

Schedule of Meeting Times:

WKAC 1080 AM Sunday 7:30 AM
Speaker, Robert Emerson
 Study Sunday 10:00 AM
 Worship Sunday Morn 11:00 AM
 Worship Sunday Eve 5:00 PM
Singing every 2nd Sunday evening
 Study Wednesday 7:00 PM

Preacher / bulletin editor:

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“...by what a man
 is overcome, by
 this he is
 enslaved.”

— 2 Peter 2:19b

**Servants during February:**

Songleader: Larry (6), David
 (13), Peter (20), Stanley (27)

Reading: Mike M

Announcements: Larry

Table: Mike B, Peter, Marty,
 Stanley

Wednesday Lesson: Kris (2), Larry (9), Stanley
 (16), Kris (23)

Area Meetings:

Pepper Road, 2/20-23

Market Street, singing, 2/25, 7pm

Eastside Russellville, John Gibson, 2/25,26

Hwy 157 Cullman, Jonathan Caldwell, 3/6-9

Singing River, Tommy Peeler, 3/6-11

South Cullman, singing, 3/11

Hays Mill church of Christ

21705 Hays Mill Road
 Elkmont, AL 35620

The Bible . Examiner

“Examine everything carefully...” —1 Thessalonians 5:21 NASB

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Out of Control

By Gary P. Henry

“No!” deserves to be placed on the list of endangered species of words. It is on the verge of extinction from our vocabulary. With each passing day, more Americans demonstrate that they are unable, and unwilling, to restrain themselves from anything their impulses suggest, and the spirit of the day is caught by the refrain of a recent pop song which exhorted us all to get out on that floor and “boogie-oogie-oogie till we just can’t boogie no more!” The result has been terrifying: having neglected the restrictions that served as our controls, many of us are spiralling downward in a moral tail-spin.

Many forms of this indulgent behavior are obviously serious. The epidemic of teenage

pregnancies and VD, the prevalence of drug, alcohol, and tobacco addiction, the random violence menacing our cities, the sordidness served up to us as entertainment, and an unfortunately long list of other problems sicken us and let us know just how undisciplined we have become. But this lack of restraint is not confined to the moral weaklings in society. All of us, to some extent, have lost control. During the holiday season just passed, for example, how many among us restrained ourselves responsibly in the use of our credit cards? How many of us put reasonable limits on our eating? The inability to say No! is morally dangerous, no matter who suffers from it.

I believe the most regrettable aspect of our 'permissive society' is that it reflects a shortage of individual SELF-control. It is easy to blame our woes on society. But society is a collection of individuals. And if society is permissive, that only means that individuals, like you and me, are. Instead of waiting for society collectively to become more restrained, we need to begin now making ourselves more disciplined. We need the courage to assume responsibility for ourselves. We need to decide personally to choose the very best and determine, God helping us, that our lives will be reasoned and rational. No one can do that for us.

Too often we rely on salvation by legislation. We simply assume the answer to any social problem lies in more and stricter laws. Good laws, of course, are beneficial and necessary, but in a country where individual citizens cannot or will not place self-imposed checks on their own behavior in obedience to common sense, there is little hope that any externally-imposed regulations will help much. What is required at the present time is not a proliferation of legal statutes. We already have more laws than a policeman can shake a billy-club at. What we do not have is

sufficient self-mastery on the part of each person.

Parents, I suspect, need especially to take note of the importance of moral self-restraint. It is not enough to force our children to do right. At some point in the future, our restrictions on their behavior will cease to be enforceable, and unless we have also taught them how to make responsible choices for themselves and equipped them with their own internal moral gyroscopes, we will see them flounder as adults.

In a certain sense, we who are Christians are 'controlled' by God. But in another important sense, we are to be controlled by ourselves. Listen to Paul: "I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; but I buffet my body and make it my slave, lest possibly, after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified," 1 Cor 9:26,27. Paul certainly understood that ultimately the restrictions were God's and that it would only be by His help that he could live within them, but he surely also understood that God expected Paul to be big enough to CHOOSE these restraints as his own and to exercise his own self-mastery in the application of them. Paul, with his vigorous and

manly sense of moral self-command, would be appalled at the flabby impulsiveness of some of us who cannot even voluntarily cut down on our gasoline consumption, much less impose the limits of moral decency upon ourselves.

Contrary to popular thinking, reasoned discipline does not hinder freedom. To think so is to confuse true freedom with reckless abandon. Actually, control makes freedom possible. The steering wheel of a car restricts its movement. But unless we define freedom as the right of the car to propel us into any ditch or oncoming vehicle it pleases, we would say that adequate 'discipline' at the wheel is one of the restraints that allow a car to be useful and not destructive. Similarly, as an old saying goes, no human being is really free who cannot command himself. As Peter, writing by the Holy Spirit's inspiration, put it, "By what a man

is overcome, by this he is enslaved," 2 Pet 2:19. It does not take a very expensive dictionary to explain the difference between liberty and libertinism. From a purely practical standpoint, then, we need self-discipline to be useful as well as free. After all, the man who does not stand for something will fall for anything, and he who is everywhere is nowhere. But, more important, from the Biblical standpoint, a lack of personal control is sinful. Self-restraint is everywhere praised in the Bible as a virtue, Gal 5:23, 2 Pet 1:6, etc. And Peter pointed out that, as the world gets worse, there is all the more need for us to be in command of ourselves: "prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled," 1 Pet 1:13, NIV. As common wisdom tells us, following the path of least resistance makes men, as well as rivers, crooked.

--via Searching the Scriptures, Jan 1980 

Remember in Prayer

Pam had surgery for a torn meniscus Thursday. **Alice** is recovering from a bad stomach bug, as is **Daniel and the children** (only Michelle appears to have escaped). **Theresa's husband, Kent,** is

recovering from Covid. **Olin Britnell** was in ALH ICU, at last report on Wednesday. Please continue to pray for **Madelene Britnell, Carolyn Dennis,** and **Joyce Smith.** 