

Eternity

A small ant travels at the speed of 1/17 of a mile per hour. The moon is 144,000 miles away from the Earth. If you could stretch a string from the Earth to the moon, how long would it take for that ant to carry one grain of sand to the moon and come back? Forever? But how long would it take that same ant to remove the whole Earth to the moon, one grain of sand at a time? The mind just can't conceive of how long this would be. But did you know that by the time that ant had removed the entire Earth to the moon, eternity would have just begun? Eternity is forever and ever and ever; like a ring, it has no end. You and I will spend eternity somewhere. Are you preparing for it?

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Sunday Morning:
Bible Class: 10:00 AM
Worship: 11:00 AM

Sunday Evening:
Worship: 6:00 PM

7:00 PM



Visit our website at:

www.blackcreekchurchofchrist.org

- ◆ Bible Call
- ◆ Georgia Mission (Soperton Church of Christ, Soperton, GA)
- ◆ Bible Correspondance Courses & Tracts (By Request)

Works of Benevolence:

- ◆ Hospital Benevolence Basket (Orange Park Medical Center)
- ◆ Raintree Village Children's Home (Valdosta, GA)

Works of Edification:

- ◆ The Black Creek Courier
- ◆ Black Creek Christian School
- ◆ Visitation Program
- ◆ Vacation Bible School
- ◆ Bible Classes For All Ages
- ◆ Keenagers Group (Over -50)



The Black Creek Courier

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"For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now; Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in your will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:" Philippians 1:5

May 31, 2009

The Treasure of Christian Fellowship

Ruth and Naomi. David and Jonathan. Job and Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar. Jesus and Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. The Bible is full of friendships—some good, some bad.

"Do not be deceived: Bad company ruins good morals" (1 Corinthians 15:33, ESV). Psalm 1:1 describes how bad company ruins good morals. In this Scripture there are three types of corrupt influences presented, often each one more rebellious than the one before. "Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked" (Psalm 1:1, ESV). Corrupt influence # 1 is descriptive of an ungodly individual—one who's uninfluenced by God, isn't religious minded, and encourages others to believe they can go through life fine without God. He has no fear of God or the consequences to come from his neglect to serve Him (Psalm 36:1).

"...nor stands in the way of sinners" (Psalm 1:1, ESV). Corrupt influence # 2 is descriptive of an individual who transgresses not merely by mistake or a momentary lapse of strength when tempted, but as a habit. "The words of his mouth are trouble and deceit; he has ceased to act wisely and do good" Psalm 36:3, ESV),

"...nor sits in the seat of scoffers" (Psalm 1:1, ESV). Corrupt influence # 3 is descriptive of one who is outwardly rebellious of God and isn't content to simply rebel and go his own way, but he takes pride in taking others down with him (Proverbs 4:14-16). This man has no conscience (Psalm 36:4).

Psalm 1:1 demonstrates the progressiveness of sin. One who has an association with the ungodly often makes sinful choices. One who begins to make sinful choices soon becomes desensitized to sin, potentially taking up residence in a sinful lifestyle, abandoning God's ways and living a life of apostasy. It describes those we should avoid in our spiritual welfare. Proverbs 13:20 indicates the companions "of fools will suffer harm" and reinforces the sentiments expressed in Psalm 1. If bad company corrupts good morals, and companions of fools suffer harm, then we can accurately contrast these Scriptures and note that good company strengthens good morals, and "whoever walks with the wise becomes wise" (Prov. 13:20).

The "world" isn't likely to be our means for finding good and wise company, but such can be found in the family of God. Christians are to be a source of good company and wisdom for each other. We're to be in fellowship, united by the sharing of a common purpose. Fellowship is the relationship

we share in Christ, one in which we are called to act in love (John 13:34). Love motivated God to send His Son as a sacrifice on our behalf. Love motivated Christ to act according to God's will (John 6:38-40).

While the purpose of the individuals portrayed in Psalm 1 is to ultimately lead others to Heaven, we must understand this fellowship has responsibilities.

