

Living in the Uncertainty of Life

By Lynn Hedrick

My recent confinements to hospitals have deeply imprinted upon my mind that we know not what shall be on the morrow. Indeed life is uncertain and is short like a vapor that appears for a little while.

In inadequate language, let me share with you some thoughts about living in the uncertainty of life.

As I live, I want someone with me!

How terrible the thought of being alone! As I lay on the cart ready to be ushered into surgery, I felt the tender touch of the hand of my wife of 44 years. God ordained marriage. Love comforts and never fails.

But, no loneliness so crushing as being without hope and without God in the world. As a Christian, Jesus is with me always. He will not leave me or forsake me. My Heavenly Father is with me as I enter the uncertainty of life prior to surgery.

Without doubt I want someone with me as I live this life of uncertainty. "Walk beside me Precious Saviour!"

No material possession is significant - Only forgiveness counts.

A man's life consists not in the abundance of the things he possesses. We brought nothing into the world and it is certain we will take nothing out. Living in the uncertainty of life causes us to see this truth and count mere things as useless.

There is something that counts - Am I forgiven of every sin that I have committed? As we live this life of uncertain length, we can be certain that God will forgive our sins and iniquities and remember them against us no more if we will love him and keep his commandments. Have mercy on me oh God, and forgive!

The wonderful blessings of having brothers and sisters in Christ.

I stand amazed at the genuine love now being expressed by you my dear brethren at New Georgia. In this, my time of extreme physical and emotional difficulty, you have demonstrated brotherly love at its finest.

Let us live soberly as we live in this life of uncertainty. — Thanksgiving Day, 1997



The North Charlottesville church of Christ

We Meet at the Piedmont Family YMCA
442 Westfield Road, Charlottesville 22901

Email: larryrouse@cvillechurch.com
Internet: www.cvillechurch.com

Ask About Our... FREE Bible correspondence courses
FREE personal home Bible studies
Daily Devotional Message - 975-7373.

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Sunday
Bible Class (children and adults).....10:00 AM
Morning Worship Service.....11:00 AM
Afternoon Worship Service 3:00 PM

Thursday
Bible Class (children and adults).....7:35 PM

See You There! Please call for directions.
227-6919

If you know someone who would like to receive this publication, please let us know.
Dial-A-Bible-Study
975-7373
Available 24 Hours a Day!



North Charlottesville church of Christ
3445 Seminole Trail #132
Charlottesville, VA 22911

Place Stamp Here

Charlottesville Beacon



A weekly publication of the North Charlottesville church of Christ
Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:16)

Volume 2, Issue 25 March 11, 2007

Learning How to Worship

By Larry Rouse



Thoughts To Ponder

Whatever is outward in worship must come as a direct result of what is inward—otherwise, it will be form without power.

Dial-A-Bible-Study
975-7373
Call Anytime!

Inside This Issue...
Editorial - Pages 1-2
Learning How to Worship Page 3
Influence: The Potential for Good and Evil Page 4 – On the Back
Living in the Uncertainty of Life

Larry Rouse
Editor

In what manner do you come before the presence of the King of the Universe? As Christians we are expected to be at His table to remember the greatest sacrifice ever made when we observe the Lord's Supper (1 Cor 11:23-26). Please understand that this is an occasion very different from what we do in our everyday service to God. Without proper preparation, proper concentration and a tender heart, we can incur the wrath of God and place our souls in jeopardy (1 Cor 11:27-30).

I believe that a good barometer of the spiritual health of a Christian and that of a local church is found in the attitudes and actions expressed in our assemblies for worship. Over the years I have observed those who showed disrespect and disinterest when they should have been trembling in their heart at the presence of God. As I look back, most of those who displayed these attitudes have since fallen away. Also, I have know of some older couples that considered themselves "faithful members of the church" because they brought their bodies to an assembly without the involvement of their hearts. These same "members" came to see, over time, that all of their children have fallen away! What are we really teaching others about worshipping God?

God is Seeking Worshippers

Jesus revealed a great truth about our God when He discussed the subject of worship. "But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:23-24). We should pause and listen to the words of our Lord. The ruler of the universe, the One who is all powerful and needs nothing, is seeking worshippers! Please understand, He is not seeking just any kind or worshipper. God will only take "true worshippers," those who will worship "in spirit and truth." Are you that "true worshipper" that God is seeking?

True Worship is not Man-Centered

What did Jesus mean when He talked about "worship?" This word Jesus used is proskuneo and is defined: (1) from a basic sense *bow down to kiss* someone's feet, garment hem, or the ground in front of him; (2) in the NT of worship or veneration of a divine or supposedly divine object, expressed concretely with falling face down in front of someone *worship, venerate, do obeisance to*; (a) toward God (MT 4.10); (b) toward Jesus (MT 2.2); (c) toward the devil and demons (MT 4.9; RV 9.20); (d) toward idols (AC 7.43); (e) toward human beings as given or claiming to have divine power or

(Continued on page 2)

Check Us Out On The Internet: www.cvillechurch.com

(Continued from page 1)

authority (RV 3.9; 13.4b) - [Friberg's Analytical Greek Lexicon](#).

Worship is a strong word that indicates an awe of the heart that causes one to fall down either literally or in one's heart in the presence of a holy God. Isaiah's response should be ours as we see God's majesty and our own sinfulness when we worship. "Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, The Lord of hosts" (**Isaiah 6:5**). Rest assured, true worship is not a place for the casual man-centered approach of our current religious world.

