



MGrace Messenger

GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH

122 Walnut Street
Madison, AL 35758
256-837-8821

GBC HOMEPAGE

<http://www.gracemadison-al.com>

"Preaching the free grace of God which brings a change of lifestyles, masters, and destinies."

DEAN OLIVE, Pastor

— January 2008 Issue —

"Knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ" (Colossians 3:24).



NURSERY SCHEDULE

JANUARY

06 – Jon & Tanya Amis
13 – David & Mary Alice Olive
20 – Nellie & Hannah McFadden
27 – Linda Olive & Sonja Williams

FEBRUARY

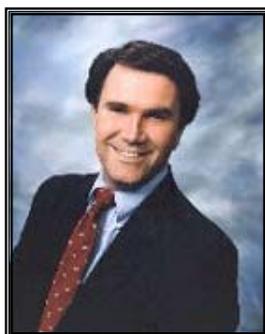
03 – Amber Solan & Sara Smith
10 – Vicki Johnson & Sharon Bagley
17 – Bob & Faye Williams
24 – Kristy Hines & Jenny Lovassy

FINANCIAL SUMMARY AS OF JANUARY 1, 2008

Budgeted expenditures (ytd)	\$101,828.00
Actual on-budget expenditures (ytd)	\$102,713.34
Actual off-budget expenditures (ytd)	\$ 42,827.47
General Fund offerings (ytd)	\$149,018.98
Love offerings (ytd)	\$ 8,603.95
Total offerings (ytd)	\$159,891.49
December Love offerings	\$ 2,920.00
December General Fund offerings	\$ 20,751.01
Building Fund balance	\$ 31,939.05
Missions Fund balance	\$ 5,156.35
General Fund balance	\$ 27,779.61

GRACE BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE

A COURSE IN APOLOGETICS
BY DR. GREG L. BAHNSEN (VIA DVD)



CLASSES MEET ON MONDAYS AT 7:00 P.M.

*BEGINS JANUARY 7
AND ENDS APRIL 28 (D.V.)*

Apologetics teaches us how to defend the faith, to give an answer to those who ask us what we believe. Since it is the task of every believer to give a defense of the faith (1 Peter 3:15), every believer can benefit from the study of apologetics. Dr. Bahnsen was one of the foremost apologists ever and his teaching is simple and easy to follow. This course sets forth presuppositional apologetics at its best.

The cost is \$25.00 plus books. The course consists of 15, two-hour lectures. For more information, see Pastor Olive.

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

NORMAL SUNDAY SERVICES

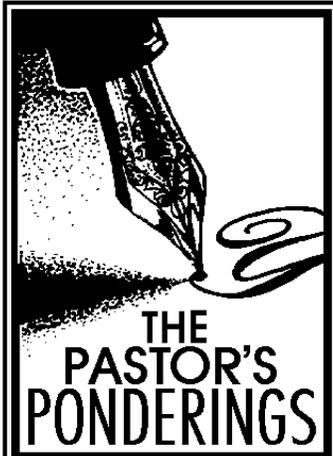
Morning Worship 9:30 AM
Sunday School 11:00 AM
Evening Worship 6:00 PM

WEDNESDAY EVENING

Bible Study and Prayer Meeting
7:00 PM

FIRST SUNDAY SERVICES

Morning Worship 9:30 AM
Sunday School 11:00 AM
Dinner at the Church 12:00 Noon
Afternoon Service 1:30 PM
(No Evening Service)



WORKING OUT OUR SALVATION

It is troubling for some Christians to read the apostolic command of Paul that is recorded in Philippians 2:12. He charged them, “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.” What bothers them is that the apostle of grace appears to be teaching

that salvation is based partly on works.

Nothing is more fundamental in the Holy Spirit inspired letters of Paul than the doctrine of salvation by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone (Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 3:5). How could Paul, who proclaimed so clearly that God saves “him that works not” (Rom. 4:5), now be saying, “Work out your own salvation?”

There is no contradiction. “Work out your own salvation” in Philippians 2:12 is another way of speaking about the work of sanctification. Paul is not calling on the Philippians to contribute to the salvation of their souls but to the sanctification of their lives. He was writing to people who were already saints. Everyone who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ to the saving of the soul is to “work out his salvation.” That is, he is to pursue as his life’s work, sanctification to its full completion.

Paul says “work out,” not work in, work for, work at, or work toward. He is very clear; we do not work in order to obtain salvation but we work out what God has worked in. No human effort is involved in the saving of our souls from sin, death, and hell, but human effort is involved in working out our salvation.

This distinction is drawn out by the apostle in Ephesians 2. In the space of three verses, Paul says that salvation is “not by works” (8) but then says that it is “unto good works” (10). James Montgomery Boice comments, “One kind of work is condemned because it comes out of ourselves and is contaminated by sin. The other kind of work is encouraged because it comes from God as He works within the Christian.”