People in fellowship love one another by their faithfulness. "And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near" (Hebrews 10:24-25, ESV). Wendell Winkler said, "When a person misses services when he could be present, but because of unconcern and indifference he stays away, he has forsaken the assembly. Accordingly, then, Hebrews 10:25 has been violated; and, consequently sin has been committed." Faithful attendance is an action that reflects love; forsaking the assembly displays a lack of love both to God and your Christian family.



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What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear the Gospel (Matthew 7:24-27; Romans 10:14,17) → Believe the Gospel (Mark 16:16; Hebrews 11:6) → Repent of My Sins (Luke 13:3,5; Acts 17:30) → Confess Christ (Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10) → Be Baptized (Acts 2:38; 1 Peter 3:21) → Be Faithful Unto Death (Matthew 10:22; Revelation 2:10).

People in fellowship love one another by working in harmony. There's always work to do! We're not always going to see eye to eye on the best way to do things. We'll have differences of opinions and maybe even have personality clashes, but we should strive to live as we're instructed in Romans 12:18. "If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all" (ESV). Our ideas and opinions aren't always going to be received with favor, but working in harmony brings glory to God (Romans 15:5-6). Being willing to give and take shows our love. Understanding this should make it easier to submit to other people's desires when we'd rather have it our way.

People in fellowship love one another by correcting those who transgress. "Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness" (Galatians 6:1, ESV). Sometimes we are quick to see our mistakes and rectify them; other times we may find ourselves tangled in sin and struggling to get free. We have an obligation to offer guidance and correction to those we know to be struggling. Some Christians abstain from this display of love because it can be uncomfortable, but our love for that struggling member of our family should motivate us to move past our own displeasure.

People in fellowship love one another by showing compassion. "Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep" (Romans 12:15). Few find it a hardship to rejoice with others, but many shy away from lending support to those enduring hardships because they don't know what to say or how to act. I once asked someone who lost a son to cancer what meant the most to his family during his son's illness, and in the days after he passed away. He said they appreciated simple sympathy most of all – that "I'm so sorry" said all that needed to be said. They valued the people who were just available—who dropped in when it felt natural, listened, offered to run errands, prepared food for them, and felt comfortable enough to talk of "normal" things. We often make things harder than they need to be; when people are grieving, simple acts of kindness go a long way.

People in fellowship love one another by showing patience. "And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all" (1 Thessalonians 5:14, ESV). The idle could be characterized as "lumps on a log" - those who fail to contribute. They are hearers and not doers (James 1:22). The fainthearted are those lacking conviction or boldness. They waver in their faith, and look for ways to remain neutral to avoid confrontation, yet desire to be in "good standing" with those in the Church. The weak lack spiritual stamina. They know what's right, and they'll run the "spiritual race" from time to time, but the pressures of the world compromise their energy for competing in the marathon. It's easy to become frustrated with people like this, but people can mature spiritually in the right environment. If through patience you provide these individuals with the encouragement, or the push they might need, you may be instrumental in helping them become a real asset in the Church, or aid in restoring their souls—an act of love that blesses the giver as well as the receiver (James 5:19-20).

People in fellowship love one another by forgiving those who have offended them. "Be kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you" (Ephesians 4:32, ESV). We've all had our feelings hurt; we're all guilty of hurting the feelings of others. When we're the offender, we want forgiveness the moment we ask. When we're the offended, sometimes we want to hold a grudge and withhold love. The Bible plainly teaches that if we love God, we must also love our Christian family (1 John 4:20-21).

People in fellowship love one another by praying for each other. "Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray

for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working" (James 5:16, ESV). Our prayers should always include petition for the Father's care on behalf of those suffering physically, emotionally, or spiritually. We often pray for God to bless our lives, but we should express the same desire for those we love in Christ. We should thank God for the people who encourage us to live faithfully, for surely it's one of the greatest blessings He's bestowed on us.

People in fellowship love one another by showing kindness. "So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith" (Galatians 6:10, ESV). Opportunities to show kindness to our Christian family are ample! Reach out to the new member of your congregation and make her feel welcome by taking her to lunch. Take an interest in the children of your congregation, talking to and engaging with them about their interests. Make a phone call to check on someone who's been sick.

