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Keystone BAPTIST

COMMON FALLACIES ABOUT CHURCH LEADERSHIP

by Pastor Steve Lyon

Bible Baptist Church, Upper Darby, PA



The word Perception comes from the Latin *cipere*, which means, “to grasp.” Perception refers to the way we take the world in, our grasp of life. It’s the way we interpret things. Sometimes perceptions can be deceiving. Twice in the book of Proverbs we are told that the way which seems right actually leads to death (Proverbs 14:12 & 16:25). In the legal world certain safeguards have been instituted to make sure the truth comes out despite our inclination to jump to conclusions: First, the concept of due process (innocent until proven guilty). Second, the opportunity to cross-witness (hearing out the other side is critical in arriving at truth) and finally, guilt must be based upon the preponderance of the evidence

(there should be no reasonable doubt as to someone’s guilt). These three safeguards are critical in forming accurate conclusions. Without them, we are easily led astray and inequity takes place.

Sometimes we form opinions based, not upon what we know, but what we presume to be true. Proverbs 12:15 says, “The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise.” The know-it-all is not likely to be on the right side of the argument because he has closed himself off to other perspectives. Since only God has all the facts and is the only one with complete wisdom, we must beware of our proclivity to deception. Proverbs 21:2 says, “Every way of a man is right in his own eyes: but the LORD pondereth the hearts.” The wiser we become the longer we wait to form conclusions until we have all the facts. Proverbs 18:13 says, “He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him.” The word answereth has the idea of returning a verdict. When we answer a matter, we are giving our final verdict.... our take on the situation. Paul reminds us that there will be a final judgment. At that point everything will come to light; even the motives behind the actions we see. It will be then that those who truly deserve praise will receive it from God (1 Corinthians 4:5). **Continued page 2**

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EDITOR

Rev. Paul J. Connor

LAYOUT & DESIGN

Anita L. Fordyce

Having said that, I am reminded that things aren't always what they appear to be. In 1 Samuel 16, Samuel lines up the sons of Jesse. One of them is going to be the next king of Israel. When Samuel sees the oldest son Eliab, he is convinced he's looking at the next king of Israel: He was looking outwardly at a man that had all the appearances of a king. God, however, said to him, "Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart." God ended up picking the least likely candidate to be king, Jesse's youngest boy David.

Here's a profound statement. Before I became a pastor, I wasn't a pastor! Enlightening isn't it? I attended a church however, that did have a pastor, so before I was a pastor, I had a pastor. I attended a larger church (than I now pastor). There were many people at this church who had insights about ministry, and church leadership which they freely shared with any and all who would listen. Some of the things they said were repeated so often that it became "common knowledge." Then I became a pastor, and discovered that some of these people had no idea what they were talking about. They had never been pastors. They didn't have a clue. They made presumptions based upon what appeared to be true to them, but wasn't based on knowledge. And they were so dogmatic and authoritative when they spouted off. I have come to learn, that some of these very ideas are passed around in other churches as well, and have caused church leadership great consternation. People have no idea how difficult they make ministry by passionately declaring things which they know nothing about! Here are just a few misconceptions of ministry.

PASTORS ONLY WORK ON SUNDAY AND WEDNESDAY

Just about every preacher will hear this when they enter the ministry, "Oh Pastor, you only work on Sunday and Wednesdays right?" This may bring a smile to the pastors who read it... at the same time a deep-seated "Ugh!" The truth is 50% of ordained ministers, across denominational lines, are out of the pulpit within 5 years. 1500 pastors leave their posts each month. One of the main reasons they leave is burnout. Eighty percent of pastors' spouses feel their spouse is overworked. 90% of the pastor's surveyed work more than 50 hours a week. I'm convinced the people who most abuse a pastor's time, are the ones who don't realize how many demands are upon them. They reason that, since the pastor has all this time on his hands, he shouldn't mind giving me an hour or two.... every week! Many people attempt to control their pastor's by expecting unlimited amounts of their time, and they are offended if it is not given. In my experience, the ones who have the most to say about how I spend my time have been the ones who work 40 hours or less a week. I'd switch hours with them any time!

