

“A man who isolates himself seeks his own desire; he rages against all wise judgment” (Prov. 18:1). So, we must go to them. And I would suggest this — if they won’t accept help, then pray for them right there and then (right in front of them so that they can *hear* the prayer) and ask God to soften their hearts and for Him to help where we apparently cannot.



Bible Reading Plan – Week 4

I want to begin this week’s reading plan by thanking brother Spann for faithfully announcing our reading plan. With that said, I want to encourage everyone to do their best to do the reading: it will increase your faith and help you get closer to God. “Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17). Find a Bible you can cozy up to, find a quiet place, and get closer to your soul’s Creator and Savior. —Jamey

- SUN = Mark 1:1-45
- MON = Mark 2:1 – 3:19
- TUE = Mark 3:20 – 4:34
- WED = Mark 4:35 – 5:43
- THU = Mark 6:1-52
- FRI = Mark 6:53 – 8:10
- SAT = Mark 8:11 – 9:29

Prayer List – Jo Byrnes * Joyce Coones * Sleatha Gore * Essielene Henderson * Faye Kilpatrick * Gary Ogden * Pat Hunt

Out of Town – the Cannons * the Johnsons

Birthdays – Ray Knisley (*Wed*) * Prentice Spann (*Thu*)
* Lauren Robison (*Fri*) * Sherry McElroy (*Sat*)

Church of Christ

Meeting at 211 NE 2nd Street in beautiful Chiefland, Florida
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THINGS REVEALED

“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 • Devoise Lord

DEACONS Tony Beach • H.C. Henderson • Jerry Smith

PREACHER Jamey Hinds

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The Athletic Christian

By W. Frank Walton • via *Focal Point*

“Train yourself in godliness, for, the training of the body has a limited benefit, but godliness is beneficial in every way, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come” (1 Timothy 4:7, 8 HCSB).

The Olympic athletic competition reminds us of the amazing skill, stamina, speed, and strength with which God’s potentially endowed the human body. The Olympics showcases the fruition of many hours of practice over many years. No one wins accidentally; no one shows up at the last minute saying, “Hey, I’d like to win a gold medal; may I compete?” The best only win due to an all-out effort, both in training and competition.

As Christ's disciple, a Christian is a spiritual athlete in the arena of pleasing God. "Train" (Greek *gumnázo*) means "to exercise vigorously" (Thayer), as in a "gymnasium." The regular habits — of Bible reading, prayer, meditation, self-control in shunning sin, praising and thanking God, loving and serving others, constantly thinking and acting like Jesus, always doing what's right, attending church, *etc.* — have spiritual benefits on earth. It makes us better people, like Jesus, who glorify God by living life as He designed it.

We are now becoming what we shall one day be. We are what we continuously do. The apostle Paul repeatedly uses athletic imagery to describe vigorous discipleship, and he urges us, "Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable" (1 Corinthians 9:25). He also exhorts us, "If anyone competes as an athlete, he does not win the prize unless he competes according to the rules" (2 Timothy 2:5). This is strictly following the New Testament training manual.

The future benefit of this spiritual athleticism is it also fits us for heaven's eternal fellowship with God. Revelation 2:7 promises that Heaven is for "those who overcome" (Greek *nikáo*, "conquer, are victorious"). It is a prepared place for a prepared people. With Christ "they will reign forever and ever" (Revelation 22:5). No more defeats or disappointments. In heaven's winner's circle, all will be an unbroken celebration of joy! By God's grace, the victory has been won!

We act consistent with how we see ourselves. The greatness of the Christian's race to eternity motivates rousing passion to "run . . . that you may win" (1 Corinthians 9:24).



Helping the Hurting

By Jamey Hinds

What should we do when a brother or sister leaves the family? What should we do when they stop attending worship services and Bible studies — when they don't take the Lord's Supper as they should, thus profaning the sacrifice of the Son of God? (*see* Heb. 10:29) Do we simply *ignore* them and *overlook* their sin? Will doing so get them closer to Heaven or Hell? Do we wag our heads and wonder what went wrong? Or, do we follow after them with a spirit of urgency, love, and gentleness?

It is difficult to confront someone when they seem determined not to be confronted. We may call, but we either don't get them on the line, or they talk but won't discuss what's really bothering them. How do we help them when they're like this?

In my asking all these questions I don't have the quick answers. If I did, I'd be selling books and making money. But I am asking in all seriousness because I really wonder how we successfully bring back lost sheep into the fold from which they left.

Paul's apostolic advice is this — "Brethren, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:1-2).

When a brother or sister in Christ *refuses* help they desperately need, then we must continue, with longsuffering in our hearts, to assist them in any way possible. Wouldn't we rather be criticized *for* helping than *not* helping? Wouldn't we want our brethren to help us even if we're acting stubbornly?

