

Noteworthy

Prayer Requests: Jo Anderson (*shut in*), Joe Brown (*recovering; medical*), Mildred Church (*shut in*), Jim & Mary Elliot (*medical*), Linda James (*ongoing medical*), Paul Lloyd (*rehabilitation in Toledo, Ohio*), the Marschall family (*exhorting Kirk to faithfulness*), Kirk Marschall (*in need of spiritual encouragement*), Linda McKenzie (*tending to her mother's health*), Butch Morgan (*shut in*), Dottie Reynolds (*ongoing medical*), Mike Sadler (*illness*), Tammy Sadler (*recovering; medical*), Colby & Kaitlyn Sadler & children (*illness*), Clay Sadler (*illness*), DeeAnn Sprott (*illness*), Suzette Stevens (*illness*).

Family and friends: Nell Goodall (*Charles Goodall's aunt; medical*), Ned Hicks (*Larry Hicks' father, ongoing medical*), Brian James (*cancer*), John Marschall (*Bob's father*), Lyndell McReedy (*Cindy Hicks' aunt*), Betty Parrish (*Diana Jordan's mother, recovering from surgery*) Ardis Tucker (*Paula Sullivan's sister-in-law, in rehab*). Remember and encourage others who are struggling physically and spiritually.

Group Meeting: Group 2 will meet tonight after the evening worship service.

Ladies Bible Class: Class will be April 8th (*next week*) at 7PM in Tammy Sadler's home.

Men's Bible Study: The 4th Sunday of each month at 5 pm (*April 28th*).

Gospel Meeting: Our meeting with Terry Benton begins today and continues through Wednesday (*Mar. 31st-Apr. 3rd*)! Plant City will have a meeting April 7-10, with Mark McCrary speaking (*see bulletin board for details*).

Assignments for Worship Service

Wednesday Night: 4/3/19

Song Leader: Jeff Lanning
 Opening Prayer: Clay Sadler
 Invitation: Terry Benton (G.M.)
 Announcements: Bob Marschall
 Closing Prayer: David Williams
 Recordings: Trent Stevens
 Usher: Larry Hicks

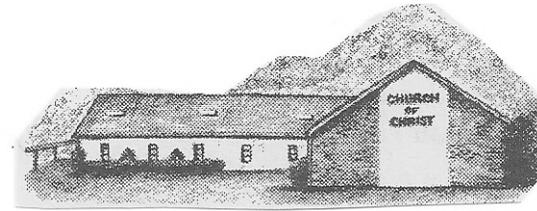
Sunday Evening: 4/7/19

Song Leader: Jeff Lanning
 Opening Prayer: David Williams
 Lord's Table: Larry Wisdom
 Announcements: Mike Sadler
 Closing Prayer: Sherman Johnson
 Recordings: Bob Marschall
 Usher: Gus Johnson

Sunday Morning: 4/7/19

Lord's Table: Larry Wisdom (B)
 Ryan Boyett (C)
 Serving: Jordan Lawson
 Ed Lawson
 Song Leader: Colby Sadler

Opening Prayer: Ronnie Henderson
 Announcements: Mike Sadler
 Closing Prayer: Steve Parker
 Recordings: Trent Stevens
 Usher: Leon Miller



**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 7:00 P.M.

DEACONS:

Robert Marschall
 Michael Sadler
 Moses Stevens
 David Williams

EVANGELIST:

Ian Rice (863) 213-9795

The Cost of Influence and Reputation

There are people in this world who are possessed with natural ability to lead and command respect of others. Call it charm, charisma, magnetism, or whatever, such people wield a powerful influence on those who look up to them as the embodiment of all they would like to become themselves.

Peter apparently possessed such qualities among the apostles; and there were David, Deborah, Nehemiah, and others. We have known such people in our day and have been influenced by them. Each reader can probably think of some "hero" of faith that he or she has looked up to through the years.

The opportunities for good that such people possess are tremendous; but so are the responsibilities. It is true that sin is sin, whoever commits it; that sin will separate one from God just as quickly as it will another. But the adverse consequences of one's sins increase dramatically with the increase of the influence and reputation he enjoys among others. The confidence of others is a trust that must be carefully protected. Once that trust is in place, the person to whom it is committed has responsibilities that others of more normal influence and reputation do not have; and the more people involved in the trust, the greater the responsibility.

Those of reputation must be prepared for greater public scandal when they

sin. Nathan told David that because of his adultery he had "given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme" (2 Samuel 12:14). Others had committed adultery in Israel, and their adultery had gone unnoticed by the enemies of God. But this was David! It was inevitable that the sin of this one man of influence and reputation would result in greater scandal than the sins of a multitude of people of lesser influence and reputation.

Those of reputation must be prepared for sterner rebuke when they sin than those of lesser reputation.

