

The Mountain Messenger

**“Behold upon the mountains the feet of Him that
bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace!”
(Nahum 1:15a KJV)**

**Special
Edition**



**32nd Annual
Victory
Lectures**

**October 23-29,
2026**

**BECAUSE YOU
KNOW THE
TRUTH...**

A CHRISTIAN'S DEVOTION

THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

BLESSINGS OF WALKING IN THE LIGHT

Along with other great articles by...
Andy Robison, Bruce Daugherty, Jon Hescht,
and more...

A CHRISTIAN VOICE FROM THE MOUNTAIN STATE AND BEYOND

“...The churches of Christ greet you” (Romans 16:16).

OCTOBER 2026

VOL. 3 ISSUE 4

Editor's Note

There is a tremendous difference between knowing something and allowing what we know to change the way we live.

This special edition of *The Mountain Messenger* is being published in connection with the 32nd Annual West Virginia School of Preaching Victory Lectures. This year's lectureship theme comes from the words of John: "I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you know it" (1 John 2:21 NKJV). The lectures will focus primarily upon 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, and Jude. I love the wording of that theme: "Because You Know the Truth."

John was writing to people who already knew the truth. Yet knowing the truth carried with it a responsibility to continue walking in it. Many who read *The Mountain Messenger* have spent years studying the Bible. Some have heard thousands of sermons, attended countless Bible classes, and read the Scriptures throughout much of their lives. What a blessing that knowledge is. But Scripture never presents biblical knowledge as the destination. Truth is intended to transform us.

As I read the articles assembled for this issue, I was see how frequently that idea appears. Andy Robison reminds us that the Christian cannot ultimately say, "This is my life." The life of the Christian belongs to Christ. John Keith reminds us that obedience to Christ is connected with the fullness of Christian joy. Cedrick Goddard challenges us to consider whether our devotion to Christ is merely occasional or truly a lifelong commitment.

Then we see truth put into action. John Ward explains that Barnabas knew the truth and became an encourager. He gave, spoke, served, and saw potential in others. Andrew Robison reminds us that Christians are called not merely to know about the light, but to "walk in the light" (1 John 1:7). Jon Hescht challenges Christians to cultivate an eagerness to serve and to encourage another generation of men to desire the good work of leadership in the church. Jonathan Jarvis reminds us that the church itself has been given a mission. We possess a gospel that was never intended to remain with us. Jesus commanded His people to take it into "all the world."

That brings us very close to the purpose of *The Mountain Messenger*. Our goal has never been to produce another Christian publication. We want to place sound biblical teaching into the hands of people who need it. We want to encourage Christians, strengthen congregations, reach those who have not obeyed the gospel, provide opportunities for Christian writers, and use the means available to us to carry the message of Christ farther.

Because we know the truth, we have something worth sharing.

In Christian service,
Daniel P. Curry, Jr. "D.J."
Executive Editor

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32nd Annual WVSOP

Victory Lectures

The thirty-second annual West Virginia School of Preaching Victory Lectures will be held October 25-29, 2026 on the theme, "Because You Know the Truth" from 1 John 2:21. The lectures will mainly be expository studies from the General Epistles of 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, and Jude. A book will be available with the printed manuscripts. All lessons will be streamed on Facebook (both the West Virginia School of Preaching page and the Hillview Terrace church of Christ page). We have great speakers from West Virginia, Florida, Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, and Pennsylvania lined up. Our keynote speakers are Dan Jenkins and David Sproule, both from the Palm Beach Lakes congregation in Palm Beach Lakes, Florida. Don't forget that Monday through Thursday evenings at 6:30 we have congregational singing for one-half hour before the evening lecture! We hope you can be with us!

A full schedule is available on the back of this issue and at <https://wvsop.com/2026-victory-lectures/>.

Andy Robison
Director, West Virginia School of Preaching



The Mountain Messenger

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Executive Editor — Daniel P. Curry, Jr. "D.J."

Assistant Editor — Jon Hescht

Graphic Editors — Andrew J. Robison V, Kaylynn Robison

Cover Photography — Kaylynn Robison

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Office@AddedtotheChurch.com

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My Life

Andy Robison

Director, West Virginia School of Preaching

Older age can provide painful reminders of youthful mistakes. After forty-plus years, I became re-acquainted with the mother of a childhood friend. Her standout memory of teen-aged me was when I was sitting on their porch singing loudly some lame rendition of Billy Joel's "My Life." That song has the defiant lyrics, "I don't care what you say anymore, this is my life; Go ahead with your own life, leave me alone." The lady meant no insult to me; it was just a clear memory for her. I had forgotten. It did cause me to reflect a bit, though, and ponder some lessons I wished I had learned earlier (not that I hadn't been taught them).

1) "Oh, be careful little ears what you hear." In early days, there were many songs I arguably should not have listened to, should not have parroted, should not have promoted with my purchases. Many of those had no overt foul language, no blatant sensuality or violence referenced. In fact, it may not have been outright sinful to listen to them, but not all things that are lawful are wise (1 Cor 6:12; 10:23). Poems, lyrics, songs, movies, do not have to be blatantly vile to inculcate the mind with an ungodly world view. The point I labor to make here is not to quibble about phraseology or poetic license in artistry. Nor is it to police other persons' listening/viewing choices. It is simply to remind individuals to be careful of the input; that becomes the outgo. "Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life" (Prov 4:23; compare Matt 15:16–20 NKJV).

