

The Bulletin

Meeks St. Church of Christ

1201 Meeks St. Corinth, Ms. 38834

Phone – (662) 287-2187

Visit Our Website at:

MeeksstreetchurchofChrist.com

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“Potential Is Not Enough”

by Doy Moyer

"It is a most mortifying reflection for a man to consider what he has done, compared to what he might have done" (Samuel Johnson, 1770).

Potential has to do with something that can happen, but has not yet happened. It has to do with possibilities: unrealized and undeveloped. While it is good to have the capacity to do many things, potential alone is not enough to accomplish what is necessary.

Christians have great potential. We have the potential for growth, to convert many people to the Lord, to make a strong impact on the communities around us. There are great possibilities; the future looks fantastic from this viewpoint.

But potential is not enough! Just because we have the ability to do something does not mean that we will do it. A congregation with great potential is no guarantee that they will make the most out of it. Remember, while something is still potential, it has not happened. What a tragedy it would be if, given the possibilities before so many Christians, these potentials were never realized!

Potential is realized when we press on with diligence to grow. We must act on our abilities and improve upon them. It takes work and commitment, not just recognition that we "can" do many things. The one talent man had the ability to gain another, but his laziness marked him forever as never reaching his potential (Matthew 25:14ff).

Sometimes people boast about their former days. "These seats used to be filled up." "We used to have so many classes going." "We used to be known for our singing."

So? What are we doing now and where are we headed? Potential will never be seen by resting on the past. Paul understood this: *"Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus"* (Philippians 3:12-14).

Paul did not think in terms glorying in his past accomplishments or moping about his failures. His potential for perfection would only be realized through continually pressing toward the goal. Shall we expect less now?

God has provided for a local church to grow and be what He wants it to be (Ephesians 4:11-16). Teaching takes place, saints are equipped to serve and edify, unity is accomplished, maturity is accomplished, and the church grows as each individual members does his or her part.

However, as long as there are Christians who do not do their share, the total potential of a congregation will not be seen. A church may accomplish much and be known for its faithfulness, but it will never attain to its full ability as long as there are some who do not act as they ought.

One or two people cannot work for everyone else. *"... the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love"* (Ephesians 4:16).

Not everyone does the same work. One person may not have abilities that another may have, and vice-versa. But God expects each person to do what he/she can do. Potential means nothing unless we are willing to act on it.

There is a sense in which we will never reach our full potential on this earth. We must avoid the attitude that says, "I did it; I'm perfect" (see Revelation 3:14-22). If we become satisfied with our spiritual lives so that we do not work for further growth and knowledge, we are in serious trouble.

So, while we recognize that we have potential, let's always be striving to grow and mature. If we will, our capacity for heaven will be attained when this life is over (II Timothy 4:7-8).

So ask yourself, "What have I done?" Then ask, "What am I able to do?" Are you working hard toward fulfilling your abilities?

"Devaluing The Local Church"

by Glen Young

via *Gospel Power*, Vol. 15, No. 25, June 22, 2008.

The local church occupies an important position in God's scheme of things. It is through the local church that Christians execute certain works. These are works which God commands that can only be accomplished as a group in the context of a local church.

To illustrate this, consider the partaking of the Lord's Supper. It is to be done on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7) when the local church is assembled together (I Corinthians 11:20,33).

Another example would be the discipline of an unfaithful Christian. This discipline is to be administered by the local church in its assembly (I Corinthians 5:4-5).

The Christian is to provoke other Christians and to be provoked by other Christians. This provoking is done in the assembly (Hebrews 10:24-25). Who can deny the importance of a local church? Does not the aforementioned items prove as much?

Paul understood how important the local church was to his Christian life, hence, "...when he had come to Jerusalem, he attempted to join the disciples" (Acts 9:26). Obviously, Paul saw the necessity and benefit of being a member within the structure of a local church.

A failure to appreciate the benefits of membership in a local church will cause the Christian to live below his potential. Sadder still, it will cause him to lose his soul.

It is impossible for the Christian to fulfill collective responsibility unless he is a faithful member of a local church. The idea that a Christian can be a member at large, never settling down at one congregation, where he would be accountable, is not acceptable conduct for a Christian. This is tantamount to 'forsaking of the assembly' and is a failure to support the work of a local church, which equals sin.

Yes, disassociating one's self from active participation in a local church is harmful to your spiritual health.

We often hear Christians lament the lack of growth in local churches. Could it be that lack of growth is symptomatic of the mentality that minimizes the importance of the local church? I believe it does! How can we work together to build up the local church if we believe the local church is not important? We cannot!

I am not saying that we should be a member of a local church that does not respect the authority of God. There have been and are local churches which teach and practice things that are contrary to sound doctrine. To them the Lord says, "*Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the work you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent*" (Revelation 2:5).

On the other hand, there are local churches which have set themselves to abiding in the doctrine of Christ (II John 9), it is to such a congregation one should join himself.

Dear Christian, if you have been guilty of devaluing the local church, I encourage you to repent. If you have failed in your responsibilities toward the local church of which you are a member, I encourage you to repent. Repent and get busy working within the framework of the local church.

Editor's note: Glen Young currently works for the Pound Church of Christ in Virginia. I have known Glen for several years, from the nineties when he was working with the Road Creek Church of Christ at Elkhorn Creek, Ky.

Glen is originally from Alabama, and is good friends with Billy and Carla Randolph, and has even preached several times at the Fourth Street church where Billy works now. (Brian Meade)

News and Notes: Sick and recovering: Tim Harris Sr, Tim Harris Jr, Chad Harris, Martha Norvell (Mississippi Care), June Lawson (Lisa Busby's Mom), Debbie Keplinger, Janis Johnson, Daniel Holloway, Tammy Kilgore (Jerry's niece), Betty Hurst, Peggy Harville (cancer), Clois Wright, and Dan & Linda Hunt, Mollie Harris, David Taylor,, Danny Cottrell, Gary Doles, Sherry Doles, Joe Felks, and Randy Beaty, Brandon Briggs & Bentley Briggs, Russell Briggs and family.

Those Who Serve:

Announcements:	Paul Johnson
Opening Prayer & Scripture Reading:	Jerry Kennemur <i>Isaiah 59:1-2</i>
Song Leader:	Dan Cottrell
Lord's Supper:	Doug George
Preaching:	Brian Meade
Sermon:	<i>"When God Doesn't Hear"</i>
Closing Prayer:	Sam Johnson