



More Than Looks and Taste

"You were created to serve God . . . You were saved to serve God . . . You are called to serve God . . . You are commanded to serve God." Thus begins Rick Warren's seven-part series, "You Were Shaped for Serving God," from **The Purpose Driven Life**.

I have a cousin who is a chef. He has worked at some of the finest restaurants in Denver. Family reunions are a dream when he is in charge of the food. Bill gives attention to every detail: the best ingredients, all in the right proportions, prepared his own special way, put together in the right order, using the right equipment, baked/cooked at the right temperature for the right length of time. But even then he's not through. Presentation is big: when it's ready to go on the table it has to be presented the right way, on the right dishes, in the right combination with other foods on the plate, and garnished just so-so.

With all of that, it would be easy to forget the purpose of the food he's preparing. The purpose of the food is not the way it looks on the table, or even how it smells or tastes. The purpose of food is (drum roll) nutrition for the body. Everything else, however artistically it is done, is basically beside the point.

A huge block of Elmwood's emotional energy over the past year has been consumed with looking at our functional structures—what could be done to increase our effectiveness in being the church God wants us to be. But with all this, it is important to remember that the point is not functional structures, or restructuring, or Rick Warren's SHAPE classes. The point is exploring and fulfilling God's purpose for our lives.

Someone wrote yesterday, "(My husband) is sick of his life consisting of (his profession) and not much else . . . so he is hoping to add another dimension to his life." Ah, that's the point! Finding and living out God's purpose for his life. Learning to serve others—which brings God's grace to their lives, and blesses ours as we fulfil our ministry. Just as the point of a meal is not to look good on the plate, so the point of a church is not to look good. When each of us is doing what God wants, we are fulfilling our roles as parts of the body of Christ—and that's what it's about. *G. Crowe*

The Practical Gospel

Aren't you tired of abstract thoughts, ideas, and promises? For example, a car dealership says that they are having the "best deals ever," or your spouse says to you that you need to be a more loving person—which is completely undefined and abstract and might mean something different to each person. It leaves a person wondering what it means, scrambling to define it, and desperately trying to make it a reality without any guidance or direction. That is just plain annoying, difficult, and impossible to handle.

Sometimes there is a tendency to divorce Scripture from life, because people believe the Bible to be a very abstract book. Commands like "love your neighbor" and "be holy" seem like just another frustrating, abstract thought. Not understanding the "seemingly abstract" nature of Scripture, we are tempted to revert to simply talking about the abstracts because it seems to be okay with everyone else if that's all we do.

But the truth is that there has never been a more practical book than the Bible. The Bible does not simply say "be holy." The Bible defines what *is* holy. The Bible does not spit out an abstract idea of loving your neighbor.... it defines who your neighbor is and what love looks like and then instructs you to do the same.

It is the greatest piece of literature on the market today, yesterday, and tomorrow. It is concrete and practical and not only *can* it change your daily life in practical ways, it was designed for that very reason. ~Dan

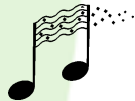
Prayer Concerns....

Kaden Koebcke, grandson of Jack & Sue McCoy, is in neonatal ICU at Riley Hospital in Indianapolis. Weighing only 2 pounds 1.3 ounces, he has serious health concerns at this time. Your prayers are appreciated....**Natasha Risley's** traction is helping so much that she is in more pain when they take off the weights! It has helped her gain three inches in height already! She has 30 pounds of weight on the entire day, except to sleep. On January 26 she will have an 8-10 hour spinal surgery. She is at the St. Louis Shriners' Hospital, 2001 S. Lindbergh Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63131-3597. Phone: 314-432-3600. Prayer hearts are available to pick up and put in a prominent place at home or work to remember to pray for her....**Doris Swensen's** back surgery on Monday, January 16, at St. Vincent's in Indianapolis went very well....**Kay Tavana** has surgery on her left elbow January 20, at Home Hospital....**Earl Leech**, grandfather of Kinley Boyd, is having chemotherapy for colon cancer and is largely confined to bed....**Leah McClain** sister-in-law of Mark McClain, is in St. Vincent's Hospital in Indianapolis with pneumonia....Continue praying for **Marie DeWoody, Annie Crowder, Diane Wolf, Sarah Watts, Neta Guthery, Jim Beghtol, Mark Eddy, Anna Dale, Eunice Whitesell, Ramona Farris, Irene Fox, Carrie High, and Delpha Allen.** Those in Rosewalk Village: **Paul & Ruth Marks, Minnie Scott, and Burnell Gulden.** Serving in Iraq: **Loren Sniffen** (*Armilda Follick's nephew just recently sent to Iraq*), **Dustin Holley, and Brad King.**

