



HILLSIDE MONTHLY DISPATCH

Hillside Baptist Church, Pembroke, NH

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Modeling the Truth of God's Word

October 2021

Read Works of Spiritual Value

From the Pastor's Desk

Ingesting Proper Spiritual Food

Philippians 4:8

Years ago when I went to college for ministry training, I had to take a Systematic Theology class. Sounds fun, right? Well actually it was fun, but really hard.

At the beginning of the semester when it came to our classroom introductions the Professor, who happened to be the new Dean of the newly redesigned Boyce College, asked us to share a little about ourselves. For the most part we all did our due diligence by giving our name, where we were from, why we were there, and what was our favorite thing to do. Let's just say that I was the foreigner among the group of very southern people.

I can't tell you exactly what I said, but I will never forget someone else's introduction. In his introduction, the young man declared that his favorite thing to do was to read systematic theology books. That's right, you read what I wrote correctly, he actually liked to read systematic theology books on his spare time. While the rest of us were in shock to such a claim, wondering if he was trying to get brownie points or telling the truth, the professor just stared at him with the biggest grin.

Looking the young man squarely in eye, the professor asked him if he heard correctly that he liked to read systematic theology books for fun, to which the man said yes with an even bigger smile in return. Without skipping a beat the professor looked at him and simply said, "You're crazy." To which the class laughed loudly, if for no other reason because of the class we were getting ready to start.

Over the years I have often thought of that moment and I will say that it comes up more than one might imagine in my life. I confess that I have read several systematic theology books, more than when I was in school, since the time that I graduated with my M. Div.

Many of you know that I have shelves of books just waiting for me to delve into and among them are several systematic theology books. I have read many of them, but I have a few to still tackle. Well this past week I picked up another volume, L. Berkof's *Systematic Theology*, revised fourth edition, 1941. As I grabbed it I thought of that day and I can hear that professor say to me "You're crazy."

Upcoming Events and Meetings

Oct. 3, 10:45 a.m. – Lord's Supper

Oct. 12 – Columbus Day (traditional)

Discovered America in 1492

Oct. 13 – U.S. Navy's Birthday

Oct. 31 – All Hallow's Eve

Weekly:

Sundays at 9:30 a.m. – Sunday School and Bible Discussion

Sundays at 10:45 a.m. – Worship Service

Tuesdays, 6:30 p.m. – Weekly Bible Study

Resumes on Oct. 5th.

It brings a smile to my face every time I think of it, because here I am reading systematic theology books, not because some syllabus for a class is making me, or some major paper that I have to write is driving me to do it, or even some need to bone up on a debate I might have in the near future. Nope, I am reading it just because I want to read it.

Just so you know I view it as the necessary part of the pastor's spiritual walk to remain fresh in the things of God's word and an aid to my personal spiritual development and well yes for fun as well.

As I was thinking about this book today I was wondering what members in our church read on a regular basis. What do you ingest with your eyes? What do you take into your heart with your reading? What do you allow to invade your spirit with the words you choose to read day-in and day-out? What we take into our hearts, minds, and spirit does in fact shape and mold us into who we are or into who we are going to be, so it is of vital importance to carefully guard yourself from that which is unhealthy, or unfruitful.

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On the web at <http://www.hillside-sbc.org>

Pastor's Desk (from p. 1)

There is a passage I would like to point to that will help guide you into what you should read, or take into yourself to decide what to choose for your spiritual food. The passage is in Philippians 4:8 in which Paul encourages them with these words: "Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things."

Obviously this passage points to more than just what you read. It hits what you look at, what you think about, what you allow to dominate your heart. It warns against allowing certain emotions to dominate your life, it warns against permitting certain individuals to have too much influence on your life, it cautions one to be careful in how one speaks.

All of this is true and is good for us to consider in our lives, but I want to focus on what you are reading. There are a lot of good books out there to read and there are a lot of not-so-good books out there as well. Some are worthy of your attention for such books challenge you, cause growth, and leave you better for reading it than if you never had the chance to read it. Then other books belong in the garbage bin and deserve no retrieval. What are you taking into your very being through your eyes, with your mind, driven by your desires?

We are encouraged by Paul the Apostle to dwell on the things that are true, honorable, right, pure, lovely, good repute, things of excellence, and things worthy of praise. Does this list guide you in what you choose to read? Does this list guide you in what you choose to engage with your intellect? Does this list drive you to be more cautious in what you decide to invest your time in?

We are called to a high fiber diet of proper spiritual food that is supposed to nurture us in our walk with Jesus. Daily reading of garbage is the spiritual equivalent of eating a lot of Twinkies, pizza, and fried dough. Sure it might taste pretty good, it might temporarily satisfy your cravings, it may even sustain you spiritually for short bursts, but it will never produce the kind of spiritual food that will truly get you through the tough times to come. Reading garbage books produces an inch deep and a mile wide chasm of surface fluff giving you no depth to guide you in your life.

You may be asking what one should read on a regular basis, well here is a little subject list to help guide you. Your primary text, you know the one that you can't step over or push aside, the one that has to be your go to everyday book, is the Bible.

Let me encourage you to find good devotionals, Sunday School books, journals by reputable Christian organizations. Find Bible based solid books on spiritual growth, prayer, and discipline. Find published books on sermons, read biographies on famous Christian men and women. And yes read books on things like core doctrines of the faith and systematic theology.

