

# The OKLAHOMA BAPTIST

Serving Churches of the Baptist Missionary Association of Oklahoma

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Number 9

## *“Playing Hide and Seek with Truth”*

**By Chris Gonthier**  
**BMAO Moral Action**

Christians today are living a life of self-imposed misery. We seek for things that we already have access to, available through our Lord and savior Jesus Christ. The problem is that we are looking through worldly eyes and not recognizing the blessings that God has already given to us. We place blessings on the shelves of our lives, or perhaps bury them in places that we seldom visit.

A lot of Christians are stumbling around in the dark, looking for what they already have. We seek “happiness” in the accumulation of things. Our “joy” comes from our worldly relationships. Our “security” comes from a good job, or our government. “Peace” comes from our knowledge and understanding. We find “strength” in ourselves, and for “direction”, everyone does what is right in his own eyes.

Rather than understanding these and other important issues biblically we search diligently to find them in locations they are not. This is both frustrating and futile. A walk through the Bible will help us to reset and properly focus.

### **Happiness**

Proverbs 3:13-14, “Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold.”

We cannot and will not find true wisdom in the world. James 1:5 tells us, “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth

not; and it shall be given him.” So while we listen to liberal talk shows, and let the government and media indoctrinate us, we ignore the true source of wisdom.

Sometimes we find happiness in suffering for Christ’s sake. 1 Peter 3:14, “But and if ye suffer for righteousness’ sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled.”

Even though this verse is clear, most lack the resolve to allow it to manifest in their lives. We can be happy if we allow God to correct us.

Job 5:17, “Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty.”

However, our pride and arrogance will not allow us to submit to the one who truly can help us.

### **Joy**

Perhaps one of the greatest misconceptions Christians have is the misunderstanding of true joy. Even the word is used incorrectly in today’s society.

We have heard about joy rides at the amusement park. They should actually be called thrill rides. Yes, they offer moments of legitimate excitement, but so too does a face-to-face encounter with a grizzly bear.

What does the bible say about joy? Psalm 16:11 says, “Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.”

So we get joy by maintaining a presence with God. This is one reason

why our spiritual walk with God is so important.

Another important truth is the role that salvation plays in having joy. Isaiah 61:10 tells us, “I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with jewels.”

Also realizing that God is the source of all our needs brings that joy. John 16:24, “Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.”

We ask others for that which we should be asking of God, because only He can supply. Isaiah 12:3, “Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.” God supplies the wells.

### **Security**

We must understand that we are not citizens of this world, but only sojourners, just passing through. People want assurances of their eternal resting place.

John 10:28 tells us, “And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.”

Notice with clarity who the one is that controls our security; it is God. Again, recognize the important role that salvation plays here as well.

John 5:24, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.”

We need to take comfort in Jude 1:24, “Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.”

It is all about God and not about me. We all know how flawed we really are, so quit trying to base security on ourselves and just give it to God.

### **Peace**

The world cannot offer that which it  
 *(“Playing Hide and Seek,” cont on pg 8)*

# "From the Pastor's Pen"

By Wearthly Shank

"Neglect of Opportunity"

"...therefore, to him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin." **James 4:17**

"But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only deceiving your own selves." **James 1:22**

Beloved, the vastness of this one Scripture verse with just one sentence of 17 words is so large, it literally encompasses all of mankind. But more importantly, it lays right in my lap, as well as yours.

First, I believe it lies in the lap of the unbeliever because God's Word tells us that Christ will draw all men [that is, all of mankind] unto Him [John 12:32].

Jesus teaches us in John 16 that the Holy Spirit's ministry is to reprove the world of sin, and righteousness, and judgment[vs.8]. The Holy Spirit's ministry is to draw all men unto Jesus. God is not willing that any should perish but that all would come to repentance [2 Peter 3:9].

Therefore, I believe that lost folk know

how to do right but they neglect the opportunity when they "doeth it not." That is, trust Christ for salvation. They reject the wooing of the Holy Spirit.

But folks, we as Christians, have that verse of Scripture, not only laying in our laps, but yoked around our necks.

Why? Because we are convicted daily by the Holy Spirit to carry out the many

responsibilities [commandments] which Christ has charged us with. Space does not allow for examples, but you know what God has assigned you to do.

