

**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

**Preacher / bulletin editor:**

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*"...Say not, 'Why were the former days better than these?' For it is not from wisdom that you ask this."*

—Ecclesiastes 7:10 ESV



**Servants during August:**

**Songleader:** Stanley (4), Larry (11),  
Dwight (18), Stanley (25)

**Reading:** Larry

**Announcements:** Marty

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

**Wednesday Lesson:** Stanley (7), Kris (14),  
Larry (21), Stanley (28)

**Lawn Mowing (week starting):** Kris (4),  
Marty (11), Stanley (18), Larry (25)

**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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## WHAT IS BETTER?

*by Warren E. Berkley*

Better is the end of a thing than its beginning, and the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit.

Be not quick in your spirit to become angry, for anger lodges in the heart of fools.

Say not, "Why were the former days better than these?" For it is not from wisdom that you ask this.

—Ecclesiastes 7:8-10 ESV

In this section of Ecclesiastes there are proverbs, but with some expansion beyond just a brief statement. And, there is an overriding theme: "What Is Better". Navigating life under the sun requires mature attention to values. Reality is, some courses of action are better than others. Some attitudes lead us in better directions; some emotions are better than others for us and for those with us.

"Better is the end of a thing than its beginning, and the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit." Solomon is teaching us patience. His approach is, to

get us to think about how the end of a thing is better than the beginning. He wants us to remember that. At the beginning of some crisis, trial or time of adversity, there is a tendency to be absorbed in those first moments of shock and to be overwhelmed and impatient. Solomon point us to the end, the conclusion. It will be over! Going into surgery, focus on the anticipated end and good outcome. Entering into a meeting with people where tension and conflicts is expected, think of the desired outcome of peace or resolution. Finding yourself at the beginning of a powerful temptation, put your eye on the victory of resisting and being refreshed by your courage. Don't let that common desire for immediate gratification foster hopeless impatience. Wait for the satisfaction of the end of a thing, for "the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit."

"Do not be quick in your spirit to become angry, for anger lodges in the bosom of fools." Once again, it is that

quick impulse and desire for immediate gratification that gets us into trouble. In a world where we can almost have anything instantly, we can't be warned enough about impatience and anger. (*Most Expository Files readers know the experience of getting upset, because your computer took 15 extra seconds to boot; or the Internet was down yesterday from 3:00 pm until 3:04. We have been cultivated to expect everything to happen almost instantly. And that cultural technological expectation can lead to rather immature frustration.*) Learning to calm down and wait is better. Patience and self-control contributes to good health, good relationships with people—and most of all, this state of heart and life is pleasing to God. Beware of anger that lodges or finds a home within you. Evict bitterness.

“Say not, ‘Why were the former days better than these?’ For it is not from wisdom that you ask this.” Solomon is not teaching against a knowledge of history, nostalgia, or speaking of the past. He is addressing the spirit of attitude that complains—claiming that if we could go back to a former time, everything would

be better. First, such talk is futile since it longs for the impossible. We cannot go back. It's not 1950 anymore! But further, think with care—was everything smooth, pain-free and easy back in the “good ole' days?” Could it be, we remember some of the good times but repress the bad? Better to face the reality of the present, gather up your courage and experience and apply your best wisdom to today.

“The Bible does not commonly assess the present in terms of the past, but much more typically does so in terms of the future, with all its potential for change. Those who insist on harking back to the past often impose burdens on those who live in the present, from which they cannot escape. But to set the present in the context of the future is to set a path before someone else that allows the past to be left behind and a new way of being to be embraced,” (*Lain Provan, NIV Application Commentary, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, Zondervan*).

And please consider, in 25 years, these will be the good ole' days. Focus on what is better now!


—via *Expository Files* October 2012 

establish guilt, and no amount of obedience can remove guilt, once established; it follows that the only way one may be justified (free of guilt) on the basis of law alone is to obey perfectly. In Romans 10:5 we read, “For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, that the man which doeth those things shall live by them.” In Galatians 3:10ff, he makes the same point, saying, “Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.”

When Paul says, “For if Abraham were justified [*free of guilt, rt*] by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God,” Rom 4:2, he is saying there would be no need for the grace of forgiveness if Abraham had never sinned. He is not saying that any act of obedience on Abraham's part would nullify grace. When we recognize that God's grace is expressed in Christ on the cross, and that this “gift” is the MEANS of forgiveness, then we can appreciate the meaning of faith (or trust) in Him. Seeking “freedom from guilt” by (perfect) works, we put our trust in ourselves—and fail. But recognizing that salvation for any but the absolutely perfect (who would need no saving) must be by gift or grace of God, we put our trust in Him who died for us.

The thought of Romans 11:6 is, therefore: “If by grace, then it is no more of [*perfect, meriting*] works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace: otherwise work [*that is less than perfect, and needs forgiveness*] is no more work,” (such as Paul has in mind in making these statements).

With Paul, trust in Jesus Christ involves obedience. Note: “for obedience to the faith,” (Rom 1:5), “who will render to every man according to his deeds,” (Rom 2:6-13), “ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine,” (Rom 6:17), “who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit,” (Rom 8:4), “for the obedience of faith” (Rom 16:26).

God's plan for making man righteous—in right standing with Him—was to forgive those who put their trust in the crucified and resurrected Lord. (Read carefully Rom. 4:6-8.) Christ is the MEANS; forgiveness is the OPERATION; and faith (obedient trust) is the CONDITION. The Jews who went about to establish “their own righteousness” (on the basis of law—Phil 3:9), did not “submit” themselves, being ignorant of God's way. There is no conflict in salvation by grace, and at the point of baptism. 

# Grace and Works


by Robert F. Turner

In the Roman letter the apostle Paul clearly contrasts grace and works, Rom 4:2-5; 11:6, and some have concluded he makes any act of obedience incompatible with grace. We believe this error is the result of failure to consider the context of his arguments concerning “law” and “works.” Will you think with us?

He begins his main argument by showing that God is Just in condemning all, for “all have sinned.” Law, both moral and positive, identifies sin. It makes sin apparent, and shows the futility of seeking to be acknowledged “free of guilt” on the basis of law alone. Since a single sin is all that is necessary to

**Mike B** is considering heart surgery, and has been undergoing a new round of chemotherapy that requires him to be sequestered during treatment. **Betty** often doesn't feel well enough to meet with us. **Stanley** is doing well while undergoing radiation treatments for skin cancer. **Hazel** remains in

rehabilitation at Goldton, and is also progressing nicely. **Joshua V** continues to undergo testing to determine the cause of his illness.

Please continue to pray for those other brethren we know and love, including **Kathy Mitchell** and **the Pollard Family**. 

 Remember in Prayer 