

# Pastor's Pen

Stay Focused!

***"Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth." Colossians 3:2***

Let's face the truth. It is not easy to stay focused sometimes when it comes to living for Christ. We can easily be distracted by things of this world. However, as children of the King, we must stay focused on what matters.

When I was hired by the Richmond Bureau of Police in 1978, I was 21 years of age and had never shot a pistol in my life. The academy was in the basement of the Mosque (currently named the Altria Theater). We used an indoor range to qualify with our pistols. To qualify, you had to have a score of 70%. During the first week, we shot every day, and everyone qualified except me. I never shot above 55%. The academy sergeant took me aside and said, "You're not focused, Wells. You think this a joke, that it is some sort of a game?" He then told me that when I came to work in the morning, I was to come early so I could qualify. If I did not, I would be terminated. I was devastated. Since high school, I have wanted to be a police officer. He told me to go home and focus on my trigger pull. He said my problem was that I was jerking the trigger. I went home, and all I did all evening was stand in front of a mirror with my unloaded six-shot Smith and Wesson revolver and practice squeezing the trigger instead of jerking the trigger. The next day, just the sergeant and I were at the range. I was so nervous that I was sweating. I stayed focused and squeezed the trigger. I barely qualified with a score of just over 70%.

Too many times as Christians, we don't focus on what really matters when it comes to living our Christian faith. We are told not to "jerk the trigger," and yet we think we know better. If we keep focused on what matters, we will understand that our lives are all about glorifying God. We must remember in this life, Christians don't win. We are called to deny ourselves, take up our cross daily, and follow Christ (Luke 9:23). We need to understand that the world will hate us and persecute us if we live for Christ (John 15:18-20). Family members will turn against you ( Luke 21:16-18). However, we must stay focused on our walk with Christ.

By setting our mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth we remind ourselves that our ultimate goal is our glorification. When we see our Savior face to face, when we sin no more, and spend eternity with the One who died to set us free, none of the suffering will compare to the glory that awaits us.

***"For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us." Romans 8:18***

Stay focused Christian, fight the good fight, run the race until the Lord returns or calls you home.

Your shepherd,

Pastor Mark

## Quote of the Week

"The Christian is a man who can be certain about the ultimate even when he is most uncertain about the immediate."  
-Martyn Lloyd-Jones

# Grace Gems

The joys of that eternal banqueting house!-John MacDuff

***"He brought me to the banqueting house, and His banner over me was love!" Song of Solomon 2:4***

"HE brought me!" All of grace! He justifies! He glorifies! The banqueting house is entered with shoutings, saying, "Grace, grace unto it!"

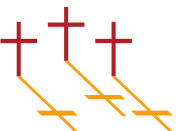
Believer, contemplate the journey ended, the course finished, the victory won. Seated at the marriage feast of the Lamb in glory, guest talking to guest with bounding hearts—recounting their Lord's dealings on earth—the watchword circulating from tongue to tongue, "He has done all things well!"

Angels and archangels, too, will be participants in that banquet of glory; and bright seraphs, who never knew what it was to have a heart of sin or to shed a tear of sorrow. But, for this reason, there will be one element of joy peculiar to the Redeemed, into which the other unfallen guests cannot enter—the "joy of contrast." How will this present world's "great tribulation" augment the bliss of a world at once sinless and sorrowless! How will earth's woe-worn cheek, and sin-stricken spirit, and tear-dimmed eye—enhance the glories of that perfect state, where there is not that symbol of sadness, nor the solitary trace of one lingering tear-drop!

My soul, seek often to ponder, in the midst of your days of sadness, the joys of that eternal banqueting house! "He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain!"

One moment at that banquet table,  
one crumb of the heavenly manna,  
one draught from the river of life,  
and all the bitter experiences of the valley of tears will be obliterated and forgotten!

Look upwards even now, and behold your dear Lord preparing for you this glorious "feast of fat things!" "Do not be troubled. There are many rooms in My Father's home, and I am going to prepare a place for you. When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with Me—where I am!"



# Weekly Gatherings

## Bible Classes

Old & New Testament Classes  
Ladies Class  
Young Adults    Young Parents  
Youth                Surge  
Sunday Morning @ 9:30AM

## Weekday Meetings

Mondays | 7PM Men's Bible Study  
1st and 3rd Saturday  
Women of Grace | 9AM  
Wednesdays | 6:30PM AWANA

## Family Groups

Thursdays @ 7PM  
Please check church website  
for start date and directions to each

## Build the Body Teams

If you would like to serve on a BtB Team  
and need to sign up, please contact the  
team leader at the appropriate email  
address on the back of this bulletin.

## Youth Study

Wednesdays @6:30PM  
Youth Study & Surge!

## Service Times

Sunday Services 8AM & 11:00AM  
Sunday School 9:30AM  
Children's Church @11:00AM

Giving from service on 12/31/2023

General Offering .....	8,005.00
Building Fund .....	5,959.68
Uganda Missions .....	1,412.00

Total.....\$15,376.68  
Attendance ..... 190

## Build the Body Ministries

Women's Ministry-women@ghbcva.org  
AWANA-awana@ghbcva.org  
Outreach Ministry-outreach@ghbcva.org  
Worship Ministry-worship@ghbcva.org  
Men's Ministry-men@ghbcva.org  
Children's Ministry-children@ghbcva.org  
Youth Ministry-youth@ghbcva.org  
Prayer Team-prayer@ghbcva.org  
Maintenance-maintenance@ghbcva.org  
Fellowship-fellowship@ghbcva.org  
Communications-communications@ghbcva.org  
Front Line-frontline@ghbcva.org  
Security-security@ghbcva.org



Grace Harvest  
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# Grace Harvest Baptist Church

Jan 07, 2024

Welcome