

THE PLEASANT VIEW PLUMB LINE

"...then said the Lord, Behold, I will set a plumb line in the midst of my people Israel..." (Amos 7:8)

THE OPTIONS

When God created man, He created man as a free moral agent. This indicates that there will be and are options in our lives. Each person has to make choices daily, because each is faced with a number of options. The options may be as simple as what to have for breakfast or as complex as buying a new house. But, either way, every individual must make several choices each day. The same has been true ever since God created mankind and placed them in the garden of Eden. *"Ye shall keep my sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary: I am the Lord. If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them; then I will give you rain in due season, and the land shall yield her increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit. Then will I also walk contrary unto you, and will punish you yet seven times for your sins"* (Leviticus 26:2-4,24). The children of Israel had to realize their **obedience** or **obstinacy** determined their **outcome**.

Obedience

In Leviticus 26:1-13 the phrase "I will" is recorded twelve times when God is telling Israel if they are obedient unto Him then God will do certain things. As Moses commanded Israel of old to walk in the statutes of the Lord, the child of God today must also walk in accordance to the word of God. The Christian is commanded to "walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4) upon putting Christ on in baptism. Paul then teaches in the new life to "walk not after the flesh" (Romans 8:1). As a child of God one is to "walk by faith" (II Corinthians 5:17) not by sight. In the relationship to those in Christ and those outside of Christ the Christian is commanded to "walk honestly" (Romans 13:13) and to "walk in love" (Ephesians 5:2).

Is your life in obedience to the word of God?

Obstinacy

In Leviticus 26:14-39 the phrase "I will" is recorded nineteen times when God is telling Israel if they are disobedient to His word there are certain actions He will take against them. In His discussion of parables Jesus taught that certain individuals have ears that are dull of hearing. These individuals have closed their ears to the teachings of the gospel by refusing to be obedient unto it. Such were the ones of which Paul said, "judged yourselves unworthy of everlasting life" (Acts 13:46).

On one occasion Jesus told some, *"If ye love me keep my commandments"* (John 14:15), but then He continued, *"He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings"* (John 14:24). Jesus warned these who had heard His words not to turn away and thus fail to be obedient. For Jesus had those who rejected Him, *"He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day"* (John 12:48).

Outcome

As Moses penned in the book of Leviticus those who were obedient unto God would be rewarded and those who were obstinate to God stood condemned. God has not changed nor has His desire for obedience diminished.

In the great judgment chapter of Matthew 25 Jesus teaches that the response to the obedient will be, *"Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world"* (Matthew 25:34). But those obstinate to the word of the Lord will hear the decree, *"Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels"* (Matthew 25:41). Which option will you choose?

-Tim Hayes

SEEKING UNITY

Text: _____

I. _____ Sought Unity

Verses: _____

II. _____ Sought Unity

Verses: _____

III. _____ Sought Unity

Verses: _____

SELF-EXAMINATION

Doctors tell us that we need to examine ourselves. Many tumors can be felt, moles that change shape or color. We need to look and feel in order to catch these problems early. The Bible also teaches self-examination. Paul said, “*examine yourself*” (II Corinthians 13:5). James writes of looking in a mirror to examine ourselves (1:230). Some questions someone put together for spiritual self-examination include:

1. Am I so **CRITICAL** that I see only a person’s fail-ures and not his/her good points?
2. Am I so **CHILDISH** that people must handle me gently lest I be offended?
3. Am I **MATURE ENOUGH** to handle hurts and disappointments without making everyone else miserable?
4. Do I **HURT** people while boasting, “I believe in saying what I think?”
5. Can I be completely **TRUSTED** with confidential information?
6. Am I guilty of making **SARCASTIC REMARKS** about the success of others?
7. Am I big enough to admit when I am wrong, or do I seek to excuse myself by **BLAMING OTHERS**?
8. Do I excuse my sins, while self-righteously **CON-DEMNING** others?
9. Are others **UPLIFTED AND ENCOURAGED** through their association with me?
10. Do I follow after peace, or do my words and ac-tions **PROMOTE STRIFE**?

“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be repro-bates?” (II Corinthians 13:5).

PAID IN FULL

A young man was getting ready to graduate from college. For many months he had admired a beautiful sports car in a dealer’s showroom, and knowing his fa-ther could well afford it, he told him that was all he wanted. As Graduation Day approached, the young man awaited signs that his father had purchased the car.

Finally, on the morning of his graduation, his father called him into his private study. His father told him how proud he was to have such a fine son, and told him how much he loved him. He handed his son a beautiful wrapped gift box. Curious, but somewhat disap-pointed, the young man opened the box and found a lovely, leather-bound Bible, with the young man’s name embossed in gold. Angrily, he raised his voice to his father and said, “With all your money you give me a Bible?” and stormed out of the house, leaving the Bi-ble.

