

# SWYPGNOTES

2009/2010

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## Life in Christ South Wales Young People's Group

God Willing

Image: The Sea of Galilee

A life in Christ is one of total dedication to God. In SWYPG this year, we will consider many different aspects of life and discuss how we can live in accordance with God's principles. We will firstly consider Baptism - the first vital step to a new life in Christ. We will then see how Bible study can give us practical instruction for life. Furthermore, we will examine our relationship with the state and the powers of this world. Temptation can affect our walk in Christ, so we will also discuss how to conquer these in our lives. We will also consider how our walk in Christ affects our decisions concerning our employment. In the ecclesia, we

have a responsibility to care for those around us. We will look at how we can glorify God through good works. Our intimate relationships and marriages must also be in accordance with God's principles and emulate the type of Christ and the ecclesia. The principles of how we spend our leisure time will also be discussed. And finally, our fellowship with each other is a vital part of our walk in Christ, as this is how we share and strengthen one another in our shared hope. This booklet aims to provide a brief overview of these topics. It is hoped that these studies will help us live a more dedicated life in Christ.



# SOUTH WALES YOUNG PEOPLES GROUP

## LIFE IN CHRIST



When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

Col. 3:4

# Talk 1: Baptism - Bro. Leen Ritmeyer

## 'The Answer of a Good Conscience toward God'

9/10/09

Baptism is essential to salvation. We all need to be baptised in order to obtain eternal life.

*"Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." (John 3:5)*

When we are baptised we put off the old man, and dedicate our lives in the service of God. It is not a light commitment, but one that will last our whole lives. Romans 6 is all about the subject of baptism. It says in verse 3 that we have been 'baptised into his death'. By being baptised we are associating ourselves with the life *and* death of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The principle of baptism has been around since the law, though not in the form that we are now familiar with. Circumcision acted as the sign of a commitment to God. In Colossians 2:11 we are told that we are:

*"...circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ".*

The children of Israel were to cut off their foreskins as a symbol of cutting off of the flesh. Baptism requires the exact same thing. When we are baptised we are to cut off fleshly thinking and raise our thoughts to a spiritual plane. Baptism is simply an outward display of this commitment, and is essential if we want to enter into God's kingdom.

For the unbaptised, baptism is the first step. It comes after a realisation that without God we are nothing. It comes after the realisation that we are sinners and that we need the grace of God in order to have salvation. However, it must be a decision that we *want* to undertake, not something that we are pressurised into doing, whether that is directly or from peer-pressure. We must *understand* the gospel, and *believe* it! If we don't have both of these things, then baptism is just a meaningless ceremony.

A common response to baptism is 'I'm not good enough'. Well that's the point! None of us are 'good' enough. We *all* sin and fall short of God's glory (Rom 3:23). But it is His *mercy* that allows us a path to salvation, and that path begins with baptism.

For the baptised, baptism is just the beginning. Our baptisms symbolised the start of our discipleship, one that we must strive at every day of our lives. Romans 6:11 says:



# Talk 2: Bible Study - Bro. Stephen Palmer

## 'Study to Show Thyself Approved Unto God'

6/11/09

### What is the Bible?

All Scripture is God-breathed or expired by God (2 Tim 3:16). Scripture is not in any way the product of man's mind or wisdom. God caused the prophets to speak or write the words which he wanted them to by "moving" them using his power, the Holy Spirit (2 Pet 1:19-21). For this reason words which were written by the inspired writers are described for us as having been said by the Holy Spirit, e.g. David (Acts 1:16), Isaiah (Acts 28:25) and Jeremiah (Heb 3:7). The Holy Spirit is of course God's power, so this is equivalent to saying that the words of Scripture, although written down by David, Isaiah or Jeremiah were actually spoken by God. God has provided the Bible for us, to reveal himself and his purpose that we may change the way we think and behave.

### Why should we study the Bible?

To answer this question it is beneficial for us to continue looking at the passage we have already mentioned in regard to inspiration, 2 Timothy 3.

2 Timothy 3:15-17

*"And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works"*

#### **"Wise unto salvation"**

By reading the Bible we can become wise, and as a result of this wisdom we can be saved from eternal death. It is worth emphasising that the Bible can only make us wise unto salvation *"through faith which is in Christ Jesus"*. We can never save ourselves by just reading the Bible and doing our best to follow what we find within it. We have all sinned and fallen short of God's glory (Rom 3:23), so we need grace and forgiveness. Ephesians 2:8-9 tells us, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast". If we think that doing Bible study as a purely academic exercise makes us automatically holier or better people and more deserving of salvation then we should banish those ideas immediately.

