

# The South Florida Avenue **MESSENGER**

CHURCH OF CHRIST

**A Friendly Church With a Vital Message Proclaiming the Unsearchable Riches of the Lord Jesus.**

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**SUNDAY SERVICES**  
Bible Study.....9:30 a.m.  
Worship.....10:30 a.m.  
Evening Worship.....6:00 p.m.

**WEDNESDAY**  
Ladies Class.....10:00 a.m.  
Bible Study.....7:00 p.m.

**HOME OF**  
Florida School of Preaching

**MISSION FIELDS**  
Dub Hill.....Russia  
Don Iverson.....India  
Marc Veary....Malawi, Africa  
Graham McDonald..Scotland  
J. Paguaga....Honduras, C.A.  
Joey Treat.....Pacific Islands  
Ted Wheeler.....Ghana, W.A.

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IN  
SEARCH  
OF THE LORD'S WAY

Sundays @ 8:30 a.m. Check local listings

## The “Knots” of Peer Pressure

Brian R. Kenyon

The term “peer pressure” is often only associated with teenagers. However, all Christians to some extent must deal with the temptation of pleasing others instead of God. Peer pressure is good when the peers are faithful Christians, but many times our non-Christian peers pressure us to act in ways contrary to God’s will. To keep from being “knotted up” by peer pressure, let us consider two points from Paul’s statements in Galatians 1:10, “For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ” (Gal. 1:10).

**The “Knot” of Compromise** We must not compromise the Gospel. Paul began that verse by stating that he could not compromise the Gospel in order to please others. Paul’s enemies, the Judaizing teachers, no doubt accused him of pleasing others at the expense of truth (cf. Gal. 6:15; 2 Cor. 10:1-18). The term “persuade [seeking the approval, ESV]” is translated from a word that means to convince, win over; to seek favor or approval from (found again in Gal. 5:10; 2 Cor. 5:11). The word “please” carries the idea of trying to be acceptable to another (Rom. 8:8; 15:1-3). By asking the rhetorical questions, Paul was inviting the Galatians to examine what they knew of him. Based upon his example, Paul was obviously seeking to please God! How could anyone successfully charge Paul with wanting to please men? He just pronounced a curse upon anyone who would preach a “different gospel” (Gal. 1:8-9)?

**The “Knot” of Pleasing Others** We must not please others at the Gospel’s expense. Paul showed that serving Christ and pleasing people at the Gospel’s expense are incompatible. Being the slave of Christ means that we must be willing to give up all for Him, including the desire to have the favor of men. John spoke of those who did not confess Christ, even though they believed, because “they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God” (Jn. 12:42-43). Paul’s use of “still,” in the clause, “if I still pleased men,” was his admission that when he served Judaism, even to the point of persecuting Christians (Acts 7:58; 8:1), he was doing it more to please men than to please God, even though at the time he thought he was serving God (Acts 23:1; 2 Tim. 1:3). A “bondservant” is a slave (Gal. 3:28; 4:1; 6:5-6), and since “No man can serve two masters” (Mt. 6:24), we cannot be a true servant of Christ when we are trying to please men at the Gospel’s expense!

Serving Christ is not always easy, especially when we are pressured by peers who are not spiritually minded. Biblical examples such as Paul give insight and encourage us to remain faithful. Let us avoid being “knotted up” by peer pressure, remembering that “as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, even so we speak [and live], not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts” (1 Thes. 2:4).

# Eternally Thinking, Eternally Living

Robert Johnson

*“Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away” (James 4:14).*

There is a line in the movie “The Quiet Man,” which starred John Wayne and Maureen O’Hara, in which O’Hara, playing John Wayne’s wife, said, “I must have my things about me!” It seems many today have the same philosophy about life. We easily get caught up in having our things about us, but forget life isn’t about the things we accumulate. It’s interesting, as we go through life, the things we must have about us change frequently. We accumulate all sorts of stuff, but we are never satisfied with what we have, being attracted to whatever is the latest and the greatest. We have to go here, see this, do that, but the gratification from it all is short lived, and we want to move on to other experiences. In the process of indulging desires, we may miss out on what life is all about.

Things may loom large in importance to us, until someone close to us has to deal with an accident, a serious illness or something else that threatens his or her time on earth, or that someone else becomes oneself. When faced with one’s own mortality, or that of a loved one, things no longer seem that intriguing. We are reminded at such times that what really matters are those we love and care for, relationships with each other, time spent together while there is still time. Most of all, our relationship with God and where we will spend eternity becomes most important.

