

THE GREENWOOD BULLETIN

Church of Christ
371 W. Main Street
Greenwood, IN 46142
(317)888-8288

www.churchofchristatgreenwood.org

VOLUME 9 NO. 13

May 27, 2012

Be Willing to Change

Lincoln Bible Reader

"God grant that I may always be right," said a Scottish Theologian, "for I never change." One of his Calvinistic brethren declared, "I am always open for conviction, but I'd like to see the color of a man's eyes who could convict me."

Each used different words, but both came out at the same destination. Neither one entertained the idea of change. Both were stubborn, prejudiced, self-satisfied. They had closed their eyes, ears, and heart to the truth, "lest haply they should perceive with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart, and should turn again and I should heal them" (**Matthew 13:15**).

The person who is always right and never changes is usually wrong on many things and always wrong in spirit. The Christian's life begins with a fundamental transformation, the

new birth, continues with constant change. The born again creature (**John 3:5**) feeds on spiritual milk that he may grow thereby unto salvation (**1 Peter 2:1-2**). God's children are to press on unto perfection, that is, full growth, maturity (**Hebrews 6:1-2**). The person who thinks he has reached the top of Pisgah, beyond which no progress can be made, is "dead while he liveth."

It is necessary to have definite ideals and strong convictions. God hates a wishy-washy, namby-pamby, unsteady person (**1 Cor. 15:58, Ephesians 4:14, 2 Timothy 4:1-8**). Truly, "a double minded man is unstable in all of his ways" (**James 1:8**).

But we must make sure that our ideals and convictions coincide with those of heaven. Strong convictions may degenerate into stubborn opinions. Jesus said, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (**John 8:32**). Our desire should be to

2

know his will and then do it.

"God promises a safe landing, not a calm passage."

Do It Because You

Don't Want To

By Gary Henry

"But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified"
(1 Corinthians 9:27).

It's healthy to do something every day that we really don't want to do – just for the exercise. There is a great benefit in practicing the art of self-discipline, that is, engaging in it regularly just for the sake of building our mental muscles.

When Paul said that he "disciplined" his body and brought it into "subjection," he spoke of something that requires a bit of unpleasantness from time to time. By its very nature, training requires us to get out of our comfort zone. If we never call upon our "muscles" to do anything more than what they want to do, then we never gain the ability to do anything more than that. It's just that simple.

And so we ought to look for opportunities to do things that we don't want to do. It's one good way that we grow.

Have you ever watched someone "exercising"? Many of the bodily movements by which strength and agility are developed would be ridiculous if we did them for any reason other than training or exercise. Take sit-ups, for example. There is only one reason to do sit-ups: to make your abdominal muscles do things they don't want to do. No one would ever do it for any other reason except . . . training . . . practice . . . exercise . . . discipline. When you do sit-ups, you're demonstrating that you grasp one of life's great principles: *There is value in doing things that don't want to be done.*

Nothing is more valuable than to have our faculties — mental and spiritual, as well as physical — trained and ready to respond to important needs. But having faculties that will respond to important needs is not something that happens overnight or without any effort. When the big tests of life come along, we won't be ready for them if we haven't been training for them before then. So today, if

3

there's some unpleasant little duty that could easily be procrastinated, do it just because you don't want to. Take that little opportunity to put the flesh in its place. Teach your body to take orders from your spirit. Someday, you'll be mighty glad you did.

**The Goal of
Longsuffering**
By Steve Klein

A housewife sits alone in the kitchen late at night. Her husband comes in after midnight. Drunk again. He is sour and abusive. It upsets her to see him this way. Her hope and prayer is that he can get help, turn his life around, and be the good man she knows he can be. In the morning she'll be up early to fix his coffee -- strong and black. And maybe she'll plead quietly with him to attend an AA meeting. Or maybe she'll just sit in silence and weep.

A parent is at the end of his rope. His teenager has broken curfew again. So many nights, waiting up late, wondering if this could be the night an automobile accident occurs, or the night his child falls in with evil companions, or the night fornication is committed. Wondering where the child could

be. Then, the child comes in. Maybe there's a quiet talk about the importance of getting home on time. Maybe there are heated words, lame excuses, revoked privileges and another sleepless night for all.

Why does the housewife put up with it? Why doesn't the parent just take away the keys permanently!?! What motivates their longsuffering? Is it not love for the one who is doing wrong and hope that the person will change?

In **2 Peter 2:3**, we learn that "The Lord is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance." God is longsuffering toward us, not because He is "overlooking" our sins and shortcomings, but because He wants us to repent - to change our minds and our lives! God's forbearance and longsuffering are designed to "lead to repentance" (**Romans 2:4**). When we continue in sin, we are showing great disrespect for God's goodness.

Like God, Christians are to be longsuffering (**Colossians 3:12; Ephesians 4:2**), but few of us probably have a very clear idea about what longsuffering is and why we should practice it. Longsuffering is not overlooking

4

sin and error or pretending that they don't exist. It does not involve failure to rebuke and reprove sin, for these things are to be done "with all longsuffering" (**2 Timothy 4:2**). Nor is longsuffering some kind of Chinese water torture that God has devised to see how much pain His children are willing to endure for no good reason. Longsuffering has a goal, a purpose. The reason we show longsuffering to others is the same reason God shows it to us -- We are patient in dealing with the sins and faults of others because we love them and we want them to change for the better.

Even when we know what longsuffering is and why we are to show it, it is seldom easy to do so. Paul prayed that the Colossians would be "strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy" (**Colossians 1:11**). Indeed, we all need to pray for God's strength that we might be longsuffering with others, in the home, on the job, at school, at play, and in the church.

VBS - June 18 -
22

9:30 - 11:00
A.M.

Get out and
invite for
June 17th
invite night!