#### **"Profitable...for doctrine"**

Doctrine is the word for teaching or learning, so God has communicated his message to us in order to teach us the things we need to know. We can learn from it in many ways, for example through reading direct commandments or reading about the lives of people that the Bible tells us about.

**"Profitable...for reproof"**

This word only occurs twice in the NT, so by looking at its other occurrence we can get a better understanding of how it is used and what its meaning is. In Hebrews 11:1 we read, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the *evidence* of things not seen". So in Hebrews the word *elegchos* is translated as "evidence". Although there is a possibility that the word in Timothy could still have an equivalence with the English word "reproof", it is more likely that we should understand the word "reproof" in Timothy as the word 'evidence' or 'conviction'. So the Bible is also profitable for helping us prove that God exists and that the Bible really is his revelation to us.

**"Profitable...for correction"**

This is a very valuable aspect of scripture for us to look into. The Greek word is made up of two words, *epi* and *anorthoō* and seems to be to do with a re-straightening. So we can use the Bible in order to correct and change the way we live our lives, and in a loving way, we can also correct and change our brethren and sisters to help us all to become more like Jesus and manifest the glory of God.

**"Profitable...for instruction in righteousness"**

This very simply tells us that the Bible teaches us to become righteous. We know that God is righteous (Rom 10:3), and we also know that Jesus is righteous (2 Pet 1:1). So by reading about God and his glory, his divine character (Exo 34:6), we can see what we need to try and live up to, and through Jesus who was "full of grace and truth" (John 1:14) we can see the divine character manifest in the flesh, the ultimate example of righteousness for us to live up to. Of course God also gives us guidance for our lives, telling us what we need to do to try and please him. We can learn from the scriptures that without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb 11:6), and we can learn that the way to remain undefiled before God is by visiting the fatherless and the widows and to keep ourselves unspotted from the world (Jam 1:27).

**"That the man of God may be perfect"**

This informs us that the final outcome of studying and reading the Bible is to become spiritually perfect. We know that in this life, as a result of our sinful nature, we cannot become completely perfect. But we know that when Jesus returns, those who are granted entry into his kingdom will be changed, they will become like Christ (1 John 3:2), we read that, "corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality" (1 Cor 15:53). God is able to make us perfect, he can change us. So the exhortation for us now is to read God's word and apply it to our lives to try and change our hearts and minds and endeavour to start the process of becoming perfect, a process which will be completed by God's grace at Christ's return.

**"Thoroughly furnished unto all good works"**

This is the point of Bible study and is very much like the previous point. Jesus tells us there is none good but one - God (Luke 18:19). God wants the

knowledge of his glory to cover the earth as the waters cover the sea (Hab 2:14). As we read in Exodus 33 and 34, God's glory is his character, his divine attributes. So by reading God's word, we can understand more about his character, and better manifest him, becoming more like Jesus, who was God manifest in the flesh (1 Tim 3:16). God wants to see fruit as a result of our Bible study, he wants to see good works, works which show his character.

### **How should we study the Bible?**

Many different methods are used to study the Bible with varying degrees of success. We need to remember why we are studying the Bible. We know that the aim of studying the Bible is that "the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works". Bible study is about change, about developing the mind of the Spirit, and becoming more like Jesus. This change in our mind and our faith has to manifest itself in works. It is no good knowing the theoretical intricacies in the books of the Bible if we do not understand the practical implications. We must be hearers *and* doers (Matt 7:24-29, Rom 2:13, Jam 1:22). This brings us on to our first suggestion on how to study the Bible:

#### **Practical application**

As we have suggested, the aim of Bible study is to change ourselves, to better manifest the character of Yahweh, which was shown to us in Jesus Christ, the Son of God. So what we read in Scripture is there to help us to do that. If the end result of all of this is going to be that God's glory fills the earth as the waters cover the sea then we need to understand exactly what God's glory is to try and change our minds to take on that character. Scripture is rich with examples of God being, "merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth", we need to seek these out and look at the way that God behaves, how pure and holy he is, and also how loving and gentle. This is what God wants to fill the earth with. So this is how we need to be!

