

Scott's Thoughts by Scott Deneen, Pastor to Youth and Families

God is not a toaster. Yes, that's right... God is not a toaster. But what do I mean by that? Just this: When we want toast, we need a toaster, but it's the toast we want. We need the toaster, however, to get the thing we want – toast. We don't want a toaster just to have a toaster; we want a toaster in order to have the thing we want – toast.

And God is not a toaster. He is not the "thing" we need in order to get the thing we want; rather, he should be the "thing" we want. Confused? Let me explain...

When we treat God as a Santa Claus in the sky, we treat Him like a toaster – a means to get what we really want – money, security, acceptance, etc.. When we take our list to Him and ask Him to give us earthly desires, then we treat God like a toaster.

Is there a better way? Yes. God is the highest and greatest Being, and a diligent, passionate, single-minded pursuit of Him is the most worthwhile endeavor anyone could have. Listen to Paul's words from Philippians 3: **"I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings.... Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me."**



Paul wanted to know Jesus and, therefore, got rid of every obstacle between him and Jesus. Jesus was Paul's treasure and Paul gave up everything in order to have Jesus – and it was no big deal for Paul to give up everything because everything else was garbage compared to Jesus.

Think of it this way: whatever is of the most value to you will get your fullest attention, all your affection, and you will seek to own it if at all possible. Whatever you love the most will be sought, bought, preserved, and protected; and all efforts/expenses will be effortless because the prize is worth it.

That's how Paul thought of Jesus. Jesus was worth everything to Paul so Paul gave up everything – possessions, vocation, health, status, accolades, accomplishments, etc –to have Him. And Paul saw everything he gave up as garbage compared to having more of Jesus.

What do you value? What do you day-dream about? What do you spend your time/money/talent on? That's your god, that's what you worship/love/adore. And if you constantly ask God to have "it" you're treating Him like a toaster – and God is NOT a toaster! Rather, **seek God in order to have more of God** – He's that satisfying!!

Upcoming Youth Events

Youth Group

Middle & High School

Sunday Nights

Bible Study
6:00 - 7:30pm

Wednesday Nights

Open Gym, Eat Out, etc.
6:30 - 8:00pm

Children's Ministry

Infant - 5th grade

Sunday Nights

Nursery

Infant - 2 yrs.
6:00 - 7:30pm

M&M Kids

Mission Minded
3 yrs. - 4 yrs.
6:00 - 7:30pm

Imagebearers

Kindergarten - 5th grade
6:00 - 7:30pm

Kids ask tough questions...

At the basketball skills clinic, players were given an "Open Mike" opportunity to ask our pastors a question. Here's one answered by Pastor Dave.

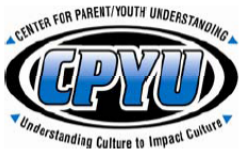


Q. How is someone saved to get into heaven?

A person is saved and will go to heaven when they put their trust in Jesus Christ by believing He is the God-man who came, suffered, lived and died to pay God for his or her sin.

One is not saved by being good or doing good things - one is saved **ONLY** by trusting in Jesus. No one can be good enough in their own strength or "goodness" to please God. Only Jesus can please God. Trust in Him and He'll take you home!

The Philippian jailer asked Paul and Silas, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved..." (Acts 16:30-31)



There are many things in life that I've prayed my teens would never do. Included are premarital sex, pornography use, substance abuse, gambling, and a whole lot more. But if my kids get through the teenage years having evidenced conformity to these behavioral standards, can I count myself as a successful parent? Maybe not.

In Mark 7 we find a story about Jesus and an encounter he had with some Pharisees and teachers of the law. A debate ensued as these leaders had seen the disciples of Jesus eating food with unwashed hands. What followed was some eye-opening corrective teaching from Jesus about the difference between conformity to outward behavioral standards and rules, as opposed to behaviors that flow out of hearts bent on relational closeness to God.

Whenever I read this passage I am reminded of the fact that while behavioral conformity might look nice, I should ultimately be concerned with the heart condition of my kids. If I am taking the time to prayerfully and deliberately nurture my children's hearts, there's a better chance that their behavior won't be driven by conformity to my expectations, but by willing conformity to the will of the One who lives in them and through them.

Are you satisfied to passively sit back and let your kids just grow up because they are conforming to your behavioral hopes and expectations? Or, are you tuned in to the fact that the human heart is dark beyond all imagination and that your parental calling and responsibility is to nurture that heart with God's Word?

Ephesians 2:8

For it is by
grace you have
been saved,
through faith-
and this not
from yourselves,
it is the gift
of God-



Photos compliments of Malcolm Mize



Presenting Everyone Complete in Christ

Sunday Morning

8:30 Worship Service

9:45 Sunday School

11:00 Worship Service

Sunday Evening

6:00 Care Groups

Youth Activities

Call us at 704.263.4275

Visit us online at

www.fpcstanley.org

Team Rosters
Game Schedule
Parent's Corner