



# The View From Here

September 2011 Volume 12, Issue 12

## LETS PREPARE TO PREACH AND WORSHIP TOGETHER

In a paper at the meeting of the Evangelical Homiletics Society, Michael Quicke observed, *"The more casual and unprepared that listeners are as they come to worship the less likely they are to experience God. All worshipers, preacher included, should make space and time for genuine prayers of preparation. "Who shall stand in his holy place? Those who have clean hands and pure hearts, who do not lift up their souls to what is false, and do not swear deceitfully" (Ps 24.3,4). Snatched seconds of mechanical routine before worship smother spiritual possibilities within worship. "True worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth" (John 4.21) and be sensitive to God who is spirit. Spiritual insensitivity to God beforehand can condemn to spiritual insensitivity during worship. The outcome is a Unitarian utilitarianism - preachers "do their own thing" which may or may not have any relevance to hearers "doing their thing."*

*"Preachers need to include themselves in more rigorous practice of prayerful preparation that stills the spirit (Psalm 37.7) and raises expectation that God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit are involved in a spiritual happening in worship for the whole community. God's word does not return empty. God's seed in good soil can make an*

*astounding difference--"bearing fruit, thirty and sixty and a hundredfold. " Worshipers should prepare with openness to what fruit they might bear. If you think a sermon is going to be a waste of time, nine times out of ten it will be. If you believe in an active present God—anything could happen.*

*"Preachers have a responsibility to model sensitive preparation for worship. In the crescendo of interruptions often leading up to the service prayer should not be treated as a routine to be squeezed out by more important matters, but the foundation for prepared minds and hearts of everyone. Listeners can be encouraged to pray in the days leading up to worship by specific information. Preachers can share next week's Scripture text and theme and ask listeners to prepare by reading and reflecting themselves as well as supporting the preacher in preparation. The more seriously preachers reflect personal conviction about the Trinitarian dynamic of worship and preaching, the more seriously listeners will prepare with them."*

**In this newsletter is a list of sermons for the next several weeks. Please use that list each week to be in prayer for what God might reveal to me and to you and to each one that attends the worship service. Thanks!**

*Jack*

## THE UNHERALDED VIRTUE

Name a virtue that you admire in others and want to develop in yourself.

So what word came to mind? **Courage** would have been a good answer, for so many people these days seem to lack the ability to confront their personal fears or to face life's uncertainties with confidence. Another good answer would be **justice**—it is concern for the public good that demands we look outside our selfishness to meet others' needs and to protect their persons and rights.

**Self-control** or the ability to practice moderation and restraint might be your immediate concern; if you are battling weight or smoking or temper, it probably ranks high on your list of desired virtues. Probably **prudence** didn't come to mind—though you might have used a contemporary term such as good judgment or discretion—it is the counter to thoughtless and reckless behaviors.

Those four qualities—*temperance, prudence, courage, and justice*—are often termed the cardinal virtues to Western civilization. As far back as Plato and Aristotle, they receive praise. Add such names as Seneca, Thomas Aquinas, and Ben Franklin to the list, if you wish. These are praiseworthy traits. And all are consistent with the great ethical teachings of Judaism and Christianity.

A virtue that gets little attention and practically no praise in modern settings is **humility**. Perhaps it is because our culture tends less and less to consult or quote biblical materials in its discussions of

character. And maybe, it is because we seem to have equated a healthy sense of self-esteem with personal arrogance.

In athletics, we call it "swagger." In the halls of academics, it is "pomp and circumstance." In business and high finance, it is "perks." On the streets, it can be called anything from "attitude" to "posturing" to "respect." And while none of these terms is evil or inappropriate, our shallow culture has come to define them in terms of a feigned superiority that lets one person or group step on another.

So the football player dances in the end zone or over the opponent he tackles, and the pitcher in baseball pretends to be a gunslinger when he strikes out the other team's cleanup hitter. In the university or company, the person who gets the promotion gloats over the one who didn't. On the streets, she dresses like a whore and wants the reputation of being "a mean girl" or he works hard at the glare and manner of a thug. The result isn't healthy self-esteem on display but boorish, uncivil, and cruel behavior—behavior of the sort that creates fights and feuds when two persons or groups of the same mindset meet.

Humility means acknowledging we all stand on others' shoulders. We all know too little to put others down. We all owe it to the other person to hear her point and to try to understand his perspective. C.S. Lewis made this important point: *"Humility is not thinking less of oneself but thinking of oneself less."*

***"Pride leads to disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom."*** (PROVERBS 11.2)

## TEN WAYS TO TELL YOU'RE SLIPPING

It's surprising how God's people awaken one day and suddenly realize they have fallen away from the closeness they used to enjoy with the Lord. The signs have been there all along, but they were not paying attention.

Here are some tests I have discovered for spotting signs of slippage in my own walk with the Lord, evidence that I'm losing the intimacy with Him that always meant so much in my personal life.

10. You know you're slipping when the big thing you look forward to on a Sunday is a football game.

9. You know you're slipping when reading the Bible no longer excites you, angers you, or challenges you.

8. You know you're slipping when you finally get up off the couch and get involved in some ministry the Lord has been laying on your heart and the first thing you do is start criticizing all the other couch potatoes who are only doing the same thing you have been doing all this time.

7. You know you're slipping when, after slacking off in your tithing over the past year, instead of feeling guilty, you find yourself criticizing the regular tithers for their self-righteous and legalistic attitudes.