#### **Context**

This is another fundamental cornerstone of Bible study, and one of the reasons why it is sometimes neglected during "study" is perhaps because of the nature of the word "study". We tend to separate the words "reading" and "study" as if they are two alien concepts. As we discussed earlier, God has given us his inspired word in order to help us change, to help us take on the mind of the Spirit, and we know that the Bible is profitable for lots of things. But we should not forget that it is a book, a book containing history, prophecy, poetry, music and letters. So we should read it like a book. That is not to say that we should read the whole thing cover to cover in one sitting, but we should read each passage in its context. We can get into difficulty if we try and isolate particular verses, or purely look at word links. This is of course something that some other denominations may have been guilty of in the past, and it inhibits true understanding as it does not allow us to look at the flow of a particular argument or dialogue.

## **Concordances**

Concordances can be very useful, but should be used with care. Frequently people place far too much reliance on what James Strong or Robert Young say a word means. We should not forget that they were both fallible humans and as a result, we should be wary of completely trusting the definitions contained in their concordances. The correct way to use a concordance is help you look up the other passages in which the word occurs (the way in which God uses the word). If we are interested to understand what God means by a particular word or phrase, we can look at where else it occurs and then, by looking at the context of those other passages, we can begin to get an idea of what God means by that word. A good recommendation is the concordance software E-Sword which is absolutely fantastic and free to download online ([www.e-sword.net](http://www.e-sword.net)).

## **Allusions and Quotations**

The word 'allusion' in relation to Bible study, on a basic level, is when one part of the Bible contains language taken from another part of the Bible in order to direct our attention back to the original passage. These may come in the form of similar words, phrases or similar circumstances. Allusions can very often help us understand the particular passage that we are reading, by leading us back to another passage. God seems to use this method to say to us "You will find help with your understanding here". However, we should be careful not to neglect the context of the original passage, as previously discussed. Quotations are also very useful, the New Testament writers very often quote from the Old Testament writers, and the Old Testament writers also quote from previous books in the Old Testament. These can help us to understand the passage that we are studying because God is giving us a signpost, telling us to go and look at this passage.

## **Questions**

1. Think of examples of characters in the Bible, both in the Old and New Testaments, who used their scriptural knowledge to help them in trials and temptations.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Follow through the theme of knowledge, understanding and wisdom in the Proverbs.



## Homosexuality

Homosexuality is becoming increasingly acceptable within today's society through the media and also through government legislation.

1. What does the bible say about homosexuality?

*See Lev 18v22, 20v13, Romans 1v26-27*

2. Clearly homosexuality is not acceptable in God's sight. However, neither is fornication, adultery or any other type of sin. Should we shun homosexuals? *See 1 Cor 5v9-13*

## Conscription

During World War I and World War II, the government introduced conscription; forcing men to join the armed services. This could happen in the future should the UK go to war on a large scale again.

1. In the past, when conscription has been introduced, people that refused to serve in the armed forces have been put on trial, being threatened with a prison sentence for disobeying the law. It is imperative that we are ready with a reason why we won't serve. List some of the reasons below. *See Ex 20v13, Romans 13v8-10*

# Talk 4: Temptation - Bro. Brian Woodall

## 'Escaping Temptation'

15/1/10

The Scriptures are quite clear that temptation arises from our own sinful nature, James writes “ Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempted he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death” (ch 1:13 to 15).

Jesus Christ is the only person who had the same nature as ourselves therefore faced temptations and yet did not sin. So in our talk we shall look at THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS CHRIST in the way he used THE OLD TESTAMENT (Deuteronomy chs 6 and 8) to combat temptation, particularly his example in the wilderness.

In order to grasp the meaning of temptation we shall look at the failure of ADAM AND EVE (Genesis 3:6) and how the delineation of that failure is a description used elsewhere in Scripture as THE WORLD which we are directed to “overcome (see 1 John 2: 15 to 17).

Because we are mortal and sinful the action of the Word of God produces a CONFLICT in our minds between God’s will and our own (Romans 7:14 to 25). We shall look at this spiritual battle, noting the importance of searching the Bible so that:

1. Make manifest the true nature of temptation.
2. Indicate the right and wrong courses of subsequent action.
3. Direct and guide into the right course.

The NECESSITY OF COMMITMENT will be considered. If we really desire to be the true servants of the Master, and to be less tempted by unsavoury situations and people it is vital that we “ seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness” (Matt 6:33). To that end we shall look at the need to find companionship and fellowship with those committed to the Gospel.

The description of the man or woman who will find a place in the Kingdom is “he that feareth God” (Acts 10:35). FEAR or REVERENCE OF GOD is a vital attitude, which can aid one to combat the evil of temptation; we shall draw from Scripture the practicable advice on this matter.

