

**Schedule of Meeting Times:**

WKAC 1080 AM Sunday 7:30 AM  
*Speaker, Kris Vilander*  
 Study Sunday 10:00 AM  
 Worship Sunday Morn 11:00 AM  
 Worship Sunday Eve 5:00 PM  
*Singing every 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday evening*  
 Study Wednesday 7:00 PM

**Preacher / bulletin editor:**

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“...These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

— Matthew 25:46

**Servants during January:**

**Songleader:** Larry (1), Peter (8), Stanley (15), Larry (22), Peter (29)

**Reading:** Mike M

**Announcements:** Larry

**Table:** Stanley, Marty, Mike B, Peter

**Wednesday Lesson:** Kris (4),

Larry (11), Stanley (18), Kris (25)

**Meetings:** South Cullman, Jan

13-15, 3pm, Reagan McClenny

**Hays Mill church of Christ**

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Elkmont, AL 35620

# The Bible . Examiner

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

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# LOVE, GOD, AND HELL

*by Matthew Bassford*

One of the most common rhetorical questions that skeptics ask of Christians is, “If God is so loving, then how can He condemn the sinner to everlasting torment in hell?” On its face, this question has some merit. After all, hell as presented in Scripture is a truly terrible place where, in the words of Isaiah, “Their worm will not die, and their fire will not be quenched.” The imperfections of my spirit are legion, yet I can’t think of a single person I would want to see in hell. How, then, could a loving God consign most of mankind to a place of eternal suffering? The problem with the question is that it places the blame on exactly the wrong set of shoulders. Not one single sinner will end up in hell because God didn’t love him. Instead, every sinner will be there because they didn’t love God.

God’s love for mankind is proclaimed in numerous ways. He reveals Himself in the beauty and grandeur of the physical creation. He sends sunshine and rain on the just and on the unjust alike; not because He has to, but because He wants to. He reveals Himself in His word, in the story of His faithful dealings with His often-faithless people. Most of all, God proclaims His love for us in His Son. In Christ, we see the fullness of deity revealed. The nature of Jesus explains the nature of God Himself: His power, His holiness, and especially His love. That love finds its highest expression in the gracious self-sacrifice of Christ for the undeserving sinner. After that, what more could God do to reach out to His alienated creation? What greater proof of His love could He offer?

The sinner, though, has remained a sinner because he has encountered the love of God and remained unmoved. He surveys God's physical handiwork yet does not honor God nor give thanks. He accepts God's providential blessings yet remains ungrateful and wicked. He has the opportunity to search the Scriptures, yet he either chooses to remain ignorant or does not respond to hearing with faith. Most of all, the sinner rejects the invitation to come to know God through Christ, and he dismisses the cross as insignificant.

Honestly, what is God supposed to do with somebody like that? God has done all He could do to reach out to the sinner in love, and the sinner has steadfastly refused each entreaty. He has remained a sinner precisely because he wants nothing to do with God.


Several weeks ago, I wrote a post entitled "Why I Want to Go to Heaven." My reasoning there is simple. Heaven is where God is, and I love God and want to be with Him. Indeed, heaven is heaven to me because God is there.

What, then, of the unrepentant sinner who has spent his life insistently having nothing to do with God? Heaven for someone like that wouldn't be an eternity of bliss. It would be an eternity of misery. Heaven would, in fact, resemble Sartre's vision of hell in *No Exit*: being trapped forever with someone you despise. Perhaps we should ask

instead, "How could a loving God condemn the sinner to heaven?"

If the sinner cannot spend eternity with God (and indeed does not want to), then he must spend eternity apart from God. There's no third way. Consider, for instance, Paul's description of hell in 2 Thessalonians 1:9, as "eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power." It has to be that way. Those who reject God also reject His nearness and His blessings. Just as we don't (or shouldn't, at least) continually force ourselves on those who don't want anything to do with us, eventually God gives up too.

That final surrender has dramatic consequences. After all, every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above. If we owe every good thing we have to God, His final withdrawal from our lives means that nothing good is left in those lives either. Absolute zero isn't the complete presence of cold. It is simply the complete absence of heat. Hell doesn't need some added suffering in order to be hell. It only needs the complete absence of God.

Is such a place wretched and miserable beyond our ability to comprehend? Certainly. All of us have spent our lives immersed in the kindness of God, and the withdrawal of His grace from us does not bear contemplating. However, those who find themselves in the midst of such suffering cannot blame God. They can only blame themselves. 

# Marital Faithfulness


by Steve Klein

A recent report revealed that "thirty-five percent of the people who use personal ads for dating are already married?" For years we've preached against and bemoaned the high rate of divorce in this country. But divorce doesn't just happen. There are any number of attitudes and actions that lead up to it. Wrong attitudes toward God, toward spouses, and toward the institution of marriage itself lead to foolish and harmful actions that destroy homes and condemn souls.

God created the institution of marriage. It is He who joins man and woman together in the bonds of matrimony, and He intends for them to stay that way until separated by death, Rom 7:2. Jesus said that man is not to separate what God has joined together, Mt 19:6. In Malachi 2:16, God literally says that He "hates divorce." Any married person with an ounce of respect for God and His will, will not take out a personal ad for a date or engage in any other activity that could lead to a divorce. It's a

matter of having the right attitude toward God.

It is also a matter of having the right attitude toward one's spouse. Spouses are to be loved, honored and cherished. A husband who is enraptured with the love of his spouse will not "be enraptured by an immoral woman," Prov 5:19,20. He will honor his wife as the weaker vessel, and cherish her as he does his own flesh, 1 Pet 3:7; Eph 5:28,29. The wife who loves her husband will "see that she respects" him, Eph 5:33. "An excellent wife is the crown of her husband, But she who causes shame is like rotteness in his bones," Prov 12:4. This mutual love and respect between marriage partners leaves no room for activities which bring pain, shame and dishonor to one's spouse. Simply put, divorce and its painful consequences are often the result of being unfaithful to God and to one's spouse.

Truly, "the way of the unfaithful is hard," Prov 13:15, NKJV. 

## Remember in Prayer

**Joyce** continues to deal with her cancer—please remember her. The **Beddingfield's** and the **Emerson's** both continue to struggle with various and serious health issues. **Carolyn** is

undergoing some serious difficulties as well, and has asked for prayer. Please continue to pray for **Dot Hice**, also. 