A Baby Shower



Becky Pitt and Lisa Crowe are hosting a baby shower for **Chelsea Barnett & newborn daughter, Sophie.** It is planned for January 20, from 7:00 until 8:30 PM, at Becky and Chad's home, 630 Central Ave., Lafayette. Money for a cash gift may be given to Lisa Crowe or Becky Pitt.



The Elmwood Boys (Ben, Patrick, Josh and Andrew) will be singing at Elmwood on Sunday night, February 12, at 6:00. (Note change of date.)



Our Sympathies

Paul Marks' brother-in-law (husband of his twin sister), **Paul Ducker**, 90, of Murfreesboro, Tennessee, died Thursday, January 12. Paul and John went to the funeral in Murfreesboro on Saturday. Our sympathies to **Pauline Ducker** and her family.

Lonnie DePriest, Margie Moffitt's oldest brother, died January 10, at the age of 79. The funeral was Saturday in Cleveland, Ohio. Our sincere sympathies to Margie and her family.

Thank You!

Thank you for your prayers for my sister, Sarah Watts, who is still undergoing chemotherapy. After just three treatments her tumor has shrunk from 2.4 centimeters to 1 centimeter. The doctors are very happy with her progress. She continues to praise God and see how He is working in her life through this. Again, thank you for your thoughts and prayers.

—Suzanne Fournier



A Big Congratulations!



Dick & Janice Waterstraat celebrate their **50th wedding anniversary** this Friday, January 20. Congratulations Dick and Janice on this wonderful milestone!



The food pantry is in need of **cereal and soup.**

New Addresses

Cindy Snapp, 22 Lori-Lee Trailer Park, Lafayette 47905. Phone: 543-6954.

Arnold & Amber Burks, 1920 Iroquois Trail, Lafayette 47909.

January 15, 2006

Class: 272 Worship: 307

Contribution: \$6,790

Budget: \$8,100

ELMWOOD CHURCH OF CHRIST newsletter (USPS 758-630) is published weekly, except the week of Christmas, by the Elmwood Church of Christ, 2501 Elmwood Ave., Lafayette 47904. Periodical postage paid at Lafayette, IN. POSTMASTER: send address changes to ELMWOOD CHURCH OF CHRIST, 2501 Elmwood Ave., Lafayette, IN 47904.



ROCK SOLID – Winterfest 2006 Gatlinburg, TN – February 17-19

It is time to speak up! We have townhouses reserved for up to 36 people. To accommodate that number, a few may need to bring sleeping bags...don't be the last ones to sign up. In addition, we are seriously thinking of chartering a bus this year, but that could make the costs up to \$40 per person more. If you have a strong opinion either way, please let me know by this Sunday, the 15th. A \$50 deposit saves your place. By the way, Winterfest is one of the "big 4" for 6th – 12th graders.

Elmwood Boys in Concert January 27 – 7:30 PM

St. Andrew UMC, 333 Meridian St., West Lafayette, has a coffee house on Friday nights from 6:00 until 10:00. They offer snacks, beverages, cards, music and fun. On Friday the 27th, the Elmwood Boys will be singing. The guys would love to see your friendly faces.

