

The Vine

I am the vine; you are the branches...John 15:5

A publication of Valley Falls Christian Church

March 2015

HOW TO KNOW WHAT GOD WANTS ME TO DO?

We all face important decisions. These decisions will often have a great impact on us and our families. It may be a question about what job to take, or where to live, or what school to attend, etc. What should we do? Does God offer any help or guidance in making such decisions? We believe the answer is YES! How does God give this guidance? In many ways:

1) **Through the Word.** The vast majority of answers are here. There are positive commands that tell us what we should do. For example, Matthew 28:19 instructs us to teach the gospel to others. You don't have to wonder if God wants you to speak to your neighbor about salvation. He does, and He said so! There are also negative commands that tell us what to avoid. If, for instance, you are praying about whether or not you should honestly report your income taxes—save your breath! God has already given that answer (Ephesians 4:25). Don't be looking for additional guidance in areas where God has already said "no" or "yes".

2) **Through Prayer.** Christians are to be consistent in prayer (1 Thess. 5:17). God promises to answer our prayers. We ought to approach Him with petitions for help with our important decisions (1 Peter 3:12). If you don't believe this will work, then don't bother to ask! (James 1:5-7).

3) **Through Circumstances.** In the Old Testament, Joseph suffered a number of awful and unjust things. In the end, he was wise enough to realize that God had used those circumstances to accomplish His will (Gen. 45:7-8). Be careful here—this "guidance through circumstances" is sometimes hard to detect, and some are quick to jump to false conclusions.

4) **Through the counsel of others.** The many commands that urge us to exhort and encourage our fellow Christians (Heb. 3:13, Gal. 6:2) demonstrate that God intends for us to help one another with the difficult things in our lives.

The Word of the Month: Joy

What brings you joy? I am asking about joy, not happiness. What's the difference?

Happiness depends upon our circumstances. Our team wins, we are happy. Our team loses, we are upset. A beautiful spring day may bring us feelings of happiness while a dreary winter day makes us feel depressed. Circumstances. Yet we can have joy even when circumstances are unfavorable.

How is this possible? We find our joy in something that transcends (is above or beyond) our daily situation. Now our situation and our circumstances are really just life. It is the present, the here and now. It may be what my life is today because of my past. It may be what I think my life will be in the future based upon where I am now. It is life. It is what I see, hear, feel and taste. It is my attitudes and reactions to those things. What is there that transcends this life?

God. God is the only thing that transcends our life. He is beyond the physical realm in his presence, his thoughts, his power and his love. He is supernatural that goes beyond the natural. When the circumstances of this life offer heartache and despair, God is still on his throne. When it seems like all the good in this world is fleeting, God remains. We find true joy only in our salvation and relationship with God.

The New Unger's Bible Dictionary defines joy as 'a delight of the mind arising from the consideration of a present or assured possession of a future good.' God is the only one who can assure us the possession of a future good, and that good thing (eternal life) is so good that our joy is capable of withstanding anything terrible this world throws at us.

Our joy comes from each person of the Trinity. The psalmist asks, "Why should we be depressed if we are with God?" **Psalm 43:4-5 (ESV)** *Then I will go to the altar of God, to God my exceeding joy, and I will praise you with the lyre, O God, my God. Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God.* Wow! God my exceeding joy. God is the source of abundant joy in our lives when we worship him.

In John 15, Jesus tells us he is the vine and we are the branches and we must abide (remain) in him. If we do that, the result is: **John 15:11 (ESV)** *These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.* Think of the joy of Jesus being in you! How deep does that joy go? Jesus had a joy in the father so deep that he was willing to go to the cross. **Hebrews 12:2 (ESV)** *looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy*

that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

So we have the joy of the Father, the joy of the Son and now we see the joy of the Holy Spirit. **1 Thessalonians 1:6 (ESV)** *And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit.* Galatians 5:22 reminds us that the fruit (the product) of being filled with the Spirit is love, joy...

Throughout the scriptures, we see all three persons of the Godhead working together to bring joy to believers. Now someone may ask, "So where is MY joy?"

I know there are a lot of true Christians for whom joy seems to have evaded. They are saved and assured of eternal life with Christ, yet can't seem to capture the joy that is available to them. How do Christians obtain joy if it doesn't just come automatically?

I don't want to oversimplify, but maybe we make it harder than it needs to be. First, this advice is for the saved. If you haven't yet committed to follow Christ in faith, you will chase joy but never catch it. So the first thing we must do is be born again – become Christians.

