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May 2016

“A ‘Sort of’ Mother’s Day Meditation: Reflections on 1 Samuel 1-2”

Have you ever wanted something so bad it hurt – perhaps not physically (although that’s certainly possible) but emotionally? Have you ever wanted something, were given it, but then had to give it up?

Perhaps you were given a car, and you were told it was yours to keep, but after a while you were asked to return it.

Or suppose God answered your prayers, and you adopted a child, and you invested all of yourself into that child, but then the biological mother decided to fight for custody.

How would you respond? How would you deal with a God who at one point seemed to fulfill your greatest hope, but then left you with shattered dreams?

Tough situations? You bet!

But they illustrate a bit of what Hannah faced as we encounter her in the first two chapters of 1st Samuel.

But before we look more closely at Hannah, let’s set the stage for our story.

After entering the promised land and living under the leadership of Joshua, Israel spent some 400 years as a disconnected group with little unity in their worship or their governance. At times God raised up judges, but they were mostly local and their influence was limited.

Now, as First Samuel opens, Eli was serving in Shiloh as judge and priest. But his leadership was inept, and his sons were making a mockery of the worship of God. It was about 1100 BC. The ark of the covenant was housed in a sanctuary in Shiloh, in the region of Ephraim, just north of Judea and Jerusalem.

Israel as a nation was in desperate need of godly leadership.

The Philistines were gaining in power and threatening to drive the Israelites out of their own land.

What were the Israelites to do? How were they to respond to a God who gave them a land, but, it seems, failed to give them the leaders needed to keep the land?

It is in this context that we move into the First Samuel. And as we do our text begins with two crises, one personal and one national.

And, our text sets forth a contrast, as we consider what one woman sought to do to ease her despair, and how one man -- God’s judge and priest -- added to the despair of his people.

And in all of this we see how, in reaching out to the cries of this one woman, God was also working His sovereign will to care for an entire nation – to raise up a true leader for His people, because our God is the God of peoples and individual persons!

And so the book of First Samuel opens with a tale of two families, beginning with Elkanah, a loyal worshipper of God who was himself of the tribe of Levi.

Elkanah had two wives, Hannah and Peninnah, with all indications being that he married Peninnah because Hannah could have no children. Perhaps Elkanah felt this second marriage was necessary to carry on his heritage, like Abraham and Jacob before him. Of course, like his ancestors, his lack of trust in God only served to create more problems. But, regardless of all this, what's clear is that Elkanah loved Hannah deeply, despite her inability to provide him with children.

Now we should note that God nowhere condones such polygamy. And, as is so often the case when we live contrary to God's design, the situation was unhealthy, for Peninnah felt the pain of being second rate when it came to receiving Elkanah's affections; and Hannah carried the shame of being unable to provide a family, a shame magnified with each child Peninnah bore.

In the end both women were hurt, with Peninnah turning her hurt against Hannah, and Hannah turning hers against God.

Yet, Hannah's anger and hurt did not cause her to turn from God, rather her longing intensified her pleadings with God (1 Sam 1:10). Hannah longed for a son. She wanted one so bad it hurt.

And so during one of her visits to Shiloh with Elkanah, she prayed in the sanctuary of the Lord asking for a child. Her countenance was so disturbed and her despair so deep that she could not even voice her prayer, which made Eli the priest believe she was drunk (1 Sam 1:13) – and so he accused her of wickedness. But Hannah was not deterred in her prayers and she prayed even more earnestly for a son. And she promised that if God would grant her request she would dedicate her son to a lifetime of service to God. (1 Sam 1:11)

Imagine her longing -- to want a son so bad that she would promise that if God answered her prayer she would give that child into God's service all his days.

Now, one might think that to have a son, and then to have to give him up might be worse than having no son at all! But that was her request. And God heard her words, even in her anguish. And He answered her prayer. (1 Sam 1:17)

Hannah gave birth to a son, Samuel, and she enjoyed his presence for perhaps six years (until he was weaned; 1 Sam 1:22). Then it was time to follow through on her promise. It was time to let go of Samuel – into the care of Eli – and into the household of his notoriously wicked sons, Hophni and Phinehas.

