

Practical Bible Principles for Living

God's Commands Are Not Options

By J.L. Caldwell, Pastor
New Jerusalem Baptist Cathedral



The Ten commandments are the basis of Hebrew Law. Four of them have to do with our attitude toward God; six have to do with our attitude toward our fellow man. During Jesus' ministry, the Jews had all but forgotten, or had chosen to forget, God's basic instruction to them. In order to facilitate the Jews remembering the Ten commandments, Jesus condensed them into two: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with All thy Heart and Soul and Strength and Mind; and then, Love your Neighbor as Yourself."

These Commandments were not intended to be yokes of bondage for the Israelites, but a wise provision for God's people to enable them to enter a life of joyful fellowship with their Creator God. We must take note of the fact that all of the Commandments are repeated in the New Testament with the exception of the fourth Commandment. Remember the Sabbath Day to Keep it Holy. The reason may be that Jesus knew that after the Cross, the Christian world would eventually begin to worship on Sunday. This does not in any way invalidate Saturday, or any other day of the week as a worship day. The fact of the matter is that Christians were not meant to operate under old Testament law. At any rate, all Christians, or believers in God, are expected to obey all Commandments.

Reverence for God is the basis of the Ten Commandments. Jesus indicated that He considered it to be man's most basic approach to God and made it the first petition in the Lord's prayer: Hallowed Be Thy Name. Jesus shows that God's interpretation of the Commandments is more strict than that of the Jews. The Ten Commandments represent the highest level of morality which God wants Children to follow. From this Love is the love and tops all (Matthew 22:37-39).

During Jesus' ministry, the Jews had all but "waxed down" God's Ten commandments to the "Decalogue." In a sense Jesus' ministry held the feet of the Jews to the fire in order for them to see that they were living a sham religion.

The Old Testament Bible bears record of such. The New Testament is God's latest Will for His children. "I come to give you life and to give it to you more abundantly" (John 10:10). The Bible teaches that we should not become weary in well doing. It is an error for any Christian to think that he/she is, in a sense, working for the Lord. We are taught in a practical sense, that we never work for the Lord, but in reality, we praise Him and affirm Him as our Creator God when we obey Him. "Obedience is better than sacrifice (work). And we are not without help. I Peter 1:2 tells us that we are helped to obedience by God's Holy Spirit. Otherwise, we would not be able to obey Him on our own. Our own personal experience of failure has shown us this is true.

There would be some Christians more inspired to faithfully obey, if God automatically sent them a thousand dollars a day, just as He fed the Hebrews in the Wilderness for forty years. These same Christians have yet to value the possibility of eternal life more than financial gain. Are we not emended by scriptures, "What would it mean to a man if he gained the whole world and lost his own soul in the process."

Yes, we get tired of going to church, singing in the choir. Yes, we get tired of going to mid-week prayer service, and church programs, not to mention giving the church our hard earned money. All

of this, and God at times seems not to care. It seems that we are always begging God for our upkeep, at least until we get tired of begging and waiting for the blessings to come. Then we take matters into our own hands and begin to devalue God's holy Commandments and may even dare Him to get on our case about our taking over our own lives. You see, God does not react to our foolishness as an angry person would do. He does not have to. The fact of the matter is, whatever judgements come to us as the result of our disobedience are already built into the act of disobedience itself. And the unwanted consequences will eventually raise their ugly heads in our lives. If you accidentally or intentionally put your hand on a hot stove, it will get burned, the consequence of such an act is built into the act.

Again, we do this to ourselves and God had nothing to do with it; just as He told Adam what would happen if he ate of the tree of life (a test). Adam, for whatever reason, decided on his own to take a bite. And now you know the rest of the story.

All of this has to do with obeying God's commandments with our freewill, which He has given us as a gift. The Commandments are for us to do or not do, the choice is truly ours to make. We must remember this! What this all boils down to is the fact God's Holy Commandments are not optional to Christians!

Today there are Christians who are doing the very same thing and need to be held, or held themselves, accountable to God's commandments. There is that subconscious belief among some Christians that God will not hold them accountable for breaking any of the His Commandments. There is an attempt on the part of some worldly forces to put forth the view that God, if He is real, is slowly becoming a power not to be respected. Given all of the negative events happening in the world today, the belief still exists that God is dead or nonexistent. The fact remains that we cannot see thunder, wind and lightning on a beautiful, clear day. However, when the conditions are right, these elements come forth with power and force and no one can stop them. In short, we then will only be able to grin and bear it when the storm comes upon us.

