



GRACENEWS

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Quarterly Newsletter



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Bearing Fruits as Christ's Disciples

Is it sufficient for us to study scripture? Is it enough for us to belong to a church? Pastor Ian expounds on why it is also important for us to behave in a fruitful manner, in line with what we know and whom we belong to.

It must have been deeply troubling for the Pharisees and religious teachers to hear. They were guardians of the law. There was no one in all of Palestine who knew the scriptures better. They had studied it and they had memorised it. They had even kept it in little boxes tied around their heads.

But then Jesus said it: *"Truly, I say to you, the tax collectors and prostitutes will enter the kingdom of God before you."* (Matt 21:31)

In His parable of the two sons, Jesus pointed out that it was not enough to know something (believe); it was not even enough to be a part of the family (belong). We are consistently called to act (behave) in ways that bear evidence of what we know and to whom we belong. Why? Because evidence of our spiri-

tual heritage is best seen in our behaviours. We are trees that are identified by our fruit (Matt 7:15-20).

*The first clear
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Greg Laurie tells the story of a little boy who went over to his pastor's house to watch him do some carpentry work. After the boy had watched the pastor work for some time, the pastor became curious and asked the young boy, "Son, are you picking up lots of ideas on how to build a bookshelf?" The boy

responded, "No, I'm just waiting to see what my pastor says when he hits his thumb with a hammer."

The first clear indication of a true heart change is bearing fruit. First, the fruit of repentance (Matt 3:8), and then the fruit that is cultivated in the soil of our hearts by our spiritual Father: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness and self-control.

My prayer for us in the next half of 2018 is that all of us will seek to produce evidence of our faith through our fruitful behaviours, simply because we know that by this our Father is glorified, that we bear much fruit and so prove ourselves to be Christ's disciples (John 15:8)! Ω

FEATURE

Living Holy, Holy, Holy Lives

Both Seah Kah Yin and his wife Christine have been members of GBC since 1989. In this issue, Kah Yin gives a personal account of his own journey of faith. Encapsulated within are his motivations and challenges faced as he strives towards godly living.

“You ought to live holy and godly lives... make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him.” (2 Pet 3:11b, 14b) In our current age, how then should we live?

The current age is a digital age. We are often bombarded with all kinds of information and advice for our physical, financial, emotional and even spiritual well-being. We have very little face time to physically interact with one another, and also little response time. People are often impatient and they expect instant responses. Many people are glued to their handphones and computers. There are many ‘good things’ fighting for our attention, and these ‘good things’ may enslave us if we are not careful. Good things may even become our idols and cause us to miss out on what is truly good for our souls (Ps 19:7).

How we shall live will then depend on what we fill our mind with (Phil 4:8). I believe it is important to start my day on the right footing – having a personal quiet time with God. It is a personal habit of mine to wake up at five-plus in the morning (before anyone in my family) to do my quiet time. It is the best time of the day for me as it is quiet and free from any distraction. I believe that every Christian should make it a point to find his or her ‘best time’ to start the day with God.

For many years, Our Daily Bread and reading through half the Bible in a year have served as my daily devotional guide. It is a great privilege to address God as Heavenly Father, asking Him to speak to me through His word every morning. It is a tremendous blessing as the scripture will assure me of God’s power and love to face the daily issues at hand – I do not walk alone (Deut 20:1). I find it comforting to commit all issues of people, family, church, ministry and my own to God, knowing that He is the wisest (Isa 55:9) and He is in control of all things. Besides a personal time with God, I find that fellowship with Christians within my care group and Bible Study Fellowship group are also important to knowing God and myself in way that I cannot perceive on my own. This has helped me grow spiritually as I am very much ministered to (Heb 10:24-25).

What does it mean to live holy and godly lives distinct from the world? What are the challenges we will face, and how do we overcome them and live victoriously under God’s mighty hands?

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. Love your neighbour as yourself.” (Matt 22:37) Most of us know this verse well. It is easily said but difficult to apply. I remember one morning when I was on my way to work, and I parked my car near an ATM to withdraw some money. On my way back, I overheard a man remarking sarcastically about my “very considerate parking”. Oops, in my haste, I had not parked properly. Indeed, I had failed



Christine & Kah Yin

“The Holy Spirit will reveal to us our sin no matter how small it is, and it has to be dealt with if we are to live godly lives distinct from the world.”

to love my neighbour. There are many instances where we fail to love our neighbours, such as being late for meeting, not putting in full effort, not helping out, and not keeping a place clean. These may seem minor but it definitely reveals the ugliness of our old selves – the self-centred life that we had once lived. The Holy Spirit will reveal to us our sin no matter how small it is, and it has to be dealt with if we are to live godly lives distinct from the world. It starts with small acts of godly behaviour.

