

Looking for a Short-Cut?

By Joe Chesser

When James A. Garfield was president of Hiram College, a father brought his son to enroll him in higher education pursuits. After reviewing what would be required, and wishing for a shorter course of study for the boy, the father said to Mr. Garfield, "The boy can never take all that in. He wants to get through quicker. Can you arrange it for him?" Garfield was quick to respond, "Oh yes. He can take a short course. It all depends upon what you want to make of him. When God wants to make an oak, He takes a hundred years, but He only takes two months to make a squash."

Many often dream of and sometimes even expect to grow to spiritual maturity in a very short time. However, there are no short-cuts when it comes to spiritual development and maturity. Moses spent 40 years in the wilderness of Midian preparing to be the one to lead God's people out of Egypt. Jesus spent 30 years preparing for his 3 year ministry. It takes 20 years to be considered an adult, and many more years to actually become a mature adult. Why then are we surprised that it takes a considerable amount of time to reach spiritual maturity?

Yet even time itself does not ensure maturity. The writer of Hebrews pointed out that there were some Christians who ought to be mature enough to be teaching others, but were, in fact, still needing to be bottle-fed themselves on milk (the "elementary principles of God's word" – Hebrews 5:12-14). Some of these baby Christians had been Christians close to 30 years. Can you imagine? 30 years and still not mature enough to feed on "meat"; they still needed "milk." Sad, isn't it?!

Spiritual growth requires a steady diet of God's word. Peter, addressing this same subject, wrote, "...like new born babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation" (1 Peter 2:2). Paul adds that by "speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him ..." (Ephesians 4:15).

Learning takes place in consistent, regular, small doses. Many years ago, a friend of mine, Dan Lightfoot, said that he doesn't remember what he learned on any given day during his school days, but he knows each day a little progress was made. That's why regular Bible study is so important. That's also why God wants parents to teach their children His ways as they go about their daily activities (Deuteronomy 6:6-9). Just 15 minutes of focused Bible study each day will pay rich rewards.

There are no short-cuts. Do you want to mature to be an oak ... or a squash?



That meets at 215 South Thomas Ave, Sayre, PA 18840
(570) 886-1838

Arthur Barry, evangelist- (607) 280-1732

February 28, 2016

WELCOME!

Sunday Bible Class- 9:30 a.m.

Worship- 10:30 a.m.

Wednesday Bible Class- 6:30 p.m.



Today's Sermon: *Have You Exchanged the Gift God Gave You?*

- Sermons are recorded and are available for listening on the church website.
- Bulletins are archived on the website.

valleycitieschurchofchrist.org
aicoc.org

Scripture: James 1:12-18

Hymns: 709 How Sweet, How Heavenly; **626** Christ For The World We Sing; **478** Nearer Still Nearer; **337** Hallelujah! What a Savior; **907** Hark the Gentle Voice

UPCOMING EVENTS...

- **Ladies Class**, Tuesday, March 1st. Sandy will lead the lesson on the seventh chapter of Esther.
- Next Potluck Dinner- March 20th.
- Spiritual Giftedness Seminar- April 23-25. Doug Hamilton from the Camp Hill church will present this program here at Valley Cities.
- Arthur and Sandy are planning to attend the lectureship at Ohio Valley University from April 3-6. This is an opportunity to advertise the outreach efforts that are on-going in Northeast, PA.



- An exploratory team from the Antioch Initiative will be coming up to Tunkhannock, PA the first week in May to start making plans to plant a church there. Arthur has been scouting out possible meeting places for the group who will be gathering there.
- There will be a campaign in June to contact all interested people in the Tunkhannock area for Bible studies and worship.
- Linda Hicks has moved out of the apartment she shared with Felicity and Chadevin and Matthew and into an apartment with her friend, Angela.

PRAYERS...

- Felicity and the boys had to deal with a fire in their electric stove earlier this week.
- Darla Towell, Katie Barry's aunt, from the church in Soldotna, AK, has cancer in her liver and pancreas. She is not expected to recover, so has requested to be on comfort care. The family was able to take her home last week.
- Lori Kashorek, wife of Doug, the preacher at the church in Plattsburg, has had a recurrence of lung cancer. She has had her third round of chemo and plans to continue her teaching job as long as she is able. She has asked for prayers.
- Please pray for the outreach effort of the Antioch Initiative to start a church in Tunkhannock, PA in the spring.
- Maxine Schiel will be managing hip and knee pain with over the counter pain killers as the X rays showed she does still have cartilage in her joints.
- Emily Barry, of Palmer, AK, and her son, Aidan will be moving back to NY, staying with Arthur and Sandy for the time being. They are flying in on Saturday with their dog, Zoe. Please pray that our family can help them all get settled with job, school and a place to live as soon as it is best to do so.
- Darlene had painful dental surgery done on Friday and has to decide how to proceed to repair her teeth. This is an unexpected, big expense for her as well.
- Our family and friends who need to be saved or restored to faith.

If you have any prayers or news that you would like included in the bulletin, please contact Sandy Barry barnecat7237@gmail.com or text or call (607) 261-0911.

When God measures men He puts the tape around the heart not the head