

March 10, 2019

Building Character

By Michael Hickox

Olney Church of Christ

220 North Van Street
Olney, IL 62450
217-218-0803
www.olneychurchofchrist.org

Services

Sunday

Bible Study	9:30 am
A.M. Worship	10:20 am
P.M. Worship	2:00 pm

Wednesday

Bible Class	7:00 pm
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Elders: Mike Gerber, Travis Hall

Deacons: John Frost, Dave Goff,
Roger Sholders

Visitors are welcome

We offer Bible classes for all ages

We also offer in-home Bible studies

We have Bible lessons on the radio
(92.9 FM) Sundays from 8:00-8:30 a.m.

Human beings can go to great lengths seeking opportunities to build character and become better people. While the world offers self-help books, seminars, etc. for growing in this way, God offers the greatest help.

When the apostle Paul spoke to the Ephesian elders in **Acts 20**, he told them ***“I commend you to God, and to the Word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified”*** (verse 32).

The Word of God builds faith (**Rom. 10:17**) and produces good fruit when it is sown in sincere hearts (**Matt. 13:23**). It is the book that can transform us from who we are into who God says we *should be*. It is the spiritual nutrition by which we can grow as God commands (**1 Pet. 2:2**).

If we want to improve our lives and the lives of others, let us seek the Lord’s solution. The Bible offers greater guidance than all other books ever written. Whether reading the Bible directly or hearing the truth of the Bible taught, God’s truth is the wisdom we should seek and respect as being far above those “words of wisdom” that originate in the minds of men (**Isa. 55:9**).

May we appreciate God’s Word, which can and does build sincere hearers up into the kind of people we should be.

Paul's Thorn in the Flesh

By Michael Hickox

2 Corinthians 12:7-10: *And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And He said unto me, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness." 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.*

Please notice a few things about Paul's thorn in the flesh:

First, note that this "problem" of Paul's was in many ways a *good* thing. The revelations Paul had seen (**2 Cor. 12:1-6**) could have made it easy for him to become arrogant and/or be exalted too highly by others. Thus, **verse 7** begins and ends with the words "***lest I should be exalted above measure.***" While Satan brings hardships into our lives to tear us down, God often brings or allows hardships to build us up. Paul's thorn in the flesh exemplifies this.

Paul's thorn in the flesh also demonstrates that the source of permanent joy is *not* having no trials or hardships,

but rather trusting and obeying God *through* whatever we face. Paul may have thought, "without this hardship, I could serve God better." Yet, in truth, he could serve God faithfully regardless of circumstances that were beyond his control.

Paul's spiritual-mindedness helped him accept when things did not "go his way," and even see his trials from a *positive* perspective (cf. **Rom. 5:3-4; Phil. 1:12-14**).

Notice also what Paul's "weakness" was. Paul did not say, "I am living in sin and cannot avoid it, but I take pleasure in knowing that God forgives me anyway." The "weaknesses" Paul endured were not sins, but infirmities, reproaches, necessities, persecutions, and distresses for Christ's sake (**2 Cor. 12:10**).

We might ask what *specific* hardship(s) were referred to when Paul spoke of his thorn in the flesh. Eye problems (cf. **Gal. 4:13-15**), speech problems (**2 Cor. 10:10**), harm from others (cf. **2 Tim. 4:14**), or other explanations may be proposed, but it is likely that none of us know for sure.

What we do know about Paul's thorn in the flesh is much more significant. Paul's thorn in the flesh was not sin he was guilty of, but a trial(s) he faced. This "thorn" was difficult for him, but he endured it joyfully and focused on the good it produced.

May we remember this when we face infirmities, reproaches, necessities, persecutions, and distresses in our lives.

Area Gospel Meetings

Walnut Chapel Church of Christ:

March 17-22 (with Jim Stauffer)

Sun: 9:30, 10:20, 6:00; M-F: 7:00

Casey Westside church of Christ:

March 21-24 (with Donnie Rader)

Th-F: 7:00; Sat: 6:00; Sun: 9:30, 10:20, 6:00

Hazel Dell Church of Christ:

March 24-29 (with Andrew Roberts)

Sun: 9:30, 10:30, 6:00; M-F: 7:00

Benton church of Christ:

March 24-28 (with Ron Griffin)

Sun: 9:30, 10:30, 6:00; M-Th: 7:00

River Ridge church of Christ:

March 31 - April 5 (with John Gibson)

Sun: 9:00, 10:00, 4:00; M-F: 7:00

God's Plan for Saving Man

God's Grace	Ephesians 2:8
Christ's Blood	Romans 5:9
The Holy Spirit's Gospel	Romans 1:16
Sinner's Faith	Acts 16:31
Sinner's Repentance	Luke 13:3
Sinner's Confession	Romans 10:10
Sinner's Baptism	1 Peter 3:21
Christian's Work	James 2:24
Christian's Hope	Romans 8:24
Christian's Endurance	Revelation 2:10

Prayer List

Holly G
 Barb A
 Sandy S (Foot Injury)
 Betty P
 Mabel H
 Norma's Grandson, Ryan (Head Injury)
 Cheryl S (Breast Cancer)
 Norma C (Injuries from fall)
 Jerry G (Throat Cancer)
 Mattie B (Leukemia)
 Tom B (Hospice) & Family
 Linda & Family
 Dody G
 Joe B (Lung Cancer)
 Allen S (Cancer)
 Jeanette & Family
 Raymond B
 Mike D (Broken Neck)
 Everly G

Daily Bible Reading

Mar. 10 – Numbers 32-34; Mark 9:30-50
 Mar. 11 – Numbers 35-36; Mark 10:1-31
 Mar. 12 – Deut. 1-3; Mark 10:32-52
 Mar. 13 – Deut. 4-6; Mark 11:1-18
 Mar. 14 – Deut. 7-9; Mark 11:19-33
 Mar. 15 – Deut. 10-12; Mark 12:1-27
 Mar. 16 – Deut. 13-15; Mark 12:28-44

Prayer Leaders

Sunday, March 10, 2019

Bible Study: Dan H

Worship: Steve

Evening: Darrell

Wednesday, March 13, 2019

Larry

Cleaning Building

Misty

Prepare Communion

Misty

Upcoming Reminders

March 23: Ladies' Bible Class @ 9:30 a.m.

June 15: Vacation Bible School

Assignments

Sunday, March 17, 2019

Reading: Mike

Announcements: Harold

Table: Steve

Serve: Mark

John

Travis

Jim

Wednesday, March 20, 2019

Invitation: Michael

Anniversaries

March 22 - Raymond & Maxine

March 28 - John & Cynde

Birthdays

March 12 - Ron

March 13 - Harold

March 15 - Anna