When you fail to do it, it is S-I-N! Wow! What a responsibility! We have no excuse. Will you lay your sin at the altar of Christ this Lord's day, or will you continue to neglect opportunities that are before you?

Romans 10:17 says, "...faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God." We have the responsibility to spread the Gospel to all the world. That includes your own neighborhood.

**Think about it!!**

## Daniel Springs Reports Big Numbers of Campers

The summer camp season at Daniel Springs Baptist Camp Ministries has been a very successful time with over 1100 campers attending five different camping sessions in June and July.

A closing camp season banquet and award ceremony was held in the cafeteria on Thursday evening, July 27. The full-time staff, summer "missionaries" (teen and college workers), cafeteria and medical workers, and camp trustees were recognized after a delicious BBQ brisket meal prepared and served by camp director Jason Prewitt and his wife Jessica.

Special recognition was given to longtime camp ministry assistant Morgan Standifer who is leaving the camp and moving back to her hometown of Midlothian after eight years of faithful service at Daniel Springs. Another employee Rosetta Hicks was recognized for thirty-three years of continuous service in the camp's food service department. Camp nurse, Terri Gaidusek, was present for the event; she has been camp nurse at Daniel Springs for twenty-five years.

Director Prewitt announced the camp continues to rebound from the devastating effects of the COVID pandemic in 2020-2021. Notable improvements in the past year include major lake renovations and several new water game events. There are always special project available on the 54-acres campus and facilities, so if your church is looking for a ministry opportunity, give the camp a call at (903) 685-2433.

Daniel Springs Baptist Camp, established in 1965, is owned and operated by Churches of the BMA of America as the national camp ministry.

Jason Prewitt has been director of this ministry since January 1, 2015.



## The OKLAHOMA BAPTIST

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# "I Was Just Thinkin'"

By Narita Roady

## "How Many Are You?"



Once there was a wise man that had been blessed with four sons. He took very seriously his responsibility in their raising. His desire was that they grow to be men of character and wisdom, not ruled by their emotions or circumstances.

Therefore he found it very important that they learn not to be too quick to judge others based their first impressions. He decided to send them on a special mission.

Individually they were to travel many miles to view a particular tree. After each had made his journey they were to meet and share what they had seen.

The first son ventured out in the Winter. Upon his return, the second son made his journey in the Spring. After he was safely home, his task completed, the third son set out on his trip in the Summer. When he came home, the fourth and last son left in the Fall, traveling the same way his older brothers had previously gone.

Finally a year had passed with each son obediently following their Dad's unusual request. Calling them all together he asked each one to share what he had observed.

The first son, who went in winter, reported "The tree was grey and hideous looking. Its trunk was gnarled and twisted.

I think it must have been dead, for there were no signs of life. I would say it is useless and should be chopped down."

The second son, who went in the spring, seemed surprised. "It must not have been the same tree!" he exclaimed. The tree I saw was beautiful covered with little green buds. It was bursting with new life. Although it wasn't beautiful it showed great promise."

The third son, who went in the fall, begged to differ with his two brothers. "You both are mistaken" he countered; I have never seen such a magnificent tree! Fragrant smelling blossoms covered it. I sat under it for a long while, admiring its beauty and splendor."

Lastly the fourth son, who went in the fall, shook his head saying, "I will agree it was a

grand tree, but while it was covered in leaves it had no blooms. On the contrary, the branches bowed to the ground, heavy with much ripe fruit. There was no doubt it was a very productive and valuable tree."

After each son had had his say, the father spoke with a twinkle in his eye. "No need to disagree, all of you is right!"

The son's looked at one another in confusion. "How can that be Father", asked one, "we each are quite sure of what we saw, and being quite different, it could not have been the same tree." The other brothers nodded their heads in agreement.

Smiling, the wise father replied, "Ahh, my son, but it was the same tree; the very one I sent you to observe. The contrast lies in the time at which you went. Your visits came at different seasons of the tree's life."

"Let this be a lesson to you my sons. As you cannot judge a tree by only one season, neither can you judge a person's character, temperament, strengths, or spiritual value, for we know not what season that person may be in. Only God knows where they are at in their spiritual growth."

We would all be wise to take heed to this father's lesson.

In Scripture the Lord tells that there are levels of spiritual maturity. In 2 Peter 3:18, Peter encourages us to grow. "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen."

