

Ladies IN the Kingdom Newsletter

Winter 2011

"Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path" Psalms 119:105

Homewood Church of Christ

Transformation through Worship, Relationships and Service

Your Light In The World

by Bob Stoess

<http://www.motivateus.com/stories/your-light-in-the-world.htm>

Have you stopped to contemplate how your mood, your humor, your attitude, or your frame of mind touches those you meet? Does each encounter bring an expression of warmth or indifference in your being? Does your experience bring fervor and passion or apathy about your way of life? You do impact the lives of those around you. You do have a scope of persuasion in your lives.

The pace of modern life tends to isolate us from each other, but the contacts you share remain significant. You absorb the energy, attitude, and disposition of those close to you. Some even change after the briefest encounters. Everything you do or say has the potential to affect the individuals you live, work, and play with daily.

Be mindful of the impact you might have on another life.

Accept and understand that your attitudes and choices will affect others. Be graceful and grateful at all times. Seek to be friendly, helpful, and responsive to those in need. Be your very best, for someone is ready to mimic your every move.

A smile can brighten the day of someone walking in gloom.

A simple greeting can enforce the understanding that one is appreciated. Stopping to spend a few moments with someone will earn you respect in their eyes. Slow down to take the time to be genuine and authentic.

A small gesture of kindness could lighten a heavy heart.

Words of approval can increase the confidence of one floundering in doubt. A word of advice could help another see the world in an entirely new light.

Have a kind heart. Be true to yourself.

Keep a positive outlook on things of the world. Remember that God is in control. You are His hands and feet in a cold and embittered world. You can make a difference to others by emulating your Savior.

Project your passion for life, your kindness to others, your love for God and mankind.

Every person you contact within your circle of influence will feel your peace, your caring, and your love. Know this and go out and make this a better world for all of us to live in.

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Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives (**Matthew 24**) when his disciples asked about His return and the “end of the age,” so He taught them parables about what will happen in the last days. **Matthew 25:1-13** contains the parable of the wise and foolish virgins who had been invited to meet the Bridegroom.

All ten women knew the Bridegroom (obviously signifying Christ) and they knew He was coming, but five did not prepare for it. Five women failed to take enough oil to keep their lamps lit while waiting to enter the wedding, but five women went prepared to keep their lamps lit all night. The wise virgins accepted the responsibility; the foolish virgins merely accepted the invitation. So it is today. Church members know the Scriptures that tell of His future coming, but many don't act like it. We are in a time of waiting and trying of our faith.

If you Google the Second Coming, you'll find a multitude of Scripture references. The Bible is our guide, our lamp shining in the darkness showing us the way to live and to be prepared for His return. Two very serious examples that apply to us are **Romans 14:12** “*So then each of us will give an account of himself to God*” and **2 Corinthians 5:10** “*For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.*”

That is what Jesus referred to in His parable. All ten virgins looked the same on the outside, but five of them were prepared only according to their own expectations. Similarly, we can know the commands and promises of the Bible, but we must also be transformed by the indwelling Holy Spirit. He is the one who wants to lead us into all truth (**John 16:13**). Not only does He help our weaknesses, but He intercedes for us with God (**Romans 8:26**)! How does the Holy Spirit come to dwell in us? The Bible says in **Acts 2:38**, “*...Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*”

Like the virgins, we don't know when Jesus will return. So, what must Christians do to prepare? We must have faith, which comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God (**Romans 10:17**). **Psalm 119:105** says, “*Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.*”

Throughout our time of waiting, we should be consistent and diligent in prayer and thanksgiving. God, who made us and loves us, wants us to communicate with Him! Some references to these commands are in **1 Thessalonians 5:17**, **Philippians 1:3 and 4:6**, **Luke 18:1**, and **1 Peter 5:7**.