2) "Whoever desires to save his life will lose it" (Luke 9:24). There may be life circumstances that cause one to need to set boundaries. In those cases, the "My Life"

sentiment may be appropriate and necessary. However, as a world view it lacks both the example and instruction of Christ. Those following Christ want to be transformed into this image (Rom 8:29). He is the prime example of one who did not live His life for Himself. He came to do His Father's will (John 6:38). He did nothing of Himself (John 5:30; 8:28). He came not to be served but to serve and give His life for others (Mark 10:45).

My life in Christ is about giving up my life to allow Him to live in me (Gal 2:20). If I love my life, I'll lose it; but if I lose it for His sake, I'll save it (Luke 9:23–24). My life should be about making choices that help me grow closer to Christ, and, within that parameter, serve other people. Selfishness must not be my guiding model.

3) "Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth" (Eccl 12:1). I do not mean to be overly dramatic, but the encounter reminded me of days wasted when I could have been a better influence on those around me at the time. My influence for Christ could have been far more than it was. How much better it would have been had I listened to older wisdom, the Scriptures, and guided my life accordingly.

Thank God for His mercy. Paul had these feelings in his very extreme situation: And I thank Christ



My Life • Andy Robison

Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. However, for this reason I obtained mercy,

that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life. (1 Tim 1:12-16)

My life is not my life; it is Christ's. Another song, an American folk hymn solemnly resigns, "I am mine no more...I've been bought with blood...Jesus is my Lord; And He rules my life." That is a better lyrical sentiment. ▲



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That Your Joy May Be Full

John Keith

West Virginia School of Preaching Instructor

The Gospel of John, chapter thirteen, records the beginning of Jesus' tender farewell address to His disciples. That section includes the narrative of Jesus washing the disciples' feet (1–20), the betrayal by Judas (21–30), the new commandment and Peter's denials are foretold (31–38).

Chapter fourteen opens with Jesus telling them of His impending departure to “prepare a place for you” (2), and that He is the only way to the Father (6). Next, He responds to Philip's request to see the Father (8–11), before transitioning to a brief word about the works they could do relative to their faith in Him (12–14). This they would be able to do because of divine assistance from the Comforter who would come after Christ's return to Heaven (15:31; cf. 15:26–16:16).

His message about the true Vine opens chapter fifteen and Jesus explains that faithful abidance is necessary if anyone desires to bear fruit unto God and avoid being “cast forth as a branch” to be tossed into the fire (6). Bearing fruit is a daily vocation for the Christian for through it the (true) Holy Father is glorified and we are truly disciples of Christ when we show our faith by our works (Jas 2:18).

The love in that reciprocal relationship between God the Father and His obedient Son extends from God the Son to His obedient disciples, including Christians even today (9–10). Jesus shares this thrilling truth about Heaven's love with His disciples for at least two reasons: 1) that the joy Jesus experiences from abiding in His Father might continue to His disciples, 2) that the disciples might experience like-joy from their unqualified obedience to the Father and Son as well.

Love was the motive behind everything that Jesus said

and did. He loved the Father; therefore, He was obedient to Him. He loved mankind; therefore, He gave Himself on the cross. He loved the Pharisees, therefore, He sternly rebuked them and wept for them (Matt 23). Doing the will of the Father was the source of joy for our Lord Jesus Christ, and He tells us that our joy springs from the same: “If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full” (John 15:10–11 NKJV). ▲



A Christian's Devotion

Cedrick Goddard

West Virginia School of Preaching

2nd Year Student



When the Bible is examined and considered in its entirety, the concept of one's devotion toward God is quite evident. Since God is the Creator and Redeemer of mankind (Gen 1–2; Job 19:25), it is the case that He would desire for man to also be devoted to Him as He has

been to them. Every person is devoted to either a job, hobby, or relationship.

Yet, how many are devoted to the One who created them? It must be acknowledged that one's devotion to God is not based upon their perfection, but rather it is upon their perseverance. Many people throughout the Scriptures persevered and were faithful through hardships in order to serve God, though they were not sinless. Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Paul, and many other individuals within the Sacred Writings were devoted (i.e., faithful and loyal) yet were by no means without sin in their past. Moreover, if that one says they are devoted to God but does not follow His commands set forth in His Word, then is he really devoted to Him? Jesus said, "If you love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14:15 NKJV). If a man or woman were to make the claim of being devoted to God, then it would imply that he or she would be a diligent student, proclaimer, and doer of His inspired, inerrant, authoritative Word (i.e., the Bible). While many modern-day "Christians" may have

the idea that a Christian's devotion is merely sitting on a church pew on Sundays and Wednesdays, this view is far from the truth. Jesus describes devotion as denying oneself, taking up his cross, and following Him (Matt 16:24).