It is important to learn from past mistakes, sadly Israel failed to do this, note the encyclical nature of the sins of Israel in the book of Judges - sin, suffering, supplication and salvation (Judges 3:6,8,9 and 10). Once we succumb to the same temptations our consciences can be cauterized, in that situation our

future in the eternal purpose of God is in doubt if we do not repent and change our attitude and behaviour. We shall look at REPETITIVE SIN, and the scriptural advice. Finally we shall look at FORGIVENESS that God extends where we do fail.

### **Questions**

1. Think of examples of those who were faced with temptation. How did they overcome the temptation? How can we apply this in our lives?

2. How did Christ overcome His temptation in the wilderness?

3. Reflect on the incident of Joseph and Potiphar's wife in Gen 39. What did he do in the course of the temptation. How does that apply in our lives?

## Talk 5: Employment - Bro. John Evans

### 'Working heartily as to the Lord and not unto Men'

19/2/10

Our study, our work and our career are a big part of our lives – if you work for 40 years you will spend around 70,000 hours in work and therefore it is important to make sure that you choose wisely. More importantly we need to listen to what the scriptures say about these matters and see what it tells us about how we should approach this part of our life. Our society today puts a lot of focus on education and careers and while there is nothing wrong with these things in themselves a balance needs to be reached.

A subject which is closely linked which is also important to look at is what our attitude should be to money, wealth and possessions – career objectives are often closely linked to maximising wealth. Our society today is absolutely focussed on materialism and there is no end of things which we are told we must have to have society status and we need to maintain a Godly perspective to ensure that we are not “choked” by these pressures.

When it comes to choosing a career or a job there are very few specific careers that are directly prohibited by scripture so a good over-arching principle is given to us by Paul when he said that “All things are lawful, but not all things are helpful. All things are lawful, but not all things build up” (1 Cor 10v23). We need to ensure that we need to take this principle into account when making a decision on what career path we take or if we are going to take a job eg if taking a particular job means we are going to regularly going to be missing ecclesial meetings we should look for other alternatives. So what does the Bible have to do say about work?

#### **Working in scripture**

God has intended from the very beginning for man to work, he placed Adam in the garden to dress it and to keep it but after he had sinned God made work to become a toil rather than an occupation and so man was told “By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread” (Gen 3v19). Despite toiling humanity has never been able to really achieve anything as Solomon noted “What has a man from all the toil and striving of heart with which he toils beneath the sun? For all his days are full of sorrow and his work is a vexation. Even in the night his heart does not rest. This also is vanity”(Eccl 2v22-23).

However many very faithful men worked and had a career in conjunction with their service of God, most notably the Lord Jesus who seems to have been a carpenter right up until the time of the start of his ministry. Paul was also a tent-

maker who worked to support himself in his work of preaching the gospel and even used his connections in the industry to preach to faithful people such as Priscilla and Aquila. What principles can we then take from the lives of these people and the words which we have recorded for us in the scriptures? What should be our motivation and attitude when we are working or studying?

### **Motivation for working**

It is very easy for our jobs and careers to become a source of pride but we are instructed that our focus should be on providing for those who we care for (1 Tim 5v8) and for those who are in need (Eph 4v28). We need to see our jobs and careers as a means to an end and not an end in itself – this is not always the attitude of those that we come into contact with but we need to be careful that the proud and selfish attitudes that many people have today does not pervade our thinking. Many also see a successful career as a means to attaining great wealth and status but the Lord Jesus tells us where our priorities should be when he said “Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you (Matt 6v31-33).

### **Our attitude to working**

It can often be difficult for us to see our employers or workplaces as important given that their ideals and principles seem to be in conflict with those of God. However Paul gives us some very important things to remember about our attitude when he writes the following in Ephesians and in Colossians – “Slaves, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would Christ, not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man, knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free. Masters, do the same to them, and stop your threatening, knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and that there is no partiality with him.” (Eph 6v5-9) and “Slaves, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men” (Col 3v22-23)

We need to see our service to our employers being as though it was working for the Lord Jesus and therefore we should put a lot of effort into it and should be as honest and show integrity in all that we do. This will not only please our Father which is in heaven but it is just another way of “letting our light shine

before men” and spreading the wonderful hope of the gospel that we have been given. Paul explains this to Titus in chapter 2v7-10 “Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, dignity, and sound speech that cannot be condemned, so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us. Slaves are to be submissive to their own masters in everything; they are to be well-pleasing, not argumentative, not pilfering, but showing all good faith, so that in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior.” However we must make sure that we strike a balance and not let our careers take over our lives to the exclusion of the things of God, this is often a balance which is hard to reach but one that we need to work towards.