And again in 1 Peter 2:2; "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word that ye may grow thereby:"

It stands to reason that not all Christians are at the same level of spiritual maturity. Yet often times we tend to get spiritual maturity mixed up with

physical maturity.

Physical maturity is easily discerned by sight, but not so spiritual. A fit throwing toddler or a selfish child's behavior is simply dismissed, no offense taken due to their age.

Yet, a 65 year old man or woman throwing a fit at a business meeting is not easily overlooked; we expect more from them. Older does not necessarily mean more mature in matters concerning Christians.

An 80 year old with 50 years of salvation and church membership under their belt could still be a babe in Christ. While a 16 year old with only three years of salvation and church membership could be quite mature in the Lord.

People, in time, will automatically mature physically. But with Christians, spiritual growth and maturity have nothing to do with time; it takes commitment, and effort.

I have seen many conflicts arise and offense be taken because of the spiritual immaturity of a Christian. Do not misunderstand. I am not saying that unacceptable behavior that is damaging to the church or others should be overlooked.

But many times a babe or child in Christ might say or do something that can be tolerated due to their spiritual "age".

There is an amazing correlation between characteristics of physical and spiritual maturity. By looking at these it might enable us to recognize those still in their spiritual childhood and help us to give them the patience and love they need.

First let's look at babies. They can be quite demanding and must be cared for and nurtured with much gentleness and attentiveness. Having no understanding other than to have their needs fulfilled as quickly as possible, their focus is strictly on self.

Babies must be served constantly as they have no ability to serve others.

Babes in Christ also need a great deal of attention. They are quite selfish in their dealings with others, and expect to be served rather than serve.

Scriptural knowledge other than their

("How Many Are You?" cont on pg 9)

# “Leaders Who Multiply”

By Larry Barker, Regional Coordinator  
Europe and North America

“To add growth, lead followers. To multiply, lead leaders.” John Maxwell

At BMA Global we are blessed and fortunate to have these kinds of leaders around the world. God’s call to leadership requires a focus on leading others to lead others who lead others. The challenge is not just teaching people to live like Jesus but to lead like Jesus.

Second Timothy 2:2 talks about discipleship to the fourth generation (Paul, Timothy, faithful men, others), and God has enabled BMA Global to see this principle lived out right before our eyes in Nicaragua, Mexico, and the Garifunas, just to name a few.

BMA Global’s second value statement tells us that “the entire context of the New Testament is one of multiplication. All healthy believers and churches will multiply. The multiplication of disciples is the most important factor in the formula for multiplication.”

We are blessed to be watching the multiplication of disciples, leaders, and churches. Mac Lake refers to discipleship as “intimacy with Jesus” and leadership as “influence for Jesus.”

Discipleship focuses on character, and the journey of leadership development is being carried out by adding competencies and skill sets to the character building seen through discipleship.

In *Gaining by Losing*, J. D. Greear gives five essential traits of multiplying leaders, areas for leaders to think through and wrestle with by applying them to their ministry context. In *Spiritual Leadership*, Henry and Richard Blackaby state, “Spiritual leadership is moving people on to God’s agenda.”

Thankfully we are witnessing this and seeing godly leaders focused on developing and raising up more godly leaders.

C.S. Lewis said, “The church exists for nothing else but to draw men into Christ and make them little Christ’s. If they are not doing that, all the cathedrals, clergy, missions, sermons, even the Bible itself, are simply a waste of time.”

The first essential trait is clarity. In our recent Global Care Conference, Drew Cline stated, “Clarity is kindness.” My, how true this is, because one of the greatest landmines in ministry is unrealistic expectations.

Leaders realize that some people have expectations they will never be able to live up to. Why? Because they just are not realistic.

In leadership, your team must be able to see what you see. Thankfully, at BMA Global there are leaders around the world who are able to envision what God is desiring to do: godly leaders seeking God’s agenda with their eyes fixed on the mission of God.

They can state it and teach it, and they are repeating it.

The second essential is familiarity, repeating it over and over. You will be tempted to think, “Oh, they already know this” or “They are tired of hearing this.”

Actually, that is when they are just beginning to hear it, understand it, and own it.

BMA Global has stated over and over again clearly that we need leaders to “Go, Disciple, Plant, Repeat!” The best that can be said is what God has already said. It is not about a bunch of new facts or new discoveries that are needed.

