

# Great Smoky Mountains Messenger



A Publication of the Great Smoky Mountains Church of Christ

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## The Lord and Me, We Have a Deal

Perhaps you have tried to share the gospel with someone or encouraged them to come to the worship service of the church, only to have them quote the title above as if they are separate from God's requirements. Don't get me wrong, we can have a covenant relationship with the Lord, but that relationship can only be had according to His stipulations and requirements. Let's explore.

In the Old Testament covenant that God made with the nation of Israel, God gave all of the stipulations and requirements to Moses on Mt. Sinai. Moses then relayed the information to the children of Israel. "So Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD and all the judgments. And all the people answered with one voice and said, 'All the words which the LORD has said we will do'" (Exodus 24:3 emphasis added). Notice the 'all' that they said they would do. The covenant was not negotiable. The Lord set the stipulations and the people could either accept it or refuse it. They couldn't say that they had a special or different deal with the Lord. Part of those stipulations were that they had to keep three specific feast days to the Lord (Exodus 23:14). They couldn't just decide to roll those three into one day for convenience. The covenant was unilateral and non-negotiable.

In the New Testament there is a new covenant. Jeremiah prophesied that this new covenant was coming (Jer. 31:31-34). The new covenant is the agreement that we can have with the Lord today, however, this deal is also based upon the commandments and stipulations of the Lord. We can either accept the deal, or deny it. We do not get to negotiate our own deal individually. Jesus basically says that if we follow Him, we can have the remission of our sins and live with Him forever (Mark 16:16; Mat. 28:19-20; Acts 2:38). Notice especially in the Matthew passage that in order to be a disciple of Christ that one must be baptized and taught to observe all things that Jesus has commanded.

Both the Hebrew and Greek words that are used for covenant in the Bible mean a contract or agreement of some kind. So, we can have an agreement with God. That agreement or covenant relationship can only be had, however, if we will accept all that God has told us to do. God's salvation is not a buffet where we get to pick and choose. We must do all that He commands us to do!

— Dale J. Babinsky



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## Please Remember/Pray For:

Patsy Bevis  
Ruth Byrne  
Trevor Hayes  
Kenny Gross  
Les Jewell  
Jason Elliot (Friend of the Greens—he is on a list awaiting a liver transplant)



## Are You a Good Listener? By Dave Chamberlin

James tells us that we should be a people who are “quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger.” (James 1: 19) There is certainly a gift that can be learned in becoming a better listener. James is concerned with the anger of man, within the context of this particular verse, when he concludes the thought with the fact that “the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God.” (James 1: 20)

Our concern should be that we work on our anger, if that indeed is a problem. It is easy, while having a “spirited” discussion with someone, to not listen to them but to use those moments to feed our own anger. We need to take time to listen to those who are talking to us.

Someone has come up with “Six Steps To Becoming A Better Listener” and they are worth repeating here. You will note that they form a LADDER—one that we should be able to remember.

L: Look at the person speaking to you.

A: Ask questions.

D: Don’t interrupt.

D: Don’t change the subject.

E: Empathize

R: Respond verbally and non-verbally.

It is possible that we sometimes leave the impression with others that we really don’t care what they have to say. It is usually unintentional. We are to be a people who are engaged in the soul winning business and as a result we must be good listeners if we are to be effective in the communication of the gospel.

## Calendar of Upcoming Activities

- ♦ Sun., Dec. 17—Marc and Mark will address the congregation this evening.
- ♦ The men’s Bible study class will take a break until January 9, 2024.
- ♦ The women’s class will be on a break until February 2024..



*Have something for the bulletin? Please give updates to Dale or Leah by Thursday.*

<u>Pantry Needs</u>	<u>Food Assistance Program Lead for December</u>	<u>Current Building Loan Balance</u>
Alfredo Sauce, Chili, Canned Beans, Jello 	Elora Crabtree 	\$431,970.93 

## God’s Plan of Salvation

- Hear the Gospel, Romans 10:17
- Believe the Gospel, John 8:24
- Repent of Sins, Luke 13:3
- Confess Jesus as God’s Son, Matt. 10:32
- Baptized to wash away sins, Acts 2:38
- Faithful 'til death, Revelation 2:10

## Today’s Sermons

- ♦ AM —Jacob Forman Preaching
- ♦ PM — Marc and Mark address the congregation

Check out the sermon archives on our website at [www.gsmchurchofchrist.com](http://www.gsmchurchofchrist.com)

*Please come back and worship with us in Spirit and in Truth—John 4:24*