

*Glorify God in all we do,
Grow with Him daily &
Go with Him to share His love.*



January at a Glance

- 1: Happy New Year!
- 3: No Wednesday Night Activities
- 7: 9:00 am Ordination and Installation of Elders and Deacons
 - 10:10 am Sunday School resume
- 8: 6:00pm Elder & Deacon Meetings
7:00pm Full Consistory will meet
- 10: 6:30 Bible Class resume
 - 6:30 & 7:30 Youth Groups resume
- 14: 2pm-8pm MS Remnant Trip to Thunder Road
- 15: 9:30 am Faith Bible Study
 - 3:00 pm Patience Bible Study
- 29: Communion Sunday

*Sundays:

- 9:00 am Praise and Worship Service
- 10:10 am Sunday School 4yrs - Adult
Coffee Fellowship Time
- 6:30 pm Fellowship Bible Studies

*Tuesdays:

- 8:30 am Quilting Chicks will meet

*Wednesday Evenings:

- 6:30 pm Bible Classes 1st-5th grades
- 6:30 pm MS Remnant Youth Group
- 7:30 pm HS Remnant Youth Group

CONTACT INFORMATION:
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sibleyfrcoffice@gmail.com

View our Website at: sibleyfrc.org





Stewardship & Giving

Offering Summary through December 28:

- **General Fund: \$359,883.65**
Budget: \$340,984.97; 105% of budget
- **Benevolent Fund: \$58,321.47**
Budget: \$70,205.23; 83% of budget
- **Building Fund offerings to date: \$2030**

Faith In Action for January:

Layettes for the Center of Hope

This month we are collecting items that a new Baby or New Mom might be in need of.

We only ask that all donated items must be NEW.

Special Offering for January



Osceola Communities Express



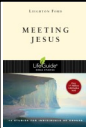
Meeting Minutes

Consistory Meeting Highlights

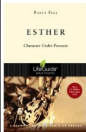
December 11, 2023

- MMSA to approve the request by Brian and Heidi Sayler to use the church for the wedding of their daughter Madeline Sayler to Nick Madsen on February 24, 2024. Chris Ver Steeg will be officiating the wedding.
- MMSA to approve the change to Article 3: **Article 3. Congregational meetings; Section 4; Sub-heading F of the FRC Sibley By-Laws changed to:** "Plurality results of the ballots cast shall constitute an election for the number of elders or deacons needed to fill consistory vacancies."
- New appointments are as follows:
VP: Ron Dykstra; Clerk: Jerrad Brouwer; Assistant Clerk: Dennis Jurgens; GF Treasurer: Mark Hulstein; Asst GF Treasurer: Derek Heronimus; Chairman of the Deacons: Brian Sayler; Clerk of the Deacons: Roger Verdoorn; Property Chair: Levi Christensen

GROWING IN THE WORD



Faith Bible Study will meet on **Monday, January 15 at 9:30 am**. We will be studying chapter #7 "Jesus & a Rich Man" in our book *Meeting Jesus*. Scripture will be Luke 18:15-30. Alfreda will be leader and Jeannette will serve as hostess. All are invited! Hope to see you there!



Patience Bible Study will meet on **Monday, January 15 at 3:00 pm**. We will be studying lesson #6 "Recognizing Unrighteousness," in our book *Esther*. Scripture for the lesson is Esther 7. Barb will lead and serve as hostess. Come for a time of fellowship and learning.



6:30pm Sunday Evening Fellowship Bible Study Opportunities!

****Message Discussion and Application Bible Study****

*Clayton and Jodi Wagenaar's home, *FRC Fellowship Hall

****Digging into God's Word: Daniel****

*Fireside Room

All ages, singles and couples are invited to attend.

Childcare can be arranged. Come, join a group and let's grow together!

Trivia Time!!

1. What person in the Bible set fire to 300 foxes' tails?
2. What Bible character had neither a father or mother, is mentioned eleven times in Scripture, was not born, and did not die?
3. The book of Proverbs list four small but exceedingly wise creatures. What are they?
4. Who warned his enemies by cutting up a yoke of oxen and saying to them that if they did not submit to him, the same thing would happen to them?
5. After Jesus had risen from the dead, Peter was fishing and caught a large amount of fish. How many fish did Peter catch in his net?
6. What Bible prophet prophesied that men would eat their own flesh?
7. What person in the Bible said, "A living dog is better than a dead lion"?
8. Which king set fire to his own palace and died in the flames?
9. How many locks of hair did Delilah cut from Samson's hair?
10. The prophet Ahijah the Shilonite found _____ outside Jerusalem and tore his new garment into _____ pieces.