It is becoming more deeply aware of the things God has already said in his Word and doing them. Thankfully, those are the kinds of leaders God has given us.

Another essential trait of a multiplying leader is proximity. People’s lives only

change when they see change modeled. Developing leaders who multiply is less about a class where you teach leaders and more about a life that you model in front of them.

In *The Multiplication Effect* Mac Lake states, “He [Jesus] didn’t just randomly and spontaneously choose these men and invest in them—he had spent time getting to know them and letting them get to know Him. He walked with them, taught them, modeled evangelism with them, prayed for them, and invited them to walk alongside him.”

BMA Global leaders are modeling this very principle.

The fourth essential trait of a multiplying leader is equity, because the ultimate goal is the transfer of leadership. The goal is not getting someone to help you but getting them to lead it, own it, and take responsibility for it.

BMA Global’s fifth value statement says that “the mission of God must be carried out according to indigenous principles. We are the scaffolding, not the edifice. Our goals are for sustainability and reproducibility.”

This truth is modeled in Nicaragua where our American missionaries left over 35 years ago. There were nine organized churches then, and today there are almost fourteen with ten current church plants and a vision to plant ten more.

The fifth essential trait of a multiplying leader is humility. Leaders who are willing to lead with an open hand. They refuse to hold on too tightly to those they develop but are focused instead on equipping, empowering, and releasing.

Our goal in leadership is the multiplication of disciples, leaders, and churches. It is humbling because many times these leaders have watched their “best” disciples be the very ones with the desire to leave and multiply.

The temptation is to hold on to them, but spiritual leadership rejects the desire to control and instead is driven by a heart to commission others into his mission.

# Educating the Children of America

Submitted by  
Pastor David Langley

Recently, a group of activists marched in New York City chanting, "We're coming for your children." Audacious behavior like this makes it easier than ever to see the sharp differences between Christian and secular worldviews.

Godly Christian parents still acknowledge Solomon's wisdom. when he wrote, "Train up a child in the way he should go" (Proverbs 22:6).

God's Word, infinitely superior to the ways of man, gives parents clear guidance. Deuteronomy 6:7 says, "And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up."

The passage couldn't be any more specific. The directive for the education of children is specifically given to parents.

The New Testament confirms this important precept. Describing the life of young children, Paul wrote that they are "under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father" (Galatians 4:2).

Even when parents employ professional educators, it is the responsibility of the parent to set the parameters.

In the thinking of many secularists today, children belong to the state or to the community. Many people believe that schools have a duty to indoctrinate children, even against the express wishes of their parents.

As far back as 1943, the Supreme Court warned against this sort of thinking. In *Barnette v. West Virginia State Board of Education*, the Court wrote as follows:

Free public education, if faithful to the ideal of secular instruction and political neutrality, will not be partisan or enemy of any class, creed, party, or faction.

Struggles to coerce uniformity of sentiment in support of some end thought essential to their time and country have been waged by many good as well as by evil men.

Those who begin coercive elimination of dissent soon find themselves exterminating dissenters. Compulsory unification of opinion achieves only the

unanimity of the graveyard.

Many parents today realize that a lot of professional educators believe it is their duty to establish "compulsory unification of opinion." Some educators realize that parents will push back if they promote gender transition, so they make a strong effort to conceal their actions in this regard.

Knowing that libraries are considered places of academic learning, some schools feature books - even for young children - that are sexually explicit.

Parents have to decide whether their children should be enrolled in public schools or in private schools or whether they should be homeschooled. But when children are in public schools, parents need to be fully aware of the potential dangers and of their legal rights.

Parents need to know if their children can opt out of certain assignments or activities, and they must closely monitor the influences their children are receiving in school.

Remember When: My third grade class in Fresno, CA read from the Bible, stood and saluted the American flag hand over heart, as we said the Pledge of Allegiance.

**RE:CHARGE**  
LEADER'S OASIS

**WEDNESDAY, OCT 4**  
**BUDDY MULLINS CONCERT IN**  
**THE SOUTHGATE BAPTIST**  
**AUDITORIUM AT 7PM**

Please join us during the Re:Charge Leader's Oasis at Southgate Baptist to hear Buddy Mullins. You might know him best from the Gaither Vocal Band.

Southgate Baptist Church | 740 SW 4th Street | Moore | 405.794.6646

# "That Reminds Me"

By Jesse Spurlock

"Why Is It That?"