Some people may attempt to be partially devoted to sin and partially devoted to God. However, being partially devoted is not devotion at all; it is merely being a lover of the world while professing and claiming to be of God. Since devotion carries along the idea of faithfulness and loyalty to someone or something, how could one be loyal and faithful to God while rebelling against His will and Word through being partially devoted to sin? Furthermore, it is evident that God does not desire occasional weekend visits from part-time Christians. Nor does He desire lovers of the world who wear a mask of Christian devotion. He desires individuals who are fully, daily, and faithfully devoted to Him!

Unlike the belief of many, baptism is not the end, but rather the beginning of a Christian's devotion. The Ethiopian eunuch went on his way rejoicing after his conversion (Acts 8:38–39). Furthermore, the Apostle Paul immediately went and preached Christ in the synagogues directly following his baptism (Acts 9:18–20). Though one may be baptized, that one must continue in his devotion to Christ through the study of the Bible and through prayer. Devotion is not something which is decided when one awakes on a Sunday morning before church services; rather, devotion is a lifelong commitment which is decided upon at baptism at which point one comes in contact with the blood of Christ to whom that one is devoted! ▲

BARNABAS: the Encourager in Action

John Ward

West Virginia School of Preaching 2nd Year Student

In Acts 4:32–37, we are introduced to Joses, whom the apostles called Barnabas, meaning “Son of Encouragement.” His name alone tells us much about his character, but the Scriptures reveal even more. Among the many early Christians who sold lands to help the poor, Barnabas stands out. Barnabas was a Levite, and Levites had no land inheritance of their own: “For the tithes of the children of Israel, which they offer as a heave offering to the LORD, I have given to the Levites as an inheritance” (Num 18:24 NKJV). Nevertheless, Barnabas owned a piece of land and sold it for the benefit of others.

Barnabas understood that genuine giving involved personal cost. His generosity was measured not by the size of the gift, but by its extent. Such giving still honors God today. Barnabas could have used the proceeds for his own financial security. Instead, he laid it at the feet of the apostles for the work of the Lord. His actions echo the command given by Jesus: “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you” (Matt 6:33). The priorities of Barnabas were unmistakable: He invested in souls, the church, and

the mission of Christ. His giving was spiritual, and he sought the kingdom above himself.

Under the Old Law, Barnabas had the right to receive support from others: “Behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tithes in Israel as an inheritance in return for the work which they

perform, the work of the tabernacle of meeting” (Num 18:21). Under the New Law, Barnabas was now a Christian. Instead of taking, he gave. Herein, Barnabas displayed the heart of Christ: “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.” (2 Cor 8:9).

Barnabas helped others in three respects: by example, through words, and with presence. Barnabas encouraged in action, selling his land and giving generously, living an active faith, and being vigilant not to abuse his liberty: “Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working?” (1 Cor 9:6). His life strengthened others, urging them to “continue in the faith” (Acts 14:22). Barnabas not only inspired others by his presence, but he also stirred them by seeing the good in others. “And when Saul had come to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples; but they were all afraid of him, and did not believe that he was a disciple. But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles” (Acts 9:26–27). Later, when Paul refused to take John Mark on his next missionary journey, Barnabas saw the good in him (Acts 15:36–39).

Our words can be a “well of life,” a source of wisdom, and a tool for building up (Prov 10:11, 31–32). Christians are called to “consider one another in order to stir up love and good works” (Heb 10:24). We are commanded to think on what is true, noble, just, pure, lovely, and praiseworthy (Phil 4:8–9). Barnabas showed the importance of encouragement. The New Testament Church today desperately needs more people to give sacrificially, speak graciously, live faithfully, and lift others up. May we all follow the example of encouragement we observe in Barnabas. ▲



Blessings of Walking in the Light

Andrew Robison

West Virginia School of Preaching 2nd Year Student

Christians are meant to “walk in the light” (1 John 1:7 NKJV). What does it mean to walk in the light, and what are the benefits of doing so? The benefits that will be examined are the communion we have with God, the community we experience with other Christians, and the cleansing power of the blood of Christ.

God dwells in “unapproachable” light because He is light (1 Tim 6:16). Christ claimed to be the “light of the world” (John 8:12). The radiant light of God left Moses’ face glowing at Mount Sinai to the extent that Moses had to cover his face with a veil in the presence of the Israelites (Exod 34:29–35). As Christians, we are to “have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness” (Eph 5:11). John writes that we cannot have fellowship with God if we “walk in darkness” (1 John 1:6). When we “put off...the old man” to “put on the new man,” we should seek to avoid practicing deeds of darkness and strive to walk in the light (Eph 4:22–24). To truly have communion with God, we must endeavor to walk where He is—in the light. This is done when we “draw near to God”; James promises that when we do, God will in turn draw near to us (Jas 4:7–10). As God walked “in the cool of the day” with Adam and Eve, we can walk with Him if we (1) are in agreement, (2) walk “in the Spirit,” and (3) “walk by faith” (Gen 3:8; Amos 3:3; Gal 5:16; 2 Cor 5:7). Because “faith comes by hearing...the word of God,” to “walk by faith” with God, we must study His word and live by it to be in communion with Him (Rom 10:17; Ps 119:11, 105).

