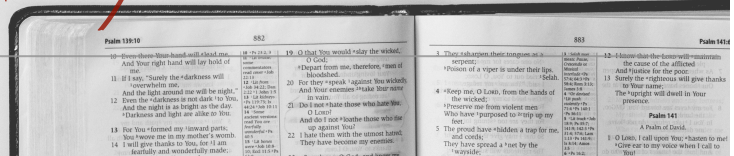


WORDS *of* TRUTH

“Spiritual Education”



Joe's Journal

Joe Manasco is a Bible major at Freed-Hardeman University who is set to graduate in December. He is working with the West Dyersburg Church of Christ in Dyersburg, TN. Joe will be having a recurring column in *Words of Truth*.

Ladies Article

Regina Larkin has been teaching children's Bible classes for 40 years and has been in public education for 25. She is married to Tom, and they have 3 daughters and 6 grandchildren.

Theme Articles

Thomas Larkin is the preacher for the Union Church of Christ in Somerville, AL. He has been preaching there for 27 years. He has his Masters degree from Amridge University.



Knowing the Truth

God is perfect in knowledge and wisdom. He has revealed truth to mankind in such a way that not only appeals to us intellectually, but stirs us to respond emotionally as well. Paul says that “all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” are hidden in Christ (Col. 2:3). Those who wish to find the truth about God, His creation of all things, and the purpose of man can do so in Scripture.

Learning is a lifelong process. We should always view ourselves as learners and disciples. Educating ourselves and our children is our first line of defense against the wiles of the devil and against the wickedness of the world. May we ever seek to “grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Pet. 3:18).

—DD

Joe's Journal

The Value of Christian Education

Joe Manasco

As I gaze into the future and see my last semester at Freed-Hardeman University inching closer, I'm amazed at how manageable it appears. Just three years ago, what now looks like a speed bump on the road seemed more like a looming mountain that was impossible to climb. Move-in days, registrations, financial aid meetings, and social adjustments that once consumed my mind have now become bubbles of thought that appear for a moment and are promptly handled. How has time gone so fast?

Life at Freed-Hardeman, my small Christian college situated in a tiny West Tennessee town, has been an amazing experience. For the most part, I've enjoyed myself, and I've made great friends with unforgettable memories. I've expanded my knowledge, I've gained confidence, and I've learned many life lessons, all while being surrounded by godly influences. All in all, I have no regrets as the curtain closes on my time at FHU.

I say all that in honesty, but I must admit: If you'd told me that I would type those words when I was a sophomore or junior at Walker High School, I wouldn't have believed you. In fact, in typical high school fashion, I probably would've thought that you had no idea what you were talking about.

Going to Freed-Hardeman, or any Christian college was never in my plans. All my life, I imagined myself going to a large public university where I could make my own way and experience something more than my small town, Jasper, Alabama. In my mind, going to a Christian university would be the exact opposite; I imagined myself as a member of one big youth group disguised as a college student. When people would ask me if I were considering FHU or other Christian schools, I'd usually reply something like "it seems nice, but there won't be anything to do!" "It's so small, won't it feel just like high school all over again?" "I want to go somewhere new, somewhere bigger!" For a long time, the most pressing concern was "I can't play football there because they don't have a team!" Christian education simply didn't seem like the best option for me. All my concerns outweighed the benefits by a long shot, so I began mentally closing the doors on the entire idea.

Finally, in an effort to forever slam the door on Christian education, I decided that I would give FHU a chance. In the fall of my senior year, I found myself riding down an endless road through Alabama, Mississippi, and eventually Tennessee. The entire ride, I tried to maintain my strong opinion that this was not a realistic option for me. The road stretched on for a little while longer until out of the nothingness appeared a quaint little town and my future college home: Freed-Hardeman University. As soon as my tour began, I felt something that made me realize this was where I needed to be. Looking back, I think that what I felt was my plans falling to the wayside, and God's providential will taking its rightful place in my life.

Since that day, I've listened to incredible lessons from God's word. My faith has been affirmed by every class I've taken, rather than casting it into doubt. I've made friends that encourage me to be better and hold me accountable when I make mistakes. I've been fortunate to learn in wholesome environments with professors that know me by name. I've been given opportunities to live out my faith by serving others. Best of all, I've grown closer to God and have seen him work materially in my life and development as a person. My experience at FHU can be summed up in one word: growth. I have truly enjoyed my time at Freed-Hardeman, and I believe that the experiences at other Christian institutions of higher education would certainly be similar.

