

**Crossville Church
of Christ**

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COMPASS

Using God's Word to Chart The Course
Of A Congregation

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January 30, 2011

Elders:

Frank Bohannon

Eddie Brown

Bill Foland

Al Griffin

Jonathan Loveday

Larry McDuffee

Clyde Randolph

Deacons:

Jim Bell

Jimmy Harris

Doug Loveday

Greg Maxwell

Brian McLaughlin

Mark Roberts

Roger Smith

Minister:

Barry Kennedy

Missionaries:

Don Iverson

Jim Waldron

(India)

Service Times

Sunday Bible Study 9 AM

Sunday Worship 10 AM

6 PM

Wednesday 6 PM

OTHER ACTIVITIES:

Ladies Bible Class

Tuesdays 11AM

Prayer Meeting

Tuesdays 10 AM

Joyful Generation

(Youth Devotional & fellowship)

1st Sunday 7:00 PM



**“If you would win the world,
melt it, do not hammer it”
(Alexander Maclaren).**

**“Be kindly affectioned one to another with
brotherly love; in honour preferring one
another;” (Romans 12:10).**

IS THE BEST THING THE NEXT THING?

Barry Kennedy

How many times do we find ourselves looking for what is next? It seems as though some people are never satisfied with what they have. On the other hand, are we as Christians not supposed to be looking toward Heaven? Is it not part of our Christian walk to be ever looking forward? Of course the answer to these two questions is a resounding YES! However, one must consider certain conditions to help understand that there is no contradiction between these two thoughts.

When many people think about "NEXT THINGS," they are thinking about eternity. Those who find themselves in the "twilight of life" often consider what is next. Others, especially those who are young, only think of what toy, snack, or good time is coming next. This mindset, expects the next thing to be bigger and better. Is that not how most all of us truly feel deep down? What is next as far as our souls are concerned? The fact of the matter is that there are only two choices when it comes to the "next life" (Matthew 7:13, 14). Therefore, consider these two thoughts in answering the question, **"IS THE BEST THING ALWAYS THE NEXT THING?"**

NO, if the next thing is an eternity in HELL. Many people do not want to even consider the thoughts of a Devil's Hell, but that does not make it go away. Hell is a reality that must be taken seriously. Jesus warned that some were in danger of **"HELL FIRE"** (Matthew 5:22). He continued by emphasizing the importance of severing anything that would "offend," i.e. cause us to sin (Matthew 5:29, 30). Also, we would do well to remember that Jesus said, *"And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell"* (Matthew 10:28). Clearly, for one facing eternity (the next thing) lost would not be the best way to "spend" eternity.

YES, if the next thing is an eternity in HEAVEN. The strait way to life is certainly a more difficult way than that of the broad and wide way to destruction (Matthew 7:13, 14). However, that does not mean that it is an impossible way. As a matter of fact, it would not be just for Jesus to request our entrance into an impossible way (Romans 3:26; 1 John 1:9). Sadly, far too many fail to appreciate God's offer of a home in Heaven. In fact, it would not be surprising to find out that many Christians do not want to go to Heaven as much as they do not want to go to Hell. This mindset is not what produces true servitude. *"But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life"* (Romans 6:22). Serving God is not to be about what we can get from Him, but what we can give to Him. *"By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name"* (Hebrews 13:15). Do we have confidence in our resurrection? Do we truly see eternity as an opportunity and blessing? God's word gives one every reason to expect the "next thing" for a Christian to be the best thing. *"He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honor"* (John 12:25, 26).

"But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content" (1 Timothy 6:6-8). Clearly we must learn to be more content in certain areas, but may we never become content with this life as our only life. If the next day is just another day here on time's side of eternity, or an eternity lost in a Devil's Hell, then we are of all men most miserable (1 Corinthians 15:19; Matthew 25:30). However, thanks be to God for granting us the hope of life everlasting (Matthew 25:26; John 3:16; Romans 6:23). In that we can say, **"THE NEXT THING IS THE BEST THING."**

MY OBLIGATIONS TO MY BROTHER

Chad Stafko
(Focus Press)

In a world of almost seven billion individuals and a nation of over 300 million, the Christian has an abundance of opportunities to affect the lives of those with whom he or she comes in contact. But does the Christian actually have an obligation to influence others, and if so, in what ways and to what extent?

Jesus addressed the issue of whether His followers had a duty to influence others, in a spiritual sense, in His Sermon on the Mount. We find these words in Matthew 5:13-15, "You are the salt of the earth....You are the light of the world. A city that is set a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to everyone in the house". In what we term "The Great Commission" in Matthew 28:19-20, the Son of God further addressed our spiritual obligations to one another, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

The Christian has within his grasp the most valuable commodity on earth—the pathway to Heaven. To not share this blessing with others is to fail in fulfilling the second greatest commandment spoken by Christ: "Love your neighbor as yourself." In fact, it was because someone shared that blessing with us that we obeyed the Gospel and became Christians. All of us hopefully want our friends and neighbors to be in Heaven with us, but we must realize that we are instrumental in making that happen through not only our conduct but also a willingness to share with them the "hope that is within us." If our friends are standing next to us on Judgment Day and we never shared with them the story of Jesus, were we truly their friend while on earth? Did we care about them?

Fulfilling the spiritual needs of those around us has eternal consequences. However, our obligations to those around us do not necessarily begin with or are limited to spiritual matters. Instead, we also have a duty to meet the physical needs of others. If we neglect in fulfilling the physical needs of others, it is unlikely, at best, that they will be receptive to any teachings regarding Jesus or the Bible. In the same way that we want our friends and neighbors in Heaven, our overall love for mankind should drive us to also want the poor, lonely, addicted, and disadvantaged in Heaven. As Paul told the Corinthians, "Such were some of you." Jesus paints for us a beautiful picture of whom we are actually ministering to when we help those in need, recorded in Matthew 25:35-40:

"For I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me. Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.'"

Jesus exemplified this requirement to fulfill the physical needs of those around Him. Recall how doors were opened for discussions of spiritual matters when He healed the lame and fed the hungry prior to teaching the people about their God. Empty stomachs and broken hearts need to be addressed first before we share the life-changing Gospel in the same way that Jesus often did when He was on earth.

What do I owe my brother? I owe him the same type of love and compassion that Jesus displayed to those around Him. In the spirit of the Good Samaritan, I need to help my fellow man when the opportunity arises and I have the means to help him. Above all, I owe him the knowledge of Christ's love for him so that he too can be a recipient of God's grace and have a home in Heaven forever.