We Must Come to Know and Love God

So much of what men call worship is a mindless repetition of outward acts and outward words that men think will obligate God to them. Some view God like a "divine vending machine." If you put the proper coins in a vending machine and press the right buttons, then the machine dispenses what you want. Our God is not an impersonal being that will respond to a certain formula. He wants our hearts!

It takes much teaching for man to see and know God. It is the love of God that ultimately melts a man's heart and causes him to "obey the gospel" (**Romans 6:17; 5:6-8**). Once a man becomes a Christian, he has a daily need to renew that love by placing himself before God in worship. It is so easy to replace seeking the approval and praise of the unseen God with seeking the presence and approval of men (**2 Cor 10:12, 17**). We must fight to keep our hearts before God.

If a man does not love God, then worship will truly be a "weariness" (**Malachi 1:13**). Those who have this view will want short services, short sermons and "worship" that caters to their tastes. Yes, we can "improve worship" from the world's point of view by doing things to keep the shallow attention of the worldly. Is this really the worship that God is seeking? If Jesus came to your assembly, would he be welcomed in reverence and listed to with rapt attention? Or would He leave in disgust at what His "house" (**Mk 11:17**) has become? In Malachi's day God wanted to "shut the doors." "Who *is there* even among you who would shut the doors, So that you would not kindle fire *on* My altar in vain? I have no pleasure in you," Says the LORD of hosts, "Nor will I accept an offering from your hands" (**Malachi 1:10**).

How Do We Teach Others About Worship?

Worship begins with learning to come before God on a daily basis. The disciples saw Jesus pray often and as a result they asked to be taught. "Now it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, that one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples" (**Luke 11:1**).

The assembly for worship should be an extension of what we are already doing on a daily basis. Sadly, some pray in their in private lives only the kind of prayers heard in the assembly. The assembly prayer is led with the needs of the many in mind, and, as a result, will often be more general. However, in private I need much more time to confess my sins and talk to God alone about the multitude of things on my heart. Those who have never learned to do this are spiritual dwarfs that may make demands to change the assembly to keep themselves from "weariness."

We Must Rebuild the Foundations

Over the last few years I have witnessed things in the assembly that have dismayed me. I have seen people bring their secular work into the assembly and work on it as they would at a desk. I have seen young people laugh and talk and, in one case, a young lady let her non-Christian boyfriend give her a backrub during the sermon. In one place a church looking for a preacher had a man ask each preacher this first question in a business meeting: "Will you cut back on the length of your sermon?" Later this same man wanted the preacher to be "fired" because he often preached over this man's self-imposed limit of 30 minutes. Brethren, we have drifted and there is much work to do!

The Call to Repentance

We need teaching that will rend our hearts and bring us back into the presence of God. Hear the words of God to the church at Ephesus. "Nevertheless I have *this* against you, that you have left your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent" (**Rev 2:4-5**).

Be honest, are you a true worshipper? If not, repent and start today by pouring out your heart in a personal confession to God.

Let us be able to join with the Psalmist in our joy at worship. "I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go into the house of the LORD" (**Ps 122:1**).



Influence: The Potential for Good and Evil

By David Hartsell

Influence as a teaching tool is not taken very seriously today. Yet, it is one of the most powerful forces that we can have over people. The word influence is from the Latin and literally means, "to flow in." It is the power of people or things to act on others, seen only in its effects. In the physical realm radiation would be a good parallel to influence. Radiation can be used constructively, as in X-rays and treatment of cancer, or it can be devastatingly dangerous, as in radiation poisoning. Let us examine several characteristics of influence that mirror those of radiation. We will see the detrimental and positive effects of influence.

Influence, like radiation, is unseen but its effects are often very clear. Jesus once told His disciples to, "Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees" (**Matt.16:6**). He was talking about the negative effects their doctrines had on so many people. Paul put it this way, "Evil company corrupts good habits" (**1 Cor.15:33**). Sometimes it is difficult for us to see the bad influences surrounding us. We might be dating someone or have close friendships with people who do not hold to Christian ideals. Let us take inventory of the things that affect us. Are those influences making us better or taking further away from God? There are avenues of good influence that we can choose. Early Christians were those who positively affected so many people. Their love and sacrifice for God and their brethren silently reached out and attracted many to Christ (**Acts 2 & 4**).

Influence, like radiation, is unseen but its effects are often very clear. Jesus once told His disciples to, "Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees" (**Matt.16:6**). He was talking about the negative effects their doctrines had on so many people. Paul put it this way, "Evil company corrupts good habits" (**1 Cor.15:33**).

The longer we stay around radiation the more contaminated we become. Likewise, the influences that touch our lives have an accumulative affect. Peter instructed wives with unbelieving husbands to win them to Christ without constantly nagging them about obeying the gospel. Instead, these godly women were to live the gospel message before them (**1 Pet.3:1-3**). Often the best lessons preached are delivered in this way. Sadly, Satan's sermons are given in similar ways. We might not walk among the ungodly but we might invite detrimental influences into our houses through various forms of media. How many have allowed TVs and computers to take their hearts away from God?

Finally, large doses of radiation are deadly. This is also true of influence. Many understand this concept. They agree that the adulterous man at Corinth had to be withdrawn from immediately (**1 Cor.5**). There are occasions where the most deadly influences are disguised in "good people." Peter is an example of this. His partiality for Jewish Christians over gentile ones caused Barnabas and other Jews to take part in his hypocrisy (**Gal.2:11-14**). We must never blindly follow people regardless of all the good they have accomplished in the past.

Influence is a wonderful tool for good and a dangerous one for destruction. Let us surround ourselves with those things and people that will help us go to heaven. Train our hearts to be the good influence that will aid others in reaching eternal salvation.

