



PILGRIM NEWS & NOTES

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE MIDWEST PILGRIM HOLINESS CHURCH

FEBRUARY 2016

Choices and Consequences

By Frances Stetler



Life is full of choices. Every morning most people make the choice to get out of bed or to hit the snooze button again. They choose what to wear, what to eat, and where to go. Most minutes of the day contain choices. Some choices are big; some are small; and some appear to be small but are actually life-changing.

The definition of choice includes words such as, **options**, **power**, **right**, and **opportunity** (dictionary.com).

Choice, by its very meaning, indicates that a person is looking at two or more alternatives. Some find choosing a relatively simple matter for the most part. Others find choices difficult to make whenever they appear, and they seek help from friends or family. However, when one faces eternal choices, he or she must make those choices alone.

The Bible contains much information about choices, giving us examples of people who made choices and the resulting consequences of those choices. For example, Abraham chose to trust when God told him to go to Canaan and asked for his son. His implicit belief in God brought him an eternal position in the Hall of Faith and the title, the "father of the faithful." In addition, Paul tells us in Romans 4:3 that Abraham's faith was counted unto him for righteousness. Of course, the ultimate result of Abraham's choices made him the father of the Jews, the family through which Jesus Christ would come.

God established the principle of choice when He created each person with a will. He wanted humans to love Him because they wanted a relationship with Him instead of being coerced into one, so He gave each the choice to serve God, making decisions based on love for God or to serve Satan, making decisions that follow the world and Satan himself. Yet, as early as the Garden of Eden, God also inaugurated the side of choice that most want to ignore: choices and consequences are two parts of a whole. Or, as a neighbor of mine once said, "Choices and consequences come wrapped up in the same package." God told the first pair not to eat of the fruit of the tree in the midst of the garden because if they did, they would die. That command was easy enough to understand, however, Satan engaged himself in the process by twisting the truth of God's command and punishment into a sort of insulting attempt by God to withhold something good: instead of dying,

they would be like gods that knew good from evil (Genesis 3:5). Adam and Eve “bought” Satan’s lie and ate the fruit. History has recorded the consequences of that choice. Although the couple did not immediately fall dead, death “passed on all men” – including themselves (Romans 5:12). Besides both spiritual and physical death, all the pain, suffering and anguish – as well as weeds and thorns and hard labor – followed as the result of this single choice.

This pattern – of options from which to choose, choosing, and consequences – is repeated myriad times in each person’s life. (Satan entering the choice pattern to twist God’s truth is also repeated.) Sometimes those alternatives are rather insignificant while others are eternal (though their eternal significance is not always recognized by the person making the choice). Whether small or large, each choice has consequences that complete it.

God’s Word gives clear pictures of those who made choices, and, because the Bible covers so many years, a careful reading reveals both good and bad consequences of those choices. For example, Moses stands stalwartly as the God-chosen leader of the Israelites. God spoke to Moses face-to-face like friends would talk (Exodus 33:11), leaving Moses’ face shining so brightly that he had to wear a veil when he came out to speak to the people (Exodus 34:29). Although this story causes wonder in the minds of its readers, we cannot understand its meaning unless we see Moses’ choice to look ahead to a heavenly reward instead of his temporary Egyptian heritage. He chose God and His people over fleeting Egyptian pleasures and counted the reproach of Christ “riches” in comparison to the treasures in Egypt (Hebrews 11:24-27).

The scriptures instruct us to choose whom we will serve (Joshua 24:15). No one can make that choice for another; each one must choose for himself, and all must make that choice. Any attempt to “ride the fence” when choosing God or the world always makes the choice for the world. The biblical story of the prophet Elijah meeting King Ahab and the challenge on Mt Carmel always intrigues me, but it gives a classic example of trying to keep God and the world at the same time. Elijah fearlessly announced God’s judgment on Ahab and the Israelites because of their sin and proclaimed that all rain would cease. Now, after three plus years with no rain, the rivers and streams were dry beds; the animals and people were desperate for water, and King Ahab was angrily searching for Elijah so that he could kill the prophet. When the two met, Elijah challenged Ahab, his false prophets, and the prophets of Baal to the contest on Mt. Carmel. In I Kings 18:21, Elijah accused the Israelites of “halting” between two opinions: God and Baal. These people were mixing worship of Jehovah with worship of Baal, and Elijah demanded that they make a choice. The consequences of this dithering revealed themselves in the mixed “faith” of their children. Each succeeding generation allowed more and more of the world to mold its thought patterns, allowing worship to become more corrupt while attempting to maintain basic forms of temple worship. Today, we live in a culture that attempts to blend Christianity and the world. People are still “halting between two opinions”: blurring the lines of standards, participating in worldly amusements, and keeping quiet about what God has done and can do. Our choice today of whether to follow God’s commands and walk in the light or make small compromises here and there that accommodate the world come “wrapped up in the same package” with the loss of spiritual vitality

for ourselves and the loss of belief in the God who can transform for the next generation.

