

Rochester Chinese Christian Church

# ECHO

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## Church Goals (2008-2010)

### ***Glory to God Alone***

*“Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Corinthians 10:31)...*

- \* by **growing** in our understanding of and love for the great doctrines of Scripture and the knowledge of Christ (Ps.119:97);
- \* by **honoring** the Word of God and prayer in humility, conviction of sin, and repentance, as the means of grace for the transformation of our lives (Rom.12:2);
- \* by **developing** a biblical world and life view, a heavenly-minded outlook, and personal character worthy of the gospel of Christ (Phil.1:27);
- \* by **encouraging** mutual exhortation toward each other's spiritual welfare, as well as concern for each other's all-around well-being (Heb.10:25); and
- \* by **strengthening** our conviction that the gospel of Christ is the only means of salvation, and our proclamation of it locally and worldwide (Acts 4:12).



Rochester Chinese Christian Church  
羅城華人基督教會



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<p><b>English Sunday Worship</b> 9:30 am</p> <p><b>English Sunday School</b> 11:15 am</p> <p>Call the church for other <b>fellowship, bible study</b> &amp; <b>youth group</b> meetings</p>	<p><b>中文主日學</b> 上午九時三十分</p> <p><b>中文主日崇拜</b> 上午十一時十五分</p> <p>欲知其他團契聚會 查經班，請電教會</p>
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Rochester Chinese Christian Church West  
羅城西區華人基督教會

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主日崇拜  
**Sunday Worship**  
下午 4:00 - 5:15 pm

主日學  
**Sunday School**  
下午 5:20 - 6:15 pm





## An Authentic Church

*“But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.”*

*1 Timothy 1:5*

Pastor Mitchell R. Herring

We want to be real. No one is able to sustain life, work, or service very well in a cause or for an organization that is not authentic and based on reality. In fact this is one of the arguments for the veracity of the resurrection. If the apostles had not seen the risen Christ and been convinced of His resurrection, they would not have been able to take the gospel across the Roman world. No one would be able to give themselves in such complete dedication, and even be martyred for something they knew to be false. The same can be said for the church. Christ is alive, and the gospel is real. Are we?

From the Reformation onwards, the marks of a true church have been defined as the pure preaching of the Word of God; the pure administration of the sacraments; and the pure exercise of church discipline. But the key was always seen to be the *pure and faithful preaching of the Word of God*. Everything else is based on and directed by this. To the extent that the Word of God loses its central place in the church, is taken lightly or not preached faithfully, to that extent the church ceases to be a true church. It is by the preaching of this Word that faith comes in the first place (Rom. 10:14-17; 1 Pt. 2:23-25). For the Christians the Word of God is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path (Ps. 119:105), food to nourish our souls (Mt. 4:4), and truth to equip us for every good work (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Indeed this is the basis for real discipleship. Christ told us to *“make disciples...teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you...”* (Mt. 28:20). This is why we preach, have Sunday School and Bible study, and read the Scriptures. The preaching, teaching, and living of the Word is what distinguishes us from the world as authentic.

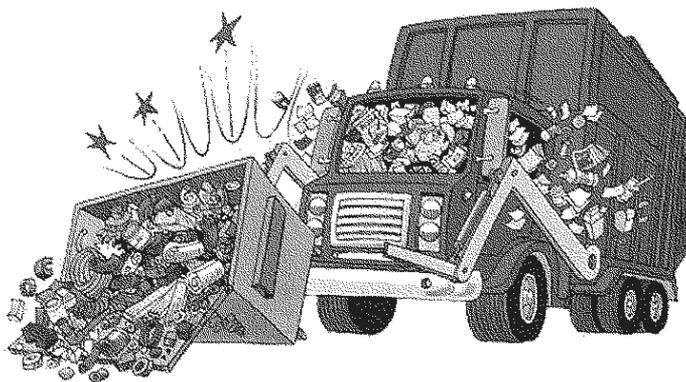
Secondly, an authentic church is a *praying* church. Sometimes we may be impatient with prayer because we are “busy”. It’s