January Celebrations

~~Birthday's~~

1 Jan Harskamp Brenda Wassman	14 Mim Ernst	30 Karen Honken
5 Sandy De Vries	17 Brayden Bruxvoort	31 Jurnea Bos Tony Bevers
6 Damian Van Der Sloom	18 Janice Groen Tanya Dykstra Tanner Dykstra	
7 Tracee Brouwer Ashley Heronimus Alan Julius	20 Kathy Runia	
8 Angie Buysman Robert Groen	24 Jayden De Boer	
9 Marcia Oldenkamp	25 Kalie De Boer	
12 Lynn Schram Alexis Hulstein	26 Rhonda Riebeling Brian Sayler	
	27 Brady Block Donna Smidt	
	28 Jon Elser	
	29 Ken Tjaden	

I have found
THE ONE
Whom my soul Loves
SONG OF SOLOMON 3:4

~~Anniversaries~~

19 Joel & Kathy Verdoorn	58 years
20 Jim & Jena Ver Steeg	12 years
26 Cole & Kayla Hoekstra	16 years
26 Bubba & Sharalyn Tjaden	39 years



If you would like to be included in our Birthday and Anniversary Calendar and do not see your name, please contact the office (sibleyfrcoffice@gmail.com or 754-2783) and let us know your dates! We would love to recognize YOU on your special day! Thanks

Praise and Worship Greeters

- 7: E: Brian and Megan Loerts/family
C: Ken and Wilma Loerts
W: Josh and Hannah Lucas/family
- 14: E: Nick and Maria Mans/family
C: Cory and Anne Maxwell/family
W: John and Kim McDougall/family
- 21: E: Dave and Jessica McDyer/family
C: Leona Meendering
W: Dick and Marcia Oldenkamp
- 28: E: Lyle Peelen
C: Larry and Rhonda Riebeling
W: Daren Rockman



Sunday School Nursery

- 7: Megan Travaille & Megan Ackerman
14: Sandy Heronimus & Chelsey Alexander
21: Sandy Lamfers & Alexis Van Diepen
28: Anne Maxwell & Ruth Wiersma

Fellowship Coffee Servers



- 7: Nate and Angie Buysman
14: Merlyn and Karen Doorenbos
21: Ron and Nancy Dykstra
28: Luella Eggink & Lynn Schram

Children & Worship during the service



- 7: Leader: Deb Kusters
Helper:
- 14: Leader: Deb Kusters
Helper:
- 21: Leader: Deb Kusters
Helper:
- 28: Leader: Deb Kusters
Helper:

Willing Hands Group

Willing Hands Group #1

will be responsible for services during the month.

Co-chairpersons are:

- Marvella/Lennis Harberts
- Diane/Arnie Langstraat

Library Volunteers



- 7: Janice Runia
14: Pauline van Engen
21: Leanne Van Kley
28: Marcia Van Ruler

Sportsmen's Devotional

Today's Photograph

It's Never Too Late To Begin To Follow God's



Bible Study Verse

James 1:22-25

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it-not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it-they will be blessed in what they do.

Thoughts

Men are bad at thinking that we know how to do everything. We don't need to ask anybody for instructions. I'm guilty of this at times.

Take for example, you buy a new fishing reel and it comes with a detailed instruction booklet on all the parts and what to service regularly. "I don't need that," you say, and it ends up in the trash. Six months to a year later you take the reel apart to service it and can't figure out how one pesky spring goes back into the side plate. Where's the instruction book?

Another example, you're meeting a friend at a certain marina on the lake for an early morning fishing trip. "Do you need instructions on how to get there?" he asks. "Nah, I can find it okay." Thirty minutes later and you can't find the marina.

Action Point

God has given us an instruction book, the Bible. It lists everything we need to know for our lives. It even has sections on what to check if something isn't working right in our lives. "Nah, I don't need it; I can figure it out."

Ten years from now, your kids don't respect you, your personal finances are a mess, or your health is failing. The list might be long or short. It doesn't have to be 10 years later, it could be tomorrow.

Where's the instruction book? Maybe I should have read the instruction book earlier. **It's never too late to begin to follow God's Word.**

Sportsmen's Tip of the Day

Keep those instruction and parts books that come with everything you purchase. No matter whether it's a sporting goods item or something around the house, set up a file. Eventually you will need the help they provide. Also, don't forget to send in the warranty and registration cards.