THE CHURCH IS TOP-HEAVY

Here's another one that I've heard. The cry is that there are "too many people on staff compared to the ratio of people in the church." I remember when I would hear this, I thought, "They must know something that I don't know." They seemed so sure of themselves and so official in condemning the size of the church leadership. It was only when I entered the ministry that I realized how many demands are placed upon the church. It's overwhelming. People don't realize how many expectations are put on the church regularly. Also, no matter how many demands are fulfilled, there will always be those who feel slighted and get offended because they didn't get enough of the leadership's time. Most people who think the church is top-heavy simply don't realize the nature of ministry.

The Impact of Talents for Christ

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By Rev. Erich Brooks
Rippling Brooks Ministries

I want to share with you a story of how Talents for Christ has impacted a life. Actually, it is my life, and I am so grateful for the involvement I had in Talents for Christ, which helped to hone my talents and use them for the cause of Christ.

I am the second of four siblings, and in our family it was expected that we all participate somehow in Talents for Christ (over the years, all of us competed in various categories and each won states and continued on to compete nationally). My older sister competed in the Bible Knowledge category, but I didn't think I was smart enough to remember whole books of the Bible. I didn't play an instrument, either, so that kind of narrowed it down to one potential category – Male Public Speaking. At first this sounded a little – actually a lot – nerve-racking to be speaking up in front of people, but I needed to compete in something. Through my dad's coaching and much practice, even presenting my speech in a couple churches ahead of the competition, I made it through. The two years I competed in Pennsylvania, I won the competition and had opportunity to go on to the national Talents for Christ competition. I know the one year I placed third nationally, but I never found out the other year. I was disappointed to not win at Nationals, but in hindsight, winning wasn't the most important aspect of the competition. God used the experiences, even more than the pleasure of winning, to prepare me for future ministry and to help this shy, quiet teen develop the confidence to be able to speak in front of others.

After high school, I went to Bible college in the youth pastoral program. My freshman year, my favorite class was speech class. While away at college, I attended a small Baptist church where I preached my first full Sunday morning sermon. I'll never forget stepping up to the pulpit that morning, looking out across the congregation, and finding that that day, of all days, several very well-known Bible scholars and college professors chose to visit our church! Needless to say, it shook me a little more to be preaching in front of those individuals. I do remember that I kind of flew through my notes that morning and finished fifteen minutes early. I continued to preach occasionally there, and I was approached just before my senior year of college about becoming their pastor. This was a real shock since I wasn't even out of college. In working through that decision, spending much time in prayer, and meeting with the pulpit committee, I didn't feel the Lord was directing me at that time into the pastoral ministry, but this was one more way the Lord was opening up my heart to the pastoral ministry.

The Lord continued to guide my steps and open opportunities to speak in front of others in church and at camp. Eventually I was called to pastor Cowlesville Baptist Church in Western New York where I served for twelve years. During those years I had opportunities to speak at conferences, camps, and Christian schools, as well as to lead a pastors and wives fellowship in the Buffalo area. In 2015, I transitioned to being on the road as an evangelist. Since then, I have had the opportunity to speak in many different churches. Do I still get nervous? Yes, sometimes I do. Most of our ministry is focused on smaller churches, but last year I spoke at a church of around 350-400 people. I was fine until I remembered the church service was also broadcast on the radio. Then I started sweating, and my heart began to race! Once I got into sharing the Word of God, though, all was fine. I am humbled to think that God uses me, someone who was so shy as a kid, to communicate His truth. I also thank God for the Talents for Christ program, which pushed me to develop the ability God has blessed me with of speaking forth the Word of God.

