

Well, this week has been a little “off-kilter.” I spent the first two days hosting family from Atlanta, two days catching up on urgent matters, and then have been running a bit of a fever last night and today . . . all of which have conspired to cause the *Laptop* to be off schedule. I normally don't like to do “congregational promotion” in this column, but that's what I'm going to do today, since there are a number of things on which I need to comment.

On Welcoming Guests. I think we generally do a decent job of welcoming guests, but there are some ways in which we can improve. In the first place, although I know we humans are creatures of habit, I urge you to sit in the same general area each week, but not in the very same seat. Sitting in the same seat will cause you to become territorial in ways that are not helpful to you or to our guests, but sitting in the same area will allow you to recognize when new faces appear so that you can be a good host to them.

When you notice persons you don't know sitting in your area (this presumes that you have made the investment to know all of the persons who are usually in your vicinity), please introduce yourself to them, and if they are alone, offer to sit with them. After the service, you can take the information card in your own bulletin and ask them whether they'd be willing for us to have their contact information. If you're going to lunch, it's almost always a “home run” to invite guests to join your luncheon gathering.

When it comes to hospitality, think “Velcro,” not “Teflon”! While we certainly don't want to crowd our guests, we do want to do everything we can to acknowledge the gift they've given us by choosing to worship with us.

A Ministry Fair! From 4-6 p.m. on Sunday, October 19, our MINISTRY Team is sponsoring a Ministry Fair in rooms 200-202. This event will provide a fun-filled opportunity to learn about the various ministries in which CBFers are involved. It will provide a chance to learn new things, make new friends, and discover new ways to use your own gifts and abilities through ministry in the congregation and in the world beyond.

In order to grow as a Christian, it's necessary to be intentional about practicing “The Five Things” each and every week: (1) participation in corporate worship; (2) participation in a small group; (3) daily devotional practices; (4) ministry in the church; and (5) mission in the world. (I'm sure you'll recognize that this is our WORSHIP – CONNECT – GROW – SERVE – GO model.) The Ministry Fair provides help with the “SERVE” and “GO” parts!

Calendar Clarity. Most of you know that one of the dimensions of life at The Meeting House is the need to schedule all use of the building (and to cancel reservations that won't be used). With five congregations, a school, and many outside groups using the campus, it's essential to schedule space use carefully and well in advance. In the past, calendar coordination has been largely done by our Church Secretary. During this time when that position is open, **Carol Batson** has agreed to coordinate our building use and calendaring. Thanks, Carol!

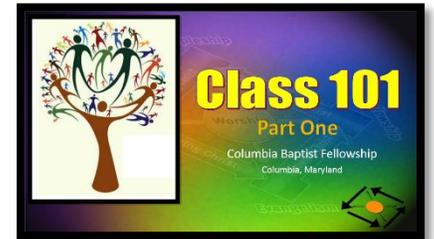
Show & Tell for Veterans' Day. On Wednesday, November 12, our program will be a “Show & Tell” event for CBFers who are Veterans. This is a time to tell “what you did in the war,” using photos, mementos, medals, uniforms, artifacts, and anything else that will help to describe some of your adventures in uniform.

“Other Doctors.” Last year we had a program that featured our CBF physicians, which was very well received. This year, we’re planning to have a program that features our “other doctors,” such as Ed.D., D.Min., Ph.D. and the like. The general idea will be to tell how you decided to seek such a degree, what you studied, and where, and what you’ve done with that degree since. The tentative date for this event is November 19, but this may be altered slightly.

CLASSES 101 & 201. Part of our ongoing emphasis on “The Five Things” is the development of four classes to introduce the general content of each area of our common life. The first two of these classes have been developed so far, and they are being made available for general participation starting this Sunday. **These are courses that every CBFer needs to experience at least once.** Here’s the schedule for the near-term:

Class 101, part 1
(Sunday, October 5, 11:30 in the chapel)

CBF’s History
What it means to be a Christian
What it means to be a Baptist

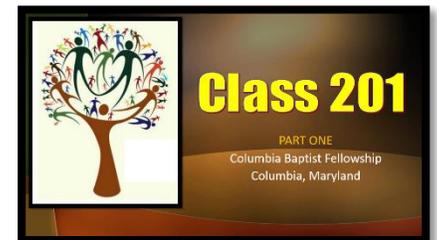


Class 101, part 2
(Sunday, October 12, 11:30 in the chapel)

How CBF is organized
How CBF Membership works
An introduction to Spiritual Gifts

Class 201, part 1
(Sunday, November 16, 11:30 in the chapel)

An introduction to the purpose, process, problems, and practice of Prayer



Class 201, part 2
(Sunday, November 23, 11:30 in the chapel)

An introduction to the structure and study of the Bible

If you haven’t already participated in these classes, I’ll hope to see you there!

Dave

The Joshua Code: Fifty-Two Verses Every Believer Should Know **O.S. Hawkins (Thomas Nelson, 2012)**

Week thirty-eight: Removing the Fear of Death

“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me” (Psalm 23:4).

Death is the single common denominator of all. In the obituary section of the paper, listed side by side in alphabetical order, are the rich and the poor, the known and the unknown, the prominent and the not so prominent. We are all equal in death.

A lot of voices and volumes today tell us how to live. Motivational and self-help books flood the marketplace. But there is only one book that tells us how to die. And there is no one verse in that Book of books which is more pertinent to the subject than our verse today.

FACT #1: DEATH IS A SURE THING

Death is sure. It is certain. We deal with death in many ways. Some attempt to flee it. Some forget it. They simply reject the idea, assuming it will somehow go away. Others fear it—and they live paralyzed lives with no hope or security in Christ. Then there are those, like David, who face death. These people realize their days are numbered, and that we all have an appointment with death.

FACT #2: DEATH IS A SOJOURN

David indicated that he walked *through* the valley. It was not his final destination. It was only a temporary passage, a sojourn. He knew this road was not a dead end with no way out. He knew it was not a cul-de-sac that got him nowhere. For David—and for us—death is simply a sojourn. We do not walk in the valley. We do not stay there. We walk *through* the valley.

FACT #3: DEATH IS A SHADOW

The Lord Jesus walked through the valley of death. For three days and nights He walked that valley and then emerged from the empty tomb and said, “Behold . . . I have the keys of death and of Hades” (Revelation 1:18 NASB).

Thus, the believer only walks through the valley of the *shadow* of death. A shadow might frighten you, but it cannot harm you. And the only way you can have a shadow is to have a great light shining. David said he walked “through the valley of the shadow of death” because that is what we do with a shadow; we simply walk through it.

Is it any wonder David went on in this verse to exclaim, “I will fear no evil”? He knew death would be defeated; that although it was a sure thing, it was but a temporary sojourn through a shadow into the light.

The apostle John got a glimpse of Jesus’ glory from his lonely island called Patmos where he was exiled. Upon seeing the vision of the exalted Christ, John formed the best description he could with our limited vocabulary and said, “*When I saw Him, I fell at his feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, ‘Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death’*” (Revelation 1:17–18). Yes, “*though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for you are with me.*”

As you memorize this verse, meditate on the fact that, through His own death and resurrection, the Lord Jesus made a way when there was no way for us. We need not fear death. We only walk through the valley of the shadow of death . . . and Jesus is with us!