### **Prayer List**



#### Of Our Number

- ◆ Janice Carnlev—Shoal Creek
- ◆ Wilfred Derrick—aneurysm
- ◆ Florene Howze—health probs
- ◆ Jim Ward—health problems

#### Others in Need

- ◆ Janet Andrews—chemotherapy
- ◆ **Deb Aplin**—health problems
- ◆ Sandra Cook—chemotherapy
- ◆ Elise Davis—shoulder surgery
- ◆ Gunner Griffin—hearing loss
- ◆ Joe Holloway—home, wife had may have had a stroke
- ◆ Brenda Mateer—cancer
- ◆ Thad McCall—health problems
- ◆ Mary Milsted—lung cancer
- ◆ Randall Ward—health problems
- ◆ Ronnie Wells—health problems
- Overseas brethren struggling. like those in India.

Continued in next column...

servants

of sin..."

◆ Pray for those mourning, public servants, gov. leaders, military, those traveling, those lost in sin, and our enemies.

#### **Events**

Lord willing...

#### July 4

Fellowship Meal after Morning Worship

#### July 11

Men's Meeting

#### July 28

4th Wednesday Singing

#### **To Our Visitors**



We are happy and honored that you are here! Please fill out a visitor's card and give us a chance to get to know you. If you have any questions about anything said or done in Bible class or worship, please ask. We seek to give a Bible answer for everything we do (Colossians 3:17; 1 Peter 3:15; 4:11).

### **Privileged to Serve**



Announcements—Glenn Howze Song Leading—Sunday—David Howze; Wednesday-Mark Howze

#### Serving the Lord's Supper

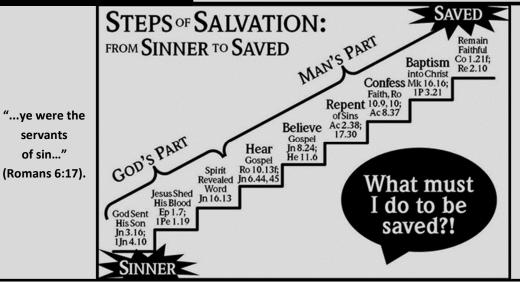
Head: Mark Howze; Helpers: Justin Derrick, Wilfred Derrick, Ethan Howze

#### Lord's Supper PM

Head: Leo Derrick Helper: Ethan Howze

Scripture Reading—Braden Hilburn

**Faithful Worship** - 1) Praying to God the Father in the name of Jesus Christ (Luke 11:1-2; John 16:23; Eph. 5:20; Phil. 4:6); 2) Singing without mechanical instruments (Matt. 26:30; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16-17; Heb. 2:12); 3) Preaching God's Word (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:42; 20:7); 4) Giving weekly as prospered, cheerfully (1 Cor. 16:1-2; 2 Cor. 9:7); 5) The Lord's Supper on the first day of every week (Matt. 26:26-28; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:20-34; 16:2; Heb. 10:23-31).



"...but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness" (Rom. 6:17b-18).

# THE BAKER BULLETIN

The weekly bulletin of

The church of Christ in Baker, FL

**July 4, 2021** 

#### **Meeting Times**

#### **Sundays:**

10AM Bible Class 11AM Worship 6PM Worship

#### Wednesdays:

7PM Bible Class

#### Other Information

5761 Hwy. 4 P.O. Box 285 Baker, FL 32531 USA 850-669-9117

#### Website:

churchofChristatBaker.com

#### **Radio Program:**

104.7FM Sundays 8:30AM WAAZ1047.com livestream

#### Jason Hilburn's Info:

850-826-8198 jasonhilburn@yahoo.com TheBibleDomain.com JasonsBibleBlog.com

## **Righteousness Exalteth a Nation:** The Moral Decline of the USA

**Rusty Stark** 

When I go into the woods, I use a compass. It helps me when I don't know which way to go — when I have no inner sense of which direction to go to get back to the road, when I can see neither sun nor stars, when every tree looks the same, or when darkness falls and I can't even see the trees. My compass points the right way. I have learned to trust my compass. My compass knows direction better than I know direction.