### **Questions:**

1. What does 1 Timothy 6 tell us is the root of all evil? Note it is the love of this element and not the element itself.
2. Where does the Lord Jesus tell us we should keep our treasure – provide quotes? How can we reflect this in our day to day lives?
3. Who is an example of someone in scripture who was treated badly by their employer but took it graciously and was blessed because of it? (Hint: it is early in the Old Testament record)
4. How can we ensure that we maintain a “work-life balance” that ensures that we deal with honesty and integrity with regards to our employment yet ensure we have time for the things of God?

# Talk 6: Good Works - Bro. Alan Sutton

## 'Faith Made Perfect by Works'

12/3/10

The Apostle Paul when writing to the ecclesia at Corinth says “ for the body is not one member, but many...now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular” 1 Corinthians 12 v 14- 27. This description shows us that we are the members who make up the whole ecclesia of God. There are many different people with many different roles, just like the body has different limbs and organs that do different jobs. But no matter how big or small the role we do may seem, we all have a valuable part to play, even as the body cannot function without all of its parts working together.

Therefore, because we all make up the one body, in a way we all have the same common role – to worship God, to help one another, to care for one another. However people may find they are able to perform particular roles that will greatly benefit the others in the ecclesia, and many roles can perhaps be specific to either brethren or sisters. Later on in 1 Corinthians 12 verse 29 and 30 Paul says “are you all apostles? All prophets? All teachers etc”. What Paul is trying to say here is that there are many differing roles to perform in the ecclesia and that each one of us should perform our roles in conjunction with each other.

### Preaching

Preaching is a very important role within the ecclesia. Preaching is the means by which we can spread Gods word. Throughout the Bible faithful men and women preached the word of God, spreading the good news to area of the world which, without them, would still be in darkness (Acts 10 v 41,42). But through preaching, the word has been sown worldwide to grow in any good ground present. Our role as preachers is very important not only because it spreads Gods word, but also because it allows us to show the world that we are not ashamed of what we believe or who we serve. It can also be a good source of confirming our beliefs for ourselves and can bring great joy whether people are interested or not. (Luke 9 v 1,2)

### Teaching

Teaching is also an extremely important role that we can perform within an ecclesia. We know from James chapter 2 that we must have both faith and works in our service to God. Faith is an understanding and appreciation of the things God has left on record for us in the Bible. It is crucial then for us to gain a knowledge of basic Bible principles which come from teaching. We have a work of teaching to one another and to the younger members of our ecclesias. Teaching is like preaching the word, only, within our ecclesias and to those who perhaps have more of a basis of scripture. Nevertheless the skills we learn from teaching and preaching will be a benefit to ourselves and others.

## **Encouragement and Help**

John 13 v 34 and 1 John 3 vs 23 (along with many other quotes) tell us to “love one another as Christ loved us”. We must show love to one another, to strengthen each other when we see others struggling on their walk to the kingdom. Isaiah 35 v 3 says, “Strengthen ye the weak hands and confirm the feeble knees”. We know that one of the greatest blessings given to us on our journey to the kingdom is each other, to help one another to stay on the path and not to stumble. A key role in the ecclesia is to encourage and to help.

Having considered some of the roles we have to perform within the ecclesia, advice is given to both sisters and brothers separately about certain roles we can or cannot perform within an ecclesia. The Bible gives a lot of detail about the differing roles between brethren and sisters. A few key ideas are seen below.

## **Sisters**

Advice is given in Titus 2 v 4 that older sisters can teach younger sisters in the truth, and therefore that younger sisters should listen and not despise the advice given. Sisters are not required to give talks or do prayers as it says in 1 Timothy 2 v 12 “I suffer not a women to teach, nor usurp authority over man”. However sisters do have an important work of teaching with regards to the children, whether that be in Sunday school or in their own homes. Sisters have an important role in the home. 1 Timothy 5 v 14 talks of the loving role a sister can play in the upbringing of their household and indeed the upbringing of their children in the ways of scripture.

## **Brethren**

Again 1 Timothy 5 v 1 tells us of the role older brethren have in instructing younger brethren and the role of the younger brethren to listen to the advice given. 1 Timothy 4 v 6 shows us that it is the responsibility of the brethren to be “nourished up in words of faith and good doctrine” to study the word of God that they might be “good ministers of Jesus Christ”, to give talks opening the word of life and brining forth the gems of scripture.

