



Cape Coral Church of Christ

1010 S.W. 20th Avenue

Cape Coral, Florida 33991

(239) 283-4880



<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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Ten Misplaced Desires?

Maybe you've heard the story about three old friends who were shipwrecked on a deserted island. After nearly a year of being castaways, a bottle floated up on the beach. One of the men opened it, and out popped a genie, granting one wish to each of the three friends. Without any hesitation, the first friend said, "I wish I were back home in Knoxville." Poof! He was gone. The second friend immediately said, "I wish I were back home in Knoxville, too." Poof! Immediately, he was gone. The third man was more deliberate. He told the genie he wanted to think about it a bit longer to make sure he didn't waste his wish. After a full two months of isolation on the island, he said to the genie, "I've reached my decision. Over the past two months, I've come to realize how much I miss my friends. It's been so lonely here without them, so I wish my two friends were back here with me." And poof! (Groan here).

I believe we can all recognize the misplaced desire this man had. The desire for companionship with his friends was noble, but that desire was misplaced if it meant calling them back to the island. But now, before we laugh at this man, we had better realize that sometimes, we too have misplaced desires; good and noble desires,

but they can be misplaced due to context. Let me offer ten misplaced desires we sometimes have.

- We want a Savior, but we don't want a Lord.
- We want a crown, but we don't want a cross.
- We want a harvest, but we don't want to sow any seed.
- We want to go to Heaven, but we don't want to go to church.
- We want to grow spiritually, but we don't want to feed on his word.
- We want Hollywood to "clean up its act," but we don't want to stop watching.
- We want the right to pray, even in school, but we don't want to pray.
- We want the 10 Commandments posted, but we don't want to live by their moral principles.
- We want to love God, but we don't want to abhor sin.
- We want to die the death of the righteous, but we don't want to abandon the lifestyle of the sinner.

The man who wanted his friends to rejoin him on that deserted island was pretty short-sighted, but not nearly as short-sighted as those whose wants are identified above. Give it some thought.

Let Singing Be Stirring!

When we sing songs that we've sung for years, we often have a temptation to "shift our brains into neutral" and cease thinking about the words and messages: about the benefits and recipients of those messages we sing!

God wants singing to be a part of His worship (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; Heb. 13:15). God purposed also, in part, that attendance in worship ought to be a way of stirring each other up to love and good works (Heb. 10:24-25). What ought I to consider if my singing is to be stirring?

To whom am I singing? The answer is: God *and* one another (re-read Ephesians 5:19 carefully)! We sing to the glory of God but to the benefit of one another. Therefore, church, bring your head up out of your book and have regard for your Christian brothers and sisters who can take comfort and strength in the song service!

What am I singing? The answer is: praises to God *and* words of encouragement and admonition to one another! When we sing to one another - we dare to ask questions like, "are *you* sowing the seed of the kingdom, brother?" "Is *thy* heart right with God?" And we dare make

the statement to one another: "I love *you* with the love of the Lord!" How wonderful to express those things in song - in a heart of love and concern for one another.

How am I singing? The answer is: With voice *and* heart of thankfulness (1 Thess. 5:17). God wants our sacrifices in worship, but He wants them from a heart that is truly thankful to Him (2 Cor. 9:6-7). God knows when we offer Him things that come from a heart that is not in it, and it can be evident to Christians by how we sing to one another! Preparing for worship, focusing on the words, and pouring out our gratitude to God and one another will stir up the church to greater work and praise.

God's Faithful Children

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints" (Psalm 116:15).

This verse from the Psalms causes our minds to reflect on the many Christians who have passed from this life. We know that, in spite of the great strides in the world of medicine, death comes to everyone. Just as surely as we are born, we will die, unless, of course, the Lord comes again during our lifetime. The writer of the Hebrew letter tells us, "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Heb. 9:27). The faithful children will then go home to be with God forever.

God, in the very beginning of creation, looked and saw that mankind would need a Savior. So when the time was ready, according to his plan, God sent His only begotten Son from heaven to earth to be our Savior. Being sinless, Jesus was the perfect sacrifice. His blood takes away all sins of those who obey the gospel plan of salvation, and it continues to cleanse those who remain faithful. How grateful we should be for the wonderful privilege of being members of Christ's church, and for the promise of eternal life that has been given to the faithful. Read Revelation 2:10.

John, in Revelation 21:4, describes the peace that the faithful will enjoy in heaven: "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." Heaven is so wonderful that, once we get there, we will never want to return to this old world of sorrow and sin. We will be filled with peace and joy forever. What a wonderful future is promised to God's faithful children!

Turning Pain into Pearls

An incredible process begins when a foreign material or a parasite makes its way inside the shell of an oyster and begins causing damage. The intruder can threaten the life of the oyster so something must be done. To protect itself, the oyster seals off the threat by using the same material that lines the inside of its shell, called nacre. The oyster cannot spit out the intruder, so it covers it with many layers of precious material, thus making it into a pearl. In other words, the producing of a pearl is a defense mechanism. The result? The painful intruders are turned into beautiful pearls.

There is much we could learn from the oyster. Too often, people intrude into our lives with qualities like discouragement, lies, insults, and anger. There is no doubt these cause damage. There is no doubt these can destroy relationships. However, when we respond in a kind and loving way, we can make someone who intended to do harm, respond in love, and transform that person into something beautiful for the Lord. Incredible changes can take place when we slowly respond to such intruders with layers of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Gal. 5:22-23).

As sad as it is, hurtful words and actions are going to enter our lives, but how we react to them is completely up to us. Peter said it best, “To sum up, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit; not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose, that you might inherit a blessing” (1 Peter 3:8-9).

What Is a Cannibal?

I'm reminded of the story about the old man who was asked what a cannibal is. His reply was that a cannibal is someone who is fed up with people. It also reminded me of one of the big differences in Jesus and me: Jesus never saw people, even annoying, sinful, and extremely needy people, as interruptions. Rather, He saw them as opportunities to show the love of God and to serve the needs of mankind. We read in Mark 5:21-43 where Jesus was interrupted by two extremely needy people: the woman who had a flow of blood for twelve years and Jairus whose twelve-year old daughter had died. I'm glad the Son of God never became annoyed or fed up with needy people. At the cross, He willingly met our most extreme need. To be like Jesus, we must learn to see other people's needs as opportunities, not as interruptions.