



Volume 7, Issue 1

February & March 2018

Hello Winter!

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Commitment to God's Standards

“I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, entreat you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called.” (Ephesians 4:1)

Just as organizations have rules their members must follow, God has standards Christians must live by.

When someone is part of a group, he or she is obligated to follow its laws or standards. American citizens are required to obey the laws of the United States. Employees must conform to the rules of their company. Athletic teams are expected to listen to their coach.

Most of us want to be part of a group because with belonging comes acceptance. This desire to conform can be quite strong, sometimes dangerously so. During Jesus’s time, “many even of the rulers believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God” (John 12:42-43). Those rulers were so committed to their religious system that they damned their souls by rigidly adhering to its code.

Some people think belonging to the church is different, though. They want the blessings, rights, and privileges of being a child of God, but they’re unwilling to conform to biblical standards. But God expects Christians to live a certain way. Paul told the Corinthian believers to remove from their midst all who live immorally (1 Cor. 5:1-2). In 2 Thessalonians 3:6 he says, “Keep aloof from every brother who leads an unruly life and not according to the tradition which you received from us.”

Since people can join athletic teams and businesses and follow the rules, since people can be so fearful of being cast out of their society that they forfeit their souls, since people can be so devoted to things that don’t matter, shouldn’t Christians make an even greater commitment to what matters most? In Ephesians 4:1-6, Paul tells us how we can “walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which [we] have been called” (v. 1). Let’s commit ourselves to obey God as we learn what He requires of us.

For Further Study

Read John 9.

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Why You Will Join the Wrong Church

I recently came across an article written by Sam Emadi which brought home for me the issue of contentment within the local Church body. He reported that he had read a *New York Times* article from 2016 that had nothing to do with politics, culture wars, or comic book movies. Instead, the most-read article of 2016 was all about commitment. In this article titled “[Why You Will Marry the Wrong Person](#),” it takes shots at our culture’s idea that the ultimate foundation for commitment in marriage is romantic affection, that feeling of compatibility that means the other person will finally fulfill my needs and make me truly happy.

CHURCH AND OUR CULTURE

As I reflected on the thrust of Emadi’s take away, I couldn’t help but see how much of our culture’s view of love and commitment mirrors how many Christians view church membership. Many Christians’ broken relationships with their churches resemble patterns of the divorce culture and its attendant assumptions about authority, love, and compatibility.

Almost every Christian knows what it’s like to question whether they joined the “right church.” After an initial “honeymoon stage,” we begin to see our church’s problems with greater clarity than we see its strengths. The sermons start to seem too “*in your face*”, or not “*in your face*” enough. The church begins questioning particular ministries. The small groups don’t meet our needs in the ways we’d hoped.

More personally, the needs of other church members begin to encroach increasingly on our own personal freedoms. Some members sin against us—even without knowing just how deeply we’ve been wounded. Without even realizing it’s happening, we begin to wonder whether our local assembly is the “right” place for us. Of course, we remind ourselves that there’s no such thing as a perfect church—something we’ve even told our fellow church members. And yet, we can’t help but grapple with the nagging question: “Did I join the wrong church?”

“DID I JOIN THE WRONG CHURCH?”

The problem with this question is that it assumes church life shouldn’t be hard. It assumes the “honeymoon stage” should continue in perpetuity or that something has gone awry if we experience significant disappointment or hurt from our relationships with other members or the church’s leadership.

But these assumptions reveal a deep and unthinking commitment to consumerism: only if the perks of membership outweigh its inconveniences will we think it’s worth it to stick it out. Regrettably, many Christians seem trapped in a perpetual cycle of this type of cost-benefit analysis.

I’ve found that Christians most often push eject on their membership, not because they’re upset at the church’s budget or because they disagree on matters of polity, but instead Christians leave their churches for the same reason people leave their marriages: a lack of relational depth and affection. In other words, many Christians leave their churches because they just don’t seem compatible with the church or because the relationships leave them feeling a little dry.

