs sages this impart,
 "The tongue's great storehouse is the heart."
 From Hebrew with the maxim sprung,
 "Though feet should slip, ne'er let the tongue."
 The sacred writer crowns the hole;
 "Who keeps the tongue doth keep his soul."
 ~Philip B. Strong~

Submitted by Esther Edwards

The Christ Like Tongue

"The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, & the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For out of the overflow of his heart his mouth speaks." Luke 5:45

Lessons From Ancient Israel

It's All About The Heart

We know that God is our heavenly Father, Redeemer and Savior. But he is also our great Teacher. He not only teaches us who he is as well as his loving nature, but he also teaches us how we should live our lives in accordance to his will. God taught Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. He taught Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and established a covenant with them.

And when he delivered the Children of Israel from their Egyptian bondage, he began teaching them through his servant Moses. "The LORD said to Moses, 'Come up to me on the mountain and stay here, and I will give you the tablets of stone, with the law and commands I have written for their instruction'" (Ex. 24:12).

King David understood God's desire to reveal himself and his ways to humanity. "Good and upright is the LORD; therefore he instructs sinners in his ways. He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them his way. Who, then, is the man that fears the LORD. He will instruct him in the way chosen for him" (Ps 25:8-9,12).

But for the most part, the Children of Israel, throughout their history had rejected the teachings of the Lord. God warned Judah through his prophet Isaiah, that they are obstinate children because of their stubborn nature. "These are rebellious people, deceitful children, children unwilling to listen to the LORD's instruction" (Isa. 30:9).

It wasn't a matter of not knowing what the Lord had taught them and then consequently required of them. It was a matter of their heart. In the OT as well as the New, the word



"heart" most of the time describes the "inner being" - the center or source (often referred to as the immaterial heart) where a person imagines, thinks, and understands; where attitudes and emotional feelings are expressed, where the will is set, and where decisions are made. [See insert]

God ultimately wanted Israel to place his teachings into their hearts not just into their memory banks of their minds. "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your

strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts" (Deut. 6:4-6).

What God had intended was that Israel would develop a heart relationship (one of intimacy, love & humility) with him. As we have seen, Moses understood this and communicated God's desire to the Children of Israel.

David also acknowledged it. "You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise" (Ps. 51:16-17).

"Give me understanding, and I will

Turn my heart toward your statutes and not toward selfish gain" (Ps. 119:34, 36).

And the prophets wrote about it. "Even now,' declares the LORD, 'return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning.' Rend your heart and not your garments" (Joel 2:12).

But unfortunately, the covenant people had a heart of stone - that is they resisted God in their hearts. - *By Larry Omasta*
[To be continued in the October Vine]

The two key words for heart in Hebrew are 'leb' and 'lebab'; in Greek the word is 'kardia'. The total number of times the word "heart" is translated in the King James is 981 - 811 times in the OT and 170 times in the NT. In comparison the word "mind" is translated less than 100 times.

*Researchers Kenneth Clark and Jack Noble from the Tennessee Temple Seminary analyzed the context of how the word "heart" is used in the Bible. They found that the **highest category** of all (24.8%) is related to thought, mind or our cognitive functions. **Next** is the category of morality at 21.7%. This has to do with doing good or evil; turning to or from God. The **third highest category** is emotion at 17.9%. This has to do with love, hate, joy, sorrow, etc. **Fourth** category is labeled spiritual (to believe in God, to accept God's will, etc) at 14.3%. The **fifth** category is motivation at 6.9%. The authors also included a category called combination at 10.7%, which included at least 2 of the first 5 categories. The **last** category-the physical organ that pumps our blood is at 1.6%.*



Resting In God

The Mark On The Wall

The other day I was cleaning our bathroom and I noticed a 3-inch scuffmark on the wall. Immediately I thought, "I've got to clean that mark off the wall." My next thought after that was, "Oh that mark has been there for months now. It doesn't look all that bad. Why bother now? I'll clean it off later." Isn't it funny how our human nature can lead us to put off tomorrow what should be done today? The scuffmark on our wall also got me thinking about my inner scuffmarks and about sin.

For many years I struggled with fears and doubts about my salvation. At times I felt that I wasn't doing enough in my walk with God. I also felt that my prayers weren't getting through to Him. God seemed distant. I had this sense that something wasn't right in my understanding and relationship with God. Was it sin? Were my fears sin? Why was I struggling with lingering doubts about my salvation? This led me to pray to God for understanding about why I was fearful, why I doubted. *God, is there something I'm just not getting? Please show me.*

In the months ahead God answered my prayers by sending me to Jesus and through His grace I came to believe and trust in Jesus as my Savior and Lord and that in Him alone is my salvation. I came to see that while I believed in God, I didn't really trust in his Son -- that He is sufficient for salvation. On the one hand, I read the scriptures that Jesus died to save us from sin, but in reality I found that I was also relying on what I was doing to make myself right with God.

It's hard to trust someone you really don't know. I had to face the hard fact that I really didn't know Jesus. But as Jesus opened my mind and heart through His word I came to know Him, and to trust Him!

I came to know and trust in Jesus as my Savior. I also came to trust in Jesus as mediator and High Priest, as my redeemer and my righteousness, sin bearer and reconciler, justifier and intercessor... the Savior of my soul. As Jesus became bigger in my life, I stopped focusing so much on what I was doing and started focusing on the work Jesus is doing in my life.



As Jesus redeems us to the Father through His shed blood on the cross, we walk in newness of life through His resurrection and glory. While we rest in the hope and joy that our salvation is assured (Rom. 8:1), we also have the flesh and struggle with sin.

But Jesus intercedes for us and shows us that we have a loving and merciful Father. The Holy Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are His children. We can come to the Father and in faith ask forgiveness of our sins, trusting in Christ's sacrifice. Nothing can "separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom. 8:39)

Are you are struggling with an inner scuffmark? Jesus' sacrifice can cover it. Trust in Him. Do you ever feel like you're just not "getting it"? Pray to Jesus and ask Him to show you. Jesus said, "Come to Me all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly of heart, and you will find rest for your souls." (Matt. 11:28-29) - *By Diane Siston*



Ten Surprises About the Unchurched



Final Part in the series

Surprise No. 8

The unchurched would like to develop a real & sincere relationship with a Christian. Our study of the unchurched continued during 2001 and 2002 with a noticeable intermediate point of Sept. 11, 2001.... *For full artilcet see "Christianity Today" on line - By Dr. Thom Rainer* Copyright © 2003 by Dr. Thom Rainer. Used by permission. www.ChurchCentral.com www.ChristianityToday.comAOL www.christianitytoday.com Copyright © 1994-2002 www.christianitytoday.com/bcl/areas/missions/articles/102704.html