Now it's true that Hannah would be able to return to Shiloh each year as she would travel with Elkanah for the annual feast, but a year is a long time!

What would you do? Would you renege on your vow? Would you try to offer God a substitute?

And as you consider your response, remember how hard it was to leave your child at school that first time – how hard it was for you and for your child – despite knowing that you would see your child in just a few hours?

If you were Hannah how would you respond? Would you try to spare your child? Would you try to spare yourself?

Put yourself in Hannah's place.

You're at home making new clothes for Samuel, trying to imagine how big he was going to be the next time you saw him, and with each stitch thinking about him, and how you longed to have him near, to hold his hand, to kiss him goodnight, to watch him grow.

Now, imagine Samuel, a small child left in a strange place with people he didn't know.

Imagine Hannah's struggle to keep her vow to God.

Sure, Samuel was an answer to prayer, a gift from God, but he was also her son. Didn't she have the right to enjoy his presence for more than a few years?

Imagine the joy of seeing Samuel each year -- a joy mixed with pain knowing that you would once again have to leave him after a few short days. Then imagine the heart wrenching cries as you turned to walk away: "Mommy don't go! Mommy, don't you love me?"

And your only hope? That one day he would understand.

Was this too much for God to ask of Hannah?

Surely God would understand if she grabbed her son and took him home, at least until he was a teenager – then she would gladly leave him! (just joking!)

Wouldn't you be tempted to go back on your vow?

We make great pronouncements to God, perhaps in times of need or in the midst of a moving spiritual experience, but when the need is past or the emotions fade we return to our former ways.

So often God proves gracious in giving us what we ask for in prayer, but so often we fail to follow through on our promises.

We sin against God, and we hurt others, and we ask for forgiveness and promise to be more loving and giving, until the next time our selfishness and pride cause us to sin against God and hurt others.

We promise to walk closer with God but we wander from Him almost as soon as the promise leaves our lips.

We promise to give of ourselves in service to God, but we forget our promise the first time we have to choose between serving others or serving ourselves.

I don't know about you, but if I were Hannah I would've been tempted to break my promise.

But to give in to the longing of her heart, and, to the cries of her son, would've been to honor herself, and her son, above her God.

It was not easy, but Hannah chose to honor God.

And God would use Hannah's devotion to raise up a servant who would in turn meet the needs of God's people – who would deliver God's people from their enemies!

God would use Samuel to bring unity and peace to His people -- something God's people had not experienced for years.

Hannah honored God above her own wants.

And God says, "**those who honor Me, I will honor.**" (1 Sam 2:30)

And because of her faithfulness God blessed Hannah with five more children. (1 Sam 2:21)

It would've been easy for Hannah to put Samuel first in her life, but that would've made God's gift to her into idol.

And I think we all know about making people or things or desires into idols.

One of the great dangers of our youth-oriented culture is how it encourages a sort of "worship" of children and youth. In the past children were taught to respect their elders, to honor their parents (Dt 5:16). Children were to be nurtured, cared for, disciplined and loved, but not worshipped (Eph 6:4). But today, the emphasis is upon the rights of the child, with the expectation that children and youth be treated like adults. (Except, of course, for unborn children, who can be terminated at will!)

What's worse, many parents build their lives around their children – running here and there, buying this and that, filling their children's lives with so many activities and so many things, all in an attempt to give their children that "advantage" in life – to give them everything our society says they need to succeed.

And we think we're doing them a favor by making them the center of our lives, when in fact all we're teaching them is how to be self-centered and narcissistic. (And recent studies of our youth culture show we've succeeded!)

Now, I'm certainly not saying that our children and youth shouldn't receive our love and care.

But what we often fail to see is that by trying to make life easier for our children, by giving them all they want, by working to make their every step safe, we are creating a false sense of security while at the same time eliminating any need for them to trust in and lean upon the Lord.

We are, in effect, putting ourselves in place of God; and, in turn, although protecting them for a time, we're risking their eternal security.