The stories I have referenced so far were those that happened centuries ago during Bible times. Those stories are impacting and convicting; however, I want to tell you two stories of women I knew who made life-changing, eternal choices. I became a witness to the consequences that came with those choices. When I was a teenager, I worked for a woman who had been a Bible and theology teacher at a Bible college. However, she decided that, since she was single and had no one to care for her when she was old, she had to have a job with a good retirement (something the Bible college did not have). She quit teaching at the Bible college and began to teach in the local public school. I did not know the lady except after she retired. Her retirement was adequate, but that was all she had: her retirement. She had no friends. Her family did not want her. She had no joy or peace. She lived in a run-down house, confined to the house and suffering in excruciating pain and abject misery. She was bitter at God and the world in general. Although she refused to allow herself to acknowledge that her lot in life was the consequence that came “wrapped up” with her choice to work out her future according to her plan instead of God’s, the evidence virtually shouted that her walk away from God’s call created a future that was bleak and painful. On the contrary, many years ago (about 1943), my mother attended a church service for the very first time. She was twelve years old; a little girl who had never heard God’s name except in swearing. That very first time in church, Jewel Stetler made the choice to give her heart to the Lord. Her life was not always easy; in fact, she suffered much physical pain, eventually being confined to a wheel chair. However, through good times and bad, Mother never regretted nor recanted her choice to wholly follow God. The impact of her Godly life and her simple, faith-filled prayers will live on in my siblings’ and my life as well as the life of every person she encountered. Sixteen months ago I stood at her casket. She looked like an angel who had simply fallen asleep. No one who attended her viewing or funeral had any question that Jewel Stetler went to be with Jesus. The path she chose when she was just a child found its end in heaven where her pain was forever gone. The sacrifices she made to raise our family on a Bible school salary, living in houses that often needed repair and stretching every dollar to make ends meet, are now forgotten in the glory of living in the presence of Jesus, the one she loved and served so faithfully.

Yes, choices and consequences come wrapped up together, but each of us has the ability to make choices that count for eternity – not just for ourselves but for those whose lives we impact. May God help us to make our eternal choices clear and distinct so that those who follow us will see the path to heaven so clearly that following it will be a natural choice.



Frances Stetler was reared on a Bible college campus and has spent 36 years of her life teaching in Christian education: first as an elementary teacher and now as a professor at Penn View Bible Institute in Penns Creek, PA where she also serves as education director.

On the weekends and in the summer she directs junior churches and vacation Bible schools.

We’re grateful to Frances for this tremendous article.

THE CONFERENCE PRESIDENT'S PAGE

Rev. James A. Southerland, Sr. originally served as the first Gen. Secretary of the Midwest Pilgrim Holiness Church, prior to being elected to the position of President in 1970, and he served in that capacity until 1986. He was re-elected to that position in 2003 and has ably served as President to this present time. He may be contacted via email [HERE](#)

How Did We Get Here . . . 50 Years Later?

A Conference President's Perspective

Part I

We came from very conservative roots. Personally, I have vivid memories of the little Church of the Nazarene that my family attended near Paris, Kentucky, in the late 1940's and early 1950's. The saints believed and lived "Bible Holiness with standards". The pastors and evangelists preached the old fashioned rugged Gospel message of the sin delivering and entirely sanctified experience. They emphasized a close walk with the Lord and clear separation from the world in attire and deportment.

The time came when we moved to a little farm closer to town. About the same time, a Pilgrim Holiness preacher who had met his wife at Frankfort Pilgrim College located in Frankfort, Indiana, came to our town. He asked my dad if he could set up a tent on our little farm along side the busy county road. We were profoundly surprised by the crowds that came. We were soon digging the footers to a new Pilgrim Holiness Church in Paris, Kentucky.