Obviously, I never attended a public university, but I did attend public high school. If I had the chance, I would not change either decision. In high school, I was exposed to ideas, lifestyles, and people that viewed the world much differently than I did, and I consider that a blessing. In college, my worldview has been challenged, most often in a theoretical way, by people that ultimately see the world much like I do.

With that being said, I want to offer a few cautions about Christian education. It is important to remember that outside the campus boundaries, there is a still world desperately in need of God. We must not forget that there are other diverse schools of thought, many of which may carry some valid points. It is easy to attend a Christian school and begin believing that the world is simple, and everyone should see it as such; when in reality, this is simply not true. It is also very easy to allow faith to become routine and allow your school's devotionals and chapel services to be the sole fuel for your faith. Before you know it, what you once considered the greatest benefit of Christian school, the spiritual influence, becomes a crutch and the greatest roadblock to your spiritual growth.

Christian education is not without flaws; however, I believe that it can be one of the greatest instruments available for cultivating your faith in God, while becoming educated in your chosen field. Much like anything else, one will get out of Christian education what he or she puts into it. If you are looking for a way to educate yourself for any given career, why not consider doing so in an environment that values you as a student, and more importantly, a soul?

The Importance of Educating our Children in the Word

Regina Larkin

Receiving a gift can be a memorable event. As we look back over our lives, each of us will remember receiving a special gift. My memorable gift would be the ring that was given to me as an engagement ring. It was the most beautiful ring I had ever seen. Not because of the size or shape, but because of the love shown to me by the giver. You see it was first given to Tom's mother years before as her engagement ring. I did not have the privilege of meeting Mrs. Betty Jo Larkin. Cancer ended her life before I met her wonderful son. She was a beautiful Christian lady and it was such a privilege to wear her ring. It was a gift I will cherish always.

In Psalm 127:3 the Psalmist said, "Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord; and the fruit of the womb is his reward." The heritage or "gift" of a child truly is a treasure, but with that gift comes great responsibility. We want to meet the physical and emotional needs of our children. We want them to have the best that we can give them. But as we do so, are we preparing them to live in this world without being a part of the world? Are we teaching them what they need to know? Are we equipping them to go to heaven?

The children of Israel were commanded to "love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might" (Deu. 6:4). Jesus repeated this command in Matthew 22:37, referring to it as "the first and great commandment." If we are to raise our children to love God, we must first love Him and obey His commands. We can never take our children some where we are not willing to go ourselves. The passage goes on to say that God's commands must be in our heart so that we can teach them to our children (v. 6). Psalm 119:11 gives the reason we are to put the word in our hearts - "that I might not sin against thee." With God's word properly placed in our heart and lives, we are equipped to teach it diligently to our children, just as God commanded the children of Israel (v. 7).

This is no small task. It is not a part time job. We cannot wait until they start school to begin teaching them. It starts even before they are born. Let us go back to the ring for a moment. It was so important to me that I was diligent to know where it was at all times, and I kept it in a safe place when I was not wearing it. I took it to the jewelry store to have it cleaned and to make sure the prongs were not wearing so thin that the diamond would not fall out. I know that I will not always have that ring. I will not always be here, and at some point, the ring will cease to be, but the soul of our children will live on in one of two places, Heaven or Hell. This is why it is so important to diligently teach them to love and respect God and His holy word.

Moses not only emphasizes the importance of being diligent in teaching our children, he also explains when such teaching should occur. We must take advantage of teachable moments. "And thou shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down and when thou risest up" (v. 7). Teaching our children is not limited to structured environments. It certainly is not limited to Bible classes at the church building. We can take advantage of teachable moments throughout the day, but to do so, we must be intentional and deliberate as we nurture our children in their spiritual development.

Moses' continues the thought in verses 8 and 9. "And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates." Have we written God's word on "the post of our house and on our gates?" Oh, we may have a beautiful picture of a passage of scripture, but does God's word rule our house? Do those entering our gate see the word living in us? Do we practice what we preach? As we are living it and teaching it, we are preparing the foundation for our children to build a strong faith in God.

