



Cape Coral Church of Christ

1010 S.W. 20th Avenue

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<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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Don't Overlook the Obvious

Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson went on a camping trip. As they lay down for the night, Holmes said, "Watson, look up and tell me what you see." Watson said, "I see millions and millions of stars."

Holmes asked, "And what does that tell you?" Watson replied, "Astronomically, it tells me that there are millions of galaxies and potentially billions of planets. Theologically, it tells me that God is great and that we are small and insignificant. Meteorologically, it tells me that we will have a beautiful day tomorrow. What does it tell you Holmes?" Holmes answered simply, "Somebody stole our tent."

People are bad about overlooking the obvious in religion also. The religious world is full of people who have studied the Bible all their life and yet missed key points in God's teachings.

Almost every book of the New Testament has statements that show that the doctrine of "Once Saved Always Saved" is false and yet many in the religious world have overlooked the obvious (Hebrews 6:4-6). The necessity of baptism to become a Christian is prevalent throughout the New Testament, yet many still claim that it has nothing to do with salvation. They are overlooking the obvious

(Mark 16:16). The connection of obedience to our salvation is also dominant in the scriptures but many still hold to the doctrine of "Faith Only," overlooking the obvious James 2:24). Still others teach as their doctrines the traditions and teachings of men, never recognizing the difference. They overlook the obvious (Matthew 15:8).

Let's avoid the trap of overlooking the obvious in our desire to live lives pleasing to God.

Maturity

Maturity has several definitions. A mature plant is one that is fully grown and developed. A bond that is due has matured. Something that has matured has come to a desired or full condition and is ripe. These definitions – especially the first and third are applicable to the maturity of the Christian's heart.

While it could never be said that any Christian has grown to perfection, Scripture reveals an inspired expectation that after spending time in Christ, one will be more mature than when he or she began (Hebrews 5:12-14). Sadly, though, it is often the case that those who have been Christians for a long time have not matured in knowledge, discernment, or character.

Immaturity of character is noticeable and troublesome. Such immaturity is illustrated in the account of Miriam and Aaron when they chided Moses. "Has the LORD indeed spoken only through Moses? Has He not spoken through us also?" (Numbers 12:2). Such jealousy of positions of authority shows immaturity of character. Miriam was struck leprous because of the incident (Numbers 12:9-10). Ananias and Sapphira could be labeled immature because they sought the approval of their peers at the expense of their integrity. They so wanted to look good that they lied about how much money they were giving. They lived, apparently, for attention. They were struck dead (Acts 5:1-11).

Numerous modern examples of these types of immaturity could be cited. Someone becomes upset because he doesn't get as much time leading in worship services as one of his relatives. A jealous member seethes because he is not even considered by the congregation for the eldership. Immaturity is often displayed as pride.

Maturity in character might be defined as the fulfillment of one's responsibilities, even sacrificially, whether one asked for those

responsibilities or not. Consider Paul, regarded as a "chosen vessel" (Acts 9:15), who became a great preacher but suffered much for it (2 Corinthians 11:22-33). Yet, he handled it well. He listed some of his former claims to fame but rejoiced in counting them all loss for the sake of the knowledge of Christ. Then, he admonished appropriately, "Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind ... " (Philippians 3:15). Such is maturity of character. Those who are mature fret not at the qualities or materials they do not have, but rejoice in coping with the responsibilities they have come to own.

Vending Machine Religion

Sitting in an automobile repair shop, I was recently confronted with one of the biggest opponents to health – the vending machine. As a young boy, like a magnet, I was drawn to the bright lights and the colorful display of pure sweetness found within every wrapper. The thrill of putting money in and selecting what I wanted was, at times, a fun and joyous occasion. Looking at this enemy of the waistline today, I can't help but see an illustration relating to the American concept of religion.

In a culture of moral relativism and unbiblical tolerance, telling us that all belief systems are equally valid, for someone to stand up and say otherwise is judgmental and pushy. It's easy to see why we are in the shape we're in. Just like when we stand in front of the vending machine to select our snack, culture tells us to pick the religion we want, the one that fits us best. In the end, it says, religion is not based upon anything other than what we desire, if we desire anything at all.

In Matthew 22:37, when confronted with a trapping question pertaining to the greatest commandment of all, Jesus replied, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." With this single answer, Jesus placed all teachings pertaining to religion into proper perspective. It's all about God! When he's first, there's no room for my particular desires. It's not about my cravings. Rather, it's about loving, wanting, and doing what's in the best interest of another – God.

Individuals are the kings when we stand in front of the blissful vending machine; we get what we want, when we want. Truth be told, that's okay in matters pertaining to peanut butter crackers verses cheese

filled crackers. However, let us never adapt that same mentality when we approach our relationship with God through Jesus Christ. May we always remember that it's about God and not us!

How to Be Quiet Within

The person who has learned to be content in whatever circumstances he finds himself, is the one who knows how to live at peace with himself (Philippians 4:10-11). Such an individual is not upset because he does not win every contest. Rather, he finds satisfaction in playing the game simply for the joy of playing, not focusing on victory alone.

Such a person has thought through his sense of godly values so that the fulfillment of his desires brings inner satisfaction and peace of mind rather than unrest and remorse (1 Timothy 6:6; cf. 1 Timothy 4:7-8).

True peace is as often found in resisting passions as in satisfying them (Colossians 3:1-15). The danger lies not so much in what we want, as in wanting something simply to satisfy an unworthy desire (James 4:1-4; cf. Psalm 66:18).

The individual who is content with himself knows how to be quiet within. Let's think about it!

Strong Tea

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom ..." (Colossians 3:16). "As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby" (1 Peter 2:2). "Receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls" (James 1:21).

Consider the difference between a strong and a weak cup of tea. The same ingredients - water and tea - are used for both. The difference is that the strong cup of tea results from the tea leaves' immersion in the hot water longer, allowing the water more time to get into the tea and the tea into the water. The longer the steeping process, the stronger the cup of tea.

In the same way, the length of time we spend in God's Word determines how deeply we get into it and it gets into us. Just like the tea, the longer we are in the Word, the stronger we become.