That’s it in a nutshell. We are not saved by good works but we are saved to do good works. There is no legalism in this. Human works have nothing to do with the salvation of our souls but human works have everything to do in our sanctification. We are not passive in this. We take a very active roll.

Elsewhere Paul shows that there are two aspects to the working out of salvation, one negative and the other positive. On the negative side we are to mortify the flesh and on the

positive side we are to grow in grace. Paul put this two-fold work side-by-side in 2 Cor. 7:1, where he said, “Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”

God commands us to work out our own salvation. Dear friends, let us heed this injunction. We must make the working out of our salvation a life-long labor. So serious is this work that Paul says it is to be done “with fear and trembling.” This means with reverential awe for the Most High God. It is not craven fear or some kind of self-torment, that we work out our salvation; rather, it is submission and reverence to God.

There is little of that kind of fear today. We live in a light-hearted and complacent age. We should have joy as believers, and no epistle emphasizes that any more than Philippians, but “holy fear of God that trembles at the thought of sin is also the attitude of the careful Christian” (Homer Kent)

Working out our salvation is serious business. The book of Hebrews charges us to “Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord” (12:14). One of the great evidences that we are Christians is that we are going through the process of sanctification. Without it, we will not see the Lord.

The idea of letting go and letting God is a popular approach to sanctification these days, but doesn’t have much biblical support. Of course, we must yield ourselves to the Lord (Rom. 6:14) but we must also strive, labor, work, fight, and run to be holy. A concerted effort must be made on our part.

But how can we in our own strength do such a thing? Isn’t this a hopeless task? It is if we are left alone to do it, but Paul goes on to say, “For it is God which works in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.” Paul is careful to point out that though we have a responsibility to work out our salvation, God himself “provides both the will and the ability to accomplish ‘His good purpose’” (Thielman). And he makes this point emphatically; God himself is at work in us accomplishing his good pleasure.

Note the two-fold manner in which God works – He works in the believer both “to will and to do,” i.e. “He works in us at the level of our wills and at the level of our doing” (Carson). It is only by God’s willing and working in us that this can be accomplished.

Working out our salvation is a high calling. We must be actively engaged in the process of sanctification. However, we are not thrown back on our own resources in doing this task. Those whose aim is it is to do the will of God will find divine resources for the work.

WEB SITES

CENTER FOR REFORMED THEOLOGY AND APOLOGETICS

– www.reformed.org/

PROVIDENCE BAPTIST MINISTRIES

– www.pbministries.org/

HISTORICAL REPRODUCTIONS

– www.historicprints.com/shop/

GRACE ABOUNDING MINISTRIES

– www.gabm.org/

PROVIDENCE CHAPEL

– www.providencedenton.org/index.php



JANUARY 6 – Observance of the Lord’s Supper in the afternoon service.

JANUARY 7 – A class on apologetics will begin with lectures on DVD by Dr. Greg Bahnsen.

JANUARY 16 – The Men’s Reading Group begins again with the second half of Jonathan Edwards, *Religious Affections*. Time: 6 – 7 AM.

JANUARY 18 – The Ladies of Grace will be meeting at 10:30 AM.

FEBRUARY 3 – The annual church business meeting will be held in the afternoon.

FEBRUARY 21-23 – True Church Conference, First Baptist Church, Muscle Shoals, Alabama. The theme this year is, “Church Discipline: The Missing Key to True Church Growth.” Speakers are Jay Adams, David Miller, Jeff Noblit, and Paul Washer. For more information see <http://anchoredintruth.org/>

FEBRUARY 24 – Mack Tomlinson, pastor of Providence Chapel in Denton, Texas, will be preaching. Mack also serves on the Advisory Board for HeartCry Missionary Society.

MARCH 13 – We will be hosting the Sovereign Grace Baptist Pastor’s Fellowship.

APRIL 18-20 – Spring Bible Conference with Kevin Landis, pastor of Bible Chapel of Delhi Hills, Cincinnati, Ohio.

LADIES OF GRACE

The next Ladies of Grace meeting is scheduled for Friday, January 18, at 10:30 AM. Our community project this month is collecting school supplies for the second semester session of East Clinton Elementary. Please see Kristy Hines for a list of items requested for donating to this needy school.

QUESTION #96 – What is the duty of the one who is rightly baptized?

ANSWER – It is the duty of such as are rightly baptized, to give up themselves to some particular and orderly Church of Jesus Christ that they may walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.

SCRIPTURE – Acts 2:47; 9:26; 1 Peter 2:5; Luke 1:6

COMMENT – “Many Christians today seem to have forgotten church membership—or to have forgotten the church altogether. That’s why you find Christian books that talk about growing as a Christian but completely ignore the role of the church. In Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians the purpose of spiritual gifts is to ‘build up the church’ (1 Cor. 14:12). This is to be one of the main goals of your Christian life...Incorporation into the church is both a glorious privilege and a practical help. Joining a church will help you to encourage and edify your fellow Christians and to be encouraged and edified by them” (Mark Dever, *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church*).

