



M Grace Messenger

GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH

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Madison, AL 35758
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GBC HOMEPAGES

<http://www.gbcmadison-al.com>
<http://sermonaudio.com/gbcmadisonal>
<https://www.facebook.com/GraceBaptistMadisonAL>

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

DEAN OLIVE, Pastor

— January 2017 Issue —

"You have dealt well with your servant, O LORD, according to your word."
Psalm 119:65



NURSERY SCHEDULE

January 2017

- 01 Jessica and Troy Moseley
- 08 Melanie Myatt and Vicki Johnson
- 15 Peter and Jenny Lovassey
- 22 Lori Hewlett and Jan Furdson
- 29 Amber Solan and Linda Olive

February 2017

- 05 Doug and Andrea Page
- 12 Jessica and Troy Moseley
- 19 Vicki Johnson Kristin Scarborough
- 26 Jan Furdson and Lori Hewlett

CHURCH CLEANING

- January - Amises
- February - Moseleys

FINANCIAL SUMMARY AS OF JANUARY 1, 2017

Budgeted expenditures (ytd)	\$185,095.00
Actual on-budget expenditures (ytd)	\$150,153.04
Actual off-budget expenditures (ytd)	\$ 4,172.48
General Fund offerings (ytd)	\$198,695.20
Designated Missions (ytd)	\$ 7,937.23
Love offerings (ytd)	\$ 7,100.00
Benevolence (ytd)	\$ 1,100.00
Total offerings (ytd)	\$214,832.43
Dec. Love offerings	\$ 3,010.00
Dec. General Fund offerings	\$ 21,736.50
Dec. Designated Missions	\$ 400.00
Building Fund balance	\$194,548.65
Missions Fund balance	\$ 17,074.15
Adoption Fund balance	\$ 2,935.00
General Fund balance	\$ 52,937.93

4 Christian Principles For Making New Year's Resolutions

The Word of God gives us not only permission to make resolutions, it gives us good reasons for doing so. In considering how to glorify God in all that we do in our particular circumstances and callings, we would be wise to resolve to make particular resolutions to assist us in our sanctification.

Resolving Sensibly

If we set ourselves about the business of hastily making resolutions as the result of our own illusions of sinless perfection, it is likely that we will not merely fail in our attempt, we will likely be less inclined to make any further resolutions for similar desired ends.

Resolving Dependently

We must be sensible in grasping the simple truth that every resolution must be made in dependence on God.

Resolving Humbly

We must not come into His presence pounding our chests in triumphal arrogance as if God must now love and bless us more because we have made certain resolutions to follow Him more.

Resolving For Christ's Sake

We cannot resolve to do anything with a presumptuous attitude before God. The whole matter is not just goal setting so that we might have happier lives. We are called to live according to His will, not our own

This was adapted from an article originally published in *Tabletalk* magazine. By Burk Parsons

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

NORMAL SUNDAY SERVICES

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

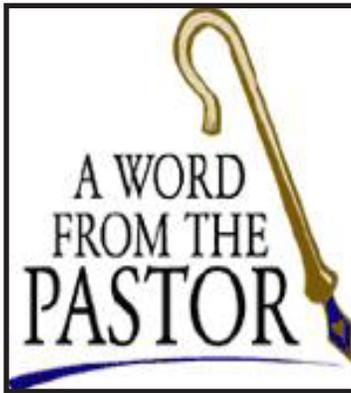
WEDNESDAY EVENING

Bible Study and Prayer Meeting	7:00 PM
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FIRST SUNDAY SERVICES

Morning Worship	9:30 AM
Meal at the Church	11:00 AM
Afternoon Service	12:30 PM

*No Sunday School
or Evening Service*



My Prayer for Next Year

BY MARSHALL SEGAL

What dreams do you have for the new year? What do you wish would be different about you, your marriage, your family, your job, or your ministry?

Some of us may have been thinking about this since late last January when our shiny new resolutions had

already grown stale and started to mold. Why do our good resolutions seem to go bad faster than a quart of milk and carton of eggs?

