

**Schedule of Meeting Times:**

WKAC 1080 AM Sunday 7:30 AM  
 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

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“...by two unchangeable things in which it is **impossible for God to lie**, we who have taken refuge would **have strong encouragement** to take hold of the **hope set before us**,”

—Hebrews 6:18

**Servants during January:**

**Songleader:** Stanley (7), Larry (14), Dwight (21), Stanley (28)

**Reading:** Mike M

**Announcements:** Stanley

**Table:** Larry, Mike M, Marty, Stanley

**Wednesday Lesson:** Larry (3), Stanley (10), Kris (17), Larry (24), Stanley (31)

**Lawn Mowing (week starting):** Hiding out...

**Area Meetings:**

**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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## Assuming the Better

by Robert F. Turner

Those who have made a study of such matters tell us that we tend to measure up to what certain “peers” expect of us. If those to whom we look as “leaders” or models indicate their high hopes for us, we strive to meet those goals. If they indicate a lack of trust in us, a feeling that we will fail, we may lose confidence in ourselves—and fail. I do not believe man is completely “programmed” by his environment, but it takes a lot of “inner strength”—“built-in” character available to those who look to God for the standard of integrity and righteousness, Prov 11:3-6—to buck the predictions of failure, and succeed in spite of the gloomy odds against us. Sinful man must be encouraged to believe that he is made in God’s image, and is capable of living “to the glory of God.”

The Hebrew writer recognized this principle, for throughout an epistle directed to backsliders, that necessitated many warnings of failure

and of its dire results, he repeatedly **encouraged**. They were “brethren” with Christ, and in Him could be glorified, Heb 2:10-13. They were “partakers of the heavenly calling,” Heb 3:1. God’s oath and promise offered them “strong consolation,” Heb 6:17-20. And after a direful warning he reminded them of past successes, Heb 10:31f, and says, “But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.”

The “back-slappers” have stretched this principle to include insincere compliments—**using** us (and our pride) to accomplish their ends. They would “palaver” us into doing their bidding or buying their products. By the same reasoning some would rule out all negative teaching and correction—including that of the Apostle Paul’s, I suppose. Such maneuvering we abhor.

But elders, preachers, and parents (to name a few) may do a

gross injustice to those who look to them for guidance, by failing to properly encourage. Must we always assume the very worst? Love “thinketh no evil,” 1 Cor 13:4-7, but tends to place the best possible interpretation on matters. It will most assuredly “rejoice not in iniquity.” (Think that one over!) Lawlessness calls forth sadness, compassion, and a desire to help on the part of those who love.

Some much needed teaching regarding the church, creedalism, fellowship, and many other subjects, has been ineffective and is rejected, because the teachers assumed a superior attitude and spoke or wrote as **though they did not expect the message to be heeded.** We do not

advocate a Pollyanna, head-in-the-clouds attitude; but rather suggest it is very realistic to expect that brethren in Christ really want to do what is right. True, many are cumbered with traditional concepts, and may have a somewhat sectarian view of the church. But this is rarely by choice. They have inherited such error, over a period of years, and the “surgery” must be done with TLC and consideration. It is a fair assumption that genuine saints desire to be rid of all human error.

So, think positively! Warn in hope! Let your speech be seasoned with salt! Fight sin because you love the sinner!

—via *Plain Talk*, March 1973 

# Meditations in a Cemetery

by Joe Fitch

The funeral is over. Family and friends have gone. The echo of songs and sermon has faded. Silence settles like fog over this cemetery as I walk amid the graves. Serious reflections flood my thoughts uninvited.

Look at those two headstones side by side. One is inscribed to Susie, a three year old victim of a childhood disease; the other marks the grave of “Granny” who died a few months later at the age of eighty. What solemn reminders of the unannounced visits of the grim reaper. None are exempt. All tread the way to the grave. The dust claims

the moldering body; all are penniless. The influential could not persuade death to pass him by; the rich could not buy another minute. “And as it is appointed unto men once to die,” ...that even includes me! It seems so unreal that I must die! The haunting refrain returns—“As the life of a flower, as a breath or a sigh, so the years glide away, and alas, we must die.”

Look at the inscriptions. All express hope for a resurrection. Doubter’s words are not inscribed on tombstones. Scriptures best express man’s hope. But no doubt some

would prefer never to wake. Many are not prepared; many have been deceived. Resurrection means judgment.

Ah, look at this grave—the plot and plight of the procrastinator. “I am going to come as soon as I get all straightened out.” And my joking barb in reply, “Don’t wait until the undertaker straightens you out.” Somehow I found no humor in the thought when they called to say he was dead.

However, I remember a funeral that was even harder. Let me see... There is the grave by that big Oak. He was a faithful Christian for years before he quit—said he wasn’t having much fun. He knew his duty and expected to return to the Lord before he died. I guess he died sooner than he expected. What a gamble to lose!

I learned at his funeral of the sorrow of people without hope. The family knew the Bible, and they knew his willful sin. He robbed my sermon of all comfort and his family of all hope. It was so sad!

## Remember in Prayer

Remember all those of our near spiritual family that struggle with illness or chronic issues, including **Mike B; Carolyn; Betty; John, Sylvia, and Paige Pollard; and Joyce.**

Please also pray for our leaders: national, state-wide, and local; they need integrity, wisdom and counsel, strength and boldness—all of which

It was such a contrast to the funerals of the righteous. All lament their death; none doubt their future. It is not difficult to find words of comfort and hope. Even more, righteousness must be consolation to a man on his death bed knowing that life is ebbing away. He could say, like Paul, “I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness...”

Over here lies my friend. He was not a Christian—it may have been my fault. I wanted to say something to him about his soul but never did. I was afraid I might offend him or say the wrong thing. Oh, how I wish I had tried! May God forgive me! A cold shudder passes over me when we sing, “You Never Mentioned Him to Me.”

The sun is setting. I must leave, but I will come again to think. It is strange to learn such important lessons about life in a cemetery.

—via *Plain Talk*, March 1969 

are in short supply.

Pray for brethren that suffer in other regions, whether from want or war—but especially due to persecution.

And pray for, look for, and expect opportunities to be of service to others. 