

God's commandments add to life's enjoyment

By T.P. ALEXANDER
Central Newspaper Services

God's expectations made plain (Deuteronomy 5:6-21)

"I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the Land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before Me." Deuteronomy 5:6-1)

The people of Israel had been slaves in Egypt for generations. They had no experience with government and no understanding of how to form a nation.

Then, suddenly they were free. Their bondage was behind them, but so were their homes and their means of making a living.

Imagine how hard it would be to mould some two of three million such people into a nation. But the people of Israel had one great advantage: they were God's people.

If they followed God in faith, trust and obedience they would encounter no appreciable difficulties. But isn't that a universal truism for devout Christian followers?

Christ did not promise Christian people a "rose garden" existence - He did, however, promise us His blessings, to those who in obedience follow Him in faith.

The Lord and you (Deuteronomy 5:6-11)

"Thou shalt have no other gods before Me." (Verse 7)

Before revealing the con-

tents of His law, God revealed Himself and reminded the Israelites who He was. He was the Lord their God. He is the only God who really exists.

First, the people were reminded of God's power. Their release from Egypt had been accomplished by a series of mighty powerful acts from God, or miracles.

Secondly, the people were reminded of God's goodness to them. He had liberated them from generations of cruel slavery. This alone, in simple gratitude, should have moved the Israelites to receive God's law and obey it gladly.

"I am the Lord thy God...thou shalt have no gods before Me."

Jesus gave us other warnings concerning worshipping idols. In Matthew's gospel He said, "Ye cannot serve God and

mammon. To the Colossian Christians Paul added "that covetousness is idolatry."

We are to flee from idolatry in any form.

"Thou shalt not make thee any graven images - and further, thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them."

God is to be revered as being the only true God - His name shall not be taken in vain.

Sometimes when I am out in public places on business, I hear men, and sometimes women, repeatedly using God's name in swear words. It produces a chilling effect on me and I get away as soon as possible.

In my mind I wonder if they know what they are doing, and how serious a matter it is.

The Sabbath and you (Deuteronomy 5:12-15)

"Keep the Sabbath day to sanctify it, as the Lord thy God hath commanded. Six days thou shalt labor, and do thy work...but the seventh day is the Sabbath day of the Lord thy God." (Verses 13-14)

As we look out upon the American scene we see a warped interpretation of this commandment.

Why did God set aside one day out of the week when we were to give that day over to rest and worship?

I grew up under the tutelage of a mom and dad who practiced this commandment

whole heartedly. The only work permitted on Sunday was feeding the livestock.

Afterwards, we got cleaned up to go to Sunday School and church. My wife was raised in the same manner as I, therefore it became normal for us to raise our children the same way.

The word "honor" comes into play here. When we keep His commands it is an act of honoring God's precepts, and harkening to those things He commands us to do.

Here is a thought to remember - God's commandments are designed to add to, not take away our enjoyment of life.

(Lesson based on the International Sunday School Lessons)

Services

Hertford United Methodist

Hertford United Methodist Church offers small group ministries. A small group is defined as 6-15 people meeting in someone's home or a church to pray, study, discuss and get to know one another. They meet for no more than 90 minutes each week for a minimum of 13 weeks.

The following small groups will be meeting on Sunday evenings in the church at 7:15 beginning Sept. 20: I and II Timothy—Learning to Thrive in a Hostile World; Curing Affluenza—a video-based discussion group using a series by Tony Compolo. The video segment will be shown during "Sunday Night Live" at 6 p.m. in the sanctuary.

Two small groups will meet during the day. They are:

Genesis for Today on Wednesdays, 10-11:30 p.m. in the church library with Myrtle Virginia Thompson.

I and II Timothy—Learning to Thrive in a Hostile World, beginning on Tuesday, Sept. 22 at 9:30 a.m. in the church library with Vern and Joyce Hammons.

Free child care is provided on Sunday evenings for children 4 and under.

For information, call the church office at 426-5467.

Poole's Grove Baptist

Revival services will at Poole's Grove Baptist Church on Sunday with the Rev. John Shannon and New Haven Baptist Church in charge. Speaker for Monday-Friday services will be Rev. George Munden, pastor of Galatia Baptist Church. Music will be rendered by area choirs each night.

