



THE ENCOURAGER

What Really Counts?

Martin Wright

It wasn't long ago that I was on vacation observing a children's card game being played by my 6 year old son and my nieces. The game was going along about as well as one could expect, when all of a sudden one of the participants played a card out of sequence and mistakenly assumed they had won the game. Voices immediately rose in protest. "It's not your turn." "That's not fair." "You can't count that." "It doesn't count." Just before the participants came to blows, fisticuffs were avoided when the young card players heard those most wonderful of words: "It's time to go to the beach."

Wouldn't it be great if all of life's struggles were so easily diffused? Unfortunately, most of our challenges are not so easily resolved or dismissed.

As we loaded the van and headed to the ocean, I was struck by the phrase I had heard... "That doesn't count." I was reminded of Paul's words in his second letter to the Thessalonian Christians where he wrote,

*"With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, **that our God may count you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may fulfill every good purpose of yours and every act prompted by your faith. We pray this so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.**"*

After the card game, it was clear what counted most to 5 and 6 year olds—you have to follow the rules for your win to count and a trip to the ocean is more important than fighting over who was right. But, I couldn't help reflecting on the bigger question—what matters most to God? What counts to God? I recalled the practical example of the sheep and the goats in Matthew 25. Then I pondered Peter's response to the peoples' question, "What should we do?" in Acts chapter two. Of course the twelfth chapter of Romans came to mind, as did the admonition of Ephesians 5:15-20 where

Paul chided Christians to be very careful how they live—not as unwise but as wise, reminding us that we need to make the most of every opportunity. Since we returned home, I have continued to ponder the question of what matters most or what counts most to God. I think it is an important question for personal reflection and direction. So, as I continued to reflect and to search the scriptures, I came upon a particularly informative passage in Galatians 5. Here, Paul conducts and concludes an argument about whether or not gentile Christians must follow the Jewish holiness code. Paul's response is summarized in verse 6, "In Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. **The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.**" Wow. So simple, but so challenging! So, what does faith expressing itself in love look like? Well, we will explore that next month...

Hope You're Having a Great Summer!





Yellow...it doesn't mean accelerate

Zach Riggs

In all actuality, it means slow down. The world around us is racing at a million miles per hour! We have drive-thru food service to avoid sitting down to eat a meal and wasting time. We have apps on our phones for everything and at the touch of a button or google search we can instantly stream information and media. No longer do we need to go to the library for a good book or to a cinema to watch a movie, but rather, we have both with us at all times and can instantly download what we don't already own. Most often than not, we, including me of all people, get irritated or aggravated when we are not able to purchase something with a few clicks or download it in less than a minute.

Boredom (a negative word associated with rest) is now seen as a position of weakness. If we are not doing something on a device, reading an article, emailing someone, or

checking status updates, our time seems to crawl and we become agitated because our daily rhythm is being destroyed. Jeremiah 2:25 in The Message states, "Slow down, Take a deep breath. What's the hurry? Why wear yourself out? Just what are you after anyway? But you say, 'I can't help it. I'm addicted to foreign gods. I can't quit.'" But you can quit! Rest and free time do not have to be seen as the negative term "boredom."

Brett McCracken, a writer and journalist from Los Angeles, once stated, "Taking the time to put the brakes on, curtail our plans a little and open ourselves up to learning something new, something complicated and enlightening, is utterly valuable. Instead of relentlessly racing forward in our maelstrom of success-seeking and amusement-curating, we would do well to pause and turn our eyes and ears to the world around us and truly listen (which

takes time)." Slowing down provides us the opportunity to truly soak up something meaningful and important. Not only this, but it also checks our pride at the door and forces us to pay attention to others around us. This can provide even greater gifts than we might be able to gratify ourselves with.

So, the challenge for this month is to take the advice of Jeremiah: slow down and don't let the false gods in your life wear you down; instead, find time to appreciate the world around you, spend time with family (especially free of all the tech gadgets), and most importantly, dig into God's word. When we take the time to REALLY read what is said by these Holy Spirit inspired authors, we can discover so many awesome things about God and who He is!