true that we can't neglect our responsibilities in work or study and just pray, then expect God to bless us. In fact, the Lord requires both prayer *and* work. The principle is that *God's work requires God's working*. The preaching of and receptivity to the gospel, Christian growth and transformation, the Christian life, and the building of God's Kingdom are supernatural phenomena. Yet we are part of that process. "*I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase...*" (1 Cor. 3:6). And Ps. 127:1 reminds us, "*Unless the LORD builds the house, they labor in vain who build it...*" It is not by might or by power, but only by God's Spirit that God's authentic work is accomplished (Zech 4:6). Church leaders especially need to be humble men of prayer. The "secret" to authentic life and ministry is not in any plan, program, strategy, or agenda. We should be very wary of trying to merely imitate strategies or programs that appear to have worked elsewhere, as if it is the strategy that is key. The key is a renewed commitment to the simple humility and discipline of prayer, confessing our own limitations, weakness, and conscious dependence on the Holy Spirit. Then we get up and get to work. This is one reason we pray in public worship, have prayer meetings, and urge private prayer. May the Lord impart a real culture of prayer to our church. This also will make us stand out from the world, and from much of the shallow, phony "Christianity" around us, as authentic.

Finally, an authentic church is one that by its life *witnesses* to the truth, beauty and loveliness of Christ and of that "that better country" to which we belong. Witness is the main task of the church in the world. This was just as true in the Old Testament as in the New (Deut. 4:5-6; Phil. 2:15). Our biblical, reverent, and gracious conduct should be such as to capture the attention of others so that they take notice and want to know what's behind it. Then we should be ready to explain it (1 Pt. 3:15).

The church is God's instrument for witness to His gospel and His kingdom. It does this both as an *organization*, through the ongoing, faithful preaching of God's Word and other outreach events, and as an *organism*, through the ongoing, faithful daily lives of its members. Wherever you are, you are the church in that place! And this is why the teaching and study of the doctrines of Scripture are so important. They show us Christ, they teach us how to be disciples and live authentically as disciples in the world, and how to share with others who want to

know also. In light of the current “*moral* meltdown,” ungodliness, and pretense all around us, even in so much of the “church” today, may the Lord grant us a heart to seek out the Word of God, to be transformed by it, and then in conscious, prayerful reliance on the Holy Spirit, to live it out in our lives, families, and church. This kind of witness will also make us stand out in the world today as faithful, full of life, and...authentic.



## The Recycling Man

Jack Yu

Some time ago, I experienced a very windy trash pickup day. The wind was strong enough to topple trash containers, and any trash or recycling that had been put out by my neighbors the previous evening was now blowing around on the street and across people's lawns. I usually don't put out the trash until the morning, and this particular morning I put the recycling containers just outside my garage door to keep them from the wind while I went back into the house to gather the trash. My intent was to bring the recycling containers out to the curb just before the recycling truck arrived, to minimize the risk of stuff

blowing away. However, while inside, I heard the sound of the recycling truck arriving -- sooner than I'd expected. Panicked, I dashed back outside, fearing that the truck would pass my house by since my recycling wasn't at the curb. To my surprise, the driver of the recycling truck had stopped the truck outside my house and run up the driveway to fetch the containers. I followed him down the driveway, where he emptied my containers into his truck and handed them back to me before driving off to the next house.

I found myself feeling very grateful for the recycling man's thoughtful act. He had gone out of his way to collect my recycling -- in just one of probably hundreds of pickups he'd have to do that day. Though it was such a brief and minor part of my morning, it brightened the rest of my day, and I praised God for it repeatedly. I wondered if the recycling man was a Christian. The following week, I made a point of observing the recycling man carefully when he came around to pick up my recycling. I was very glad -- and not too surprised -- to hear that the radio in his truck was playing a sermon on a Christian radio station. That didn't necessarily mean that he was a Christian, but it did mean that it was a lot more likely.

Our lives in this world are lived in view of others. The way we work, the way we talk, the way we drive, the way we treat others, the way we react to things that happen to us -- no matter what we do, the way we conduct ourselves in our everyday activities can have a strong impact on those who observe us, whether strangers or friends, believers or not, and whether or not we know they're watching. The impact can be either very positive or very negative. And it can be had in something as mundane as picking up recycling.

