

Everyone is busy. Everyone has more to do each week than he can get done. Still, if Heaven is really important to you, you will make time to sit down and study. We have the teachers. We have a strong desire to see you grow. We can come to your house and spend an hour a week in diligent study with you. We are ready. Still, no one can help you grow if you never make an effort or lift a finger.

—Lynn Parker
Kingsbury, Tx



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Those in need of prayers...

Rick & Sheila Beauchamp—his job hunt, mother, her ears
Waynette Davis, Karla Dobbs, Sharon Harp—health problems
Darrell Broking family—their job hunt
Lavonne McClish—macular degeneration treatments
Janice Parks—her back, new job, mother, and family
Rick Heimberger, Darrell Conley—health problems

Records you helped make...

Bible Class	6
Sunday AM Worship	6
Sunday PM Worship	6
Wednesday PM Bible Class/Worship	12
Contribution	\$310.00
Contribution average (2009)	\$325.43
Contribution from Alton/Leta Fonville	150.00

Sermon broadcasts...

Both sermons each Sunday are broadcast via Internet, available at our Website, www.northpointcoc.com. The Sunday morning sermon begins at approximately 10:47 a.m., and Sunday afternoon at approximately 1:15 p.m.

Bible class teacher for August
Chairman of Men's Meetings (July–September)
Preacher, Lighthouse editor

Darrell Broking
Rick Beauchamp
Dub McClish

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Sunday

Bible Class	9:30 AM
Worship	10:30 AM
Worship	1:00 PM

Wednesday

B.C./Worship	7:00 PM
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The Northpoint Lighthouse

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COMPASSION

Among the many attractive and ennobling traits of character urged upon servants of God and followers of Christ is compassion. Even those who possess no compassion appreciate this trait in others, especially when they receive it.

God's compassion is extolled in Psalms 86:15: "But thou, O Lord, are a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth." Notice the companion virtues to compassion: *graciousness, longsuffering, and mercy*. Because of His compassion, God is slow to anger (145:8). Out of His compassion, God sent the prophets to warn His people of coming doom if they failed to repent (2 Chr. 36:15).

Compassion graced the earthly life of our Savior. Upon seeing the multitudes, Jesus "was moved with compassion for them" (Mat. 9:36); cf. 14:4; 15:32; et al.). In every case where His compassion is mentioned, He did something to help the object of His compassion.

Since we are to follow God as our pattern of behavior (1 Pet. 1:16, and since Christ is to be formed in us (Gal. 4:19), it follows that we must be compassionate. The upright man is "gracious, and full of compassion and righteousness" (Psa. 112:4). The Hebrew Christians were commended for having "compassion on them that were in bonds" (Heb. 10:34). Zechariah commanded God's people of old: "Execute true judgment, and show mercy and compassions every man to his brother" (Zec. 7:9).

While lauding this all-too uncommon virtue, a word of warning is in order concerning its misuse. We must never use compassion as an excuse for a compromising attitude toward God's Word. In the name of "compassion" some would withhold the Truth from those who need it lest they be offended. It is no mark of compassion to neglect or refuse to speak the whole counsel of God whereby one might be saved, whether it be to a brother or an enemy. Nor does a compassionate disposition contradict the capacity to raise one's voice in bold protest against sin and error, as our Lord often did. Paul's compassionate spirit did not prevent his calling Elymas the sorcerer "thou son of the devil" (Acts 13:10). As with the noble virtue of sincerity, so with compassion—it is not the totality of virtue. Let us cultivate the sweet disposition that can be born only of compassion, all the while determined to stand firm in all of the Truth.

—Dub McClish
Denton, TX

THE CHRISTIAN'S HOPE

The hope, which a Christian possesses, is far greater in substance than mere wishful thinking. The writer of the Hebrews letter said, "faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1).

The apostle Paul wrote to the Romans, who had been "called to be saints":

For we are saved by hope; but hope that is seen is not hope; for what a man sees, why does he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we do not see, then we do with patience wait for it (Rom. 8:24–25).