Here is where the Holy Spirit visited us in services, revivals and Sunday School classrooms. Here is where anointed preaching and the voice of the Almighty convicted me to the very core of my being. I repented that cold night in January 13, 1960. I was wonderfully sanctified four night later at the same altar of prayer. Under the influence of Godly preaching, powerful praying and a revival spirit, I answered the call of God to preach on the night of February 29th.

As a high school senior, I began to prepare to attend Frankfort Pilgrim College. It was here that I was exposed to the heart beat of activities and direction of the Pilgrim Holiness Church. Under the influence of spiritual giants like Rev. J. Wesley Adcock, Rev. Merton Rundell, and Rev. R. K. Storey, my spiritual values were shaped. There was clearly a division of paths that was taking place within the Pilgrim Holiness Church. Choices were made between the conservative "old fashioned way" and a more liberal approach. The conservative positions of the ladies' plainer dress standards with long uncut hair and no jewelry and clear separation from the world were born in the spirit of revival. As we traveled across the movement with practical worker's groups from the college and conducted revival meetings, there was excitement at God's movement among the people. There was also resistance from some officials of the denomination. Their plan was to make the merger between the Pilgrim Holiness Church and the Wesleyan Methodist Church a reality.

Upon leaving FPC after graduation, Patsy and I had a good schedule of revivals and camp meetings in which we preached and sang across the Midwest. It was during this time that I received a call from the Superintendent of the Illinois District saying that the Pilgrim Holiness Church in Decatur, Illinois, wanted to vote on us to become their pastor. He ended by saying "I don't want you to go."

We had had some wonderful revival services there. I told him that we didn't want to go there to pastor.

During the night we prayed earnestly in separate places. The Lord made it exceedingly clear that if they called us we were to accept the pastorate. We were informed the next morning that we had been elected. Thus we began our pastoral ministry and stepped into the problems that the pending merger brought to our people.

Our local church had a mature body of saints, some of which were parents or children of District officials. It was here that we established fellowship with Rev. Eugene Gray and his Bloomington, Illinois, congregation. We gained respect and insight into the workings of the District and the General Church. As more information was learned about the pending merger, our people became more alarmed at the changes that would be forced upon them. During a meeting with the District Officials of the Illinois Wesleyan Methodists and the Illinois District Council of the Pilgrim Holiness Church, it was made clear that the standard of dress, ladies' bobbed hair, jewelry, including wedding rings were not issues. We were ultimately informed that if members from other states wished to transfer their membership to our local churches and exhibited conflicting standards than what we held dear, we had to take them into our membership and the local board had no choice in the matter. No divorced and remarried individuals were members of the old Pilgrim Holiness Church. With some of the changes that came with the merger even divorced and remarried preachers were taken into the membership and ordained. The wedding ring became acceptable into membership.

As these and other practices became prominent, my local church board informed me that they were not going down that road of compromise. Their stated determination was to remain a Pilgrim Holiness Church and maintain the same standards upon which the Decatur, Illinois, Pilgrim Holiness Church was established. The Lord used Rev. Eugene Gray in a wonderful way to help open the way for our churches to continue.

Part two reveals how our Conference was born . . .



Bro. Southerland stands with Rev. A J Whitney, who was instrumental in the founding of our Conference



Bro. Southerland and his son, Allen

Purity in an X-Rated World

by Rev. Darrell Stetler II

I admit it -- I love the Internet. I liked it from the first time I heard the beep beep boooop of our first dial-up modem, and saw how information came streaming into our home. Anything I needed to know, type it in... and there it was.

Today, it's better, smarter and way, way faster. My smartphone is always connected. Google Now learns what I like and search for, and automatically shows me news stories connected to my interests. Drive syncs all my files, so I can retrieve any picture or document from anywhere and send it instantly to anyone. Amazon lets me order & ship things directly to my door. My sermons on Youtube have been viewed 5,000 times as of this writing. I can find the lyrics to almost any song in seconds.

A friend told me once (and I've repeated it many times) "Without the internet, I am like any other mortal."

So you know I'm pro-internet.

But when I was asked to write about the dangers of the internet, I know exactly what I have to say.

Be cautious, friends. The internet is like nuclear power. Harnessed, it's great. Without proper controls, it's deadly.

No phenomenon shows this more, or is more pervasive in our culture than internet pornography.