Next, actively worship God. Come together on Sunday to worship and fellowship with other believers. However, you can't let the worship be confined to a couple of hours on Sunday. Let that fellowship refuel your daily worship of God. Yes, I said daily! Take time out of every day to spend with God through prayer – part of that prayer being simple worship of God for who he is.

Stay connected to Jesus. He is the way, the truth and the life. He is the bread of life, the living water and the good shepherd. He is the alpha and the omega. He is the light of the world and the resurrection and the life. There truly aren't words that can fully express the love he had for us. We do this through reading the word and through prayer.

Walk in the Spirit. **Galatians 5:16 (ESV)** *But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.* It is just a few verses down we read that the fruit of the Spirit is joy. Walking in the Spirit is seeking to hear the Spirit and obey the Spirit. It is a willingness to be led by the Spirit.

Yes, but what if things get really bad? How can I still be joyful? Paul gives us a command in **Philippians 4:4 (ESV)** *Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice.*

(continued on back page)

Recipe Swap

BEEF BARBECUE

1 boneless chuck roast (3 pounds)
1 cup barbecue sauce
½ c. apricot preserves
1/3 cup chopped green or red pepper
1 small onion chopped
1 T. Dijon mustard
2 tsp. brown sugar
12 sandwich rolls, split

Cut the roast into quarters, place in a greased 5 qt. slow cooker. In a bowl mix all the other ingredients except the rolls. Pour over roast. Cover and cook on low for 6-8 hours or until meat is tender. Remove roast and thinly slice. Return meat to slow cooker and stir gently. Cover and cook 20-30 minutes longer. Skim fat from sauce. Serve beef and sauce on rolls.

ACTIVITY FOLDERS: There are still a few folders with no chairperson. Mother's Day, Father's Day, Graduate Banquet among others.

SAVE THE DATE: Caitlyn and Austin are getting married July 25th, 2015 and want you to mark your calendars. (the announcement is on the bulletin board).

PRAYER REQUESTS

OUR SOLDIERS: Curtis Mitchell, Brandon Miller, Ryan Myers, Luke Cummings, Greg Morales, Ryan Kirby, Zach Stiffler, Josh Lackey, Dan Cook, Rick Huertz, Steve Heinen, Ammin Spencer, Gates Kobuszewski, Leslie Bolz, Austin Everhart, Noe Garza, Brandon Hammons, Ruth Churchill, Jason Cherry, Aaron Cook

COPIES OF THE SERMONS ARE AVAILABLE ON CD UPON REQUEST: If you would like a copy please see Mike. You can also listen to them online at www.valleyfallsscc.org.

POCKET CHANGE FOR PROGRESS: This will be a special offering every 3rd Sunday during church. The money will be split between Mission Lake Camp and the School Supply Giveaway Fund

RECYCLING: We have a recycling box beside the copier in the office.

CANDLELIGHT DINNER: The 5th annual candlelight dinner will be held here on Saturday, April 18th at 6 pm. Lots of volunteers will be needed in the following areas: gathering good china place settings, cooking, serving, setting up/down. We are blessed again to have pianist, Matt Miller providing the music during dinner. Last year over \$3000 was donated along with school supplies. Look for more details and signup sheets in a few weeks. If you have questions see Dennis and Ronda Turner.

Birthdays and Anniversaries

4 Donetta Farr
Mary Breitsprecher
6 Joy (Farr) McGuire
Katie (Mitchell) Handke
8 Caitlyn Thomas
10 Jennifer Guffey
11 Peggy Meyer
14 Gary & Betty Smith (1983)
15 RALPH SHEAD
19 Peyton Barrett
20 Grace Thompson
Lance Turner
CASSIE WATKINS
26 Trey Munson
Marvin Prebble
28 Grady Tichenor
Jeff & Carolyn Starkey (1981)
29 Isaac Reich

(Names in CAPS in Mission Field)

Serving in March

Congregational Prayer:

Stan Farr

Scripture Readers:

1- Carson- Philippians 1:27-30

8-Farr-Philippians 2:1-5

15-Starkey- Philippians 2:5-8

22-Durand/Matt- Philippians 2:9-11

29- Tichenor- Philippians 2:12-18

Nursery:

1-Debbie Gerstner/Nic

8-Nancy Gatzemeyer/Nic

15-Joan Phillips

22-Glee Hosler/Caitlyn

29-Sara Haybarker/Libby

Greeters/Ushers:

1- Carson

8- Farr

15- Starkey

22- Durand

29- Tichenor

Lord's Supper Preparation:

1- Carson

8- Farr

15-Starkey

22- Durand

29- Tichenor

Communion Table:

1-Stan, Jay

Dennis Tichenor, Matt Branam

8- Jay, Stan

Clint Thomas, Jarret Mitchell

15- Stan, Jay

Ray Mitchell, Wayne Arnold

22- Jay, Stan

Dennis Turner, Kevin Gatzmeyer

29-Stan, Jay

Steve Carson, Matt Branam

Musicians

Worship Leader: Erin Thomas

Organ: Leah Brown

Piano: Donetta Farr

Guitar: Mike Kirby, Clinton Thomas

Mandolin: Erin Thomas

Church Offerings

Jan.25-\$1720.00

Feb.1-\$1072.00

Feb.8-\$3977.00

Feb.15-\$1212.00

Our expenses average \$1500 a week.

Valley Falls Christian Church has a website!!

www.valleyfallsc.org

MEN'S BREAKFAST: The men's breakfast will be on Mar. 14th at 8:00 AM. Stan Farr will be cooking.

TIME CHANGE: Time change will be Mar. 8th. Don't forget to set your clocks ahead one hour.

SISTERS OF STRENGTH (S.O.S.)-

(Mission Statement: We are a lifeline to glorify God through service to the church and community and to build personal relationships with our Christian Sisters.) We will not be having our regular meeting in March.

COLLECTING FOR ALPHA: Alpha Christian Children's Home can use Campbell soup UPC labels and lids, Best Choice UPC labels and General Mills Box Top Symbols coupons (Box Tops for Education.) We will have a box in the hallway outside the nursery under the mailboxes.

Congratulations to Aaron Cook and Cheyenne Huber who were baptized into Christ on February 15th. May your new walk with Christ be full of joy and blessings!

VOLUNTEER NEEDED: The church needs a committed volunteer in the area of technology. It includes running the sound system, projection and other possible duties if available. Please see Pastor Mike if you are gifted in this area and might like to serve in this capacity. He will choose from the candidates who are interested.

WOMEN'S RETREAT: The women's retreat at Mission Lake Camp will be Mar. 20-21. It starts Friday at 5 pm. Dinner will be at 5:30. It ends Saturday at 3:00 pm. It's \$30.00 and you can register online. They will preorder tshirts. For more information you can see the flyer on the board or there are more flyers on the table in the foyer.

2015		MARCH					2015	
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	
1 2:00 PM Service at Midland 5:00 PM Youth Group	2	3	4 6:15 PM Worship Practice 7:00 PM Bible Study 8:00 PM Elders	5	6	7		
8  Daylight Savings 5:00 PM Youth Group	9	10	11 6:15 PM Worship Practice 7:00 PM Bible Study 8:00 PM Board Meeting	12	13	14  8:00 AM Men's Breakfast		
15  10:00 AM Pocket Change for Progress 5:00 PM Youth Group	16	17 	18 6:15 PM Worship Practice 7:00 PM Bible Study 8:00 PM Elders	19	20	21		
22  VBS Meeting after Church 5:00 PM Youth Group	23	24	25 6:15 PM Worship Practice 7:00 PM Bible Study	26	27	28		
29 5:00 PM Youth Group	30	31						

Valley Falls Christian Church

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On the web: www.valleyfallsc.org
Find us on Facebook!

Mike Kirby, Pastor

You are welcome to join us!

Sunday Service times:

Bible Study (all ages) – 9:00 AM
Worship – 10:00 AM
Youth Group – 5:00 PM

Midweek Bible Study:

Wednesday 7:00 PM

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

The curriculum has been purchased!! It will be another great year for VBS. Please begin praying for a successful VBS and where YOU would like to serve. VBS this year will be Monday through Friday, June 1-5, 7 to 9 in the evening. The first meeting will be March 22 after church. Between now and then the jobs will be described in the bulletin so you'll have an idea which fits you the best.



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

(Joy continued)

Paul gave that command from the Lord while he was in prison. Paul chose to be joyful even when in chains because nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. Sometimes we just have to choose to be joyful and refuse to let anyone or anything steal our joy. It is a decision we make. Paul reminds us further in the chapter that the Lord is near, don't be anxious, pray and to think about pure and right things.

One of the pure things we can think about is heaven. One day we will be in the presence of Jesus and will experience a joy unmatched while on this earth. **Isaiah 35:10 (ESV)** *And the ransomed of the LORD shall return and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.* The Bible tells us any suffering we go through in this world is nothing compared with the glory of the next. We can have joy in Christ no matter where we are in life!

Romans 15:13 (ESV) *May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.*

Mike