I would encourage you to put the abilities God has given you to work in your local church and to encourage the young people around you to do the same. It can have a great impact in directing others to our great God!

TALENTS FOR CHRIST

COMPETITION CATEGORIES

MARCH 27-28, 2020

- Extemporaneous Writing
- Bible Knowledge: Old & New Testament
- Art: 2-Dimensional, 3-Dimensional
- Photography
- Home Economics: Baking, Needlework/Handiwork, Sewing
- Bible Quizzing Team
- Vocal
 - Male & Female Solos
 - Large & Small Groups
- Instrumental*
 - Brass: Cornet, Trumpet, French Horn, Trombone, Baritone, Tuba, Sousaphone
 - Strings: Violin, Viola, Cello, Bass, Classical Guitar, Folk Strings
 - Woodwinds: Bassoon, Oboe, Clarinet, Bass Clarinet, Alto Saxophone, Tenor Saxophone, Flute
 - Piano
 - Large & Small Group
- Speech
 - Oral Interpretation
 - Public Speaking: Male & Female
 - Visualized Bible Teaching
 - Puppetry
 - Digital Media
 - Digital Presentation

**Exceptions can be made to these categories and instruments with prior approval from the Talents for Christ Committee.*

DEADLINE FOR REGISTRATION IS MARCH 6, 2020

State Representative's Comments
Rev. Paul J. Connor



I AM PUZZLED

The word perplexed comes to mind... or even the word bewildered, but the word puzzled seems to sum it up for me. The things I see happening just do not make sense and even with an effort of guesswork I am

left without a satisfaction. To some of you it may make very clear and simple sense, but to me – well – **I am just puzzled.**

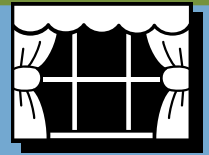
Along time ago I realized that in many churches there is a tendency to fall into a typical pattern in attendance – what I call the “50% Syndrome”. I am very puzzled when half of those in attendance in a Sunday morning service do not return for the Sunday evening service. And half of those that were in church Sunday evening do not come for the mid-week Prayer Meeting. **That puzzles me.**

The more I travel and minister in these fifty plus years, serving the Lord, the more I have observed some very puzzling things:

- We still have the glorious gospel to proclaim – Matthew 28:18-20 – but there are fewer and fewer out on visitation in our churches or even sharing the marvelous Plan of Salvation with others around us - - **This puzzles me.**
- We still have the Holy Spirit ministering – Acts 1:8 – but many of us act as if we do not have the capability to be used of the Lord or don't want to be witnesses for Christ- - **This puzzles me.**
- Our testimony suffers when the unsaved see an unfaithfulness in our involvement in church services and activities - - **This puzzles me,** especially when we are told not to forsake the assembling of yourselves together (Hebrews 10:25).
- So many today are convinced that their church has to / must be more like the world in church

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From the Parsonage Window



What Time I Am Afraid

Many years ago I heard a missionary tell how fear and anxiety, had brought her home from the field. I'd had minor bouts of it but nothing like what she had been through. She said, “I guarantee you, that in time, this will only be a memory if you seek God's purpose and fill your mind with Scripture, even when nothing makes sense.” My infrequent anxiety was bothersome, but I ignored it and life moved on. I've always been a type-A, go getter, not afraid to try anything kind of person, so why couldn't I eradicate this tendency on my own. Just stay busy was my mantra.

I have Afib, a heart rhythm abnormality. With the help of a pacemaker, I kept on doing my thing, my way. But three years ago, one night shortly after Christmas, anxiety and fear coupled with paralyzing panic hit. About 10:00 that evening, I exploded into sheer terror. I told my husband I needed to do something—to move—to get busy which was always my solution so I could divert my thoughts. In a total flight and fear mode, I defrocked the house of the holiday decorations in two hours while he put them in the attic. But, the anxiety didn't go away and from then on a panic attack with waves of fear could come at any time and anywhere. I was frightened to the point of shaking when it occurred, which soon was every day.

