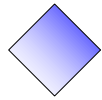


# The Voice of Truth



February 17, 2013

## Lukewarmness By Jimmy Pettigrew

There is a strange, peculiar and bewildering disease that is spreading among God's children today! It strikes Sunday afternoon and is cured by Thursday morning. This disease is called "LUKEWARMNESS". This lukewarmness makes my Lord sick (**Revelation 3:16**).

We in the Lord's church are not totally committed to the Lord. Brethren, we become married to Christ when we obey the gospel. It is then that we become a part of His bride, the church (**Romans 7:4; 2 Corinthians 11:2**). We then made solemn marriage vows, and they must not be broken. If we neglect these vows for just a moment we deny the Lord and "If we deny him, he also will deny us," (**2 Timothy 2:12**).

As Christians, we have solemnly promised the Lord that we will ever be faithful in all our duties as a part of the bride - we must not break these vows. But, sadly many of my brethren and sisters who would not think of breaking the vows they made to their earthly companions think very little of breaking the vows they made when they became married to Christ. Many, after making vows to the Lord, break them! HOW?

- (1) By forsaking the assembly (**Hebrews 10:25**).
- (2) By loving the things of this world (**1 John 2:15-17**).
- (3) By not seeking and saving the lost (**Matthew 28:18-20**).
- (4) By not putting the Kingdom of God first (**Matthew 6:33**).
- (5) By not adding to your faith (**2 Peter 1:5-11**).
- (6) By burying thy talent (**Matthew 25:14-30**).
- (7) By not redeeming the time (**Ephesians 5:15-16**).
- (8) By not giving attendance to reading, meditating, study (**1 Timothy 4:13-15; 2 Timothy 2:15**).
- (9) By not having a saving influence (**Matthew 5:14-16**).
- (10) By not presenting our bodies a living sacrifice, holy

to God (**Romans 12:1**).

I know that you could think of many more ways we break our vows to our Lord. Have you faithfully kept your vows? One day I was talking to a man who was supposed to be a Christian. He told me he attended services "most of the time," and seemed to think this put him in a good relationship with God . . . Now, please, think about it!!!

What if a husband was faithful to his wife most of the time?

What if your car started most of the time?

What if your heart beat most of the time?

What if you showed up for work most of the time?

What if you received your pay check most of the time?

What if you did your taxes most of the time?

What if.....?

Then WHY should one think he can please God by being faithful most of the time? Have you been true to the Great Bridegroom? May I implore you to live true to the Lord. Christ died for us; let us serve him faithfully until the end (**Revelation 2:10**).

Be a faithful Christian. A faithful Christian is one who is big enough to attend services of the church without being begged or bribed to do it. A faithful Christian is one who lets the Lord tell him what to do and be found doing it. He loves to obey the Lord in all things at all times.

Brothers and sisters have you faithfully kept your vows? Have you been faithful to God in all things? It is the desire of our Savior, Jesus Christ, that we as Christians do His will, and thus show our love for Him and appreciation for His sacrifice for us. Paul tells us to be "fervent in spirit; serving the Lord" (**Romans 12:11**). •

***A faith that will not take us to worship will not  
Take us to heaven!***

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## “Increase” By Jarrod Jacobs

The life of a Christian is not static. It is not a life where we can simply maintain “status quo” and expect to please the God of Heaven. If we are not growing, spiritually, we are not pleasing God. On one occasion, Jesus told a group of people, “*I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot! So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth. For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked*” (**Rev. 3:15-17**). These people made the Lord sick when they thought they needed nothing, and spiritually, tried to be neither “cold” nor “hot,” but “lukewarm.” This is unacceptable to God.

We are expected to grow and increase in a spiritual sense. This is made clear when we read a passage like **II Peter 1:3-11**, and see that it declares that we must “*give all diligence*” to “*add to (our) faith*” certain things. Are we doing this? Are we making an increase? Some have the attitude (while they may not state it, it is evident in their works; cf. **Titus 1:16**) that so long as we have been baptized, then nothing else is necessary. Not so! Baptism is the beginning of a process, the beginning of a spiritual journey, and not the end. Just as a child’s birth marks the beginning of a new phase of his life, so also, one’s spiritual birth (**Jn. 3:3**; **I Pet. 1:23, 2:2**) marks the beginning of a new phase in his spiritual life! In this study, let us note some ways in which God expects His people to increase in their spiritual lives.