Woodland United Methodist

Woodland United Methodist Church will hold a bazaar on Oct. 3, 11 a.m.-1 p.m., featuring a country store, crafts and a chicken salad cold plate for \$5. For lunch tickets, eat-in or take-out, call Paige Eure at 264-2427 (work) or 264-2243 (home).

United Methodist Women

The United Methodist Women of the Elizabeth City District will hold their annual District Day Apart on Saturday, Sept. 26 at United Methodist Church, Kitty Hawk. Registration begins at 9:30 a.m. and the program at 10 o'clock. Lunch and a nursery for pre-school children will be provided. Guest speaker will be the Rev. Jon Strother, Hertford United Methodist Church.

Children need help of guardians ad litem

At the hospital a newborn baby girl is withdrawing from cocaine. Her homeless mother has given birth to two other cocaine-addicted babies. Both were removed from the mother's care because they became severely malnourished.

A 10-year-old girl came home from school with a mate requesting that she be treated for lice. The child's mother brutally cut the shoulder-length hair to the scalp, gashing the girl's head. The girl returned to school in tears with bruises all over her body.

Each year thousands of children in North Carolina are thrust into the court system through no fault of their own. Some are victims of violence, psychological torment or sexual abuse. Others have been neglected or even abandoned

by their own parents. Most of them are frightened and confused.

These children need volunteers to serve as guardians ad litem. A guardian ad litem is a trained volunteer appointed by the juvenile court to represent the best interest of an abused, neglected or dependent child. The GAL is paired with an attorney advocate to represent and be a voice for the child in court.

There is a need for volunteers in this district, especially in Gates County.

The next guardian ad litem training for Camden, Chowan, Gates, Perquimans and Pasquotank counties begins this month. Please call the GAL office at 331-4755 for additional information and an application.

Perry awarded scholarship

Kamani Perry of Perquimans County was awarded a scholarship from the North Carolina Division of Veterans Affairs. Perry was

among 11 Albemarle area students to receive scholarships available to children of certain disabled, deceased or POW/MIA veterans.

Church news notices

Written notices for the services column are due on Friday at 5 p.m. Please make sure the release contains the date and time of the service(s) or activity.

Notices may be mailed,

faxed or brought to the office by the deadline.

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We would like to thank everyone who said a prayer, sent a card, sent food, visited, called or sent a gift while Diana was at Duke Hospital & since returning home. We are so thankful to be part of such a caring community.
Buck, Claudia & Diana Bunch

Open Letter
Dear Friends,
When you attend the funeral, you help the bereaved. Just by being there you let them know you care; that even though there has been a death, friends like you remain. After the funeral your bereaved friends still need to know you are there to listen and to care. Telephone, visit, drop by with food, assure them you have not forgotten them.
Respectfully,
W. Larry Swindell
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The "Word" for the Week
From My Heart
S. Keith Vaughan, Pastor
The Hertford Baptist Church

I recently read that psychologists estimate that the average individual has as many as 700 occasions to speak to someone each day. In the course of those conversations a talkative person uses 12,000 sentences and about 100,000 words. Think about it ---100,000 words in one day!

That little story reminded me of a passage of Scripture written by James. In the third chapter, James says, "If anyone is never at fault in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to keep his whole body in check." The apostle also warns that "the tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell."

What destruction can be wrought in a single day by just one person with his 100,000 words! But also, what a blessing! It all depends on how they're used. It's true that damaging consequences can result from the tongue's misuse, but it's also true that much good can be accomplished if it is used properly. The important question is, how will your tongue be used today? To speak words that bless the Lord, encourage others, and witness for Christ? Or will it be involved in gossiping, judging, and criticizing? If during a 24-hour period everything we said we recorded and then played back for us to hear, I'm afraid it would be rather shocking and embarrassing.

So watch what you say, Whether you're a talkative person who uses 100,000 words a day, or the silent type who gets by with only 10,000, be sure you make them count for good. Why not use your words this week to be an encouragement you give may be just the ingredient the Holy Spirit needs to speak to the heart of a family member or friend.

Worship in the church of your choice this week with your family. Your life will be richly blessed.

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