Trivia Time Answers!!!

1. Samson (Judges 15:4)
2. Melchisedec (Hebrews 7:1-3)
3. Ants, conies (badgers), locusts and spiders (Prov. 30:24-28)
4. Saul (1 Sam 11:7)
5. 153 (John 21:11)
6. Isaiah (Is.9:20)
7. Solomon (Eccles 1:1; 9:4)
8. Zimri (1 Kings 16:18)
9. Seven (Judges 16:18,19)
10. Jeroboam, twelve pieces (1 Kings 11:29, 30)

From the library--



The first book this month is **THE HEIRLOOM** by Beverly Lewis and it is a LARGE PRINT edition. “After her widowed father remarries, nineteen-year-old Clara Bender is no longer needed to help run his household. Marriage seems like her best hope of moving out, but there are few young men in her tiny Indiana Amish community. When she comes across letters from her mother's aunt Ella Mae Zook, Clara sets off to visit Lancaster County's Hickory Hollow to decide where her future lies. Ella Mae is not quite ready to move from the farmhouse where she and her recently deceased husband spent over fifty happy years, but her children are eager to resettle her, making Clara's visit seem like an answer to prayer. The two women form a warm bond while restoring an heirloom wedding quilt and sharing their lives, with Ella Mae confiding about a tragedy from her courting years. Eventually, Ella Mae suggests Clara stay for the summer, allowing Ella Mae more time with her and giving Clara an opportunity to meet the area's eligible young men. But when the unexpected happens, will Clara find where her heart really belongs?”



The above mentioned book is the prequel to the “**Heritage of Lancaster County**” series and we have those in one volume!

THE SHUNNING, “Katie Lapp, a young Amish woman, lives a quiet life in Hickory Hollow, Pennsylvania, but after one visit to the attic, her world begins to crumble.”

THE CONFESSION, “With her identity shattered, Katie sets out on a journey of discovery that will take her into a world she's never known.”

THE RECKONING, Katie is living the life she used to dream about, but her heart yearns for her Amish friends and the love she left behind.”

There are many books just waiting to be checked out to help you enjoy the long winter evenings!! Visit the library soon.

Jeannette Juffer



PRAY FOR GOD'S PEOPLE

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Ed and Jan Harskamp | 17. Dale and Karen Honken |
| 2. Bill and LaDonn Hartzell | 18. Anita Hoting |
| 3. Wilma Hatting | 19. Ken Huls |
| 4. Kevin and Twila Heemstra | 20. Pray for our College Students |
| 5. Dwayne and Janice Heikes | 21. Pray for our Church |
| 6. Pray for our College Students | 22. Loren and Deb Hulstein |
| 7. Pray for our Church | 23. Mark and Rosie Hulstein; Dawson, Walker |
| 8. Dan and Maureen Heilman; Luke, Amelia | 24. Michael and Chelsea Hulstein; |
| 9. Burt and Jan Henrichs | Addison, Aubrey, Bennett |
| 10. Derek and Ashley Heronimus; | 25. Rod Hulstein |
| Kalen, Brooks | 26. Scott and Jamie Hulstein; |
| 11. Ken and Sandy Heronimus | Ashilyn, Karissa, Alexis |
| 12. Jo Hielkema | 27. Pray for our College Students |
| 13. Pray for our College Students | 28. Pray for our Church |
| 14. Pray for our Church | 29. Chris and Teresa Hurlburt |
| 15. Melissa Hisek; Sofia, Georgia | 30. Cody and Kristen Witt; |
| 16. Cole and Kayla Hoekstra; Amelia, Grace | Braelyn, Adelyn, Caelyn |
| | 31. Mike and Mary Hustoft |

College Students:

Marissa Ackerman
Halle Block
Tayler Bremer
Madison Brouwer
Regan Crichton
Keegan De Zeeuw
Makya Dykstra
Maverick Elser
Jared Kruger
Emma Langstraat
Matthew McDougal
Gannon Rockman

MacKenzie Beyer
Kaden Maxwell
Teddy Van Gelder

Carter Brouwer
Andrea Leusink

Dalten Bremer
Ashilyn Hulstein
Natalie Klaassen

Grant Brouwer
Ryan Van Marel

BE A
Prayer
WARRIOR
Luke 21:36

Luke 21:36

Helen Vander Veen

PRAYER JOURNAL

SOLA SCRIPTURE—NOT SCRIPTURE ONLY



More and more I am hearing the use of “sola scriptura” to mean we only read the Bible, and nothing else. That is not what the term means, and it is not what we ought to do as believers.