### Increase In Knowledge

Once one knows the plan of salvation, he must not stop his learning! He must continue to increase in his knowledge of God’s word. In the long ago, Solomon said, “*Let the wise hear and increase in learning, and the one who understands obtain guidance*” (**Prov. 1:5**). Are you a wise man or not? Are you on your way to becoming such? Solomon tells us what it takes. In like manner, for Christians it is necessary that we increase in our learning. The apostle Paul wrote to the Colossians, and told them he was praying for them that they might, “*walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God*” (**Col. 1:10**). Yes, just as a little baby increases in knowledge of his surroundings daily, so also Christians must increase in that spiritual knowledge daily!

### Increase In Strength

A little infant is born helpless. Yet, this does not last long! That baby will soon stretch his little muscles, crane his neck, roll, and flop in an effort to increase his strength so he can soon crawl, walk, and run.

In like manner, it was not long after Saul of Tarsus became a Christian that he “*increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving that Jesus was the Christ*” (**Acts 9:22**). Just as knowledge must increase, so also spiritual strength must increase! How does this happen? It happens through having our “*powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil*” (**Heb. 5:14**). How are we doing in our spiritual exercise? Are we increasing in spiritual strength? If not, why not? It is high time we increased in strength, so we can withstand the wiles of Satan!

### Increase In Brotherly Love

In addition to the above, let us also increase in brotherly love. The Thessalonians were encouraged, “*May the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, as we do for you*” (**I Thess. 3:12**). This encouragement is repeated in **chapter 4:9-10** of the same letter. Are we increasing in brotherly love? Peter’s letter to the Christians declared that “*brotherly kindness*” is something we need to add to our faith (**II Pet. 1:7**). Are we increasing or shrinking? Be honest!

### Conclusion

“*Finally, then, brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God, just as you are doing, that you do so more and more*” (**I Thess. 4:1**). It is evident in our study that the Christian needs to increase, grow, or abound in that spiritual sense. Just as a newborn grows, so also we need to grow after having been born of God! Are we doing this? If not, repent today and continue in that process of spiritual growth. It is evident from Scripture that unlike physical growth, increasing spiritually is something we control (**II Pet. 3:18**). Therefore, let us heed the word and please God, increasing more and more.

*Credit: The Old Paths - 1/27/13 ♦*

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**When an archer misses the mark, he turns and looks for the fault within himself.  
Failure to hit the bull’s-eye is never the fault of the target. To improve your aim –  
Improve yourself. ♦**

## Giving God Your First and Best

### By Jonathan L. Perz

By the end of the Old Testament, the Israelites had a problem. They ceased giving God their best and began sacrificing “*the stolen, the lame and the sick.*” Serving God had become “*a weariness*” to them. They “*sneered*” at the table of the Lord, declaring it “*contemptible.*” As a result, God cursed their blessings and shunned their sacrifices, making them contemptible before all the people (**Malachi 1:1-2:9**).

Herein lies one of the most fundamental and vital principles of Christianity, and at the same time, one of the biggest problems with Christians today. Every single worthwhile endeavor in our lives will be significantly enhanced if we will simply learn to put God first and give Him our best.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus taught us to “*seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness*” (**Matt. 6:33**). While the context here is one of worrying about the needs of this life, the principle stands—put God first and give Him your very best and He will take care of the rest.

The problem is that we are too concerned about our own things to give God our very best. Paul wrote on one occasion, “*For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus*” (**Phil. 2:21**). Is such a testimony of your life? Does this describe the end result of the decisions you make on a daily basis? It is far too easy to read this about someone else and affirm it. It is another thing altogether to humbly and honestly “own up” when it is stated to describe the reality of our own lives. Can we honestly say God is getting our first and best in every avenue of life?

Another problem is that we don’t trust God with our best, so He does not come first in our lives. As hard as it might be to hear, it is true. If we trusted God, we would give Him our first and best without reservation. As it stands—if we are honest—God often takes a back seat to us as we see to our needs first, then His will. This can be illustrated in our time management, our laying by in store, our assembling, our sharing of the gospel, our prayer lives,

our Bible study, our recreation time, etc. While we may say we are giving God our best, our works too often belie us. If we want to honestly say we trust God with our best, we need to daily put Him first!

Hardly realized and rarely practiced is one of the key elements in all of this. Giving God our first and best will result in us receiving the best. The best husbands and wives are first and foremost godly husbands and wives (**Eph. 5:22-32**). The best parents are first and foremost godly parents (**Eph. 6:4**). The best employers and employees are first and foremost godly employers and employees (**Eph. 6:5-9**). When we give God our first and best in all of these areas of our lives, we will inevitably be giving our spouses, our children, our employees and employers our best because it is the simple will of God that we live righteously and godly in all of these avenues of our lives. On the other hand, when we withhold our first and best from God, but try to fulfill the role of spouse, parent and employer/employee, the blessing of God is missing in our endeavors.