As each Christian walks with God, a blessed community that is founded on the truth of God’s word is experienced. The prophet recorded this stunning declaration: “[T]he Lord is in His holy temple. Let all the earth keep silence before Him” (Hab 2:20). The apostle Peter declared that the people of God (i.e., the church) make up the spiritual temple of God (1 Pet 2:4–10).

Paul plainly stated the profound truth that God dwells in and among His people, the church (2 Cor 6:16). If we desire, then, to dwell with God, we must be a part of His temple—the church. Our citizenship is in heaven, after all; we are mere sojourners on this earth (Phil 3:20). Is it then possible for Christians to “dwell together in unity” (Ps 133:1)? If we want true community as Christians—if we long to be united—we must unite on the truth (1 Cor 1:10). Unity cannot be achieved by tolerating the darkness we are meant to expose (Eph 5:11)! If we all strive to abide in the truth, we can walk with God in true community with one another.

The Lord has promised that “if we walk in the light as He is in the light...the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin” (1 John 1:7). In this one verse, we see the cleansing agent, the stain being cleansed, and the extent of the cleansing. The cleansing agent is the “precious blood of Christ,” which He shed “for the remission of sins” (1 Pet 1:18–19; Matt 26:28). It is only when one is baptized that His cleansing blood is accessed (Gal 3:26–27). The stain cleansed by His blood is that of our sins, washed away first in baptism (Rev 1:5; Acts 22:16; 1 Cor 6:9–11). The extent of the cleansing is all of our sin (1 John 1:7). The condition John gives for this continual cleansing is “if we walk in the light.”

Let us strive faithfully to walk in the light that we may have communion with God, community with one another, and the continual cleansing of our sin. ▲



Eager to Serve

How do we look at church leadership?

Jon Hescht

West Virginia School of Preaching Graduate

It is the goal of every congregation, whether they are currently able or consistently working towards it, and also the pattern set forth by the New Testament that they have qualified and capable men who can be appointed to the roles of Elder (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5; et al) and Deacon (Acts 6; 1 Tim 3) for their perspective congregations. There is a constant need for leadership and guidance of the flock, as well as a need to provide strong servant-leader examples to teach and encourage the brethren. The need is universally recognized as is the command, but oftentimes one key element can be easily assumed and therefore left un-emphasized: desire.

A common question asked of children is, “what do you want to be when you grow up?” Most will respond with various careers that they think seem fun or exciting – fireman, police officer, doctor, veterinarian, etc. Some children will give a deeper answer about wanting to be happy or healthy. These are the things they desire; they aspire to because they have seen the importance and attention shown by parents, teachers, and others they look up to.

Those same children also notice what things are *not* given as much attention or recognition. They notice when parents and others file attendance at services under “things to do if we have time and I feel like it.” They notice when parents make time for jobs or extracurricu-

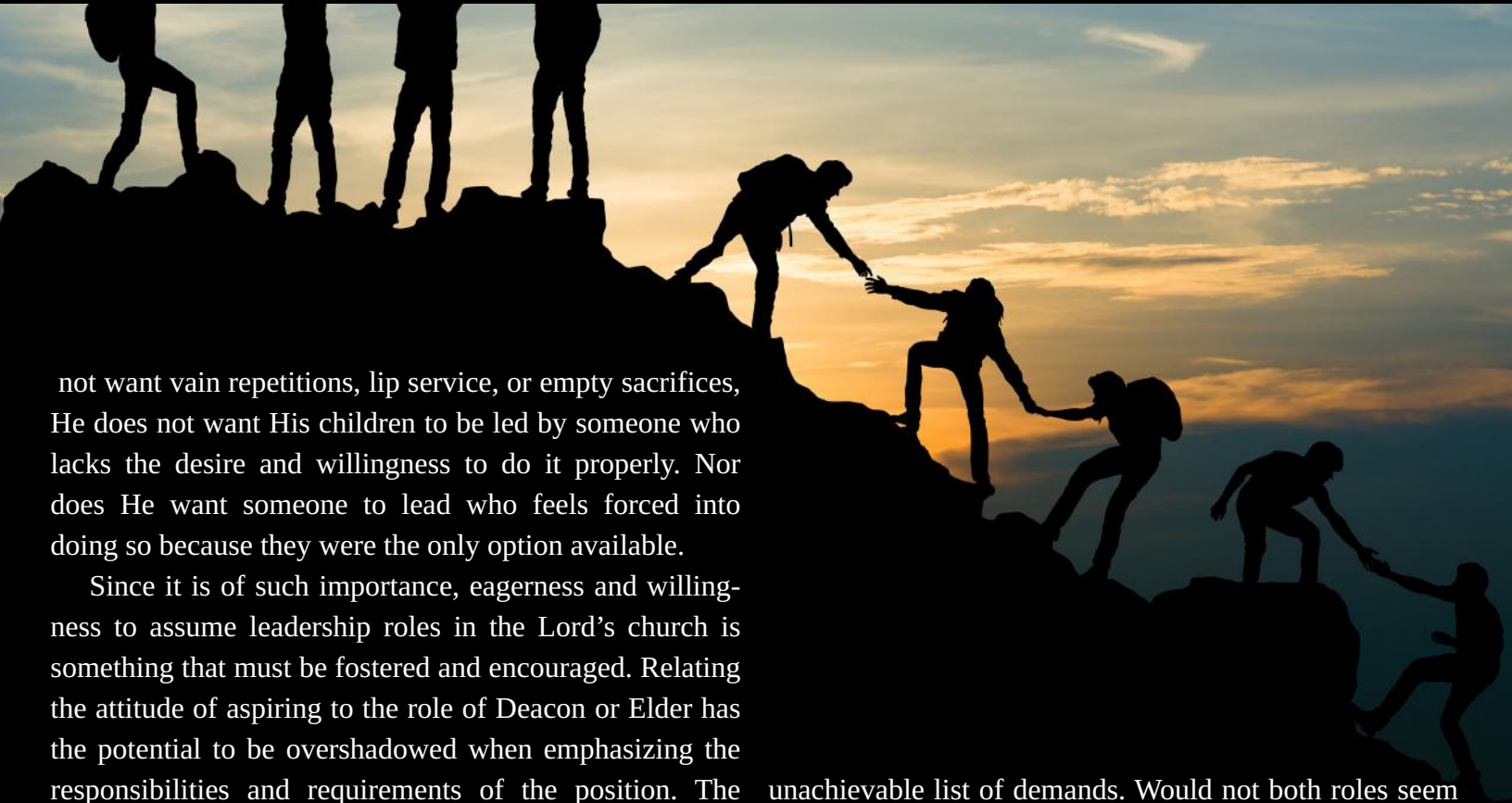
lars or sporting events but make plans to attend the Devo or Gospel Meeting only if it is on a Sunday or Wednesday at a “convenient” time. They notice when they are told “Seek ye first,” but are shown “try to squeeze it in if everything else is done.”