Consider the following statistics:

- Porn is a \$60 billion industry per year worldwide – \$12 billion in the USA. (\$32.8 million per day!) That's more than pro baseball, basketball, football & hockey combined... more than the combined revenues of ABC, CBS & NBC.
- Porn sites comprise 12% of ALL sites on the internet.
- 25% of all search engine requests are porn-related.
- 28,000 people view porn per second.
- 372 users every second type words to search for porn.
- In the year 2014, one of the largest pornography video sites reported 78.9 billion video views -- that's 11 for every person on the earth.
- 90% of kids by age 18 have seen porn on the internet.
- Average age of first exposure for a child is 11 yrs., usually inadvertently.
- #1 consumer of porn: boys 12-17.

Now, after you pick your jaw up off the floor, let me hit you with one more: A university attempting to study the effects of pornography, attempted to locate a control group of men who had not been exposed to it, so they could compare them with men who had. They cancelled the study; they were unable to find men who had not.

In that kind of world, is it even possible to be pure?

I imagine there were those who felt the same way when Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints..." (1 Cor. 1:2, NKJV) I imagine they stopped, shook their head, and looked out the window at the towering mountain fortress of Acro-Corinth above their city. The ancient writers say 1,000 temple prostitutes engaged in "worship" at the temple of Aphrodite.

But while it may seem challenging, He calls us to holiness nonetheless.

How do we protect our homes? Our children? Our own hearts?

Books have been written on this subject, and space is limited here. (I will be writing on this topic in more detail on my blog in the new few weeks. If you want more info, I encourage you to sign up for my updates at www.darrellstetler2.com/email)

Here are four beginning suggestions:

1. Build technological walls between your family and sin.

No one in today's world -- NO ONE -- should have an unsecured, unfiltered internet connection. There are multiple tools available to do this, at reasonable cost (or no cost!). Invest the time. Get them. Learn them. Use them. **Here are my favorites:**

OpenDNS - this software lives on your wireless router (not the computer), so it filters every device connected to your network. Invaluable, and free. Slightly more complicated to install than other programs. Very dependable in blocking. Not as powerful in monitoring and reporting.

Covenant Eyes - Filtering program for computers and phones. No child should have a smartphone or tablet without it. Not free, but excellent.

X3Watch - Free phone reporting app, sends your browsing history to an accountability partner. Somewhat weak on what it catches, but free. Also has a paid version of filtering software for computers.

Purify - This company shows Youtube videos, and strips away all the sidebars, comments, suggested videos, etc. Excellent idea for those who need to use Youtube, but dislike the abundance of sensuality & vulgarity in the suggested video thumbnails.

2. Pray like crazy.

While we may fight with digital means, the protection of our homes is fundamentally a spiritual battle. Fasting and prayer for your family simply can't be replaced.

3. Communicate often.

Cultivate honesty & willingness to share about these things by starting early. Talk about it with your children. Discuss it with your spouse. Men, share this parable with your wives.

Imagine that the Scripture condemns eating chocolate. Not only does it condemn it, but it condemns looking at it, and wanting to eat it. Then imagine that everyone ate chocolate. There were books about it. 12% of all websites were about chocolate. TV shows featured it, celebrities discussed their chocolate lives on talk shows, and magazines and billboards featured half-unwrapped chocolate bars. Now, how hard is it not to think about chocolate?

Ladies, "Is it really like that?" is a question you need to ask of your husbands. If he's honest, he'll say yes. But the conversation you have after he does will be important. And you'll need plenty of this next principle:

4. Create an atmosphere of grace.

I'll be honest. You can't build walls high enough to completely solve the problem. You can't have enough tech tools. You can't check up enough to prevent the possibility. Odds are extremely high that your husband, your child, will see something impure. Perhaps even intentionally. What then?

Paul says the law is clear that "the person who DOES these things shall live by them." (Romans 10:5, NKJV). But the opposite is also true. The person who doesn't -- will die by them. And if the atmosphere of your home is one of law; if you've created an atmosphere of law, fear, condemnation, ultimatums... then the threat of condemnation will add to the guilt of their conscience and keep them from coming to you. They may try to repent & seek forgiveness from Christ, but they won't seek you out.

Please take it from me as a man who has struggled deeply in this area & come thru to victory: Grace is more powerful than sin. Law is not... but grace is.



Rev. Darrell Stetler II pastors the Bible Methodist Church in Oklahoma City, OK, where he lives with his wife, Elizabeth, and their six children.

He also blogs and shares resources for pastors & church leaders, which can be found via the following website: www.darrellstetler2.com



PASTOR TO PASTOR

Ministering to those who minister to others

Choices

Life is mostly made up of choices. There are many things that influence the choices we make in our personal lives as well as our vocational endeavors. Things like family traditions, cultural influence of where we were born and reared, our dreams of perfection and wanting to succeed in life.