Children are a blessing. They are a gift from God. And they are to be cared for and nurtured so that they can be used by God in His time and in His way.

They are to be loved, but not worshipped! And yet that's what we do when we find ourselves honoring our children above our God.

Hannah could have done that – but instead, she entrusted her son into the care of her sovereign God rather than believing she could better care for him.

Hannah honored God above her son.

And, as Samuel learned to lean upon and listen to God, he grew in the knowledge of God; and he came to be God's instrument in bringing peace to the land. (1 Sam 2:26, 3:19-21, 4:1)

But the first two chapters of First Samuel also speak of Eli.

Eli was the head priest. Eli knew God and knew what was expected of him as a priest.

And Eli had his own sons, Hophni and Phinehas, who were dishonoring God and their service to Him. Eli's sons were abusing the women who served at the tabernacle. Eli's sons were strong-arming the people, forcing the people to give over the best of their offering to them instead of to God.

And Eli knew all this. In fact, he enjoyed feasting with his sons, knowing full well how they were getting such choice food. And, yes he reprimanded them, but it was half-hearted, after all, it was nice to have steak for dinner.

And so, although Eli's sons should have been driven from their service to God, if not stoned for dishonoring God, Eli let them continue in their ways because Eli honored his sons above his God.

Hannah honored God above her son, and in doing so she showed Samuel just how much she loved him. For, in honoring God over her son she taught Samuel what was of greatest importance -- and that was faithfulness to God.

Eli honored his sons above God, and in so doing he wrongly taught his sons that God's glory could be compromised. And Eli's disdain for the glory of God cost him, for God judged him and his sons - - and the penalty was death! But then, God will not give His glory to another, nor will He tolerate those who do! (Isa 48:11)

You see, in truth, when we order our lives for the sake of our children -- at the expense of our and their relationship to God – we're not only doing them an injustice but we're being selfish, and we're claiming for ourselves what ultimately belongs to God.

The hard truth is, often we not only make our children into idols, but we want them to make us their idol – seeking after their worship of us instead of directing them to worship God alone.

Idolatry can show its ugly head in many places, which is why 1 Samuel 1-2 is not just about the contrast between one mother's love and one father's failure.

We can work our way into a wonderful career, see it as an answer to prayer, thank God for it, but then find our job getting in the way of our worship of God.

Perhaps we find ourselves having to work an occasional Sunday, which happens in our twenty-four-seven society.

But suppose, we start to offer to work on Sundays, even plan to work on Sundays, after all the pay is good.

Or perhaps we have Sunday's off from work, but we have too much to do to bother with church.

Before we know it God becomes a distant memory, someone we think we can ignore without consequence.

Our drifting from God may be deliberate or subtle, but it's just as deadly either way.

And instead, our "god" becomes a job, or a hobby, or a vacation home, or our kids' activities, or our personal comfort.

And we disguise our idolatry with noble sounding excuses like: “I need to spend time with my family”, or, “I must save up for my child’s education”, or, “I need to get away and relax.”

It’s so easy for us to find ourselves making an idol out of God’s gifts, instead of allowing God’s gifts to draw us closer to Him.

And these temptations toward idolatry are not limited to careers, or kids, or possessions. They even show up in the “church” – as was the case with Eli!

By God’s grace we come together to serve Him. And as part of our service we’re challenged to get involved in the life and work of the church. And that’s good, until we start to serve in order to feed our need for significance, because then our faith becomes defined by what we do for Christ instead of who we are in Christ. And when that happens our ministry can become an idol – something we do more for self than for God.

God doesn’t want our service as much as He wants our heart!

Moreover, the service we render must flow from a love relationship with God or it’s merely an empty-if-not-idolatrous-activity. And when that happens we can start to look a lot like Hophni and Phinehas.

Now, the first few chapters of 1 Samuel are about God’s sovereign working to deliver His people according to His covenant promise made to Abraham and ratified under Moses.

And in His sovereign plan He gave Hannah a son.

But in God’s plan He also gave Hannah the opportunity to cooperate in His greater working – if she would choose to honor Him.