Some things in life cause me no real concern. For instance, when someone is flying at 20,000 feet and have to jump from an airplane, I know and probably most others do also, that they need a parachute. I don't think that has to be written down.

I know that an astronaut in a space suit in outer space needs a space helmet if he/she is to survive. Most people who are permitted to run loose in society also know that.

However some of those same people do some things that really make me wonder.

Take for instance (specifically) a scotch tape dispenser. It has a removable plastic core onto which a roll of scotch tape fits. The plastic core slides into a slot in the tape dispenser, allowing the roll of tape to rotate as the tape is removed from the roll. That's a very simple principle.

When the tape is all used up, the plastic core is removed from the center of the empty tape roll. A new roll of tape is placed onto that core and the roll of tape on the core is replaced in the holder notch on the dispenser. That seems very simple to me.

However, some of the people who know you need a parachute to jump from a plane, can't seem to comprehend the principle of the tape machine.

All the above is so obvious, I don't think you would need to write out any instructions. However, when working in the secular world, people working under me would often find the tape dispenser a terrible challenge.

They would use all the scotch tape up and have enough sense to go to supply and get another roll of tape. However, when they tried to put it into the tape dispenser, they couldn't get it to work because they had thrown the core away

along with the empty center from the roll of tape.



They also couldn't master the concept of checking what they threw away to see why it had worked before and their new roll won't. They would give up and place the tape dispenser on my desk with the new roll of tape lying loosely on top.

One time there was a note that read, "This is a piece of junk!" However, usually there was no note or any indication which genius had thrown away the center core.

Of course, when I was trying to find out who was responsible, my obvious irritation made the culprit reluctant to own up to it.

I've wondered why a society that has

written warning against using an electric hair dryer in the shower would not also have instructions to not throw away the core of the dispenser when replacing a roll of scotch tape in a dispenser.

After all, the same one who would not know enough to keep the core of dispenser would likely be someone who would try to use an electric hair dryer in a shower.



As frustrated as I get at those who don't really think about what they are doing, I can imagine what God must feel about some of the actions of humanity.

When you think about it, our involvement in sin is even more ridiculous than someone using an electric hair dryer in the shower. The pleasures of sin are for a season and the end result is death.

With sin we have everything to lose and nothing to gain? With Christ, we have everything to gain and nothing to lose.

So why would man choose sin and hell over an abundant life here and now and eternal life to come?

## Great News From Grace Harbor

After a very busy Summer, I am happy to give a report following a month of not much going on! Ministry in our community and to our neighbors is most certainly what we are called to engage in, and be faithful in, but there is also a spiritual component to rest and a stillness before the Lord.

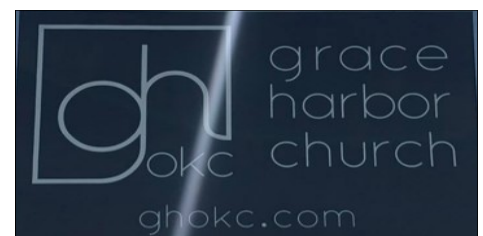
We have been walking through the 15 Psalms of Ascent this Summer and one of our pastors recently preached Psalm 131 that says "But I have calmed and quieted my soul, like a weaned child with its mother; like a weaned child is my soul within me."

This seemed to be a timely and refreshing Psalm for our church to hear. We are all prone to a constant intake of information via news, radio, and social commentary. Some are prone to the busyness of ministry when God wants us to simply enjoy his presence.

We are praying to enter into this kind of season as a church in the months ahead.

On another practical note, we have welcomed about four new visiting families over the last month or so, and have enjoyed seeing them plug into our church through relationships with our members and through small groups.

We have our second and final covenant membership class next week and are praying to have good attendance for this!



# CBC Students Receive New Study Bibles

## Study Bibles Gifted to CBC Students at First Chapel

Central Baptist College president, Terry Kimbrow, addressed the students on Wednesday, August 23, at the first chapel of the academic year where He announced this semester's chapel theme... A Biblical World View.

He asked the students, "What is the definition of world view? Do you know? Can you tell others what you believe about the world around you? Worldview is expressed through the lens in which you see the world."

He noted that his worldview had changed over his lifetime. "As I have grown in my relationship with God, my worldview has changed."