Scripture points out clearly that faithfulness is more important than success. That being the case, it would seem that choices which produce faithfulness in our personal responsibilities to the people we pastor has great reward.

One choice that is sometimes lacking in the shepherd of the flock that evidences itself numerically and spiritually in lack of growth, is the choice to pastor the best people in the congregation and neglect the trouble-makers and those who are perhaps not talented in making our program fly. Our only choice is to pastor every soul God has placed in our care. Peter was admonished in scripture to feed the whole flock. The song writer had it wrong about the ninety and nine being safe in the fold. The shepherd chose to leave them all in the wilderness and search for that one lost sheep. Many of the choices a pastor has to make may seem to be all wrong but the only hope for sheep that need special care is a pastor full of love and compassion.

We made the choice to pastor a church where there had been a moral scandal between the pastor and a prominent member. Our first Sunday there were 13 people in attendance and 6 of them were my family. One choice I made that proved to be a good one was to map out the small town of 15,000 population and systematically cover the area in a calling program. I used a survey that asked questions which would give me a picture of what they would want a church to do for them. Many wanted to talk about the trouble at the church but I had the same reply for everyone, "I was in Africa when that took place and I don't know nor want to know all the details. I came to pastor those who come and I would be thrilled if you would let me be your pastor too." It was not always easy but it was the right choice to pastor all the people who came. By the help of the Lord over an eight year period we saw the lady involved restored to gracious victory and once again play the organ. We saw the attendance build to the upper 60's and lower 70's and give God all the glory.

I don't know anyone who always makes the right choices. We have this treasure in an earthen vessel. I see some people make some choices that just don't even make common sense. I have personally found some things to help balance the scale in most cases.

1. What is the driving force behind the choice I am about to make relative to the church and God's kingdom? Is it personal pride of looking successful or love and compassion for every member of my congregation?
2. Have I counseled with a fellow minister to get their opinion?
3. Have I prayed and waited on God to make His will plain to me?

Another rewarding choice that needs to be made is a consistent calling program. Dr. Stephen Gibson in our Ministerial Convention set the standard of friendship very clear for us. He said, "If you have never been in their home, or they have never been in your home, then you are not friends."

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT!!

This year is very special and exciting! We will be honoring Rev. and Mrs. James A. Southerland, Sr., our Conference President and wife, for their many years of service to the Pilgrim Holiness Church Conference! As many are already aware, Bro. Southerland notified the Conference two years ago of his intention to end his tenure as Conference President at the completion of his current term. The Southerlands have spent the majority of their ministry working in the interest of the Pilgrim Conference and we want to give honor to whom honor is due!

A special service is scheduled to be held on June 24th, 2016, at 7:00 PM. (This is the last Friday of Camp Meeting)

We will also be commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the Pilgrim Holiness Church! We plan to have a special celebration service on June 26th, at 10:00 AM. (This is the last Sunday morning of Pilgrim Family Camp.)

Please begin making plans now to attend these very special services!

“Too many of us want a religion which is less demanding and more socially acceptable; and as always, this means an atmosphere hostile to outspoken, confrontational preaching against the sins which we indulge, the carnal attitudes which we display, and the worldly trifles which we excuse.” - Rev. Larry Smith

(Continued from page 9)

Being friends with your congregation is more than a Facebook level. I can't remember where I first heard this truth but where pastors practiced it faithfully I have seen it build the kingdom of God and proven true.

“A HOME GOING PASTOR MAKES A CHURCH GOING PEOPLE.” I have told my pastor to concentrate his efforts on the new converts and those needing his attention the most, but I will have to confess that it is a thrill to answer his knock at our door. I have observed that when you are in their homes, they are free to express themselves regarding personal needs or Church programs. We do a lot of one-way communication from the pulpit and sometimes leave a lot of questions in the minds of the hearers. They are not going to discuss their questions just merely by shaking your hand at the back door of the church.

To the retired ministers . . . it is **always** the right choice to let your pastor be the pastor. He needs your support of the truth in preaching more than he needs your advice.

Being faithful to nurture the sheep will bring you blessings that are overwhelming and will boost you when you need it. Take your family on vacation and don't neglect your wife because you will probably be her pastor longer than anyone else.



Rev. Roger Russell is a former missionary and pastor of many, many years. He is married to Betty and they are faithful attendees of the Noblesville Pilgrim Holiness Church.

