

God's Plan of Salvation:

1. Hear - Romans 10:17
2. Believe - Mark 16:16
3. Repent - Acts 2:38
4. Confess - Romans 10:10
5. Be baptized - Acts 22:16
6. Live faithfully - Revelation 2:10

Announcements:

Sick: Mrs. Calvert, Ms. Dannels, Mr. and Mrs. Hadley, Mrs. Kelly Hall, Mrs. Elizabeth Jackson, Ms. Kim (Ashley Law's mother), Lamar Mathis, Mr. and Mrs. Pete Newsome, Mr. Winns.
Out of Town: Jared Law and family.

If you would be interested in any of the following ways to study the Bible, feel free to let us know:

- Home Bible Study - We will come into your home or other place you feel comfortable and study the Bible with you. Bible questions are welcome in these studies and we will seek to give a Bible answer.
- Correspondence courses - We will be glad to mail you a correspondence lesson that you can fill out and mail back to us and we will send you the next lesson.
- Call us with your Bible question - #503-707-6014.
- Visit our website:
www.oakgrovechurchofchristjenningsflorida.com
- Come and visit - We always strive to have good, practical Bible instruction at each of our assemblies.

Oak Grove Church of Christ Bulletin

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“Early”

By Derek Long

It is common to hear about people getting up early to do something they are eager and excited about doing. People may wake up early in the morning to go hunting or fishing. If we do something “early,” it may indicate it is important to us or we place a high priority upon getting it done. In the Bible, we read of things people did “early.”

Genesis 20:8 tells us, “So Abimelech rose early in the morning, called all his servants, and told all these things in their hearing; and the men were very much afraid” (NKJV). God had told Abimelech in a dream Sarah was Abraham's wife and he needed to restore her to Abraham. Abimelech did not delay to make the necessary corrections in his life. If we find ourselves guilty of sin, we need to make the necessary changes “early” and not delay to rid ourselves of sin.

Genesis 22:3 says, “So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and he split the wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him” (NKJV). God gave a command to Abraham to offer his beloved son Isaac as a burnt offering. Abraham did not procrastinate about doing what God commanded him to do. Instead, he rose early to head out to obey the command of God. Do we rise early to obey God's commands even if they involve us doing something which seems unpleasant?

Exodus 32:6 gives us an example of people who did evil early. It says, “Then they rose early on the next day, offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat

and drink, and rose up to play” (NKJV). We can see the zeal for wickedness in these individuals from the fact they would rise early to engage in worship to a golden calf. Are we people who cannot get excited about the service of God but we can get excited and get up early to engage in some sinful practice?

1 Samuel 15:12 says, “So when Samuel rose early in the morning to meet Saul, it was told Samuel, saying, ‘Saul went to Carmel, and indeed, he set up a monument for himself; and he has gone on around, passed by, and gone down to Gilgal’” (NKJV). God was displeased with Saul for his failure to utterly destroy the Amalekites. Samuel would be sent by God to rebuke Saul for his disobedience. Samuel rose “early” to go and speak to Saul about his sin. When people are in sin and need correction, do we rise early to seek to bring them back or do we put off talking to them about their need to change?

Job 1:5 tells us of the actions of Job, “So it was, when the days of feasting had run their course, that Job would send and sanctify them, and he would rise early in the morning and offer burnt offerings according to the number of them all. For Job said, ‘It may be that my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts.’ Thus Job did regularly” (NKJV). Job was concerned about the spiritual well being of his family. He would rise early to offer sacrifices for his children in case they had cursed God in their hearts. Do we place a similar priority upon the spiritual welfare of our families as Job did?

Psalms 63:1 describes the attitude of the Psalmist, saying, “O God, You are my God; early will I seek You; my soul thirsts for You; my flesh longs for You in a dry and thirsty land where there is no water” (NKJV). Do we like the Psalmist seek God early? Is our longing for God comparable to the longing a thirsty person would have for water? Isaiah 26:9 also speaks of seeking God early.

Psalms 101:8 tells of what the Psalmist would do. It says, “Early I will destroy all the wicked of the land, that I may cut off all the evildoers from the city of the Lord” (NKJV). In his zeal for God, here is a person who would rise early to deal with those in sin. While we today may not punish sin by death, do we have a similar attitude toward sin?

Isaiah 5:11 pronounces condemnation upon some based on what they do early, “Woe to those who rise early in the morning, that they may follow intoxicating drink; who continue until night, till wine inflames them!” (NKJV). Here are people who pursue intoxicating drink from early morning till late at night. God condemns such people. Let us make sure we are not among those who go after intoxicating drinks or substances.

Jeremiah 25:3 records for us how Jeremiah reminds the people, “From the thirteenth year of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah, even to this day, this is the twenty-third year in which the word of the Lord has come to me; and I have spoken to you, rising early and speaking, but you have not listened” (NKJV). Jeremiah reminds the people he has been telling them the word of God for several years but they have refused to listen. Jeremiah risen early to speak to the people. Do we rise early to speak God’s word to people who need to hear it?

Mark 16:2; Luke 24:1, 22; John 20:1 speak about women coming to the tomb of Jesus early on the first day of the week. These women were coming with spices to finish preparing the body of Jesus. The fact they came early speaks of their love and concern for Jesus. Here was a task they felt was important and they were not going to wait for extra time to pass before accomplishing it. Of course, when they come to the tomb they find it is empty because Jesus had risen from the dead.

Acts 5:21 tells how after the apostles had been imprisoned for preaching the word, were released, and told by God to teach again, “When they heard that, they entered the temple early in the morning and taught” (NKJV). The apostles go back early in the morning to continue teaching as God instructed them. Would we rise early to obey the commandment of God if we had just suffered persecution for doing the thing God had told us to do? Do we have enough zeal to spread God’s word that we are willing to get up early in the morning to teach it without facing a threat of persecution?

Hopefully these thoughts will cause us to examine what we are eager to do and help us become more eager to serve the Lord!