

**PRAYERS & ENCOURAGEMENT**

Those who are sick or need our prayers — Pat Espy, Linda Reagan, Bud Mixon, Richard Branum, Cindy Loughmiller, Margaret Blake, Phillip Stevens

Continue to remember in your prayers those who are unable to attend worship services regularly: *Billie Sue Atkins, Freda Dunn, Romona Stokes, and Marjorie Barringer.*

Please pray for those who have forsaken the Lord that they may be reconciled to God.

**READING THE OLD & NEW TESTAMENTS IN ONE YEAR**

*Monday - 2 Sam 13-14; Acts 28*

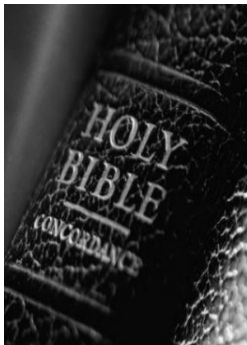
*Tuesday - 2 Sam 15-17; Psalms 3, 63; Romans 1*

*Wednesday - 2 Sam 18-20; Psalm 34; Romans 2*

*Thursday - 2 Sam 21-23; Psalm 18; Romans 3*

*Friday - 2 Sam 24; 1 Chr 21; Romans 4*

*Week #22  
May 21 – May 25*



**VISITORS** - We would like to get to know you better, and ask that you stay a while after services. We encourage you to visit our website at <http://www.parkhillchurchofchrist.com> where you will find sermons, articles, and daily bible studies to encourage you in your daily walk with God.

**QUESTIONS?** *We Welcome the opportunity to study God's word with you any time.*

*All sermons are recorded on CD & DVD -  
If you would like a copy, please ask one of the men.*

**ELDERS**

Carl Dolan.....479.414.1972 ~ Ron Roberts .....479.452.0347 ~ Joe Turner....479.459.6023.

**DEACONS**

Wayne Carson...479.648.1087 ~ Luke Dolan.....479.357.9547 ~ Joe Dugas .....479.629.4046 ~ David Meek.....479.459.0820

**PREACHER**

Bryan Loughmiller.....479.434.3939

**May 20, 2018**

**THINK ON THESE THINGS**

*Welcome to the Park Hill Church of Christ*

**3536 GRINNELL AVENUE FORT SMITH, AR 72908 479.782.2415**

*It is our desire to worship God in spirit and in truth, and to glorify Him in all we do.*

**SCHEDULE OF SERVICES**

SUNDAY MORNING  
Bible Study.....9:30 am  
Worship.....10:15 am

SUNDAY EVENING  
Worship..... 5:00pm

WEDNESDAY EVENING  
Bible Study.....7:00pm

***Addiction***



*1 Corinthians 6:11 "Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God."*

Last Sunday evening, my fellow preacher, Jason and I delivered a lesson about addictions. In a question and answer format we tried to take a serious look at a very serious problem. You can go to our website and listen or watch that lesson. We offer free CD's of that lesson if you would like one. I want to pull a few thoughts from that lesson.

First, we don't like to admit addictions. We don't like to admit that within the church we have such problems. It ruins our image of pristine perfection. But reality demands that we be honest. One of the characteristics of addictions is denial. The addict lives in denial, proclaiming that he can quit anytime, but he never does. The family of the addict often hides behind denial and the church can even be party to all of this.

The image of a dirty street person, laying against the back wall of a building in a dark alley is often the picture we have of an addict. Not today. Not anymore. Soccer moms. Professional people. College students. People in the church. Addictions come in many forms: prescription drugs; illegal drugs; alcohol; pornography; gambling; sexual addictions; compulsive shopping and spending; even, addicted to social media. The nature of these addictions takes a heavy toll

upon families. The burdens are great.

Most addictions come in forms of two, three or more. It is common for a person to have more than one addiction at a time. And, there is a huge emotional toll that addictions have upon a person. Emotionally, the addict is immature and unable to deal with his problem in a rational way. This plays a role in the relationships and marriages of addicts. It is not uncommon for the addict to have been divorced many times. Emotionally unable to deal with life and making immature decisions, the addict ruins marriage.