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Personal relationships, however, were never meant to serve as the foundation for our sense of church commitment. If we pursue relationships as the foundation of our belonging, we're more likely to be inescapably trapped in the consumerism and "met-needs" mentality at the heart of our divorce culture. However, instead of valuing consumerism, the Bible roots our membership in the idea of a covenant, which offers an infinitely superior alternative.

COVENANT PRECEDES COMMUNITY

Tim Keller notes in his *book on marriage* that a covenant *"creates a particular kind of bond . . . a relationship far more intimate and personal than a merely legal, business relationship. Yet at the same time, it is far more durable, binding, and unconditional than one based on mere feeling and affection. A covenant relationship is a stunning blend of law and love."*

When the Bible speaks about the church, it refers to it as a covenant community. Church members aren't just part of a shared interest group. They're covenanted to one another by a sacred promise to oversee one another's membership in the kingdom and faithfulness to King Jesus (Matt. 18:15–20). The New Testament unfolds the details of that sacred promise: We regularly gather together (Heb. 10:24–25), bear one another's burdens and sorrows (Gal. 6:2), encourage one another (Heb. 3:12–14), pray for one another (Jas. 5:16), and forgive one another (Col. 3:13). Many churches helpfully formalize these biblical instructions into a church covenant, a set of promises members make to one another when they enter into membership.

These covenant obligations are the foundations of our church commitment and should function as the backbone to church life. Covenant precedes community. We might even say covenant creates community. The covenant promises that members make to one another blossom into the life-giving relationships our hearts crave.

Rooting commitment in our covenant promises doesn't mean that church relationships are nothing but soulless duty. Instead, covenant commitments are the food that nourishes our relationships with other members. The more we hold ourselves to our covenant promises, the more our relationships blossom and endure through seasons of difficulty. Again, as Emadi perceptively notes in his article, *"Compatibility is an achievement of love, it must not be its precondition."* The world argues that affection is pre-requisite to commitment. But the biblical picture is actually quite the opposite: commitment and service create affection.

COVENANTS CARRY YOU THROUGH SUFFERING

The reason God roots the most important relationships in the world—like marriage and church membership—in covenants is to ensure they endure through fire. Have you ever noticed how traditional marriage vows were designed to ensure couples prepare to love one another well in the midst of suffering? Couples pledge themselves to one another even in "poverty" and "sickness" until parted by death.

This same expectation of future trials also marks the promises church members make to one another. We pledge to *"bear one another's burdens,"* (Gal. 6:2) and patiently bear with and forgive the sins of our brothers and sisters who wrong us (Col. 3:13; Eph. 4:32). If we make our covenant commitments the ground-floor basis of our life and relationships in the church, we come to expect the rough patches and prepare to face them with godliness.

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While our affections for our church and its members can be fickle, easily dissipating as soon as circumstances shift unfavorably, our covenant commitments never fade. As Keller notes, covenants are by their very nature oriented toward the future. They *“are not a declaration of present love but a mutually binding promise of future love.”* In some sense, the whole point of a covenant is to pledge our love and fidelity for the rough times ahead. Thus, covenants carry us through suffering. Once more, Emadi notes, *“Choosing whom to commit ourselves to is merely a case of identifying which particular variety of suffering we would most like to sacrifice ourselves for.”*

FOR YOUR OWN GOOD, STICK WITH THE “WRONG” CHURCH

Joining a church, like seeking a spouse, is daunting. Loving others makes us vulnerable, and committing ourselves to a church immerses us in the needs of other sinners. Eventually, every congregation will find a way to get under our skin, frustrate us, or even wound us—and we will do the same to them.

Our relationships will ebb and flow, as will our affection for the church. But the solution is not always looking for a better fit. Instead, we renew our passion and re-ignite our sense of belonging by holding ourselves to our membership covenant—sacred promises that bind even the “wrong” people together.



Greetings from Insight Pregnancy Services.

