



**SERVICE TIMES:**

Sunday: 9:30 AM  
10:30 AM  
5:00 PM  
Wednesday: 7:00 PM

**ELDERS:**

Todd Cox  
Travis Everett  
Jimmy Griffith  
Bryan Tacker  
Paul White

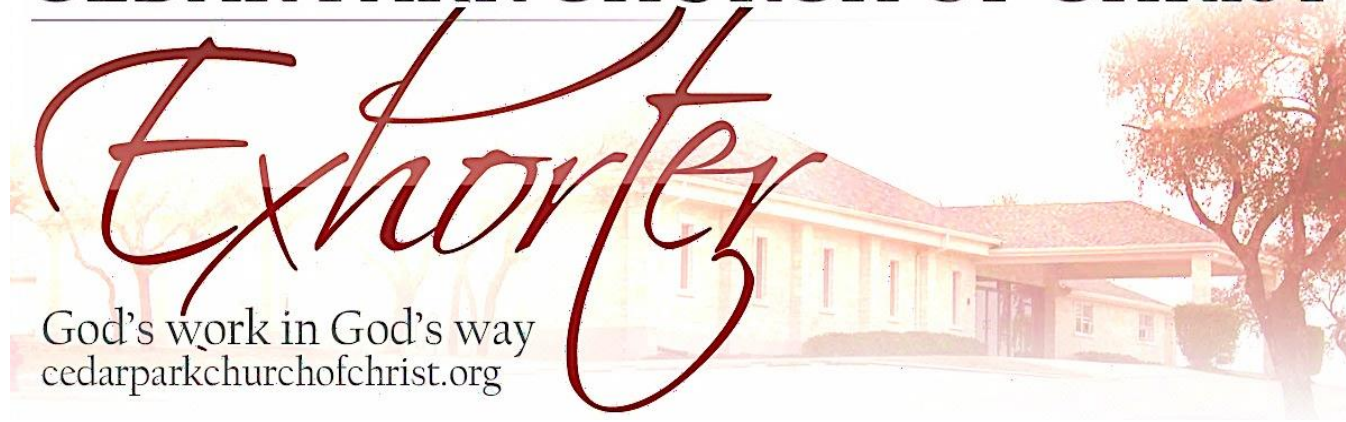
**DEACONS:**

Derek Anderson Ryan Griffith  
Dan Harbin Craig Hecht  
Danny Meek Phil Parker  
Jason Stannard Travis Starling  
Steve Turquette

**EVANGELIST**

Paul White

# CEDAR PARK CHURCH OF CHRIST



August 2, 2020

## The Gift of Reason

Mankind has a terrible history of taking God's gifts and blessings and turning them into idols. Consider the story of the bronze serpent. God had Moses fashion a bronze serpent as a way of bringing salvation to Israel, but only a few generations later the Israelites had started worshipping it. Sadly, humanity continues to repeat this pattern today, failing to learn the lessons of the past. In this article, I want to discuss Reason. Our capacity to reason, when kept in submission to God, is a wonderful blessing. But reason, when used for our own motives and outside of God's order, makes for a seductive and soul-threatening stumbling block.

Reason is, according to the New Oxford American Dictionary, the power of the mind to think, understand, and form judgments by a process of logic. Reason is one of the traits of man, which distinguishes him from the animal world. While animals are driven by their base instincts and needs, man has the capacity to learn, explore, and understand the world around him. We think and plan, not just for the hours or days ahead, but many decades in advance, and sometimes we make provision for future generations. Also, man thinks in terms of good and evil, righteousness and wickedness, while the animal considers only its own survival.

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God made us special in this way, in part because we are made in the image of God. God is the pinnacle of intelligence, wisdom, and knowledge. His imagination created a universe, that we can only attempt to understand, and a glimmer of that intellectual spark lives in each one of us.

But God also made us this way because He expects us to use Reason as a tool to draw us closer to Him. God wants us to seek Him (Matt 7:7) and use Reason to be our guide. Preachers like the Apostle Paul reasoned with people from the scriptures (Acts 17:2), and the Levites of the Old Testament helped the congregation understand their meaning (Neh 8:1-8). Sometimes understanding the scriptures can be difficult, and the unlearned and unstable may twist them to their own destruction (2 Pet 3:16), but the exercise of Logic and Reason can help us apply those scriptures correctly.

God has also given us Reason to help us discern between good and evil (Heb 5:14). We are to approve the things that are excellent (Phil 1:10) and judge with righteous judgment (John 7:24). The Bible gives us laws to live by, but it doesn't enumerate every possible virtue or vice. For example, the Bible doesn't mention social media, which wouldn't be invented for another 2000 years, but it gives us principles that we must apply to social media by the exercise of Reason.

Unfortunately, the gift of Reason has been abused by mankind, turning it into an object of worship like that bronze serpent ages ago. In recent generations science and Reason have given us a better understanding our universe, and our technological achievements seem limitless. It seems like there's nothing that science and Reason can't do, given enough time and effort. In our increasingly secular world, Reason is seen as the answer and guiding light, leading us to "self-actualization" and "human flourishing," instead of leading us to God as intended.

If the idea of the worship of human reason sounds overblown, it happened in a literal sense during the French Revolution. The Culte de la Raison (Cult of Reason) was established to replace Christianity. This atheistic religion had its own temples and worship, even converting the Notre Dame cathedral into one such temple. While we don't have such overt worship of reason today, it exists in the hearts of many.

The exhortation for Christians is to use Reason correctly and keep it in its proper place. Our reason must submit to God, and not be selfish or proud. Conversely, a worship of Reason is really a worship of man. We must remember that the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom (Prov 1:7). We have to recognize that man's reason is limited (Job 11:7-8, Rom 11:33), and that we lean upon God for an understanding of the universe and our place in it. God has given us His word to help us understand the things that are too great for us, and to impart those mysteries, which we can't uncover on our own. Let us never be like those Israelites who took God's gift of the bronze serpent, and made it into an idol. Let us thank God for the gift of Reason and use it to draw close to Him and discern good and evil.

- Dan Harbin



### **You Tell On Yourself**

You tell on yourself by the friends you seek,  
By the very manner in which you speak,  
By the way you employ your leisure time,  
By the use you make of dollar and dime.

You tell what you are by the things you wear,  
By the spirit in which you burdens bear,  
By the kind of things at which you laugh,  
By the things you choose to photograph.

You tell what you are by the way you walk,  
By the things of which you delight to talk,  
By the manner in which you bear defeat,  
By the "juicy" gossip you will repeat.

By the books you choose from the well-filled shelf,  
In these ways, and more, you tell on yourself;  
So there's really no particle of sense  
In an effort to keep up false pretense.

- Author unknown