

**Noteworthy**

**Prayer Requests:** Jo Anderson, Karen Berry (*recovering from accident*), Margaret Blackburn (*pancreas and hip*), Joe Brown (*cancer*), Marian Church (*neck and back*), Mildred Church, Sunny Day (*Had dental surgery last week*), Linda James, Paul Lloyd, Neil Miller (*back*), Butch Morgan (*ongoing medical*), Dottie Reynolds (*back, ongoing medical*), Ken Turner.

*Our family and friends:* Tonya Bryan (*Dottie's Reynold's daughter*), Ned Hicks (*Larry Hick's father, ongoing medical*), Plen Hicks (*Larry's brother*), Brian James (*cancer*), Jesse Jordan (*Yvonne Jordan's husband*), Ardis Tucker (*Paula Sullivan's sister-in-law*), Lourdes Villalobos (*Rowena Lawson's mother*), Bob Waldron (*ongoing medical*), Charles Woods (*Ed and Terrell's brother-in-law*).

**Out of Town:** Larry and Cindy Hicks will be out of town until 1/2/17.

**Bible Class Review:** The next kid's review class will be January 8th, shortly after the evening services, in classroom # 7.

**Group Meeting:** Group (1) meets tonight after worship.

**Ladies Bible Class:** The next Ladies' Bible will be held Monday, January 9th at Angela Wisdom's home (@ 7PM). In preparation, please study lesson number VII that begins on page # 131 in the book, "Some Do's and Don'ts for the Christian". (*See the sign-up sheet in the foyer*)

**New Quarter:** Next Sunday begins a new Bible class quarter. The high school class will combine with the adult class, and Ronnie Henderson will begin teaching on various topics in the auditorium. All other age groups will be studying the Invasion & Conquest and Judges periods of Bible History.

**Assignments for Worship Service**

**Wednesday Night: 12/28/16**

Song Leader: Trent Stevens  
 Opening Prayer: Colby Sadler  
 Invitation: Clay Sadler  
 Announcements: Mike Sadler  
 Closing Prayer: Ian Rice  
 Recordings: Bob Marschall  
 Usher: Leon Miller

**Sunday Evening: 1/1/17**

Song Leader: Keith Marschall  
 Opening Prayer: David Williams  
 Lord's Table: Colby Sadler  
 Announcements: Larry Hicks  
 Closing Prayer: Sherman Johnson  
 Recordings: Trent Stevens  
 Usher: Gus Johnson

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**Sunday Morning: 1/1/17**

Lord's Table: Colby Sadler (B)  
 Jordan Lawson (C)  
 Serving: Keith Marschall  
 Trent Stevens  
 Song Leader: Larry Wisdom

Opening Prayer: Leon Miller  
 Announcements: Larry Hicks  
 Closing Prayer: David Williams  
 Recordings: Clay Sadler  
 Usher: Gus Johnson



**Lakeland Hills  
 Leader**

**LAKELAND HILLS CHURCH OF CHRIST**

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**ELDERS**

Larry Hicks (863) 899-7405  
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 Larry Wisdom (863) 583-4311

**SERVICES**

Sunday  
 Bible Study 9:00 A.M.  
 Morning Services 9:50 A.M.  
 Evening Services 6:00 P.M.  
 Wednesday  
 Bible Study 7:30 P.M.

**DEACONS:**

Robert Marschall  
 Michael Sadler  
 Moses Stevens  
 David Williams

**EVANGELIST:**

Ian Rice (863) 213-9795

***Churches -- God-Centered or Man-Centered?***

Religion by its very definition would seem to involve God. The word godly means God-centered. However, there are those who practice a religion that is all about man rather than God. To say that such religion is godly is not to say that it is wicked, but simply that it is not centered in God.

Jesus described such people in his day in the words of Isaiah: "These people draw near to me with their mouth, and honor me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. And in vain they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men" (**Matthew 15:8-9**). Paul writes of those who are "lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God" while at the same time "holding a form of godliness" (**2 Timothy 3:4-5**). Jude describes some who are in the church, but are "ungodly men, who turn the grace of God into licentiousness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ" (**Jude 4**).

Why would ungodly individuals continue to profess religion? Some do so, "supposing that godliness is a way of gain" (**1 Timothy 6:5**). Others, like Diotrophes (**3 John 9**), love the preeminence that they have attained in the church. Or, like the rulers of (**John 12:43**), they may love "the praise of men more than the praise of God."

### Contrasting Churches

Local churches may be led either by godly or by ungodly men — that is, by men who are most concerned for God and things of the Spirit or by men whose concerns are primarily human and temporal. Such churches can be distinguished by the following:

**Goals:** Godly leaders have as their goal "the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning crafti-

ness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things unto Him who is the head — Christ" (**Ephesians 4:12-15**). Men whose thinking is not dominated by God have as their primary goal increasing numbers — a big church. They consider numerical growth proof of God's approval.

**Doctrine:** Godly leaders are determined to abide in the doctrine of Christ and not to go beyond it (**2 John 9**). Not godly men, knowing that most of the public "will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables" (**2 Timothy 4:3-4**), provide the teachers that will tickle their ears.

**Discipline:** Godly leaders will insist that, in harmony with God's instructions, the church "withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly" (**2 Thessalonians 3:6**). Ungodly leaders advertise: "Come as you are" and boast that they are not judgmental, receiving everyone regardless of lifestyle.

**Worship:** Godly leaders insist that God be worshipped "acceptable with rever-

ence and godly fear" (**Hebrews 12:28**) while ungodly men place great emphasis on "worship" that pleases the public and they seem concerned only that everyone leave "feeling good about themselves" and eager to return. Preachers: Godly leaders are not nearly as concerned with excellence of speech or of wisdom as that preachers be "determined not to know anything... save Jesus Christ and him crucified" (**1 Corinthians 2:1-2**). Ungodly leaders insist that preachers be entertaining and personally popular, even with the world.

**Activities:** Godly leaders test every proposed action by all the scriptures, determined to "do all in the name of the Lord Jesus" (**Colossians 3:17**), while ungodly leaders offer whatever people want — sports, entertainment, education, feasts, travel - with little apparent concern for what God wants.

### Testing Ourselves

The Bible blesses those who "hunger and thirst after righteousness" (**Matthew 5:6**). By contrast it **condemns those who have "pleasure in unrighteousness"** (**2 Thessalonians 2:12**). Our taste in churches will help us determine which we are.

How will a person who has "pleasure in unrighteousness" feel about a church whose goal above all other things is to remake him into the image of Christ, whose doctrine is "the apostles' teaching," a church where he is put on notice that he must live a godly life or be disfellowshipped, where worship is designed exclusively to please God, where preachers preach only the word of God — reproving, rebuking and exhorting — where activities are altogether spiritual?

On the other hand, how will one who is hungry and thirsty for righteousness feel about a church he visits where he receives nothing but entertainment, where the "sermons" are little more than jokes and pop psychology, where sin is never rebuked, sinners never convicted or exhorted, and where activities are the same as those offered at a public school, theater or country club.

What kind of church are you seeking — the church of your choice or the church of God's choice? A godly church or an ungodly church?

- by Sewell Hall