Listen to what Solomon wrote concerning God's word in Proverbs 3:3, "bind them about thy neck and write them upon the table of thine heart." Just as in Deuteronomy 6, the instruction is first to be taken personally. We must inscribe God's word in our hearts. Then, we strive to plant God's word so deep into the hearts of our children, that the trials and tribulation of the world cannot uproot it. By doing this, we are training our children in the way they should go (Pro. 22:6). This is a daunting task but there is no greater gift that we can give to our children.

We love to receive gifts and we appreciate those who gave them. Some gifts are more memorable than others – those we cherish. The gift of a child should be our most beloved possession. Let us strive to show them the way of the Lord.



Discernment

David Dixon

“For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

Hebrews 4:12 KJV

In an effort to educate ourselves spiritually, we have to learn to discern between right and wrong, good and evil, God’s will and our own. Those in the religious world who believe miracles are still occurring believe that the ability to detect lying spirits or to determine deceptive doctrines is a miraculous spiritual endowment from God, and they call it the gift of discernment. The truth of the matter is that miracles have ceased, and discerning the difference between lying spirits and true, and between false doctrines and sound is a matter of comparing them to God’s Word. For those who believe they have the miraculous spiritual gift of discernment, the only indicator of such is a feeling of unrest in their spirit, or a sick feeling when they hear a concept that contradicts what they already believe to be true. Butterflies in our stomachs when we hear the truth are not evidence of a miraculous endowment of the Holy Spirit, but rather they are evidence that we need to turn to God’s Word for the truth.

The word *discernment* means the ability to judge well. The ability to discern comes from knowledge gained through study and living. When God appeared to Solomon in a dream as he was beginning his reign as king of Israel, He told Solomon to ask Him for something. God left it open to Solomon to ask for anything he thought would help him rule. Solomon’s response was, “Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?” (1 Kin. 3:9). Solomon knew that as a king he would need to be able to discern between what was righteous for the nation and what was easiest for himself. God gave Solomon his discernment. He demonstrated that discernment immediately thereafter in his judgement of the dispute between the two harlots. Now, we gain the ability to discern by reading of great men and women in the Bible and their dedication to doing God’s will.

Discernment also deals with the ability to pick a particular thing out of a group of many. Imagine being in a loud, crowded subway station, and being separated from a loved one. Would you be able to pick out your loved one’s voice above the din of all the other sounds around you? You probably would, because you would be straining to listen for a familiar voice tone and wavelength, and you would assume that voice would be using noticeable words and sounds to try to get your attention. The world is full of spiritual sounds that are striving to block out the truth from our minds. Postmodern philosophies, humanism, evolution, and the religion of politics are all seeking to obscure the distinct sound of the truth, especially to the ears of our young people. Discernment is the ability to block out all the white noise of sin and error and hone in on fundamental Biblical truths.

In First Corinthians 2, Paul speaks of the difference between the wisdom of God and the wisdom of men. He says God has revealed spiritual things unto us by His Spirit, but the natural, or carnally-minded man cannot discern those spiritual truths. The reason the worldly man cannot discern spiritual things is because he isn’t thinking spiritually. The Greek word translated as *discerned* in First Corinthians 2:14 means to scrutinize or to investigate. The carnally-minded man is not interested in investigating deep, spiritual questions to the benefit of his eternal soul. He is only interested in pleasing himself in the flesh and in the present. We can conclude from verse 13 that discernment is comparing or interpreting spiritual things according to what the Holy Spirit has revealed.

In Hebrews 5 and 6, the writer is encouraging Jewish Christians in the first century to move forward in their faith under Jesus’ covenant, and not to slip back into the physical law keeping to which they were accustomed under the law of Moses. In Hebrews 5:14 we find, “But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even to those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.” He identifies maturity in faith as those who are skillful in the word (v. 13). Notice that according to Hebrews 5:14, the exercise of our senses to be able to discern precedes the ability to digest the strong meat of the Christian life. Discernment between right and wrong is a basic fundamental of the Christian faith. Wisdom, then, is always choosing the right. These Christians had not yet “resisted unto blood” (Heb. 12:4), but doubtless they would. In order to persevere the persecution (surely a concept that would fall under the category of “strong meat”), they needed to have their senses exercised before they ever faced that dilemma.