Recently, his pastor gave him a big compliment when he said, “Bro. Russell has been a huge support to me. He and his wife are great assets to this church!”

We thank Bro. Russell for this wonderful and insightful article!



A Woman's Perspective

By Stephanie Burley

Your Food, Your Choice!

Just a few weeks ago, the calendar turned and another year began. For many, a new year is a fresh start. It is a time to evaluate one's life, determine areas that need improvement, and resolve to make changes. A study by the University of Scranton's *Journal of Clinical Psychology* shows that 45% of Americans always make New Year's resolutions. That's pretty impressive! Almost half of our country's population annually makes a commitment to better their lives. Unfortunately, only 8% actually keep that commitment. There are a number of reasons why people fail to follow through. Too many times, the fervor and intention fade and resolutions that were so heartfelt in the beginning are discarded due to a lack of self-discipline. All of the sudden, those areas of weakness seem too difficult to face, and we give up thinking, "Oh well, maybe next year." And we move on, fighting the same battles, struggling with the same issues, telling ourselves that it's just too hard.

The same study also concluded that the number one resolution is weight loss. Surprised? I wasn't, either. That resolution is what sells an abundance of gym memberships, meal replacement shakes, and athletic wear. Enter any department store, and you'll see the shelves lined with products advertised to help people achieve this goal, and because of the rate of failure, it becomes a never-ending cycle. By February, the treadmill has become a clothes rack, the shakes have been discarded in favor of something more sustaining and palatable, and the gym shoes are buried beneath the yoga mat in some far corner of the closet. And the cycle begins again.

But what if the cycle didn't have to begin again? What if I decided that I was sick and tired of being sick and tired? I don't mean sick as in physically ill, but sick as in sluggish, stressed out, exhausted, and weak. What if I decided to take control of every bite of food I put into my mouth? Yes, every single bite. And what if I began to make the right choices about how to fuel my body? On February 22, 2014, I committed to changing my relationship with food. That decision has impacted me tremendously, and its results have changed my perspective. Let me share 6 simple, yet smart ways to revolutionize your eating habits:

- 1. Nourish.** Americans love to eat. Food brings us joy, and often it is the social aspect of eating that we enjoy most. But to assist us in making wise decisions about food, it is important to ask ourselves whether or not we are nourishing our bodies or just filling our bellies. To nourish my body, I supply it with what is needed for life, health, and growth. I strengthen and build my body (or the opposite), by what I eat. A healthy diet should consist of meals and snacks at regular intervals throughout the day. Your body should not be allowed to go hungry. Don't have time to eat throughout the day? I challenge you to rearrange your schedule and make time for what is important. Choose nutritious foods that are easier to incorporate into your calendar. Be sure to eat protein, carbohydrates, and healthy fats in moderation. And like your grandmother told you, don't

ever skip breakfast. Breakfast wakes the body and kick starts the metabolism. When you are eating intentionally and wisely, your body will crave the first meal of the day, and it will make it much easier to stay on track for the remainder of your waking hours.

2. Hydrate. This seems so simplistic. However, studies show that 50-66% of the population may be mildly dehydrated. Percentages are higher among children. Many of the people I talk to struggle with drinking enough water, or even knowing how much is enough. Rather than wasting energy on trying to determine how much water to drink, let me encourage you to start drinking. Set specific markers throughout the day to remind you to drink. This will look different for everyone, and your preferences won't be the same as mine. A lot of people don't care for water, but I believe that is because our culture is addicted to sugary drinks and find water distasteful. If you are struggling to introduce more water in your diet, try new options. Some people prefer a water bottle with a straw. Some like water ice cold. Some prefer a glass cup or bottle to plastic. Some infuse fruit for flavor. Learn what works for you, and go with it. The more water you drink, the more you will want. That is normal and good. If you find that you are hungry, grab a bottle of water first and see if that curbs your desire for food. Many times we mistake thirst for hunger. Mild dehydration can cause a headache or weakness, and that is a signal that the body needs water.