Jesus said in Matthew 5:14-16, *"You are the light of the world. A city 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 men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven."* Brothers and sisters, let us consider how we may prompt praise to the Father through our conduct in everyday things.

## Firm Foundation

Lawrence Tai

When we're young, we take for granted the benefits of youth. We overlook the fact that we're able to do things that someone twice our age wouldn't be able to do, simply because we're young. However, when we're young, we also take for granted the fact that we may lack the experience and knowledge of someone twice our age, simply because we may be more focused on ourselves instead.

About a couple of weeks ago, I was attempting to lift a moderately heavy box to move it into my car. Seeing how I'm still relatively young, I simply just go ahead and attempt to move the box on my own, relying on my strength to help me out. However, while attempting to move the box into the car, I ended up hurting my back. I actually have had back problems for a few years now, and have even gotten to the point where I've gone to doctors to get treatment. So since my back issues were somewhat a recurring event, I decided to go to my doctor to get my back checked out. Starting with my personal doctor, I was eventually referred to an orthopedic doctor and finally a physical therapist. In meeting with each doctor, one common point came up about how I could better help my back, which was that I needed to strengthen my core muscles. By strengthening my core muscles, I would be able to better support my back and help prevent my back muscles from overworking, causing some of my back pains. I needed to strengthen the "foundation" of my body.

While I was prescribed some medication to alleviate the pain, the medication was only a temporary relief. What I needed to really do was to exercise to build up my muscles in such a way that they could better support my back and the rest of my body. In meeting with the physical therapist, I was first assessed to see what movements would cause pain, and what movements I could do that would help with the pain. I needed a basic assessment of what my body could handle. As the meeting went on, I was further taught exercises that I would be able to perform that would allow me to build up my core muscles. Some of the exercises were pretty basic and straight forward, others I had never seen before and were considerably more difficult for me to do. Though these exercises are difficult to do at first, they are

supposed to be done daily such that I can continually build up the strength in my weaker muscles. It's only been a few weeks, but I have found that the daily effort put in to help my back through these exercises have greatly helped to ease the pain that I have in my back. And though I may still have pain from time to time, I now have a way to deal with the pain.

Similar to how I found myself being told that my core muscles needed strengthening, as Christians we also need to be strengthening our foundation. Without a strong core, we as Christians will be unable to stand up to the daily spiritual battles that we have to face. While we may prevail in the short term, without a strong foundation we will end up hurting ourselves more in the end. Building a strong core is also something that doesn't happen overnight. In the same way as to how I need to exercise daily to continue to build up my muscles to be able to support my back, we as Christians need to daily be strengthening our walk with Christ. We need to be daily in the Bible so that we may know what we need to do in order to get stronger spiritually. As we continue to build ourselves up daily in our walk with Christ, we will come across days where there will still be pain. However, in having Jesus Christ on our side, as well as having the Word of God in our hands, we will know how best to alleviate the pain so that we can continue on.

The passage from Matthew 7:24-27 focuses on Jesus talking about the wise and foolish man building their homes. The wise man built on solid rock, while the foolish man built on shifting sand. The foundations that both these men built their homes on determined how strong of a house they had when times of trouble came. In the same way one needs to build the "foundation" of the body to be able to avoid the weakness and pain, we need to build our spiritual foundation in Christ such that when times of trouble do come, we have a solid footing to stand on. It is my hope and prayer that we as a church and as Christians will all have a solid foundation, strong enough to withstand any trial so that on the Day of Judgment, we will hear Christ say "Well done, good and faithful servant!"



## Are You A “Loser”?

Michelle Sharman

Are you a “loser”? I want to be.

There is a reality television show called “The Biggest Loser” on which the contestants try to win by losing the most weight. I’m not talking about that kind of “loser”.