Hannah honored God first and foremost, and God blessed her, for, God’s word says, “**Those who honor Me I will honor.**” (1 Sam 1:30)

And because God’s word is timeless, it’s fitting to ask ourselves what this passage and God’s promise mean for us today.

And I believe it speaks right to the heart of many of our struggles, because in truth the thing that’s holding most of us from experiencing the fullness of God’s riches is that we’ve constructed idols in our lives that we don’t want to tear down. And what makes things so complicated is that some of these idols were erected with the best of intentions and for apparently good reasons. But, an idol is an idol regardless of how well we justify it!

And so, as we look to celebrate Mother’s Day this month, and Father’s Day next month, I would encourage parents of all ages to receive your children as a gift from God, but, in seeking to love and serve them, remember that the best way to love your child, regardless of their age, is to honor God first.

Now, perhaps there are some reading this -- mothers or fathers or grandparents or guardians -- who realize that you’ve inadvertently put your child or grandchild or stepchild before your God – perhaps in seemingly innocent ways like skipping worship to take them to soccer, or like neglecting your time with the Lord in order to spend time with them.

If this describes you then know that God is a loving and forgiving God, and He can make all things new if you would turn to Him and honor Him.

And for all of us, this passage challenges us to search our lives and see what idols we’ve built -- like personal ambition, or career goals, or financial security -- things that have caused us to put God on hold, if not eliminate Him completely from our lives.

God desires to be honored in our lives here and now.

And God will honor those who honor Him – for God is a gracious God.

But God will also judge those who put other people or places or things before Him – for God is a jealous God – even a consuming fire! (Dt 4:24; Heb 12:29)

In the movie, "Chariots of Fire", Eric Liddle forfeited the opportunity to run in the 100 meter dash at the 1924 Olympics because the preliminary heats were on Sunday. And so instead of running the 100 meters, a teammate gave Eric his place in the 400 meter race. Now earlier in the movie, Eric, a devout follower of Jesus, spoke of how God made him fast, and when he ran he felt God's pleasure. Surely, we might argue, what was the problem with him running on Sunday, after all, if running was God's gift to Eric wouldn't God be most glorified if Eric used that gift regardless of the day? Besides, he could always go to an early service and be to the track on time? But for Eric, to keep the Sabbath special for God was his statement that God was sovereign in his life -- that he desired to honor God in all he did.

You may remember that before Eric's race, Sam Schultz, an American runner, gave Eric a note. The note read, those who honor God, God will honor -- taken from 1 Samuel 2:30.

Eric went on to win a gold medal in his race.

But even if he would've lost.

And even if Hannah would've had no other children after Samuel.

And even if you lose a promotion because you won't put your job before your God.

And even if our children complain because we make God and His principles a priority in our homes.

Still, we must honor God above all other people, or possessions, or activities, or opportunities, because to give God any place but first place is to dishonor God.

But, to put God first, above all else, even our children, is to please God, and is to give Him the glory that God alone deserves.

Moreover, to honor God first and foremost is to make ourselves useful instruments in the hands of a loving, almighty God who will honor those who honor Him.

May God be honored in and through you, all of your days!

God's grace and peace to you,

Pastor John

CATCH THE SPIRIT!!

May 15th is Pentecost Sunday. Pentecost is the day that the **Holy Spirit** came upon the disciples in Jerusalem, they began preaching the Good News of Jesus Christ, and the Christian church was born!!

Pentecost is a day to celebrate! It is a celebration of newness, of recreation, of renewal of purpose, mission and calling as God's people. It is a celebration of God's ongoing work in our world.



Red symbolizes the **fire** of the Holy Spirit and therefore, red is the color of the day. The sanctuary will be decorated with red and everyone is encouraged to wear something red that morning.

We hope you will plan to join us for this special day of celebration!!



During the months of **April and May** we will receive a **Special Mission Offering**. We will divide the money collected between two ministries: a local

ministry – InterVarsity at HVCC, and an international ministry – Presbyterian Disaster Assistance.