Children are naturally driven *towards* whatever is made to seem exciting and appealing and *away* from what is treated as a task or chore – something forced. Language used can play a large part in swaying opinion, which is why lessons on the difference between a “have to” and “get to” mentality in areas like simply going to church are often given. Seeing fellowship as an opportunity or a privilege sets a drastically different tone than treating it as a forced requirement.

This same idea should be what translates over into the work and leadership of the church. In his first letter to Timothy, Paul introduces the qualifications of an Elder with the idea that it is a “fine work” a man would aspire or desire to do (1 Tim 3:1). It is not described as a requirement that someone is forced to accept whether they want to or not, but as an opportunity to serve God in a greater capacity.

The willingness to take on the responsibility of leadership should directly correspond to the desire to be a servant to others (Mark 10:43–45). Peter gives a charge to those serving as Elders to those who were scattered to do so voluntarily [intentionally, deliberately] “with eagerness” (1 Pet 5:2). He also explains that doing so is following the will of God. In the same way that God does





not want vain repetitions, lip service, or empty sacrifices. He does not want His children to be led by someone who lacks the desire and willingness to do it properly. Nor does He want someone to lead who feels forced into doing so because they were the only option available.

Since it is of such importance, eagerness and willingness to assume leadership roles in the Lord's church is something that must be fostered and encouraged. Relating the attitude of aspiring to the role of Deacon or Elder has the potential to be overshadowed when emphasizing the responsibilities and requirements of the position. The focus on the expectations and qualifications is undoubtedly needed, but a pairing with a look at how attainable those qualifications are and the joy that can come from it is also desperately crucial.

Desiring to one day be appointed to either position might seem natural, but what happens when acknowledgement is not accompanied by appreciation and encouragement? What happens when all that is heard about the leadership of the congregation is what could have been done differently or what is not being done at all? The short answer is that what happens is exactly what is evidenced in congregations today—a gap in the number of qualified and willing men to serve in these dedicated roles leading to reduced leadership of the flock.

However, the key idea here is not to disparage but to examine what can be implemented to foster change and growth. A pivotal factor in having qualified men to fill these roles goes back to that idea of *desire*. The men Paul spoke of in 1 Timothy 3 had a desire to serve in that capacity. He then goes on to describe the type of person that is qualified to fill the role. The part that seems often forgotten is that what Paul describes is simply a strong, mature Christian man—not some ridiculously

unachievable list of demands. Would not both roles seem much more feasible and inviting if they were presented as a faithful, mature Christian man that had opportunity to teach others through example and encouragement?

Just like the child that sees the positive attention and recognition given to one career or another, younger children and younger Christians alike benefit from seeing positive attention and recognition given to those tasked with serving and leading the congregation. The writer of Hebrews instructs to obey and submit to leadership so that they may keep watch over the souls entrusted to them with joy (Heb 13:17). Let that joy be seen and taken to heart by all the congregation. The church at Thessalonica was told to hold their leaders in the highest regard in love because of their work (1 Thess 5:12–13). Let there be no question about the love and appreciation held for those in positions of leadership.