Look at a passage with me. In John 20:19 (NIV),

*“On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!”*

Imagine what the disciples were thinking. They had spent the last 3 or so years of their lives traveling, eating and witnessing Jesus’ life. They saw miracles; they even performed some themselves. Jesus was their friend and their leader. They had given up jobs and left their families for this man. And now He was dead. Where does that leave these 11 men? They had believed in Him but if He was dead, His ministry wasn’t Truth, the words He said didn’t count. If He was dead, they had wasted years of their lives with a man that was no different from other men. Worse than that, they were associated with a criminal that had just been crucified on a cross. If they were associated with Him, their lives were in danger.

Every single person must decide who or what to follow. These 11 men had decided to trust and follow Jesus, thinking He was the Way, the Truth and the Life. Nowadays, people try to find truth in different religions. Some try to live good lives. Some just try to enjoy themselves. All make a choice what their lives will value.

For these 11 men, at this moment, locked in a room together, they may have been thinking back over the past years. The passage says they were behind locked doors for fear of the Jews. They may have been worried about their future. They may have been thinking “Was Jesus for real? Was it worthwhile trusting and believing in Him now that He is gone?” They probably felt like losers in a bad situation. What should they do now?

Then Jesus came to them and said, “Peace be with you!”

Jesus' resurrection proves He is the Way, the Truth and the Life. It proves that our faith is not empty. Jesus gave these 11 men an unwavering faith to live their lives for Him without fear.

Jesus taught in Luke 9:24 *“For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it.”* I want to be that kind of loser. But how do we do that?

Until I had Cate in 2003, I was working. After having Cate, I stayed home so I was thrilled to be able to serve church more. Being on the deacon board has been such an amazing experience. I am amazed that God can bring 16 people from different backgrounds and languages and we can make decisions together. I attribute it to prayer and the leading of the Holy Spirit. I have learned so much about the other people on the board by being with them. I have more respect and deeper thankfulness for them. These people have willingly “lost” their lives for Jesus. They want what He wants and no longer what they want. And it is seen in the way they live and the decisions they make.

I sometimes get frustrated because I don't think I am doing enough to follow God. It's true I go to Bible study, attend church, and teach Sunday school. But doing things doesn't convince me that I am living correctly. I want to lose my life for Jesus. Is my heart in it? Am I growing and changing?

It seems to be day by day that I evaluate if I am surrendering to Christ and letting the Holy Spirit fill me. More God, less Michelle.

Deuteronomy is one of my favorite books. Here God makes it simple and gives us a choice.

Deut 30:15-20 *“See, I set before you today life and prosperity, death and destruction. For I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commands, decrees and laws; then you will live and increase, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land you are entering to possess. But if your heart turns away and you are not obedient, and if you are drawn away to bow down to other gods and worship them, I declare to you this day that you will certainly be destroyed. You will not live long in the land you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess. This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may*

*live and that you may love the LORD your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him. For the LORD is your life, and he will give you many years in the land he swore to give to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.”*

Isn't the Bible great? It is similar to the thought in Luke. If you choose to keep your life, and your heart turns away, there is a consequence. You'll lose it.

If you choose to lose your life and take up God's life for you, to keep His commands, and love Him, then God will bless you.

This doesn't make sense to the world. It didn't make sense to those 11 disciples sitting in a locked room trying to figure out how to live their lives. Not until Jesus came, removed all fear and made everything clear. How about us? Will we choose to say "the Lord is my life"? Some may think you are a loser. Changing your life for a man named Jesus Christ. Are you a "loser"?

I want to be.



## Fellowship

Stephanie Wong

College is a very unique period in a young person's life. For the first time, you are uprooted from all things familiar and plunged into a world where you and your peers are in similar boats. You are all given vague instructions to find your individual destination without actually being told where that is, and only a few of you actually have a plan that may or may not pan out. I am definitely not about to end up where I originally planned four years ago, but I find that I have enjoyed the journey that God charted for me. Though I wish it didn't have to end, I am unfortunately facing a new stage of life already.

As I think more and more about leaving college and entering the real world, the more I feel afraid. This past year I worried the most about eventually leaving this church and fellowship. It was in this fellowship that I first encountered and connected with Christians my age. It was the first time I felt as though I belonged. And I am scared of losing that, not simply for the sake of losing something precious to me, but for what might happen if I don't have a fellowship to lean on. It felt dangerous because ultimately I ought to lean on the Lord and not other people. I thought to myself, "There can't be any maybes when it comes to serving God. Either you are, or you aren't." This was one of many reasons that I began to consider taking a sort of break from fellowship.

