

Washington church of Christ

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washingtonnjchurchofchrist.com

Order of Services

Sunday, December 9, 2012

Song Leader	David Osinski
Prayer	Scott Thomas
Preaching	Bob James
Lord's Supper	
Prayer for the Bread	Cameron Wydro
Prayer for the Cup	Ralph Ruggiero
Prayer for the Collection	Lee Redd
Assisting at the Table	Bob DeGrado
Closing Prayer	Glenn Montgomery
Announcements	Matt Grimaldi

Sunday, December 16, 2012

Song Leader	Cameron Wydro
Prayer	Derald Sanchez
Preaching	Bob James
Lord's Supper	
Prayer for the Bread	Lee Redd
Prayer for the Cup	Brian Jeffries
Prayer for the Collection	Tom Dolan
Assisting at the Table	Gennaro Ruggiero
Closing Prayer	Scott Thomas
Announcements	Matt Grimaldi

Schedule of Weekly Services

Sunday Morning Bible Classes	9:30 am
Sunday Morning Worship	10:30 am
Sunday Evening Worship	6:00 pm
Wednesday Evening Bible Classes	7:30 pm

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Goals in Maturing...

But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine: that the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience; (Titus 2:1-2)

I once worked with a Quality Analyst who was responsible for ensuring the efficiency of manufacturing processes employed in a production plant. He was often known to say that if something could not be measured, it could not be managed, controlled, and improved. Over the years I've come to see the validity of that statement.

We often talk about growing as Christians ... but, how do we know that we are? Do we measure our growth? *Can* we measure our growth?

In first chapter of the book of Titus the apostle Paul instructed Titus on how to organize the churches in the various cities of Crete. Additionally he gave Titus some insight into the character of the people he would have to deal with. In chapter two Paul gives him various instructions as to his own method of teaching and what kind of instructions he should give to the various classes of his hearers. He was, in general, to speak only such things "*which are proper for sound doctrine*" (Titus 2:1).

More specifically, he was to instruct aged men to be *sober, grave, and temperate* ... or in other words to act in a manner that reflected their time of life, (Titus 2:2). The aged women were to be a proper example to the younger females, and to exercise a proper care over them, (Titus 2:3-5).

I'd like to suggest that these guidelines for the lives of older Christian men and women might be used as metrics to measure whether we are growing spiritually as we age.

It seems clear that older people in the church are to be leaders by example to the younger. The assumption seems to be that they, or should I say *we*, have lived long enough to sift and sort out the differences between that which is truly abiding in value and that which is of little or no value.

Far from being a threatening or frightening process, aging can be a rich and rewarding experience. We can either fear it and fight it, or we can flow with it and enjoy it.

Let's consider, from a spiritual perspective, the rich potential of the aging process for men presented in the four goals we see in Titus 2:2. We need also keep in mind that the word "*likewise*" in Titus 2:3 implies that these same goals are just as valid for women.

The first goal is that of **sobriety**. The Greek word used here has the primary meaning of "sobriety in contrast to drunkenness from overindulgence in wine." But the word is also used in the wider sense of clear-headedness in general. Here is the picture of a person who has achieved perspective in life ... one who is not under the influence of outside forces, whether alcohol, money, anger, lust, or greed. Whatever else the experiences of aging should do for us, they should enable us to develop a perspective in which our values are brought into line with God's Will for us.

I've gotten to the point in my life where people that I've met and gotten to know somewhat fall into different stages of life. I'm often saddened by folks in their forties and fifties who are still wildly pursuing the same transient goals they were chasing in their twenties and thirties.

Some of you may be able to relate to this situation ... you are talking to a group of young people and sharing with them some of the changes in your own values, especially with regard to wealth and possessions. As you talk, you read the look on their faces, and you know some of them are not "buying it". No matter how much "fatherly, or motherly, advice" you give, you know that many of them are going to learn things pretty much the way we did ... *by trial and error*. When maturing is part of aging, our perspectives and values grow into sobriety, and we develop a more clear-headed way of viewing everything around us.

The second goal of maturing in our older years is **reverence**. The Greek word used here is rendered **reverence** in the King James, **dignified** in the ESV, and "**worthy of respect**" in the NIV. Bakers New Testament Commentary says that this word means "serious-minded, i.e., not clowns", and that it describes "serious and mature behavior." This does not mean that as we age we become dull or dowdy. When I think of men possessing this quality Sewell Hall, Paul Earnhart, and Dale Smelser come to mind. Having spent time with them I feel that they all are excellent examples of this quality. They are enjoyable to be around for they radiate a love for life, for people, and most importantly, for the Lord.

The third goal is to be "**temperate**." Here the Greek word is translated "prudent" or "sensible." Strong's Greek Dictionary defines the word to reference "safe (sound) in mind, that is, self-controlled (moderate as to opinion or passion)". In his commentary on the passage Lloyd J. Ogilvie writes that "it is said to portray a person whose actions have a high degree of *correlation* with his best judgment. Maturing includes narrowing the gap between our best judgment and our actual behavior."

Part of the challenge in this area of growth is effectively involving both our mind and feelings in the process of shaping our judgments. When good judgment is primarily a matter of rational precision, it can become cold and impersonal. When it is primarily shaped by feelings, it has a way of becoming irresponsible. As we age we learn better how to use God's Word as a guide in reaching a balance between two.

The fourth goal seems to describe the product of the first three ... "**sound in faith, in love, and in patience**." This trilogy seems to be a favorite of the apostle Paul and is referenced in 1 Thessalonians 1:3 as "*your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope*".

Faith has a way of growing with the years, not necessarily in the intellectual sense, but in the sense of simply trusting God more. I have more intellectual questions the more I study and learn, but I find myself trusting in God more and more. Growth in **love** manifests itself in our increased ability to act in the best interests of others. And, growth in **patience** and **endurance** enables us not merely to survive, but to better transform our hardships into things of beauty for God.

Wisdom is with aged men, And with length of days, understanding. (Job 12:12 NKJV)

... **Bob James**

Our Prayer List...

- ⤴ Everett Guyton ... Lee Redd ... Donna Banghart ... Georgia DeLorenzo ... Glenn Montgomery's father ... Mary Celentano ... our young people here at Washington ... our young people away at college ... the men and women in military service ... leaders of our nation ... leaders of our congregation ... our congregation .
- ⤴ As we have entered the holiday season we will have many of our members, family, and loved ones traveling. Let's all keep them in our prayers.

"This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him." (1 John 5:14-15 NIV)

Coming Events - Home & Away...

- ⤴ Though it's still a few months away, we are planning our Spring 2013 Gospel Meeting with Tommy Peeler from FC. The dates are March 10th – 13th ... that's Sunday – Wednesday. Please plan your 2013 spring vacations and travels around that date if at all possible.

Items of Note...

- ⤴ This week's Bible School studies will focus on the Scattering of the People and an introduction to Abraham (Genesis 10 - 12). Remember, as a part of our Bible School program each family should strive to have a review each week of the material discussed in our classes. The next studies for this period are ...
 - ⤴ December 16th & 19th - Abraham & Melchizedek (Genesis 13 – 17)
 - ⤴ December 23rd & 26th - The Son of Promise & Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 18 – 22).
- ⤴ The Winter II - 2012 Bible School period starts on Sunday, December 30th. There will be a meeting for all current teachers and those scheduled to teach during the new period this evening at 5:00pm here at the building.
- ⤴ Anyone desiring a family or an individual Bible Study should contact me (Bob James). I typically keep Tuesdays and Thursdays open for these studies.