

From: Smelser [mailto:sbsmelsers@comcast.net]

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GOOD NEWS: PROGRESS, AND A DOOR OF OPPORTUNITY

My friend Joshua recently arrived back in the US from West Africa. If you recall, Joshua is a Presbyterian minister in Liberia who I met through his son last year. We had been begun a study on Romans (a very important text regardless, but especially so when studying with a Calvinist), and he had also been attending with us both Sundays and midweek before needing to return to Liberia.

Well, we restarted our studies today, and I expected us to get back into our study on Romans. But Joshua had other things on his mind. First, he told me of friction in Liberia which led to ties being severed with some other teachers (perhaps providential?), and he asked if I could provide study material to go back to Liberia, in place of the Westminster (as in Westminster Confession, Creed of the Presbyterians) curriculum that they had been using before.

Also, rather than returning to Seminary classes now that he was back here, as had been his prior intention, he decided instead that he should continue to study with me. He said being with us "has been good for me," that he believes I am teaching truth, and that God's will is in this.

We spoke together, and agreed, about the importance of relying on God's Word as authoritative above us all (**Acts 17:11, John 8:31; John 10:4-5**), and I noted how the Westminster Confession (just like the WatchTower and other writings) has no apostolic authority. We then began discussing the TULIP of Calvinism, which of course he had studied, and I pointed out that one fault of Calvinism is the exaggerated addition of false adjectives in front of the first four nouns in TULIP. For obviously there is grace, there is atonement, there is election, and there is depravity. But Calvinism falls into error when it declares depravity to be "total," election to be "unconditional," atonement to be "limited," and grace to be "irresistible."

We looked at two examples tonight:

(A.) Instead of atonement being limited, Jesus died "for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world. (**1 Jn. 2:1-2**),

(B.) Instead of "total depravity" [i.e.; inability to do anything good or even desire anything good, but "only and always sinning" (cf. E. Palmer, see below)], we see Cornelius having done both evil and good. Obviously he needed salvation (**Acts 11:14**) because of sins (**Acts. 10.43**). But that didn't mean he was incapable of doing or even desiring good, for the text makes clear that Cornelius respected God and he was commended by the angel of God for prayers and his charity (**Acts 10:1-4**). It's not our good deeds that we need to be saved from, it's our *sins* we need to be saved from (**Matt. 1.21**). Joshua saw the point.

I used the definition of Total Depravity from my preferred tool for showing what TULIP stands for: The Five Points of Calvinism, by the Calvinist theologian, Edwin Palmer (the author cited above). While being very wrong about Scripture, Palmer is very clear and bold about Calvinism, which is why the book is so helpful in exposing the errors. Palmer is no offhand writer either, he was the Executive Secretary of the NIV, and General Editor of the NIV Study Bible. So when you compare Scripture with the clear nonsense and heresy in the book, it is a powerful way to study and refute Calvinism.

I also offered to return to Romans if he would prefer that, but Joshua said this topic was very important, and while he had studied TULIP before, he had studied it "only from one angle." So next time we will begin by comparing chapter 1 (T), in Palmer's book of TULIP, with Scripture. Please pray for my friend Joshua - that he will continue to seek, and have the courage to apply what he sees both in life and in teaching. Joshua is a kind and good man in his 60's. You would like him.

BIG CHANGE: Chase Byers, the young evangelist from KY that I invited to help me with the work when it first started, has accepted an invitation to move to Indiana at the end of the year. Chase and Rebecca have been a real asset to the work here, and will be missed. But the particular church they are going to sounds like a unique and good opportunity, and they especially want someone to help with evangelism,

which is what Chase will want to do. It will also put Chase and Rebecca closer to both their families, which will also be a blessing. We appreciate their time and work here and wish them well! This will leave Stephen Rouse and myself as coworkers here, and will also give more room for other men to be more active in teaching, which is also a good thing.

PARENTING FROM PROVERBS:

For some time now I've been doing a series on child training (close to 50x), mostly in the US and some in Europe. In September I was privileged to do it again with the good brethren in Westfield IN and then the following week at Broadmoor in Nashville. Both good groups, both with good kids and good parents. The former is a smaller church doing well, and the latter is a larger church doing well.

