

**University Heights Church  
of Christ**  
445 Columbia Ave.,  
Lexington, KY 40508  
(859) 255-6257  
www.uheightschurch.com

**WORSHIP SERVICES**

**Sunday**

Bible Study: 9:45 AM

Worship: 10:45 AM; 6:00 PM

**Wednesday**

Bible Study: 7:30 PM (This is  
immediately followed by a  
short worship period)

**First Friday of Each Month**

Singing: 7:30 PM

**LEADERSHIP**

**Elders**

Garry Banks, David Collins,  
John Thompson

**Evangelist**

Adam Litmer

**Deacons**

Troy Antle, Richard Brundige,  
Matt Thompson, Adam  
Litmer, Bill Morelan, Jim  
Parsons, Pat Seabolt, Adam  
Daniels, Jamie Powell

**Adam's Office Hours**

Tuesday-Friday (8:30-4:00)

**A Suggestion**

Paul's pattern among new Christians was to enter their homes and teach them in that intimate setting (Acts 20:20). At the first saints met every day, either in the temple or in their homes, to praise God and learn more about Him (Acts 2:46). This day-to-day and house-to-house study led to a group of saints prepared to take the Word into the world when they were forced from their homes (Acts 8:1-4).

Here's the suggestion: begin studying with someone outside of the assembly on days other than Sunday or Wednesday. If you have a believing spouse you have a built-in study partner living right there in the same house. If you do not have a spouse willing to study with you, ask one of your fellow saints if they'd be willing to start a weekly study. I know several at this very congregation who would leap at the opportunity. Once you get one study started, try for two. Once you have two studies going, see if you can do a third. If you do this I promise the results will be thrilling. Pick a book, open your Bibles together, and dig in!

**Note**

There will be a meeting for the congregation this afternoon at 5.

**IN NEED OF PRAYERS**

Jeff Howerton, Rhonda Boyd, Paul Atkisson, Barbara Matheny, David Morrow, Debbie Parker, John Bennett, Robert Brundige, Donald Dawson, Gail Stein, Sandy Childress, Susie Burton, Jacob Profit, Valerie and Barry Boyd, Jannett's mother and stepfather, Sandy Driver, Erlene Young, Doris Baker, Bernard Larch, Burnice Richardson, Ruth Poynter, Janice Parsons, The Spivey family, the Dillard family, Cassie Neel, Larry Sells, The Knollman family, Christian Shadburne, Lynette Thomas, Mattie Johnson (hip replacement)

# University Heights Messenger

Volume 7--Number 24

June 14, 2015

## **The Awesome Power of Free Will**

John Thompson

God created us with an ability of enormous power. With the use of that power we determine our present and our future; with the use of it we can change the direction we are heading as indicated by our past; with the use of it we are influential in our interactions with others. Many times an individual uses that power without conscious thought; often one abdicates control of that power to others; seldom does one consciously, with forethought, harness that power and use it to achieve a goal of utmost importance. Hopefully, you are asking, "What is this power?" It is the power of free will.

Perhaps you never thought free will to be a powerful thing. But consider this: regardless of whatever happens to you; regardless of how you are treated by those around you; in spite of any kind of repressive government; even in the face of intense persecution we have the power of free will; we can choose our course of action. No man, no government, not even Satan can ever take away from another the power to choose. The best that a government can do is to limit one's choices; all Satan can do is to lie and deceive you that good choices are bad and evil choices are good.

I can think of no example that better illustrates the power of free will than that of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. They were in desperate straits, you will recall. Nebuchadnezzar was convinced his power would prevail and force those three young irritants to fall down and worship that golden image. As we go to Daniel 3, ask yourself this question, "Who was really in control of that situation?" First, the three young men chose not to do what the king commanded. They had the ability to say yes, they had the option of saying no, and they chose not to worship an idol. How powerful was that choice? It was powerful enough to bring perhaps the most powerful man on earth at that time to the point of rage. Some Chaldeans reported to Nebuchadnezzar, "*There are*

*certain Jews whom thou hast set over the affairs of the province of Babylon, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego; these men, O king, have not regarded thee: they serve not thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up. Then Nebuchadnezzar in his rage and fury commanded to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Then they brought these men before the king.”* (Daniel 3:12-13) Three lowly, foreign servants brought the most important man in the kingdom to the point of rage merely by the decision they made.

Surely the king’s power would prevail now that he could directly confront the three upstarts. With his rage barely under control, he offered them the final ultimatum, confident they would now succumb to his power and bow before the image. Not so! Those three godly young men choose a course of action that raised the level of the king’s anger to the boiling point. They said, *“O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up. Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury, and the form of his visage was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego: (Daniel 3:16-19)* There is no doubt that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego had complete control of their situation merely by choosing the course of action that was right in the sight of God.

Isn’t it remarkable that those three young men did not feel boxed in? The perceived no dilemma. They did not hem and haw, stammer, equivocate, or ask for more time to consider their answer. Nothing is said about them standing before the king, quaking in their sandals, cowering, groveling, begging or exhibiting any posture consistent with feeling powerless. Why did they have no fear? They had no fear simply because they knew they were in control, and they were in control because they were using their free will to make choices God would approve of.

We must never forget that we too can use our free will to make choices that are to our spiritual advantage. *And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.* (Joshua 24:15)

## **The Ancient Paths**

Adam Litmer

*“While we remain true to the principles on which we started out, there is no earthly power that can impede our progress. But the day we leave these walls and go out to take counsel with the world, will mark the day of our decline. We have nothing to fear from without. Our only danger lies in the direction of indifference and compromise. While we are true to God in the maintenance of these principles, the divine blessing will be upon our work. But should they ever be surrendered, ruin will certainly follow as that the Bible is true.”*

The preceding quote is from F.G. Allen. It can found in the January 23 edition of the *Gospel Advocate*, 1896. His words prove as true today as they did when he first penned them. *“Thus says the Lord: ‘Stand by the roads, and look, and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is; and walk in it, and find rest for your souls.’ But they said, ‘We will not walk in it.’”* Jeremiah 6:16

In the early to late 1800’s congregations of the Lord’s church were springing up like wild fire throughout this country. The plea was simple: Let’s go back to the New Testament and stand upon it alone. Let’s refuse to speak where it does not, but refuse to remain silent where it does. That biblical plea had been largely abandoned and when it was rediscovered it truly turned this country upside down (Acts 17:6).

Armed only with truth and a burning desire to see it defended, poorly educated Christians (and a few highly educated) ventured forth like whirlwinds to cast down and destroy the arguments of men of high educational attainment (2 Corinthians 10:4-5). Their opponents and detractors cried out, “How is this possible? They’ve not been to the Universities or Seminaries!” No, but they *had* sat at the feet of the Master Teacher and before long all their opponents recognized *“that they had been with Jesus”* (Acts 4:13b).

Sadly, many of the congregations that came into existence then began to cast longing looks at the world around them. Truth alone was no longer good enough. *Respectability* in the world and among its denominations became the order of the day. The distinctive plea was surrendered as they became like all the nations (1 Samuel 8:6).

Let us never surrender the plea to seek the ancient paths for only there will we find the truly good way.