The phrase came into being during the Reformation, when the reformers insisted that scripture was the final authority for doctrine instead of the Pope, councils or tradition. Luther’s great statement before the Diet of Worms stated that scripture would bind his conscience, and not the pope.

But that does not mean that Luther only read the Bible, or that the books that he wrote were of no value. Luther and Calvin were both exceedingly well read in the church fathers and could have taught at great length about the councils and the writings of the church fathers.

They would be devastated by the modern protestant church because we are woefully ignorant of the Bible, and of those who wrote about the Bible. If one more person excuses themselves from knowing the bible, because “I am so smart,” I will scream! I am not any smarter than anyone else—but I keep learning!

Jesus said in Romans 12:1-2 *Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.*

The “therefore” refers to the previous 11 chapters of the book, where Paul outlines God’s plan of salvation for both the Jew and the Greek. His conclusion begins with vs. 1 of chapter 12. We are to present ourselves as ‘living sacrifices’. In the Old Testament, animals were killed and sacrificed to atone for the sins of the Jewish people. Now we are to be ‘living’ sacrifices—not ‘dead’ ones. This is our worship, this is life to all believers.

To do that we are to avoid thinking and behaving the way that non-believers do, by “*renewing our minds.*” We can’t know what God’s thoughts are until we study those thoughts in Scripture. The great news is that we don’t have to do this alone. For two-thousand years, those who really are smarter, have been writing down their ideas and conclusions to help us to be able to know what God’s will is.

I read what Luther and Calvin, and Augustine, Edwards, Sproul, Guinness, and others say—they help me to know what God means in the scriptures. Sola Scriptura is not only scripture, but the test of the validity of the ideas of others. READ! LEARN! GROW! GLORIFY and GO!

WHAT TO READ ALONG WITH THE BIBLE...

How do you know what to read? We live in an age when anyone can publish a book, and they often do! How do you know who to trust and who to believe? Find a good publisher, they are not all equal. Not all protestants are the same, and you ought to seek out those who are Reformed, and who honor Sola Scriptura. Liberal theologians do not approach the scripture in the same way that we do. The debate is similar to the debate among judges about the best way to approach the US Constitution. If the Bible is true—then it is true and must be obeyed. But, if we get to rethink the Bible and put more emphasis on current cultural issues we are more like those *who* say that judges can legislate from the bench and make up new rights that are not included in law.

I suggest that you look to the strong reformed publishers like Ligonier, InterVarsity Press or Presbyterian and Reformed Press. When in doubt—ask for help.

There are many types of books to read, many approaches to expanding your understanding of God and his thoughts. Study Bibles, commentaries, doctrinal works, subject matter studies, church history, historical works, and confessions are just a few categories.

Here are a few suggestions that I hope will help you to find a new love for God's thoughts.

1. First. **Get a good study Bible.** I recommend the *Reformation Study Bible* from Ligonier. The notes are from the Reformed view of theology, and there are excellent additional resources. I love the introductory material to all of the books of the Bible because they include a section on how Christ is revealed in that book. There are wonderful articles, and the right editions include all of the reformed confessions.
2. **Commentaries on books of the Bible** are essential when you want to dive deep into a specific book. Pick one from a good author or publisher, and make sure it has good footnotes and references. That is one way to check the scholarship of the book. What denomination is the author associated with, do they teach for a reputable college, what are their affiliations? A commentary generally reveals the theological perspectives of the author—which could lead to confusion. Select works by reputable theologians from a Reformed perspective for the best information.
3. **Church history** is an important part of your theological understanding, but it can be overwhelming. If you learn well from video lessons, then I recommend the series by Dr. Robert Godfrey from Ligonier—*A Survey of Church History in six parts*. Don't be daunted by the 73, 20 minute sessions. I have watched them multiple times and have loved every minute. I'd love to do them on Sunday night if anyone is interested!
4. **Confessions and Systematic Theology**—read the originals. Calvin wrote his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* for laymen. If that seems to much, try reading *Truths We Confess* by Sproul to have Calvin's Institutes explained.



A Letter from Pastor Colas

To: First Reformed Church

May the peace and grace of the Lord be with you. Greetings to you at First Reformed Church. It is a pleasure for me to find the opportunity to write you this letter. I want to take this time to thank you at First Reformed Church in Iowa. I received the support in September but I was not able to write right away because I had an injury in my hand, but I feel better now thanks to God. We at Lagossette Church are grateful and thankful for the support from your congregation. I pray and believe that the labor will not be in vain in the name of Jesus, as it says in 1 Corinthians 15: 58.