6. You know you're slipping when you can read the Ten Commandments and give yourself a passing grade on all of them.

5. You know you're slipping when you can go a whole day without praying and it not bother you one bit.

4. You know you're slipping when you can have a dirty thought and justify it as "what normal humans do."

3. You know you're slipping when you feel a nudging from the Holy Spirit to speak to that person or give to this one or make a phone call to another and you squelch it.

2. You know you're slipping when you decide to reward yourself for doing well by skipping your Bible reading and prayer for that day.

1. You know you're really, really slipping when the problem of slipping doesn't cause you great concern.

*Dr. Joe McKeever is a Preacher, Cartoonist, and the Director of Missions for the Baptist Association of Greater New Orleans. Visit him at [joemckeever.com/mt](http://joemckeever.com/mt). Used with permission.*



# The Word of Truth

## POWER FROM ON HIGH

September 04

**POWER FROM ON HIGH**

*After Conversion:  
Reality and Nature of the  
Holy Spirit's Indwelling*

September 11

**POWER FROM ON HIGH**

*After Conversion:  
The Purpose of the  
Holy Spirit's Indwelling*

September 18

**POWER FROM ON HIGH**

*The Holy Spirit's Role in  
Sanctification:  
Spiritual Warfare*

September 25

**POWER FROM ON HIGH**

*The Holy Spirit's Role in  
Sanctification:  
Led By the Spirit*

October 02

**POWER FROM ON HIGH**

*The Holy Spirit's Role in  
Sanctification:  
Be Filled With the Spirit*

October 09

**POWER FROM ON HIGH**

*The Holy Spirit and Spiritual  
Gifts: Concept and Purpose*

October 16

**POWER FROM ON HIGH**

*The Holy Spirit and Spiritual  
Gifts: Categories of Gifts*

October 23

**POWER FROM ON HIGH**

*The Holy Spirit and Spiritual  
Gifts: Talents or Tasks?*

October 30

**POWER FROM ON HIGH**

*Does the Holy Spirit Give  
Miraculous Gifts Today?*

## TEN WAYS TO KNOW YOU'RE GETTING IT RIGHT

The marks on the door-facing leading into the back yard tell of the growth of the children over the years. The clothing in back of the closet the kids can no longer wear speak of the growth of your young'uns. The escalating cost of schoolbooks as the kids move into high school and then into college bear eloquent testimony to the maturation of the offspring. They're growing up.

But how can you tell when spiritual growth is taking place? Where are the markers? How are we to know if one's development as a disciple of Jesus Christ has plateaued or is even regressing? To my knowledge, there is no answer book for this question. There are only indicators.

**Here is my list of ten signs, indicators, markers—that we are growing in Christ, that we are getting it right.**

### 10. A CHANGING APPETITE

My taste for spiritual things is changing. I find myself loving to study the Word of the Lord and looking forward to it. Far from it being a chore, it's literally fun. Job said, *I have esteemed the words of Thy mouth more than my necessary food* (Job 23.12).

At the same time this is happening, my thirst for a trashy novel, an entertainment magazine, a sexy movie or a television celebrity expose' is drying up. My appetite for spiritual junk food is diminishing. And that's a good thing!

### 9. A DISGUST FOR THE SHAMEFUL

The more we become like Christ—and that is

God's plan for every believer—the more we will find ourselves turning away in disgust at activities that used to fascinate us.

Paul spoke of certain activities as "*shameful even to speak of*" (Ephesians 5.12). On another occasion, Paul spoke of the enemies of the cross of Christ: "*Whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame.*" They "*set their minds on earthly things,*" he said (Philippians 3.19). No dirty jokes for me, thank you. No porn movies or books or magazines. Not even the (ahem) mildly racy stuff. We just don't need it anymore. We have better things to do and read.

### 8. A LOVE FOR BELIEVERS

There is something almost uncanny about this: the closer we are to Christ, the more we will love His people. Likewise, the further we stray from Him, the less use we have for them and the more critical we become of them. It is an ironclad principle, one that never fails: love Christ, love His people. Love the world, despise His people.

Remember that the next time you hear some backslidden church member running down church members. *By this shall all men know you are my disciples, that you love one another* (John 13.35).

So, you find yourself treasuring those believers at church who are genuinely giving their best to the Lord, even though it's small potatoes to the world. Congratulations. You are becoming like Jesus.

### 7. AN UNUSUAL PEACE AND QUIETNESS

The latest upheavals in the economy and in

the political realm do not unnerve you the way they used to. You are far steadier than previously. You still care about the country, you work at being a good citizen, and you pray for your leaders. But you know that fixing your hope on them is a sure recipe for disappointment.

*If you then be risen with Christ, set your affection on things above where Christ sits at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth* (Colossians 3.1-2).

Some of your Christian friends will be upset with you because you are not upset. They may even accuse you of not caring, of being unpatriotic. Surely, if you were in the know as they are you would be as panicky as they. You will take that in stride because of Number 6.

**(The next 6 will be in the October newsletter)**

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**A BIG WELCOME  
TO THE NEWEST MEMBERS  
OF THE CCC FAMILY:**

**AUGUST 28:  
Chris Woolf, by baptism.**

*Be sure to welcome him and make the effort to get to know him as God brings us together in His family.*



Work is progressing on our new campground shelter and trash coral. Thanks to all the guys who have helped in the building process, led by Steve Hickel.

