

The Lakeview Lamp

“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” - Psalm 119:105

December 17, 2006

Hitting All the Red Lights

Mitchell Stevens

Isn't it fascinating when you're in a hurry to get somewhere, more obstacles inevitably get in your way? I was contemplating this last Monday while trying to make a lunch appointment, finding myself waiting at the fourth red light to have stopped me in traffic. I'd only met this fellow I was joining once before, and I hated to be even a few minutes late. By the time I had been blocked by my sixth red light in a row, I was beginning to formulate my excuse. "Sorry, man. I was stopped by *every red light*." How could he argue with that? I was held back by forces completely out of my control. If only construction zones, bad drivers, and my car's fuel level would have more consideration for my sudden urgent deadlines! Well, if my friend said anything, I'd be ready with the old "Traffic" trump card.

"Now, wait a minute," I then said to myself. "What's really put me behind on my plans – these red lights, or that second cup of coffee? This truck blocking the inside lane, or that third time checking e-mail instead of finding an ironed shirt?" And so my pesky conscience acquitted Memphis traffic and settled the blame uncomfortably back in my own lap.

How often do we absolve ourselves of all responsibility for failing to meet our obligations by citing forces that are truly out of our control? Upon closer examination, don't our choices in some way or other have more to do with our setbacks than we first admit? "I'm sorry we can't make it to worship. We've been sick all weekend." We missed you last weekend, too, but, of course, "We were out of town for the holiday weekend." And the week before? "Well, I had been overworked and really needed some sleep." Sorry to hear that. How about the week before? "You know – Sundays are the only days I really have to recover."

Truly, sickness happens and holidays are welcomed opportunities to get away. But is it the fault of these things alone that have led to a habit-cultivating month of non-attendance to the service of God and His saints? Where does God really fall in the plans we make? Does each day begin with "*if the Lord wills...*" (**Jas. 4:13-15**)? What would change if such words were more of a habit? On Wednesday evenings can we say, "If the Lord wills, I'll take two Sudafed and go to bed"?

Who can criticize a fever? Who would frown at a family outing? Sometimes these things mount up like red lights on a road we're in a hurry to get down. But the weight of the obstacles can be lessened by the choices we make before they come. Shall the unpreventable absences from the saints form the exception or reinforce the general rule?

“Therefore, be careful how you walk, not as unwise, but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil” (Eph. 5:15-16). “Not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another” (Heb. 10:25).

Lesson to Be Learned

Ron Adams

Simon Says... The children's game "Simon Says" is an activity wherein there is a group leader, and he says, "Simon says jump." Then you're supposed to jump. But if he just says "jump" without prefacing it with "Simon Says," then you're "out." And if you do something other than jump, you are "out." An interesting game that is used to train one to pay attention and to follow orders.

The Bible Says... Similarly, in the game of life when the words "the Bible says" preface a command or order one needs to obey. But if the words "the Bible says" do not precede a religious belief, command, or directive one must refrain from following it. If one does he will be "out."

*"Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you who practice lawlessness [not ruled by law; contrary to law].' Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock." **Matthew 7:22-24***

Harsh words? No! They are the words of a loving Savior spoken to keep you from being counted "out."

*"The LORD will not abandon His people, nor will He forsake His inheritance." – **Psalm 94:14***

Family News

Sydney Elizabeth Bansemer, Jill and Eric's baby, remains at Vanderbilt.

Mary Burnett has had another good week.

Betty Chapman was baptized into Christ two Wednesdays ago! We rejoice. The next morning she had major surgery to remove a tumor and her left lung. We rejoice that the surgery was successful. Her address is: 107 Sumner Meadows Ln., Hendersonville TN 37075

Arrigo Corazza, who we help support, has thrombosis to his left eye.

Metty Fain is in Room B2, 215 Highland Circle Dr, Portland TN 37148.

Elmo Ferrell test results show no signs of cancer.

Barry Fultz is scheduled for major surgery on January 10th.

Estelle Hayes has lost three cousins recently.

Sandra Hunt has several health problems. She remains in a great amount of pain. She also fainted recently: unknown cause.

Candy Jenkins has been sick this past week.

Cindi Malone was sick this past week, but is much better. **Allen** arrived safely home Wednesday night. Remember the Christians in Vietnam.

Patti Parham, Walter Boyd's niece-in-law, has advanced colon cancer.

Fran Pickens is not doing any better, but is not any worse.

Cotton Read has had a better week.

Laura Reed has arthritis in her back. It is worse.

Georgia Taylor may be a little better. She enjoys visitors.

Ame White remains about the same.

Robert Wray continues to have dizzy spells daily.

New Reports: **Fred Newman**.

Out of town, traveling, or visiting: **Bansemers** (KY).

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"Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks" (1 Thes 5:16-18).