## Questions

1. What are some things that you personally can do in your ecclesia to fulfil the roles mentioned above?

2. Reflect on an instance where you benefited from a member of the ecclesia fulfilling such roles.

3. List some of the other key roles we can play within an ecclesia, with quotes to back up each one.

# Talk 7: Relationships & Marriage - Bro.

## David Nicholls

### 'Marriage is Honourable in All'

9/4/10

#### Marriage and Relationships

Marriage, and its precursor – the romantic relationship are matters of utmost importance to consider. These gifts are from God to enable us to fulfil human needs for intimacy and fellowship. These are gifts which in the small matters of day to day life can teach us about the love he and his son have for us, and that we should have for them. They are relationships in which serious principles of God are given to be upheld for his glory. They are relationships which more than any other relationships we experience can have bad or good influences on our discipleship. It is uplifting to know their full beauty and meaning, and essential to make sure we 'get them right'.

#### Marriage and it's Meaning

Marriage is introduced to us right at the start of the Bible, when Adam is cause to sleep by God, and Eve is formed from his side and then brought to him:

*<sup>23</sup>The man said "This is now bone of my bones, And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man." <sup>24</sup> For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh. Genesis 2: 23-24 (NASB)*

The unity of man and wife is emphasized here – she originated from him, and because of this they were to be one flesh – not literally, but in every possible essence a loving unity of one mind, one purpose – supporting and helping each other to serve and glorify God. This unity is an active unity which didn't just happen naturally – the man was to actively seek to be joined to his wife (and no doubt the wife was to do the same for her husband also). Adam and Eve, the prototype husband and wife were to work at becoming unified in love.

We see many examples of marriages in the Old Testament and the lessons we can learn from them. Marriage also is used as a symbol to represent the relationship between God and Israel – God redeemed Israel out of Egypt to be his wife, whose role was to serve and be faithful to him. (Jeremiah 3: 1-14, Ezekiel 16: 1-15). However, it is when we get to the New Testament that we truly see what marriage is all about and what it represents. We see its true beauty and searching exhortations, when Paul quotes Genesis 2 and explains it:

*<sup>31</sup>FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND SHALL BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH. <sup>32</sup>This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church. Ephesians 5:31-32.*

This mystery of two separate people coming together to be one is there to represent and teach us about Christ and the ecclesia. Christ is the husband and the ecclesia is his bride to be. Christ has shown his willingness to cleave to his wife by redeeming her through his life and death. We as the ecclesia have to show the same desire to be one with Christ – of the same mind and purpose to glorify God. Then when he returns, we will be married to him and be completely at one with him and God.

### **The Relevance to Us in Romantic Relationships**

Most of us at South Wales Youth won't be married. But nearly all of us are or will be in romantic relationships in our life. The principles we are to live by if we are in these relationships are the same as if we are married. We are to treat Christ as our husband already, even if we are not already married to him. If we are in a relationship, then we must fulfill the roles and principles given by God which are expounded in Ephesians 5: 22-33, Colossians 3: 18-19 and 1 Peter 3: 1-7. The overwhelming principle in all of these passages is that if a girl is in a romantic relationship, she must treat her boyfriend as the ecclesia treats Christ - with loving submission and respect. If a boy is in a romantic relationship, he must treat his girlfriend as Christ treats the ecclesia – with selfless devotion, sacrifice and love. When both parties play these roles as commanded, then the true beauty of Christ and his bride is shown and the two parties in the relationship benefit abundantly.

### **Compatibility**

The principles a boy and girl have to follow are God's principles. The goal of marriage is to learn about the love of Christ together and to become of one mind encouraging each other to glorify God. We need to ask ourselves if we can really achieve these aims with someone who does not share the same view of God as us. This obviously should make us seriously consider if it is right to be in a romantic relationship with someone who isn't interested in God, Jesus and the Bible – i.e. someone not from the meeting. But just as important is to look carefully at people in the meeting. When a partner can have such an influence on us, we need to look at prospective partners and ask serious questions about whether they will be a good or bad influence on our discipleship and our love for God. If they aren't, then maybe the relationship is not the best idea.