James reminds us we are not masters of our own destinies. We can make all kinds of grandiose plans, but we don’t really know what can happen from one minute to the next. If you consider the sum total of the days of our lives, compared to how long we will spend in eternity, we are a vapor, a puff of smoke that is briefly visible and then dissipates and is gone. The things of life we had about us will be taken up by others, sold or even discarded, but we will go into eternity. Solomon said, “As he came from his mother’s womb, so he will go again, naked as he came; he will take nothing for his efforts that he can carry in his hands” (Ecclesiastes 5:15). What each one of us takes is what we have carried in our hearts, which comes from within and makes us what we are – how we think, feel and act. How that has motivated us to live our lives will be what we answer for in judgment. Jesus reminds us, “For from within, out of people’s hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immoralities, thefts, murders, adulteries, greed, evil actions, deceit, promiscuity, stinginess, blasphemy, pride, and foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a person” (Mark 7:21-23).

We have no clue when the vapor of our lives will vanish, but we do know what will happen afterwards. “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad” (2 Corinthians 5:10). Will our lives have been filled with things or relationships? Will we have pursued stuff or righteousness? Will our memories be of things that no longer exist or of spiritual realities that commend us to heaven? The longer we live, the more yesterdays we accumulate, and the fewer tomorrows we have. With the time you have, how do you live? What do you live for?

We can’t go back and undo our mistakes, but we can decide to make a difference starting today, for whom we live and what we do with life. Appreciate what you have, whether little or much and what God provides for your physical well-being. Love the people in your life, for you don’t know how long you have them to love. Remember that Jesus is Lord, and let God be God. Live for the eternal. When the smoke of life clears in the here and now, have you lived so that there is something better waiting for you, an existence that will never fade away in eternity. “Praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. According to His great mercy, He has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead and into an inheritance that is imperishable, uncorrupted, and unfading, kept in heaven for you” (1 Peter 1:3-4). Live for what lasts longer than a vapor or a puff of smoke. Live eternally thinking.

# SFA FAMILY MATTERS

## Prayer List

**Our Members:** Jim Turner is real weak, and still has infection. Please call before you visit with him. Becky Sheumaker was home with bronchitis. Jacquelin Dopwell's cancer has returned in several places and is spreading rapidly. She plans to do more chemo in the near future. Also keep Ginny Hamby, JoAnn Hoback, Elizabeth Tubbs, Carla Moore, Debbie Horsley and Margaret Coone in prayer.

**Relatives:** Wayne Hendrix, Bonnie Patterson, Tonya Mathis, Dee Moore, Margie Bolding, Lydia Tubbs, (Elizabeth Tubb's mother), Preston Craft (Melissa Craft's brother) and Harold Rister.

**Shut In Members:** Virginia Plumlee, Ann Howard, Dick & Joyce Burbage, Janet Crosby, Duane Nelson and Sharon Edler.

**Others:** Jackie Stearsman, Chrissi Fuesner and Alyssa Buckner. Keep all of these in your prayers.

## Upcoming Events

**September 17th:** Men's breakfast at the Hilltop Church of Christ in Winter Haven at 8:00 a.m.

**September 18th:** Baby shower and potluck dinner after the morning worship service for Josh and Marissa Estridge.

## Sympathy

Joe Shanes, Jeanelle Thrower's brother, passed away 8/29 in Tennessee. Please keep Jeanelle and the family in your prayers.

## Response

Elizabeth Tubbs requested prayer from the congregation. Please let's all pray and encourage her.

## Placed Membership

Chaz & Molly Hines placed membership last Sunday. Let us please welcome them into our family.

## Change of Address

Janet Crosby has been moved to Valencia Hills Re-hab Center, room #317,

## Visitors

Heath Rowe, Sari Rowe, Danielle Eisenhard, Katrina Greene, Yvonne Reynolds and Victor Travis.

## SCHEDULED TO SERVE

### September

Charles Paulin ..... Table ..... C.J. Grimes  
Tucker Sweeney ..... Assist ..... Bobby Sheumaker

Sunday, September 11, 2016  
9:30 A.M.

Song at Bible Class ..... Tucker Sweeney  
Prayer ..... Bobby Sheumaker  
10:30 A.M.