These ministries were chosen in part because they help us to fulfill our mission as a church:

- To Love Our God and Neighbor**
- To Proclaim the Gospel Through Word and Deed**
- To Make Disciples of Jesus the Christ**

You should have received a booklet containing a “Calendar of Blessings” and an envelope for each week from Easter to Pentecost. The calendar has some suggested things that we are blessed with and often take for granted, things many in our world live without.

We ask you as you consider those things to determine how much you will give each week in thankfulness for the blessings you have been given. Put your contributions in the envelope provided and place it in the offering plate on Sunday mornings. Remember to include your regular offering envelope number so your contribution can be recorded correctly. Checks should be made payable to Third Presbyterian Church.

There is a display at the front of the sanctuary with information about InterVarsity Christian Fellowship and Presbyterian Disaster Assistance as well as additional offering envelopes if you need more.

If you did not receive the offering materials and would like them, please call the church office (283-2420).

If you have any questions, please speak with any member of the Outward Ministry Committee (Pat Gilmaier, Rob Jensen, Jason Laz, Peter Laz, Sue Laz, Jen McAuley, Andy Miller, Jerry Whitman, Vera Whitman Pastor John).



Remember in Prayer...

Our Shut-ins at home:

Tillie Herman, Marcella Goard, June Giles,

At the Eddy: Dot Multunas, Edna Wells

At Schuyler Ridge: Dolores Robb

At Brookdale Colonie: Dot McGan

Those dealing with health issues:

Stan Bentley, Doris Calamaras, Joshua Valerio

Our Church:

Pastor John and the Session

Our Community:

Those who don't know the Lord
 Those dealing with financial difficulties
 That our schools would be places of safety

Our World:

Missionaries serving around the world
 Open doors for sharing the Gospel message.
 Persecuted Christians around the world

Help Fill the Shelves at Hope 7's Food Pantry!

Hope 7's food pantry serves families in need right here in our own community. The need is great and has been growing every year!

During the month of May we will be collecting paper goods – napkins, paper towels, tissues, toilet paper, etc.



Donations of other non-perishable food items will also be accepted.

Serving This Month

May 1st

Worship Assistants: Deena Dominy and Dean Calamaras
 Greeters: Bill Multunas
 Head Greeters: Rob Jensen
 Nursery: Alice Bentley
 Communion: Rob Jensen
 Fellowship Hosts: Sue Stierer

May 8th

Worship Assistants: Peter Laz and Eric Ofori
 Greeters: Valerie Bidwell, Vaughn Skarzynski
 Head Greeter: Andy Miller
 Nursery: Jen McAuley
 Communion: Sue Laz, Vera Whitman, Alice Bentley, Andy Miller
 Fellowship Hosts: Pat Gilmaier

May 15th

Worship Assistants: Sue Laz and Connie Russell
 Greeters: Alice Bentley, Joe Pasinella
 Head Greeter: Rob Jensen
 Nursery: Deena Dominy, Angelina Solomon
 Fellowship Hosts: Lois Pasinella

May 22nd

Worship Assistants: Bill Multunas, Ella Miller
 Greeters: Deena Dominy, Andy Miller
 Head Greeter: Christian Multunas
 Nursery: Wendy Giddings
 Communion: Bill and Christian Multunas, Dean Calamaras, Deena Dominy
 Fellowship Hosts:

May 29th

Worship Assistants: Eric and Jesse Ofori
 Greeters: Dean and Doris Calamaras
 Head Greeter: Peter Laz
 Nursery: Alice Bentley
 Communion: Doris Calamaras, Eric Ofori, Hazel Landry, Jason Laz
 Fellowship Hosts:

May Birthdays

5/4 Joshua Multunas
 5/7 Steve Dickson
 5/7 Virginia Somerville
 5/8 Bob Somerville Jr.
 5/11 Stanton Bentley
 5/13 Matthew Martin
 5/16 Kim Davey
 5/27 Bill Multunas
 5/29 Bridget Somerville



May Anniversaries

5/2 Sue & Peter Laz
 5/14 Jon and Sarah Purnell

General Financial Update for March 2016

	Year to Date	March
Total Income	\$39,953.00	\$12,770.00
Total Expenses	(\$41,986.84)	(\$13,436.57)
Difference	(\$ 2,033.84)	(\$ 666.57)



Fellowship Hosts Needed

Hosts are needed for Fellowship Time throughout the upcoming months. Fellowship hosts are asked to bring a few snacks for after worship. Coffee, sugar, cream, cold drinks, cups, napkins, and plates are provided. In addition to snacks, you would also be responsible for setting things up and cleaning up afterwards.

