

Noteworthy

Prayer Requests: Jo Anderson (*ongoing medical*), Margaret Blackburn (*pancreas and hip*), Joe Brown (*cancer*), Marian Church (*scheduled to see neurosurgeon with consideration of surgery*), Mildred Church (*shut in*), the Day family (*sickness*), Charles Goodall (*skin cancer was removed from his forehead last Monday*), Linda James (*Rm. 113 at Lakeland Nursing and Rehab*), Paul Lloyd (*on-going medical*), Linda McKenzie (*medical*), Bonnie Meagher (*medical*), Butch Morgan (*ongoing medical*), Dottie Reynolds (*on-going medical*), Mike Sadler (*neck*), the Sheffield family (*sickness*), Suzette Stevens (*ongoing medical*).

Family and friends: Nell Goodall (*Charles Goodall's aunt*), Chuck Goodall (*Charles & Vernita's son—cancer*), Ned Hicks (*Larry Hick's father - ongoing medical*), Brian James (*cancer*), Wayne Ryland (*ongoing medical*), Ardis Tucker (*Paula Sullivan's sister in law—ongoing medical*). Remember and encourage others who are struggling.

Kid's Review Class: Will be next week, immediately following evening worship.

Group Meeting: Group 1 will meet *next week* after the evening worship service.

Ladies' Bible Class: Meets February 12th at 7pm, in Kyoko Williams' home. In preparation, please do *lesson 4* titled, "Blessings of Wifehood" from the book, "Woman, Her Blessings and Responsibilities".

Men's Training Class: The 4th Sunday of each month, beginning *January 28th* (5pm).

Winter Bible Classes: Tues., *Jan 23rd*, 7pm, at Larry Wisdom's home. (*Five Lesson Series on Church History*)

Upcoming Meeting: The Brooksville Church of Christ has an upcoming meeting with Brent Hunter Feb. 2nd-4th. (*See flyer on the bulletin board for details about meeting times*)

Assignments for Worship Service

Wednesday Night: 1/17/18

Song Leader: Larry Wisdom
 Opening Prayer: Jerry Williams
 Invitation: Nick Ross
 Announcements: Leon Miller
 Closing Prayer: Nick Ross
 Recordings: Bob Marschall
 Usher: Larry Hicks

Sunday Evening: 1/21/18

Song Leader: Joe Brown
 Opening Prayer: Ronnie Henderson
 Lord's Table: Nick Ross
 Announcements: Larry Hicks
 Closing Prayer:
 Recordings: Keith Marschall
 Usher: Gus Johnson

Sunday Morning: 1/21/18

Lord's Table: Nick Ross (B)
 Bucky Day (C)
 Serving: Ed Lawson
 Jim Abram
 Song Leader: Colby Sadler

Opening Prayer: Sherman Johnson
 Announcements: Larry Hicks
 Closing Prayer: Mike Sadler
 Recordings: Trent Stevens
 Usher: Gus Johnson



**Lakeland Hills
 Leader**

LAKELAND HILLS CHURCH OF CHRIST

2510 Lakeland Hills Boulevard Lakeland Florida 33805 (863) 688-4336

www.lakelandhillchurchofchrist.com

ELDERS

Larry Hicks (863) 899-7405
 Leon Miller (863) 640-6378
 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

Works of the Flesh: Idolatry

The responses of two of my friends when I asked them the question, "What is idolatry?" are both typical and indicative of how Christians view this subject. They both replied in like fashion, "Easy, it is the worship of false gods." Though we've been warned against "contemporary idolatry" from the pulpit all of our lives and give a hearty amen, do we not then sit back and smugly say to ourselves, "Forget about it, there isn't any **real** idolatry to worry about today."?

Idolatry in the Old Testament

Pagan practices pervading the period prior to the New Testament encompassed Israel in a fiery ring of heathen worship. Peoples surrounding the holy nation included the following: Syrians, Sidonians and Hittites from the North; Egyptians, Moabites, Edomites and Amalakites from the South; Assyrians, Ammonites and Babylonians from the East; the Philistines along the Mediterranean coast just to the west; and other scattered groups living within Canaan not driven out during the conquest (Judges 1:21, 27-36). All were idolatrous and all posed an eminent threat to the spiritual purity of God's people by

means of introducing the spiritual harlotry of idolatry. Those idols esteemed veneration were mountains, springs, trees, blocks of stone, carved, painted and molded images and wooden poles of Asherah such as the one destroyed by Gideon in Judges 6:25-32. Other idols embraced were the sun, moon, sacred animals and the basest of barbarous “gods” demanding infanticide and prostitution as tokens of service. Let the reader take note — the resurgence of idolatry in today’s new age movement is just as much a threat now as it was 4,000 years ago.

