

The Pastor's Pen

Several years ago I learned that October and November is band festival season. I had always thought Saturday afternoons in the fall were reserved for college football games and everybody watched college football. Boy, was I wrong. When Josh became a freshman member of the Betsy Band, I learned there are other activities on Saturday afternoons in the fall. With Natalie in her third year in the band, I am continuing to learn about band festivals. We are currently in the midst of the festivals with the state championship just around the corner.

I had a lot to learn about band festivals. I had to learn why they are conducted, for whom, and how to win or succeed (after all, you've got to try to win something on these afternoons). I learned band festivals are opportunities for the bands to perform before peers, parents, and appreciative audiences. I learned that band festivals have judges that critique every part of the band's performance, so technically these events are band competitions. I learned trophies are given out to the winners.

What I have struggled to learn is how the judges decide which band is better when all the bands seem good to me. I can understand a band not winning when the band can't march in unison, can't play "Rocky Top," or the color guard can't catch all those things they throw up in the air. But, when all the bands are good, don't make blatant mistakes, and have obviously worked hard on their craft, I don't understand what makes the difference. How do they decide the winner?

Somewhere along the line it must come down to personal preference and what the judges like. So, if you are going to please the judge, it would be smart to know what the judge wants to see.

When I read the Bible, I understand someday we, too, will be judged. There will be a final review of our lives. But unlike the band festival judges, our final judge tells us what He is looking for in our life's performance. He looks first for a relationship with Himself established by grace through faith. Beyond that, He looks for a life that brings Him glory.

In John 15:8, Jesus said, "By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples." He proceeds to outline what that fruit would look like: love one another (v. 12), keep Christ's commandments (v. 14), and abide in Christ's love (v. 9). The essence of our judgment will be in those 3 areas: loving each other, living out the commandments of Christ, and loving Christ.

So, how are you doing in your life's performance? Maybe you won't win a championship or a trophy, but you might win a crown—the crown of life (James 1:12). And what will we do with that crown—display it like a trophy? I don't think so. I think we will join with the elders and lay our crowns at the feet of Jesus in the throne room of heaven. (Rev. 4:10). And when we do, we will join our voices with every creature to glorify our God. What a festival it will be!

Together in His Service,
Brother Joe

Mark's Madness

Can you hear the sound of Christmas music in the distance or see a glare of lights through your car window? If you can it can mean only one thing, Speedway in Lights is back for our eighth year. Once again we will need people to help with greeting, selling tickets, directing and parking cars. Even Santa will need help in his village. What a great time of fellowship with other church members. Did I mention the perks: like standing out in the freezing cold rain, eating free food, and drinking lots of hot chocolate and/or coffee and talking to someone that you may not know that well. If this sounds like fun to you, IT IS. If you don't have anything to do on Monday nights starting November 21st - January 2nd, please come and join us for a great time. We will need at least 17 volunteers for each of these nights. I know that definitely seems like a lot of nights to sacrifice, but the fellowship with other members is PRICELESS. God has used the Speedway in Lights to bless the youth these past eight years. We would not have been able to have this privilege without the help of those who volunteer. If you are interested please see Mark to sign up. Once again we will be taking a van from the church; we will leave at 5:00pm. Thank you again for your help.



We will be having a volunteers meeting Sunday, November 6, after the morning worship service.

Running the Race,
Mark Hebrews 12:1~3

Preschool Little Bits

It's been unusually quiet in our section. Preschool now has the lowest number of children we've had in years. The desire and prayer of Preschool teachers and Preschool Council is to reach young families and have our classes bustling with children again.

We're being blessed to see God at work answering our prayers. The Humphreys family has recently joined our church and they have a vivacious preschool boy named Hayden. Last week we had a young family visit bringing a beautiful 4-year-old girl and they indicated they would be back.

With so many class changes and Extended Session volunteer changes, a new schedule has been developed. Several workers are new to Extended Session and we're very thankful for their willingness to serve. Parents can expect to see some new faces on Sunday mornings. For those who've served through the years, we thank you for your faithfulness...from the bottom of our hearts!

November is Thanksgiving and after that will be several special services and schedule changes for December. When we get to the holiday season, all schedule changes will be posted on the bulletin board in the Preschool area.

Our Preschool may be small, but the Lord has blessed us with very special children.

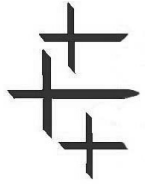
We are thankful for every opportunity to teach them the love of Jesus.

*Miss Brenda & the Preschool Council,
Vicki, Jenny, Myra and Brenda C.*

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