

## SCHEDULE OF ASSEMBLIES

Sunday morning worship (Bible study) .....	9:30 AM
Sunday morning worship (Preaching) .....	10:30 AM
Sunday afternoon worship (Preaching).....	4:00 PM
Wednesday evening worship (Bible Study).....	7:00 PM

## NEWS AND NOTES

**VISITORS:** If you are visiting with us, we welcome you and ask that you please sign our guest book and fill out a visitor's card and put it in the collection basket or give it to one of the men in the congregation.

**SCHEDULE:** The schedule for May is available and will be posted on the bulletin board so the men can see what their responsibilities are for the month.

**OUT OF TOWN:** Telford and Alice Hamm are out of town today.

**SICK AND SHUT-INS:** Elmo Wilson, Zola Basham's brother continues to have health problems. Helen Sparks has health issues that sometime keeps her from services. Brittney Day continues to have problems occasionally. Britney's aunt who had gall bladder surgery and is now doing better. There may be others who are sick that I am unaware of, if so, please tell Bruce Tooley, who is making announcements in April.

**NEW PROGRAMS BEGIN:** The new teaching bulletin was inserted in the Red Bay News this past week. This bulletin will be published and inserted once each quarter. Our TV/Radio program on the local Cable TV channel 12 and 97 is scheduled to be on at 6:30 AM and 4:30 PM on Sunday and at various times through the week on TV and the two local radio stations 1430 AM and 99.5 FM has already begun. This program will be aired a minimum of three times a week. Please pray for these efforts that they will reach people who will be interested in reading and listening to God's word.

**GOSPEL MEETINGS:** Piney Grove April 29th-May 2nd with Greg Chandler Mon-Wed 7 PM; Phil Campbell April 29-May 2 Mon-Wed 7 PM; Weatherly Heights lecture (Huntsville) May 3-6 (see flyer for speakers and times); Hays Mill Congregation (Elkmont) May 13-16 with Kasey Harbin Mon-Wed 7 PM.

**NOTE:** To have information put in the bulletin please get it to Jerry before Saturday afternoon.

## POINTS TO PONDER

- Talking comes by nature; silence by wisdom.
- Easy street and the strait and narrow path do not intersect.
- Trust not the world. It never pays what it promises.
- Whatever controls your life is your Master.

# THE EASTSIDE REMINDER

2Pet 1:12-15

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## THE FRUSTRATIONS OF FREE WILL

By Russ Bowman

*"Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness... So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him Gen. 1:26-27"*

The creation of mankind in the "image and likeness of God" is absolutely filled with important implications. It answers a number of questions that continue to intrigue us, many of which revolve around the unique nature of humanity as we stand compared to all other animate objects in our world. Why do we look the way we do? Because we're made in the image and likeness of God. Why do we possess a sense of justice? Because we're made in the image and likeness of God. Why do men measure things by their aesthetic qualities (beauty in appearance, sound, taste, etc.)? Because we're made in the image and likeness of God. Why are we moral creatures? Introspective creatures? Emotional beings? Capable of abstract thought? Because we're made in the image and likeness of God. In fact, that all-important revelation regarding our origin provides us a reference point for life. The most fundamental questions of existence - "Why am I here? Where am I going? From whence did I come?" - are all answered in that

one profound statement. And given all of the implications of that affirmation, the knowledge that I am created in the image of God should offer me a measure of satisfaction, solace, and worth that many people do not enjoy.

On the other hand, I would propose that at least one aspect of my divine design is a source of frequent frustration in my life, namely my freedom of will. Free will is, in many ways, a wonderful blessing that is among the most unique indications of our kinship with God. While someone might argue that there are animals in this world that can make choices of their own accord, the reality is that such "choices" can always be explained by the instincts that are characteristic of that particular animal. Mankind, on the other hand, possesses the singular capability of analyzing and weighing the potential outcome of our actions and then determining - even with the possible consequence of difficulty or discomfort - that we will act in a particular way. Free will permits independence. Free will accounts for individuality. Free will prompts love and sacrifice and persistence and aspiration and achievement. How different and unfulfilling would be life were we mere robots, preprogrammed for every conceivable circumstance and capable of reacting only according to the designs of another. Freedom of will is unarguably a wondrous quality.

On the other hand, few things are more frustrating than the freedom of will. As a husband, I enjoy a relationship whereby Tracy and I have been united for as long as we live on this earth. We are to be "no longer two but one flesh" (Mt.19:4-6). Our future together demands oneness as we try to raise our children and sustain our home and serve our Lord and live out our lives. But, neither one of us lost our freedom of will when we said, "I do." She's not always as agreeable as I think she should be, and her free will frustrates me at times. And, oddly enough, those are generally the same occasions when my freedom of will frustrates her. Freedom of will, you see, is what permits selfishness and stubbornness and a lack of cooperation. In other words, the very quality that allows for two to

become one is the same quality that prevents two from acting as one. And I find the same frustrations as a parent. Fathers and mothers are supposed to have all of the answers, though the older I get the more I realize how ignorant I really am. But parents should and do have more experience, with life than our kids, and a predominant part of our role is to guide and counsel and train our children to be people of character - people of God. So, we try to point out potential problems and encourage good decisions and offer necessary correction. And that would be wonderful if our kids didn't interfere. The challenge - the frustration - of parenthood (so far) is that my children have their own will. While at times I can simply dominate their will (primarily because of my position as parent and provider), I'll not be effective in my job unless I help them to exercise their own will wisely. I can't make all of their decisions for them. And at times that's really frustrating. And the same is true in my relationships with other Christians. I'm supposed to support and edify and encourage and even correct my spiritual family (1Thes.5:14; Heb.3:12f; 1O:24f Eph.4:11f; GaL6:1f). But I can't make someone else do right or mature spiritually or participate with their brethren or stand to their commitment to the Lord. What a frustration. And here again, they cannot make me serve the Lord, thus I become the frustration.

And on top of all of this, my free will means that I stand accountable, for myself. No one can force me to act, can make my decisions for me, can live my life. I am free to choose. And thus, I am responsible for my actions. My free will is the very basis for my judgment.

But here's the irony.... and the beauty. I can choose to do good, to serve God, to be faithful, to persevere and be diligent no matter what anyone else in this world does. And because of that will I can please God. With all of my flaws and shortcomings, I can please the Maker of the universe. Whether my wife does or not, whether my kids do or not, whether my brethren do or not - I can love the Lord and enjoy the hope that results. And because of that, I can live with the frustrations.