



Volume 17 Issue 27

July 3, 2022

GOD SAID SING

When people visit our worship services; some express curiosity about our lack of instrumental music. Some may ask if we are too poor to afford them. Others may ask us if we don't like instruments. The fact is we are not too poor to afford them. We like instruments! Our reasoning goes much farther than that. It concerns faith and our desire to follow God's instructions. God said "sing." Think about it this way. When a man offers a gift to his wife, the considerate thing to do is offer a gift that will please her. She is the recipient of the present! I may want a rifle, a new computer, or a truck. But if I'm going to give something to my wife that she will appreciate, I will select something I believe will please her, not me. I will consider all I know of her, particularly what she has said she likes and wants. My gift will be based on her will, not mine. As God's people, we want to offer worship to God that is acceptable to Him. In offering that worship, what is important? Is it what I want or what God wants? You will agree the most

important thing is what God wants. The proper course is to offer that worship to God that I know will please Him. How do I know what is pleasing to God? Might I suggest we turn to the scriptures and let God Himself tell us? We can read the New Testament and find exactly what it says regarding how we are to worship God. The Bible states that we are to sing no less than ten times (Matt. 26:30; Mk. 14:26; Acts 16:25; Rom. 15:9; I Cor. 14:15; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; Heb. 2:12; Heb. 13:15; Jas. 5:13). As we read and study these verses, we notice that there is no room for instrumental music in our worship services. Why do we sing? It is because God said "sing." This is serious because *"Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son"* (II Jn. 9). – Aric Russell

The Narrow Road Life is full of choices. There are things that everyone must choose to do or not do, places to decide to go or not to

go, and people to become friends with or to ignore. We have many choices to make, and many of them are difficult. The Lord spoke of a choice man has to make in Matthew 7:13-14. It says there, *“Enter in by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few that find it.”* Picture, if you will, that you are standing at an intersection of two roads. The first road is well-paved, easy to navigate, and mostly straight, with very few hills to climb and several lanes for driving. The other road is a two-lane road with potholes, no shoulders, curvy, and very hilly. Which road would you choose to travel? Most people will take the first road because of the ease of navigation. Why would anyone willingly go down the second road with all of its difficulties? We face the same two choices in our spiritual lives. It is easy to do the things of this world and go down that “easy road.” We will meet little or no resistance if we choose to go along with what everyone else is doing. The cruise control can be set, the seat leaned back, the air conditioner cranked up, the stereo on our favorite radio station, and no cares or anything getting in our way. There is no such thing as peer pressure on this road because everyone does whatever is pleasing at the time. The other choice, however, is not as easy. It is a difficult road. It is indeed the road less traveled

(Matt. 7:14). For the most part, people do not wish to be different from the rest of the world. It is difficult to be different from the world (II Cor. 6:14-18). Finally, notice also that these two roads have crossovers. There is tremendous pressure on those who take the difficult road or way to leave it and cross over to the easier route. One can go from the easy road to the difficult road through obedience to God’s will (Matt. 7:21) and living a life faithful to Him (Rev. 2:10). However, most do not cross over to this way. In fact, many cross over from the difficult road to the easy road. Perhaps the road less traveled gets too difficult for them, or like Demas, they *“love this present world”* (2 Tim. 4:10). They see that it is much easier to “go with the flow of traffic” on the easier road and choose to take it. What we must do then is consider the **end** of the two roads. The narrow road leads to the right destination, which is eternal life (Matt. 7:14). The well-traveled road leads to a dead-end, a destination of destruction (Matt. 7:13). Which road are you choosing? – Aric Russell **Back To The Basics** A disturbing trend seen in the church is the lack of interest or excitement from fellow Christians. Some may attend every service, but it appears that they are only “going through the motions.” Their zeal in their singing, their praying, and their Bible study, all seem to be nonexistent. The problem is similar to a professional athlete or even an entire team that may be

"in a slump." You see, athletes or sports teams sometimes do not perform to their true potential. When slumps like these happen in sports, the solution to get out of them is simple. Work on the "fundamentals" or get "back to the basics." The same is true with us. As Christians, when we find ourselves in a slump or just "going through the motions," we need to go back to the "fundamentals" or get "back to the basics." I understand that there are many ways to do this, but we will focus on two good things we can do. The first thing we should do to get out of a slump is to energize our faith. Hebrews 11:1 offers a good definition of faith. It says, *"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."* Faith is believing and trusting in something we cannot see with our own eyes. Why is faith important? Let the Bible answer. Please read Hebrews 11:6. The text tells us that faith is essential to please God. We believe that Jesus walked on this earth. We believe that Jesus performed many miracles while here on this earth. However, we never saw Him with our own eyes. Yet, we believe that He did the things mentioned in the Bible. You see, we already have faith. It is part of what leads us to be faithful as Christians today. Is our faith where it should be? We all need to energize our faith, and we can do that by studying God's word. Romans 10:17 says, *"So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."* The Bible is designed to produce faith. If we are diligent in

reading our Bibles and take the time to study God's word, we can "energize" our faith. After we energize our faith, we then should strengthen our hope. W.E. Vine says that hope is the "happy anticipation of good." However, notice hope is not wishful thinking. It is not an insecure "I hope so." Instead, hope is a confident expectation. Why is hope important? Romans 8:25 says, *"But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience."* Thus, we learn that hope is essential to persevere. Perhaps it is that we have started to lose hope. If so, we need to go back to the scriptures. Romans 15:4 tells us, *"For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope."* We see again that if we spend time in God's word, we can learn more about the hope that is found in Christ. Again, I understand there are more ways to renew our zeal and get excited. Nevertheless, I hope that if you find yourself in this situation, you will work on the two areas we mentioned. Energize your faith and strengthen your hope. It is also crucial to remember that God has given us two very important tools to help us whenever we are in need. Those tools are His word and prayer. Therefore, the next time you find yourself in a slump, remember to turn to God's word and go to Him in prayer. – Aric Russell



MONTHLY CHALLENGE

DIRECTIONS: Each first Sunday of the month, we will have challenges that you should attempt to complete by the end of the month. If we all, as members, complete these challenges, our church will grow in spirit and in number.

1) Praying For Others Challenge

James 5:16 *"The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much."* Prayer can turn night into day, and can change the worst of circumstances into amazing blessings. There are so many areas where our prayers can make a difference. We can pray for one another. "Epaphras, who is one of your number, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, sends you his greetings, always laboring earnestly for you in his prayers, that you may stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God," Col. 4:12. We can pray for our enemies. "But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you," Matt. 5:44. We can pray for those we wish to share the gospel with. "Praying at the same time for us as well, that God will open up to us a door for the word," Col. 4:3. There are so many areas where prayer is the difference maker. Devote this month to praying diligently in these specific areas and watch God clear pathways to make progress. "I will even make a roadway in the wilderness, rivers in the desert," Is. 43:19.

2) USING YOUR BIBLE IN THE WORLD

Share the following verses with someone who does not attend this congregation at least twice this month:

Titus 3:3-8

"For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another. But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. This is a trustworthy statement; and concerning these things I want you to speak confidently, so that those who have believed God will be careful to engage in good deeds. These things are good and profitable for men."