In my workplace, I will keep to biblical principles and humbly address issues with my bosses where required. I am even prepared to resign from my job if things are clearly wrong and do not change (Eph 5:15-17). God is faithful and I am confident that He will provide and not leave me in a lurch (Prov 10:3).

In church, I may be requested to help in areas where I feel inadequate in. However, I believe that if it is God’s calling, He will provide the needed help to get it done (Ps 121:3). It is so easy to say no to a request, giving excuses such as being busy, having no time, or that there are better and more qualified people. I believe in being available for God’s work and not ignoring any call for help (Prov 3:27), as long as God is glorified and that the people whom I serve are ministered to. I don’t have to have things go my way (that’s pride) – His way is more important.

I know many non-Christians who are nice, gentle and caring, and I also know many Christians who are demanding and nasty. It is not a matter of trying harder, being nicer or outdoing non-Christians. We will never be good enough until the day we meet God face to face. We are all work in progress. Am I alone? No (Isa 41:10). Do I grow weary and give up? No (Gal 6:9). Fully trusting that God is sovereign and merciful will help us live victoriously. Ω

FEATURE

Work of the Spirit

What is our response when things do not go our way? How is our response a reflection of who God is and how He is working in us? Toby Wu and a sister-in-Christ share with us how God worked in them as they wrestled with challenges and struggles.

Toby Wu

When I fractured my ankle back in March, I never thought the pain I experienced would convict me of anything more than mere foolishness. I had been in one of the most 'productive periods' of my life: I was studying a heavier course load, doing a part-time internship, and even training to represent my university in cheerleading. I had been chided for my hectic and fast-paced life, but I was proud to be able to manage such intense commitments and to develop myself in all the things I enjoyed.

So when they all came to an abrupt halt, I felt extremely lost. Many well-meaning people suggested that perhaps God was telling me to slow down, but in the emptiness of days spent recovering I could only fret over how much time and 'progress' I was losing.

It truly amazes me that although I had chosen to grovel in my sin, God still pursued my stubborn heart which had only anticipated the supposed promises of a restored physical body. As blessed as I was to have received such immense care from my family, friends and our church, I was most blessed with the relentless Holy Spirit that broke my pride and confronted me with the gospel. I was shown, in many ways, how helpless I was in choosing to depend on my meritocratic pursuits which made me feel strong, always refusing my humble identity of a born-again disciple of Christ.

Although I am so grateful for my physical healing, I am even more awed by how my soul has been made new in Christ and is slowly being sanctified every single day. While I still face the temptation of buying into the false gospel of my boundless individual potential, His mercies are indeed new every morning, and He gives me the strength to trust and follow Him.

“Although I am so grateful for my physical healing, I am even more awed by how my soul has been made new in Christ and is slowly being sanctified every single day.”

Anonymous¹

What would you do when you were discouraged by things happening in the office which you thought were not right? Or when you saw injustice? Or when you were unfairly passed over for a promotion? I was caught in a situation where there was power struggle among the bosses. I reported to the second-highest-ranking boss in the company. My immediate boss and his boss did not see eye-to-eye on many issues and had frequent conflicts, arguing over many work issues so much that work got stalled. Decisions were not made on a timely basis, and that inadvertently affected those working under them.

Over the years I had always received very good performance rating, and I was due for a promotion. I was very disappointed my promotion did not go through as I was caught in the power struggle. Eventually my immediate boss had to leave the company. With my immediate boss gone, I was at a loss. Going to work was painful. During this trying period, I was praying and crying out to God for His help and deliverance. Every morning before I started work, I would try to read the Bible faithfully and pray unceasingly, trusting Him and believing that He will work things out for the good of those who love Him.

“God’s word has brought much comfort and strength to me as He reminded me that He will never leave me nor forsake me.”

God’s word has brought much comfort and strength to me as He reminded me that He will never leave me nor forsake me. I read Psalms every morning to refresh my soul. Psalm 9:9-10 were some of the verses that I had clung on to in times of discouragement: “The Lord is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble. Those who know your name will trust in you, for you, Lord, have never forsaken those who seek you.”

¹ This sister-in-Christ has rightly requested for anonymity given the sensitive nature of her sharing. We thank her for her willingness to share and encourage our fellow readers.

FEATURE

DISCIPLING THE HEARTS OF THE NEXT GENERATION



Photo by Rene Bernal on Unsplash

What does it mean to bring up our children in the ways of our Lord? Pastor Eugene dives into relevant parts of the Bible to explain the importance of shepherding the hearts of our children, so that our focus is on helping the children in GBC understand what is going on in their hearts, and not simply helping them behave in a certain manner.