Unfortunately, our country — the USA, America the Beautiful — has voluntarily given up its moral compass. It has exchanged the truth and guidance of God's Word for feelings, fads and fancies.

#### **OUR GREAT COUNTRY**

It is important in an article about problems with our nation to acknowledge that this nation is a truly great one. Every Christian ought to have feelings of gratitude for the freedoms this country affords us. Freedom of religion, freedom to worship as we believe God wants us to, is not a minor thing. Ours is a truly great country that has recognized this freedom as the right of all men before God. And it has upheld and defended this freedom, for our good.

Furthermore, this country defends my freedom to preach the Gospel boldly, without fear, without loss of property, without torture, without being killed for speaking out. I would like to think that I would preach the Gospel boldly even if our country tried to repress this right of mine, but I know that it is easier to preach the Truth because I live in this great country. As a preacher, allowed to devote my time and effort to spread the Gospel, I must be careful what I say in criticism of the country that protects me in this effort. Many preachers have died at the hands of lesser countries who wanted to suppress the Gospel.

#### FREEDOM OR LICENSE?

Many in this great nation have mistaken freedom for license. Instead of being grateful to the God who our founders recognized, many in our country have tried to throw off the bonds and responsibilities that faith in God brings with it. Instead of seeing freedom as a responsibility, many have tried to use it as an excuse to do whatever feels good. This type of lawlessness is not true freedom, and it brings reproach on any people.

This country has lost the only true moral compass. Instead of looking to and following the Truth of the Bible, it has looked to philosophers, educators, scientists, and psychiatrists to determine what is right and what is wrong in our new, modern world.

#### FINDING TRUE MORALITY

The Bible comes from the mind of God. It always points the right direction. Morality flows from the nature of God. It is a reflection of his character and purity. There is nothing we can substitute that will guide us into right and away from wrong like the Bible can.

Morality cannot be found in the mind or heart of man. It is not a subjective matter. It is not subject to what I feel or think at any given moment, and it is not subject to the thinking of the masses. Morality cannot be decided by popular vote. Many years ago the prophet wrote: "O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jer. 10:23). Solomon wrote: "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. 14:12).

#### **BETTER OFF THAN OTHER COUNTRIES?**

Is the United States more morally deprived than other nations? Maybe not. Those who have traveled to other countries realize that, in a comparative way, the U.S. may be better off morally than many other nations.

Many countries display their pornography on magazine and postcard racks and broadcast it more openly than do we. Those who have done mission work in Russia know the extremely high divorce rate and the casual attitude toward abortion. Some Scandinavian countries have 'led the way' in things like euthanasia, sex-change operations, etc. Many countries have openly nude beaches and other depraved practices.

#### OTHER COUNTRIES ARE NOT THE STANDARD!

Whether or not we are a morally deprived nation cannot be determined by comparison with other countries. Other countries are not the standard. God's word is. Comparing ourselves among ourselves is not wise (2 Cor. 10:12). Do we really get any pleasure or sense of well-being from claiming to be the least smelly skunk in the woods or by pointing out that the other snakes are more poisonous than we are?

Regardless of how we compare with other countries, two things are clear: 1) Our moral standards have declined from where they used to be. 2) We do not come close to acknowledging or upholding God's moral standards.

#### **AREAS OF CLEAR DECLINE**

We once saw HOMOSEXUALITY as the shame and perversion it was. This was God's standard (Rom. 1:26-27; 1 Cor. 6:9-10), and it was our standard also. Now our political and social climate encourages people to openly choose and live a homosexual lifestyle. We adopt children into homes with two 'daddies' or two 'mommies.' We allow our school systems to teach this an as alternative lifestyle. And, we condemn those who are old fashioned enough to speak up against this perversion.