At first, I believed that it would be a little drastic to leave fellowship and set that thought aside. But then something happened and it was as if my fears were being brought to life. One of my friends who had graduated from college not too long ago was struggling with her own spiritual life. She had chosen to leave her church due to a number of reasons, including not finding a church fellowship where she felt comfortable and that her faith was failing her. I wondered if it was all a coincidence to find out right when it had become one of my burdens, but my track record with coincidences has shown me that they usually bear more scrutiny.

For awhile, I withdrew from everyone around me and asked God what to do. Patience is not a virtue of mine, but it seemed like all I could do was watch events unfold for my friend and pray that I

wouldn't end up the same. There I was, watching my fears happen in real live action to someone I know, someone I looked up to and thought was strong in faith. I wanted to comfort her, to assure her of God's love, but I couldn't stop thinking in the back of my mind, "What if that were me one day?" My break became like a test for myself: Can I survive without fellowship? Am I purely leaning on God and doing all things for His glory? I sought the answers to these questions for months and honestly wasn't sure if I wanted to know the answer.

My friends protested my leaving the fellowship, despite my insistence that I needed to figure things out on my own. It seemed like I would never find out until the time came to leave, which concerned me even more since then it would be too late to do anything.

When graduates' night at RCCC arrived, it was there that the Lord gave me an answer. Pastor Herring spoke briefly of the times we graduates were about to face, leaving behind familiar old friends and searching for a new church family again. He said that while we have had good times with our fellowship, we should prepare for the fact that we may not find another like it again. When I heard this, I felt like a naïve child who had once more underestimated the Lord. I was not alone in this, which He had been attempting to show me all along. And there was no way to "deal" with the situation except through Him.

It wasn't the kind of answer I was expecting, because He knows that I am perfectly aware I can do nothing on my own and should lean on Him more. However, it was somehow an answer that I needed to hear. He answered me with reassurance that I was not crazy to worry about my future spiritual life; that no matter what happens, He has my back for as long as I follow Him. I may not know what will happen, but it will be all right. I just pray that the Lord will continue to bless me again in the next years of my life.



## The Pilgrim's Prayer

Sylvia Lu

I'm really nervous because I'm not qualified to talk about prayer. Many of you know that our family is called the "traveling Lu". Well, I was born in Indonesia and moved to Taiwan before we came here. Both my mom and dad came from big families. We have relatives and friends in Australia, Indonesia, Singapore, Hong Kong, Canada, China and Taiwan. So we are able to visit them in those places. We and our four children often travel either for pleasure or for duty. A lot of my prayer requests are for travel mercy so we are called the traveling Lu. Whenever we travel we consider ourselves visitors or tourists. We have stayed at small apartments, big mansions, cruise ships, cheap motels or luxurious resorts. Wherever we go or stay, you know what is the best part of traveling? It's coming home because home is where I belong.

In March the Lord blessed us with a trip to Istanbul, Jordan, the Holy Land and Egypt. We joined a Christian Tour Company. Before we left, they sent us a booklet about the trip. In it was an article called "The Pilgrim's Prayer". It's about not to complain during the trip. I read it once and didn't pay any attention to it because there was more important information that I needed to know. Our group had about 120 people. We were in three buses. Most of us are Christians and there were some pastors and ministers among us and one of them would read some scriptures and prayed for us every morning. We had a beautiful service at the Sea of Galilee and two communion services in Jerusalem.

In general we acted like good Christians and were very friendly to each other. We waited patiently and smiled at those who made us wait while they shopped, we joked about eating the same thing for lunch almost everyday. Maybe we complained just a little for the long line at the Ladies' Room, some without soap, paper or even water.