When I see young people in the church putting effort into dressing like, sounding like, and acting like their friends in the world, I know those young people lack discernment. When I see middle aged parents struggling to balance faith, family, work, and leisure, I pray for them to gain discernment of what is best for their lives. When I see older Christians who are rock solid in their faith and encouragement of other Christians, and I hear them tell their stories of the struggles they have been through to get where they are, then I know what discernment looks and sounds like.

What this world needs is the ability to discern between good and evil, and the wisdom to always choose the good. And those things only come from God’s Word.

Knowledge, Wisdom, and Understanding

Thomas Larkin

“Get wisdom, get understanding: forget it not; neither decline from the words of my mouth. Forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee: love her, and she shall keep thee. Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy wisdom get understanding.”

Proverbs 4:5-7 KJV

I am not a fisherman. I’ve gone fishing many times before - in fact, I went fishing this week. And, I can say that I enjoy fishing, at least when they are biting. I know the basic concepts of fishing. But I am not a fisherman.

Being a fisherman involves more than being able to bait a hook and cast a rod. A fisherman knows his equipment and which bait to use and when. A fisherman understands the effect the weather will have on his efforts. A fisherman is wise to the most likely places to catch fish in the lake or stream. Being a fisherman involves more than having a little knowledge of and basic understanding about fishing. Perhaps this illustrates well the relationship between knowledge, understanding, and wisdom.

Solomon wrote, “For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding” (Pro. 2:6). The New Testament parallel is found in James 1:5 - “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.” In both passages, we are told that God is the source of knowledge, understanding, and wisdom, but how does it happen? Let’s consider these three concepts.

Knowledge

A good working definition of knowledge is that it is acquaintance with and perception of facts, truths, or principles gained by study, investigation, or experience. Of course, we are interested in knowledge of spiritual matters. The book of Proverbs speaks extensively on this topic. It tells us that gaining knowledge involves reverence for God. “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction” (Pro. 1:7). This passage also emphasizes the importance of the right attitude necessary to gain knowledge - I am a fool if I am not humble and willing to be taught.

Gaining knowledge also involves a desire to know. If I do not value what I might learn, the odds are against my increasing in knowledge. In Proverbs 2, Solomon emphasizes the importance of this desire - “My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God” (Pro. 2:1-5). “Incline thine ear ... apply thine heart ... criest after ... liftest up thy voice ... seekest her as silver ... searchest for her as for hid treasure” all of these phrases emphasize the desire needed to find the knowledge of God. Nothing compares to the knowledge of God and his will. Again, Solomon wrote, “Receive my instruction, and not silver; and knowledge rather than choice

gold. For wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it” (Pro. 8:10, 11).

Becoming knowledgeable involves effort. Years are spent in pursuit of academic degrees. Truly, a lifetime can be spent learning any discipline. But none are more important than learning of God and his ways. Concerning this, Solomon wrote, “Bow down thine ear, and hear the words of the wise, and apply thine heart unto my knowledge” (Pro. 22:17). The story is told of a Christian lady who told her preacher, “I’d give half my life to know the Bible as well as you do.” To that he responded, “Well, that’s what it cost me.” Follow the wise king’s charge and “incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding” (Pro. 2:2).

One who has this desire and is willing to put forth the effort to learn must also consider the source of knowledge. It seems that “fake news” was invented in our time, but since the garden, when the father of lies (John 8:44) tempted Eve, it has been necessary to distinguish between truth and falsehood. John recognized that there is “the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error” (1 John 4:6). And so, Solomon warned, “Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge” (Pro. 19:27). He further warned, “Go from the presence of a foolish man, when thou perceivest not in him the lips of knowledge” (Pro. 14:7). To this we can add Jesus’ warning against “false prophets which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves” (Mat. 7:15); Paul’s prohibition against “profane and old wives’ fables” (1 Tim. 4:7); and John’s caution that “false prophets are gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1).

Wisdom and Understanding

The relationship between wisdom and understanding is not always definitive. In a poetic book like Proverbs, these two terms often are used interchangeably. For examples, look at Proverbs 2:2,6; 3:13, 19; 5:1; 8:1; et al. Understanding involves a mental grasp of the facts that we encounter. It is the ability to comprehend, not just what the facts are, but what those facts mean. Understanding involves the proper use of our thought processes - we will never come to have understanding without exercising our minds. In a similar way, wisdom has to do with the power of discerning and judging properly what is true or right. We might say that wisdom is the proper application of our knowledge and understanding.