Best regards,
Pastor Colas



JANUARY 28, 2023
FOLLOWING
SUNDAY SCHOOL

Chili, cinnamon rolls and hot dogs for the children will be provided. Volunteers are needed to help serve and clean-up.

Hope to see you there!!

*******New 2024 Calling Districts *******

District 1: Arnie Langstraat/Collin Van Diepen:
Jaden Abels-Kailey Bruxvoort

District 2: John Juffer/Mark Hulstein:
Jane Buysman-Trudy Dykstra

District 3: Kevin Klaassen/Derek Heronimus:
Luella Eggink-Cole Hoekstra

District 4: Ron Dykstra/Troy Block:
Dale Honken – Jamie Klaassen

District 5: Lyle Peelen/Brian Saylor:
Joanne Klaassen – Cory Maxwell

District 6: Dennis Jurgens/Roger Verdoorn:
John McDougall-Jennie Schram

District 7: Jerrad Brouwer/AJ Weg: Kley:
Ted Schutte - Curt Van Kley

District 8: Dale Honken/Levi Christensen:
Steve Van Kley – Chris Wynia



Education Schedule:

Please remember the following Weather Cancellations Procedure: If there is NO school, or school is released early due to inclement weather, there will be NO WEDNESDAY Night activities.

Sunday School 3 yr - Adult:

- Classes Resume January 7

Wednesday Bible Classes (1st-5th grades):

- Jan 3: No Class due to Christmas Break. Class resumes January 10

MS and HS Remnant Youth Group:

- Jan 4: No Youth Group due to Christmas Break.
Youth Groups resume January 10

College Addresses

Ryan Van Marel
804 Medary Ave. South
Brookings, SD 57006

Ashilyn Hulstein
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Brookings, SD 56007

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Iowa City, IA 52245

Andrea Leusink
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Storm Lake, IA 50588

Carter Brouwer
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Apt. #313
Brookings, SD 57007

MacKenzie Beyer
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Storm Lake, IA 50588

Ted Van Gelder
SDSU
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Marissa Ackerman
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SDSU
Brookings, SD 57007

Halle Block
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Taylor Bremer
SDSU
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Madison Brouwer
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Regan Crichton
Iowa Lakes CC
Estherville, IA

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Makya Dykstra
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Mitchell, SD 57301

Maverick Elser
3455 Holdrege Street
Lincoln, NE 68503

Jared Kruger
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Appt. 4
Calmar, IA 52132

Emma Langstraat
Young Hall 273
SDSU
Box 2807
Brookings, SD 57007

Matthew McDougall
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IA Lakes Comm. College
3200 College Drive
Emmetsburg, IA 50536

Gannon Rockman
3099c Nest Ave.
Sheldon, IA 51201

If your student will have a different address for the 2023-2024 school year please let the office know.

Hello First Reformed Church,

As a parent have you ever been told by your children, "I'm so mad at you."? The context of this question is that as parents we sometimes have to be the bad guy in our children's lives. We have to tell them no, we have to take away things, or we have to discipline them in some way. Whatever the circumstance we realize that at times our children will not be happy with us. There was something that was told to me by my mother that I will never forget. There were times when I would ask my mom if I could do something and she would tell me no because it was dangerous for me to do, or that it would harm me in some way. I would say something along the lines of, "Mom that is so unfair!" She would then respond with, "I don't care. I'm not your friend, I am your mother." Sadly, this is not the mentality of parenting in modern culture. We tend to try to be buddies with our children. We try to act like we are their age. We try to fit in with their social groups. We even tend to dress like them, maybe we are trying to keep the youth alive in us. Maybe we just don't like having people be mad at us. Whatever the reason is, we have to remember that we are not called to be our children's friends, we are called to be their parents. This does not mean that we can never hang out with them or have fun with them, that is a part of parenting. We just have to continue to be aware that there needs to be boundaries put in place. There will be times where you will need to spank, ground, or take something away from your child. There needs to be respect in the house for both mom and dad. I have seen too often kids that will yell profanities at their parents or show utter disrespect to their moms or even dads. How do we do this? How do we affectively parent our children?

