



The Sword

*“And take... the sword of the Spirit,
which is the word of God.”* Ephesians 6:17

“The Sword” is published weekly by the OAK GROVE CHURCH OF CHRIST, as a teaching and information tool for the congregation. Articles are intended to encourage the study of God’s Word every day! — Jack W. McNiel, editor

Volume 17 - January 3, 2010 - Number 1

“Drawing Nigh To God” by Jack W. McNiel

A new year’s beginning is the perfect time for us to re-commit ourselves to God. The past year is now behind us, the things of that year are beyond us now and we cannot change them. If we were not as faithful as we ought to have been last year (and I would hazard to guess that none of us was as faithful as we should have been) then we need to commit ourselves, each and every one of us, to drawing nearer to God in 2010. The inspired writer James said, “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.” (James 4:7-8).

To submit to God means to be obedient to His Word - to yield yourself to His authority. In yielding to God, we resist the devil. In resisting the devil and yielding ourselves to God, we draw closer to Him and He draws closer to us. But, how can we submit to Him and draw closer to Him if our sins are separating us from Him? Isaiah wrote, “*But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear. For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue hath muttered perverseness.*” (Isaiah 59:2-3). Sin is not just actively transgressing God’s law, but sometimes it is in our passivity toward obeying His commands. James 4:17 says, “*Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.*” Knowing God’s will and not doing it is the same as actively working against it. “*He that is*

not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.” (Matthew 12:30). Our sins of commission along with our sins of omission pull us away from God - the opposite of drawing nigh.

Since sin has separated the non-Christian from God and will also separate the Christian from God, we each have the need to repent. Jesus made it possible for all of us to be able to be reconciled to God. His death paved the way for all mankind to become children of God through their obedience. His work in mediation also allows the erring child of God to be restored his fellowship with God - to draw nigh to God once more. We draw close to God after first submitting to His will - obeying the gospel. We cannot approach God unless we have first been cleansed. The non-Christian is cleansed (remitted) of his sins through repentance and baptism (Acts 2:38). The Christian who has fallen away can be cleansed of his sins once more through repentance, confession and prayer. *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”* (1 John 1:9). To *“cleanse your hands...”* (James 4:8) means to repent of our sins and to be forgiven. To *“purify your hearts ye double minded...”* (James 4:8), means to approach God with singleness of heart; to devote ourselves utterly to Him and to His will. It means for us to

be double-minded no longer, in other words, to stop trying to serve two masters - God and self. Jesus tells us that this is impossible, *“No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon”* (Matthew 6:24).

In this new year, let us each submit ourselves to God and commit ourselves to resisting the devil with every fiber of our being. Let us each seek to draw “nigh” to God and allow Him to draw “nigh” to us. Just like in any relationship, communication is key. Communication is a two-way street - we must speak to God and allow Him to speak to us. God speaks to us only through His written Word. We need to read and study that Word daily in order to stay in constant communication with Him. But we also need to speak with Him on a daily basis. We can only speak to God in prayer. We need to be praying all the time - *“Pray without ceasing”* (1 Thessalonians 5:17). This year may we each seek to become closer to God than ever. I hope that by the time this year is over we each will have become a more faithful and productive child of God, drawing ever near to Him.

Keep Your Sword Sharpened
– Be A Daily Bible Reader!



NEWS AND NOTES:

OUR PRAYER LIST:

Congregation:

- Bert Wyman had knee surgery last Tuesday and she is doing well. She is currently in St. Luke's Hospital in Lee's Summit.
- Wendell Osborne is now cancer free!
- Please remember in your prayers all who have been sick, bereaved or in the hospital recently: Marjorie Alley, Freda Bentley, Lloyd Cooper, Irene Jennings, Jim O'Connor, Wendell Osborne, Alberta Petering, Opal Reed

Friends & Family:

- Shauna Heck has been diagnosed with advanced cancer.

ITEMS OF INTEREST:

Oak Grove:

- There will be a New Years Eve party at the home of Darrell and Connie Andrews for young adult to middle-aged group beginning at 6 PM.
- There will be another New Years Eve party at the home of Claude and Lydia Andrews for the Seniors also at 6 PM.

*Happy
New Year
2010!*

SERVING ONE ANOTHER:

LEADING IN WORSHIP: *January 3*

Announcements: Richard Petering

Usher: Lowell Smith

Lord's Table: Tim Smith

West: Hershel Hunt – Walter Reed

East: Peyton Jenkins – Tyler Jenkins

Sunday AM

Song Leader: David Wiesemann

Opening Prayer: Leland Reed

Second Prayer: Dean Evatt

Scripture Reader: Roy Smith

Sermon: *Acts 2:38-41*

"How To Restore The N.T. Church"

Closing Prayer: Tom Dykes

Sunday PM

Song Leader: Sean McLaughlin

Opening Prayer: Vint Hall

Sermon: *Matthew 1:21*

"Jesus the Messiah" Part 5

Closing Prayer: Brent Hall

Wednesday Night:

Song Leader: Brayden Shelley

December 30

Devotional: Peyton Jenkins

Closing Prayer: Darrell Andrews

January 6

Devotional: Tyler Jenkins

Closing Prayer: Dustin Hall

OUR CURRENT RECORDS:

Wednesday: *December 23*

Bible Class 65

Sunday: *December 27*

Bible Class 73

AM Worship 84

PM Worship 75

Contribution \$1,373

Budget \$2,061

*The King James Version is requested for
pulpit, classrooms, & scripture reading.*

Work Program 2008-2009

Team	Leader/s	Next Assignment
1	Jack McNeil	Feb. 7
2	Roger Stephenson	Feb. 14
3	<i>Walter Hutcherson</i>	<i>Jan. 3</i>
4	Vernon Logan	Jan. 10
5	Dustin Hall	Jan 17
6	Roy Smith Tim Smith	Jan 24
7	Justin Liljegren Dixon Liljegren	Jan. 31

WHO WE ARE:

The Oak Grove Church of Christ is independent of any denominational organization. We are not associated with any national or world headquarters. Yet, we cooperate voluntarily with our sister congregations in the Lord's work and fellowship.

The church of Christ is noted for its emphasis upon returning to New Testament Christianity and for its desire to *"be perfectly joined together in the same mind and ... judgment..."* (1 Cor. 1:10). We try to follow the basic, innocent faith that was proclaimed on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2).

If you are earnest about learning more by means of studying the Holy Bible and obeying what it says, you will truly find a home here at Oak Grove Church of Christ.

Oak Grove Church of Christ

104 SW 6th Street,
Oak Grove, MO 64075 (816) 690-4599
www.ogchurchofchrist.org

Head of the Church:

Christ (Eph 1:22; 5:23; Col 1:18)

Elders: (1 Tim 3:1-7)

Claude Andrews
Walter Hutcherson
Richard Petering
Lowell Smith

Deacons: (1 Tim 3:8-13)

Darrell Andrews
Dean Evatt
Vint Hall
Hershel Hunt
Leland Reed
Tim Smith
David Wiesemann

Preacher: (2 Tim 4:1-5)

Jack W. McNeil
Office: (816) 690-4599
Cell: (816) 522-2584
ogchurchofchrist@embarqmail.com

– Schedule of Services –

Sunday:

Bible Study – 9:30 a.m.
Worship – A.M. 10:20; P.M. 6:00

Wednesday: Bible Study – 7:00

Bi-Monthly: *"House to House / Heart to Heart"*