I turned to my doctor, thinking a short dosage of medication would magically make it disappear. I begged God to let this be the answer. However, we tried several medications with some making it worse. During this time, I had a routine follow-up with my cardiologist, I was an anxious mess and apologized to him about my shaking hands. He took my hand and said, “You think that you're losing your mind, don't you?” He explained that the Afib had physically caused the feelings of anxiety. I had

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THE PASTOR IS A GREAT PREACHER BUT A HORRIBLE MANAGER

There's another criticism of pastors that can stem from ignorance. Pastors have been greatly blessed over the years by men in their congregations that are leaders in the secular world: Business owners, managers, CEO's and other positions seem to give some Christians a greater understanding of what it takes to lead a church. There are, however, others that fail to see some of the differences between "ministry" and "business." They are convinced the pastor is a good preacher, but a horrible manager. "Stick to preaching" they might off-handedly say to their pastor. Sometimes these folks fail to take certain things into consideration. They are used to leading employees whom they pay. They have the power to say (quoting our President), "You're fired!" In Church ministry, one of the hardest tasks is getting people to be faithful when they are simply volunteers. Since their livelihood doesn't depend on it, there's not as much at stake. In ministry the work is always plenteous and the labors few (Matt. 9:27). I've come to realize that some of the greatest administrators I will ever know are pastors' that have ignorantly been criticized for being weak in that very area!

THE PASTOR DOESN'T LIKE TO DEAL WITH PROBLEMS

While I realize that any of these criticisms could indeed be true, I suspect that many pastor's are condemned unfairly from those who don't see the whole picture. It's funny to me that the only people that have ever labeled me a "people-pleaser" were people that weren't pleased with how I dealt with them. I have found great comfort in Paul's acknowledgement to the Corinthians that he didn't really care how others thought of him. He said, "With me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment" 1 Cor. 4:3. Paul understood that it was only God's opinion that mattered. Even his own judgment of himself meant little in light of God's approval.

It is impossible to please everyone. No matter how wise you are, or no matter what decisions you make, there will always be someone that is unhappy with your decision. That is ministry! Each one of us must seek God when dealing with sinners. Some will think you should have dealt more firmly with a person, while others will think you handled that same situation too harshly. It is impossible to escape the ministry without being criticized. None of that will matter if our primary goal is to hear our precious Savior say, "Well done thou good and faithful servant."

In conclusion, be careful who you listen to when it comes to bad reports. There are so many motives and opinions bandied about that are chaff. People will speak with great authority on things they know very little about. Everyone has an opinion. If you want to help your church, and your concern is great enough to go to the source, then do so privately. If it is not, criticize the Penguins or Flyers... and then keep your mouth shut.

"And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business...."

1 Thessalonians 4:11



Mark Your Calendar With these Dates



Fall Conference - September 16-18, 2019

Open Door Baptist Church, Greensburg

Hosts: Pastor Joshua Franklin and Congregation

Guest Speaker: Evangelist Ron DeGarde

Future Dates for Conferences are on our website: parbc.org

Youth Retreat and Talents for Christ

March 27-28, 2020

Calvary Baptist Church, Bloomsburg

Deadline for Registration – March 6, 2020

See www.parbc.org (Teen Activities)



Spring Conference - April 20-21, 2020

First Baptist Church of Ogden, Boothwyn

Hosts: Pastor Dan Hicks and Congregation



Churches Searching for a Pastor

(as of June 2, 2019)

Bethel Baptist Church -- Erie
Garden Heights Baptist Church – Erie
Grace Baptist Church – Kittaning
First Baptist Church – Roulette
Tidioute Baptist Church – Tidoute
Calvary Baptist Church – Union City
Worthington Baptist Church – Worthington



