

News & Notes

Sunday, April 10, 2005

Remember in Prayer: Sally Etta Crawford; Leon Jackson is in the hospital after an accident; Mary Kidd; Deliah Mann; Howard Moody; Diana Shaver, sister-in-law to Shawna Northrop, has slipped discs in her back as well as a broken arm; Jamie Spence, father of Edna Ray has been diagnosed with cancer; Ruby Street; Calvin and Ollie Ursery; Sharon Walker, sister of Frank Walker, had surgery on the 30th and is doing well; Alvie Williford.

Sympathy is extended to the family of James and Marie Smith in the death of their grandson.

The **singing** at Briar Crest Extended Care is today at 4:30 PM.

The next **elders' meeting** is today at 5:00 PM.

A **thank-you letter** from Sam and Mary Kidd has been placed on the bulletin board.

Sermon In Preview:

AM: Reaping Rich Results

PM: "Assuredly, I Say to You, Today, You Will be With Me in Paradise"

For the Record (April 3, 2005):

Attendance: 79 Contribution: \$1291.00 Budget: \$1205.00

The Ashland Church of Christ

P. O. Box 25

Ashland, MS 38603-0025

ashlandcoc@juno.com

Sunday:

Bible Study 9:30 AM

Worship 10:30 AM

Worship 6:00 PM

Wednesday:

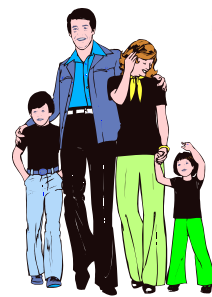
Bible Study 7:00 PM

Shepherds:

Barney King

Junior Roberson

Carrol Street



The Ashland Announcer

*"Give to the Lord, O families of the peoples,
Give to the Lord glory and strength" (Psalm 96:7).*

GROWING
in
FAITH

Self-control

Jeremy Northrop

In 2Peter 1:5-11, Peter said, "But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins. Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." The third thing Peter says needs to be added to the Christians faith is self-control. In order to better understand self-control, one must define what self-control is, notice why it is important for a Christian to have self-control, and finally, notice the good positive consequences of self-control.

In 2Timothy 3:3, Paul spoke of some perilous men being without self-control. The idea is that they were powerless. They were not able to help the sin that they were involved in. They constantly gave into the lust of the flesh. Peter uses the word in

the opposite way. He says the Christians should have self-control or have power over their own actions. A Christian should be able to help the actions he or she does. Immediately from these two verses, one sees that self-control is something that a person grows. It is not something that simply happens. A person chooses to be in control of their own actions. The men of 2Timothy 3 chose not to be in control and Peter encourages Christians to be in control.

In motivational circles, this concept is called self-awareness. The idea is that a person's environment does not determine his or her actions but rather a person chooses his or her actions or response to any given situation. Interestingly, several motivational speakers talk of self-awareness as if it were their very own idea. The concept is biblical in nature and God created humanity to be this way. Therefore, God alluded to this concept long before any motivational speaker ever thought of the idea.

For example, the Proverb writer tells his readers to answer a fool according to his folly and not to answer a fool according to his folly (Proverbs 26:4-5). The point is that a person must discern in the situation when it is appropriate to answer a fool according to his folly and when it is not. The situation does not determine the action, but the person chooses to act in a certain way. Paul said, "Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!" (Philippians 4:4). Why would Paul give such a command to Christians who are in the midst of turmoil and trouble? He understood that rejoicing is a matter of choice, not a consequence of the environment. All of a person's responses are a matter of choice. Another great example of this concept is implied in the command of Proverbs 22:6. There the Bible says, "Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it." A parent's actions toward their own children is not a matter of circumstance. Parents should not say things like "If my child does such and such, there is nothing I can do" or "I cannot teach my children anything." A parent is instructed to train their children. They have control over their actions. The actions of children are not to dictate how parents should act. Consequently, this concept is implied in the reverse as well. "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right" (Ephesians 6:1).

This point is perhaps most vividly seen in the realm of salvation. Any one person has control over his or her own destiny and his or her own destiny alone. One cannot save another person's soul. This is sometimes called free-moral agency. The concept is that each individual chooses whether or not to be a moral person. They choose to do good or evil. Therefore, one's own destiny is not a matter of chance but rather a matter of choice.

One can quickly see the good consequences of exercising complete self-control. First, a self-controlled person is not controlled by external forces. Therefore, a self-controlled person is able to choose his or her response to certain situations and the outcome will generally be better. When a person can stop and reason his or her own response to a stimulus, then the response will be more productive and effective than usual. For example, if a person were to say something like, "I just get mad when someone yells at me" then one can readily see such an attitude is both impulsive and uncontrolled. But if a person were to reason the situation and choose an appropriate response, then the situation can be resolved in a better, more effective way.

Then, self-control helps one not to sin. When a person's environment determines their actions, then they would have no control over the sin that is in their life. This is a ridiculous concept to say the least. The eventual end of the lack of self-control is no control over one's own eternity. When a person chooses to listen and chooses carefully the words they speak, then they are unlikely to say or do things that are against the will of God. James gave the command nicely in James 1:19-20, "So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God." When a person chooses these actions, then it will not bring about the wrath of man or even the sin of man but rather the righteousness of God.

In conclusion, the ideas of this article might quickly be refuted because of the difficulty contained in them. No doubt, in this culture especially, it might be very difficult for a person to choose their actions as opposed to letting their individual situations affect their actions. However, difficult does not mean impossible. The goal for the Christian should be to work to a point where he or she is in control.