After leaving Israel, we crossed the Sinai Desert in Egypt to go to Cairo. It was dry, dusty, rocky, no beautiful scenery. At lunch stop I said, "I don't blame the Israelites for complaining; they had to live in tents in this kind of condition. I would too." Many agreed, but not God. The Lord said to me, "Sylvia, you like to

complain just like the Israelites even though you are in much better condition than they were." I had to ask God to forgive my sin of complaining. And He prompted me to read the Pilgrim's Prayer again. Let me read it to you.

*If some things do not happen as they are scheduled,  
 Lord, may I remember that I am a pilgrim, not a tourist!  
 If I should get tired and incline to become short tempered,  
 Lord, may I remember that I am a pilgrim, not a tourist!  
 If my meal in a foreign country may not be to my particular liking,  
 Lord, may I remember that I am a pilgrim, not a tourist!  
 If delays should occur and I become anxious,  
 Lord, May I remember that I am a pilgrim, not a tourist!  
 If some other pilgrim is making noise so that I cannot hear the  
 guide, Lord, when I ask that person to be a bit more quiet,  
 Lord, may I remember that I am a pilgrim, not a tourist!  
 If someone takes a better seat or more choice place,  
 Lord, may I remember that I am a pilgrim, not a tourist!  
 If I find myself waiting in line or last in line,  
 Lord, may I remember that I am a pilgrim, not a tourist!  
 If the person in front of me buys the last item which I really  
 wanted,  
 Lord, may I remember that I am a pilgrim, not a tourist!  
 If I should get a chance to help another person who always  
 seems to be annoying me,  
 Lord, may I remember that I am a pilgrim, not a tourist!  
 If someone is always the "last one on the bus" and I am always  
 on time,  
 Lord, may I remember that I am a pilgrim, not a tourist!  
 But Lord, especially let me remember that what I often find to be  
 objectionable in another is what you often find to be  
 objectionable in me. And let me remember this and forgive  
 the other, as you are continually forgiving me. Amen.*

The Lord also told me that this prayer is not just for traveling, it should always be my prayer. Because this world is not my home, I'm just passing through. I'm a pilgrim living here on earth and I'm traveling toward my home in Heaven. Remember Christian

in *The Pilgrim's Progress*? He encountered so many troubles and dangers on his journey, but whenever he looked up toward the King's Palace and cried out for help, he was delivered. And how joyful and grateful he was when he reached the King's Palace, his heavenly home.

As Christians we also face all kinds of difficulties and problems that we don't want. Like long lines at the supermarket, traffic on the road, bad weather, sickness, aging with ache and pain (like me), or unreasonable neighbors and coworkers, financial difficulties, death of our loved ones,...the list goes on and on. Thank God we can pray and cry out for help and cast all our anxieties and burdens to the Lord because He cares for us. And we can also ask our fellow pilgrims to pray for us especially when we are too weak and too tired to pray. Psalm 121 has helped me through many tough times, especially when my husband had a stroke and when he had two open-heart surgeries; when a doctor at Williamsburg called at night and told me that my son had an accident and they were transporting him to a bigger hospital in Newport News because he may need a brain surgery; when my daughter went to Sudan for five weeks with no way of communication with us; when four years ago the doctor told us that my mom had ovarian cancer and it had already spread; when my brother passed away two years ago...*"I lift up my eyes to the hills, where does my help comes from? My help comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth. He will not let your foot slip. He who watches over you will not sleep nor slumber....The Lord...will watch over your life, the Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore."* In John 16:33, Jesus said *"In this world you'll have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."*

Let's pray. "Lord, help us not to complain or be discouraged when we are in trouble. Help us remember that we are pilgrims in this world. Help us to focus on the things above and put our trust in You. Lord, leads us and guide us to our eternal home in Heaven. In your name Lord, Amen.



TOURIST INFORMATION

## Discipline, Careless Confidence and Heartbreak

Boaz Tang

Our God is so good. After my first year of college, I can honestly say that this past year was the most wonderful year as a child of God. I have made friends and relationships that will last into eternity. It is funny how God uses different circumstances to teach us essential lessons.