Many years passed and the young man was very successful in business. He had a beautiful home and wonderful family, but realized his father was very old, and thought perhaps he should go to him. He had not seen him since that graduation day. Before he could make arrangements, he received a telegram telling him his father had passed away, and willed all of his pos-sessions to his son. He needed to come home immedi-ately and take care of things.

When he arrived at his father’s house, sudden sad-ness and regret filled his heart. He began to search through his father’s important papers and saw the still new Bible, just as he had left it years ago. With tears, he opened the Bible and began to turn the pages. His father had carefully underlined a verse, Mathews 7:11, “*And if ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Heavenly fa-ther which is in heaven, give to those who ask Him?*”

As he read those words, a car key dropped from the back of the Bible. It had a tag with the dealer’s name, the same dealer who had the sports car he had desired. One the tag was the date of his graduation, and the words ...**PAID IN FULL**.

How many times do we miss God’s blessings be-cause they are not packaged as we expected? I trust you enjoyed this. Pass it on to others.

REASONS FOR INCREASED ZEAL

The pages of the New Testament literally burst forth with the excitement that is felt with serving god. All who were associated with the Lord's work in the first century were dedicated, zealous workers in the vineyard of God who labored at length in anticipation of what was next to come. So many examples abound of such an attitude and presence in the scriptures that to attempt listing them would be futile. However, suffice it to say that the same joy and excitement can be and is enjoyed by Christians worldwide, here at Pleasant View included. At times it is beneficial to reflect back and look forward at reasons for increased zeal.

1. Attendance continues to increase. Some may be puzzled by this statement because the number board often lingers close to the same number. However, when one looks at the number of visitors that we are blessed with at most services it becomes evident. The number board is deceiving because it only reflects the number present on any one occasion, a number that stays low at times because of many members who travel whether randomly or periodically. At times when all members have been at services and we have had our regular number of visitors our attendance has soared to the high fifties and also into the sixties. Thus regardless of what the board may say at times, attendance is increasing. Among those visiting are not only members from other congregations at times, but likewise Christians who have moved into the area as well as non-Christians from the community. By staying the course and fulfilling our duties as Christians these visitors can easily become members (either by teaching non-Christians or encouraging and being hospitable to Christians seeking a church home) thereby glorifying God and increasing the borders of His kingdom.
2. Opportunities for local evangelism continue to increase. The fertile hearts of Pleasant View and Cheatham County are white already unto harvest. Thoughts upon how these souls can be reached are likewise increasing with each passing minute. For space considerations, however, I would like to mention those we are looking at acting on in the coming year. First, a continued effort to which the men of this congregation are committed is our annual gospel meeting. Last year's was a success, but we are certainly not content to sit on our heels. This year we hope to do as much as we can to promote and enhance this yearly effort. By planning ahead and starting early much can be done toward this. Advertising will hopefully not only include our newspaper ads and flier mail-outs, but even more personal acts of door-knocking, individual home mail-outs, personal invitations, posting fliers across town, and other methods. No expense or effort should be spared to encourage our friends and neighbors to hear the soul-saving gospel message. Connected with this gospel meeting effort will be a new project for Pleasant View, but one with untold potential. This year our meeting is hopefully going to be planned for the week (Sunday-Wednesday) following the annual fire department picnic. I learned last year that booth space is available which the men have agreed to pursue. Lord-willing this year the Pleasant View Church of Christ will have a booth to promote New Testament Christianity and our meeting that will start the next day. This is an exciting opportunity that should reap great spiritual fruit. Likewise do we hope to increase fellowship opportunities to portray the activeness of this congregation to the community and make them aware of the working, loving, and closeness this church enjoys. Other things are forth-coming but these being some of the most exciting.
3. This congregation is about to being efforts that will drastically improve the organization of this church by starting a study on church leadership that will hopefully result in the appointing of elders and deacons. By organizing ourselves according to God's tried and true plan we will be better equipping ourselves for the work of the church and the glorification of God. It is a big step to go from having absolutely no elders or deacons to appointing both, but it is one that will be done slowly, methodically, and studiously to the best of our ability and scriptural know-how. The men are to be commended for their willingness to allow our study and this attempt, and let us all prayfully promote this to the best of our abilities.
4. There is anticipation of numerous other opportunities of financial support and congregational involvement awaiting us. Right now certain things that we would like to support and be involved in have had to be postponed for lack of resources, but we look forward to investigating them further in view of future growth and increased sacrificial giving. Brethren, much of the world is dying lost because many good works in the brotherhood do not have the financial ability to move forward. Let us all resolve in 2008 to do all we can to help this congregation to help others.

-Andy Brewer