ABORTION was once outlawed. Now it is available virtually on demand, even for minors. Our attitude toward the sanctity of life has now changed to where people are clearly advocating further strides in killing, like active euthanasia. Peter Singer in his book Practical Ethics argues, "If we can put aside these emotionally moving but strictly irrelevant aspects of the killing of a baby, we can see that the grounds for not killing persons do not apply to newborn infants" (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979, p.124). He goes on to say, "...killing a defective infant is not morally equivalent to killing a person. Very often it is not wrong at all" (p.138). Not only do these chilling words represent a decline from where we once were morally, they are clearly against God's standards (Gen. 9:6; Prov. 6:16-19). Cecil Hook (one who claims to be a brother in Christ) in his

book *Free In Christ* argues for euthanasia, comparing it to putting down his family's fox terrier (New Braunfells, TX, p.33).

PORNOGRAPHY is a threat to the fabric of our society. The standard of God is plain; pornography is sin (Matt. 5:28). As a nation, we used to have laws against it that we actually enforced. Today we are faced with some truly terrible statistics (from www.safemedia.com, current as of 2003, [likely much higher now, JPH]):

Revenue from pornography in the USA (app. \$12 billion) exceeds the combined revenue of ABC, CBS, and NBC (app. \$6.2 billion). Child Pornography generates \$3 billion annually. There are 4.2 million pornographic websites on the world wide web. That's about 12% of total websites. There are 68 million search engine requests for pornographic material every day. That's about 25% of total search engine requests. There are 116 thousand internet requests for "child pornography" every day. (Some of these stats represent worldwide figures and are not limited to the USA. However, the U.S. is actively involved in this worldwide degradation.)

DIVORCE was once viewed as shameful. Every divorce has sin in it — either the sin of the fornicator who caused a just divorce, or the sin of people who divorce but have no scriptural cause (Matt. 19:9). Not everyone who has been through a divorce should be ashamed, but every divorce has shame in it. Today's view of marriage is simply a trial and error approach. Marriage vows are not seen as vows but as vague hopes. Commitment to spouse and to marital faithfulness is a lost concept. This represents a decline.

Our CHOICES IN ENTERTAINMENT represent an area of rapid and alarming decline. The 'funniest' and most used phrase on television seems to be "Oh My God!" used to express surprise, dismay, fear, and even lust. How can we make any pretense to revere the God we blaspheme? Standards of speech have declined from where we once were, and especially in movies and television they are far from God's standards (Eph. 4:29; 5:3-4). Even cartoons made for children have curse words. One movie had as its basis the idea that God gave his power to a man (Jim Carey) who was then 'Bruce Almighty.' Some will condemn me for criticizing a movie I did not watch, but I don't need to eat rotten fish to know it is bad. On the advertisements for this movie the main character used the power of God to blow up a lady's dress so he could see her. How much more blasphemous can we get? And, even some Christians could not see anything wrong with such blasphemy. How easy it is to become desensitized!

And what shall I say more? Time would fail me to tell of the decline in modest dress, the crude, antisocial, sensualized, and violent lyrics of modern music, the casual attitude toward sex before marriage, the increase in gambling and related crimes and on, and on, and....

#### **LEADERSHIP PROBLEMS**

It is not only Hollywood that has led us down the steep path of moral degradation. Political leaders — Senators, Representatives, Presidents, and Governors — and many religious leaders and educators have publicly lied, been caught in illicit romances and perversions, and have defended themselves or their colleagues by saying that such things have nothing to do with being fit for positions of leadership. The only way we can accept that premise is if we simply close our eyes to the very real danger that a whole nation of children — including our own — will follow these leaders into sin, and into hell.

#### **GLORY OR SHAME?**

Since righteousness exalts a nation, can we say that we should be exalted for our righteous behavior? Since sin is a reproach to any people, should we not, as a nation, hang our heads in shame? Indeed, shame is foreign to hearts that are seared; we have forgotten how to blush, even when we should (Jer. 6:15).

The United States of America has changed to a point that it is unrecognizable. It is not the country our founders dreamed of. It is not characterized by the slogan on our money — In God We Trust. Instead, it is characterized by its attempt to leave God, the mention of his name, and the demands of his morality, behind.

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