That is why Christians base their hope on the substance of faith and their faith on evidence.

The word *hope* comes into comparison with such words as *desire*, *expect*, *anticipate*, *wait*, and *look for*. My hope is weak if these aspects of my hope are weak. The apostle Paul wrote, "But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly; wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared for them a city" (Heb. 11:16).

Again, "According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death" (Phi. 1:20).

Further:

For they themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come (I The. 1:9–10)

Finally, Peter wrote:

Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwells righteousness, wherefore, beloved, seeing that you look for such things, be diligent that you may be found of Him in peace (2 Pet. 3:13–14).

The word *hope* and comparable terms are used in the Bible to contrast it with despair. The apostle Paul wrote that the Ephesians were at one time "without Christ ... having no hope and without God in this world" (Eph. 2:12; cf. 1 The. 4:13). But he adds "now in Christ Jesus you...are made near by the blood of Christ" (Eph. 2:13). That is why the apostle was able to write to the Colossian brethren and say, "To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you and the hope of glory" (Col. 1:27).

The apostle Paul continues to admonish the Galatians, "Let us not be weary in well doing for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Gal. 6:9). He is saying to them, in farm language, that in preparing the soil for the sowing of the seed and spending the growing season in watering and cultivating the crop, that they should not become weary and faint, because their hope will be realized in the fall at the time of gathering and harvesting the produce.

The Christian's hope becomes "an anchor of the soul, both sure and stead-

fast" (Heb. 6:19). When Robert Owen, the atheist, visited Alexander Campbell at his farm in Bethany, Virginia, Campbell took him out in the pasture to show him his prized cattle. Owen pointed out one of the calves and said to Campbell, "I am just like that animal, neither of us has any fear of death." "Yes," replied Campbell, "but neither of you has hope."

N.B. Hardeman would describe Hell to his Bible classes at Freed-Hardeman College as "a place where hope is a stranger and mercy has never been found." The Christian's hope is built upon our desire and expectation that God can and will keep His promise (Tit. 1:2). The apostle Paul wrote that love "believes all things (and) hopes all things" (1Cor. 13:7). The apostle Peter encourages us to "sanctify the Lord God in [y]our hearts, and be ready always to give an answer to every one that asks you a reason of the hope that is in you with gentleness and respect" (1 Pet. 3:15). It is surely true that our hope is deepened when it is challenged, and we are able to defend our hope against all questions.

—Adron Doran
Deceased

“AND DEAR GOD, PLEASE HELP ME TO GROW...”

Those words, often uttered in prayer, make up a proper request. We all should desire to be stronger spiritually (2 Pet. 3:18). We should indeed long for growth (1 Pet. 2:1ff). Let us examine this prayer request, as well as our attitude and efforts toward spiritual growth.

What would you think of a man who prayed, "God, please help me not to lose my job," and then that same man slept in and was late to work every day? I have heard both men and women who say they want to be stronger spiritually. I have heard some say they want to know the Bible better. I have heard some folks piously sing, "More, More About Jesus." And then I have seen the very same souls skip Bible classes on Sunday and Wednesday. Any wonder why there is no growth? When one's attendance at worship assemblies is "hit and miss," then that person will exhibit spiritual stagnation.

When a tree in the orchard does not grow, we give it extra attention. When a Christian does not grow, we try to give him or her some extra attention as concerned brethren. After all, we have an obligation to build up each other: "So then let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another" (Rom. 14:19). Your brethren cannot help you grow if you do not engage in really challenging, serious Bible study. Some brothers and sisters have been in the church for 10 years or more and have never yet made 10 pages of study notes. Casual reading of the Bible is not Bible study.

We cannot edify you if you are not in the assembly of the saints on a regular basis. If students in public school attended like some of my brethren attend Bible classes and the worship assembly, they would be charged with truancy. We cannot help you grow if you persist in saying, "This is not a convenient time" or employing similar excuses.