

Pastoral REFLECTIONS

Staying Cool

July 30, 2023

Most of the country has experienced intense heat. Anyone deciding to go outside for any period of time has to plan carefully. Those who ignored the heat advisory information and decided to hike the trails in places like Arizona have either been rescued, hospitalized, or died.

Every day spiritual warfare intensifies (Ephesians 6:10-12). The scriptures are clear; “Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.” (1 Peter 5:8) He goes to heaven day and night making accusations against God’s people like in the case of Job (Revelation 12:10). Trials will come; we must not act like something strange is occurring (1 Peter 4:12). The Lord even died on the cross providing us salvation, so we don’t perish in this heat (hell) forever.

They say that climate change is taking place. It is clear that satan is busy making the world more evil by the minute. When we think we have heard it all, there comes some unimaginable crime the very next day. The scripture explains that in the last days, “evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.” (2 Timothy 3:13; NASU) Paul continues in this manner; “you, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned, and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.” (2 Timothy 3:14; NASU) This is why the Lord has provided the Bible to guide us so we do well with the temperature very high every day.

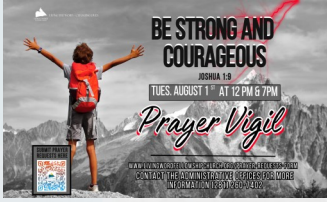
There is no way we can live in this kind of heat every day and not intentionally seek the Lord through His Word, especially since our spiritual battles can be internal and external (Galatians 5:17). This process is like building muscles in a gym; it has to be intentional, or when the wicked world connects with the wicked flesh, we will overheat. Remember, the flesh has nothing good in it (Romans 8:9-14). So let’s be intentional as we work out our salvation (Philippians 2:12-13); remember the list?:

- 1. Be purposeful about our spiritual growth – Life Application, Sunday worship, Bible study, and be accountable to someone you trust (Hebrews 10:23-26; James 5:16).
- 2. Live by faith and not by sight, so our troubles strengthen us, displacing hopelessness (2 Corinthians 5:7; 2 Corinthians 4:7-12).
- 3. Be purposeful in trials, so they mature us, accomplishing why Christ allows trials to be in our lives (James 1:2-4).
- 4. Become a prayer warrior (1 Thessalonians 5:17-18).
- 5. Be dedicated to make our marriages and families stronger; it empowers everyone in the family (Ephesians 5:25-6:4).
- 6. Become engaged in making our church spiritually mature and physically productive (join the 700 club; Exodus 35:20-36:7).
- 7. Be loving and friendly, not just desire that people be friendly towards you (1 John 4:7-11).

The fruit of the Spirit will keep us cool in the heat (Galatians 5:22-25).



UPCOMING Events



PRAYER VIGIL—TUES. AUG. 1ST 12 & 7 P.M. Join us for a Back to School Prayer Vigil Tuesday, August 1st at 12 p.m. and at 7 p.m. with the Theme, "Be Strong and Courageous" Joshua 1:9. Jesus has instructed us to pray - join us as we collectively pray for one another and other prayer concerns. For more information contact Pastor Duane Lawrence or Tomitra Wiley.



NACA HOMEOWNERSHIP EVENT Join us Living Word Family and learn about credit restoration and the best ways to save for buying a home. This event will give advice from the Neighborhood Assistance Corporation of America (NACA) specialist on information about purchasing a home whether you are a first-time home buyer or repeat home buyer. Also there will be information on restructuring your mortgage. For more information contact Jeff Allen at jeffrey.allen@lwfellowshipchurch.org



BACK TO SCHOOL BASH Join us Aug. 5th 10 a.m.—1 p.m. as we serve and evangelize our community! Please help us by donating clothes, backpacks, girls hair accessories, and any other school supply items. You don’t want to miss this opportunity to serve our community. Register a child to receive a backpack and school supplies on the events page of our website. For more information, contact Keron Brown or Rashaud Hudson.



FREE YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT CODING CAMP Attention all youth 7th - 12th grades and all L.E.G.I.T. Young Adults, we are offering a FREE CODING CAMP August 11th 6-8 p.m. and Saturday, August 12th 9 am - 1 p.m. You will learn valuable computer science skills : how to code a website and a blog. Sign up on the events page of our website and for more information contact Shani Smothers at shani.smothers@lwfellowshipchurch.org



LWCA BACK TO SCHOOL SPECIAL Back to School is almost here! Sign up for our LWCA S.T.E.A.M. (science - technology - engineering - arts & math) before and after care for ages 5-12. students will learn chess, robotics, arts and crafts, cooking classes, outdoor sports including tennis, and godly principles. Special lock-in price of \$85 if you register by August 15, 2023! \$120 per week after that date. Register at www.lwcacademy.org or by calling (713) 686-5538

Children are now required to check-in upon arrival. Please report to the registration desk located in the children’s wing.