Friendships with those like the ungodly individuals in Psalm 1 will only pull us down spiritually, tempting us to spend time in places we ought not be or do things we shouldn't do—actions that lead to spiritual demise. Friendships among Christians can be a sort of "spiritual shoring" - an aid in our Christian walk. But this blessing comes with responsibilities that shouldn't be ignored. We should give great care that we act as "the shore" and not "the loose screw"

Selected

A Good Name

Good name in man and woman,
 dear my lord,
 Is the immediate jewel of their
 souls:
 Who steals my purse steals
 trash: 'tis something,
 nothing;
 'Twas mine, 'tis his, and has
 been slave to thousands;
 But he that filches from me my
 good name
 Robs me of that which not
 enriches him
 And makes me poor indeed.

William Shakespeare
 From *Othello*
 Act III, Scene 3

Black Creek... This Week

Servants For the Month of May

	A.M.	P.M.
Announcements	Billy Smith	Billy Smith
Scripture Reading	Gordon Richau	Gordon Richau
Song Leader	Sam Sipper	Steve Atnip, Jr.
Opening Prayer	Stanley Posey	Don Miller
Lord's Table	Steve Atnip, Jr.	Sam Sipper
Assistant	Don Shaw	
Assistant	Floyd Grace	
Assistant	Josh Hatcher	
Assistant	Ted Copeland	
Sermon	Steve Atnip, Sr.	Steve Atnip, Sr.
Closing Prayer	Larry Russell	Dick Morgan
Prepare Communion	(May) Glenda Smith	(June) Marne Miller
Cleaning the Building	(May) Glenda Smith	(June) Marne Miller



Black Creek Family:

Antip family, Carolyn Lackey, Copeland family, Posey family, Morgan family, Dasher family, Shaw family, Sonny Best, Grace family, John Moore, the Dennard family, Wanda Cheek, Dix family, Kay Van Horn, O'Conner Vaughn, Blair family, Thompson family, Scriven family, Evans family, and Maloy family.

Away:

Glenn Tarrant, Maria Williams and Tom Sewell (all friends of Cindy at work), Steve Holiday (Mary Dennard's Nephew), Evan Chapman (5 yr. old who was just diagnosed with Leukemia), Baxter & Mary Louis Forrester, Dwayne Seaman and family, Cindy Anderson, James Smith, Kay Taylor, Dorothy Wilson, Eileen Lacy, Donald Petteway, Robert Vaughn, Gerri West, Terry Thompson, Gary Bartlett, Sloan Hunter, Bob Melson, and Catherine Moon.



We are so happy that you have chosen to worship with us today. If you are visiting with us, please remain a bit after services so we can become acquainted and let you know how special you are to us. Also, if you have any questions concerning anything you saw in our services today, please ask any one of us here today. We will be more than happy to answer any of your questions.



Volunteer Work Lists: There is a list on the bulletin board for anyone who could volunteer to watch the little ones during service if the need is present.

Mailboxes: Please remember to check your mailboxes weekly.

Hospital Basket: We need to restock our snacks for the Hospital basket. If anyone can contribute, please see Billy Smith or Mary Register.

Ladies Bible Class: Come join the fun, learning and fellowship with Gay and the rest of the class. Our next class will be on June 2. Ladies, if you can, bring cards and stamps.

Arlington Church of Christ: Is offering a 12-week course entitled **Historical Christian Evidences (Apologetics 1)** on Tuesday evenings starting on May 26th. For more information, see the bulletin board.

Dinner on Grounds: We will be having a fellowship dinner this morning after the services. Please join us in this time of fun and fellowship.

Volunteers Needed: Our VBS is coming up on June 22-26 from 7-9 PM. We are still in need of volunteers and tents. If you could help, see one of the ladies on the VBS committee.

Children's Home Food Truck: Will be stopping by the church building on either July 6 or July 7. The list of foods and items needed are posted on the bulletin board.

Reunion: The Greater Jacksonville Christian School is holding a reunion for alumni and friends on July 11 from 6-10 PM in the Lakeside Church of Christ fellowship hall. Cost is \$30 per person, due by June 1, 2009. For more information call Lakeside Church of Christ.

2009 Northeast FL Youth Conference: July 17-19 at Lakeside Church of Christ. The cost is \$15 per teen. You can register online, or see the bulletin board for more information.