Paul speaks of withstanding Peter "to his face" when Peter withdrew from eating with the Gentiles (Galatians 2:11-13). Paul's rebuke of Peter was "before them all". Peter was hardly the first Jewish Christian to refuse to eat with Gentile Christians, but Paul obviously recognized the seriousness of Peter's actions because of his greater reputation and influence. Others were following his lead on this occasion, including Barnabas. Peter could not enjoy the luxury of a private meeting with Paul; Peter had to face the sting of immediate and open rebuke. Peter had betrayed a trust. Nothing less than open rebuke could counteract the harm that was resulting. Sterner rebuke is simply a cost — an inevitable cost — of influence and reputation.

Those of reputation must live more cautiously than others if they would maintain their influence and good name.

Every Christian is warned not to place a stumbling block in his brother's way (Romans 14:13; 1 Corinthians 8:9), but one who is known and admired by

thousands of brethren in many places obviously will have to be more cautious than one who is known and admired by only a few brethren locally. Paul would have to give up far more to be "all things to all men" than would some Christian who had never been outside his home community. That's just the cost of influence and reputation. If one is not willing to pay that cost — if he is determined to be unbending in his conduct "no matter what others might think" — he needs to come to a greater appreciation of the value of a good name (Proverbs 22:1).

Those of reputation must be especially careful to build upon Jesus Christ, the true foundation, rather than upon them-

selves. The words, "For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord," must become their motto (2 Corinthians 4:5). Those who place their loyalty in men of name and reputation are in error. Their faith is not what it ought to be. But those who deliberately use charisma and flattery to attract a following are also in error (1 Thessalonians 2:1-13). The more natural charisma one is blessed with, the more cautious he must be.

When "Shoeless" Joe Jackson, a star Chicago White Sox outfielder, we involved in the "Black Sox" scandal of the 1920's and was on his way to trial, a small boy, hurt, disappointed, with tears in his eyes, was heard to cry, "Say it ain't so, Joe; say it ain't so." Each reader is likely somebody's hero. Other readers are men and women of widespread influence. Let each one, when he is tempted, and before he yields, look ahead to the tears, and hurt and disillusionment that he is about to bring to those who look up to him; let him hear their potential cries of "Say it ain't so, Joe" and, motivated by their confi-

dence and his own love for the Lord, let him "resist the devil". For, if he betrays the trust that has been committed to him, he can be saved eternally through repentance and forgiveness. For this we are so grateful! But he likely will never recover the confidence he has lost. Right or wrong, that's reality. It is the cost — the inevitable cost — of influence and reputation.

~ Bill Hall

Subjective Spirit Leading

Subjective "Spirit Leading" is when one is moved by imagined nudging and impulses, then attributes that imagination to the "leading of the Spirit". It often never is in complete harmony with Spirit "revelation" in the Bible. It is sometimes outright contrary to Spirit guidance through "revelation" (**Eph.3:3-5**).

It is completely subjective as to whether it is the Holy Spirit instead of a deceiving spirit or just plain human desire and imagination. Yet, you get drawn into the language and thinking that imagines the Lord walking and talking with you, and then you start saying "the Lord told me this" or "the Lord showed me this".

Francis Chan offers stories from those who have experienced "real encounters" with God. He says each of us has the choice every day "to depend on yourself, to live safely, and to try to control your life. Or you can live as you were created to live—as a temple of the Holy Spirit of God, as a person dependent on Him, desperate for God the Spirit to show up and make a difference." Yet, he is basically telling people to imagine the Spirit "showing up" in some emotion-driven and imagination-perceived way, and all such imagina-

tions automatically becomes self-confirmation that the Holy Spirit instead of Satan as an angel of light is doing this "showing up".

Beth Moore is another that uses this imagination-driven approach where her imagination of talks with God become conversations with God in which she reports "what God told me". This kind of thinking is very dangerous, and yet some of our brethren are jumping on the bandwagon of these kind of authors and speakers and promote them as truly guided by God. The real "Holy Spirit" showed up in guiding the apostles into "all truth". He revealed and confirmed "the faith once for all delivered to the saints" — **Jude 3-4; Heb.2:1-4**. He powerfully leads through that revelation (**Heb.4:12; Eph.3:3-5**). When we are listening to the Spirit in scriptures used correctly we are listening to the voice of the real Holy Spirit.

Imaginations must be cast down and not exalted to the level of God's word. When a person does not "abide in the doctrine of Christ" but gives greater or equal guiding authority to their imagination of conversations with God, they have quit "holding fast to the Head" (**Col.2:19**) and have "intruded into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind" (**Col.2:18**). This is "empty deceit" because it imaginary conversations with God told as if it happened in reality, and this is a form of lying since God did not actually tell them anything. It is purely adult form of make-believe and empty of real revelation. Be careful of those who promote such.

~ Terry Benton