



Weekly Newsletter – Sunday, May 2, 2021

Office hours are Mondays and Wednesdays, 9:00am-3:00pm.

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Three Signposts to Help You Stay on the Narrow Way by Bethany McIlrath

While rereading *Pilgrim's Progress*, it struck me how simple were the instructions given to the main character, Christian. Just stay on the narrow way. Go straight. Yet time and again, Christian strays or is tempted to veer. The arguments for taking another path are often compelling and plausible.

The same is true for us. No matter how long we've been a Christian or how thoroughly we know God's Word, the simple call to stay on the narrow way is difficult for us to obey. As one hymn says, we are "prone to wander." For as simple as "straight ahead" seems, we're easily sidetracked.

Writing to Christians in Colossae long ago, Paul offered counsel on recognizing the temptation to follow other ideologies or envision a better direction for our faith. His counsel is just as helpful today when we are not sure which way to go in our thinking.

Go the Way of Dependence – *"See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ"* (Col. 2:8). One way to know we're being tempted to think differently than Scripture directs is if we're drawn to something that isn't "according to Christ." Other translations say, "based on", "coming from", and "depend". If a philosophy doesn't point us to Jesus, we simply shouldn't pursue it! Christ is the source of wisdom, the one who supplies us with everything we need, and the one we live for.

We may think we're just exploring new ideas when someone proposes a new social theory, or our favorite person on social media encourages us to follow a wise set of principles they developed. But Paul's warning is clear: we might actually be taken captive. It's important to stop and ask ourselves if these ideologies serve to increase our dependence on Christ, the only one who can deliver true wisdom.

Go the Direction You First Began – *"Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving"* (Col. 2:6-7). Just before issuing this warning, Paul reminded his readers that they didn't need a new way but needed to continue in the direction they began when they received Jesus. Part of living according to Christ, depending on Christ, is sticking with him.

It's tempting to supplement our faith in Christ with faith in modern, tangible ideas. Some philosophies promise to help us make sense of the things in Scripture that we don't like or agree with. But here Paul points out that it should be Jesus and his Word that help us make sense of new ideas, not vice versa.

Jesus is our starting place for finding wisdom and everything else we need for a godly life. We are rooted in him, built up in him, and established in him. He isn't just the only way to be saved; he's the only one who can lead us in the way that is right.

Go Toward the Treasure – *"... that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, which is Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. I say this in order that no one may delude with plausible arguments"* (Col. 2:2-4). In these verses, Paul describes his concern for his readers. His earnest desire for them is God's intention for us who read the words today. The reason for staying on the narrow path is simple: along it we discover treasure.

Why does this counsel tell us to depend on Christ and not on human tradition or the elemental spirits of the world? It's not that God wants us needy and obligated. Nor does he tell us to continue in the way we were taught because he wants us stunted or stupid, instead of growing and learning.

Rather, we learn about the marvelous mystery of Christ when we stick to the narrow path. We grow in courage, we grow in love, and we gain riches of assurance of understanding. Every gem of wisdom and knowledge is hidden in Christ. We aren't going to find any of these eternally valuable things by pursuing temporary, supplemental philosophies. Praise the Lord! When we're not sure which way to go in our thinking, the answer is simply and entirely to depend on Jesus. He's the one we're seeking anyway!

Lifting in Prayer

Beverly Abosch: recent Covid test was negative; thank you all for your prayers.

Deborah Diaz: has Covid-19; she is Domingo's cousin.

Gracie: 2½ month old diagnosed with a blood disease/immune disorder; she is at A.I. DuPont Hospital.

Mozambique: pray that God will send just the right person to teach the mission team's children.

Greenbank church: Godly guidance for our elders & minster as they lead our congregation.

Pray for unity in our country and for our leaders to seek God's wisdom and guidance.

If you have an item for prayer or praise, please email it to office@greenbankcoc.org for inclusion in our weekly list. To view previous prayer requests and those on our ongoing lists, please visit the Weekly Bulletins page on our website www.greenbankcoc.org.

Announcements

Expanded In-Person Worship

We have opened our Sunday morning worship to all who feel comfortable attending. We ask that everyone be dedicated to continuing the disciplines of wearing masks, healthy distancing, hand washing/sanitizing, etc. to help minimize any risk of infection. We understand there are some who are not ready to return, and that's okay. Our livestream will continue for your benefit. Also, for those who may not be ready to join the larger assembly in the auditorium, we will also be broadcasting the livestream in the blue room. We will closely monitor things in hopes of restarting Sunday School classes for children and adults as soon as it is determined to be reasonable.

Ladies & Young Girls Classes

All ladies are invited, and encouraged, to join us for the final class of our current study. We will meet at 11:00am on Saturday, May 8th. If you have not previously attended the class, register here:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/70A0845AFAE2EA6FB6-ladies> and Crystal will send you the link to connect on Zoom. We would love to have an outstanding number of ladies join us!

Mozambique Mission Team Need

The mission team in Mozambique is looking for someone to teach their children in the "team kids" school. No previous teaching experience is needed, just a heart to love and serve. If you, or someone you know, is interested in this opportunity, please contact Amy at amywesterholm@hotmail.com.

2021 Baby Bottle Benefit

Please consider making a donation to A Door of Hope Pregnancy Center. This organization ministers to expectant mothers who may be at risk for abortion. An easy way to donate is by clicking on this link: <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/Greenbank-Church-of-Christ>. This is a private and secure page. If you prefer to use a check or money order, make it out to Greenbank Church of Christ, put "BBB" in the memo, and mail it to the church. We encourage you to do what you can to give to this Christian ministry.

Camp Manatawny

Registration is open for Spring events and Summer camping sessions.

***May Events:** May 20-22 – Church Leaders Workshop; May 28-31 – Family Camp; May 29 – Open House.

To register for any event, go to www.manatawny.org.

Worship with Us Online

Sunday Mornings 9:00 a.m. Spanish service English service @ 10:30 a.m.

1) **Facebook Live:** <http://www.facebook.com/greenbankchurchofchrist>

2) **Greenbank Website:** www.greenbankcoc.org Click on the Facebook Live tab on the menu bar at the top of the page. PLEASE NOTE: You do NOT need to have a Facebook account to view the live feed through our website.

3) **Phone In:** If you do not have internet access, you can dial in on your phone to connect.

(301) 715-8592 Enter Meeting ID 889 4601 8992

Online Bible Studies

Wednesdays @ 7PM: Facebook Live <http://www.facebook.com/greenbankchurchofchrist>

Ladies & Young Ladies Classes: 2nd Saturday of each month at 11:00 a.m. Online using the Zoom platform.

Register for class here: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/70A0845AFAE2EA6FB6-ladies>

Our book is Honorable and Dishonorable Women of the Bible by Crystal Reyes available on Amazon Kindle.

Options for Giving

We appreciate those who have been able to maintain regular giving. Ways to contribute:

1) **Write a check** and mail to 511 Greenbank Road, Wilmington, DE 19808, or hold all checks until we begin meeting again.

2) **Cash** can be dropped off at the building on Mondays between 9-11 a.m. or set aside your contributions and bring them when we begin meeting again.

3) **Online giving:** PayPal has been set up on our website www.greenbankcoc.org. Click on the “Donate” button and follow the instructions. (Note: there is a small fee assessed from each donation.)

Last Week's Contribution: \$6,981 Weekly Average: \$4,677