

other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon"(Matt. 6:24).

Again, we are just kidding ourselves. One or the other ultimately takes precedence in our lives. Mammon is the god of money. **We can't serve God AND money. Is serving God more important to you than earning money?** The headache, or the fatigue, that keeps you from the assembly, would it also keep you from going to work? What if you are offered a job that pays much more money, but one that would keep you so busy you would have no time to serve the Lord? **How you make such decisions shows what is most important in your heart.** It is like the little girl who received two coins, one for herself and one for the collection. After she accidentally dropped one of them down the storm drain, she said: "Oh, too bad, there goes the Lord's money!"

Does this mean we should be fanatics? No. In Ecclesiastes 7:16-18 we read: *"Do not be overly righteous, Nor be overly wise: Why should you destroy yourself? Do not be overly wicked, Nor be foolish: Why should you die before your time? It is good that you grasp this, And also not remove your hand from the other; For he who fears God will escape them all."* There is a great difference between being fanatical and being dedicated.

A fanatic is someone who has a blind, uncontrolled and exaggerated zeal for something, accompanied by intolerance of others. Fanaticism is in reality an expression of hate. A Christian must be patient, humble and meek. A fanatic is none of these. He is impatient, haughty and high minded.

We must be dedicated, but not fanatical. **Being dedicated means that someone stands 100% behind something, that he gives himself completely to that cause. A Christian must be dedicated. He must give himself fully in service to God and his fellow man. God must have the first place in his heart and in his actions.**

**For God, lukewarm isn't warm enough!**

Rev. 3:14-16, *"And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, 'These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness the Beginning of the creation of God: 'I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of My mouth.'"*

The great danger of being lukewarm is that it is easy to believe you are all right. A lukewarm person thinks: "Well, at least I'm not cold." But lukewarm isn't warm enough for God. He will spew us out of His mouth unless we repent.

Christ saved us so that we might be zealous in good works.

Titus 2:11-14, *"For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works."*

Christ came to save us from sin. But it is not enough just to avoid evil. We must be zealous in doing good.

Here are a few practical suggestions for putting God first in our lives. Among other things, we need to be zealous in the following points:

- Acts 2:42 *"And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers."* To continue steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine we must both know the Scriptures and put them into practice in our lives. **To continue steadfastly in fellowship we must attend the services of the church and seek fellowship with other Christians.** We must eat regularly at the table of the Lord. We must continue steadfastly in prayer. All these things are involved in putting the Lord first in our lives.
- **We also need to be doing something to serve our fellow man.** The church is a body with each member doing its part according to its own ability. Examples of things we can do are visiting the sick, elderly and prisoners; helping the poor; teaching people the gospel; helping to prepare and distribute printed materials; helping to take care of the meeting place. There are countless ways to be of service to others.

**We need to continually ask ourselves: Does God occupy the first place in our lives?** Our love for Him must be greater than our love for any other person or any thing. It must be greater than our love for ourselves and our own enjoyment. The saved have been given an assignment: to be zealous in good works. We are to give ourselves fully in service to God and fellow man. This is our task.

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Bulletin for 09-26-10



Record for Sunday, September 26, 2010

Attendance	30
Offering	\$679.30



*Coat Giveaway: Please be cleaning out your closets and bringing any coats that you no longer wear to the building for our upcoming coat giveaway. The date for the event has not yet been set, but we need to be getting the coats ready for the giveaway.*

### Upcoming Events

Oct. 2 -7 Marriage Enrichment and Gospel Meeting at Eastside congregation in Morganton, GA (speakers are: Cliff Goodwin, Ron Gilbert, Dennis Morris, David B. Smith, Keith Ritchie, and Doyle Partin)

Oct. 3-6 Gospel Meeting at Central (Dalton) with Ralph Gilmore speaking

Oct. 10-14 Gospel Meeting at Union Grove Congregation in Cleveland, TN.

Oct. 31 Area Congregational Singing at Central (Dalton) at 6:00 PM

Please continue to pray diligently for **Curtis Love**. Curtis is a member of the Lord's church who attends at the Chatsworth congregation. He has recently been diagnosed with **lung cancer**. Please pray for his healing and for strength for his family.

We rejoice over the good report that **Betty Holt** recently received from her doctor. Betty is the sister of Barbara Warren and Jean Webb.

There are several members of the Lord's church in our community who are confined to their homes and are unable to attend services. Please pray daily for these loved ones and encourage them with cards and visits. Callie Paige (Chatsworth Health Care Center), Lillian Criswell (confined to home) Cecil Hill (confined to home)

*Continue to remember in prayer: the Lord's church (worldwide), our missionaries, our nation and her leaders, and our service men and women on foreign soil, Steve Weaver, Edna Dooley, Eathel Currey, Betty Holt, Nelle Tipton, Gene Smith, Diane Combe, The Genny Green family, Chovo Barrientos, Efrain Villareal, and Raymond Castaneda*

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### Does God Occupy the First Place in our Lives?