One can see God's forthcoming judgement, operating like an on-coming heart attack. You've been feeling good for years with health check-ups and you are confident that all is well. Then two weeks after having been given the "physical okay" from the doctor, suddenly and without warning, your heart stops and you are no more. First of all, one must understand that God had nothing to do with this tragic ending. The person did it to himself by not obeying the great commandments which carry with them life and death. How often have we heard the Bible say to each of us, "The soul which sins, dies."

God's word to be obedient brings us life, eternal life. God cannot make a holy nation out of a people who will not obey His Command-

Durham Chamber of Commerce Accepting Leadership Durham 2004 Applications

The Durham Chamber of Commerce is accepting applications for its Leadership Durham 2004 program. For the past 31 years, Leadership Durham has trained and inspired over 800 area citizens to become more involved in Chamber, community and government affairs.

Through face-to-face meetings with influential area leaders and on-site visits to local institutions, class participants gain insight into community issues such as public education, human needs, local government, law enforcement, economic development and health care.

Applications for Leadership Durham 2004 are due by 5 p.m. on Friday, October 10. The selection process is highly competitive and is

based upon demonstrated leadership ability, evidence of community involvement, willingness to assume greater community responsibilities and recommendations. Approximately 20-30 people are accepted annually.

Leadership Durham is a six-month program that runs from late November to early June. Classes meet every other Thursday (excluding holidays) for a total of 13 full-day sessions. Regular attendance is expected; if you miss more than three sessions, you will not be able to graduate from the program. Leadership Durham commences with a mandatory orientation on Thursday, November 20, 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. at Treyburn Country Club. In addition to the sessions, class members will adopt community service projects that vary in length depending on the scope. Projects will be discussed in detail at the orientation.

The cost of the program is \$950. The fee includes breakfasts and lunches, tours, materials, group transportation, receptions and a graduation ceremony. A \$100 non-refundable deposit is due by orientation on November 20. The remainder of the balance is due by December 15. Please contact Jack Boyd for information on available scholarships and payment options.

Leadership Durham is an excellent way to become an active and influential force in our community. William A. Kalkhof, President of Downtown Durham Inc., said, "Leadership Durham taught me that if I wanted to get involved, I could make a difference — and it taught me how to get involved." Kalkhof was a member of Leadership Durham Class of 1989.

For an application, brochure and additional information, visit the Durham Chamber of Commerce Web site at

www.durhamchamber.org/members/leadership.html. You may also contact Jack Boyd at the Chamber at 682-2133 or jboyd@durhamchamber.org.

Shaw's Woodard Named National Player Of the Week

Shaw University cornerback Shawn Woodard was named Division II Player of the Week by D2Football.com.

Woodard (6-0, 180), a sophomore from Rock Hill, SC recorded four interceptions, five passes defensed, two solo tackles, one forced fumble and one fumble recovery in the 21-7 victory Edward Waters in the Willie E. Gary Classic in Jacksonville, FL. Woodard was also named CIAA Defensive Back of the Week for the second time this year.

Woodard leads the nation in interceptions (7).

Note: Shaw nose tackle Walif Campbell was named honorable mention D2Football Player of the Week as he recorded 10 tackles (8 solo) and four tackles for loss. Campbell is amongst the nation's leaders in tackles for loss.



Trans Fats

By Suzzette Goldmon
Family and Consumer Educator
North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service

Saturated fat, unsaturated fat, now trans fats? Many people are asking what are trans fats and are they a new kind of fat. Trans fats are fats produced when other oils are changed for cooking purposes. This is not a new kind of fat that has just been created or discovered. Trans fats have been around for a while, however it has received a lot of attention recently that has caused it to be thrust into the forefront of nutritional studies.

Trans fatty acids or trans fats are created when liquid, unsaturated oils such as soybean oil are converted into a solid fat. During this process hydrogen is added to the oil to create a solid fat that can be used for cakes, biscuits, pie crusts and many other foods. Adding hydrogen will change the consistency and increase the shelf life of the fat. As a result of the hydrogenation process, all of the fat molecules are not completely converted or changed, therefore creating the trans fats. Some trans fats occur naturally in foods such as milk.