While waiting, we are to be vigilant in obedience to God's truth and in serving others. **Luke 4:18-19** says that people will see our good works and glorify our Father in heaven. **2 Peter 3:11** says we are to be holy in conduct and godliness. We are to represent the character of Christ to the world in the power of the Holy Spirit, not in our own strength.

You must believe, pray, and obey. But keep in mind that you cannot succeed by your own strength. Christ in you is your hope of glory (**Colossians 1:27**). Like the song says, “ 'Twas grace that brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.”

Matthew 5: 14-16 (NIV) “You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”

Under the Bridge Ministry - The Under the Bridge ministry is a shared activity with other churches to feed the homeless in Birmingham. Each Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday meals are prepared, delivered, and served by various congregations under the I-20/59 Bridge in downtown Birmingham. As opportunity and need arise clothing, bedding and personal items are also distributed. Homewood Church of Christ is responsible every 3rd Thursday and 5th Sunday of the month under the I-20/59 Bridge to feed and show love to God's people. Anyone interested in participating with the ministry should meet at the Homewood building at 5:45 PM to ride the bus to the site or meet at 6:30 p.m. under the bridge to help serve. You will be blessed by your time there!

- For more information contact Butch Wear or Stan Tumlin.

Missions - Homewood Church of Christ is involved in reaching out to the world with the Good News of Jesus Christ. Over the years we have partnered with missionaries at different places around the globe. Most recently our major effort has been with missionary families in the West African countries of Togo, Burkina Faso, and Benin. Additionally, we have groups of our church family who have participated with ministries that are working with the poor of Honduras, Guatemala, and among the Navajo nation in Arizona.

- For more information contact Stephen and Jennifer Presley

Adopt A Soldier Project - In the month of December, our congregation did service projects during our regular Wednesday evening class time. These were called “We Care Wednesdays.” We assembled soldier care packages for our first service project. Those that wanted to participate were encouraged to bring items such as personal hygiene products, snacks, batteries, books, magazines, playing cards, etc. People were also given the opportunity to make monetary donations to cover the cost of shipping the items overseas. Thanks to the generous donations from the members here, we gathered enough items to send:

- 1 care package to Ardelle Evans (friend of PJ Vining)
- 1 care package to John O. Hagen (brother-in-law of Steve Brannan)
- 12 care packages to Vanessa Kelley (daughter of Craig and Jennifer Kelley) and members of her unit
- 1 care package to Jeff Mackinnon (son-in-law of Robert and Nancy Reed)
- 12 care packages to members of Tay Magnani’s unit (son of Glida and Richard Magnani)
 - Misty Cuthbert and Glida Magnani helped organize this project
 - For more information go to <http://www.adoptaussoldier.org>

BEAUTIFUL WORDS

shared by Elizabeth Barker

Someone has written these beautiful words. Their meanings are like the Ten Commandments to follow in life.

1. PRAYER is not a "spare wheel" that you pull out when in trouble; it is a "steering wheel" that directs us in the right path throughout life.
2. Do you know why a car's windshield is so large and the rear view mirror is so small? It is because our PAST is not as important as our FUTURE. So, look ahead and move on.
3. FRIENDSHIP is like a BOOK. It takes few seconds to burn, but it takes years to write.
4. All things in LIFE are temporary. If LIFE is going well, ENJOY it; it will not last forever. If LIFE is going wrong, do not worry, it cannot last long either.
5. Old FRIENDS are like Gold! New FRIENDS are Diamonds! If you get a Diamond, do not forget the Gold! Because to hold on to a Diamond, you need a base of Gold!
6. Often when we lose HOPE and think this is the end, God smiles from above and says, "Relax, sweetheart, it's just a bend, not the end!
7. When GOD solves your problems, you have faith in His abilities; when GOD does not solve your problems He has faith in your abilities.
8. A blind person asked St. Anthony: "Can there be anything worse than losing eye sight?" He replied: "Yes, losing your VISION."
9. When you PRAY FOR OTHERS, God listens to you and blesses them; and sometimes, when you are safe and happy, remember that someone has prayed for you.
10. Worrying does not take away tomorrow's troubles; it takes away today's PEACE.