On a side note of personal preference, I would caution about reading too many fictional books, even if they are

"Christian." Most of the time fictional books are laden with fluff, easy "believism," and false theology that wrongly creeps into the mind as right theology. Besides, I've always held to the fact that I get enough fiction on TV and yes sometimes in real life as well.

I would like to encourage you to think about the list the Apostle Paul gives us from Philippians 4:8 and let it guide you towards the right things you choose to spiritually ingest in your life, that it will guide you to choose proper spiritual food for you growth in Christ and for your usefulness in the work of His kingdom and glory.

✠ Pastor Jim

Property and Space Patrol

Building and grounds: Because of the amount of rain in September, the lawn needed to be mowed once a week.

The attic of the parsonage was cleaned out and the extra insulation was installed.

During the first week in October the heating system in the parsonage basement will be updated.

Minor renovations will hopefully be done to the parsonage basement in the month of October.

The AWANA group plans to remove their equipment from the church within the next few months.

✠ Pastor Jim

Book Review

After finishing this enlightening and entertaining resource on the Bible, it seemed worth passing on this book review to you all. Our Daily Bread Ministries is most familiar for its monthly devotional booklet that it mails free of charge to anyone who requests it. Their publishing organization, Discovery House, offers many books and printed resources for believers and seekers alike.

The *Our Daily Bread Bible Sourcebook* explores the who, what, where, and wow elements of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. In 280 pages, author Dave Brannon, a senior editor for Discovery House, presents each book of the Bible in an easy to follow structure using the same topic headings for a consistent review.

Each Bible book begins with a **Top Ten** list of facts that relate to the author, the book, or the times in which it was written. For example, in Judges, the first item states that women played a key role in the book.

It then moves on to a set of **Ws**.

Who is about the author of the book. For Psalms, it lists David, Asaph, the sons of Korah, and several others.

What gives an overview or summary of the book.

When gives discusses the time period to give you a historical context. For Amos, the earthquake that is mentioned is thought to have occurred in 750 B.C.

Where gets into geography by explaining where the events of the book took place. The Book of Acts ranged from Jerusalem, through Asia Minor, and into Greece.

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Book Review, from p. 2

Why discusses the book's purposes and its main themes.

Wow! gives you some unique non-religious uses of the book as found in our culture. For 3 John, singer Johnny Cash wrote and performed a song called "My Children Walk in Truth" based on 3 John 1:4.

Worth Remembering quotes several valuable verses that might be worth memorizing.

Wonders from the Past gives a quick look at archeological discoveries that confirm the historical accuracy of the Scripture – not so much for believers as for refuting the criticism of non-believers. For Isaiah, in 2018 archeologists working near the Temple Mount found a "bullae" (used to press a seal) that contained the name Isaiah.

For the gospels, another topic is **What's Unique in This Gospel?** One instance in Matthew is the visit of the wise men (Matt. 2:1-12).

For a fresh, new look at the greatest book ever written, this guide is worth reading. To order a copy, go to <https://ourdailybreadpublishing.org/> and search for Bible Source Book.

✠ Michael Frascinella

Stay Focused on God

Here is a good story submitted by Cynthia Ward about staying focused on God

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A lady went to the Pastor and said, "I won't be attending church anymore."

He said, "May I ask why??"

She said, "I see people on their cell phones during the service, some are gossiping, some just ain't living right, they are all just hypocrites."

The Pastor got silent and he said, "Ok... But can I ask you to do something for me before you make your final decision?"

She said, "What's that?"

He said, "Take a glass of water and walk around the church two times and don't let any water fall out the glass."

She said, "Yes I can do that."

She came back and said "It's done."

He asked her three questions:

1. Did you see anybody on their phone?
2. Did you see anybody gossiping?
3. Was anybody living wrong?

She said, "I didn't see anything because I was so focused on this glass, so the water wouldn't fall."

He told her, "When you come to church, you should be just that focused on God, so that YOU don't fall. That's why Jesus said 'Follow me.' He did not say 'follow Christians.' Don't let your relationship with God be determined by how others relate with God. Let it be determined by how focused YOU are on God."

Birthdays and Anniversaries



Hillside wishes a happy, happy, happy birthday to the following people who are celebrating another orbit around the Sun:

10/1 Pastor Al Page



Hillside also wishes God's blessing on anyone who celebrates a wedding anniversary this month. If that is you, please let the editor know.

Tune in to Gospel Radio

In the Concord area, get more of God's Word by tuning into New Hampshire Gospel Radio at 99.1 FM or 104.3 FM. For example, on Saturday nights at 6 p.m. the locally produced "Saturday Night Gospel Hour" offers a wide variety of southern and country gospel music. During the week, tune into well known speakers such as Alistair Begg, Chuck Swindoll, Dr. David Jeremiah, and Dr. Jim Daly.

Learn more at <http://www.nhgr.org/>.

Prayer Requests

If you need us to pray for a physical, spiritual, financial, marital, or other need, contact Pastor Jim, Pastor Al, or Michael Frascinella and they will get the word out to the membership. It is our duty and privilege to lift you up in prayer to Jesus Christ our Lord.

Hillside on the Web

Go to the Hillside web site <http://www.hillside-sbc.org/> for more information about our fellowship, including this newsletter in PDF format.

Submissions for Next Issue

Deadline is Oct. 25. Send news items to News Wrangler and Editor, Michael Frascinella, mfrascinella at comcast dot net.



Hillside Baptist Church is a member of the Baptist Convention of New Hampshire, part of the Southern Baptist Convention.

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