I trust that you had a blessed Christmas and are ready to jump into the new year. 2017 sure passed quickly! There were many things that happened here in 2017 that would not have happened without your support.

- We’ve had 1000 visits with clients, mentoring them in the areas of pregnancy options, healthy pregnancy, adoption, parenting, fatherhood, sexual healing and healthy relationships.
- 137 clients this year were new to us.
- More than 30 babies were born through the ministry.
- The Gospel was shared with clients more than 20 times and we prayed with clients 474 times.
- Several clients were helped out of abusive situations and others were helped with housing needs.
- We launched our new Insight 4 Dads program.
- We raised 100% of our budget, \$216,000.
- We had an unprecedented number of presentations in the area schools.
- And, we changed our name to more effectively reach our target audience.
- Over 3500 volunteers hour were invested in ministry.



The opportunities to minister to people in these ways cannot happen without your support. So, from our Board of Directors, Staff, Volunteers, and clients we say, “Thank you with all our hearts for all that you have accomplished with us this past year.”

Let’s work together to do it again in 2018!!!

Debbie Lamos
Executive Director



February 2018



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Greeters for February: <i>Clint & Shelley Cook</i>				1 Praise Team practice	2	3 Elders Prayer Time
4 Sunday school Worship Service <i>Ministry Shares Offering</i> Sunday school	5 <i>Ladies Aid</i> Men's Bible study	6 AWANA	7 Wednesday Night Service	8 Praise Team practice	9	10 Elders Prayer Time
11 Sunday school Worship Service	12 No Men's Bible study	13 No AWANA	14  Christian Women's Club No Wednesday Service	15 Praise Team practice	16 Board Meeting	17 Elders Prayer Time
-----Biblical Counseling Conference-----						
18 Sunday school Worship Service <i>Church Potluck</i>	19 <i>Ladies Aid</i> Men's Bible study	20 AWANA	21 Wednesday Night Service	22 Praise Team practice	23	24 Elders Prayer Time
25 Sunday school Worship Service Sunday school	26 Men's Bible study	27 AWANA	28 Wednesday Night Service	29 Praise Team practice		

Sundays

Worship
 Services
 10:00 a.m.
 Sunday school
 9:00 a.m.
 11:45 a.m.

Mondays

1st & 3rd
 Ladies Aid
 10 a.m.

Tuesdays

Supper
 5:30 p.m.



6 p.m.

Wednesdays

Night Service
 7 p.m.

3rd Friday

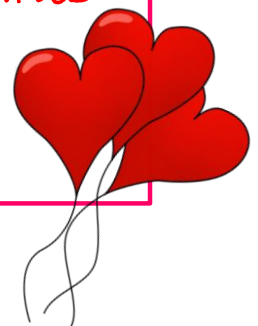
Board Meeting
 6:00 p.m.

February Birthdays

2: Iva Gravelin
 3: Lucille Foust
 11: Karsten Knuver
 20: Landon Winter
 Marilyn Davis
 21: Rylee Kelley
 Mary Cook

February Anniversaries

14: Gordon & Marian Witte
 27: David & Susan Meyers
 27: Bob & Sharen Franklin



Happy Valentine's Day

Items on this calendar are subject to change



March 2018



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Sundays Worship Services 10:00 a.m. Sunday school 9:00 a.m. 11:45 a.m.				1 Praise Team practice	2	3 Elders' Prayer Time
4 Sunday school Worship service Sunday school (Building Fund Offering)	5 <i>Ladies Aid</i> Men's Bible study	6 AWANA	7 Christian Women's Club Wednesday Night Service	8 Praise Team practice	9	10 Elders' Prayer Time
11 Day Light Saving Time Sunday school Worship service Sunday School	12 Men's Bible study	13 AWANA	14 Wednesday Night Service	15 Praise Team practice	16 Board Meeting	17 Elders' Prayer Time
18 Sunday school Worship service Potluck	19 <i>Ladies Aid</i> Men's Bible study	20 AWANA <i>1st day of Spring</i>	21 Wednesday Night Service	22 Praise Team practice	23	24 Elders' Prayer Time
25 Palm Sunday Sunday school Worship service Sunday school	26 Men's Bible study	27 No AWANA	28 Wednesday Night Service	29	30 GOOD FRIDAY Service/ Communion	31 Elders' Prayer Time

Monday

1st & 3rd
Ladies Aid
10 a.m.