ACKNOWLEDGE OUTREACH MINISTRY

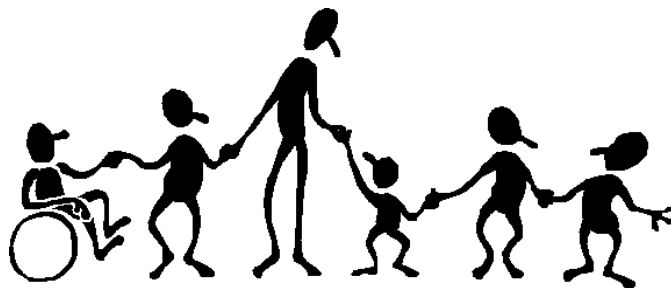
This organization's purpose is to create and operate social programs targeted to low-income populations and at-risk youths. These programs are needed as they are not offered anywhere else in the Wylam community. The success of AOM lies in the volunteers and donations from those individuals dedicated to meeting the needs of others. AOM is a 501-(C)(3) organization established in 2004, by Wilma Patterson, Executive Director. It came into existence as a result of her desire and need to help women and children. Part of the success is the many individuals at Homewood Church of Christ who have been actively supporting AOM since its inception by offering their time and donations.

Some of the regularly scheduled activities are:

- ❖ **GIRLS OUTSTANDING & BOYS BREAKFAST CLUB** for 4th and 5th Graders : Wilma helped organize these clubs at Wylam Elementary School where she takes a healthy snack (usually fruit) to the local school every Thursday and Friday morning from 8-8:30. There is a motivational speaker while the children socialize.
- ❖ **FULL PLATE:** The hungry and homeless of the community are fed dinner at the building 2-3 times a week. They also sponsor a free Community Outdoor Thanksgiving Dinner.
- ❖ **AFTER SCHOOL TUTORING:** Monday–Thursday children come for a snack and receive free help with their homework and any subject they need additional help in being successful. [This is temporarily unavailable until the community center is finished]
- ❖ **FOOD PANTRY:** Food, diapers, hygiene products, etc. are handed out to those in need in the community.
- ❖ **YARDS :** Youth Are Really Doing (community) Services - Helps residents in the community with services such as mowing lawns, minor home repairs, raking leaves, etc.
- ❖ **COMMUNITY FUN DAYS:** Usually on a Saturday about four times a year, the whole family can come for a free lunch and safe, fun activities like moonwalks and games.
- ❖ **S.E.E.P. - SUMMER EDUCATIONAL ENRICHMENT PROGRAM :** Monday -Thursday during the summer children are exposed to various free activities outside of their community – Birmingham Museum of Art; the library; soccer, basketball, baton and cheerleading camps. Groups of volunteers come to AOM to sponsor specific group activities. The children receive breakfast and lunch.
- ❖ **MEN (Male Empowerment Now):** Mentor program for young African American males.
- ❖ **COMMUNITY COMPUTER CENTER:** This center will be used by residents seeking employment, senior citizens computer classes and after-school tutoring sessions. This program is in the process of being developed pending donations of new computers.
- ❖ **HIS Boutique:** This is a clothes closet which distributes clean, gently-used, and new clothing. Each piece is given to meet a specific need.
- ❖ **CHRISTMAS BLESSINGS :** AOM collects Christmas wish lists from families that need help in providing presents for their children for Christmas. These gifts are graciously given by members of Homewood Church of Christ and Asbury Methodist Church.
- ❖ **ANNUAL EASTER EGG HUNT:** AOM hosts an annual Easter Egg Hunt at the local community park.
- ❖ **SCHOOL SUPPLY DRIVE :** Book bags, school supplies, and school uniforms are provided to those in need of them. These items are donated by various individuals and churches.
- ❖ **COMMUNITY AID:** This is an all encompassing area – anything from helping with power and gas bills to handing out donated kerosene heaters for those in need. There have been a number of families devastated by house fires and AOM has assisted by locating temporary shelters and clothing for the family members.