If the intent is to have more men aspiring to take up the role of Deacon or Elder, then the attitude should be to let all the congregation know how good and honorable that work is. Pray that when a child is asked what they want to be when they grow up, the answer of Deacon or Elder would be given. Foster a mindset of men who are eager to serve. ▲

THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

Jonathan Jarvis

West Virginia School of Preaching Graduate



Companies have mission statements, reflecting the hope of accomplishing something. NASA's mission statement says, "NASA explores the unknown in air and space, innovates for the benefit of humanity, and inspires the world through discovery."¹ Tesla's mission statement

says, "building a world of amazing abundance."² These are just two examples of what companies or organizations are about. The statements listed show the desire of the organization to meet a need with a focus on the world. There is one organization that also has a focus on the needs of the world, yet with a vision that is beyond the scope of the physical universe: the church.

The church is a divine institution that engages in a particular mission that is unlike anything any other human organization can rival. Based on the definition you find in the dictionary (I used Merriam-Webster), "mission" involves several key elements: the "what" (a task, or something to do or achieve), the "why" (the purpose for engaging the task), the "who" (the participants in the mission), the "when" (the time or timeframe), the "where" (place(s) involved), the "how" (the resources needed to complete the mission), and the outcome. Let's notice these elements with regard to the mission of the church.

The "what." The church's mission statement may be found in both Matthew 28:18–20 and Mark 16:15–16. The task assigned to the church is to spread the Gospel to the world by teaching and preaching.

The "why." Simply put, the church has this mission because Jesus said so. Most likely, every parent at some point has uttered the words "because I said so," indicating their authority to command their child to follow through with instruction given. Jesus said, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth" (Matt 28:18 NKJV). Why should we not listen to Him? Other than authority, Jesus gave this commission for the purpose that God "desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim 2:4).

The "who." This involves three people/groups of people. The first is the sender. In the Great Commission, Jesus is the sender who was ultimately sent to earth from heaven by God. The second group are those sent. Jesus gave the commission to His immediate apostles, who were initially sent out. The third group are the recipients of the message. This is "all the world" (Mark 16:15), "all nations" (Matt 28:19). This represents the people of the world.

The "when." The timeframe we have to engage in this mission is until "the day of the Lord" (1 Thess 5:2; 2 Pet 3:10), the final day of judgment.

The "where." This includes the physical place in which the church has its work, namely, "all the world" (Mark 16:15). There is no nation, race, or geographic region outside of the scope of the Gospel.

The "how." How is the church to accomplish the command of going into all the world? There are a couple of methods used in the New Testament: by walking on land and by using a boat to sail across the sea. Today, there are many more methods of "going" into all the world, including flying, and using modern technology like the internet to go virtually to places harder to reach in person. What about the "how" of teaching and preaching? The book of Acts shows both personal

THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH - JONATHAN JARVIS

conversations and public proclamations.

The results of fulfilling this commission are summarized by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount: those who hear and do the teachings of Jesus will not fall, and those who hear and do not do His teachings will fall (Matt 7:24-27). The former will be counted faithful to receive

the crown of life (Rev 2:10), and the latter will be considered unfaithful, receiving eternal separation from God (Matt 7:21-23). ▲

1. NASA. "About NASA." 16 September 2026. <https://www.nasa.gov/about/>
2. Tesla. "About Us." 16 September 2026. <https://www.tesla.com/about>

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BIBLE CLASS USING OUR GIFTS FOR GOD

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The Ethiopian Bible

David Kenney

West Virginia School of Preaching Instructor

If you have not heard of The Ethiopic Bible by now, you probably will. It has been promoted by some as the “Most Complete Ethiopian Bible.” Some claim 81 books; others advertise 88 books. The list of books may vary depending on what is being counted, e.g., “Liturgical Texts” (Sinodos, Book of the Covenant I, Book of the Covenant II, Ethiopic Clement, Ethiopic Didascalia, and Ser`atä). Some sources count Sinodos as four separate works (Order of Zion, Statutes, Gitzew, and the Apostolic Canon). So, one should be prepared to find various listings of books depending on what edition may be ordered. Also, be aware that even those who have historically used the Ethiopic Bible did not consider all the books within it equal in terms of canonicity.

The most important issue to remember, whether one is looking at a Protestant Bible, Roman Catholic Bible, Greek Orthodox Bible, Russian Orthodox Bible, Coptic Bible, or the Ethiopian Bible, is that all have the same sixty-six books we recognize as canonical. Books outside of this canon are treated differently among these various ancient Bibles. What books are NOT found in the Ethiopian Bible but included in others (though not necessarily in all others)? 1–4 Maccabees. What books are in the Ethiopian Bible(s), but not found in these others? 1, 2 Enoch, Jubilees, The Testament of the Three Patriarchs, Prayer of Manasses, 2, 4 Baruch, 1, 2, 3 Meqabyan, 1, 2, 3, 4 Sinodos, 1, 2 Book of the Covenant, Clement 1, and Didascalia. Now, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church does not necessarily consider these additional books on equal canonical status as the others.

