

## Pursuing God's Whole Nine Yards

By Daniel Mark

Many years ago, a spiritual mentor of mine introduced to me a passage of Scripture I hadn't seen in the Bible but has since become one of my favorites. The Word of God is so marvelously rich in its content it's doubtful any one verse or passage could be a solitary favorite of anyone. More pertinently, Psalm 37:4 has been such a gem of inspiration of faith as have been Jeremiah 29:13, Matthew 7:7 and Hebrews 11:6. Those passages convey the exciting message that God offers us incredible generosity when we petition and seek Him on His terms. (James 4:3, 1 John 5:14)

The scope of these passages is so immeasurably wide we believers ought to embrace them with a holy gusto and boldness. And as if these weren't enough, Ephesians 3:20 elevates God's promises into the stratosphere! The believer has an inexhaustible source of power and other resources in the God of creation, whose might and wisdom and knowledge are infinite.

What then should our response be? We certainly cannot afford to hold God to a standard other than what He has set. Our desires and aspirations must rise to His great offerings as a means of honoring and obeying Him. What if God actually gave a large plate of all the benefits He wants all His children to have and prosper with? The Bible does contain myriads of goals God has set before us as we journey on the straight and narrow path to heaven.

Assuming we're truly saved and have been grafted into His family (Romans 11:7), our Heavenly Father desires the following in our lives:

1) Be a disciple and a disciple-maker. Following His glorious resurrection, the Lord Jesus gave the explicit command to teach the Gospel to all varieties of people and make them disciples. (Matthew 28:18-20)

2) Become a cross-bearer daily! Our Lord demands the holy routine of taking up our cross and denying



**Kids Five Day Club was held in July**

ourselves as His wholly owned followers. (Matthew 16:24)

3) Be a good and faithful servant. Probably the greatest evaluation of any life will come when the Lord says, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant." All of life's gains and successes matter not a whit if these words will not be said to us at the Judgment Seat of Christ. (2 Corinthians 5:10)

4) Be alert and vigilant and be like one of the five wise virgins as opposed to being like the foolish ones. The certain return of our Lord or the possibility of being called home previous to this must indelibly be on our minds.

5) Learn and strive for holiness. God cannot condone unholiness and will not operate where unholiness habitually holds sway. (1 Peter 1:16; Hebrews 12:14)

6) Be a fruit bearer. In John 15 the Lord Jesus gives us the goal for fruit bearing: the glory of God. He also describes the means of achieving this. The Apostle Paul supplies us with the practical mechanism of bearing fruit through Jesus Christ unto God's glory. (Romans 6)

7) Finally, be an overcomer. There's a huge class of passages bearing on this topic, but perhaps the most telling is found in Revelation 3:21.

The aforementioned are just a small sampling of the wonderful life and lifestyle God intends for us saints of His through His beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Irrespective of churches or denominations, each individual believer has the privilege and responsibility to pursue God along these lines. Are we desirous and trusting enough to seek God this way?



## Happy Birthday!

Blessings to all who celebrate a birthday this month. May you feel the love, joy and presence of the Lord as we all celebrate your special day with prayers and warmest wishes.

Barbara MacQueen	August 11
Kenneth Bills	August 13
Tingling Sun	August 27

## Fellowship Picnic Lunch

Please join us immediately following the worship service on Sunday, August 11, for an enjoyable time of fellowship and a picnic lunch. Sandwiches and beverages will be available. Please bring a side dish or dessert to share and invite a friend, too!



## ISI Garage Giveaway

Help international students and their families experience the warmth and caring of our local community. The Annual ISI Garage Give-Away, which will be held between 8 am and noon on Saturday, August 24, at the Lutheran Church of the Messiah, 407 Nassau Street, in Princeton, assists international students and visiting scholars by providing them with large and small items to help ease their transition to Princeton.



Donations of adult or children's bicycles in good working condition, bike helmets and locks, furniture, small appliances and kitchen, bath and bed needs are especially welcome.

### Items needed:

pots, dishes, silverware, toasters, irons, heaters, fans, sheets, blankets, desks, dinette sets, lamps, chairs, couches, beds, bookshelves, throw rugs, heaters



### Not accepted:

televisions, computers, monitors, toys, clothes, books, curtains

Drivers with pickups and vans and helpers are also needed. The rain date is September 7. For additional information, contact Bob Louer at (973) 462-4071 or [Robert.Louer@gmail.com](mailto:Robert.Louer@gmail.com); Carrie Louer at (407) 538-1099 or [Carrie.Louer@gmail.com](mailto:Carrie.Louer@gmail.com) or Tom Taylor at (908) 406-4790 or [guytmt@gmail.com](mailto:guytmt@gmail.com).

