



# Rockwood Church of Christ

## The Proclaimer

August 28, 2016

P.O. Box 416  
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**Elders:**

Dana Carter  
Kenneth Carter  
Don Chandler

**Deacons:**

Kendall Bear  
Larry Brackett  
Roger Carter  
Steve McCreary

**Minister:**

Todd Houston

**Secretary:**

Susan Chandler

**Service Times:**

**Sunday**

Bible Study 10 am  
Worship Service 10:45 am  
Worship Service 6 pm

**Wednesday**

Bible Study 7:30 pm

**Email:**

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Rockwoodchurchofchrist.com

## GOD EXPECTS HIS PEOPLE TO GROW

He gives us time to grow – “*when for the time you ought to be teachers*” (**Hebrews 5:12**). Youth grows into adulthood, newborn babies are to grow spiritually (**II Peter 2:2**).

Christian growth is natural – as natural as a child’s growth. It is normal – if a child does not grow, we know something is wrong. It is necessary – God gives the time, plus the provision of food, exercise, and environment for growth.

**Our growth is four-dimensional:**

- 1. We grow downward.** When a tree or shrub is moving upward, you know the roots are growing downward. The deeper our roots, the richer is our spiritual moisture and consequently our ability to withstand trial and adversity. A deepening of our spiritual roots gives stability to life. Deep roots into the Word will enable us to have confidence in a time when strange winds of doctrine are blowing in every direction (**Ephesians 4:14**).
- 2. We grow upward.** When the roots go down deep, the evidence will be seen upward. There will be a greater thirst for the things of God. More time for prayer and more intimate fellowship with God will be evident. This growth is silent and gradual in the direction of Jesus, becoming more like Him each day. “*But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Jesus*” (**Ephesians 4:15**). Living as He lived; forgiving as He forgave; loving as He loved and enduring as He endured – that’s the evidence of growing up in Him.
- 3. We grow inwardly.** The inward man is renewed daily (**II Corinthians 4:16**). When we grow downward and outward toward Jesus, we assimilate those graces described in **II Peter 1:5-8**. Inward growth makes us aware of our own weakness and gullibility’s. Inward growth creates “the right spirit” within and the attitude that enables us to cope.
- 4. We grow outwardly.** This growth is gauged by how well we relate to the people around us – family, brethren, coworkers, and people in general. The church is not a monastery or convent. It reaches out as salt and light in this present world (**Matthew 5:13; Philippians 2:15**).

Are you growing downward, upward, inward, and outward? Can you see the evidence of self-discipline; the use of time; the acceptance of responsibility; deportment and interest? There is a great joy in seeing someone mature in Christ. Let us grow up together in Christ!

**Clarence DeLoach**

# WHEN ADVERSITY STRIKES

Although life has many satisfying moments, there will be times of adversity. In fact, there is a greater risk of personal tribulation the longer we live. Hardly a week passes by that we don't hear of a car wreck, broken bone, life-threatening surgery, unexpected death, financial collapse, or marriage breakup. David was no stranger to difficult times. Many of the Psalms grow out of the crucible of personal conflict. A close reading of **Psalm 70** shows that he often became impatient in hostile environments. Four times he asked God to hurry in answering prayer. Five times he requested that God would "let" circumstances change regarding his adversity. The **Psalm** closes when David asks God to "*make no delay.*"

Like David, the suffering saint will ask, "Why is God so slow in answering my prayers? Why is He so impatient in working out solutions to my problems?" Here are some biblical thoughts:

## **1. Adversity is an opportunity to repent.**

Many of our hardships are caused by the disobedience of others. If God were quick to punish, few (including yourself) would be alive. It is God's nature to be SLOW in punishment so the wicked will have time to repent. Even if our trials involve only circumstances and not wicked people, hardship makes us examine our own hearts (**see Psalms 130:1-3**).

## **2. Adversity is an opportunity to grow.**

History shows that when a culture becomes addicted to pleasure and luxury, it soon ceases to exist through self destruction. Tribulation ensures our survival by helping to instill within us the qualities of discipline, independence, and creativity. Paul said that adversity helps create perseverance, character, and hope (**Romans 5:5**). Saints who graduate from "the school of hard knocks" are often those who have grown the most.

## **3. Adversity is an opportunity to shine.**

When the Corinthian church had so many problems, Paul wrote "*there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you*", (**I Corinthians 11:19**). Paul believed that others would be able to see our mature faith by the way we handled conflict. God approves of us when we survive suffering.

Men have a tendency to be impatient in misery. We should not interpret God's slowness in answering our prayers as slackness. He may be trying to give us a lesson.

**Dewayne Chaffin**

# ***Nothing But Mammals***

By Todd Houston

No doubt, anyone with any degree of human affection is deeply affected by the endless barrage of atrocities perpetrated by man against his fellow man. We all agree that we must strive to thwart this thirst for violence. However, many of us are looking in the wrong place for solutions. Indeed the issue is much deeper than the preferred method of carnage (i.e. guns, knives, bombs, etc.). America is suffering from heart disease, and as with any disease, if we hope to find a cure; we must identify its source. I would like to pose two contributing factors that must be addressed. If we do not correct these two things, we will never convince people to respect the lives of their fellow man.

The Biblical picture of humanity is one of God given intrinsic value. Mankind was created to sit at the top of creation (**Gen. 1:28**) because we are created in the image of God (**Gen. 1:27**). The rest of the Bible tells God's plan to make man more like Him and ultimately proclaim His excellencies (**1 Pet. 2:9**). Part of that plan includes absolute, unswerving respect for human life. Why then are we so ready to kill one another today? Take away the desire to kill and weapons become harmless.

First, I submit that our current plight is the direct result of distorting the worldviews of several generations to the point much of society is convinced we are nothing but mammals. Second, the sanctity of life means very little as is evidenced by the legal killing of millions of helpless babies. If our government sanctions the slaughter of her most helpless and innocent citizens, her claims to reverence human life are indeed hollow. Our children grow up in this climate and see right through this blatant double standard.

As a result, we have become numb to the plight of our fellow man. Animals tear each other to shreds daily, and no one thinks twice because it is natural. Why then do we act so surprised when the people that our culture has worked so hard to convince they are mere animals begin to act like the animals we have made them out to be? Conversely, if we convince our children that all men are created in the image and likeness of God, will they not naturally tend to respect the sanctity of human life?