Announcements ..... Stacey Paulin  
Song Leader ..... Jason Hendrix  
Opening Prayer ..... David Anderson  
Sermon ..... Hiram Kemp  
Closing Prayer ..... David Deal

6:00 P.M.  
Song Leader ..... Paul Romine  
Opening Prayer ..... Jimmy Sweeney  
Sermon ..... Hiram Kemp  
Greeters ..... The Kenyon's  
Att. Cards ..... Ian & Sebastian  
Closing Prayer ..... Tyler Anderson  
Open & Close Building ..... Phil Fife

Wed. September 14, 2016  
Song Leader ..... Steve Hunley  
Opening Prayer ..... C.J. Grimes  
Closing Prayer ..... Steve Hunley

Please meet in the library. If you cannot serve, please call Chuck Wyatt so he can get a replacement - 859-5231

Sunday, September 18, 2016  
9:30 A.M.

Song at Bible Class ..... Frank Hamby  
Prayer ..... Kyle Bingle  
10:30 A.M.

Announcements ..... Stacey Paulin  
Song Leader ..... Jason Hendrix  
Opening Prayer ..... Paul Romine  
Sermon ..... Hiram Kemp  
Closing Prayer ..... Bob McAnally

6:00 P.M.  
Song Leader ..... Paul Romine  
Opening Prayer ..... Fred Strickland  
Sermon ..... Hiram Kemp  
Greeters ..... The French's  
Att. Cards ..... Sebastian & Quadarius  
Closing Prayer ..... John McShane  
Open & Close Building ..... Phil Fife

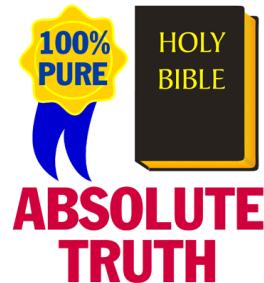
Wed. September 21, 2016  
Song Leader ..... Frank Hamby  
Opening Prayer ..... John McShane  
Closing Prayer ..... Kenny French

## ~ HOW ARE WE GIVING ~

Aug. 14.....	\$4,293.10
Aug. 21 .....	\$4,394.02
Aug. 28.....	\$4,535.83
Sept. 04.....	\$5,659.00
Contribution Average.....	\$4,961.40
2016 Weekly Budget.....	\$4,422.60

# "Purity" by Whose Standards?

A few years ago, a consumer bought a bottle of vanilla extract that had written in big bold letters, "100% Pure Vanilla." After using it in a recipe or two, he read the ingredients to discover that it also contained corn syrup. Furious that such a product could be labelled "100%" and still contain a different substance, he actually called the product information number listed on the label. When he finally reached an actual person, and discussed the issue at length, the customer service representative finally said sharply, "Well, according to government standards we can label the product 100% pure." What this reveals about our government's standards on ingredients can be saved for another discussion by someone more expert in that field than this writer. There is, however, a spiritual application to this incident. We cannot truly practice "pure religion" (cf. James 1:27), unless our beliefs and actions are based solely on what God has revealed! There are those in the religious world whose standards may include some of God's word, but also some doctrines of men. While these religions may appear as good or better than others, they cannot be the "pure religion" God desires. Partially correct standards are not the same as the pure standards of God. Jesus said that we are to live by "every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). Paul warned, "Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy (continued below)



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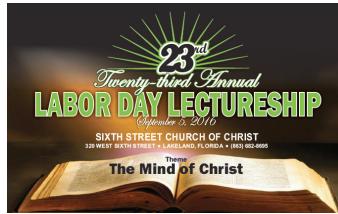
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The End of Your Search for a Friendly Church . . .



Hiram Kemp and Terrance Brownlow-Dindy (minister of the 6th Street church of Christ) have begun a 15 minute radio program, "**The Way of Truth**," which airs Monday evenings from 5:00-5:15 on WWAB, AM 1330.

**Special Thanks** to those who attended 6th Street's Labor Day Lectureship, SFA was well represented! Thanks for your sacrifice and encouragement!



**Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness** Matthew 6:33

(continued from above) and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ" (Colossians 2:8). Members of the church in Colosse were beginning to mix Judaism, paganism, and Christianity together as one religion, much like the "Coexist" crowd today, but such would have been disastrous. Humanly devised systems are powerless to save! Paul told the Colossians (and us) how to keep Christianity pure: "And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him" (Colossians 3:17). Doing everything in "the name of the Lord" does not mean to dedicate everything to Him, but it means only to do those things He authorizes (Matthew 7:21-23). May we dispel deception and realize that "pure religion" can only be based on the pure Gospel.  Brian