“...Tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the Lord, and his might, and the wonders that he has done.” (Ps 78:4b)

Instructing our children in God’s ways involves teaching them the Bible, helping them to learn how to pray, and bringing them to church. But discipling our children entails much more than simply ensuring that they do certain things or behave in a certain way – we must go deeper.

Proverbs 4:23 says, “Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.” In the Bible, the ‘heart’ refers to our inner person – who we really are on the inside: our desires, affections, thoughts, motivations, beliefs, attitudes, etc. What is in our hearts will determine who (or what) we worship. Or, to put it another way, who (or what) we truly worship reveals what is really in our hearts. As Jesus said, “Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” (Matt 6:21)

Our heart shapes our words and actions; it shapes how we relate to other people and how we relate to God. In explaining why different people bear different behavioural fruit, Jesus said, “The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.” (Lk 6:45)

What does this mean for how we instruct our children? An important application is that we should not lose sight of the attitudes of a child’s heart that underlie his or her behaviour. We need to get to the heart of the matter, because behaviour

has a ‘why’. When we disciple children in this way, we help them to understand what is going on in their hearts. Uncovering the desires, motives, attitudes and affections of the heart enables us to know and love a child in a deeper, more substantive way.

We are not merely trying to ‘fix’ their behaviour, we are shepherding their hearts.



By focusing on the hearts of our children, we help them to see their need for the gospel and for true conversion, not just behavioural change. We are unable to change the hearts of our children. But the good news is that God can, through the gospel of His Son. In Christ, we receive God’s Spirit, who transforms us from the inside out. He takes away our hearts of stone and gives us hearts of flesh. He realigns our attitude, affections, motivations and desires, so that we worship God alone. Therefore, our goal is to shepherd the hearts of our children by pointing them to the only One who is able to save. As God’s word says in Titus 3:3-6, “For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another. But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Saviour appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Saviour.” Ω

MINISTRY FOCUS

Caring for our youngest family members

Ever wondered what goes on in the nursery? Cheong Ai Tho shares more about this ministry with us in words and photos, and talks about the joys and challenges of serving in the nursery, and how the church may pray for the ministry.

“Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb a reward.” (Ps 127:3)

1. What does the ministry do?

The nursery welcomes early-age children to Grace Baptist Church (GBC). It is the goal of our nursery helpers to provide a safe, comfortable and nurturing environment for children, so that parents can worship God and attend the service without feeling insecure or worried about the well-being of their children. The nursery is available for infants to those up to three years of age, during our Sunday morning service.

2. Who are currently serving in this ministry?

Currently, we are very blessed to have volunteers from various age groups: uncles and aunties, including singles who serve joyfully to ensure the children are cared for during service. All nursery helpers are experienced, familiar with the nursery facilities, and aware of their duties and responsibilities while attending to the children. They also strive to make each child’s earliest church encounters a loving and nurturing experience.

The ministry comprises two major areas:

- **Physical**, i.e. meeting basic needs of the children, such as keeping them clean, comfortable and occupied in play, singing Christian songs, letting them rest if needed, and feeding them if instructed by the parents; and
- **Spiritual**, i.e. teaching the older children. A pair of assigned teachers prepare and deliver a structured Bible study programme, which consists of reading a short scripture or verse from the Bible, learning a Bible story and making craft, to help the children understand and apply the message.

3. What are the joys and challenges in serving in this ministry?

Serving in the nursery may not be everyone’s cup of tea but for those who love spending time with children, our volunteers can assure you that the joy of seeing each child grow and mature in different ways is indeed very rewarding and satisfying. This is especially when the children look forward to coming every Sunday to not only meet their ‘little’ friends but also their uncles and aunties! We have witnessed many children who had struggled and resisted coming to the nursery, but later running in and simply saying “bye” to their parents; so be encouraged – the children will adapt and learn that there is a time and place for everything.

The challenge is not knowing how many children will attend each Sunday and hence, the efficient allocation of volunteers on some Sundays, but so far we have been able to manage as the pair of Sunday School teachers will always come in earlier to help, so we are very thankful for this.

4. How can we pray for the ministry?

Pray for:

- The children to grow in the knowledge and fear of the Lord as the helpers model Christlikeness in their service;
- More helpers, and all helpers to be faithful in our service and joyful in our ministry; and
- New parents to entrust their children to the nursery and God’s provision of this ministry. Ω



They start by praying.



They sing and listen to stories.



They do craft.



They even clean up after themselves!



MISSIONS / EVENTS

Great Commissions Month

For the month of May, GBC focused on the Great Commission. Our pastors and invited guests shared with us God's work through missionaries and missions organisations beyond our church walls. Aside from the focused sermons and EQUIP classes, a notice board in the fellowship hall kept the church updated on our missionaries' work and their prayer requests. Let us continue to keep our missionaries in prayer and connect with them, not just this month but throughout the year!