ILLUSTRATION – If the church is a building, then we must be bricks in it; if the church is a body, then we are its members; if the church is the household of faith, then we are part of that household. Sheep are in a flock, and branches on a vine. Biblically, if we are Christians we must be members of a church. This membership is not simply the record of a statement we once made or of affection toward a familiar place. It must be the reflection of a living commitment or it is worthless (*Nine Marks of a Healthy Church*).

THEOLOGY

CORNER



A REFORMED AND BAPTIST CATECHISM



Puritan Gems

THE ENJOYMENT OF GOD

JONATHAN EDWARDS

“The enjoyment of God is the only happiness with which our souls can be satisfied. To go to heaven, fully to enjoy God, is infinitely better than the most pleasant accommodation here. Fathers and mothers, husbands, wives, children, or the company of earthly friends, are but shadows; but God is the substance. These are but scattered beams, but God is the sun. These are but the streams, but God is the ocean.”

THE TYRANNY OF QUIET TIME

Tim Challies

Like all Christians, I love my quiet time. I am always thrilled at the prospect of sitting down during the few quiet moments before a busy day to spend some time alone with God--a few moments one-on-one with my Creator. I love to open the Bible and to carefully and systematically read the Word of God, allowing it to penetrate my heart. I love to sit and think deeply and meditatively about the Scriptures and to seek ways that I can apply God's word to my heart. I love to pray to God, pouring out my heart in confession, praise, thanksgiving and petition. It is always the best and greatest part of my day. I couldn't live without my quiet time.

But that's not reality, is it?

Like all Christians, I sometimes love my quiet time. While I am sometimes thrilled at the prospect of sitting down to spend some time with God, all too often I dread it. I'd rather catch up on the news or spend some time writing or reading a good book... My quiet time is often invaded by little children, demanding my time and attention. Too often I hate to make my way through a difficult book of the Bible and dread spending another day reading through the prophecies of Isaiah. Thinking requires more time and effort than I am willing to give and it usually seems that a quick, cursory prayer is enough to make me feel that I've done my duty and asked God to bless my day and to forgive me for being a jerk with my kids the night before. I skim Scripture, breathe a prayer, and settle down to my breakfast.

That's a little closer to reality, isn't it?

In *The Discipline of Grace*, Jerry Bridges provides two scenarios and

then a question. In the first, he describes a good day. "You get up promptly when your alarm goes off and have a refreshing and profitable quiet time as you read your Bible and pray. Your plans for the day generally fall into place, and you somehow sense that presence of God with you. To top it off, you unexpectedly have an opportunity to share the gospel with someone who is truly searching. As you talk with the person, you silently pray for the Holy Spirit to help you and to also work in your friend's heart."

We've all had days like that. But we've also all had days like this: "You don't arise at the first ring of your alarm. Instead, you shut it off and go back to sleep. When you awaken, it's too late to have a quiet time. You hurriedly gulp down some breakfast and rush off to the day's activities. You feel guilty about oversleeping and missing your quiet time, and things just generally go wrong all day. You become more and more irritable as the day wears on, and you certainly don't sense God's presence in your life. That evening, however, you unexpectedly have an opportunity to share the gospel with someone who is really interested in receiving Christ as Savior."

Bridges then asks if you would enter into those two witnessing opportunities with a different degree of confidence. Think about it for a moment. If you're like most Christians, I suspect you would feel less confident about witnessing on a bad day than on a good day. You would feel less confidence that God would speak in and through you and that you would be able to share your faith forcefully and with conviction.

Why is it that we tend to think this way? According to Bridges, we've come to believe that *God's blessing on our lives is somehow conditional upon our spiritual performance*. In other words,

if we've performed well and done our quiet time as we ought to have done, we have put ourselves in a place where God can bless us... This attitude "reveals an all-too-common misconception of the Christian life: the thinking that, although we are saved by grace, we earn or forfeit God's blessings in our daily lives by our performance."

Perhaps you, like me, have too often turned quiet time into a performance. If we perform well for God, we enter our day filled with confidence that God will bless us, and that He will *have* to bless us. We feel that our performance has earned us the right to have a day filled with His presence, filled with blessings, and filled with confidence. And, of course, when we turn in a poor performance, we feel that God is in heaven booing us and heaving proverbial rotten vegetables in the form of removing His presence and, in the words of a friend, "dishing out bummers."

Quiet time becomes tyrannical when we understand it as a performance. Bridges provides a pearl of wisdom. "Your worst days are never so bad that you are beyond the *reach* of God's grace. And your best days are never so good that you are beyond the *need* of God's grace." Whether we are having a good day or a bad day, the basis of our relationship with God is not our performance, for even our best efforts are but filthy rags, but grace...

Do not allow quiet time to become performance. View it as a chance to grow in grace...

*Tim Challies writes one of the best Christian blogs (<http://www.challies.com/>). He is also the author of the newly published book, *The Discipline of Discernment*, by Crossway.*