Second, there has been a shift in the way society looks at addictions. More and more, there are studies about the chemical and psychological dependence of addicts which feeds into the idea that addictions are diseases. This has led to the common thinking of medical and mental health being the solutions to kicking the addictions. Pills, counselors, support groups are the mainstream answer to dealing with addictions. What is put aside is that most of these are choices, moral choices. Behind all of these addictions is sin. Spiritual problems can only completely be solved through Christ. Spiritual issues need to be addressed with spiritual solutions. There may still be a need for medical and mental treatment, but not to the exclusion of Christ. You cannot leave Jesus out of the picture. Developing faith and making one strong in Christ must be part of the equation. Without this, the addict never learns to make the right spiritual choices.

Third, our verse today has much to do with this. Here Paul addresses the Corinthians. It is personal, specific and pointed. The verse begins, "And such were some of you." What were they? He tells us in the preceding verses: they were fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, homosexuals, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, and swindlers. They were a mess. We'd classify some of these, if not all of these, as addictions. However, they changed. They were washed, sanctified and justified. The letter of Corinthians begins by naming those Christians as sanctified, saints by calling.

There was no AA in the first century. They didn't have exit groups for homosexual behavior. Support groups didn't exist. How did they break free from alcohol? How did they leave the homosexual lifestyle? What about being effeminate? Those things weren't accepted. Toleration isn't the key here. They changed. They became right with God. How did they do it? They used the power of Christ and addressed these problems from a spiritual standpoint.

It is with the shield of faith, as the Ephesians were told, that all the flaming arrows of the evil one can be extinguished. It is learning to resist the devil as James says. It is knowing to pray that you enter not into temptation as the Gospels tell us. These addictions were spiritual problems first. They were addressed spiritually first.

Passing out free needles, changing the laws and making drugs legal and available only masks the real problems, a society that is living without Jesus. There is hope and help in our times. It must begin with the Lord. Addictions are spiritual problems. Wrong choices have been made by those who are not strong spiritually. Ignoring this aspect will only keep the addiction going.

Fourth, help needs to be found in our love, compassion and forgiveness for each other. This is what God has done for us. Finger pointing, whispering, blaming, name calling will only cause the addict to disappear and it will crush his family. Put down the radar guns. The Corinthian list of what they once were could well be our list as well. Drugs, sex and rock 'n roll, hard partying, has been the song that many of us danced to and lived in before Christ. We have all made pitiful choices that were not thought out and obviously not very spiritual. If it wasn't for God's grace and the love of others, many of us would have died in those addictions. Instead of running people off in guilt, let us remember where we came from and let us open our hearts, extend a hand and welcome those who want to find help in the Lord.

Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest. Who is more weary than a person who has been fighting an addiction for a long, long time. They have tried this and that and yet the cravings for what they are addicted to remains. Christ wants to help. It would do well for leaders in the congregation to learn more about this. It's time to get our heads out of the sand and stop claiming that we don't have these problems among us. We do. We have had for a long time. It has hurt many. Families have known of the hypocrisy some have lived in.

We must stop telling folks to go and get fixed and then they can come back. That's not what Jesus would say. Getting fixed, sounds like what you do to a car that doesn't work. We are dealing with issues of the heart, mind and will. We are dealing with spiritual battles. It takes time, sometimes a long time to recover and put these things behind a person. The church needs to be patient. The church needs to be a friend. The church needs to be part of the solution and not more of the problem.

The hope is found in the words of our verse today. Those drunk Corinthians were justified. Those immoral Corinthians were washed. Those homosexual Corinthians were sanctified. They recovered, were restored and were useful to God through Jesus. God didn't give up on them. God didn't toss them away. They were not forever gone. Once a drunk, always a drunk, isn't true with God. There is hope. Change is possible.

Help, hope and Christ. That's the message. That's what needs to be preached and practiced. I hope this will generate more discussion. I hope that some of our minds will change. I hope that some will come out of the shadows and talk freely. I hope that shame and guilt can find forgiveness and a new life in Christ. I hope that some will admit to what they have been hiding for a long time. I hope families find support and comfort in fellowship. I hope tears produce hugs, prayers and hope. I hope that some who have been enslaved to these sins not only put them behind them, but some day stand behind pulpits and preach and serve as shepherds to help others in the kingdom of God.

Addictions-they are not coming, they are here. They are among us. They are some of us. Now, what will we do?

*Roger Shouse, Jump Starts Daily #2102*