Another principle to think about is that of the active effort to become as one. A romantic relationship (maybe more than other relationships) requires hard work. It isn't all fairytales and film endings. For a couple to become as one it is a constant work to submit, to sacrifice, to help. Adam actively left his father and mother in the quest to be unified to his wife - if we are in romantic relationships then we have to work hard to make it work – for the benefit of our partner and for the glory of God

### **Single**

Of course, not every servant of God will get married. Marriage is a beautiful thing. But there must **never** be a culture that puts pressure on people to marry, or makes people feel like second class citizens if they are not married. 1 Corinthians 7 explains that if someone is single it is not a curse ,but is a



## Talk 8: Leisure - Bro. Andrew Jenner

'All Things are Lawful for me; But all Things are not Expedient'  
7/5/10

We all have time outside of school/university/work when we can choose what we do in our spare time. Some of us like to socialise and interact with each other. Others may prefer to spend time alone, or a combination of the two. Whilst some like sport, others may choose to read a book. We are all different and have different preferences of how we like to spend our free time. Let's ask ourselves whether we make good use of our time and whether we live as the Bible says we should. What do we actually spend our time doing?

**Our focus in life:** whilst many people's lives may have a focus on work, sport or hobbies, our focus in life is to manifest God's character. We read in 1 Corinthians 10:31; *"whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God"*. We should be applying this principle in our lives each and every day.

We also read in Galatians 5:19-23 things which we should not be doing and in contrast to these the characteristics that we should be displaying;

*"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."*

**The laws of the land:** as followers of Christ we are commanded to obey the laws of the land in all cases, so long as they don't come into conflict with the laws of God (see 1 Peter 2:13-15). What other passages can you think of which tell us this is how we should live?

Let's now consider a few specific examples and see what the Bible says.

**Alcohol, clubbing and drugs:** we are not commanded never to drink alcohol. Instead we are clearly commanded never to drink to excess. As we see from the passage above those who do so *"shall not inherit the kingdom of God"*. Is going to a club a good environment to be in? What is the focus here? Surely it is to have a great experience, usually involving copious amounts of alcohol. Also, people (particularly female) are often dressed immodestly which is not helpful for our walk to the Kingdom. People behave in ways that followers of Christ should not. We are instructed to be in full control of our bodies, as well as

obeying the laws of the land, so drugs are not something that we should do. (See Rom 13:13, 1 Cor 6:20, Eph 5:18, 1 Tim 5:23, Titus 2:6, 1 Pet 5:8). What other references can you find?

**Fashion, TV and media:** in today's society celebrities are idols and role models. People look up to them, copy their actions and even dress like them / get similar hair styles! The focus is on the individual and what they have done. This is different from our focus in life. We are to follow the example of the Lord Jesus Christ, who was so different from today's celebrities. Are we too into fashion and spend lots and lots of money on designer labels? What do we watch on TV? Does it help us on our walk to the Kingdom? (See 1 Cor 11:14, 1 Tim 2:9, Phil 4:8). What other references can you find?

**Gambling and sport:** the gambling industry worldwide is worth over \$3 billion. As with lots of these issues, people get addicted to them, and gambling is no different. What is the motivation behind gambling? If we watch or play sport, how much time does it take up? If our team play at the same time as the meeting, would we choose the meeting or sport? (See Pro 13:11, Eccl 5:10, Matt 6:24, 1 Tim 6:10, Heb 13:5). What other references can you find?

What scriptural examples can you think of where we read about people making use of their spare time? (Hint: think about Solomon / Paul, also see 1 Cor 10:23, Eph 5:16, Col 4:5)

The Bible does not give specific guidance in every scenario we may find ourselves in. It does however lay down principles that can be applied in all cases. We must always remember to *"do all to the glory of God"*.

# Talk 9: Fellowship - Bro. Richard Palmer

## 'Fellowship in the Gospel'

11/6/10

God has created us as social creatures; we have a need for friendship and interaction with others. From man's beginnings when Adam acted as a keeper of the Garden of Eden, God identified that: "It is not good that the man should be alone", God saw the need man had for support and friendship and so provided for that need in giving Adam a companion. In fact in the relationship of this first man and woman we have what might be described as a definition of 'fellowship'. Adam said that Eve was: "Bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh" – there was a unity between Adam and Eve – a oneness, Adam understood Eve, and Eve understood Adam and this perhaps sums up what fellowship is - a unity of mind and a sharing of purpose. The book of Philippians speaking on the subject of fellowship tells us:

"Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind". (Philippians 2 v 2)

So in this context it appears that 'fellowship' describes a unity of thinking and love between 2 or more individuals. When we have fellowship with others, the way we think and the things that we love are the same.