*Relying on God has to begin all over again every day as if nothing had yet been done.*

C. S. Lewis

## Elders' Corner

By Darrell S. Bernheisel

Writing a eulogy, if you've never been given the chance, tends to focus the mind. It's both emotionally and intellectually challenging. Among other things one must ponder the deceased's life including: the peaks and valleys they faced, the interactions we had with them, the lessons they taught us, and the impacts to our lives and others. Those are palpable recollections. But it's also easy to see life's ephemeral hold. The mood during times of contemplation can be characterized at the beginning of Ecclesiastes 1:2-4: *"Life is fleeting, like a passing mist. It is like trying to catch hold of a breath; All vanishes like a vapor; everything is a great vanity. What good does it do anyone to work so hard again and again, sunup to sundown? All his labor to gain but a little? One generation comes, another goes; but the earth continues to remain."*

For those that don't know, my mother recently passed away from complications due to her two-year battle with cancer. It's possible in such circumstances to give in to our grief and despair. How could such a thing happen? Why did it end this way? Of course, we can't answer these questions. We're left trying to make sense of what happened. What was King Solomon (believed to be the writer of Ecclesiastes) trying to say? Better yet, how could I take the book's "reality check on life" and apply it to my mom's life? How could I provide purpose and meaning to her family and friends amidst the sorrow?

As the writer of my mom's eulogy, I was not in grief. In fact, as I wrote notes, spoke to my siblings, and contemplated her wonderful life (despite setbacks, loss, and pain), I began to paint a picture of purpose, peace, and strength. You see, my mom was a believer. The knowledge knowing my mom was saved gave me hope which I wanted to share as her testimony.

I think my mom's life is a testament to what Solomon was alluding to: that our lives should not put hope in earthly pleasures and worldly treasures. Rather, we should put our hope in God. From

Isaiah 40:29-31 we read: *"He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary; they will walk and not be faint."*

Every funeral entails an ending to someone's life on this earth and the beginning of their next life. We all have a choice in how we live. Everyone will be grouped into two groups. We read in Matthew 25:32-33: *"All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left."* The sheep on the right are blessed, and He will say, *"...take your inheritance..."* The goats on the left are cursed, and He will say, *"...depart from me, you who are cursed..."*

I am overjoyed that my mom made her choice wisely while she was alive. She will rejoice in her inheritance in the Kingdom. I am thankful that she had Jesus in her heart. From Romans 10:13 we know: *"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."* For those who are unsure, or need more time or information, I'd encourage you to step out in faith and accept Christ into your heart.

The conclusion of Ecclesiastes, as noted in the KJV 12:13-14, has my six favorite words to live by. We see Solomon's wisdom summed up in this easy to remember verse: *"Fear God and keep his commandments."*

May you and your families be blessed. I ask for your prayers for peace as I mourn the passing of my mother.

## Financial Update

(Through June 30, 2024)

*"The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want..."*

	Actual	Budget
Income	\$64,848	\$89,000
Expense	\$69,225	\$89,000

## Further Up and Further In

*Inviting dialogue to encourage growth in  
and among us*



By Cindy Bills

### Refined in Love

August in New Jersey. Heat wave after heat wave. I have never been a fan of hot weather or inclined toward sun worship. Without a doubt, August in New Jersey is one of the tools the Lord uses to sanctify me, to expose some of my poor attitudes and lead me toward wholeness in Him. I can't help but associate the heat associated with this time of year with the Refiner's fire....

Of course, August in New Jersey is not as hot as other locations, and there are many people who enjoy the hot weather. But life as fallen people in a fallen world means that in one way or another, the Lord will use the stresses we experience to conform us to His image, to refine us.

In Biblical times, gold was refined by melting it. That means bringing gold to a temperature of almost 2000<sup>o</sup> Fahrenheit! I am sorry to say that my trials and challenges do not need to get nearly that "hot" to expose my lack of faith and patience. But as I deal with those trials and challenges, I can appreciate the Lord's gentle touch and patient attitude toward me even as He uses my circumstances to prepare me for heaven.

The attitude that I bring when I encounter something I would prefer to avoid plays a vital role in my ability to walk in faith and remain in the crook of the Shepherd's staff. Sometimes the trials in our lives represent consequences for poor and/or disobedient choices that we've made. And in this case, it is important for me to accept the correction, exercise a

commitment toward repentance, and thank the Lord for not letting me remain in sin. At other times, the challenges we face are less personal and more a reflection of the fall. While repentance may not be in order in this case, an attitude that manifests faith—the conviction that the Lord is working good even though I am unable to see it—remains vital.

Applying a living and vibrant faith to life's challenges does not mean minimizing or denying them. Suffering on any level is real, and King David and the Old Testament prophets have recorded for us the distress and even despair that they experienced at times. And that is what makes the trials we face so challenging: Satan would have us become so distracted by tribulation and so disappointed in God that we cease to seek Him. But King David and the prophets have also recorded for us their unwavering belief in a good and sovereign God despite appearances to the contrary. God hates the fall and its consequences! His response is to apply His commitment to redemption to all the pain and ugliness in our lives.

To be sure, walking in faith in the midst of difficult times and circumstances is not easy. There is Good News, though! The Body of Christ is designed by God, and her saints are called to love, uphold, and encourage one another. As we invest in the life of the body in the form of a local church, we are able to hold and be held, encourage and be encouraged, empower and be empowered. And as the body functions by the Lord's design, everyone is blessed. May it be so at Windsor Chapel....

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**If you have any items or information you would like to share in the newsletter, please e-mail:**

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