Probably the work that stirs the greatest discussion is 1 Enoch. Some argue Jude’s quotation (vv. 14–15) of 1 Enoch (1:9) argues for its canonicity, but that is an overreach. Just because Jude quotes a portion of the work

that is accurate does not mean the entirety of 1 Enoch is accurate or canonical. New Testament writers quoted uninspired texts by pagans (cf. Acts 17:28; Titus 1:12), does that mean we should include those works or consider them “canonical?” It does speak to the existence of such a work, though it is only found in the Ethiopian Bible and partially among the Dead Sea Scrolls. Think about this: if the work was truly canonical, should it not be as abundant as the other books? If the claim was true that it came from Enoch, preserved by Noah, then how could Moses omit it? Maybe, probably, because it did not exist in the period it purports! The oldest copy was found among the Dead Sea Scrolls (ca. 3rd to 1st century BCE). The oldest copy from the Ethiopian Bible dates to the 15th century CE. Scholars have examined pseudepigraphic works and found these additional works do not reach the level of canonicity. It is not uncommon to find a copy of *The Lost Books of the Bible*; however, these were not actually lost but rejected. Still, many were purchased for the sake of curiosity.

There is much discussion on the diversity of books in various religious circles with some exclaiming they can find unity among these various extra books. While these additional works may serve some historical-cultural value, one must not assume these serve theological value. While a person is free to read these works, one may quickly realize that these just do not belong. There is an interesting statement by Josephus in his work



The Ethiopian Bible • David Kenney

Against Apion in c. 94 CE:

Our history hath been written since Artaxerxes very particularly; but hath not been esteemed of the like authority with the former by our forefathers; because there hath not been an exact succession of Prophets since that time. And how firmly we have given credit to these books of our own nation, is evident by what we do. For during so many ages as have already passed, no one has been so bold, as either to add anything to them; to take anything from them; or to make any change in them. (1:37–41)

He is referring to the Jewish canon of 24 books which equates to our 39 books of the Old Testament. Books such as 1,2 Enoch would be omitted by Josephus' statement.

These various Bibles have the same sixty-six books that we have, and all these various groups consistently recognized these same sixty-six books as canonical.

Additional books have been treated with various degrees of certainty and uncertainty. We can have confidence that we possess the true and complete canon of Scripture. We should be careful to keep our focus on what is certain and be cautious about what is spurious. ▲

Jones, Edward. *Original Version Ethiopian Bible in English: The Complete Encyclopedia, Including the Missing Deuterocanonical Apocrypha Enoch, Jubilee, Meqabyan and the Lost Writings*. 88 Books. n. p., 2024.

Nickelsburg, George W. E. "Enoch, First Book of." Pages 508–16 in vol. 2 of *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*. Edited by David Noel Freedman. 6 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1992.

Wilson, Asher. *The Most Complete Ethiopian Bible in English*. China: Holy Word Press, 2024.

Zuurmond, Rochus. "Versions, Ancient (Ethiopic)." Pages 808–10 in vol. 6 of *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*. Edited by David Noel Freedman. 6 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1992.



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Life in the Spirit

Bruce Daugherty

West Virginia School of Preaching Instructor

Romans 8 is the high, joyful culmination of all that Paul asserted since the statement of his theme “The just shall live by faith” (Rom 1:17 NKJV). The word “spirit” is found five times in the first seven chapters of Romans and eight times in chapters nine through eleven, but it is found twenty times in Romans 8. By means of the death of Christ and the presence of the Holy Spirit believers are enabled to walk in the newness of life.

But it is important to keep what the Bible says about the Spirit in view. Too often, vague notions that confuse emotionalism with the Holy Spirit abound in popular thinking. The Holy Spirit is not an impersonal force or power. The Spirit does not give feelings of euphoria that makes the day better. The Spirit does not “possess” one against their will and override inclinations to sin.

Christians are to “walk according to the Spirit” (Rom 8:1, 4). Even though they are still in the body with its weaknesses and temptations, there is a new behavior to follow for those who are led by the Spirit. This walk is submission to the leading of the Spirit through God’s word and results in life and peace (Rom 8:6).

To be “led by the Spirit of God” is proof that we are children of God (Rom 8:14). We can call on God as Father with intimate terms because we have been adopted into the family of God (Rom 8:15). Since we are God’s children there is an expectation of being heirs together with Christ in glory, if we suffer with Him (Rom 8:17, 18).

Life in the Spirit is forward looking. Christians “eagerly wait” in hope (Rom 8:19, 23, 25).

Till that hope is realized, God’s Spirit intercedes for His people (Rom 8:26–27). God’s providential care ensures that those who love Him are cared for in all of life’s circumstances (Rom 8:28). And the believer is assured that God will not let trial, persecution, or power separate them from Him (Rom 8:31–39).

There is also a need to avoid a misconception that some Christians have about the Bible, especially the Old Testament. When Paul said, “in the Spirit, not in the letter,” he was not pitting the Spirit vs. Scripture (Rom 2:29; 7:6; 2 Cor 3:6). Keep in mind the work of the Spirit—He inspired the message of the written Hebrew Scriptures and He was inspiring the Apostles and prophets of the New Testament as they were interpreting those passages for Christians (John 16:13; 2 Pet 1:20–21; 1 Cor 2:13). As Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount, He followed a formula explaining the law and the intent behind it. This was revealed in the repeated phrase “You have heard it said, but I say unto you . . .” The law said, “You shall not murder” (Matt 5:21–22). But Jesus explained that it was anger that led to murder, so people of the kingdom need to learn to love, not hate others. The old expression “The Old Testament is the New Testament concealed; the New Testament is the Old Testament revealed” is true. Do not pit the Spirit’s words of the Old Testament against the Spirit’s words in the New. The Spirit is the Author of both.

