

Vancleave Church of Christ Weekly Newsletter

Dedicated to spiritual encouragement and local Christian ministry

January 2, 2022

Scripture Reading: *Philippians 3:13,14*

A Friend of God by Duane Patton

One of the most interesting statements found in all the Bible is from the pen of James. He wrote,

*“Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, ‘Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.’ And he was called **the friend of God.**” (James 2:21-23, NKJV, emph. mine, DP)*

Later, in the same book, James stated that one cannot be friends with God and friends with the “world” at the same time. In other words, those who give their time and affections to this present life and the things in it more than time and affection given to presence of God and His will for them cannot be considered a friend of God. James wrote, “Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God” (James 4:3). Similarly, John the apostle also wrote about the problem associated with worldly living while claiming to be God’s friend:

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever. (1 John 2:15-17).

Near the end of Jesus’ earthly life, He encouraged the disciples to be less worldly and more godly when He said to them, “Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends. You are My friends if you do whatever I command you” (John 15:13, 14). Jesus literally laid down His life for all people. He made it possible for everyone to become His friend. Like Abraham, we today can offer our very lives to God by faith (2 Corinthians 5:7; Hebrews 11:6). This will ensure that each of us, like Abraham, can be called God’s friend. Maybe a good question each of us should ask is this: What am I willing to “lay down” to be a friend of God?

“...we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God.” (2 Corinthians 5:20)

Seeking first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness...

Services:

Sunday
9:00 AM Bible Class
10:00 AM Worship

6:00 PM Worship

Wednesday:

6:00 PM
Prayer & Bible Study

Local Works of Faith:

Sunnybrook Children’s Home
Gulf Coast Bible Camp
Local Food Pantry
Annual Youth Events
Back-Pack Buddies
The Gospel of Christ TV (Fox 25)
(Every Sunday at 6:30 AM)

Foreign Missions:

Guyana
India
Guam

Local Wi-Fi Network Access:

SSID: 2Wire029
Key: 3995723302

E-mail: vcocministry@vancleavemschurch.org

Web Site: <https://www.vancleavemschurch.org>

Subscribe to these on YouTube:

Vancleave Church of Christ Digital Ministries
The Mississippi Gospel Minute



The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and His ears are open unto their cry. ~ Psalms 34:15

Recent Prayer Requests:

- **Mike Kenney:** Dealing with various blood clotting issues and needs our prayers.
 - **Pam Carter:** Recently passed away from cancer. Our prayers are requested for her family.
 - **Jeffrey Richardson:** came through surgery well. Thank you for your prayers!
 - **Others:** _____
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Please Continue to Remember These in Prayer

David Hines	Harvey Goldensup	Cindy Stevens	Maxine Robinson
Tonya Organ	Joe Dorris Box	Frank Sentelle	Amy Stevens
Jack Hayes	Roy Corbin	Mary McDaniel	Mary Culbreth
Mark Damron	Paul Langham	Mary Alice Kenney	

Have requests or other announcements? Send email to vcocministry@vancleavemchurch.org

Announcements: Today is first Sunday. All are invited to remain after morning services and enjoy a meal together. A brief devotional will follow. There will be no evening services today.

WEEKLY WORD OF ENCOURAGEMENT: There are over 7 billion people living in Earth. Opportunities to share the Gospel are literally all around us! "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel..." (Mark 16:15)

Daily Bible Reading Plan for 2021, Week 50

MONDAY Romans 14-16

Can our convictions regarding matters of opinion help or hinder the growth of the church?

TUESDAY Acts 20:4-38; Acts 21, 22; Acts 23:1-35

Do you think Paul should have been less active in his faith? Did he suffer needlessly?

WEDNESDAY Acts 24-26

Paul spent much time publicly defending his faith in Christ. Are we willing to do this, also?

THURSDAY Acts 27, 28

Does the discussion at Malta sound similar to the way folks view Christianity today?

FRIDAY Colossians 1-4; Philemon

Did you notice the idea of Christ being the center of our lives in these letters?

SATURDAY Ephesians 1-6

Both the teaching of Christ and the practice of Christianity are taught. Why?

SUNDAY Philippians 1-4

"Joy" is mentioned a number of times in this letter. Why is this so?

"...they received the word with all readiness of mind..." (Acts 17:11)