Tuesday

Supper
5:30 p.m.



6 p.m.

Wednesday

Night Service
7 p.m.

3rd Friday

Board Meeting
6:00 p.m.



March Birthdays

3: Luke Beckwith
4: Marian Witte
6: Christy Counterman
10: Scott Fifer
13: Wes Knight
18: June Frontjes
20: Reagan Ouder Kirk
22: Sue Frens
26: Phil Rottman
29: Pam Morgan
31: Lori VanderArk
Gary Teja



March Anniversaries

13: Brad & Lori Kellogg
15: Larry & June Frontjes
30: Earl & Carolyn Shoemaker



Items on this calendar
are subject to change

Food For Thought...

Muffin-Tin Quiche with Smoked Cheddar & Potato

Prep 30 m
Ready In 1 h



Ingredients

2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1½ cups finely diced red-skinned potatoes
1 cup diced red onion
¾ teaspoon salt, divided
8 large eggs
1 cup shredded smoked Cheddar cheese
½ cup low-fat milk
½ teaspoon ground black pepper
1½ cups chopped fresh spinach

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 325°F. Coat a 12-cup muffin tin with cooking spray.
2. Heat oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add potatoes, onion and ¼ teaspoon salt and cook, stirring, until the potatoes are just cooked through, about 5 minutes. Remove from heat and let cool 5 minutes.
3. Whisk eggs, cheese, milk, pepper and the remaining ½ teaspoon salt in a large bowl. Stir in spinach and the potato mixture. Divide the quiche mixture among the prepared muffin cups.
4. Bake until firm to the touch, about 25 minutes. Let stand 5 minutes before removing from the tin.

To make ahead: Individually wrap in plastic and refrigerate for up to 3 days or freeze for up to 1 month. To reheat, remove plastic, wrap in a paper towel and microwave on High for 30 to 60 seconds.

Equipment: Muffin tin with 12 (½-cup) cups

Cinnamon-Raisin Oatmeal Cookies

Prep 25 m
Ready In 1 h 15 m

Ingredients

1 cup white whole-wheat flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
½ teaspoon salt
⅔ cup packed light brown sugar
6 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
1 large egg
1½ teaspoons vanilla extract
1 cup old-fashioned rolled oats
½ cup raisins

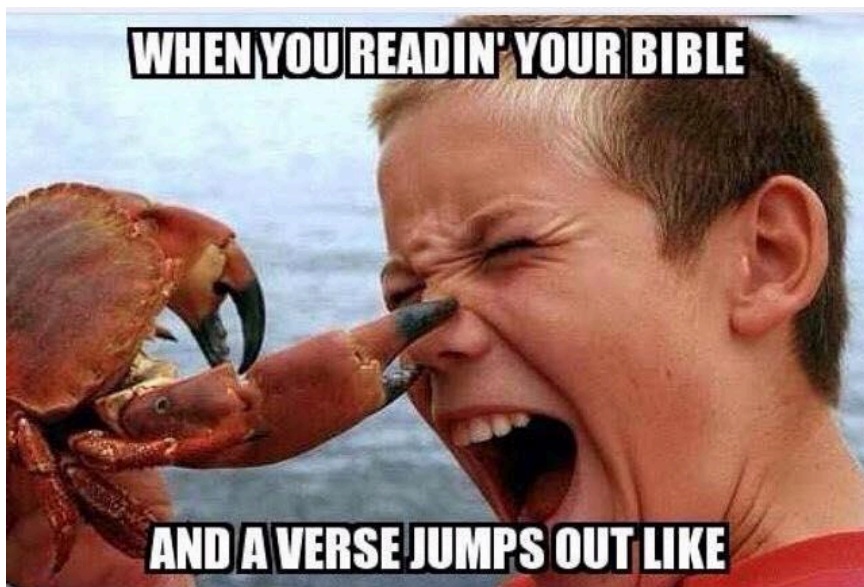
Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350F. Lightly coat a baking sheet with cooking spray.
2. Whisk flour, baking powder, cinnamon and salt in a medium bowl.
3. Whisk sugar, butter, egg and vanilla in a large bowl. Add flour mixture, oats and raisins and stir with a wooden spoon until well combined. Drop level tablespoons of batter onto the prepared baking sheet, making 12 cookies per batch.
4. Bake until golden brown on the bottom, 12 to 14 minutes. Let cool on the baking sheet for 5 minutes before transferring to a wire rack to cool completely. Repeat with the remaining batter.

