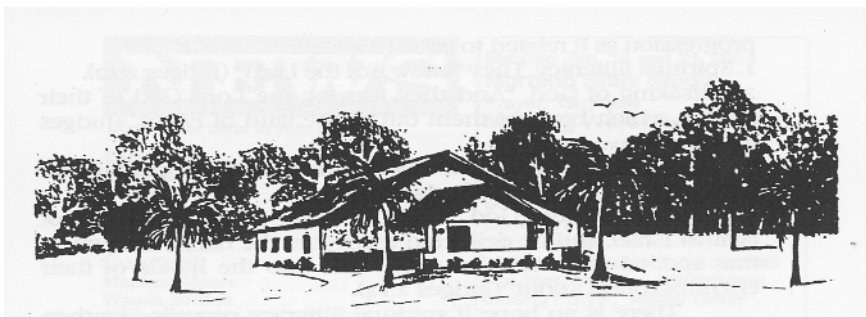




Cape Coral Church of Christ

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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It Seems Right to Me

"There is a way that seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death" (Proverbs 14:12; 16:25).

When meditating on the preceding passage, one begins to realize that mankind's wisdom apart from God's wisdom can leave one spiritually destitute. Society and tradition can set one's moral compass to believe that his reasoning is correct even when it violates God's commands. The end result of such thinking is described by the prophet Isaiah, "Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!" (Isaiah 5:20).

Christians must use the principles of God when called on to make moral judgments. That is why it is so very, very important to have a good knowledge of what the Bible says and does not say. Another Old Testament warning states, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge" (Hosea 4:6).

We must continue to give attention to reading, to exhortation, and to doctrine as prescribed by 1 Timothy 4:13. Just as "an apple a day keeps the doctor away," a little daily dose of God's word helps us build a healthy spiritual awareness that we can draw upon to help us make important decisions about what is right and what is wrong.

Watch Your Mouth?

Bad words and foul language - it's hard to escape them. Whether at work, school, or even alone listening to podcasts, music, streaming on Netflix, watching YouTube, or scrolling through social media, corrupt speech and cursing are everywhere and seem increasingly common and accepted.

As a result, some who profess to follow Christ are often indistinguishable from the world in how they talk. Someone may ask, "Where in the Bible does it forbid specific cuss words?" It doesn't - especially since those living when the New Testament was written didn't speak English. But just because the Bible does not specifically forbid certain words does not mean they are permitted.

Ephesians 4:29 says, "Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear." In context, Paul addresses sinful anger (vv. 30-31), often expressed through words. Curse words frequently come out in moments of anger. "Corrupting" (Greek *sapros*) referred to rotten fruit, decayed wood, or spoiled meat - something worthless and harmful. Likewise, worthless and harmful words include insults, verbal abuse, gossip, and slander. Also implied are words considered inappropriate for Christians, not only by other believers but even by non-Christians.

For example, the other day I was talking with a man at a local high school. After I mentioned I was a preacher, he paused during our conversation, looked at me, and said, "I know you're a preacher, but ..." before using several expletives to tell a story. He didn't think it wrong for himself to cuss, yet he implied it would be out of character for me. If our culture still sees certain words as inappropriate - avoiding them on prime-time TV or not wanting children to say them - then they fall under "corrupting talk."

Curse words are not harmless. Jesus warns, "I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak, for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned" (Matthew 12:36-37).

Doubt

"Doubt makes the mountain which faith can move." Anonymous, from the Toledo (Ohio) Blade, Jan. 1931

If you have ever doubted the existence of God, then you are normal. It happens to the best of folks. But the concern arises when we are not satisfied with the evidence presented to us.

Most folks have the notion that faith is baseless and without reason or evidence. But that actually is not true. "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork" (Psa. 19:1). "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1). Notice that both passages speak of evidence. But if people doubt and choose to ignore what God has provided, He will not be pleased. "For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse" (Rom. 1:20).

Perhaps what causes us the most distress are the books and TV programs that would suggest that there is not a God. These programs explain away what is clearly printed in the sacred text. And it does not help when they have someone interviewed who has a degree, or degrees, that pertain to religion, that cast doubt on what the Bible says.

There is a grave concern that this doubt and uncertainty is causing Christians to be more quiet about their faith. They begin to wonder if there really is a God.

And what about the most seasoned veterans of the cross when they have doubts? Yes, it is part of being human. Perhaps we can refer to it as the Elijah syndrome (1 Kings 18-19), or John the Baptist syndrome (Matt. 11:23). There will likely come a time that you will struggle, but take heart, the evidence abounds enough to revive your faith!

The Ocean Waves of Life!

Have you ever stood in the ocean when the waves are rolling in? If you are not prepared and standing with your feet firmly set, the waves can easily knock you down. The Bible uses this idea of "standing firm" and "holding fast" when describing how we need to be living our lives. The term "hold fast" is defined as "to continue to believe in or adhere to an idea or principle." The closely related word "steadfast" is defined as "resolutely or dutifully firm and

unwavering." We are to hold fast to God and be obedient to Him. "It is the Lord your God you must follow, and Him you must revere. Keep His commands and obey Him; serve Him and hold fast to Him" (Deuteronomy 13:4).

We are to hold fast to our faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, our Savior. "Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession" (Hebrews 4:14). We are to hold fast to the teachings that we have received through the Bible. "So then, brothers and sisters, stand firm and hold fast to the teachings we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter" (2 Thessalonians 2:15).

We are to continue steadfast in the work of the Lord. "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 15:58).

Are we standing firm or letting life's worries wash us away like ocean waves?

The God of Hope

Mankind has made up many gods. As a result, their hearts have been filled with fear, hatred, hopelessness, and doom. But the God of the Bible is called "The God of hope." "Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit" (Romans 15:13).

If we desire lasting joy and peace, it is only available through the God of hope. If we want to abound in hope, it is only available through the power of the Holy Spirit. And all of this comes through faith - believing and trusting in God's word. Paul is not referring here to salvation based on faith alone - he is addressing Christians, and encouraging them to continue in faith. They have already been saved and he addresses them as "brethren" in the next verse. The stronger our faith, the more we will be filled with joy and peace, and abound (have more than enough) in hope.

We Christians overflow with hope because we serve the God of Hope.

Don't be discouraged. Trust in God. He will fill you with hope.