

Oak Grove Church of Christ Newsletter - 2023.01.22

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Sermon recordings

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Speaker-AM: Nate Vick

Title: Godly Leaders Part 1

Recording:

tinyurl.com/NateLeader1

Speaker-PM: Nate Vick

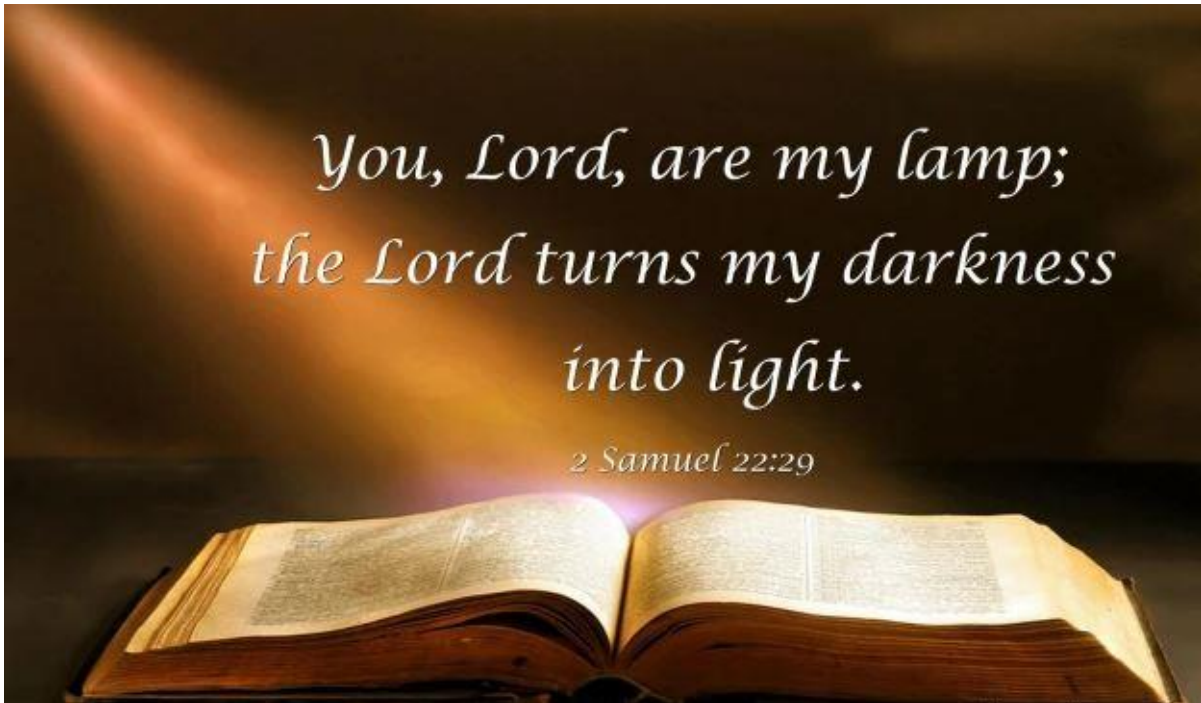
Title: Godly Leaders Part 2

Recording:

tinyurl.com/NateLeader2

*You, Lord, are my lamp;
the Lord turns my darkness
into light.*

2 Samuel 22:29




Become as a Child, By W. I. Helterbrand

Jesus said in Matthew 18:3-4, “Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.”

Many people believe that to understand the Bible, to know God’s will, a person has to put themselves through the hardship of academics and lofty thoughts. To some, God’s word seems silly. Some believe it must be interpreted to be coherent. The common problem among these lines of thought is one of humility and meekness. Don’t get me wrong, theological and philosophical study have their place, and a well-put-together argument can be a useful tool in the Lord’s work, but just to understand and do what God desires of us requires humility and meekness. Just like a child. Paul told the Corinthians that he “did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom,” but rather he was determined to only preach “Jesus Christ and Him crucified” (1Cor. 2:1-2).

If we are looking for lofty thoughts, theologies, philosophies, and academic speech, we might overlook the simplicity of the gospel that we are called to believe. 1Corinthians 1:21 says, “For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.” Understanding and following Jesus requires belief, meekness, and humility, not a degree in theology or philosophy.

So, humble yourself. Become as a child and live out what Paul commands of us in Ephesians 5:17 “do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.” Do not be afraid to lower yourself to where you can accept and enjoy the simplicity of what Jesus requires of us.



Idle Words, 1/21/23 by Craig Thomas

"Help, LORD, for the godly man ceases to be, for the faithful disappear from among the sons of men. They speak falsehood to one another; with flattering lips and with a double heart they speak. May the LORD cut off all flattering lips, the tongue that speaks great things; who have said, 'With our tongue we will prevail; our lips are our own; who is lord over us?'

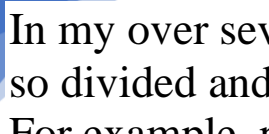
'Because of the devastation of the afflicted, because of the groaning of the needy, now I will arise,' says the LORD; 'I will set him in the safety for which he longs.'

The words of the LORD are pure words; as silver tried in a furnace on the earth, refined seven times. You, O LORD, will keep them; You will preserve him from this generation forever. The wicked strut about on every side when vileness is exalted among the sons of men" (Psalms 12).

In Psalm 12 David laments at the unruliness of the wicked and especially the unruliness of their tongues (i.e., words, speech). The speech of such people is described as:

- using duplicitous flattery (Psalms 12:2),
- boasting prideful things (Psalms 12:3),
- using one's tongue as a weapon (Psalms 12:4), and
- using the tongue to oppress others (Psalms 12:5).

David's description of these wicked people provides a perfectly accurate description of many in our society today.



In my over seventy-year pilgrimage on this earth, I have never seen our society so divided and so much venomous speech be spewed out on a nonstop basis. For example, politicians and others are constantly and without a legitimate basis accused of being “Hitler!,” a “racist,” a “misogynist,” a “fascist!” etc. I try to keep up with current events, but it can be very depressing. I have several news sites on the internet that I check semi-regularly. However, I must severely limit my time there because it is downright depressing given all the awful things people are saying. James rightly said, “And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell” (James. 3:6).

It is obvious from Psalm 12 that a lack of “tongue control” is not new. David experienced three thousand years ago exactly what we experience today. However, our modern (?) society has taken it to a whole new level. I firmly believe these ugly thoughts and attitudes betrayed by today’s speech were always there in many people’s minds. But the internet and social media are now providing an outlet for such acrimony, bitterness, and animosity. Read the comment section of any internet news story these days to see what I mean. The degree of anonymity offered by the internet contributes to this problem. People can hide behind their computer screens as they rip and tear others to shreds, as they “bite and devour” one another (Galatians 5:15). There are little if any consequences. But God sees! God knows! Some of the most frightening words in the Bible were spoken by Jesus when He said:

“... out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things. But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned” (Matthew 12:34-37).

“My brethren, these things ought not to be so. Does a spring send forth fresh water and bitter from the same opening? Can a fig tree, my brethren, bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Thus no spring yields both salt water and fresh” (James. 3:10-12).

We need to think of these things before we speak or hit the “Send” button!