Natasha Risley

Natasha is over halfway through the traction process as she prepares for surgery. Ten of us were able to go to see her on Saturday (the Banters have been down to see her too) and we aren't sure who got the greatest benefit, Natasha or us. She looks so good and we believe she is at least three inches taller already. Natasha would love to hear from you, so you can write her at: Natasha Risley, c/o St. Louis Shriners' Hospital, 2001 S. Lindbergh Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63131-3597. You can also call her at 314-432-3600—ask for Natasha Risley. -Lee



It's a Boy!



Kaden Avery Koebcke was born Friday night, January 13, to Cami (McCoy) and Travis. Born at just 28 weeks, he weighed 2 pounds 1.3 ounces, and measured 14 inches long. He is in Riley Children's Hospital in Indianapolis where he is being treated and monitored for various things associated with any premature baby. Cami and Travis and the McCoy family ask for your prayers during this happy but anxious time.

A Note from an Elmwood family member

*I would like to "Amen" Dan Cooke's article in the newsletter last week (January 10). This church family we have **is** ideal. I recently visited with the Elders. It wasn't too long into the discussion that I knew this was the time for a **full** confession, and I truly let it **all** hang out! The Elders didn't fall over or pass out, they listened. What happened next impressed me the most: they showed great love as they guided me in the way of the Lord. Now that is **IDEAL!!** Praise the Lord! When the elders invite you to come for prayer—do it!*

Good \$ense Budget Class

Beginning this Wednesday, January 18, and running for 7 weeks, the Good \$ense Budget Class, taught by Janet Boston and Brent Branstetter, will meet at 7:00 PM. The class is limited to 24 people. You may sign up in the Farris foyer. All questions can be directed to Janet at 477-7668, or Brent at 423-5650.



- Jan. 18, 7 PM...Bible classes for all
- Jan. 18, 7 PM...Good \$ense Budget Class begins
- Jan. 20, 7:00-8:30 PM...Baby Shower for Chelsea Barnett and daughter, Sophie, at Becky & Chad Pitt's home

PLEASE NOTE: LIFE GROUPS WILL MEET ON FEBRUARY 5. WE WILL MEET AT THE BUILDING ON FEBRUARY 12 AND BE TREATED TO THE SINGING OF "THE ELMWOOD BOYS"

Read: Exodus 26-40;
Mark 1-6; Psalms 18:28-20:9;
Proverbs 1-3

2006 Spiritual Adventure

Week 5: January 29–Feb. 4

The Blame Game

This week's readings are a very interesting mix. In Exodus, you have the Lord's instructions on the 10 Commandments and other laws, the priests and the Tabernacle. In Mark we read of the beginning of Jesus' earthly ministry and His incredible healing powers. The Psalmist reminds of where our (and his) strength comes from. And of course, the Proverbs remind us of the need to receive wise instruction.

I played the blame game really well when I was a child...I had a brother who was 5 years younger than me – he didn't have a chance. Sorry, Wes! I'm not the only one good at that game, however (and to be honest, I still play it sometimes), Aaron was a pro! Have you ever thought about it? Sandwiched in the middle of God's instructions for the spiritual lives and activities of the people of Israel at Mt. Sinai is the story of the golden calf. God tells Moses to go down and see what the people have done and Moses asks Aaron what was going on. Like a great spiritual leader he answered, "You know how prone these people are to evil." I reread the story just to be sure, but no one is recorded as holding a gun to Aaron's head telling him to make the calf. The people made the suggestion, he told them to bring their jewelry and as he put it, "...out came this calf!" Sorry Aaron, but you needed the same lesson we must not forget today. It is in the text: 1) receive instruction from the Lord, 2) let the Lord heal our weaknesses, 3) depend on His strength, not ours and, 4) receive wise instruction and support from others. Aaron listened to the wrong people and was easily swayed. Don't get me wrong, you and I have done the same, but let's learn from Aaron's mistake and begin to live our lives in a way where we don't need to play the blame game. I'll be praying for you as you identify the specifics, please do the same for me.

–Lee Porter