Fall Women's Retreat; A Taste of Garden Getaway...a peek behind & a look

"Let me hear of your unfailing love each morning, for I am trusting you. Show me where to walk, for I give myself to you." Psalm 143:8



At Garden Getaway, you'll find a lovely spot to slow down and walk with God at a leisurely pace. The pictures displayed were taken at OCC's previous ladies' retreat held in the spring of 2013. The conversation was intimate, the atmosphere calm and the fellowship warm. The same location will be utilized for Garden Getaway and this year's retreat

committee is dedicated to delivering a fresh retreat with reviving results.

Your experience at Garden Getaway promises to be full of friendship, faith and fun. You'll explore Ecclesiastes 3 and discover how God is at work in your life no matter what season of life you're in. Your learning experience will be

enhanced and Christian fellowship built through relational interaction in an atmosphere that allows you to unwind and be restored. Enjoy your time and feel refreshed by God's love.

There are plenty of spots available so sign-up at the display table in the foyer for your special getaway!

“The DATA DEN”

Virgil Clotfelter

It began on Family Day, Sunday afternoon. The “Data Den” was open in the parking lot to allow families to submit current information for our church records. We collected contact information so that the church is able to reach you when in need (and believe me, I’ve seen time when the contact information contained in church records has been extremely useful). We collected other information that will help us demographically to better understand and know our congregation and its ministries. And, we collected information about the talents, skills, abilities, passions, and interests of our church members so that when a ministry need arises, we will better know who to ask about helping and serving. All this will be an on-going effort until all families are updated.

You might be asking, “Why are you



doing this?” That is a fair question and one that I hope I can answer to your satisfaction. OCC has recently purchased a new church management software system known as Servant Keeper. Data from old records has been downloaded into this new system, but we want to make sure that your family and ministry information is accurate and up-to-date. So, even if you’re thinking... “I’ve been at this church for 40 years and they

have all my information,” we want to confirm and verify everyone’s profile and add much new information as well. This form will help us do just that.

Many more opportunities to supply and collect “Data Den” information are on the horizon. To get started, blank forms will be available at the

Life Center as well as the office during weekly office hours. We may also take time during our Sunday services to seek needed information as well as employing the telephone or other technologies to solicit helpful information. Other creative opportunities will cross your path. We are taking every possible precaution to keep all data secure by carefully guarding privacy and establishing “gate keeping” policies limiting access to our records to recognized office and technical team personnel. Please find time to FULLY complete the form soon.

Your cooperation is greatly appreciated and will greatly help me address one of the major efforts the Elders requested I tackle as your associate minister. I thank you in advance for your help. I truly believe this process will be a meaningful asset and helpful tool for Christ’s work at and through OCC!

Hilltop Events: Family Day & Men’s Retreat

FAMILY DAY...

Hilltop will host it’s annual ‘Family Day — Hog Roast & Fish Fry’ Sunday, August 3 from 12:30 — 3 pm. Meal will include pulled pork OR fried fish, corn-on-the-cob, baked beans, slaw, tomatoes, and much more. The cost will be a free will donation. All monies after expenses go to the “20/20” Vision/Building Fund.

A variety of activities will be available such as volleyball, board games, air hockey, swimming (pool opens at 1pm), ‘dunk a dean for a donation’ just to name a few! Come out, join in the fun and help support the camp.

MEN’S RETREAT

This year’s retreat message is ‘Amazing Grace’ with featured Speaker Tom Elsworth, Senior Minister of Sherwood Oaks Christian Church, Bloomington, IN.

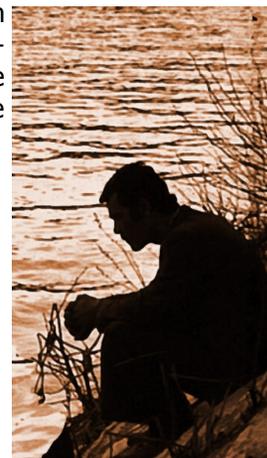
Retreat Schedule:

Friday, August 8
5:00 p.m. — Check-in
6:00 p.m. — Pulled pork supper
7:00 p.m. — Music
7:30 p.m. — Message, Part 1
8:15 p.m. — Offering & Break
8:30 p.m. — Message, Part 2
9:15 p.m. — Gift drawings (must be present to win)
9:30 p.m. — Campfire w/ music & devotions
10:00 p.m. — Head for home or bed down

Saturday, August 9
8:00 a.m. — Continental Breakfast (\$5.00/person)

Retreat Cost: \$20.00
Advance meal registrations needed by: Wed., Aug. 6

Registration forms available at the Life Center or the church office.