This is a great question that needs to be asked first with your spouse. If you are having concerns about this, you first need to sit down with your spouse and discuss what is going on. There needs to be this reformation within the culture, where husbands and wives make each other a priority again. That both need to be together when making big time decisions. Both need to be on a united front when it comes to discipline or anything else involving the children. Remember your spouse was there first, before your children. If we go back to Ephesians 6 the spouses come first in the family unit. When it comes to discipline the Bible has a lot to say about this. Proverbs, the book of Wisdom, for example has a lot to say about it. Discipline needs to take place in the home, or else children will have zero respect for authority and they will not know how to function in their own families. Discipline is actually a fruit of love for your child. As long as it follows the Bible correctly it is something that reveals that you care for your child and want to see them succeed.

Finally, our children have enough friends around them, they need their mom and dad. When God chose them for you, He did not say, "Joanna needs a good friend, so I am going to send her to Josh and Hannah so that they can be her good friend." He sent Joanna to us because He wants us to be her parents. Do we truly realize this? That God chose our children, we did not choose them. We may have chosen to keep them, but we did not know anything about our children before they were born, but God knew. He has entrusted us with our children and so we should not waste it. To wrap up, parents we need to be aware of how we are raising our children. Are we raising them to be in the Lord, or are we raising them to be in the world and go to the Lord on Sunday? Being a follower of Jesus is not a weekly thing, it is a daily thing. Don't just think you are raising children; you are discipling them. You are taking Jesus' Great Commission and putting it into practice every day and you may not even realize it. Your children are not just your children, they are God's children as well, treat them as such and train them in the Lord. Don't fear because you don't have to do it alone. If you ever need a hug this big ole teddy bear has one for you.

Blessings,
Josh



Dad Jokes With Josh:

The salesman at the furniture store told me, "You can fit five people on this couch with no problems." I said, "How in the world am I going to find five people with no problems?"



Forgetting He Came for Me . . . and You

By Adam Hofer

As I sit around the table with my family before we eat meals, we pray as a family and we always end the prayer by thanking God for coming, for teaching us His ways, and for dying on the cross so that we live life to the fullest reconciled to God, and for all the work that is done through the Holy Spirit. We approach Him with thankful hearts because we know that He came for us, taught for us, died for us, and works in our hearts for us so that He is glorified through us. Yet, so often it is easy to forget this reality. Seeing him when life is hard is often difficult. Being disciplined enough to want to hear from Him in those times can be just as difficult. Yet, we know from His Word that we have a God who is always there...in the good times and bad times. Give us eyes to see this reality continually, Lord!

Today, a 31-year-old man was brought to the Center of Hope to talk with me because he was experiencing suicidal thoughts. In our two-hour conversation, we spoke of the Gospel, his innate value in the eyes of God, and that God had a plan for his life outside of the brokenness he currently is going through. Yet, he seemed to refuse to listen to my words and, like so many others, intentionally chose to stay in a state of hopelessness to stew in his brokenness. He heard everything I said to him before but lacked the strength to press on. All the pains of his life, ranging from his childhood to the present, were weighing on him to the point that he did not want to live any longer. The only thing that seemed to numb his pain was meth, which has led him deep into addiction. I asked him, **“Do you want to be well?”** He replied sadly and without hope, “I am going to die with meth flowing through my veins.” The surprising thing is that he has a relationship with God. Yet, through his struggles, he forgot that He came *for him*, taught *for him*, died *for him*, and is currently there *for him* through the Holy Spirit. In his despair, he didn’t want to hear it, or at least, not at first. Thankfully, our long conversation led to prayer twice. The first time I prayed over him. The second he prayed, **“God, I need you more than ever. I am broken. I need you.”** In periods of hardship, we often lose sight of God’s presence. We forget He came for us. Yet, we desperately need Him.

The reality is we often forget He came for us, which leads us to lose sight of God’s presence in our lives. We lose sight of Him because our eyes are focused elsewhere, on our pains, on our responsibilities, on our families... Yet, that does not change the reality that God came in flesh through Jesus Christ, that He dedicated His life to disciple and teach, and that He hung in constant, throbbing pain on the cross to set us free from the bondage of sin and death, and that He unleashed the Holy Spirit to renew and empower our hearts and minds. Why did He do these things? The answer is simple: He loves us, even when we forget. I’m no longer going to forget that He came for me...and for you. Let’s spread this message of hope to the in this new year. Thank you, Lord, for coming! Thank you for loving me.





FORGET THE former THINGS
do not dwell in the past
See I AM doing a NEW thing
I AM MAKING A WAY
in the wilderness
and streams in the
wasteland.

ISAIAH 43:18-19

DaySpring