



Richland Baptist Association Newsletter

December 2023

From Your Director of Missions (D.O.M.):

As we approach another season of celebrating our Lord leaving heaven to dwell among us, to live a sinless life, to illustrate to us the character and love of God His Father, to die on a cross at Calvary for my sins and yours, to be resurrected on the third day after His death to prove that there is life after death. Truly, we that have received Him as our Lord and Savior will be with Him and our Father for all eternity. That, Sisters and Brothers, is the true meaning and complete story of Christmas. Share it with everyone that you meet.

Eastside Baptist along with some others are hosting Caroling at the Cross on Saturday December 2, 2023 at 6PM. It will be at the Cross at the corner of Horn Road in Rayville. Come and enjoy an evening of fellowship and singing songs about our Savior's Birth.

Raymond Perrin, the Minister of Music at First Rayville and also one of our Associational Ministers of Music, along with First Baptist Rayville and other church choirs within our association, will be presenting a musical "Savior For All". What a blessing it was to attend such a wonderful presentation of the Gospel through music last year. This year is going to be a GREAT BLESSING TO ALL! It will be held at the Rayville Arts Center and will be presented on Saturday December 9, 2023 at 6PM and on Sunday December 10, 2023 at 5PM. Bring your family and your friends! This is a great outreach opportunity for your church. I look forward to seeing you there!

As we celebrate Christmas, may we keep Christ at the center of everything that we do. The world's greatest gift is not under a tree but was placed on a tree over 2,000 years ago. My Christmas Prayer is that all non believers come to know our Christ as their Savior and Lord.

Thank all of you for the privilege of serving our Lord and You! What a Joy!

Pat and I want to wish each of you a Very Merry Christmas. Our Lord gave us a very special gift when he gave each of you to us to become part of our family.

Johnny

Upcoming Events for the Month of December 2023

- Dec. 01: Pastors/Staff (Wives/Husbands) Christmas Party 6:00 PM
- Dec. 02: Caroling at the Cross 6PM @ Cross behind I-20
- Dec. 03-10: Lottie Moon Week of Prayer
- Dec. 05: Richland Encampment Meeting 6PM @ Richland Encampment
- Dec. 09: "A Savior for All" Musical Presentation @ Rayville Arts Center 6PM
- Dec. 10: "A Savior for All" Musical Presentation @ Rayville Arts Center 5PM
- Dec. 25: Christmas Day! (Celebrate Christ becoming flesh with your family)
"The Word became flesh and dwelt among men!"
Hallelujah What a Savior! Merry Christmas!

Upcoming Events for the Month of January 2024

- Jan. 01: Happy New Year!
- Jan. 09: Pastor and Staff Conference and Luncheon 11 AM @ Big John's
- Jan. 21: Sanctity of Human Life Sunday
- Jan. 21: Richland Association Pulpit Exchange
- Jan. 22-23: LBC Evangelism Conference @ Temple in Ruston

[READ MORE ON OUR WEBSITE](#)

Opportunities to Serve

Pastor: Beouf River Baptist
Bethel Baptist
First Baptist Rayville
Lone Cherry Baptist
Newton Baptist
Westside

Youth Minister: Alto Baptist

**If you have a need in your church, please let us know and we will post it in the Monthly Newsletter.*

Something to Think About...

How do you break an addiction to something that either is or has become necessary for life or quality of life?

The most classic example of this would be overeating in the form of food addiction. While except in extreme cases, the drug or alcohol addict does not require their addiction “to live/survive”, the person addicted to food is not able to completely cold turkey give up their addiction. It is necessary for life so we don’t tend to treat food addiction like other addictions because one can generally not give it up completely.

In terms of a spiritual discipline (prayer, bible study, meditation, worship, etc.) antidote, what would be the “cold turkey” antithesis of food addiction? ... FASTING. In fact, while extremely difficult scripture points to the same things:

3 Then the tempter approached him and said, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.” 4 He answered, “*It is written: Man must not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.*”
-Matthew 4:3-4 HCSB

Context: Jesus was in the midst of a FORTY DAY FAST! In His physical weakened condition, He is tempted to satiate the cravings of His physical body. While it is scientifically true that the physical body must eat to sustain life, it is spiritually true that those given the breath of life from the Creator God are sustained and held together by something greater than flour and water. (NOTE: Do not endanger your life by going on an extended fast on a whim. Unless God is drawing and calling you to such a thing, do not attempt a fast of more than a day or two without medical supervision from a trusted Christian physician lest they be confused at your desire.)

Why all this talk of addiction vs. fasting? Because we are facing a similar war against spiritual discipline on another front that we are rapidly losing in a newer quality of life addiction. We have all taken potshots at digital devices, social media, and those addicted to them. Have we ever considered the battle many of these are facing is almost akin to the addiction that some experience with food? I won’t go so far as to say this is exactly the same as the necessity of food for the physical body. However, to those trapped in this dopamine addiction, it is most definitely a “quality of life” addiction. While we would be tempted to say prescribe cold turkey to break the addiction, many are unable in their spiritual weakness to have the kind of fortitude of mind and will to endure such a fast since this dopamine addiction is right there in the physical side of the mind, their brain.

So if a cold turkey fast isn’t the spiritual discipline remedy, what could be the answer here? Another spiritual discipline that we have largely ignored in our modern society is that of SLOWING DOWN. While we have been sleeping the world has continued to increase the frenetic pace that wars against slowing and meditation. Compare how quickly the camera angle shifts in television programs from older classics to more modern day shows. YouTube itself felt the pressure to add Shorts due to things like Instagram and Facebook reels and TikTok videos where the MAXIMUM LENGTH is 90 seconds (1 minute and a half). However, their most successful videos are generally between 15-30 seconds. How are you going to convey the gospel or disciple people with a 15-90 second max attention span through a 30-45 minute sermon? That kind of change is not gonna happen via a cold turkey fast. They are going to have to slowly be weaned off of that dopamine craving through the spiritual discipline of SLOWING so that they can:

“Be still (stop striving, stop fighting) and know (recognize, understand) that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations! I will be exalted in the earth.”
-Psalm 46:10 AMP

It is no wonder the oft-quoted verse of 2 Timothy 4:3 says a “time will come when they will not ENDURE sound doctrine”. Did we ever stop to think that it might not be the content as much as it is that they can not listen that long! The same word for tolerate also means ENDURE in that verse. It also uses “itching ears” to describe a hungry impulsiveness that can’t wait. Sounds like dopamine addiction to me!

- Jonathan Young

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