According Strong's concordance The Greek word translated 'fellowship' (Koinonia) has the meanings of: communion (sharing), communication and distribution. What does its root word (Koinonos) mean?

Koinonos (Strong's number 2844):

**Philippians 2 v 1 – 5** tells us of how we can promote fellowship in our relationships. What characteristics do we need to work on to help us in our fellowship with others?

The English word 'fellowship' is hardly ever used in the Old Testament of the Bible - only on 2 occasions in comparison to 14 times in the New Testament. However fellowship as a concept can be clearly seen throughout the Old Testament. Speaking of the friendship between David and Jonathan we are told that:

“...the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul” (1 Samuel 18 v 1)

Jonathan and David's soul (their character) was united. And they had a mutual respect and love for the way each other thought.

What other examples of fellowship do we find in the Old Testament?

In the epistle of John we are told that we can share fellowship with others if we share the same direction in life:

“If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin”.  
(1 John 1 v 7)

If we think our direction in life is that of Gods and yet we do not share true fellowship with others what impact does that have upon our faith? (See: **1 John 2 v 9 – 11**)

Fellowship often has a practical as well as a spiritual outworking. In the book of Romans the Gentile Christians in Macedonia and Achaia made a “...contribution (literally – a fellowship) for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem”- just as the Jewish Christians had shared (or fellowshiped) their spiritual blessing with the Gentile believers (**Romans 15 v 26 – 27**).

In what way can we allow fellowship to have a practical and spiritual outworking in our lives?

Fellowship among believers is particularly important during times of hardship. Often we need the spiritual and practical support of others most when times are hard. The Corinthian ecclesia shared in the sufferings of Paul and Timothy and responded by giving them comfort (1 Corinthians 1 v 7). In **Philippians 3 v 10** we read of the fellowship we have with Jesus in his sufferings. In what way does this passage suggest we can share in Jesus sufferings?

The action of eating bread and drinking wine shows how we can remember Jesus and his sufferings. And it is through these sufferings that we can have fellowship in a shared hope. What does **1 Corinthians 10 v 16 – 17** tell us about fellowship (the word communion in this passage is the same as fellowship)?

# Programme 2009/2010

Date	Subject/Activity	Speaker	President	Organist	Door Keeper	Venue
Oct 9 <sup>th</sup>	Baptism - 'The Answer of a Good Conscience toward God'	Bro. Leen Ritmeyer	T Bramhill	S Day	S Greenwood	Cardiff
Nov 6 <sup>th</sup>	Bible study - 'Study to Show Thyself Approved Unto God'	Bro. Stephen Palmer	J Hughes	T Kitchen	D Stevenson	Cardiff
Nov 14 <sup>th</sup>	SWYPC Study Day - Samuel, Saul and David	Bro. Peter Owen				Cardiff
Nov 22 <sup>nd</sup>	<b>BIG HELP</b>					Treorchy
Dec 4 <sup>th</sup>	The State - 'Keeping Faith and a Good Conscience'	Bro. Dafydd Jenkins	D Lewis	S Day	T Archer	Cardiff
Jan 15 <sup>th</sup>	Temptation - 'Escaping Temptation'	Bro. Brian Woodall	D Robson	D Robson	J Stevenson	Swansea
Feb 12-14	Hebron Hall Youth weekend					Hebron Hall
Feb 19 <sup>th</sup>	Employment - 'Working heartily as to the Lord and not unto Men'	Bro. John Evans	J Ritmeyer	D Robson	D Robson	Swansea
March 12 <sup>th</sup>	Good works - 'Faith Made Perfect by Works'	Bro. Alan Sutton	S Greenwood	S Brook	J Hughes	Cardiff
Apr 9 <sup>th</sup>	Relationships & Marriage - 'Marriage is Honourable in All'	Bro. David Nicholls	S Hawkes	D Robson	J Snelling	Swansea
April 25 <sup>th</sup>	<b>BIG HELP</b>					Bridgend
May 7 <sup>th</sup>	Leisure - 'All Things are Lawful for me; But All Things are Not Expedient'	Bro. Andrew Jenner	B Kent	B Palmer	A Robson	Cardiff
June 11 <sup>th</sup>	Fellowship - 'Fellowship in the Gospel'	Bro. Richard Palmer	D Stevenson	R Benson	L Skinner	Cardiff
Sep 3-5	Llanmadoc Study Weekend	Bro. Michael Owen				Llanmadoc
Sep 25	National Youth Fraternal - David and Friends					
Cardiff – Fitzallen High School						