The old Wylam Bank building has been purchased for Acknowledge Outreach Ministry and will become the AOM Community Center. It is in rough shape and is currently being gutted so that reconstruction on the inside can begin. Help will be needed for this project.

- For more information contact Wilma Patterson or Beverly Bendall



Oil for My Lamp

by Sharon Jaynes

<http://www.girlfriendstogod.com/Devotions/DevotionArchives/2010DevotionArchives/May10DevotionArchives/OilForMyLamp51910/tabid/856/Default.aspx>

"Her lamp does not go out at night..." (Proverbs 31:18 NIV).

Driving along the coast and coming upon a lighthouse is an inspiring sight. Even though the map marks where the landmarks are stationed, it still brings a thrill when each one comes into view. That's how I feel when I see a mother nurturing her child. It is nothing new, this love of a mother for her offspring, but each time I see it, my heart takes a leap. Lighthouses and mothers share some common features, yet each one is beautiful and unique. Her light consistently burns bright, her stairs invite visitors to climb to greater heights, and her rough exterior remains impervious to the elements. But the most important feature is the oil in her lamp.



Recently, I stood looking at the Bodie Island lighthouse in North Carolina with its bold black and white horizontal stripes painted on its cement exterior. She is quite a flashy beacon, to say the least. Then I turned to look at the rough seas that were beating against the shore. I thought about the mariners who were so dependent on the lighthouse's searching beam to lead them safely to shore. What if she ran out of oil? What if she didn't shine? The ships were relying on her to be prepared and well supplied with oil. Then I thought about my own life as a mother. Suppose I ran out of oil, my light grew dim, or worse, burned out altogether. What would happen to my little fleet?

The blessed woman in **Proverbs 31:18** also had a lamp. Scripture says that *"her lamp did not go out at night."* I used to read that verse and think, "Doesn't this woman ever sleep!" But then I realized that it wasn't so much about her staying awake all night, as it was about her lamp. She never let her oil run dry.



A lighthouse has one primary mission: to broadcast light so a mariner can see the shore. Likewise, a mother is a beacon that displays the light to guide her children through an ocean of choices. A mother's light is Jesus Christ, and she can't shine that light if her lamp runs dry. **Ephesians 5:18** says, *"Be filled with the Holy Spirit."* That "be filled" is a present tense, continuous verb. It means be filled daily and continually. Interestingly enough, many times in Scripture, the Holy Spirit is referred to as oil. How does a woman run out of oil? In Max Lucado's book, *Just Like Jesus*, he tells a story that gives us a clue.

"A lighthouse keeper who worked on a rocky stretch of coastline received oil once a month to keep his light burning bright. Not being far from the village, he had frequent guests. One night a woman needed oil to keep her family warm. Another night a father needed oil for his lamp. Then another needed oil to lubricate a wheel. All the requests seemed legitimate, so the lighthouse keeper tried to meet them all. Toward the end of the month, however, he ran out of oil and his lighthouse went dark, causing several ships to crash on the coastline. The man was reproved by his superiors, 'You were given the oil for one reason,' they said, 'to keep the light burning.'"

As women in the twenty-first century, we are tempted to meet every need that comes our way - and they are constant. But our primary job is to love the Lord, love our husbands, and nurture our children. All the other needs that scream for our attention, though they are noble, must wait until we take care of our families first. Keeping a good supply of oil in our lamps will ensure that we are ready for the tasks the Lord has given us to do.

Technology Dangers and Risks for Teens

by Susan Carney

<http://www.suite101.com/content/technology-dangers-and-risks-for-teens-a150392>

Kids are learning how to master technology at younger and younger ages. While the internet and cell phones provide many benefits that previous generations couldn't have even imagined, they can also be used in unhealthy and even dangerous ways, too.