“Every Christian here is either a missionary or an impostor.” – Charles Spurgeon

Events

Good Friday | 30 Mar 18 ▼



The good news of Good Friday is that Jesus willingly laid down his life to draw us to Him. We respond by grieving over our sins that killed the Son of God, and asking for mercy. We trust that He saves us and rules over us as King, and this should lead to worship!

Resurrection Sunday & Baptisms
1 Apr 18 ►

The church came together again to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus! We also witnessed the baptism of Benedict Seah (left) and Sengalrayan Janet Maria (middle), and welcomed Suriabiantara Tjahaja (right) via transfer of membership (rightmost photo).



Quarterly Congregational Meeting
8 Apr 18 ▼

Missions and membership were the focus of the second QCM of the year. We encourage you to read this blogpost (<https://tinyurl.com/gbc-2q18-qcm>) to find out what was discussed.



Family Dedication | 8 Apr 18 ▼



Four young families dedicated their children to God (L-R: Samuel and Jessica with Ezra and Josiah; Wei-quan and Hui Jing with Kayla and Amanda; Vincent and Sachie with Manuel and Micah; Kwang Yew and Christabel with Alexander). The parents committed to modelling the faith and love of Christ to their children. In response, the GBC family promised to disciple these young family members in our midst.

EVENTS

2Gs Lunchbyte – GIVE Thanks and ForGIVE | 14 Apr 18 ▼

We thank God for the 200 guests who attended the evangelistic talk aimed at blessing the elderly and Chinese-speaking attendees. We pray that He will now nurture the seeds sown for His glory. *(Photographs by Navigators)*



YA Evangelistic Event 19 May 18 ▼



A panel comprising Jonny, Toby and Juslyn, moderated by Jonathan, shared their online lives, and Samuel shared the gospel. These helped the audience of 40 YAs and their non-Christian friends reflect on their own social media usage and its link to their search for identity.



Vacation Bible School | 31 May to 2 Jun 18 ▼



We welcomed close to 70 children of GBC members and non-members into our church for the VBS. We thank God that they had fun learning about God through songs, dances, movies, games, experiments, crafts and stories, and pray that the seeds sown will bear fruit in His time. We also thank the many volunteers who helped out before, during and after the VBS, from creating the backdrop to leading the children to manning the different stations to preparing food for more than 100 people!

YA Retreat | 14 to 17 Jun 18 ►

Fifty-five YAs and Elder Beh spent three days examining what the Bible says about heaven and the Christian's hope in heaven, through main messages given by Samuel Beh and Bryan Tan, and workshops on Bible reading and how our view of heaven should change the way we work and think about ourselves. It was also a blessed time of rest and fellowship.



CHILDREN'S CORNER



3rd B: Behave

by Rachel Wong

Are you tired of having people constantly tell you to behave yourself? Perhaps you are already very well-behaved so you never need to hear these dispiriting words, but let's suppose that you do hear parents and teachers say this from time to time. What motivates you to 'behave', when told to do so?

Have you heard of the 'carrot or stick' approach? To understand this you have to imagine that you were a donkey. Now I am reliably informed that donkeys love carrots, so if you were a donkey and someone told you to carry a heavy load to the next farm and promised you a bag of carrots at the end of it, would that make you gallop next door to get your reward? Or what if you were told that if you didn't carry the load you would be beaten with a stick? Would you gallop next door just as fast? Both the carrot and the stick make the donkey do what he's told, either for a reward, or in order to avoid punishment.

What about you? If your teacher says, "If you don't talk I will give you a doughnut", would you continue chatting to your friend? How about if your teacher says, "If you talk I will give you extra homework"? I'm sure you would keep quiet pretty fast!

But really, none of these are good reasons to do the right thing. We shouldn't need a carrot or a stick, or a doughnut or more homework to make us want to do the right thing. What does the Bible say about this? In John 14:15 we read that Jesus said, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments." So that's all we need: simply LOVE. We love because God first loved us and gave us His Son Jesus Christ who came and paid the price for our sins (1 John 4:10, 19).

We don't do the right things because we think that God will reward us if we do, or punish us if we don't: we do the right things just because we love God and want to make Him happy. So we don't need anything from outside ourselves to make us behave and obey God – it is the Holy Spirit inside us who, through the word of God, reminds us how Jesus lived His life and helps us to be like Him, BECAUSE WE LOVE HIM.

So don't be like the donkey! God's people say "No" to carrots and sticks, and "Yes" to obeying Him with hearts of love. Amen! Ω