



Cape Coral Church of Christ

1010 S.W. 20th Avenue

Cape Coral, Florida 33991

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<http://www.thelordsway.com/capecoralfl>

Schedule of Services

Sunday: Bible Study: 9:30 A.M.

Worship: 10:30 A.M. and 5:00 P.M.

Wednesday: Bible Study: 6:00 P.M.

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Pay Attention to Your Soul!

Your doctor probably runs routine lab-work when he sees you for your annual physical. He's interested in things like your weight and your blood pressure in order to assess your general well-being.

Physical health has certain benchmarks. If your blood-sugar is too high or too low, there's a problem. If your tests reveal results that are outside of normal tolerances, your doctor will consult with you to figure out how to deal with the problem.

Sometimes I wish our spiritual health could be quantified and charted. We could examine our holiness and see if it is trending up or down. We could be given a printout that shows whether we have tested positive for anxiety, greed, pride, or any number of spiritual maladies that often go unnoticed.

Scripture has all sorts of descriptions of things that happen to Christians who are dying: they fall from grace (Galatians 5:1-4), they are led away by error (2 Peter 3:17), they become weak (1 Corinthians 8:11), they move away from hope (Colossians 1:21-23), they deny the Lord (2 Peter 2:1), and even depart from God (Hebrews 3:12).

Unfortunately, many of those who fall victim to these spiritual sicknesses never realize it until it is too late. The devil never brings it to our attention when we are heading down his road.

A wise person takes inventory of his or her spiritual health and well-being. How is yours?

Thankfulness

We often take things for granted. One of those things is "thankfulness." We do not value it as a high priority even if thankfulness is required for spiritual fulfillment and enjoyment in God. If we recognize that God is indeed the Giver of all good things and if we are dependent on Him, then we should acknowledge Him in all of our ways. "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths" (Prov. 3:5-6). He deserves our thanks and our praise. The longer we walk with God, the more thanks we will have to give to Him who is the provider of all good and perfect gifts, (James 1:17) The more we learn to see God as the loving Father who does not refuse to give good things to His children, the more we will thank Him. "For the Lord God is a sun and shield; The Lord will give grace and glory; No good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly" (Ps. 84:11).

As children of God, we have so many things for which we can thank God. "I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well" (Psa. 139:14). Not only should we praise Him for His wonder and power as revealed in the created world, but also thank God for the love manifested in the cross and His supreme demonstration of mercy toward us while we were unrepentant sinners. Certainly we can join Paul in proclaiming, "Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!" (2 Cor. 9:15).

In addition to being thankful for the creation and the gift of salvation, Paul is also thankful for all converts which would be his brothers and sisters in Christ. "We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of your love for all the saints" (Col. 1:3-4) The apostle found great encouragement and joy in acknowledging God for continuing to be at work in the world around him, continuously calling all people to repent and to be faithful to God through the proclamation of the gospel. "For all things are for your sakes, that grace, having spread through the many, may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God" (2 Cor. 4:15).

Thankfulness is a very valued subject in the Scriptures. For example, in Leviticus 7:13, we read that offerings were given to God for thanksgiving. In 1 Chronicles 16:8, David put Asaph in charge of composing songs of thanksgiving to the Lord. In Psalm 100:4, we are told to enter the house of God with thanksgiving. In Nehemiah 12:8, Nehemiah selected certain individuals for the express purpose of giving thanks. In Matthew 15:36, we see Jesus giving thanks to the Father for even simple things such as food. Thankfulness is all over the pages of Scripture. We

are commanded, "Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name" (Heb. 13:15). "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you" (1 Thess. 5:18). Thankfulness is supposed to be a continuous action of the heart about all the things of life!

God has given us a glorious creation, He has given us His only Son in Christ, He has blessed us with the fellowship of the church, and He is alive and working for conversions of souls. We have many good reasons to be thankful toward Him, and to demonstrate it by serving Him in obedience and faithfulness with a sincere attitude of reverence and awe.

You Must Do Your Part

No man can save himself from his sins, but everyone must turn to the Lord, in His appointed way, and look to Him alone for salvation. The Lord Jesus Christ, and He alone, has authority to forgive sin and save souls.

In the conversion of man, there must be co-operation between God and man. God presents the evidence to prove that Jesus Christ is His Son, but man does the believing. God offers the motive to induce man to repent, but man does the repenting. God persuades man to confess His Son, but man does the confessing. God appeals to man to be baptized, but man chooses to be baptized. God provides the straight and narrow path which leads to life everlasting, but man must walk in it.

Keep Watch over the Door of My Lips

Our words have powerful potential for good and for evil - to help or to harm. Knowing this, we need to exercise great caution concerning the things we say. Have you ever been hurt - seriously wounded - by the words of another? Has a brother or sister spoken something that seemed to cut like a knife? And then, when you responded, they replied: "Well, that's not what I meant." Or, "You took that in a way that was not intended."

OK, we accept that explanation if sincerely offered, but we would warn you to be ever more careful with your words. Even when not intended, words carelessly chosen can do much damage. And, who knows how often we might have said things that unknowingly hurt another and they suffered silently, never mentioning how painful our words were to them. Be careful! Know that your words can cut like a sharp sword (Psalm 57:4). Make sure that what you say will build up and not tear down (Ephesians 4:29). By taking great precautions with our words, we will keep ourselves out of trouble (Proverbs 21:23).

Let us pray as the Psalmist did: "Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips" (Psalm 141:3). Think!

Marching

One of my favorite songs is "We're Marching to Zion." As we march, there are some important things for us to remember so that we do not fall prey to temptations that seek to distract us from our goal. We are not looking to win a perishable crown (1 Corinthians 9:25), we are marching towards eternal life!

In life, we face many obstacles, and there are a number of different "forks in the road" that leave us with choices to make. As we march towards Heaven, we must remember to take the right path (Matthew 7:13-14). The easy choice is usually not the correct choice; sometimes we have to take the difficult path. We teach this to young people concerning peer pressure, but adults need this lesson just as much as children. If we follow the path to Heaven exemplified by our Savior, we will end up at our destination and receive our eternal reward. As Thoreau wrote, "The path of least resistance leads to crooked rivers and crooked men."

As we journey through this world as strangers (1 Peter 2:11), we should use the tools given to us by God to survive our march. Jesus serves as an intercessor, advocate, and mediator on our behalf. In addition to this, God has given us the Holy Spirit to help us and teach us (John 14:16-17, 26). Not only has God given us His Spirit, His Son, and His ear (through prayer), he has provided us with the armor needed for battle (Ephesians 6:10-17). We serve a mighty, loving God who has provided everything we need to make it back to him!

The most difficult thing to understand about our march is its duration. We often feel like our life is a long, winding road with a lot of distance left to travel. The truth is that many of us, young or old, may have more of this life behind us than in front of us. We never know when our Lord may return or when we will be called home. With this knowledge, we need always to keep our eyes toward Heaven. If we wake up every day with the singular goal of making it to Heaven, there will be no problem choosing the right path or utilizing the many tools and protections God has given us. James reminds us that life is short (James 4:13-14) and we should live every day focused on waiting for our real lives to begin!

Are You a Christian?

When a farmer stops plowing his land, stops planting seeds, and stops harvesting, he has stopped being a farmer because he has stopped doing those things that identify a farmer.

When a Christian stops attending services, stops giving, stops studying, stops taking the Lord's supper, and stops singing and praying, he has stopped being a faithful Christian because he has stopped doing those things that identify a faithful child of God.