Now, go back to the point concerning wisdom’s origin. Solomon and James both tell us that God gives wisdom (Pro. 2:6; Jam. 1:5). But while wisdom is from God, it is not a miraculous gift, and it is not given arbitrarily. Wisdom is given as we strive to gain knowledge and exercise understanding. Even though man must fulfill this responsibility, wisdom is still God-given. Without God’s revelation, we cannot know His will. Without the mental faculties that He created in us, we cannot develop understanding.

Of course, this is an ongoing process. We never stop learning. The acquisition of knowledge is a lifelong experience. A wise man realizes that he does not know everything, and so “the heart of him that hath understanding seeketh knowledge” (Pro. 15:14).

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IMPROVING PERSONAL BIBLE STUDY

Allen Webster

[Editor's note: *This article appeared in the January 1, 1993 edition of Words of Truth. Bro. Webster has written dozens of helpful tracts and has had a hand in the success of House to House, Heart to Heart and Polishing the Pulpit. He works with the Jacksonville Church of Christ in Jacksonville, AL*]

"I would study the Bible more, but I don't get anything out of it. I just can't seem to understand what I read, and what I do understand, I can't remember."

Sound familiar? We all want to learn the Bible and have all started to read through the Bible but have gotten bogged down and burned out. Since Bible study is the lifeblood of a Christian (2 Tim. 2:15; Rom. 10:17), it behooves us to "pay the price" to learn how to make our Bible study time profitable and soul-strengthening.

Try these guidelines to make the best use of your time.

Get a good Bible. It is better to spend a little extra to get a Bible that you can keep for a lifetime. Get one with easy-to-read print (your eyesight will not get any better), get a reliable translation (the King James and American Standard [1901] are considered the most accurate), and one with adequate study helps (concordance, dictionary, maps). A good leather Bible will cost about \$50.

Set aside a time for study each day. Personalities differ; therefore, each has to choose his own best time. Some like to get up a little early and study before work; others like to study on their lunch hour; many choose to retire early at night to a quiet place for their study. The main thing is to study at the same time each day. Make DAILY Bible study a habit (cf. Acts 17:11). Do not let anything keep you from your Bible study on any day. Be jealous of it and selfish about it!

Study for a set amount of time. Study for as long as you can keep your mind on it. Many choose to study for thirty minutes at a time. Others enjoy a full hour each day. Some have found that fifteen minutes of concentrated study is best for them.

Study sitting or standing. Too many fall into the trap of reading while reclining in bed just before falling to sleep. This is a disadvantage to concentration and learning. It is better to study at a desk or even standing beside a table or counter (it is hard to fall asleep while standing!).

Study in the same place. Choose a quiet place away from the television, telephone, children, radio and

all other distractions. It is best to study in the same place because familiar surroundings provide fewer distractions.

Study with a plan in mind. Too many skip around in study and have no real goal in mind. Choose a book and plan to learn that book before going to another. Choose a single subject and do not get sidetracked until you feel that you understand the Bible's teaching on it.

Concentrate fully. This is the key to learning. It is better to study with full concentration for ten minutes than to put a half-hearted effort into thirty minutes. Do not allow your mind to drift.

Mark key verses. Do not be afraid to mark in your Bible. It is a tool to help you go from earth to heaven. By marking the verses that you want to remember, you have sharpened your tool. This will also help you find important verses faster later. Many use a yellow marker for this purpose (use one that does not bleed through).

Take notes and write down questions. It is easier to remember something if you write it down. Even if you never look at it again, by writing it down, you have written it more clearly in your memory. Any questions should be immediately written down. A good commentary can help with the answer. Your spouse, Bible class teacher, an elder or preacher would enjoy helping with the answers.

Use what you learn. If you want to remember what you have learned, you must use it. If it is a fact, tell it to someone. If it is a precept to be obeyed, put it into practice and you will never forget it.

Test these guidelines for a week and see if you do not learn more and enjoy studying more than ever before!

(continued from page 5)

A wise man is willing to listen to others, and so, “A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels (Pro. 1:5). And it is true that if you “give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser: teach a just man, and he will increase in learning” (Pro. 9:9).