The same can be said of our worship and edifying the brethren (**Heb. 10:24-25**). Edifying and provoking the saints to love and good works in the assembly is truly a by-product of putting God first and giving Him our best in worship. Sing your best to God and all will benefit. But when we sing to men to be heard of men, can we honestly say God is getting our first and best? Pray most fervently to God and all will benefit. But when we pray to men to be heard of men, can we say we are truly giving God our first and best? Hunger and thirst after God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength and all around you will benefit!

God deserves our first and best! Did He withhold His first and His best from us when He gave us His only begotten Son? Certainly not! Couple this with the fact that we didn’t deserve Jesus and you have all the reason you need to give Him your first and best in every aspect of your life! Think on these things... *Credit: www.moodychurchofchrist.com* ♦

### THINK ABOUT IT!

When a farmer stops plowing his land, stops planting seed, and stops harvesting his crops, he has stopped doing those things that identify him as being a farmer. When a Christian stops attending worship services regularly, stops studying, stops giving as he has been prospered, and has stopped working for the Lord, he has stopped being a Christian because he has stopped doing those things that identify him as a Christian. “*By their fruits ye shall know them,*” (**Matthew 7:20**). ♦

## Are You Heaven Bound?

By David J. Riggs

It matters not what else you do in life, if you miss heaven you have been a complete failure. You might gather about you great riches and fame and leave thousands of friends to mourn your departing, but if you are not ready for heaven you have been a miserable failure. On the other hand, you may die in a charity home for the poor and be buried in a potter's field without a single friend to mourn, but if you receive heaven, your life has been a marvelous success.

You can't afford to miss heaven for if you miss it, you miss all. It is the place of eternal rest (**Heb. 4:9-11**) where pain, sickness, and death will not be known (**Rev. 21:4**). It is an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that does not fade away (**1 Pet. 1:4**). It is that city built by the living God (**Heb. 11:10**).

You don't have to miss heaven. Humbly submit yourself

to the will of God (**Matt. 7:21**). Let His Word guide you (**2 Tim. 3:15**) and let no one beguile you or your reward (**Col. 2:18**). Overcome temptations (**James 1:12**) and suffer for His cause with rejoicing (**Matt. 5:11-12**). If you do these things, heaven will be yours someday for the God of heaven who cannot lie has promised it.

I quote a few words from some of our songs: "I am going to a city where the streets with gold are laid, where the tree of life is blooming, and the roses never fade. Here they bloom but for a season, soon their beauty is decayed; I am going to a city where the roses never fade." "I am bound for the promised land, promised land, I am bound for the promised land; O who will come and go with me? I am bound for the promised land." "When we've been there ten thousand years, bright shining as the sun; we've now less days to sing God's praise than when we first begun."

Credit: <http://oakridgechurch.com/riggs/> ♦

### The Nature Of The Kingdom Of God

IS NOT

1. Of This World (**John 18:36**).
2. Eating and Drinking (**Rom. 14:17**).
3. In Word (**1 Cor. 4:20**).
4. With Observation (**Luke 17:20**).

IS

1. In Power (**1 Cor. 4:20**).
2. Righteousness (**Rom. 14:17**).
3. Peace (**Rom. 14:17**).
4. Joy (**Rom. 14:17**).
5. Within You (**Luke 17:21**).
6. Unshakable (**Heb. 12:28**).

### What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear and Learn - **Rom. 10:17** m. **10:9-10** ; **1 Pet. 3:21** ; **John 6:45; 17:3**

Believe - **Heb. 11:6**; **John 6:29; 8:24**

Repent - **Luke 13:3**; **Acts 3:19; 17:30**

Confess the Lord - **Matt. 10:32-33**; **Romans 10:9-10**; **1 Pet. 3:21**

Be Baptized - **Mark 16:16**; **Acts 22:16**; **Gal. 3:26-27**

Continue in the Apostles' Teaching - **Acts 2:42**; **2 Tim. 3:14-17**

### About the Hillcrest church of Christ

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#### Schedule of Assembly

**Bible Study:** Sunday, 9:00am  
**Worship Service:** Sunday, 10:00am  
**Bible Study:** Wednesday, 7:00pm\*

\*A song service is held on the last Wednesday of every month

[www.hillcrestchurchofchrist.com](http://www.hillcrestchurchofchrist.com)