

"Pray for one another, that you may be healed" (James 5:16)

Jo Byrnes * Joyce Coones * Sleatha Gore
H.C. Henderson * Faye Kilpatrick

This Week's Birthday & Anniversaries

Tony & Lisa Beach (tomorrow) * Lisa Beach (Thursday)
Jerry & Avilene Smith (next Sunday)

Gospel Meeting

Pine Avenue church of Christ, Ocala, FL * July 6-11
Al Sandlin, preaching * 7:00 PM Monday through Friday.

"He Who Comes to God" (Heb. 11:6)

What Must I Do To Be Saved?

- ❖ Hear the word of God (Mk 4:24; Lk 8:18; Rom 10:17).
- ❖ Believe the word of God (Jn 20:30-31; Heb 11:6).
- ❖ Repent, the first word of the gospel (Ac 2:38; 26:20).
- ❖ Confess (Jn 12:42, 43).
- ❖ Be Baptized (Eph 4:4-6) —
 - ↳ Buried (Rom 6:3-7; Col 2:11, 12; 3:1).
 - ↳ In water (Jn 3:5-7; Ac 8:36-38; 22:16).
 - ↳ For the forgiveness of sins (Ac 2:38; Heb 10:18).
 - ↳ To be saved (1Pe 3:20, 21).
 - ↳ Putting on Christ (Gal 3:26-29).
 - ↳ Into a unified body (1Co 12:13; Eph 4:4-6).
- ❖ Live faithfully until the Lord comes (1Th 4:13-18), or until you die (Heb 9:27; Rev 14:13).

~ CHURCH OF CHRIST ~

Meeting at 211 NE 2nd Street in beautiful Chiefland, Florida
Post Office Box 2539, Chiefland, FL 32644

THINGS ABOVE

"If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth."

— Colossians 3:1, 2 —

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ELDERS

Buddy Johnson 493-2948
Devoise Lord 463-2226

DEACONS

Tony Beach 493-2332
H.C. Henderson Jr. 493-4568
Jerry Smith 493-4381

PREACHER Jamey Hinds — preachinginchiefland@yahoo.com
Home (352) 493-1744 Office 493-1242 Cell 949-5789

www.chieflandchurchofchrist.com

When Brethren Compete

By Jamey Hinds

When brethren compete *there are no winners*. The Lord doesn't gain from our competing against one another; the congregation doesn't either. And instead of there being a close fellowship, at best there will be an undercurrent detrimental to the work of the Lord; the worst is open animosity.

In Galatians 5:13-15 the apostle Paul wrote, "For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another."

For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ But if you bite and devour one another, take care lest you be consumed by one another.”

The imagery the apostle uses here is graphic—we can well imagine a jungle seen in which animals bite at and devour one another. We already have an enemy who is seeking to devour us: “Your adversary **the devil** prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour” (1 Pet. 5:8).

Sometimes the problem of competition among brothers and sisters originates from pride — we think too highly of ourselves than we should (*see* Rom. 12:16). How do we become the standard of determining right and wrong for others?

“We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to build him up. For Christ did not please himself, but as it is written, ‘The reproaches of those who reproached you fell on me.’ . . . Therefore, accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God” (Rom. 15:1-3, 7).

“Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, *showing tolerance for one another in love*” (Eph. 4:1, 2). The parallel passage comes from Col. 3:12, 13 — “So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.”

In putting on a heart of compassion, we should understand that this is a deliberate choice to be made and put into action. It doesn’t come accidentally — it is deliberate: we choose to do this. And the reason why we choose to put on a heart of compassion is because we love our brethren.

“We know that we have passed out of death into life, be-

cause we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death. Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. . . . If someone says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen” (1 Jn. 3:14-15, 20).

Frustration sometimes gets the better of us. Satan can use frustration to completely stop us from doing what we need to do in the vineyard of the Lord. Frustration is something we all go through at some point in our journey toward heaven. But, how will we deal with it?

If we look too closely at what others are or are not doing, then we have lost our *focus*. Just like the apostle lost his focus when he walked on water at the Lord’s command — “Peter said to Him, ‘Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water.’ And He said, ‘Come!’ And Peter got out of the boat, and walked on the water and came toward Jesus. *But seeing the wind*, he became frightened” and he began to sink (Mt 14:28-30).

Frustration can grow to the point of discouragement, if we allow it. Discouragement can go on until it becomes animosity toward our brethren. Satan wants this to happen because then he has won.

One older brother in Christ suggested to me years ago to not allow disappointment in my brethren to become discouragement. There is a difference between being disappointed and being discouraged — disappointment is the *seed*; discouragement is the *tree*.

We need to pray for each other more. And we need to be more tolerant of each other. Think of a child who doesn’t understand something they’re being taught — tolerance continues to teach and lead; intolerance berates. “Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you” (Eph 4:31-32).