Taken from Fredricksburg Church of Christ website

We all should ask ourselves a crucial question: Does God occupy the first place in my life? Many are willing to serve God as long as it doesn't cost them too much time or effort. They give God the crumbs of their lives, and as far as they are concerned, He'll just have to be satisfied with that. But He isn't.

**God never asks for more than we can give. But He does ask for the best we can give.**

Under the old covenant, when people brought sacrifices to God, they were to offer Him only the very best. God did not accept a sacrifice that was second-rate or that had flaws.

Malachi 1:6-8, 13, 14: "A son honors his father, And a servant his master. If then I am the Father, Where is My honor? And if I am a Master, Where is My reverence? Says the Lord of hosts To you priests who despise My name. Yet you say, 'In what way have we despised Your name?' 'You offer defiled food on My altar. But you say, 'In what way have we defiled You?' By saying, 'The table of the Lord is contemptible.' "And when you offer the blind as a sacrifice, is it not evil? And

*when you offer the lame and sick, Is it not evil? Offer it then to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you favorably?" Says the Lord of hosts. "You also say, 'Oh, what a weariness! And you sneer at it,' Says the Lord of hosts. "And you bring the stolen, the lame, and the sick; Thus you bring an offering! Should I accept this from your hand?" Says the Lord. "But cursed be the deceiver Who has in his flock a male, And makes a vow, But sacrifices to the Lord what is blemished -- For I am a great King," Says the Lord of hosts, "And My name is to be feared among the nations."*

It was bad enough that they brought second-rate offers, but they also complained and grumbled saying: "What a drudgery it is!"

If serving God seems like a "weariness" to you, maybe you are just giving God the crumbs of your life from a sense of obligation or fear. **But God isn't pleased with scraps anyway. Giving the plate-scrappings of your life to God can never bring the "joy of the Holy Spirit" (1 Thess. 1:6).**

To put God first in our lives, we must begin by putting Him first in our hearts!

Mat. 22:37,38: *"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." This is the first and greatest commandment.*"

When we give God the place of highest honor in our hearts, we will also put Him first in our lives. We will offer Him the very best we have. And we will find joy in serving the Lord, instead of experiencing it as a drudgery.

**Our love for Christ must be even greater than our love for our father, mother, son or daughter.**

Mat. 10:37: *"He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me."*

Sometimes we must choose between Christ and our relatives. What if relatives or friends drop in just when you are leaving to go to the assembly? Do you say: "We are going to worship God now. You are welcome to come along, or if you do not wish to do so, make yourself at home, and we will be back in an hour or so." Or do you think to yourself, "Too bad, but now I can't go to the assembly."

How we react in such situations shows who occupies the first place in our hearts.

**Our love for God must be greater than our love for ourselves and our own enjoyment.**

What if we have a special opportunity to serve the Lord on a

day we were planning to do something for our own enjoyment? Do we say: "I'm thankful for this opportunity to be of service. The other can wait." Or do we say: "You know, I really feel bad about it, but I have a previous appointment."

Is our free time so filled with "recreation" that we have no time for the Lord? If so, we are just giving God the crumbs. We love ourselves with all our heart, not God. And God is not pleased.

What if someone we know is in the hospital, but visiting hours are the same time as one of our favorite TV programs? Do we say: "I'm going to visit him this evening. He might need cheering up." Or do we think: "What a shame that visiting hours are at such an inconvenient time! I'll try to visit him TOMORROW, or maybe next week."

I once went with a brother to be introduced to another brother in the Lord. After we knocked, he came nervously to the door and said: "Come on in. We're watching such and such on TV." So we sat for two hours and watched TV. Finally, the brother I was with said: "Well, it's getting late. I guess we need to be going home." Our "host" looked away from the TV just long enough to say: "Glad you dropped in. Come back anytime." He didn't even go with us to the door.

What do you think of the spiritual condition of someone like that? He is as dead as a doornail. The TV is his god, an idolatrous image he serves. He is an unfruitful tree that will be cut down, unless he repents.

We certainly need periods of rest and recreation. That is not the point. We are speaking of priorities. We are speaking of the difference between self-love and love for God and fellow man.

Once when Jesus' disciples had just returned from a preaching trip, He told them: "Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while." Although they needed rest, as it turned out, something else became more important. "So they departed to a deserted place in the boat by themselves. But the multitudes saw them departing, and many knew Him and ran there on foot from all the cities. They arrived before them and came together to Him. And Jesus, when He came out, saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion for them, because they were like sheep not having a shepherd. So He began to teach them many things" (Mark 6:31-34).

Notice that Jesus was moved with compassion. He had intended to have some time alone with His disciples for rest. But because He loved His fellow men, He put their welfare above His own comfort. He is, of course, the perfect example of how a man ought to put God first in his life.

Nor can God and something else share first place in our lives. That just doesn't work. Jesus said: *"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the*