

Light and Life

For Your Amusement

“... if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy – meditate on these things” (Php. 4:8). “... but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night” (Ps. 1:2).

We must meditate on the things of God – things that will benefit our lives spiritually as we pursue moral excellence. Another word for ‘meditate’, is ‘muse’. As we muse on profitable things, we come to a greater appreciation and understanding for the truths God has revealed to us. We grow to better identify how those truths apply in the modern world and even in our own personal lives. This is a serious endeavor that takes time and careful reflection.

The opposite of ‘musing’ is ‘a-musing’. Entertainment takes away from the seriousness of meditation. This has been a huge factor in the degradation of our culture’s public discourse in general and has born untold consequences to the destruction of the American religious mind. Every ounce of serious truth must be diluted with twenty pounds of amusing fluff!

And yet this is not a new problem. Consider the audience that was summoned with such great pomp and circumstance to hear Paul’s defense before King Agrippa and Festus (Ac. 25:22-27). As Paul gave his impassioned defense, Festus seemed thrilled by his ‘performance’ (Ac. 26:24). But Paul wasn’t performing. He was proclaiming the truth in a reasonable way (Ac. 26:25).

The same thing happened as Paul preached the resurrection on the Areopagus (Ac. 17:16-34)! To those who have spoiled their minds with amusement rather than meditation, everything of value appears as entertainment. Unless the truth is presented in a fashionable way, what is the use of paying attention? The value is not in the content, but the pretty packaging. We must train our minds to discern what is important – and meditate deeply.

- Sam Bunyard

Another Perspective

Gambling vs Love for God & Others

Though gambling has become socially acceptable and legal, it is not right according to what God teaches us in the Bible. God teaches us to love Him with all the heart, mind, and soul, and to love our fellow man as we love ourselves (Mt 22:37-40). Everything else God teaches us depends on these two principles. “Love” in this sense comes from a Greek term, *agape*, referring to the highest kind of love: a love based on principles of truth and right, and a love seeking the best interests of its object rather than mere self-gratification.

Since love of God and others must be the motive for all our conduct, how do these two principles relate to gambling? God teaches us that we may receive gain in ways which demonstrate love to all parties to any transaction. We may receive gain in the following ways: 1) the process of labor (Ep 4:28), 2) the exchange of goods and services (Mt 13:45-46), and 3) gifts (Mt 6:1-4). Each of these methods of receiving gain is honest, showing respect for principles of truth and right and for the welfare of all parties involved.

Gambling is a wager on some chance event, with the result that the ‘winner’ takes gain from others without respect for principles of truth and right and without seeking the welfare of all parties involved. Therefore, gambling is a means of taking dishonest gain. The fact that the other participants agreed to take part does not mitigate the dishonesty involved, any more than ‘kickbacks’ in a business deal are mitigated from dishonesty by the agreement of the parties involved. Gambling is an exercise in covetousness, seeking mere self-gratification without regard for truth and right or the best interests of everyone involved.

Gambling is sinful, an offense against God and a curse to our fellow man.

- Ron Halbrook (edited for space)

ASSEMBLY TIMES

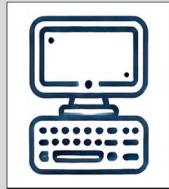
Sunday

Morning Bible Class 9:30
Morning Assembly 10:30
Evening Assembly 5:00

Wednesday

Evening Bible Class 6:30

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DOWNTOWN CHURCH OF CHRIST

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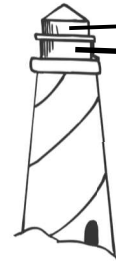
On the Day of Judgment,
we will seek mercy
over justice.

ELDERS:

Otis Hardin
Perry Johnson
Ken Parker
Alan Revier
GW Walsh

DEACONS:

TJ Burleson
Scott Hale
Jason Hill
Chris Johnson
Brock McKeel
Randy Potter
Tim Roberts
Randy Shell



DOWNTOWN GOSPEL BEACON

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The 'Obedience' Passages

A great many people who profess to follow Christ will push back against anyone who teaches that obedience matters. They may acknowledge the 'importance' of obedience; but when pressed, they will say that an obedient response to the gospel is 'unnecessary' for our salvation.

Without getting into the Calvinistic underpinnings of such a belief, let's just let the Bible do the talking:

"Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life" – Jn 3:36
"We are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him" – Ac 5:32 "We have received

grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith" – Ro 1:5
"...to bring the Gentiles to obedience by word and deed" – Ro 15:18
"...your obedience is known to all" – Ro 16:19
"...to bring about the obedience of faith" – Ro 16:26.

And we could add: Mt 7:21, Ro 6:16, 2 Co 10:6, He 5:9 and many more.

None of these passages negate the importance of God's grace, for no amount of 'obedience' allows us to boast or to 'earn' a home in heaven (Ph 2:8-10). But to embrace a 'faith only' gospel is just wrong (Ja 2:24). It mocks the King – and will cost many their soul (He 10:29).

- *WKing*

FAMILY NEWS

PRAYER LIST –

Preachers we support: Japan, Philippines, Vietnam, Canada, Mexico, Peru, & U.S.

Sick: KFletcher, Swims, JMarshall, RStarr, MiBader, JTerrell, ACorder

Shut-ins: BPennington, SCole, SWiese, VCarter, KHeiligenthal, AHopper

Military: Kyler Sullins, Sean Potter

WELCOME! – Welcome to Seann Bounous, who recently made the decision to join our Downtown family! Let's make him feel welcome!

SENTENCE SERMON – When worship becomes performance, the pulpit becomes a stage, the speaker a performer, and the audience the entertained.