3. Plan. One of the greatest causes of poor eating is the convenience of fast food. In our mobile society, it's often substantially easier (and sometimes more cost-efficient) to swing into a drive thru or order take out than it is to grocery shop, prep a meal, serve the meal, and clean up the mess. When you choose to eat well, you also choose to allocate the time necessary to make it happen. As you begin to fuel your body properly, you will find fast food less and less appealing. Keeping the refrigerator and pantry stocked with healthy options such as carrot sticks, grapes, string cheese, yogurt, peanut butter, and almonds will ensure that good choices are at your fingertips. If you are frequently on the go, invest in a quality lunch tote and a few packaged snacks to keep in the car. The internet is loaded with fun, healthy, and delicious ideas for a variety of ways to combine foods. Who would have thought that a slice of toast with a spread of peanut butter, topped with a sliced banana and a sprinkle of cinnamon would taste like a decadent breakfast pastry? Or that a boxed spice, yellow or white cake mix (mix only) could be combined with a can of pure pumpkin and a few dark chocolate chips to create a heavenly and fairly nutritious cookie or muffin? Healthy eating requires intentional planning, especially until it becomes a solid habit.

4. Track. Tracking is especially important for those who are trying to lose or gain weight. (Yes, there are those who are trying to gain in order to get to a healthy weight.) If budgeting is the key to a healthy financial life, tracking is the key to weight loss. A common excuse for not tracking is that it is too time consuming. My response is this: As with anything else, creating new habits does require a little extra time and mental energy. Also, like anything else, once you do it a few times it is no longer as time consuming and becomes second nature. It is easy to underestimate how much one eats and drinks in a given day, and we often cannot see the true picture until it is tracked. Not only does tracking help us understand how much we are eating, it allows us to

see whether we are nourishing ourselves well with what we eat (most trackers have nutrient charts or graphs), and it reveals the frequency of our meals. With the conveniences of mobile apps, tracking is easier than ever. Livestrong and My Fitness Pal are two of several free activity and food tracking mobile applications available, and both are very user friendly. Journaling is also very effective. Depending on your relationship with food, sometimes it is helpful to write out one's feelings and emotions during the process of change. Many times journaling will reveal a relationship between food, stress, hormones, and emotions, which enables us to watch for triggers and avoid falling into harmful patterns.

5. Smile. Healthy eating gets a bad reputation because of the negativity with which it is associated.

Sometimes people who are trying to eat healthy don't really want to, and they create food drama everywhere they go. Others are simply wanting to shed a few pounds for an event or special occasion (not really wanting a change in lifestyle), and all they can talk about is the unhealthy food they really want to eat. When a person truly decides to change his nutritional habits, he isn't seeking attention. He is doing it for purposes greater than a photo or an event, and that purpose directs his choices and his attitude. Healthy eating isn't all salads and smoothies. Healthy eating is learning to be creative with the wonderful variety of food that God has provided for us for nourishment. Good habits result from wise choices, and within a short period of time these habits produce results like increased energy and weight loss. If you are earnestly seeking a change in this area, create a list of healthy foods you enjoy. Start with that, and begin eliminating unhealthy foods. As your tastes change, you can introduce healthy foods that are less appealing, and you may be surprised to see how appetizing they become.

6. Splurge. Does healthy eating mean forever removing sweet treats or carb laden meals from one's diet?

No. In fact, many studies prove that complete restriction from foods one craves is almost certain to derail good intentions. A common term among dieters is "cheat meal," and that is a term I'm not willing to use. Planned splurges can be a great incentive for staying on track, and they curb cravings tremendously. One should not have to avoid all social functions just because there is a chance of being tempted by unhealthy foods. Intentional planning will create room in the food diary for occasional splurges.

In our culture, developing healthy eating habits and making wise food choices can be a drastic change.

There are many Christians who, if they were honest, would give a list of excuses as to why they cannot eat healthy foods. Let me ask a question. How many times have you and I counseled men and women who are addicted to pornography, cigarettes, alcohol, or drugs? We've earnestly and honestly told them that God could help them make any changes needed to conform to His likeness. And we are correct. Is that same God not able to help us overcome the obstacles that are keeping us from making wise choices? Of course, He is able. The key is to be intentional, and quit saying, "It's too hard." It isn't too hard. It is simply a combination of asking God for wisdom, guidance, and strength, and then making one good decision, followed by another. As we seek to glorify Him through our choices, it will be less about us, more about Him, and we will find peace in knowing that we are progressively becoming more like Him because of our disciplined pursuit of Him.



News from around the Conference

News articles on this page have been submitted by various Pilgrim Churches. We reserve the right to edit the submissions as necessary to fit space requirements. E-mail all news to: pauldplemmons@yahoo.com

Rochester Hills, MI - (by Pastor Dan Plemmons)

God is blessing in Rochester Hills! It's hard to believe that we have been here for 17 years now, but we are praising the Lord for the help that He has given, and is continuing to give!