Far too many resolutions fail because we fail to pray. We set out with courage, ambition, and even some exhilaration. We might pray over our resolution(s) on that first day of January, like praying in the driveway before a long car ride. But before we've even made it out onto the highway of another year, we've already left prayer behind, and with it, the power needed to persevere in any new habit or pattern.

Without prayer for God's help, our most meaningful resolutions will either fade and fail altogether, or even worse, seem to succeed, but fail to say anything significant about God. Before you make any new resolutions, resolve to pray. If you don't resolve to do anything else this year, resolve to pursue change and growth through prayer, and not through your own resolve.

With only a few hours left in 2016, and a new year coming quickly, I'm thinking less about what I will do differently, and more about all that God might do in me and through me. The changes I need most in my life — my devotional life, my marriage, my eating, my exercise, my ministry — can't start or end with me, so I must pray.

My new prayer, over every other prayer for next year, is this:

Lord, teach me more about yourself than I already know, humble me again with all that I do not know, and make what I do know more alive and real in my heart and life.

Lord, help me see more of you than ever before.

Every new day, and every new year, begins with the same prayer, "Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law" (Psalm 119:18). With the Spirit in us, and the infinite wonders of the very words of God himself before us, we never have any reason to be content with what we already know. Without a doubt, we should expect to see and understand things about God this year that we've never seen before.

We never stop praying that God might "give [us] the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of [our] hearts enlightened," that we might know more of him — his hope, his wealth, his power (Ephesians 1:17-18).

Satan spends every second of every day lying to us about God (Revelation 12:9). We expose and defeat him with "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, praying at all times in the Spirit" (Ephesians 6:17-18). Ask God to show you more of himself in his word this year than you've ever seen before.

Lord, reveal just how little I know of you.

Satan is so devious that he turns even our knowledge of God into a temptation to sin. Ignorance of God will always lead to evil, but even knowledge of God can become ungodly. We may know enough about God to be saved, but most of us also know plenty to become proud.

As the apostle Paul warns, "Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. If anyone imagines that he knows something, he does not yet know as he ought to know. But if anyone loves God, he is known by God" (1 Corinthians 8:1-3). It is tragic when the theology that should utterly humble us strangely causes us to think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think (Romans 12:3).

True theology — however refined, however developed, however articulate — sounds like worship: "When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him" (Psalm 8:3-4). As God shows you more of himself, ask him to help you to see just how little you know, and just how little you deserve to know what you do. Ask him to make you humble.

Lord, make what I do know of you more real in my heart.

From an early age, the world taught us to measure progress in all the wrong ways. We spent twenty or more years learning a little more math, or a little more history, or a little more science, and we measured our ourselves year after year by test scores and final grades. But the Christian life is not simply a Systematic Theology course. Maturity is measured by a spiritual heart monitor, not a theological Scantron. By character, not head knowledge.

How do we turn what we know into true Christian growth? Through prayer. Prayer is the match that lights the kindling of knowledge we've gathered over time. Tim Keller writes,

Prayer turns theology into experience. Through it we sense his presence and receive his joy, his love, his peace and confidence, and thereby we are changed in attitude, behavior, and character. . . . Prayer is the way that all the things we believe in and that Christ has won for us actually become our strength. Prayer is the way that truth is worked into your heart to create new instincts, reflexes, and dispositions. (Prayer, 80, 132).

Too often we have loved what we've learned about God more than God himself, and when we do, our lives remain essentially the same. We learn more and more, but never change. But if we never really change, have we really known God at all? Keller continues, drawing on John Calvin, "You may know a lot about God, but you don't truly know God until the knowledge of what he has done for you in Jesus Christ has changed the fundamental structure of your heart".

More of God, less of pride, and more like Christ. As the sun sets on another year, may the Son rise like never before on the horizon of our hearts.