You can host on your own or you could work together with others to make the job easier. There is a sign-up sheet near the kitchen showing the Sundays where a host is needed. If you have not hosted before and would like some assistance or if you have questions, please speak with Natalia Multunas.

Bible Quiz for May 2016

This quiz will focus on Luke 22:1-46.

1. True or False: The chief priests and teachers of the law were so impressed with Jesus' teaching that that wanted to offer Him a permanent position with the Sanhedrin.
2. What was the name of the disciple who betrayed Jesus?
3. What was the name of the location where Jesus ate the Passover meal with His disciples?
4. Fill in the blank: Taking the bread and giving thanks, Jesus gave it to His disciples saying, "This is my _____ given for you; do this in _____ of me." (NIV)
5. Fill in the blank: Taking the cup after supper, Jesus said, "This cup is the _____ in my blood, which is poured out for you." (NIV)
6. True or False: When Jesus said that someone would betray Him, everyone in the room knew who He was talking about. (NIV)
7. For which of Jesus' disciples did Jesus pray that he not be sifted as wheat by Satan?
8. When the disciples argued over whom among them was the greatest, who did Jesus say was the greatest?
9. Which disciple boldly declared that he would follow Jesus to prison and even to death?
10. True or False: When Jesus went off to pray (in the Garden of Gethsemane) on the Mount of Olives, the disciples kept watch to make sure He wasn't disturbed.

SESSION MEETING-THIRD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH-APRIL 11, 2016

CLERK'S REPORT

- Miscellaneous Information:
 1. Average attendance for March 2016 was 57.
 2. Jerry Whitman preached on April 3rd.
 3. Jerry Whitman will be preaching at East Hebron United Presbyterian Church on April 17th.
 4. Bill Multunas will be preaching on May 15th, Pentecost.
 5. Following that will be Andy Miller, Sal Scechitano, and Sue Laz.

UPWARD MINISTRY

WORSHIP & PRAYER - We are looking to create a video of pictures of our moms and dads that will be used on Mother's Day and Father's Day.

INWARD MINISTRY

CONGREGATIONAL CARE

- Setting up visitation schedule with Vera Whitman.
- Cards and Call Ministry on-going.

CHRISTIAN NURTURE

- **WOMEN'S MINISTRY** - There is a possibility of a one day women's retreat at the end of summer or early fall. More information to follow.
- **YOUTH MINISTRY** - VBS planning in place.
- **SENIOR GOD SQUAD** - Our Spring/Summer gathering sponsored by the Senior God Squad has been set for Saturday July 16th at noon. We will start with our catered lunch by Carols Eatery on Pawling Avenue, and then our music entertainment at about 12:45. This time we will have a couple, called "Moonshine Holler", who sing and have a sing-along of American favorite songs. We will also have our Mission Project for Ronald McDonald House of Albany, Of individual servings of snacks and microwavable items. We will also have our collection for our financial gift to help with the stay of families with extremely sick children.

OUTWARD MINISTRY

OUTREACH & MISSIONS

- Spending for April: \$500-Capital City Rescue Mission, \$500-Gideons International, \$500-InterVarsity (Hudson Valley Community College), \$300-InterVarsity (RPI & Russell Sage)
- Easter Egg Hunt went very well. We had 33 children attend.
- Plans for the Community Garage Sale to be held on June 4th are in place and we are already getting calls to reserve spaces.