Resolution on the Sanctity of Human Life

WHEREAS the Bible teaches that life is a gift from God because we are created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27; 5:1-2; Deuteronomy 4:32; Malachi 2:10), and life begins at conception (Psalm 139:13); and

WHEREAS the Bible teaches that God has knowledge and a relationship with the unborn child (Jeremiah 1:5; Psalm 139:13-16); and

WHEREAS the Bible refers to the unborn baby as a child and is therefore a person in the eyes of God (Genesis 25:22; Luke 1:13-17; Romans 9:11); and

WHEREAS the Bible teaches that the unborn child was afforded legal protection under the Law (Exodus 21:22-23); and

WHEREAS the Bible teaches that children are a blessing from God (Psalm 127:3-5); and

WHEREAS the Bible teaches that we should not commit murder (Exodus 20:13; Deuteronomy 5:17; Matthew 19:18; Mark 10:19; Luke 18:20; Romans 13:9; James 2:11; 1 Peter 4:15) because that person is created in the image of God (Genesis 9:6); and

WHEREAS the Bible both condemns and forbids the sacrifice of children (Leviticus 18:21; 20:2; Deuteronomy 12:31); and

WHEREAS the Bible teaches that God judged ancient Israel for sacrificing its children (Jeremiah 7:30-34; Ezekiel 16:20-21; Ezekiel 20:30-31); and

WHEREAS our nation continues to murder its unborn children, and has failed to repent of the abomination of abortion; and

WHEREAS the recent push for late-term abortion laws in New York and Virginia and beyond by elected leaders are brazenly advocating for policies that would allow abortions up to the very day a child is born, and that for those precious babies who are born alive after a failed abortion attempt, pro-abortion politicians in Washington D.C. have repeatedly rejected legislation that would require abortionists to provide life-saving medical care to these infants, leaving them to die.

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that we, the messengers of the Pennsylvania Association of Regular Baptist Churches gathered at Crescentville Baptist Church, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, April 29th & 30th, 2019, believe that the medical procedure of abortion including abortive medication is the destruction of a human life and, therefore, is considered murder in the Scriptures; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we admonish the citizens of the United States of America who have supported abortion, abortionists, pro-abortion legislators, and pro-abortion legislation to repent and seek mercy and forgiveness from our loving Heavenly Father who is rich in mercy and grants forgiveness to all to call upon Him by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we encourage our brothers and sisters in Christ to pray for, support and vote for pro-life judges and candidates in the upcoming Pennsylvania primaries, May 21, 2019;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we sympathize with those who become pregnant because of rape or molestation, and encourage them to seek help from a Bible-believing church or pro-life women's clinic, and we encourage our churches and their members to help those who desire to do what is best for this new child either in keeping the baby or through adoption;

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that we urge our church members to contact their Representative and Senators by calling the US Capital switchboard at (202)-224-3121 and urge them to support the Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act.

A Resolution in Objection to the “Normalization” of Sin

WHEREAS our nation and the world have been subjected to an onslaught of challenges, protests, and other efforts to overturn existing laws against sodomy, adultery, pedophilia and such like; and **WHEREAS** the LGBTQ lobby has succeeded in persuading the US Supreme Court to hear their cause, claiming their preference as a matter of Civil Rights; and

WHEREAS several religious/church organizations have lowered their standards to accept participants in homosexual conduct into membership, some drawing the line at marriage; and

WHEREAS public education has already introduced sex education, including promotion of the acceptance of alternate relationships beyond heterosexual marriage, beginning in elementary school grades and the use of transgender persons to teach in such classes (Deuteronomy 22:5; Leviticus 20:1—21); and

WHEREAS efforts have already been made to compel Bible-believing churches, schools, and other organizations to employ such persons in their ministries under threat of discrimination suits; and

WHEREAS the Bible explicitly forbids all such conduct, in both the Old and New Testaments, as an abomination to God (Romans 1) who made mankind male and female (Genesis 1:27) with gender distinctions both identifiable and unchangeable at the DNA/chromosomal level.