However the main way it is created is through the chemical process to produce solid fats from liquid oils. Cooking does not create trans fats. The solid fats containing trans fats are typically found in the form of shortening, margarines and many convenient and snack foods.

The reason trans fats are important nutritionally is that they present some serious health concerns. Consuming high levels of trans fats can raise your total cholesterol. It can also increase your "bad" cholesterol or low-density lipoprotein (LDL) as well as lower your "good" or high-density lipoprotein (HDL.) By affecting the cholesterol levels in a negative way, consuming large amounts of trans fat could increase your risk for heart disease. Just as many other food sources, too much of it can cause adverse health consequences. Even though trans fats could increase your risk for heart disease, it is controllable.

The point to remember for controlling trans fats is to eat in moderation. Soon nutrition labels on food will include the amount of trans fats along with saturated and total fat content.

For additional information contact: Suzzette Shaw Goldmon, NC Cooperative Extension, Durham County Center, 721 Foster Street, 560-0525.

<http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/durham/>
Suzzette_Goldmon@ncsu.edu

History of Sycamore's in Illinois' first black church

By Chris Rickert

SYCAMORE, Ill. (AP) - Members of the Israel of God's Church gathered recently in Sycamore for their annual conference, their 95th since the church's founder arrived in Sycamore and set up what is almost certainly the first black church in DeKalb County.

In between baptisms, services and church business meetings, the 500 or so people who attended were able to visit a small museum across the street from the church. Until 1979, the building housed one of the denomination's pastors.

Known simply as The Museum, it was set up shortly after the Rev. Samuel Parker died at the age of 97. It contains hundreds of photos, newspaper articles, plaques and other artifacts from the church's history.

That history began when the denomination's founder, Apostle George Washington Flowers, a former slave, arrived in Sycamore in 1907, years after founding his first church in Chicago, recounted church member Nathan Thomas. Thomas' father, 101-year-old Joseph Thomas, is bishop at the Sycamore church today.

Church members refer to Flowers as the "visible founder," because while God is believed to be the true founder of the denomination, Flowers was the one visible to people and carried God's message.

Today, the church has 16 congregations located as far away as Los Angeles and Arkansas, but primarily in Midwestern cities such as Racine, Wis., and Detroit.

Since Flowers' arrival in Sycamore, the church's spiritual mission has had an important social component as well. Its members welcomed blacks new to the area during a time in which, according to Nathan Thomas, they were essentially not allowed to live anywhere but along North Street, where the church is located.

"The house has always been a place for people who needed," the younger Thomas said, referring to a home the church owns next door to the museum. "Because at that time we couldn't live anywhere else."

The church owns 14 properties along a stretch of North Street, including a dormitory where conference visitors stayed, an apartment building where Nathan himself lives and a five-acre campground that serves as the home of the church's summer camp.

Nathan recalls that the church built a house two doors down from the museum for a professor from Africa who was teaching at Northern Illinois University in the early 1960s. The professor came to the church after being turned away by every other landlord he approached, all of whom claimed to have just rented out the apartment the professor was interested in.

"For the people in that neighborhood, it was very important," DeKalb County historian Phyllis Kelly said of the church.

Kelly noted that the neighborhood is located near the former Anaconda Wire company, where many of those who lived in the neighborhood worked during World Wars I and II.

Thomas said the church had something of an informal agreement with Anaconda to provide workers for the factory if the factory would provide jobs. Young black men would then come to Sycamore to work in the factory, and at the same time train to become ministers in the church.

Thomas said the museum has never had a formal relationship with the city or local tourism groups to publicize its collection, although he said they would be welcomed to do so.

IT'S BEING TREATED WITHOUT RESPECT. IT'S HAVING TO FIGHT FOR EVERYTHING. IT'S NOT GETTING THE SAME CHANCES. IT'S BEING LEFT OUT, YOU DON'T COUNT. IT'S DEATH.

It's the brutal truth of 33 million people trapped in the state of American poverty. A bitterly real place where every 43 seconds, another child is born. Where every day, one out of every six children in America reaches for a lack of opportunities. Where every year spent adds to that child's risk of failing in school, repeating grades, dropping out, never graduating. But for some children, those bleak prospects are short. Because, every 53 minutes in America, another child is freed from the impact of poverty.

POVERTY.
America's forgotten state.

Catholic Campaign for Human Development
1-800-945-4243
www.povertyusa.org

To view photos and words from Americans living in poverty, visit www.povphoto.org