



Jumping Through Hoops

Set two people side by side and see which one can get from point A to point B first: you have a race.

Set two people side by side and see which one can get from point A to point B while they have to climb over a couple of walls, run over some logs in a pool, crawl through some mud, go across some monkey bars while someone throws some balls at them, and get past a 280lb body builder: you have a TV show.

Often times it is not crossing the finish line that entertains us. We are more entertained by the hoops people have to jump through before they even get to the finish line.

We find this scenario playing over and over in the New Testament. Many of the Jewish Christians became more concerned about creating hoops for the Gentiles to jump through, than actually caring about whether or not they love the Lord. They were not so much excited about the fact that Gentiles were flocking to hear the message of the gospel story. They were more concerned about whether or not the Gentiles were going to do things the Jewish way. They wanted them to be circumcised. They wanted them to observe the Sabbath regulations. They wanted them to follow their dietary laws. It wasn't enough that they wanted to come to the Lord. They had to come to the Lord "their" way.

I love what James has to say about this situation. In Acts 15 a large council gathers to discuss this matter. Many were unsure about what to do with these Gentiles. James, after hearing about the many wonderful things that were taking place among the Gentiles, speaks up saying, "*It is my judgment, therefore, that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God.*" Wow! What an amazing statement. *We should not make it difficult!* Basically, quit making them jump through your hoops.

What a powerful reminder. Have I made things difficult in the past? Have you made things difficult for someone to turn to the Lord? Let us not create more hoops for others to jump through. Paul puts it best when he writes, "*For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified*" (1 Cor. 2:2).

-Gilbert

The Word of God

By Phil Ware

For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Heb. 4:12

What is the greatest tool to repair the human heart?
by-pass surgery?
angioplasty?
artificial heart?
transplant?

How about the Word of God? You see, while these other techniques can be of great aid to the physical heart of people, God's tool for heart surgery is his Word. This sharp scalpel can reach the soul and spirit as well as being a physical blessing. So how much of your heart are you offering to God and his powerful heart-healing tool to touch? As you open God's Scripture, as you hear the message of God preached, why not ask for the Holy Spirit's help to help you understand, apply, and put into practice what is being taught? Let's offer our hearts to the Great Physician to do his work in us!

-Excerpted from heartlight.org



Sara Postlethwait is in St. Elizabeth Hospital for complications from the pain medication she was taking for broken ribs. She hopes to be home by Wednesday.... Continue praying for Scheryl Gaylor, Joe Seele, Thelma Hoyt, Bud Darby, Delores Hill, Clifford & Betty Farner, Annie Crowder, Pete Swank, Diann Doty, Jan Lucas, Kaden Koebecke, Christa Phillips, David Brutans, Charles Moore, Hattie Coffel, Mary Tavana, Dorothy Walters, Irene Fox, Edith McCoy, Eugene Zinn, Valley Stockton, Irene Sims, Marie DeWoody, Paul & Argie Verett, and Minnie Scott.

In the military: **Josh Martin** and **Brent Kaufman** are serving in Iraq.

Weekly Prayer Focus

September Prayer Focus: Body Life Ministry

Pray that the Senior Servants ministry continues to foster knowing Christ by providing opportunities to serve others as Christ did. May God bless our card ministry to the church and may we create a "belonging place" for the seniors in our church. May God make us aware of all aspects of prayer including praise, thanksgiving, and intercession. Pray that God will help us to focus on the purpose, value, and habit of prayer. May He help us pray individually, or with our elders and ministry staff often.

K-5th Grade Ministry Garage Sale



A garage sale for the K-5th grade ministry at Elmwood is planned for **September 12, 8 AM-12 noon**. It will be held in the church parking lot. The money raised from this event will go toward a ministry (or ministries) of the children's choice. Donations are

needed from the congregation. Any garage sale items that you would not mind donating would be welcome. Please bring your donations to the church building no later than Friday, September 11th. For more information see Dana Miller, Mandy Anderson, or Miranda Parson.



Elmwood Church:

We would like to thank you for collecting new school supplies for our Tools for Schools Program. We set a record by helping 700 students with over 24,300 pieces of school supplies. In these difficult times, it is wonderful to see so many in our community stepping forward to help make a difference. Thank you for your support and generosity.

-Dawna Whitus & Eloise Lewellen, Salvation Army



All-Church Picnic September 13



Elmwood's annual all church picnic will once again be at Columbian Park at **noon on September 13** (following the second service). We will eat at 12:30. Bring plenty of food to share and enjoy getting to know our new students and other new faces at Elmwood. **No evening service or LIFE groups on September 13.**

China Trip

Gayle Crowe and Edward Short of World Christian Broadcasting are leading a group of 30 friends and staff on a 12-day trip to China beginning September 12. Their itinerary takes them to some of China's most famous sites. Be praying for their safety as they tour the country.

Prayer Partner Ministry

The prayer-partner sign-up sheet will be available in the Farris Foyer on **Sunday, Sept. 13**, and at the all-church picnic. Please prayerfully consider praying for a K-12 student(s) this school year.

-Christi Branstetter

September 6, 2009

Class: 179 Worship: 265

Contribution: \$9,657



Who's Coming to Lunch?

The following quote is from David Kinnaman and Gabe Lyon's book *unchristian*. The focus of the book is on what this generation thinks about Christianity and why it matters. The authors make it clear that Christianity has an image problem.