The life of justified people is to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit. This leading is revealed in the words the Spirit gave to inspired men like the apostle Paul. This Spirit led life brings countless joys of assurance, peace, and love. Dear reader, are you walking according to the Spirit? ▲





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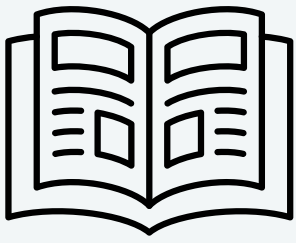
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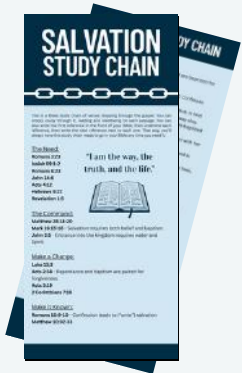
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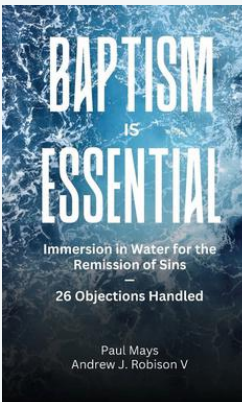
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General Resources



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Sharp Five Media - Affordable church websites and media by a member of the church - sharp-five.com



Bible Call - Access Bible information recordings online or by phone. - biblecallonline.com

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WVCYC "Pressing On" CD - Contact Andy Robison to order your CD or Thumb Drive!
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The Religious Coffee Hour - Podcast hosted by Hunter Melott found wherever you listen to podcasts.



Authentic Christian - Podcast produced by GBN, hosted by Aaron Gallagher and Scott Ingram gbntv.org/the-authentic-christian/

Deepen Your Knowledge



Apologetics Press - Articles, videos, books, etc. focused on the defense of New Testament Christianity - apologeticspress.org



Gospel Broadcasting Network - Provides Bible-based and unbiased resources from the Word of God - gbntv.org



Focus Press - Provides podcasts, articles, videos, books, and daily devotionals. - focuspress.org



World Video Bible School - Videos and free study courses on Biblical topics - wvbs.org



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Berean Study - Ask questions, find answers, and grow in your understanding of God's Word. - bereanstudy.app/get

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Memoria - Bible verse memorization tool. Removes 1 word at a time as you practice. - ajrv.us/bible/memoria



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WEST VIRGINIA SCHOOL OF PREACHING VICTORY LECTURES

October 25-29, 2026

BECAUSE YOU KNOW THE TRUTH - 1 John 2:21

Studies in the Epistles of John and Jude

Sunday B.C. - Introduction to the Epistle of Jude: Dan Jenkins
Sunday A.M. - Introduction to the First Epistle of John: Aaron Burch
Sunday P.M. - Introduction to the Second and Third Epistles of John: Dan Jenkins

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
9:00	"That Your Joy May Be Full" 1 John 1:1-4 Charles Pugh III	Little Children, Young Men, and Fathers 1 John 2:12-14 David Deagel	Distinguishing Between Truth And Error 1 John 4:1-6 Rico Brown	Gracious Gaius 3 John 1-8 Noah West
10:00	Walking In The Light 1 John 1:5-10 Skip Andrews	"Do Not Love The World" 1 John 2:15-17 Ed Melott	"Let Us Love One Another" 1 John 4:7-21 Scott Judge	Dictatorial Diotrephes and Dependable Demetrius 3 John 9-14 Mark Day
11:00	Jesus Christ: Our Advocate 1 John 2:1 Andy Robison	Concerning Antichrist 1 John 2:18-29 Dan Kessinger	Tests of Faith And Love 1 John 5:1-12 Phil Gear	Disciples, Deceivers, And The Doctrine Of Christ 2 John 7-13 Steve Smithbauer
1:15	Jesus Christ: The Propitiation 1 John 2:2 Paolo DiLuca	"Behold What Manner Of Love" 1 John 3:1-3 Rod Goddard	"Sin Leading To Death" 1 John 5:16-17 Don Schuler	"Contend Earnestly for The Faith" Jude 1-4 Robert C. Veil, Jr.
2:15	"By This We Know That We Know Him" 1 John 2:3-6 John Board	Victory Over The Practice Of Sin 1 John 3:4-12 Bruce Daugherty	A Trilogy Of Knowledge 1 John 5:18-21 Justin Odom	Apostasy: Old And New Jude 5-19 Brandon Foresha
3:15	New And Old Commandments 1 John 2:7-11 Dan Jenkins	The Contrast Of Love And Hate 1 John 3:13-24 Kyle Lancaster	Loving, Knowing, Abiding, and Walking 2 John 1-6 D.J. Curry	Steadfast Or Stumbling Saints? Jude 20-25 David Kenney
7:05	The Bible's Doctrine Of Truth Terry Jones	Faith Is The Victory 1 John 5:4 David Sproule	The Faith Once For All Delivered - Jude 3 David Sproule	Blessed Assurance 1 John 5:13-15 David Sproule

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