

Oak Grove Church of Christ Newsletter - 2025.12.14

Website: oakgrovecofc.org

Facebook: facebook.com/oakgrovecofc

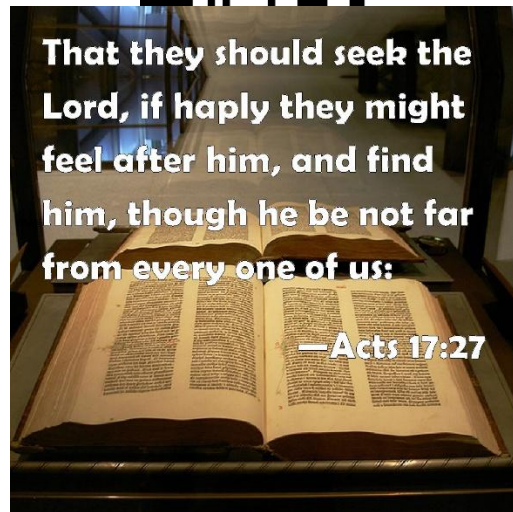
Sermon recordings

Scan the QR code below with your phone's cam, or visit oakgrovecofc.org/sermons.

Speaker-AM: Jamie Rinehart

Title: Worship

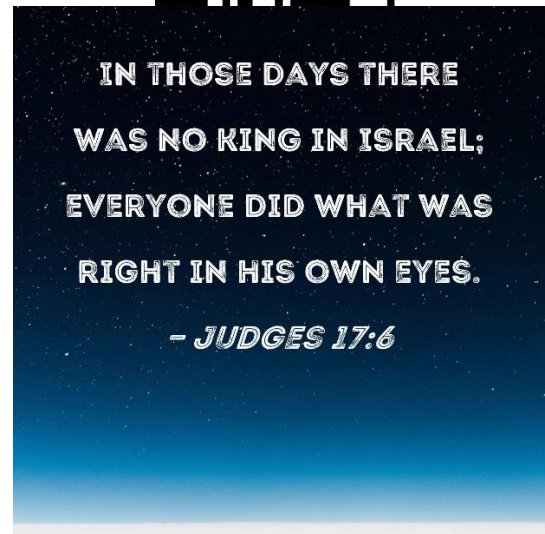
Recording:



Speaker-PM: Steve Helterbrand

Title: Coda

Recording:





Articles

According to the Rules, 12/15/2025 by Terry Wane Benton

Paul said that in athletics no one is crowned unless they “compete according to the rules” (II Timothy 2:5). Being “strong in the grace” that is in Christ (II Timothy 2:1) means we are diligent to operate our lives of faith “according to the rules” unless we don’t care if we are ‘disqualified’ from receiving the prize.

Would we call it “legalism” if an athlete tried to make sure he was abiding by the rules? Would we shame the athlete who studied the rulebook to make sure he was abiding by the rules? If all the other athletes were breaking the rules, should you act like it is no big deal? Should you join in the rule-breaking? When the judges look at the rule-breaker and also consider the conscientious rule-keeper, will the rule-breaker get the prize over the rule-keeper? Will the judges rule in favor of the rule breaker because he judges that he cannot reward rule-keepers because they are awful legalists? Should rule keepers be rejected, while rule breakers be rewarded?

Paul knew he could become “disqualified” for the prize unless he disciplined himself to strive for the prize according to the rules. (I Corinthians 9:24-27). See, true grace “teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts” (Titus 2:11f). Grace is not a license to sin (Jude 3-4), and one is not allowed to “continue in sin that grace may abound” (Romans 6:1ff). Grace teaches us to be servants of righteousness. If we do not abide in what grace teaches, we do not receive the blessings of grace or stay qualified for the prize. Do not let modern teachers turn the grace of God into licentiousness. You must abide by the rules of grace. The prize is more than worth the effort to be qualified according to the rules and to stay qualified according to the rules.

The Two Evils, 12/15/2025 by David Gibson

Isn’t it sad? The way people seek after what proves counterproductive, totally illogical, and ultimately defeating.

“Has a nation changed its gods, even though they are no gods? But my people have changed their glory for that which does not profit. Be appalled, O heavens, at this; be shocked, be utterly desolate, declares the LORD, for my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water” (Jeremiah 2:11-13). Forsaking the Fountain for broken cisterns. How foolish!

In our day, don’t we see broken cisterns all around us: materialism, sinful pleasures, power grabs, prestige-seeking, acceptance by the in-crowd, stimulants providing a high that ultimately enslaves. The author of Ecclesiastes reviews the various pursuits he had tried but found to be disappointing dead ends. It seems that every generation falls for the same old follies that captivated previous generations. The same old sins, the same ultimate emptiness. “. . . there is nothing new under the sun” (Ecclesiastes 1:9). Satan keeps hawking his wares, and people keep buying and buying and buying.

But “the fountain of living waters” keeps flowing and flowing and flowing for all who will drink: “The Spirit and the Bride say, ‘Come’ And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price” (Revelation 22:17).

The offer still stands.