

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

David Collins
John Thompson
Troy Antle

Evangelist

Adam Litmer

Deacons

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)

neighbors, who care about them—and they are grateful. We have treated them as we would be treated (Matthew 7:12). But is there not also a blessing to *God*? He is the God of the poor and considers what is done to them as good done to Him.

Finally, we will be judged by our own standards of compassion and mercy. We must never forget this. To the degree that we have pity on our fellow man, so God will have pity on us (Matthew 6:14-15; Proverbs 19:17; Ecclesiastes 11:1).

Let us pledge to put this psalm into practice—our own acceptance by God depends upon our doing so.

IN NEED OF PRAYERS

Jim Parsons, Julie Patton, Declan Weatherholt, Jaclyn Litmer, David Seabolt, Jeff Howerton, Rhonda Boyd, Nicholas Thompson, Louis Harrod, Paul Atkisson, Vicky Litmer, Sheila Lawson, Keia Burton, Robert Brundige, Susie Burton, Valerie and Barry Boyd, Janett's mother and stepfather, Sandy Driver, Erlene Young, Burnice Richardson, Ruth Poynter, Larry Sells, Evelyn Damron, Tony Tyree, Jennifer Dunbar, Jean Gartland, John Blessing, Alleen Terrell, the McDonald family, William Roberts, Kip Pearce, Paul Lyda, Fae Thomas

University Heights Messenger

Volume 9--Number 4

January 22, 2017

Ambitious? For What?

John Thompson

Without a doubt, ambitious people achieve more than those who are not ambitious. Ambition can be said to be the antidote to laziness or slothfulness, both of which are condemned in the Old and New Testaments. Ambition is “a strong desire to do or to achieve something, typically requiring determination and hard work” and involves setting and sticking to specific goals. Laziness is wrong categorically. Ambition can be just as wrong depending on what one desires to do and what essential responsibilities are ignored or neglected in going after those all-important goals. On the other hand, however, ambition is vitally important so that stagnation, mediocrity, regression, or any other repressive influence does not prevail.

I recently came across a Facebook posting from a most ambitious individual. He apparently does motivational seminars and states in his posting, “My goal these days is to get more than 7 billion people to hear my name constantly, know it when they hear it, and then when they think sales training and increased revenue, they think of me.” He goes on to say that all of the efforts of his company, all of its finances and resources, all of the decisions made should be devoted to “the goal of moving me in the direction of getting everyone on the planet to know about me, my products, my company, and my efforts.” His posting ends with a bit of encouragement for others to think big like he does, ending with “TAKE OVER THE PLANET WITH ME.” Although he indicates his goals may be unrealistic, he believes he can achieve more by aiming extraordinarily high than limiting himself right from the start.

The Bible has a great deal to say about ambition, both directly and indirectly. Mankind became ambitious almost right from the start. Eve,

upon hearing the Serpent say that by eating the forbidden fruit she would *be like God, knowing good and evil*, suddenly saw the fruit as something that would make her wise like God. At Babel the people ignored God's command to multiply and replenish the earth, choosing rather to congregate in one place with the purpose of making a name for themselves. Simon the sorcerer was ambitious in that he desired the power to impart spiritual gifts on others. Diotrefes was exceedingly ambitious desiring to rule the church. Ambitious people would do well to heed the caution given by Paul in Philippians 2:3, *Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves*. Therein lies the problem with ambition. Too often it becomes a selfish ambition that drives one to achieve for self at the expense of others.

But God does desire Christians to be industrious and not slothful. He is not opposed to ambition that achieves spiritual success. Carefully consider two passages that will help us to pursue godly goals: 1 Thessalonians 4:10-11 says *And in fact, you do love all of God's family throughout Macedonia. Yet we urge you, brothers and sisters, to do so more and more, ¹¹and to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life: You should mind your own business and work with your hands, just as we told you* (NIV). 2 Corinthians 5:9 says, *Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him*. (NASB) Is it your ambition to be known by everyone on the planet? Is your primary goal in life to achieve success as the world defines success? Or, are you ambitious to please God? Are you ambitious to serve others? Are you a parent ambitious to bring up your children in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord?" Are you ambitious to seek first the Kingdom of God? Our spiritual success depends upon how we answer those questions.

Snapshot of Psalm 41:1

Brent Lewis

"Blessed is the one who considers the poor! In the day of trouble the Lord delivers him." God intends for His children to remember the poor. Jesus clearly taught in Matthew 25:31-46 that we will be judged, in part at

least, by whether or not we have done this.

There will always be those who are poor and God has ever been concerned about them. When Jesus said in Mark 14:7, *"For you always have the poor with you,"* he only repeated that which God had said through Moses long before: *"For there will never cease to be poor in the land"* (Deuteronomy 15:11). The fact that there would always be poor who need to be cared for was treated by God in the above Old Testament passage with these words: *"Therefore I command you, you shall open wide your hand to your brother, to the needy and to the poor, in your land."* Christians have a similar responsibility. *"So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith"* (Galatians 6:10).

"Poor" is not necessarily limited to those who are in physical poverty. The word is footnoted in the ASV to mean "weak," and David had just finished the preceding psalm by calling himself "poor and needy." The word often means "weak, miserable, downcast." We must be helpful and compassionate to such people. Why?

First, it is our duty. Christians are to show insight, thoughtfulness, and practical brotherly kindness. Of course, we cannot relieve all needy people in the world. We must be discriminate. Our means are limited. We have other obligations (1 Timothy 5:8) for which God holds us responsible. So we have to act judiciously. But whatever we do should be done in a spirit of love. We must "consider" the poor—but we must do more than *just* consider (James 2:14-17; 1 John 3:16-18; Romans 12:10, 13).

Second, in doing this there will be a "blessing." First, a blessing will come to *us*. We simply cannot do good without being the better for it. Every act of true love and self-denial increases our dignity and strength. Notice James' statement in James 1:25-27 about the man who will *"be blessed in his doing."* There will certainly be a blessing to the *poor*. We have helped them in a time of need. They feel that they have not been forsaken, that someone actually cares. It gives them faith in God and in the people of God. They still have brothers and sisters in Christ, or