To make ahead: Store airtight at room temperature for up to 3 days.



“...A merry heart doeth good like medicine...”



More Ridiculous State Laws

Oklahoma-

Bear wrestling is illegal. (Isn't that one of the crimes that kind of takes care itself?)

Oregon-

It's illegal to pump your own gas.

Rhode Island-

It's illegal to bite off another person's leg.
(Just in case you thought it might be ok, it's not!)

Tennessee-

Students may not hold hands while at school.

Virginia-

It's illegal to tickle women.

Washington-

It's illegal to harass Bigfoot, Sasquatch or any other undiscovered subspecies and is punishable by fine & or imprisonment.



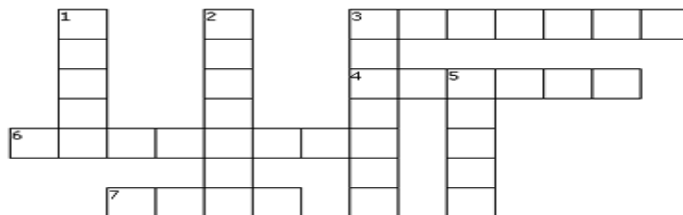
ACTIVITY PAGE

How well do you know the book of Revelation?

1. One day in about the year 95 A.D., a man named John had a vision from heaven. The book of Revelation is John's record of that vision. Where was John when he had his vision?
2. Who was Revelation originally written for?
3. What form of literature is Revelation?
4. One day, John heard a voice and turned to see a vision of seven golden lampstands. In the midst of the lampstands was a heavenly being with white hair, eyes like fire, and a voice like rushing water. A two-edged sword was coming out of his mouth. Who was this being?
5. John was given a vision into heaven. He saw a scroll with seven seals on it. Who in heaven was found worthy to open the seven seals and reveal the knowledge of human affairs and destiny contained in the scroll?
6. As the first four seals were broken open, John saw a vision of the "Four horseman of the Apocalypse." What did they represent?
7. An angel came from the East bearing the seal of God. He placed God's seal on the foreheads of people who were faithful servants of God. How many people received the seal?
8. Seven angels appeared with seven trumpets. As each trumpet was blown, a partial destruction afflicted the earth as a warning of God's coming judgment. Then, a woman appeared in the sky, clothed with the sun, wearing a crown of 12 stars. What else appeared in the sky?
9. Next, a beast like a leopard emerged from the sea. How many heads did it have?
10. Yet another beast emerged from the earth which performed great signs and deceived the people of earth. What number was associated with this beast?

Let the Children Come

He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these." Mark 10:14b (NIV)



ACROSS

3. Bringing happiness, pleasure, or contentment to someone
4. Small in size
6. Sons and daughters, young people
7. The parts of the body which connect the hands to the shoulders

DOWN

1. A statement accepted as fact
2. A country or territory ruled by a king or queen
3. To be a member of a group, such as a club or organization
5. To come in contact with or to feel with your fingers

little	touch	kingdom	arms
children	truth	belongs	blessed