Texting Teen Drivers

Texting has become one of the preferred methods of communication among teens. Because they are so adept at texting, and can do it so quickly, it's not uncommon for teens to multitask; texting while eating, doing homework, watching TV, and even, more dangerously, walking or driving. Any activity that compromises a driver's attention can increase the likelihood of an accident. Teen drivers, who have logged less hours behind the wheel and often lack the judgment that more experienced drivers have, may overestimate their ability to operate the car safely while texting. Since automobile accidents are a major cause of death among teens, and distractions are a contributing factor to most accidents, the explosion of texting among teens is likely to have an impact on teen driving fatalities.

Social Networking Sites

These days, it seems everyone has a Facebook or Myspace page. Since it's so quick and easy to post pictures, videos, thoughts, and conversations, this may mean that impulsive teens don't filter what they post as well as they probably should. Add to this the fact that these postings are often not as private as they may seem, and several potential problems present themselves. First, kids may post personal or identifying information about themselves in ways that open them up to identification or attention from people with questionable intentions. In addition, the material they choose to post about themselves now may come back to haunt them later. Potential employers, prospective colleges, and others who look for a professional portrayal may not appreciate those pictures of raucous partying, the comments about sexual experiences, or the casual use of profanity.

Camera Phones Photos

Today's camera phones are small and sneaky. This makes it possible for kids to carry a camera nearly everywhere, and to (often without the person's knowledge) take pictures or videos in bathrooms, locker rooms, and other places where there is an expectation of privacy. Kids have taken pictures of other kids (or themselves) in compromising, embarrassing, or sexual situations. And then, to add insult to injury, these pictures are often forwarded to numerous other kids or posted online for others to view.

Teen Cyberbullying

The internet has quickly become a preferred method for kids to verbally harass and harm one another. The speed at which kids can exchange information, coupled with the perceived anonymity of internet communication, makes it easier for kids to say and do things to each other that they often would think twice about in a face to face situation. Unfortunately, teens are very adept at using this technology, and their emotional and social development is often lagging behind their technological savvy. For this reason, bullying on the internet has become a real problem. Kids often either don't understand the impact of their actions, or they don't consider the consequences before they send a mean comment or forward a threatening message.

Interacting With Internet Predators

Internet predators hang out in teen chat rooms looking for kids they can take advantage of. They recognize that many kids are lonely, feel misunderstood, and are starving for attention. They convince kids that they can fill these needs, and build a relationship over time while encouraging the teen to keep it a secret from others who "wouldn't understand" their special relationship. In this way, the predator "grooms" the child for the ultimate goal; a face to face meeting where he can use the trust he has gained to initiate sexual activity.

* Parents, teachers and youth workers need to be aware of how teens are using technology, both in ways that benefit them and in ways that could be harmful. Awareness, education, open discussion, and supervision will help reduce the chances that kids are involved in negative behaviors. Check out [ThinkUKnow](#) for many useful resources.

What Laws Could Be Involved?

http://criminal.findlaw.com/-crimes/a-z/child_pornography.html?DCMP=KNC-Child-Pornography&HBX_PK=child+ponography+laws&HBX_OU=50

Federal and state laws make it a crime to produce, possess, distribute, or sell pornographic materials that exploit or portray a minor. Increasingly, child pornography laws are being utilized to punish use of computer technology and the Internet to obtain, share, and distribute pornographic material involving children, including images and films. Teens and adults can be prosecuted for participating in these activities.

Alabama: Obscene Materials Containing Visual Reproduction of Children AL Code Title 13A, Chapter 12, Article 4 Division 4

Transmitting obscene material to a child by computer Section 13A-6-111

Federal: Sexual Exploitation and Other Abuse of Children 18 USC Chapter 110

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