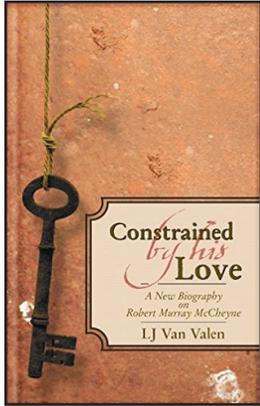
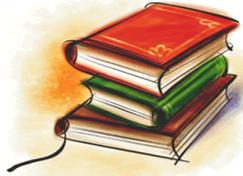
By Marshall Segal . Source: desiringGod.org

BOOK REVIEW

Constrained by His Love: A New Biography of R. M. McCheyne,

J. Van Valen, Christian Focus
Publications, 491 pp.

(66% off currently at Reformation Heritage Books).



Robert Murray McCheyne was born in 1813 and died in 1843. His life, was nothing short of extraordinary. Given the charge of St Peter's Church, Dundee at the age of 23, even his trial sermon was blessed, with two people being saved. The church saw astonishing growth, overflowing with 1,100 hearers. He stands today as one of the outstanding preachers in the history of Scotland.

The spirituality of McCheyne and his focus on the work of Christ was immediately apparent. Hostile crowds often melted under his preaching as they realized the sincerity of the man and the power of his message. His life is a lesson to us all, that when we submit to our Sovereign Lord and his plan, he can and will use our bodies, no matter how weak, our gifts, no matter how limited and our lives, no matter how short.

J. I. Packer comments, "He was an outstanding man of God, and his life story, here told in fullest detail and with fullest sympathy, should on no account be missed." Joel Beeke says, "Finally - a definitive, contemporary biography on Robert Murray McCheyne abounding with historical detail, sterling illustrations, and spiritual warmth." David Robertson, the current pastor of St. Peter's Free Church of Scotland, says, "He has much to teach us about how to reach the cities and the modern industrialized world for Jesus Christ. Read and learn."



JANUARY 15 – Our Pastor will resume preaching services on Sunday morning. Please keep him in your prayers.

FEBRUARY 5 – Instead of an afternoon worship service, we will be holding our annual church business meeting. Members are strongly encouraged to be present.

MARCH 12– A representative from the Gideons will be giving a 10 minute presentation about their work in the morning service. An offering will be received for the publication of Bibles by the Gideons.

Spurgeon's Catechism

with Scripture Proofs

Question 29: How does the Spirit apply to us the redemption purchased by Christ?

Answer: The Spirit applies to us the redemption purchased by Christ, by working faith in us, and by it uniting us to Christ in our effectual calling.

Scriptural Proof: Ephesians 2:8; Ephesians 3:17; also 1 John 5:1; Philippians 1:29; Acts 16:14; 18:27; John 3:8; 6:64f.

Commentary: No one has a saving interest in Christ without faith. Salvation comes to those who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no salvation apart from faith. He that believes not is condemned. But faith is the result of the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart. The Spirit convicts of sin and opens the heart that the sinner might believe.

By the powerful working of the Spirit, the new birth comes. The Spirit works mysteriously but also mightily. Those whom the Spirit quickens to life believe. They are savingly joined to Christ in faith. Faith unites them to Christ. The calling of the Spirit is thus effectual. The Spirit does not fail in bringing all whom the Father gave to the Son to redeem.

Effectual calling and the new birth is a divine work. None but God the Holy Spirit can perform it. This mysterious and mighty work and is brought about by God the Holy Spirit. He insures that the redemption accomplished by Christ is applied. Thus all who believe in Christ are united with Christ and are seated with him in the heavenly places.

Nothing is so wonderful as real union with Christ! The Spirit makes us one with Him. Together all the saints make up the bride of Christ. We are part of the kingdom of God. And this union made possible by the Spirit results communion with Christ. What a joy it is to experience both union and communion! We are called into fellowship with the Redeemer to whom we are joined by faith. We are no longer in darkness but walking in the light of the Son!



Thomas Manton Puritan Quotes MEDITATION

"The end of study is information, and the end of meditation is practice, or a work upon the affections. Study is like a winter sun, that shines, but warms not: but meditation is like a blowing upon the fire, where we do not mind the blaze, but the heat. The end of study is to hoard up truth; but of meditation to lay it forth in conference or holy conversation."

