



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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It Doesn't Take Much to Feed a Corpse

Those of us living in the Texas panhandle enjoyed a strange and remarkable Spring. Due to several weeks of above-average rainfall, the usually parched, arid earth has become a virtual paradise, exuding life with luscious blades of green.

A good friend fussed that he had already mowed more grass this year, by the first of June, than he mowed all summer long last year. His point: this year's greenery is beautiful to look at but more difficult to take care of than the dirt of last year's drought.

He was right, and about more than grass. More effort has always been required to care for that which is alive and growing than for that which is dead and decaying. It doesn't take much food to feed a corpse.

This principle is even true concerning churches. Vibrant, healthy congregations demand effort and hard work: the toil and prayers and sweat of an energetic membership. By contrast, dead churches are easier to care for. More often than not, they just want to be left alone; allowed to slowly return to the spiritual dust from which they came.

The next time you feel inclined to complain about the effort, the work, the sacrifice the church asks of you, remember this: dead

churches, steeped in the stench of decay, make few demands; living churches are the ones requiring something of you!

Is the Devil Responsible for Our Sins?

Satan desires one thing, which is the spiritual demise of all humanity. He wants every soul to end up in hell with him (Matt. 25:41). Satan accomplishes his mission by getting people to live their lives in sin.

Satan entered into Judas and caused him to betray the Lord (John 13:27; 18:1-5). Satan “filled” Ananias’ heart to lie to the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3). Satan “deceived” Eve to disobey the Lord (1 Tim. 2:14; Gen. 3:1-6). Jesus told Peter that “Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not” (Luke 22:31-32). The devil is always busy trying to “devour” people with sin (1 Peter 5:8; 1 John 3:8; John 8:44; 2 Cor. 2:11). So when we sin, is the devil responsible for our transgressions because he caused us to do it?

The devil does tempt us to sin. He even tried to tempt Jesus to sin (Matt. 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13). However, if the devil is responsible for our sins, then why will we one day be held accountable for them (2 Cor. 5:10; Rom. 14:12; John 5:28-29; Rev. 20:11-12)? It is because the devil cannot “make” us do anything. He only plays a part in our sin by dangling the carrot. James said, “Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin” (James 1:14-15). The devil only tempts, and it is we who either resist or transgress. This is why God “will render to every man according to his deeds” (Rom. 2:6). We have the ability through Christ (Eph. 6:1; Phil. 4:13) and the responsibility as Christians to “Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (James 4:7). After resisting, the devil leaves “for a season” (a while, but never for good) (Luke 4:13).

Nevertheless, we have “endured” that temptation to sin (James 1:12). Furthermore, with every temptation, we are given all the help necessary to withstand the devil; as God will not allow any temptation beyond our individual power to resist, and also gives us a faithful way out (1 Cor. 10:13). So when we give in to sin, it is our fault!

Covering Our Mouth

Do you breathe through your mouth or your nose? Most do one or the other without even thinking about it. God gave us a nose for a reason. According to Healthline.com, breathing through your nose filters out foreign particles, humidifies inhaled air, and produces nitric oxide that serves to widen blood vessels.

In contrast, mouth breathing promotes inhaling unfiltered air, asthma, tooth decay, snoring, sleep apnea, and even teeth or jaw abnormalities. So what is one of the solutions to stop the habit of mouth breathing? Some suggest putting tape over one's mouth.

In a similar way, keeping our mouth closed is not always a bad idea when it comes to our everyday conversation. Jesus said, "on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak" (Matthew 12:36).

The most frequent and easiest way we sin is with our mouth. James wrote, "For we all stumble in many ways. And if anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle his whole body... (4) Look at the ships also: though they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs. (5) So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great things. How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire! (6) And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell" (James 3:2,4-6).

While I'm not suggesting literally putting tape over one's mouth, there are times when it is better to remain silent. When angry, remember, "A fool gives full vent to his spirit, but a wise man quietly holds it back" (Proverbs 29:11). In times of disagreement or debate, consider that sometimes we should "answer not a fool according to his folly, lest you be like him yourself" (Proverbs 26:4).

On other occasions, don't forget the words of James 1:19, "Know this, my beloved brothers; let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger." In other words, listening attentively, taking time in being thoughtful, filtering out what not to say, and how to effectively say something goes a long way in sin prevention and relationship building.

Six Things Not Found at the Judgment

The Bible speaks often of the moment of reckoning, when the righteous and wicked dead (John 5:28-29) and all living (Matthew 25:31-33) will stand before the King of kings to give account for the conduct of the body (2 Corinthians 5:10).

As we attempt to paint a mental picture of the Judgment Day, some things should not be envisioned because they will not be there. There will not be any:

- Unbelievers (Philippians 2:10; Revelation 1:5-7)
- Material possessions (2 Peter 3:10)
- Mistrials (Acts 17:31)
- Secrets (Romans 2:16)
- Baptisms (Matthew 25:31-46)
- Invitation songs (Matthew 25:10)

There will be a righteous Judge who will give a fair trial to every individual. All will give an account. An eternal sentence will be handed down based upon one's life and acceptance or rejection of Christ's sacrifice.

There will be no parole, stay of execution, or pardon for the lost. All of us will need abundant grace to be able to stand at His right side, and Scripture tells us how that is extended. We must prepare for that in this life (Hebrews 9:27).

The Folly of a Poor Listener

“He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him...” (Proverbs 18:13 KJV).

The most important skill of one who would give wise counsel to others is the skill of being a good listener. A good listener is not only is skilled at listening to the spoken word, but he is also attentive to other forms of communication e.g., body language and voice inflection. Sometimes, with people we know well, we may think we know what they are about to say, so we react and begin to respond before they finish talking. When they say something and we assume that we know where the conversation is going, we stop listening attentively to what they are trying to communicate as we start to formulate our answer.

Miscommunication like this, at the very least can cause confusion and at the worst lead to a foolish and shameful mistake. We need to listen more and speak less, and at least hold our tongues until we have truly heard and understood the matter before us. To truly hear a matter, oftentimes we may need to listen to people on the other side of the matter before we can advise anyone.

Read Proverbs 18:17; 27:17; James 1:19-20