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that we, the messengers of the Pennsylvania Association of Regular Baptist Churches assembled this April 29-30, 2019, at Crescentville Baptist Church in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, do hereby affirm the Bible’s condemnation of all such conduct and misrepresentation of gender and the basic distinctions between men and women as found in Scripture.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we take exception to the efforts to “normalize” such conduct, now being openly accepted and recommended in the media and social media, in an effort to undermine the Biblical principles that have brought God’s blessing upon our nation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we recognize the efforts being made to change the values of professing Christians and Americans in general, and educate our people, especially parents, to know and uphold the Biblical principles now being rejected by those who consider such behavior within the realm of “normal relationships.”

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that we “obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:39) and mark the Apostle Paul’s warning, “and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them” (Ephesians 5:11).

A Resolution on the Power of the Gospel

WHEREAS the Bible clearly states that all humanity is conceived in sin and therefore are in a lost state, spiritually dead and condemned to that eternal condition (Romans 3:23; Ephesians 2:1-3); and

WHEREAS the Bible clearly states that there is no effort on anyone's part by which they can redeem themselves from that lost state (Ephesians 2:8-9); and

WHEREAS the Bible clearly states that salvation must be brought about by a supernatural act done expressly by God (Ephesians 2:4-7); and

WHEREAS the Bible clearly states that this act of God is based completely upon His grace to an individual and administered personally to that individual by the acceptance by faith of that grace (Romans 5:8; Romans 6:23); and

WHEREAS the Bible clearly states that grace is based upon the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ upon His death, burial and resurrection and declared to be the "Good News" otherwise known in Scripture by the term "Gospel" (1 Corinthians 15:1-4); and

WHEREAS upon receiving that grace by faith that individual is given a spiritual new birth and becomes born again, making him a child of God and placing him by adoption into the family of God (John 3:3-8; John 1:12-13; Galatians 4:3-6); and

WHEREAS the Bible clearly states this Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes by placing his faith in its power to save him (Romans 1:16); and

WHEREAS the Bible is extremely clear that there is only one name under heaven, given among men, whereby all must be saved, that of the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 4:11, 12).

Be it, therefore, resolved that we the messengers of the Pennsylvania Association of Regular Baptist Churches assembled this April 29-30, 2019, at Crescentville Baptist Church in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, do hereby stand upon the clear teaching of Scripture concerning salvation by grace through faith only through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Be it also resolved that we declare the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ to every individual person, without discrimination for any reason (Isaiah 55:1, 6, 7; John 3:16).

Be it further resolved that we will declare the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ at any cost and without any fear of what man may do to us (Acts 4:18-20; Hebrews 13:6).

Be it finally resolved that we will continue to declare the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ because He has commissioned us to do so, and we will declare it until He comes again for His church (Matthew 28:18-20).

A Resolution Commending the Whole Bible as Worthy of Our Reading and Study

WHEREAS the Bible, which consists of both the Old and New Testaments, is all the written Word of God, Holy Spirit inspired; and

WHEREAS God has revealed Himself through His Word, by His Works and relationship with His Creation, including man (Psalm 19); and

WHEREAS man can know God and come into right relationship with God by following God's Word regarding sin and salvation, especially the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Son of God, Who gave Himself a substitute sacrifice for our sins (Isaiah 53; Romans 5:8); and

WHEREAS there is no other Authority given among men, whereby sinful man can be redeemed and reconciled to God, because the entire Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, points us to Jesus Christ, His finished work on the cross, and our need to trust in Him as a personal Savior (Luke 24:27, 44).