An Introduction to the 'I am' Statements of Jesus

Kevin Tucker

This article is the first in a series on what are known as the 'I am' statements of Jesus. They are recorded for us only in the Gospel of John. These emphatic statements made by our Lord identify Him clearly as both God and Messiah. This first article will serve as an introduction to put Jesus' statements in the larger context of John's gospel and also to provide some preparatory information for following articles.

Though the Apostle John's name is nowhere explicitly stated in the fourth gospel, there is no doubt he is the author. The strong, consistent testimony of the early church and the weight of the internal evidence both point to John's authorship.

The testimony of the early church fathers confirms that John was the last of the four gospels written. Multiple considerations indicate a date of c. A.D. 80-90, some 50 years after Jesus' ministry and decades after the other three gospels were written.

John MacArthur, in his commentary on John's gospel, notes it is unique among the gospels. The first three, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, are known as the Synoptic (from a Greek word meaning "to see together") Gospels because of their similarities in content, structure, and perspective.

But John's gospel is obviously different. He says nothing about Jesus' birth and infancy, temptation, and baptism. John omits the Sermon on the Mount, the Transfiguration, and the institution of the Lord's Supper. John records fewer miracles than the Synoptic writers and no narrative parables.

Over 90% of what John wrote in his gospel is not found in the Synoptics. John opens his gospel with a striking prologue found in the first 18 verses. J. C. Ryle says, "Nowhere in the Bible shall we

find such clear and distinct statements about our Lord Jesus Christ's divine nature. Nowhere shall we find so many expressions ... no mortal man can fully grasp or explain." John also recorded some of our most treasured portions of the Bible: Jesus' encounters with Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman, His raising Lazarus from the dead, His public discourses in chapters 5-8, 10, His private discourses with His disciples in chapters 13-16, and His High Priestly Prayer in chapter 17.

John is the only gospel that contains a precise statement of the author's purpose. '*Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*' (John 20:30-31) Here we see that John's purpose was both apologetic (*that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God*) and evangelistic (*that by believing you may have life in his name*).

MacArthur notes that John's apologetic purpose was to convince his readers of Jesus' true identity. John presents Jesus as God incarnate, the Messiah, and the Savior of the world. Accordingly, John repeatedly refers to the miraculous signs Jesus worked. In fact, John organized his gospel around eight "signs" or miracles to prove Jesus' true identity as the Christ, the Son of God, and lead his readers to belief in Him as Savior. Take, for instance, the first of Jesus' signs that John records—turning the water into wine at a wedding. John writes, '*This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory...*' (John 2:11) In his prologue, John had already written that Jesus' glory was, '*glory as of the only Son from the Father...*' (John 1:14)

In terms of achieving his evangelistic purpose, which is inseparable from his apologetic purpose, John used the verb "to believe" nearly one hundred times to emphasize that those who believe in Jesus as the Christ will have

eternal life. This represents more than twice the times it was used in the other three gospels. We see an example of this when Jesus told Nicodemus, '*that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.*' (John 3:15)

John also documented Jesus' eight 'I am' statements that will be the focus of the next several articles. They can be found in John 6:35, 8:12, 8:58, 10:9, 10:11, 11:25, 14:6, and 15:1. Each of these eight statements supports John's dual purposes in writing his gospel. Consider first John's apologetic objective. The words 'I am' translate the Greek 'ego eimi.' Leon Morris writes, "Jesus uses an emphatic 'I am' to bring out important teaching about his Person. In Greek, the personal subject of the verb is not normally expressed: the form of the verb makes clear what the subject is. But if it is desired to emphasize the subject, then the appropriate pronoun may be used. What makes this so important in John is that we find a similar usage in the Greek translation of the Old Testament. There we find that the translators used the emphatic form of the speech when they were rendering words spoken by God."

Taken in their full context, each of these statements is also strongly evangelical. Look, for instance, at the first one. In 6:35, John records Jesus as saying, '*I am the bread of life...*' In verse 40, Jesus clearly explains the evangelical implication of His deity when He says, '*that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.*'

We have in these eight 'I am' statements, the self-disclosure of the incarnate God. In the next article, we will begin to look at our Lord's powerful statements in more detail.