Idolatrous gods of the Old Testament included Baal, Asherah, Molech, Tammuz, Milcom, Chemosh and Apis, the bull-calf god of ancient Egypt just to name a few (1 Kings 18:19; 2 Kings 23:10; Ezekiel 8:14; 1 Kings 11:33). Throughout the history of Israel, idolatry remained a problem (Genesis 31:19; Exodus 32:1-4; Joshua 24:14; Ezekiel 8). Finally, the descendants of Jacob had filled their cup of wrath and Israel and Judah were swept away into Assyrian and Babylonian captivity in 722 and 586 BC respectively.

Idolatry in the New Testament

Thayer defines idolatry as, “the worship of false gods,” and W.E. Vine as service done to an idol in the New Testament Greek. The extermination of any semblance of idolatrous practices and icons following

the Maccabean war created an unprecedented era free from pagan iconism among the Jews in Palestine prior to the birth of the Lord. Would it last? Hardly, as the perpetrator simply enters in a new disguise. Thus our Lord warned, “*No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon*” (Matthew 6:24). The apostle echoed these sentiments stating, “*Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, evil concupiscence (evil desire in NASB), and covetousness (greed in NASB), which is idolatry*” (Colossians 3:5). Peter again admonished brethren to flee from such (1 Peter 4:3).

Our Own Pet Idols

Although we are quick to judge those without, we frequently fail to recognize that the sword cuts both ways (Romans 2:1,3,19-24). Just as Rachel wouldn’t leave Laban’s household idols behind, so we too hang on to our coveted little gods (Genesis 31:19).

• **The Idol of Self-Glorification** “I despise arrogance in others but I am different. I have the **right** to erect my pet idol of personal glory by refusing to acknowledge the little guy, boasting of my works and achievements and always turning the spotlight away from others and back on myself during conversations. After all, look at my eloquence, intelligence, experience and age. Do you happen to know how many journal

publications and gospel meetings I’ve had? Are you aware that. . .” Preachers, beware (Matthew 6:1-4, Luke 18:11,12; 2 Corinthians 10:12).

• **The Idol of Work, Recreation and Entertainment** “You know I really **want** to do more scripture reading, teach the lost, attend more gospel meetings, visit the sick and erring and volunteer to assist in the work in the local church. But you know, I have so little time since my pet idol requires me to pay the mandatory homage. You see, for countless hours every week I am required to sit in front of the TV, read magazines and books, spend time on the computer, at the office, the tennis court, the fishing hole or doing housework, yard work and pulling over time, that I’m really strapped down with the *important things*.” Indulgent and enslaved, take heed (Ephesians 2:3; Romans 1:22-25; Galatians 4:8,9; Luke 12:15)!

• **The Idol of Sensuality** “I do go to church every week, and it really makes me happy. But what makes me even happier is my pet idol that gives me immeasurable pleasure. It’s my idol of lurid TV shows, movies, magazines and books. Shorts, swimsuits, halter tops, hot pants, beach and pool parties. Necking, touching, fornication, and even flirting with someone other than my spouse every now and then. Certainly God will provide grace for this little idol won’t he??” Immoral, be warned, (Matthew 5:28; 1 Timothy 2:9,10; 1 Corinthians 6:9; Proverbs 7)!

• **The Idol of Unlawful Fellowship** “I’ve been a non-institutional, multicup, conservative preacher for 30 years. Since I am not teaching error, just who are you to question the erection of my miniscule idol to the god of ‘extended fellowship.’ Why, how else would I embrace all my old pals who now are teaching error on divorce and remarriage, women’s roles in the church, inorganic evolution (the day age theory), recreational alcohol consumption and those that are drifting off into ecumenism? Do you really expect me to cancel the gospel meetings of guys I went to Bible college with?” Compromisers, rethink your course in light of the words of Jehovah God (Nehemiah 13:23,24; 1 Corinthians 5:2,13; 2 Timothy 2:17; 2 Peter 2:2; Acts 20:29,30).

When we read the account of men who were supposed to be the spiritual pillars of Israel, Solomon and Rehoboam, sanctioning idol worship within the kingdom of God, we shake our heads in disgust (1 Kings 11:7,8; 2 Chronicles 11:15). Do we claim to be better than they? Brethren, the smoke of idolatry is rapidly encircling us today. Shall we heal the brokenness of “Israel” superficially preaching, “*Peace, peace, but there is no peace*” (Jeremiah 8:11)? Or shall we point men back to the ancient paths (Jeremiah 6:16)? Someday there will be no balm in Gilead and sadly enough, it will be much too late (Jeremiah 8:20-22).

- Joshua Gurtler