STEWARDSHIP

GENERAL FUND/FINANCE

- We had a negative cash flow during March of \$666.57. This brings our year-to-date deficit to \$2,033.84.
- 2017 offering envelopes have been received.

- 1st Quarter Offering Statements were distributed on 04/03/16.

PROPERTY - New handicapped height toilets should be installed in downstairs bathroom in the next couple of weeks.

NOMINATING - Process is moving along.

ALBANY PRESBYTERY

- A Listening/Resolution Team has been appointed in response to the request from the Cohoes Church, for gracious dismissal to the ECO (Evangelical Covenant Order of Presbyterians).
- Presbyterian Disaster Assistance is active in Hoosick Falls, assisting the congregation there, as they deal with water contamination.
- Next meeting will be June 3-4 at Silver Bay.

THE WESTMINSTER SHORTER CATECHISM

What we believe matters. Doctrine matters, for out of our core beliefs come our actions – actions which, by God’s grace, should bring honor to God and blessing to others and us. To help build a solid theological foundation out of which “God honoring works” can flow, I encourage you to spend some time reading and reflecting upon the questions below, which have been selected from the Westminster Shorter Catechism. The “Westminster Shorter Catechism” is one of the catechisms included in the Book of Confessions of the PCUSA, and was originally written to supplement the “Westminster Confession of Faith” as a teaching document for younger Christians.

Q 76. Which is the Ninth Commandment?

The Ninth Commandment is, “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.”

Q 77. What is required in the Ninth Commandment?

The Ninth Commandment requires the maintaining and promoting of truth between one person and another, and of our own and our neighbor’s good name, especially in witness-bearing.

Q 78. What is forbidden in the Ninth Commandment?

The Ninth Commandment forbids whatsoever is prejudicial to truth, or injurious to our own or our neighbor’s good name.

Q 79. Which is the Tenth Commandment?

The Tenth Commandment is, “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house, you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is your neighbor’s.”

Q 80. What is required in the Tenth Commandment?

The Tenth Commandment requires full contentment with our own condition, with a right and charitable frame of spirit toward our neighbor and all that is his.

Q 81. What is forbidden in the Tenth Commandment?

The Tenth Commandment forbids all discontentment with our own estate, envying or grieving at the good of our neighbor, and all inordinate motions and affections to anything that is his.

From Music and Audio-Visual Ministries...

(NOT QUITE)
“YOU ARE ▲ WHAT YOU SING”

Have you ever really considered some of the downright dangerous things we declare in the hymns and songs that we sing? I have to admit that sometimes I find myself cringing at the lofty and noble sentiments I attribute to yours truly in the course of our musical worship. Check out these lyrics from two well-known hymns and three contemporary worship songs.

- “This is my story, this is my song, praising my Savior all the day long...” (*really? I do this all day long?*)
- “All to Jesus I surrender, all to him I freely give...” (*seriously? I’m giving up everything to him?*)
- “Lord, I give you my heart, I give you my soul--I live for you alone. Every breath that I take, every moment I’m awake--Lord, have your way in me...” (*no kidding? I want Jesus to have his way with me with every breath I take and every moment of every day?*)
- “I will worship you with all of my heart. I will worship you with all of my mind. I will worship you with all of my strength, for you are my Lord.” (*am I truly sure I’m worshipping him with ALL my heart, ALL my mind, and ALL my strength?*)
- “I will seek you all of my days. I will follow all of your ways...” (*not missing a one, huh? Seeking him ALL of my days and following ALL of his ways?*)

Kinda embarrassing, isn’t it? Who can live up to this *Super Christian*? Why sing from such hypocrisy? You’ve heard the old joke: How do you get to Carnegie Hall? *Practice*. I think we’re practicing. I don’t think the old hymn writers and the contemporary song writers *were* or *are* delusional narcissists. I think they were giving us something to hold on to, something to aspire to, something to *live into* as a dress rehearsal for the great *gathering together* and eternal life together with Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. 1 John 3:2 says, *Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.* “We shall be like him...” Well now I’ve got no problem at all singing words like that.