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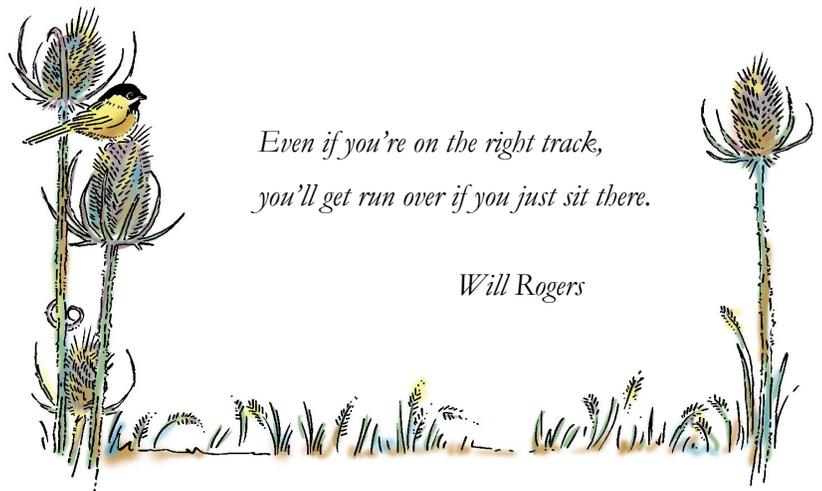
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- 2 Julie Weaver
Lela Foust
Martin Wright
- 3 Kolten Brooks
- 4 Samantha Smallwood
Eddie Purnell
Locke Stadler
- 7 Matt & Gwen Bond*
- 8 Kim Olmstead
- 9 Christian Taulbee
Allison May
- 10 Randy Olmstead
Leona Folz
Christian Fredericksen
Bob & Judy Kirby*
- 11 Janet & Gene Murphy
- 12 Logan Miller
Gary & Kim Hamblen*
- 14 Kendall Yeaton
Jerry Pardue
Diane Bolin

- 15 Robin Ramp
Alex Ferguson
Michelle Hundley
Jonah Wichman
- 16 Carolyn Pruitt
Amy Brown
Gracie Hendrix
- 17 Ronnie & Carolyn Pruitt*
Cristina Holwager
- 18 Thom & Kim Barnett*
- 19 Debbie Roettgen
Ameilia Bond
Matthew Senesac
Les & Debbie Roettgen*
- 21 Wanda Johnson
- 22 Lukas Stadler
Bill Johnson
Jerry & Charity Hall*
- 24 Shawna Whipker
Randy & Charlotte Moss
- 25 Emily Surenkamp
- 27 Karen Hardin
Gavin Klakamp
- 28 Mary Helen Peterson
- 29 Tim & Myra Hurt*
- 30 Alicia Mullins
- 31 Mary Ellen Thomas
Katie Bond



*Even if you're on the right track,
 you'll get run over if you just sit there.*

Will Rogers

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 Norman Love, Elder 812-552-1807
 Don Bradley, Elder 812-445-3611

...on the calendar

- ◆ 8-1 JJ Family Pool Party 6-8pm @ Hilltop
- ◆ 8.2 Baby Shower, Nikki Smith, OCC Café, 2pm
- ◆ 8.3 Donut Sunday 9:30-9:50 am
- ◆ 8.3 Hilltop Family Day 12:30-3pm
- ◆ 8.5 Women's Bible study begins @ B.Stoner's 6pm, Isaiah
- ◆ 8.8&9 Hilltop Men's Retreat
- ◆ 8.10 Yeaton Kenya Presentation 6:30pm OCC
- ◆ 8.13 Women's Bible study begins 9:15am, Café Harmony of Gospels
- ◆ 8.20 Men's fellowship breakfast 7-8:30am OCC fellowship hall