A wise man does this because he sees the value of knowledge. “Wise men lay up knowledge: but the mouth of the foolish is near destruction” (Pro. 10:14). The term, “lay up,” means “to treasure.” It is the idea of saving money or making a financial investment. In fact, gaining knowledge is an investment – and it pays dividends as it accrues. The “payoff” is seen in a life guided by wisdom and understanding. James described that life - “Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. ... But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace” (Jam. 3:13,17-18).

This closing words of Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount illustrates this well. “Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock” (Mat. 7:24, 25). A person who eagerly hears Jesus’ teaching is willing to gain the necessary knowledge to live by God’s will. But hearing alone is not enough. The phrase, “and doeth them,” indicates one who exercises understanding. The result is a life guided by wisdom founded upon the will of God.

Consider one final thought concerning the relationship between the three terms. It is possible to have knowledge without possessing understanding or wisdom. The foolish man heard Jesus’ sayings (v. 26), but did nothing about it. Plenty of people have knowledge without the understanding necessary to use it properly. But it is impossible to develop understanding or wisdom unless we first learn what we need to know. We might say that knowledge provides the materials, understanding enables us to fit them together, and wisdom makes the house worth living in. This fits well with Solomon’s

statement, “Through wisdom is an house builded; and by understanding it is established: And by knowledge shall the chambers be filled with all precious and pleasant riches” (Pro. 24:3, 4).

I may never be much of a fisherman, but I’m thankful to God that with his help, anyone - including me - can gain knowledge, exercise understanding, and develop wisdom in spiritual things.

PLEASE SUBMIT CHANGE OF ADDRESS!

Every month we have a few publications returned to us due to mailing records that are not up to date. Each return costs us money in addition to the initial postage. We ask that you please submit updated mailing information if you are moving so that you will not miss any issues. You may submit your change of address by mailing us at 1501 6th Ave., Jasper, AL, 35501, or by emailing us at office@sixthavenuechurch.org. If we do not receive updated information we will have to remove those that are returned from the mailing list.

sixthavenuechurch.org

We hope and pray that you will use our website for personal growth in the faith of Jesus Christ. On our website you will find many resources including bulletins, sermon audios, Bible correspondence courses, Searching for Truth materials, and House to House/Heart to Heart materials. You can also sign up to receive our bulletin by email or submit questions you would like to have answered. On the website you will also find back issues of *Words of Truth*. Please visit regularly and use the resources available to you!

ASK A BIBLE QUESTION

QUESTION: Voting for our next president is getting closer. What should I be considering, as a Christian, as I make preparation to cast my vote?

ANSWER: Christians are the residents of two kingdoms: Heaven and Earth (Col. 1:12-13). These kingdoms are in constant conflict with one another (Mark 6:24; John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; 1 John 5:19). Christians have the responsibility of supporting civil government (Mat. 17:24-27; 22:21; Mark 12:17); however, their ultimate allegiance must be to the kingdom of Heaven (Acts 5:29; Phi. 3:20). Every Christian should reflect God's kingdom in their life (Mat. 5:13-16). The privilege of voting is granted to those of good standing in this country (Constitutional Amendments 15, 19, 26). Casting our vote is an expression of good citizenship (Acts 23:1). We are instructed in God's Word to obey civil authorities (Rom. 13:1), pray for political leaders (1 Tim. 2:1-2), honor political leaders (1 Pet. 2:17), and serve as salt and light in this crooked and perverse generation (Mat. 5:13-16; Phi. 2:15). Therefore, voting should reflect our recognition of civil responsibility (Rom. 13:1-7) and spiritual convictions (Phi. 1:21). Furthermore, voting should be done based on Biblical orientation, not party affiliation. Your voting should be done with God as the audience (1 Pet. 3:12) and the Word of God as your guide (John 12:48). Casting your vote should be preceded with much prayer (1 The. 5:17) and serious thought (Phi. 2:5). Since Christians have the opportunity to choose leaders, we should vote for those with the highest morals and greatest amount of godliness. We MUST examine each candidate's beliefs as to their understanding and commitment to Biblical truth and issues such as, homosexuality, abortion, bio-medical issues, ethnic conflict, etc. We should vote for those that are in agreement with Christian teachings and will protect Christian principles. Remember, voting is a moral issue.

-Mark Nichols Posey
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