To introduce the Fall chapel series, his message for chapel was, "The Foundation of Central Baptist College." He briefly addressed the twelve articles of the "Doctrinal Statement of the Baptist Missionary Association of America."

He assured the students that while the wording of the "Doctrinal Statement" has changed over the years—the basis for the beliefs cannot change. "It is," he said, "based on the inerrant, unchanging, living Word of God."

Along with unveiling the Chapel theme, President Kimbrow presented each student with a new Worldview Study Bible. This Bible is published by Holman and written in the Christian Standard Version and contains more than 130 essays by notable Christian scholars, center-column references, and extensive worldview study notes.

The gift was underwritten by an anonymous donor. He told the students, "This book will change your life if you let it!" He ended with a challenge: "Take care of it; cherish it; read it; and obey it."



One of the greatest experiences of being supported by gospel-centered and biblical-based

churches in the BMA of Arkansas is the dedication and commitment you exhibit for Central Baptist College. We are looking forward to all that the Lord will do through you and your church on CBC Day.

Thank you to everyone who has signed

up to participate on this special day. As of this week, we are shy of our goal of 200 churches participating, so please prayerfully consider registering.

Please consider setting aside a brief segment in your service to pray for the college, playing a video greeting from President Kimbrow through the link at <https://www.cbc.edu/cbcday>, and/or hear a testimony from a CBC student or CBC alumnus who is in your church.

Please feel free to also request a specialized thumb drive to play the video if you cannot run it from the link. In addition, we have bookmarks to commemorate this day.

Register today by visiting the link at <https://www.cbc.edu/cbcday> or by personally contacting Duffy Guyton, Director of Church Relations, via email at [dguyton@cbc.edu](mailto:dguyton@cbc.edu) or call (501) 269-6784.

Thank you for your continual trust in us as the Lord transforms this generation through higher education that "integrates Christian faith and academic excellence in a Christ-centered environment."

For more information on CBC, please visit <https://www.cbc.edu> and to learn more about the unprecedented tuition-free scholarship for traditional aged BMA students, the "BMA Promise", visit Central Baptist College Approves BMA Promise ([cbc.edu](http://cbc.edu)).

BMA State of Oklahoma Meeting

# Woman's Fellowship

## OCTOBER 14TH

Starting at 9:00

On Saturday Morning

Hosted By

New Heights Baptist Church

1414 SW 119th Street

Oklahoma City

worship  
special speakers  
Fundraiser  
Lots of Blessings  
Lunch to follow

## “Playing Hide and Seek,” cont from pg 1

does not have. I can offer someone ten dollars, but I cannot offer them ten million dollars.

Simply put, I do not have ten million dollars. The world does not have peace; therefore it cannot give you peace.

Philippians 4:7, “And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

The world does not have anything good to offer to you. John 16:33, These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”

The way to receive peace is to overcome the world by depending on God. Psalm 29:11 tells us, “The Lord will give strength unto his people; and the Lord will bless his people with peace.”

So God blesses his people with peace, “his people”. So we see that God gives us the peace we desire, but the previous verse also shows us our next point, God gives us strength.

### Strength

This world wears us down; it doesn't make us stronger. For strength we must go to God for help. Isaiah 12:2 “Behold,

God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation.”

Notice again the common theme of salvation in the gifts that God gives to us. Without salvation, none of this is possible.

We maintain strength by patiently waiting on God.

Isaiah 40:31, But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.”

Christ is the great “abilitator”, made up word, he gives us the ability to have strength through him.

Philippians 4:13, “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”

We must take hold of 2 Corinthians 12:9b-10. “Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.” Let God work through our weaknesses.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Northeastern Association Annual Meeting

September 9/Bethany, Tulsa

### Central Association Annual Meeting

September 12/Southgate, Moore

### Re-Charge Leader's Oasis

October 4-6, 2023

### BMAO Annual Meeting

October 13-14

New Heights, OKC

### Direction

Proverbs 3:5-6, “Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.”

We need to be totally focused and centered on the Lord.

Psalm 37:23, “The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and he delighteth in his way.”

So if you are good, living for God, then he will direct you. Sometimes when we don't receive direction it is because we are not living right.

As is clear throughout the verses that we see here we must depend on and lean heavily upon God. He has the answers to all our questions, and he is the source of all our blessings.