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that we, the messengers of the Pennsylvania Association of Regular Baptist Churches assembled this April 29-30, 2019, at Crescentville Baptist Church in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, do commend the reading, study, exposition, and confidence in the truth and trustworthiness of the whole Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, because it is inspired of God (II Timothy 3:16).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we acknowledge the theme of the entire Bible is Jesus Christ; therefore, we need not hesitate to preach Christ from the Old Testament.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that we give thanks for God's preservation of all His Word, for the benefit of all believers and as a warning to unbelievers, that Jesus Christ is coming again soon to take His own with Him. "And so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore, comfort one another with these words" (I Thessalonians 4:17b, 18).

Puzzled—Continued

music and personal dress to arrack people. Yet scripture instructs us to come out and be separate AND to be Holy for GOD is Holy (Leviticus 11:44 and Romans 12:1, 2) **I am very puzzled by this.**

- Some dear folks get irritated and angry when the pastor's message is too long and goes past the golden marker of twelve noon, yet, some of these same dear souls have no problem at all watching a sports event that goes on for hours - - **I have always been puzzled by this.**
- Many under-shepherds are suffering financially while their churches are very proud of their large missionary budget. Yet, Scripture says do not muzzle the ox that trotted out the corn (I Timothy 5:18). **This puzzles me with a heavy heart.**
- We have our youth activities and many churches do not want to join us with their young people. They are missing out on the fellowship and special spiritual blessing. **This puzzles me.**
- When a pastor prepares a spiritual meal for a needy congregation and some miss the "dinner" and do not even know they are becoming spiritually starved souls (again, Hebrews 10:29) - - **I am puzzled.**
- Souls are changing priorities and commitments so that it is becoming "Me first" In attitude and actions when scripture tells us we are to die daily (to self) and that Christ must increase and we must decrease. (Glassines 2:20 and John 3:30) - - **I am puzzled.**
- Individuals are claiming salvation, but are not willing to follow Christ in the pool of baptism. (Romans 6:4) - - the puzzles me.
- People professing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ do not want to join a good fundamental, independent Baptist Church. (Acts 2:41)--**I am puzzled.**
- I am sure that by now you see the above mentioned concerns are all very serious and trouble my heart. There seems to be a lessoning of standing steadfast by many Christians today. Because of all that **I am puzzled aren't you?!?!?**

What time—Continued

become so used to my heart's erratic rhythm that I never thought of this. Two procedures to reset the rhythm set my heart in order.

Physically, I began to feel better but the tendency to be on edge and fearful had become a life pattern. With the help of a therapist, who helped me realize I needed to reprogram my expectations and thoughts. I knew I couldn't do it without God's strength. While I had prayed that He would remove this condition, He didn't. Because of the fear, a weapon of Satan, my mind listened to fear-filled lies and I only got worse.

I began to research Scriptures about anxious fear and to pay attention to when my emotions were escalating. Slowly, I began to get better. I began to say no, to requests and not to over schedule my time. I learned it was OK to do nothing. I learned it's also OK that for some of us, medication is essential and not a sin.

Finally, I slowed down my frantic thoughts by starting a journal on my computer. The first thing every morning and at the end of every day, I wrote in this journal about what I was thinking. I was totally honest with myself. Sometimes I wrote out my prayers so that I could pray without the distraction of my racing mind. With no judgment and no rereading to fix it, I wrote every day. I'm a writer and editor so that was a tough one; however, to this day, I've not reread any of it.

I read recently that sometimes, God in His wisdom allows what He can prevent with His power... but always for a purpose. I had begged Him to take it away. I knew He could, but He didn't. I didn't understand that then but I do now.

Once I could refocus, and reorganize the expectations I had for my life, and allow myself to slow down, I begin to feel better. And, most importantly, I learned to especially hang on to this one verse, "What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee" (Psalm 56:3). In trusting, I relinquished my mind to His strength and care. My most important lesson, though, was realizing that God loves me and His "...thoughts 'for me' are of peace and not of evil to give 'me' an expected end." (Jeremiah 29:11).

After several months, one day, like the missionary said, the fear and anxiety became a memory because I now know, *What time, I am afraid I will (can) trust in thee (Him).*"