

ANNOUNCEMENTS

JAN 3, 2016

SICK LIST:

HEALTHCARE CENTERS:

Ruby Harrison

HOME: Fred & Romaine Elliott, Wilma Brown, Deloris Brown, Bruce Windham

PRAYER LIST: April Lazenby, Sue Hinds, Joshua Jackson, Elmer Williams, Debra Webb, Patsy Tucker, Rhonda Poe, Debbie Odom, Robert Turner, Bobby Holloway, Ricky McDonald, David Brown, Kim Elliott, J.D. Dailey, James Horsley, Donna Laratta, Kathy Windham, Arthur Mason, John Pruitt, Madison Banks, Charles Crump, Martha Ann, Elesia Wright, Margie Thomasson, Micah Earnest, Vonciel Phillips, Wanda Self, Katie Griffies, Bruce Windham, Raymond Johnson, Joyce Jacobs, Morgan Calhoun, Patrick Parker, Robert Nelems, Gene McDonald, Sabrina Handley, Mike Miles

AM - NEIL MYERS - WHAT'S GOING ON?

PM - NEIL MYERS - GOD HAS A GIFT FOR YOU

THANKS TO THOSE WHO ARE FILLING IN FOR ME IN MY ABSENCE BOTH TODAY AND WEDNESDAY EVENING

BIRTHDAY:

Jan 8: Henry McDonald

THE WEST WALKER WELCOMER

WEST WALKER CHURCH OF CHRIST
26036 HWY 78
CARBON HILL, AL 35549
(205) 924-9038
westwalkerchurchofchrist.org

TIMES OF SERVICES

SUNDAY MORNING

Bible Class 9:30

Worship 10:20

SUNDAY EVENING 5:00

WEDNESDAY BIBLE STUDY 7:00

ELDERS:

Gene McDonald 924-4827
Carlton Myers 221-0637
Neil Myers 924-9289
Bruce Windham 221-2348

DEACONS:

Danny Busby 387-0213
David Preston 300-1927
Kevin Richardson 295-8864
Chris Robbins 388-1354
Vince Roden 924-4062

MINISTER:

Ben Wright 522-8004

Do You Love God? **Jon Mitchell**

Is your definition of Love the same as God's?

Let's say that a survey taker decided to make it his goal to stand outside of every church building in America each Sunday and ask every person who left the building if they loved God. How many do you think would answer in the negative? My guess would be that the overwhelming majority of churchgoers would gladly and sincerely profess their love for God, and I am thankful for that. It is due to their love of God that they are attending church in the first place. It's because of their love of God that they own a Bible and peruse through it from time to time. Their love of God is a major reason why they love others and help others in their time of need. Professing a love of God is an important first step.

"First step'?" you might ask. "What do you mean, 'first step'? I thought loving God is the ultimate, the pinnacle, the highest we can achieve!" That is true, but consider this. We say that we love God...but does God agree? Does God think we love him? Does God define us loving him the same way that we define loving him? We might be tempted to assume that he does, but God's Word suggests otherwise (Is. 55:8-9). In fact, Jesus said that there would be religious people who call him "Lord" and are involved in many good works who would still be condemned at judgment (Matt. 7:21-23). Obviously, those who call Jesus "Lord" and do many good things in his name would also gladly say that they love him...so why are they being condemned?

The answer lies in finding out how God defines our love for him, and the way to do that is to go to his Word. This makes sense when you think about it. Consider your spouse and your closest friends and the love you have for them. When you think about it, the love you have for them and they have for you is based upon your mutual knowledge of each other. You know each other well, you understand each other, and that's what causes your love for each other to grow more and more. It's the same with our relationship with God. The more we come to know God, the more we will love him...especially when we grow in our understanding of just how much he loves us! (John 3:16; 1 John 3:16).

But how do we come to know God? The only way that will happen is by going to his Holy Spirit-inspired Word (2 Pet. 1:19-21; 2 Tim. 3:16-17). After all, no one knows the mind of God except the Spirit (2 Cor. 2:9-11), and the Spirit revealed the mind of God to the writers of Scripture (John 16:12-15; 1 Cor. 2:9-13; Eph. 3:3-5; 2 Pet. 2:19-21). When we study and meditate upon God's Word day and night (Ps. 1:1-3), we grow in our knowledge of God and how he looks at things. We also grow in our knowledge and understanding of how God defines our love for him.

So just how does God define loving him? Over and over again, the Scriptures correlate love of God with obeying God (John 14:15, 21, 23-24; 1 John 5:3). In fact, obeying God is how we come to know him as well as to love him (1 John 2:3-5). Even in the Old Testament, God always defined the concepts of loving him and obeying him interchangeably (Deut. 6:4-5; 7:9; 10:12-13; 11:1). So if you obey God, you love him. If you choose to unrepentantly disobey God, you don't love him. If you love him, you obey him. If you don't love him, you will not obey him. It's that simple.

With this in mind, go back to Matthew 7:21-23. Why did Jesus condemn some even though they called him “Lord” and did many good things in his name? He tells us why. “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.” They weren’t doing the Father’s will. Perhaps they were doing some of it, but they weren’t obeying him in all areas of their lives. That’s why he called them “workers of lawlessness.”

Do we love God? Sure, we might say we do. We might sincerely think that we do, and perhaps in some areas of our lives we do. All of that is good and shouldn’t be ignored. Like I said earlier, it’s an important first step. However, ask yourselves this. How well do you know God? How well do you know the Bible? How often do you go out of your way to study his Word in depth? Furthermore, are you obeying his Word? Are you doing so as best you can in all areas of your life? Are you willing to obey God even if his revealed will in the Scriptures goes against your most cherished belief? Are you willing to put God above even family, even above self? When you disobey him, are you willing to repent? Are you willing to obey him no matter what?

That, and that alone, shows how much we truly love God.