This was my second time doing the series at Broadmoor, the last time was a dozen years back. They continue to be in a blessed position. They have growth, unity, good leadership, and about 70-80 kids. The front rows were full of young ladies, mostly adolescent. They pay good attention, sing beautifully, and are very encouraging. One of the things I noticed years ago, but had not originally expected, was that this topic isn't just interesting to parents - kids really like it. They really listen, and no doubt relate to various anecdotes, and they value good homes. I'd been handed sermon notes during the series, but on the last night, several kids came up with thank you notes. It was a joy to be with them, and I commend that group, those kids, and those parents.



OTHER STUDIES AND CONTACTS:

Last Wed. night I was pleased to see all three of the following at Bible class: Joshua (from Liberia), his friend Maurice (who recently left a Baptist church), and my neighbor across the river, Monte. All of these men are 60 and older, whereas many studies have been with younger people. Sunday morning we had Joshua and Maurice again. Monte often comes on Wed. only.

One night in September, at a Walmart in another city, I saw the young homeless man I worked with so long the first year, and who used to provide me so many study opportunities. I was very pleased to see he was finally holding a real job again, and I congratulated him. Unfortunately, shortly afterwards he quit. Sad. I, on the other hand, need to get out and get more studies - since he was my main source of studies, and those had mostly dried up. Recently I've started doing some street work again, but I should have started back on that earlier. I did have a recent conversation on the street that I hope will bear fruit: a couple ladies from the "Jehovah's Witnesses." I spoke with them about the resurrection of Christ. Some Witnesses don't know this, but JW doctrine is that the human body of Jesus never rose from the dead. He was raised in spirit they say, but never was his body raised. His physical appearances in human form, they say, was like angels appearing as men, but it was not his crucified body. This is fully contradicted of course by a.) the empty tomb, b.) by **Lk. 24:37-43**, showing them his hands and feet, c.) showing the nail holes to Thomas (**Jn.20**), and d.) **John 2:19-21**. ("he spoke of his body." They had not heard this. As I spoke with them, one agreed that the Bible makes it clear he rose in his body. As I told them that was not JW teaching, she said that would be "concerning" to her if they denied that. So I encouraged them to check that out. I gave them my contact info, and I know the area they reach out at, so I hope to see them there again.

I also got a new study with Ryan, a college student I met at the Y. We met for a study with him wanting to know what the Bible said about homosexuality. He was under the impression that different versions of the Bible said different things, and hence the different positions from different churches. After reading the actual texts, of course, he saw the Scripture very clearly condemns it. I explained to him the nature of theologically liberal churches, and their general rejection of so much of what the Scriptures actually say. We are in touch, and are to get together again after midterms. Looking forward to studying with him again. My studies also continue with Zach, the 19 year old. He studies with me and my 17 year old son Lukas. [*Sidenote: Lukas has been doing very well. I've enjoyed hearing him speak and also teach one adult class at church. He's a good young man and does a good job.*].

Other studies and attempted studies: I've been told by a couple of guys at Reservoir Park that we can get together, but that actually happening continues to be evasive. But hey, maybe sometime - and if they will

get into the Word once, it makes it more likely they will again.

Also, back in Adams county studies continue in Acts with Kim, and with neighbors Ed & Tara, along with Dan Bunting helping there.

LASTLY:

We had a good crowd this past Sunday, pointing again to the need to get extra space. Work is already going on in a larger part of the building, and we should be in there by November or December. This location is good because it is central, it is in a safe area (by the river), and it includes a free parking lot (very important in the city). The landlords offered to pay for the renovation of our new and larger meeting space, but they wanted a 9 year lease. Having filled our small area in a little over a year from our last lease, we don't want to limit our selves for the next 9 years, so we negotiated instead that we would pay for the renovations ourselves, in exchange for a low rental rate at on a shorter lease. It will be expensive up front (35K plus), but will give us what we need now without tying us down for too long in a rental.

that's all for now, thank you so much for your prayers, your interest, and your support!

your brother,

Scott

717 321 3321

www.3minutebiblestudy.com

p.s. Due to some support being ltd to the first 12 months, support is down, and may be down more at the end of Dec. But we are fine for now, and increased income from the local church here helps cover some of the external decrease, as is good. Thanks!

thank you notes & sermon notes from Broadmoor kids