Infants—6th grade

LWFC KIDZ



ORDER OF WORSHIP

- Announcements
- Communion
- Visitor’s Welcome
- Worship In Giving
- Offering boxes are located at all perimeters under crosses
- Special Music
- “Religious vs. Relationship” Judges 2:1-5
- Click “Sermon Notes” on the Website
- Call to Discipleship Please remain seated at this time
- Benediction

LEGACY MIDDLE SCHOOL - HIGH SCHOOL TUESDAY NIGHTS EFFECTING TODAY FOR TOMMOROWS youth ministry of LIVING WORD FELLOWSHIP

Religious vs. Relationship
Judges 2:1-5

A. True Relationship Never Forgets (v. 1):

- 1. The Angel of the Lord did not need permission or did not need to be invited. The Angel came unannounced and, with authority, executed what will take place one hundred and sixty years after Joshua passed away.
- 2. The Angel of the Lord reminded the people of Israel that He and He alone got them into the land they now enjoy, and that is only because of His covenant with them.
- 3. It is the Angel of the Lord who made a way out of no way to get them out of Pharaoh’s powerful, brutal grip to the land of freedom and plenty. All they did was respond to the way that the Angel of the Lord created.
- 4. God never breaks His promises. There are 7,000 promises in the scriptures.
- 5. By the fact they are still in the Promised Land and have not gotten into servitude to another ruler, and the Lord has not expelled them, God has exposed His faithfulness to His covenant. It is not about losing the relationship with the Lord, the emphasis should be more about how we can consistently demonstrate a true devotion to Him.
- 6. The Lord’s faithfulness describes His nature (Deuteronomy 32:4).

B. Being Religious Causes Us To Forget (vs. 2-3):

- 1. As faithful as the Lord has been, it is amazing that the ‘Angel of the Lord’ has to stop the people of God from developing a covenant with an ungodly population.
- 2. The commitments we make should never interfere with our commitment to the Lord.
- 3. We must constantly be intentional about keeping high places (anything, person, our ambition that takes our attention away from God) out of our lives (Romans 12:1-2; 1 Peter 3:13-16; 5:6-11). This includes denying ourselves (John 12:23-26; Luke 14:25-33).
- 4. Our obedience to God is forfeited when our commitments and the altars we erect create a major distraction in our lives. This is why it is absolutely necessary to live an intentional life before God (Hebrews 12:1-3).
- 5. Having a passion to grow in our knowledge of God exposes the nature of our hearts. If our passion grows, our love for Him becomes obvious. If we are easily distracted, it exposes that our hearts are not fully surrendered (Psalm 25:4-5; 51:6; 86:11; 119).
- 6. When we are not intentionally seeking to develop our lives in the manner the Word of God has directed us, but yet we live each day in a world that is becoming more and more godless, it is very easy to be lured into the traps of the world and to eventually not serve the Lord faithfully (Romans 7-8, 12; James 1:12-16).

C. Genuine Worship Erases Religion (v. 4):

- 1. The people clearly understood, especially what the ‘Angel of the Lord’ verbally communicated through the prophetic Word of God. They also clearly and in detail understood the authoritative nature of this message.
- 2. They, independently, without any influence from the ‘Angel of the Lord,’ collectively sought forgiveness from the Lord. They did this continuously.
- 3. True repentance leads to genuine worship. It must be consistently taught to those around us, or it will be lost (Judges 21:25).
- 4. They knew how to call on God and continuously persistently sacrifice to the Lord God but did not do so in a manner of true worship.
- 5. We often seek the Lord to bless us rather than allow Him to develop our lives for the purposes He died to provide; life and life abundantly (John 10:10) and to become our friend (John 15:13).
- 6. When the world and all its influences get the best of us, our worship of the Lord is neglected (1 John 2:15-17). Unfortunately, our lives must be seriously impacted before a desperate need for Him elevates our passionate desire to worship Him sincerely.



PRAYER REQUESTS

Grieving: Myrtle Nichols & family, Robert Horn & family, Ruth Cranford & family, the family of Lakeesha Davis, Leatrice Sam & family, Jackie Jordan & family, and Vivian Phillips & family

Health and Healing: Lurlean Lane, Florence Wiggins, Retha Amos, Margaret Baptiste, Cici Sharpe, Eunice Johnson, Jeffrey McQueen, Eric White, Ella James, Pat Crawford, Lisa Roberts, Birdie Williams, Jon Heard, Rutha Patrick, Betty Goode, Latifah Brown, Tanisha Collins, Eric Prichett, Rufus Hadnot, Pat James, Kevin Carey, Lori Lee, Nikisha Doyle, Jessie Austin, Sherri Love, Elizabeth Clark, Clara Williams, Betty Cunningham, Wanda Turk, Deborah Smith, Dorothy Price, Kathryn Ford-Cheatham, Anthony Thomas, Beverly Austin, Joshua Williams, Ruby Hunter, Yvette Ford, Calvin Wilson, Elizabeth Bean, Diane Ford, Patrice Terell, Patsy Gatterson, and Rita Hughes.