Our gathered worship now pales in comparison to the heavenly vision of worship shown to the likes of Paul and what John saw in Revelation. The writer of Hebrews encourages us to spur one and another on to good works and to not forsake the assembling of ourselves together as we see the day of the return of Christ approaching. We may not be *quite* what we are singing now, but each time we gather, consider it a dress rehearsal--an opportunity to practice, as we draw ever nearer to the day when we shall be like him for *we shall see him as he is*.

With Joy in the Journey,
Sal Scicchitano



Mission Spotlight: YFC Bangladesh

Bangladesh YFC (BYFC) launched its operation in assisting poverty stricken people, school drop-outs, and unemployed youths in their quest for a meaningful life and to earn a living for their basic needs in 1995.

Peter Halder is the founding National Director of YFC in Bangladesh. Though he grew up in a predominantly Muslim country, he enjoyed the experience of being raised in a Christian home and he accepted Christ after high school. Soon after he felt God calling him to serve poverty stricken, undereducated, and unemployed young people in their quest for a meaningful life that can only be found in a relationship with Jesus Christ. Peter and his team concentrate on bringing young people to maturity in Christ, instilling leadership, and training them in the skills they need to earn a living.

The ministry of BYFC includes a preschool; a rehab center for those seeking to get out of drug addiction; clubs for teens; help for those dealing with HIV/AIDS; drug and HIV prevention programs; prayer ministry; community outreach; and children's homes for street children (children rescued from trafficking, kidnapping, and sex work) and orphans.

Peter shares the story of Monya (not her real name): *“Monya was on the street as a child with no food, shelter, clothes or education. She was sexually abused by the street people. She was admitted to the first children's home in 2004 where she was given food, shelter, care and education. Monya is now in college. Monya heard the gospel of Jesus Christ at the YFC center and eventually found Jesus. Now she knows, even though her parents are not alive, that she has a Father who cares for her. Now she is walking with Jesus and living a transformed life. There are many lives that have been transformed because of your support. Thank you!”*

The senior staff met together in November and set the following goals for the next 5 years:

- To reach 105 million young people
- To start 5 new children's homes
- To build a dormitory to house college students who are from the YFC children's homes
- To establish 200 Hi-Clubs (YFC high school clubs)
- To develop and equip the YFC Drug Addicts Treatment and Rehab Center to be the best in the country.

Peter writes:

“In Bangladesh there are two million street kids, 7 million drug addicts, 161,000 with HIV/AIDS, 3.3 million children who are not in school and 43% of the population only earns \$1.25 per day. The vision is to reach every young person in every people group in our nation. It is absolutely impossible for us to do it without His grace and your support. I am humbly asking you continue your faithful prayer and financial support so that we can set our people free from every sort of bondage, help them to live transformed lives and see them in the Father's flock.”

Please remember Peter and his staff and our other mission partners – Capital City Rescue Mission, Hope 7, Ronald McDonald House-Albany, Capital District YFC, InterVarsity at RPI, Sage and HVCC, Horizons, Gideon's International, Voice of the Martyrs, Medical Benevolence Foundation PC(USA), and our sponsored children – Emerson in El Salvador and Anyelo in Guatemala - in your prayers.

Information and updates on all of our mission partners can be found in the binder in the church office and on the bulletin boards in fellowship hall.

COMMUNITY GARAGE SALE

June 4th
9:00 – 2:00

The Outward Ministry Committee is once again planning for a Community Garage Sale this summer so as you do your spring cleaning begin saving the treasures you no longer need and plan on joining us on the 4th. There is no cost to participate. Just bring a table and your treasures to sell. If you would like to use one of the church's tables please speak with Andy Miller.

If you would like to help out, we are looking for people who can help with set up and clean up and we need a few people who could man the food table and the church information table.

If you are able to help out or if you have any questions, please speak with Sue Laz.



*Third Presbyterian Church
115 Winter Street
Troy, NY 12180*

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

*Our Mission:
To Love our God and Neighbor
To Proclaim the Gospel through
Word and Deed
To Make Disciples of Jesus the Christ*

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life." John 3:16