In December, we had our Annual Christmas Dinner, which was attended very well with many visitors. An older lady named Marilyn came to the Christmas Dinner, and she has been attending our church since that time. She recently commented, "I've been attending another church for sixty years, and I have never felt the love and acceptance that I feel when I come to this little church!"

Please pray that God will continue to use this little church to reach souls for Him!

A Christmas Miracle for the Walden Family

Our family had a Christmas Miracle! Our daughter-in-law, Karen, had been having some problems with her left arm. She is a RN at the Columbus, Indiana hospital. The hospital changed the way the nurses chart (from sitting at the desk to standing at a pedestal in the patients' room) and being left handed, this was awkward for her.

She had an X-ray made of her arm, and they found a mass on the bone between her shoulder and elbow. She has been worried sick. UBC came to their church with their Christmas program, "A Christmas Miracle". At the end a trio of boys sang, "A Miracle in the Making" and the pastor encouraged those with concerns in their life to come forward for prayer. About half the congregation went forward, including Karen.

She recently had a MRI and the result was that the growth on her bone is benign, nothing to worry about! Praise the Lord! The doctor said the tumor has probably been on her bone since she was a child. The numbness she gets at times in her arm is probably caused by a nerve in her neck. He wants her to have physical therapy for 4 weeks. Also, he doesn't want her to stand in the patient's room to type in the chart, he wants her to sit at a desk. He will send a note requiring that if she needs it. That was our Christmas Miracle!

Highlighting the Laity



It all began when Jason was 15, and Annette was 14! Jason attended the Mt. Carmel Bible Methodist Church near Cincinnati, and Annette attended the Batavia Pilgrim Holiness Church where her parents have pastored for many years.

The God's Bible School College Choir was going to be ministering in music at Jason's church, and the Batavia church decided to dismiss their service so their people could attend, and that's when the sparks flew!

Annette says, "I would sneak glances at him during the service, and he would do the same! He was so handsome. He came up to me after the service and introduced himself. I didn't say very much because I was shy, but something sparked that night, and it has never stopped!"

I asked Ruth Hart (Annette's mother) to give us an inside glimpse into this fine young couple.

Jason and Annette Forsee are a wonderful Christian couple. They were married on May 13, 2000. They have been blessed with three children. Jason II (age 20),

Vanessa (age 14), and Dalton (age 9).

Jason II works for his Dad in Sheet Metal Construction and Iron work. It can be dangerous work as they go up a couple hundred feet or more in height.

Vanessa and Dalton go to Milford Christian Academy. It is a good Christian school. In the summer, Vanessa works for a lady doing odd jobs and makes very good money. All of the family like to hunt. They have two dogs, a Pit Bull, and a Cavalier King Charles Spaniel and two cats. They live in the country.

Annette has a cleaning business and also cares for a lady. She is very busy as she also does book work for Jason's business.

Annette is our song leader and also teaches the middle SS class. She has blessed us with many specials, and has been a great encouragement to many at the church. She tries to help those in need. She has a big heart and loves to give to others.

Jason is my husband's assistant, and is his right hand man. If there is anything that needs done he is there to help. He holds a service on Sunday mornings for the young adults, and is seeing new young people come in that wouldn't come otherwise. God is mightily using Jason.

He also preaches 2-3 times/month. He brings out good truth and everyone enjoys hearing him. If he sees something that needs to be done, he is there to lend a hand. Everyone loves Jason, Annette and the children. They have been a tremendous help to the church. God is using them in many ways and they have been a blessing to many people. They stand firm in their beliefs and do not waver. We can count on them at all times.





About Pilgrim News & Notes

Pilgrim News & Notes is the official publication of the Midwest Pilgrim Holiness Church, and is published bi-monthly.

The main goal of *Pilgrim News & Notes* is to be an encouragement to our readers as well as a source of information to those with connections or interests in our Conference.

All submissions are welcome, however, we reserve the right to edit as necessary to fit design and space needs. Not all submissions will be published.

Please email all submissions to the editor via the contact info below:

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A. W. Tozer Quotes Worth Thinking About . . .

Modern Worship seems to reflect the culture around us more than the Christ in us.

The Devil is a better Theologian than any of us, but he is still a Devil.

The church has adopted the false notion that much noise equals spirituality.

Promoting self under the guise of promoting Christ has become far too common.

Faith creates nothing . . . it simply notices that which is already there!