

Welcome to New Life !

We are very pleased you are here. We sincerely hope you will be especially aware of God's presence as we worship. If this is your first time to worship with us, here is what you can expect:

Worship in Singing & Giving

- We leave how to worship up to you as an individual. During **singing** worship, you are free to connect with God in whatever biblical way that expresses your heart's adoration. Some may remain seated, others stand, kneel, clap or lift their hands.
- If you would like to receive personal **prayer** during worship with singing, you may go to one of the Prayer Teams located at the back of the sanctuary.
- Invitation is given for **tithes and offerings**. If you are our guest, please do not feel obligated to contribute when God's tithes and offerings are received.

Worship in Sharing God's Love

Expressions of greeting and God's love are extended to all, especially to our guests.

Worship in Meditating on God's Word

Teaching from the Bible for about 35 minutes.

We encourage you to use our **staffed Nursery** [which has a private nursing room] and **Children's Churches** during the service. Please ask an usher for assistance in locating the various rooms.

{turn page over}

Pastor Bob Wine

May 4, 2008

HOW TO GET OUT OF A SAND TRAP

"Break out" and deliberately pursue knowing God more intimately
Jeremiah 29:13-14

FOCUS FOR THE DAY... getting the stalled moving forward

- 25+% of us get stalled or dissatisfied

Jeremiah 29:13-14 "Yes, when you get serious about finding me and want it more than anything else, I'll make sure you won't be disappointed. I'll turn things around for you ... You can count on it." Message

- Extensive research on spiritual growth discovered church activities alone have minimal effect on a person's spiritual development.
 - Unless religious activity is being driven by a passion for Christ, it will not result in forward spiritual motion.

"CATCH THE NEW LIFE"

1. FIVE STAGES OF SPIRITUAL LIFE

- pre-Christian/unbeliever
- babe – learning the basics
- little children – exploring their faith, but still quite self-focused
- young men – close to Christ, know His voice, talk to Him daily, volunteers, etc.
- fathers – so Christ-centered they won't go anywhere without Him!

Like playing golf, there are a lot of hazards that make spiritual growth a serious challenge.

2. COMMON SAND TRAPS

The stalled:

- 16% of church attendees are 'stalled'

• Research showed the top four sand traps are ...

1) Inappropriate relationships (an emotional or physical affair, other relationships that pull them away from God)

2) Addictions (out-of-control spending, gambling, alcohol, porn, overeating, etc.)

3) Emotional issues (depression, anger, stuffing emotions – classic symptoms of unforgiveness.)

4) Not prioritizing one's spiritual life (spending more time on other things like TV, internet, emails, movies, shopping)

YOUR PASSION IS VITAL!

- There is a lot of wrestling and surrender that leads up to getting out of one of those traps.

Jeremiah 29:13-14 “Yes, when you get serious about finding me and want it more than anything else, I’ll make sure you won’t be disappointed. I’ll turn things around for you --- You can count on it.” Message

- Fact: Without God’s help - you won’t get out. [**Genesis 30:37-43**]
- Don’t confuse the method with the passion to obey God’s directions. It is the **passion** that puts God to work for you.

The dissatisfied:

- Another 10% are ‘dissatisfied’ with the church.
 - **Why?** They never seemed to understand the responsibility for their spiritual growth belongs to them – not the church.
 - Without your daily spiritual discoveries in God’s Word, you will grow anemic and eventually feel you are not being fed.
- 1 John 4:19** “We love him, **because** he first loved us.”
Exodus 33:13 “If you are pleased with me, teach me your ways so I may know you and continue to find favor with you.”
- If you don’t get past this mile marker, you will ultimately become dissatisfied, and very likely, land in some sand trap.

The flame of your passion for God is the force that generates both spiritual growth, as well as, deliverance from life’s sand traps.

HOW CAN I BEST PUT THIS INTO PRACTICE?

Ask yourself, “*What is the condition of my spiritual passion for God?*”

One way you can answer that is by thinking of what you are most passionate about—a hobby (golf, scrapbooking, etc.), your children, your job, etc. Have you adjusted your schedule and/or budget to accommodate that passion? Now, ask yourself, “*Do I adjust my schedule or budget just as much to accommodate being with God or doing what He wants?*” If not, your passion for God is not strong enough to sustain you.

The most functional “multi-vitamin type” means for increasing your spiritual passion is to find someone else who also wants to learn to hear God’s voice and learn His character and values (ways). Find a partner of the same gender and begin as soon as possible.

Quite a few of you are already involved in this kind of a Spiritual Life Coaching relationship. But if it doesn’t seem to be functioning as it should, contact one of the pastors, and we’ll coach you in how to get the most out of it. **Take initiative - act today to increase your spiritual passion.**

“DIGGING DEEPER”

For personal or small group study

Week of May 4, 2008

QUICK REVIEW: Which point or scripture passage most challenged, confused, or caught your attention in this week’s message? Why?

TODAY’S FOCUS

1. Sand traps on a golf course are obstacles that make it difficult for a golfer to get the golf ball onto the green and into the hole. How can this illustration compare to the obstacles in our lives? What do you see as some of those obstacles [sand traps]? Do they serve a purpose?

What do you do when you personally get into one of life’s sand traps?
2. What obstacles did Jesus face? How did He respond? [Matthew 4:1-11; 12:22-28, 38-39; John 6:51-53, 60-64; 12:37]

GETTING THE POINT

1. The “stalled segment” of people in their spiritual journey believe in God and that Jesus is the only way to salvation, but they are often rudderless. You know you are stalled if you don’t demonstrate that belief through personal spiritual practices such as daily prayer, Bible study or solitude. What causes a person to become stalled in their spiritual walk? [2 Peter 2:1-2; 3:17; Revelation 2:4-7]

What can we do to get “unstalled” and find a rudder that will keep us moving forward? [Jude 1:20-23; James 1:22; 4:6-8; Hebrews 10:22-25]
2. Who do you feel holds the responsibility for a person’s spiritual growth ~ the person? the church? To what degree do you think this responsibility has been misunderstood through the years? How can misunderstanding it cause a growing Christian to quit moving forward -- and to even stall and become dissatisfied?
3. Read 2 Corinthians 4:7-18. How important is the level of passion we have for Jesus in determining how we respond to life’s difficulties? In what ways can these difficulties often cause us to stall?

A LOOK INSIDE

What has been helping you grow spiritually lately? If passion for Jesus is vital ~ what are **you** doing to fire that passion?