"When it comes to our interaction with outsiders, we have to realize that our relationships, our interactions with people, comprise the picture of Jesus that people will retain. God has wired human beings so that spiritual influence occurs most commonly through relationships. One of the clear implications of our research is that the negative image of Christians can be overcome, and this almost always happens in the context of meaningful, trusting relationships. The goal of overcoming their negative baggage is not just to make outsiders think pleasant things about us, but to point them to life in Christ. We do not 'spin' the Christian message; we live it. We do not need to exaggerate or hype faith; we embrace and describe all the potency, depth, complexity, and realism of following Christ."

While this probably sounds complicated to some of us, the opportunity to act on this information is very simple and right around the corner. This Sunday afternoon (after second service) we are going to have our annual "all-church" picnic. This is always a fun time and there will be lots of great food (fried chicken, lemon pie, fruits – I can taste it now) and fellowship. While the food and fun are great and even appealing to our guests, it is the fellowship that can make a difference for some of our guests...if we will allow it. As the quote above mentions, people come to faith in Jesus through relationships. It may be perceptions that keep them away; genuine Christians offering genuine life, love, friendship, and a place in God's family will draw seekers to Him. It will be a real temptation to hang out with the same group you always hang out with at the picnic, or you may look for that person(s) you haven't seen in a while. The real need is for us to find those people we don't know...our guests...so we can help them build relationships – relationships that will draw them to Jesus and impact their lives for eternity.

Some will say, "I'm not good at making new friends" or "I might say something wrong." We have a few folks here at Elmwood that are really good at connecting with guests; you know who they are, stay near them and observe what they say and do. Honestly, they learned from someone else. When Sharon and I started dating, I wasn't a Christian. She didn't invite me to a picnic, but it was a LIFE Group and the dynamic was and is the same. Through that group of teens, I found relationships that have lasted a lifetime and more importantly, faith that sustains me daily. I'm thankful those teens took the time for me...someone at the picnic may need me/you/us to do the same! – Lee



September 18-20, Ross Camp

What does the Elmwood Men's Retreat look like? Why would I want to attend? Do you struggle with being grounded and anchored in God's word? How does a Christian man live out his faith in today's society?

As men we all struggle with difficulties following Christ due to the constant pull of the world. We have all kinds of priorities (made by us) and most of the time God gets the tail end.

The Elders and Body Life Deacon, Dave Weckerly, are challenging all the men of Elmwood to take part in this year's Men's Retreat at Ross Camp, West Lafayette. If you would like answers to the above questions, please plan on joining us while we fellowship, pray, sing, search God's word, and lead each other to experience being in the presence of God. Our study focuses on *"The Holy Spirit In Us."* We will start with dinner on Friday night at 6:15. If you have questions call Kevin Walters at 765-586-3486, or email him at kwalters1959@verizon.net. We are praying for you and eager to join with you in praising our *loving and mighty God!*

Golf Anyone?



Lafayette Christian School invites you to participate in the school's annual charity Golf Tournament. The event is scheduled for Friday, September 18 starting at noon at the Ravines Golf Course. The cost is \$80 per person or \$300 for a team of four. Please call the school at 765-446-2259 or go to

www.lafayettechristian.org for more information and a registration form.



September 9, 7 PM....Bible classes for all
September 13, noon....All-Church Picnic;
NO LIFE GROUPS OR EVENING SERVICE
September 18-20....Men's Retreat, Ross Camp
October 4, 11:00 AM....The Great Communion, Harrison High School

Read:
*Isaiah 43-61; Ephesians 4-6
 Philippians*

2009 Spiritual Adventure

Week 39: September 21-27

No Excuses, Please

With literally days to go before this writing assignment is due, I find myself expending more time and energy trying to think of a reasonable excuse to get out of it instead of doing the work. I am a superb excuse maker. If excuse making were an Olympic event, I would be a gold medalist. Yes I had a tough day at work and I didn't sleep well last night. I'd much rather be catching up on email, watching a movie, reading a novel or talking to my best friend on the phone. I knew I was in "excuse mode" and had to snap out of it. So I read the passages I was supposed to comment on. Parts of the passages were from Ephesians and Philippians. If Paul could write these beautiful letters while imprisoned, then I could write from the comfort of my home. How appropriate was Ephesians 4: 20-24:

²⁰You, however, did not come to know Christ that way. ²¹Surely you heard of him and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. ²²You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; ²³to be made new in the attitude of your minds; ²⁴and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

I am glad I read my assignment. I have had an attitude adjustment and have gotten out of my "excuse mode". This proves that I need to read my Bible more often. For that I have "no excuse."

-Elaine Baird

| Weekly Schedule | Elders | World Missions |
|---|---|--|
| Sunday Worship 8:00 a.m. Bible Study 9:30 a.m. Worship 10:45 a.m. Life Groups 6:00 p.m. Wednesday Bible Study 7:00 p.m. | Bill Bell 463-1139 Joe Mathews 474-8369 Joe Ruhl 463-6822 Rick Swensen 463-6822 Don Vice 471-8653 | Kevin Chambers World Christian Broadcasting Anchor Point, Alaska 99536 Loren and Penny Hollingsworth Phuket, Thailand 83000 E-mail: lholly54@yahoo.com Bren and Cheryl White P.O. Box 245 New Market, MD 21774 |
| | Staff | |
| | Ministers Gilbert Kerrigan 418-3652 Lee Porter 463-6993 Phil Travis 447-2874 Office Sherry Marks, Manager 447-2874 Carol Bell, Secretary 447-2874 | |

 Our Vision:
 Knowing Christ,
 Making Christ Known.

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