As Jim Reeves so eloquently said it, “This world is not my home, I'm just a-passing through, my treasures are laid up somewhere beyond the blue...The angels beckon me from heaven's open door, and I can't feel at home in this world anymore.”

I am headed up into the arms of my Savior, how about you?



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## **“How Many Are You?” cont from pg 3**

acceptance of salvation is very small. You'll find them to be quite helpless concerning scripture, doctrine, Christ-like conduct, and very weak.

Thessalonians 5:14, Now we exhort you, brethren, . . . support the weak, be patient toward all men.

Toddlers can be very tiring. You will find them frequently in trouble, always arguing with other children and demanding their own way. They are quite vocal about opposition and are known for frequent outbursts.

Their dealings with others are a bit on the petty side: who's first, what belongs to whom, who got the biggest or the best, etc. These pint size people are quickly frustrated and easily give up without a great deal of encouragement. Attention spans are short and they must be amused to be content.

Christians at this stage are marked by eruptions of anger, tantrums, and a contentious spirit. Most of these connoisseurs of petty things.

One of their main concerns is if their “perceived” rights have been violated or might have been infringed upon by another. It is of no concern to them how these rages affect those around them, having things THEIR way is the focus.

They are pretty rebellious and dislike being told what to do. 2 Timothy 2:25 In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;

Juniors are maturing and may appear further a long than they are. But situations quickly reveal they have far to go. Concentrated effort must be made to keep them on the right track. They are still easily distracted and always looking for entertainment.

When in fault they result to making

excuses, or blaming others for their misconduct.

This holds true for “junior” Christians also. You'll find them quickly excited about new concepts or service, but they lack the commitment to follow through. They are also easily frightened by things they do not understand.

For example, a false teacher might share untruths with them, say, security of the believer. Because of their limited understanding and knowledge of God's Word, they do not have the truth to anchor them, and will believe the lie or fear if they are truly saved.

Their relationship with God is still an emotional one, not a complete faith and truth one. Ephesians 4:14, "Be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, by which they lie in wait to deceive."

Teens are more matured, but have a tendency to be easily swayed. Their need for acceptance drives them to act unwisely. For a while they act mature, and then suddenly do something that leads us to think, “What on earth were they thinking!?”

As most of us know, NO ONE knows MORE than a teenager THINKS they do! While they are responsible much of the time, they are not yet consistent or dependable. They make decisions by how they feel not by understanding.

“Teen” Christians are also quite unpredictable and often act without thinking. For a time they will conduct themselves as mature believers, then out of the blue, they do something foolish. We are shocked because we thought they knew better!

Choices are based on the strength of their emotions not the strength of their relationship with Christ.

How many times have you heard

someone say that they don't need to be in classes because they already know it all? That's a sure sign of their level of maturity.

It isn't unusual for these believers to be put in positions of leadership too soon, only to disappoint everyone when they fizzle out somewhere along the way.

True adults are mature but always growing and learning. They are responsible not only in the tasks assigned to them, but also in their decisions, conduct and speech. They are dependable and will do whatever it takes to get the job done, even if it means personal sacrifice.

The needs and feelings of others are put before their own. Younger people look to them for sound guidance and advice.

Mature Christians are no different. They are the pillars of the assembly, peacemakers, and totally dependable. Their choices are consistently based on God's Word and His wisdom. They are totally committed and understand what needs to be done. You'll find them among the 10% of the church that are doing the work.

In our families there are members at all levels of maturity and the same is true with our church families. God wants his family to grow up. Those that are fathers and mothers are given the responsibility of discipling the younger ones in love, being gentle and long suffering.

Are you sensitive to the maturity of your brothers and sisters in Christ you labor with in His work? Are you possibly expecting too much from the “babes, toddlers, juniors and teens”? Are there some you are coddling and hindering from growing as they should? Last of all, are you “all grown up” yourself? How you respond to and deal with these babes is an indicator of your spiritual maturity.

Each of us needs to prayerfully consider this and do a thorough self-examination to see if we are where the Lord wants us to be.

I think the Lord said it all when it comes to dealing with those that maybe have not progressed as far in spiritually in 2 Timothy 2:24. “And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient. . .”

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***“It stands to reason that not all Christians are at the same level of spiritual maturity. Yet often times we tend to get spiritual maturity mixed up with physical maturity.”***

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