



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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Make Up Your Mind Ahead of Time

Do you want to save a lot of time and hassle? The best way is to make decisions now in anticipation of the future.

Jesus warned his followers that persecution would come, and with the trials would be opportunities to witness (Luke 21:12-19). Then He told them, "But make up your mind not to worry beforehand how you will defend yourselves."

Jesus knows the value of making prior commitments. By forethought, we can anticipate certain situations, and out of our value system, we can decide beforehand how we will deal with them. Here are some examples.

Assembling with the Church. When I was growing up, I didn't feel I was "made to go to church." It was a simple fact; the decision was made in advance. We would assemble Sunday morning, Sunday night, and Wednesday night. Why make the decision each time? If worship and fellowship are important, then make the decision beforehand.

Supporting the Lord's Work Monetarily. The Bible teaches purposing – planning ahead how much will be given. "First-fruits"

giving is a demonstration of faith in and love for the Lord. Why decide each time? Plan ahead so the Lord won't get left-overs.

Living Daily for Jesus. The devil works overtime. But by deciding beforehand what companions you will have and not have, where you will go and not go, what you will do and not do, what speech you will use and not use, you can save time and emotional energy. Jesus will be glorified as you let your light shine.

Disciplines for Spiritual Growth. Making a prior commitment to a daily devotional time of Bible study, prayer, and meditation will make growth much easier. Spiritual goal-setting works.

The Risk of Leadership

A courageous leader runs many risks! He has counted the costs and faces those risks. He faces them knowing he won't always be right. Knowing he will often be defeated, criticized, or misunderstood. He knows that weaker people who depend upon him are often his severest critics.

The courageous leader knows he must define objectives. And so he defines them, knowing not everyone will support them. He knows he must communicate with people. And he tries; and risks being misunderstood, misquoted, or mistaken.

He knows he must make decisions. And so with care he does so, knowing that not all of them will be right. Often he trusts people, and is proven wrong; but he knows he can't quit trusting.

A leader must be concerned with priorities - his profession, his family, his personal needs, the church. He knows he must define priorities, and so he does, often feeling a lack of wisdom, often feeling out of balance. But he keeps sharpening his focus.

Yes, a courageous leader faces many risks. He faces the supreme risk - he knows he'll be judged with greater strictness! And he occasionally wonders if it's worth it. Sometimes he wants to quit. And being human, he's had to wrestle with emotions of fear, frustration, and futility. He's had to deal with the appeal of indecision, inaction, and inertia.

But when there are risks there are also rewards. And the courageous leader has his. He's known the thrill of victory, the joy of achievement, the satisfaction of being useful. He travels on a certain level of life. He's viewed with a special esteem, holds a special hope, and savors a special reward.

And so ... thank God for our leaders. Thank God that they run risks and have courage. And thank God that they're getting stronger and stronger. We need them!

Heaven - a Reward Motivation

If a person was to pin-point the single most important reason for all that God does for us both physically and spiritually, my conclusion is that He wants us ALL to go to Heaven. In the words of the apostle Peter in 2 Peter 3:9, "He does not want any to perish but everyone to come to repentance." Now, in order for us to qualify for that trip to the celestial city, first we must be redeemed (bought back) from the bondage of sin. God has provided a way of us to be redeemed by the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and so He adds incentives in the Bible to motivate us in that direction. If all men and women thought alike, then God would only have to use one incentive to try and spark our spiritual interest. However, we are all different, and because of our differing personalities, God uses various motives to help us see reality.

Some people can only be encouraged from the negative standpoint, therefore our Lord warns us of Hell and its impending doom for the disobedient.

Others can be reached by compassion, so God tells us of His great demonstration of love in John 3:16, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." In light of that, He urges us to serve Him faithfully until death.

Still others are stimulated by reward motivation. The incentive to live righteously is living eternally with the Lord. The proper incentive should cause one to take stock of himself and look introspectively into his own life.

God wants us all to go to Heaven, thus through His word He tries to stimulate that desire through different avenues. My hope and desire is that He reaches all that would be receptive to His word.

It's a Privilege

Booker T. Washington rose from slavery to become a great educator. With little more than brains, courage, and his bare hands, he built Tuskegee Institute. He saw it grow from an unlikely beginning in a hen house to a million-dollar educational center. He raised virtually all the money to build, equip, and staff this first American teachers college for black people.

In his autobiography, Washington made the interesting observation that he never had to assume the posture of begging, because really generous people never begrudge their philanthropy. On the contrary, they enjoy giving and feel privileged to be in a position to support a worthwhile effort in which they believe.

A typical response was that of one benefactor whom Washington tried to thank for his donation. He said, "Don't thank me, Mr. Washington. I'm grateful to you for giving me the opportunity to help a good cause. It is a privilege to share in it."

The key word is "privilege." Living or giving which is viewed only as a duty, obligation, or responsibility leaves one empty. But when we sense the privilege of living and giving, it's different.

How refreshing were the Macedonians. They begged for the privilege of giving. Have you ever heard of such a thing?

There's something wonderful about the person who sees giving as a privilege and gets excited about being involved. He doesn't have to be coaxed or pressured. For him, giving is not an imposition but an opportunity, not a burden but a privilege.

Loving the Unlovable

The world is waiting for the church to become a great society of men and women who will love the unlovable – love across all political and racial and social lines.

We can't love just the ones easy for us to love: We must love the ones which are difficult to love. Many times we hear the statement, "I need more faith." But seldom do we hear, "I need to be more loving."

The Bible clearly states that we are to love everyone: friend - enemy - attractive - despicable - kind - stimulating - boring - hateful - there are no exceptions! There is no brilliance required to love those who interest us or make us feel important, it is easy to love those people. But what about those who interest us so little because it takes effort to make conversation with them, or how much do we love those with whom we disagree? How about the one who wrongs us ... lies about us ... gossips about us? Are we to love the individual whose life seems dedicated to thinking up new ways to torment us?

What the world – what the church, yes, we as individuals need, is true Christian love! Remember the words of the Master, "If you love those who love you, what reward have you? And if you greet your brothers only, what do you do more than others?" (Matthew 4:46-47).

Let us learn to love the unlovable.