In college especially, a lot of times I see nonbelievers and they seem like they have their lives together. They have a high social standing, wealth, friends, plus they seem like they're having a great time in sin. Sometimes it feels unfair; everyone is a sinner, but as a Christian why am I experiencing this or that trial? One thing that hit me is that God only disciplines his children. For instance, my dad would not spank another child that is not his own. Why? Simply because it's not his child. The Father disciplines those that he loves, His children. I need to be disciplined and rebuked because it is in my nature to sin. If God or my dad did not discipline me, then something is wrong. Either they don't love me enough to get me back on the right path or I was living a perfect blameless life; the latter is impossible. If I am living my life without any trials or rebukes from God, I may very well not be His child. Luckily, God has been and will be guiding me on my road of life. Let me be clear, I am not wishing punishment on myself, but a slap in the face every once in a while is a very necessary part of the Christian walk.

In light of who God is, we are nothing. Our lives are small, short, and insignificant to the smallest degree. Yet those that understand who God is and trust Him completely will be archived in eternity, what an honor.

John 4:46-51(NIV) *"Once more he visited Cana in Galilee, where he had turned the water into wine. And there was a certain royal official whose son lay sick at Capernaum. When this man heard that Jesus had arrived in Galilee from Judea, he went to him and begged him to come and heal his son, who was close to death. 'Unless you people see miraculous signs and wonders,' Jesus told him, 'you will never believe.' The royal official said, 'Sir, come down before my child dies.' Jesus replied, 'You may go. Your son will live.' The man took Jesus at his word and*

*departed. While he was still on the way, his servants met him with the news that his boy was living.”*

In this passage, this unnamed royal official did something that I need a lot of work on. The royal official took Jesus at His Word. Jesus said it and that settles it. This man understood who Jesus was, he understood that God's Word is alive and does not need to be defended or logically reasoned for it to be valid. Don't misunderstand me, human logic is from God and we should use it. However, human logic is flawed and severely limited at best. God's word will last forever because it is ultimate truth; the Bible will be preserved into eternity. This little unnamed official will forever be remembered as the man that took Jesus at his word, what a marvelous honor. Regrettably, I do not always take God at His Word; I rationalize and place God's commands through my own human logic filters. Usually this leads to unhappiness, lack of peace, and a spiritual tearing of the conscience. It doesn't have to be that way. Why do I make it so difficult? "God said it? That settles it." This mindset change won't happen overnight. It takes a close step by step intimate communion with God to develop that level of faith and surety in God. In other words, my goal is to have a careless confidence in Christ. I am not there yet by any means, but I'm working on it. It takes time to deny my pride and just believe God's word and do as it says.

Humility is such a vital part of a healthy relationship with God. God broke my heart and it was the best thing that ever happened to me. However, God is not this heartbreaker god that breaks hearts and humbles us for divine angelic grins and giggles. He does it for our own good. He took my worldview and exposed the flaws in me and in the world. Pride is the root of all sins, so when I am proud and arrogant and I cannot expect God to smile on my life until God brings me back a contrite spirit, usually through discipline. God is not concerned about doing something great for me, He is concerned about doing something great in me. Man looks on the outward appearance, God sees the heart. The more our worldview aligns with a biblical worldview the better.

God knows that we as Christians cannot be fully used by Him until the things that break His heart are the same things that break our hearts. The body of Christ will reach its full potential when our hearts become more and more like God's heart. God

wants us to see sin the way He does, to see love the way He does, to see the lost they way He does. God is shaping and sculpting us to look like him, see like Him and act like Him, so He can use us effectively. I need to do my part and be obedient whatever the consequences. The Bible totally goes against human nature. To treasure discipline, abandon human logic and see crushed pride as a fundamental part of life, is ridiculous in the eyes of the world. God is truth. This made me realize the only being I could completely trust was God. The only book I could completely trust, the Bible. The only encouragement to saturate myself in was the Holy Spirit's. The only way I could live is in Jesus Christ, and joy and completeness come with it. God is so good.

People say that God is love but he is also a just God. This is true, but why the separation? God is love; only in His love He is just. God's love and justice coincide. God is willing to discipline and breaks our hearts until we have a careless confidence in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ simply because He loves us more than we could ever imagine. Praise be to God.

