



Truth Matters

A Publication Discussing Matters Related To Truth Because Truth Matters

Get Ready! New Year's Resolutions are Coming



Upcoming Dates:

Christmas Drama with Sweet Communion	18
Christmas Day service 10 a.m.	25
New Year's Day 10 a.m.	1
Missionary Sunday	22
Winter Bible Conference	27-29

Special points of interest:

- Members, remember to read the proposed changes to our governing documents.
- Special membership meeting February 26

Does your spiritual life sometimes seem more like a burden than a blessing? Does your spirituality seem to exhaust you as often as it refreshes you? Have your spiritual practices become “just another thing to do” in an already overcrowded, stress-filled schedule? If so, then you need to simplify your spiritual life.

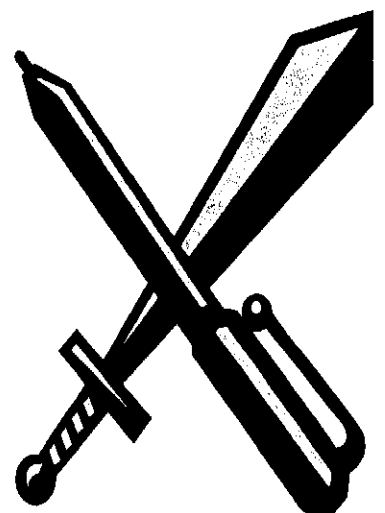
We should expect part of true spirituality to exhaust us, for it exists not merely for our own edification, but to serve the glory and purposes of God. Jesus’ spiritual labors occasionally so fatigued Him that He could remain asleep in an open boat in the middle of a lake during a life-threatening storm (see Luke 8:22-25). Likewise, the apostle Paul knew the depletion of inner resources that results from the willingness to “spend and be spent” for the sake of the souls of others (2 Corinthians 12:15). All aspects of externalized spirituality—serving people’s needs, doing good works, taking the gospel to

the spiritually lost, working in church ministries—expend the reserves of both body and soul.

There’s a problem, though, when the inflow of spiritual renewal doesn’t replenish the outflow of spiritual ministry. Our spiritual life should be *the* source of inner recreation and restoration since it is the way we most directly experience the Lord Himself in daily life. Through our spiritual disciplines (rightly motivated and practiced) come many of the most refreshing blessings of knowing Christ.

An example of how the spiritual disciplines can be an ongoing means of reinvigorating the soul is depicted in Psalm 1:2-3. Frequent meditation on (and not just reading) God’s Word so continually refreshes the meditator that, “He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper.”

However, as everything else in our lives becomes more complex, so can our spirituality. As one writer observed, “The pattern of over-involvement, clutter, and busyness that is a part of our lives at home and at work will follow us into our spiritual lives unless we are vigilant.” With increasing prosperity and technology come increasing opportunities and options—even in our spiritual practices—that weren’t available a short time ago. For instance, instead of simply sitting in a comfortable chair by a sunny window with our Bible, journal, and pen, now we can

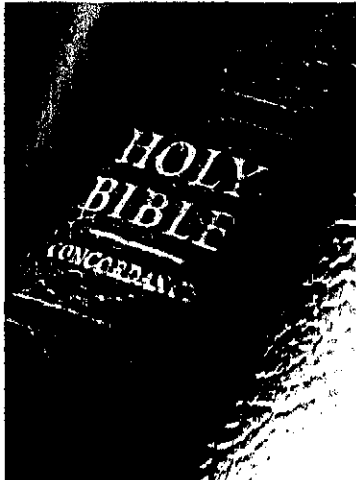




Get Ready!

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- Receive devotional readings sent daily by automatic email.
- Read the Bible in several of the many translations we possess, including those on our computer.
- Make journal entries on the computer by keyboard or voice-recognition software, inserting interesting graphics along with the text.
- Envelop our devotional experience with worship-enhancing audio and/or video.



But it all needs to be done faster than ever before because of the strangling demands on our time.

The growing frustrations of hurry and complexity affect the practice not only of our spiritual disciplines, but also of our congregational spiritual disciplines (the ones we practice with other Christians). There's less time for church involvement than previously, and yet there are more church activities to choose from. We're so far behind in so many things that sometimes we wonder if

what we receive from church is worth the overwhelming effort just to get there.

In some ways we're doing more than ever spiritually, but enjoying and profiting from it less. Many areas of our lives are productive and prosperous, yet we've never felt so spiritually withered. Our calendars are full, but our souls are empty.

The time has come to evaluate whether what we are doing in our spiritual lives is taking us where we want to go. There is hope.

Winter Bible Conference Theme: "The Unity of the Bible"

Two of my "pastoral convictions" include the need to foster partnering relationships with churches of like faith and practice and the need to facilitate our church in going deeper into God's Word.

For a while, it appeared that both of those convictions were going to be met in a Fall Bible Conference among the Grace Partner churches. It has become apparent to me in the past few months that in order to be sensitive to both the needs of our church and the needs of the other Grace Partner churches, we need to divide these two convictions between two different conferences. Therefore, the Fall Bible Conference will go to foster the partnership among our fellowshipping congregations while the second conviction will be met in an Annual Winter Conference hosted by LBC.

That having been stated, we will host our first *Annual Winter Bible Conference for Going Deeper*.

Dates: January 27-29

Times: Friday 7 p.m.
 Saturday 6 p.m.
 Sunday 9:30 a.m.
 10:45 a.m.

Theme:

"The Unity of the Bible: How the Testaments Fit Together"

Topics:

- Making Sense of the Covenants
- Understanding the Place of Israel in the Plan of God
- Making Sense of the Law
- The Ten Commandments in the New Covenant Era

Speaker: Geoff Volker

Pastor of New Covenant Bible Fellowship in Mesa, AZ
 Director of the In-Depth Studies Foundation

