



Pastor's Perspective — Learning to Give

By Dr. Ron D. Lindholm, Senior Pastor

An old southern preacher was speaking to his congregation and solemnly said: "We have to crawl before we can walk." As if on cue, the congregation replied in unison: "Let us crawl, preacher. Let us crawl." The preacher then said: "We have to walk before we can jog." In unison, and with enthusiasm, the congregation replied: "We have to walk, preacher. Let us walk." Inspired by their response, the preacher continued: "We have to jog before we can run." Sensing that he was leading them to some mountaintop affirmation, the congregation answered: "Let us jog, preacher. Let us jog." But the next thing he said was unexpected. "Before we can run," he told them, "we have to learn how to give." There was a moment of silence, followed by: "Let us crawl, preacher. Let us crawl."

I cannot attest to the authenticity of that story, but I would dare tell you that it's not unusual for a church to respond that way to sermons on giving to the

Lord's work in the setting of the local church — though for the most part that has not been my experience at Fellowship.

"Just as you excel in everything...see that you also excel in this grace of giving."
2 Corinthians 8:7

That said, our giving to the budget needs of the church fell well-short of our budget requirement in 2014, even though we should have reached that requirement easily and exceeded it. As a consequence, budget cuts were proposed and

adopted for 2015 that reduce our overall weekly budget requirement by some \$200.00.

If you ask our Finance Committee or our Pastors and Deacons about our giving, they might tell you that their hope is to see a turnaround in 2015. But if you ask me, I would say that my hope is that our budget needs would be met by the shared sacrifice of our congregation. The tithes and offerings that Neita and I bring won't nearly meet our church budget requirement — and neither will yours. But if your tithes and offerings are combined with ours and given faithfully week-by-week and month-by-month, they will do that and more.

That old southern preacher wanted his congregation "to run." Which is to say that he wanted them to thrive in their relationship with the Lord and to flourish as a church in the work God had committed to them. I want the same thing for Fellowship. But as with them, so with us. "Before we can run, we have to learn how to give."

JANUARY MEMORY VERSE



This is the message we have heard from Him and declare to you: God is light: in Him is no darkness at all. ~ 1 John 1:5

On December 21,
our Choir Performed
"The Christmas Story"



A Year Closer to God By Nick Irving

A while ago I asked myself, “How much of a Christian am I?” I knew about the Bible; I had read stories and sections of the Bible. But I had never read the Bible in its entirety. The Bible is the sole book my faith is based on. There is only one book and I had never even read it all. I had heard people cite Bible verses to combat Christianity and “prove” that the Bible was “contradictory of itself.” I realized it would be easier to argue my beliefs if I actually knew what I believed and why.

I decided I would read the whole Bible in one year. I planned to use the “Our Daily Bread: Bible in a Year” program. It encourages two readings daily: one in the Old Testament and the other in the New Testament. When I started off January 1, 2014, I didn’t realize what I had gotten myself into. I thought breaking the Bible reading into 365 days would make it a simple task, reading a couple minutes a day. Well, I was wrong. But later on I realized that wasn’t a bad thing.

For the first few months I was really interested. But after a while, reading the Bible became a chore. Some days I would zone out and spend a really long time trying to understand a small passage. It was hard for me to get through the book of Numbers. If you haven’t read the book, it’s exactly what it sounds like: Numbers! I became bored with the Bible. I thought, “What’s the point of reading the Bible if I’m not going to absorb what I’m reading?” I didn’t have to enjoy the book of Numbers, but I needed to pay attention. I began praying before reading and asking the Lord to open my mind and quiet my thoughts. I think this helped a lot. I started to enjoy reading the



Bible again and the time that it took each night didn’t bother me anymore. It was nice to be able to retire the day with reading.

While reading, I came to verses I knew there was controversy over. Why does God get to choose a people and favor them? Why does God condone plundering and killing and slavery? But, when you read the Bible all the way through, you get to

look at the context of everything. You take a step back from the specific verses under question and see what’s actually going on. I saw that you can’t decide what the Bible says by a single verse; that it’s best to get the whole context of things and understand the history surrounding the issue. Now I know where those types of arguments come from and why it’s wrong to take verses out of context.

Reading through the Bible has definitely put me closer to God. Reading the Bible has helped me learn a lot, but there is still a lot I don’t know. Even though I will be done reading through the Bible on December 31, 2014, I won’t be done. I thought reading the Bible would leave me saying “Ah, now I’ve read the whole Bible. I’m done.” Nope. The more I read the more I question and want to know more. It’s going to take a lot more than one reading to understand the Bible.

Please plan to attend the [January Annual Meeting](#) on January 28. We will be approving the Officers and Officials appointed by the Pastors and Deacons, as well as reviewing the annual reports of the various church leaders. If you are responsible for an annual report, please remember that the deadline for turning them in to the church office is Sunday, January 13.

Money Matters

Christmas Missionary Offering: Through the annual Christmas offering, \$4,457.25 was given for our missionaries, exceeding our goal of \$4,150. Thank you for this generous expression of your love for the Lord and for our missionaries who are serving Him on our behalf.

December Giving Per Week (General Fund)	\$4,454
Weekly Need	\$5,131
Year-to-Date General Fund Giving	\$239,202
Year-to-Date General Fund Need	\$266,812

Calendar

Jan. 7	First Wednesday Fellowship Dinner (6:30 PM)
Jan. 13	Nursing Home Ministry (2:00 PM)
Jan. 24	Men’s Breakfast (8:00 AM)
Jan. 28	January Annual Meeting (7:30 PM)
Jan. 30	Youth Ski Trip

Fellowship Baptist Church

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