

FaithforLife

MILLARD IVES ■ 352-365-8258 ■ features@dailycommercial.com

www.dailycommercial.com

Inner-heart motivation makes all the difference

Who should have gone looking for the “prodigal son” in Luke 15? Last week Timothy Keller told us it was the duty of the elder brother, quoting when the Lord told Cain that he was in fact his brother’s keeper. Keller who wrote “The Prodigal God,” which places a different spin on this popular parable found in Luke 15, commonly called “The Parable of the Prodigal Son. His prognosis is that both the younger and older sons were lost, but the older was unaware of his lostness. He was morally good but had a very bad heart.

Fortunately, we have an older brother who does seek us when we are lost. “Think of the kind of brother we need,” wrote Keller. “We need one who does not just go to the next country to find us but who will come all the way from heaven to earth. We need one who is willing to pay not just a finite amount of money, but, at the infinite cost of his own life to bring us into God’s family, for our debt is so much greater. “Our true elder brother paid our debt, on the cross, in our place. “There was no other way for the

heavenly Father to bring us in, except at the expense of our true elder brother.” We’re told in the Bible that fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and knowledge of God. Keller asked, “How can the inner workings of the heart be changed from a dynamic of fear and anger to that of love, joy, and gratitude?” Fear is just the beginning point. But it can’t stop there. “You need to be moved by the sight of what it cost to bring you home” wrote Keller. “The key difference between a Pharisee and a believer in Jesus is inner-heart

motivation. Pharisees are being good but out of a fear-fueled need to control God. They don’t really trust him or love him. To them God is an exacting boss, not a loving father. Christians have seen something that has transformed their hearts toward God so they can finally love and rest in the Father.” Jesus is most certainly worthy of our love, admiration and extreme gratitude. “Jesus Christ, who had all the power in the world, saw us enslaved by the very things we



Rick Reed
REFLECTIONS

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CHURCH CALENDAR

A LIST OF UPCOMING EVENTS

TODAY

CARE4KIDS EVENT IN WILDWOOD: Grace Tabernacle Church, Wells Fargo Bank and Youth Challenge of Wildwood have teamed up to offer a community family day with a hot meal, food, toys, books, snow cones, clothing and more, from noon to 3 p.m. at the Wells Fargo Bank branch on Main Street (U.S. Highway 301) in Wildwood. For information about the event or to be a vendor contact Larry Green at 352-250-8794 or visit www.care4kids.com.

‘ALL ABOUT FAIRWAY’ CLASS: 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., Fairway Christian Church, 251 Avenida Los Angeles, The Villages. Provides information about the church to members and non-members. Lunch is provided, sign up required by calling 352-259-9305.

‘PRAY, EAT, LEARN’ WITH RABBI KAREN ALLEN: 10 a.m., Congregation Beth Shalom, 315 N. 13th St., Leesburg. Shabbat service, followed by lunch and Torah study. Call 352-326-3692 for details.

NEW LIFE CARPENTERS FOR CHRIST ONE-DAY FURNITURE SALE: 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., New Life Presbyterian Church, 201 La Vista in Fruitland Park. Contact Clemi Beckham at 352-259-9051 for details.

WEDNESDAY-THURSDAY

FAIRWAY CHRISTIAN CHURCH COLLECTS SCHOOL SUPPLIES FOR KIDS: Bring your school supplies for the “Back to School Drive” at worship services today and Sunday. Saturday contemporary service at 6 p.m.; Sunday traditional service at 7:45 and 11:30 a.m., and Sunday contemporary service at 9 and 10:15 a.m. Call the church at 352-259-9305 or visit www.fairwaycc.org for details.

AUGUST 8

BACK TO SCHOOL BASH AT FIRST BAPTIST: 5 to 9 p.m., for students in grades 6-12, a free event at the First Baptist Church, 402 Oxford St., in Wildwood. Enjoy hot dogs, chips, soda and water and three huge inflatables for everyone. For information call the church at 352-748-1822.

AUGUST 9

PRISON VISITATION SUPPORT VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY: A meeting will be held today, 10 a.m., at the First Baptist Church, 220 N. 13th St., in Leesburg for those interested in learning how to be involved in visiting inmates at the Federal Prison in Coleman once a month. For information, call the church at 352-787-1005.

LEESBURG

Reaching out

Theresa Campbell | Staff Writer
theresacampbell@dailycommercial.com

Twelve volunteers devote time each month behind bars at the Federal Correctional Complex in Coleman, where they lend a listening ear to help inmates transition back into a useful place in society.

They strive to interact with the inmates who do not receive visits from family and friends. For some volunteers, the prison visits constitute a ministry and mirror what they believe Jesus would do.

Twelve more volunteers are needed in the Prison Visitation Support program, led by Pastor Gary Blanchard of First Baptist Church in Leesburg.

The church will host a meeting at 10 a.m. Aug. 9 to share what’s involved and what it takes to become a prison volunteer.

The ideal volunteer? “Mature people, good listeners and willing to visit anyone without prejudice,” Blanchard said. “Women, men, lay people, clergy, retirees — people from all walks of life.”

Those who speak Spanish are especially valuable, but foreign language proficiency is not required.

Applicants go through a personal interview, 4-hour training at Coleman, and background check.

After being accepted, volunteers are asked to make a visit once a month, where they see about four individual inmates with each visit lasting about 30 minutes. The Federal Correc-

First Baptist Church volunteers help inmates transition from prison to society



SUBMITTED PHOTO

ABOVE, BELOW: Twelve volunteers devote time each month at the Federal Correctional Complex in Coleman.



REACHING OUT

WHO: Prison Visitation Support volunteers

WHAT: A meeting will be hosted for people interested in becoming volunteers to visit inmates once a month at the Federal Correctional Complex in Coleman.

WHEN: 10 a.m. Aug. 9

WHERE: First Baptist Church, 220 N. 13th St., Leesburg

CALL: 352-787-1005 for details

tional Complex in Coleman actually consists of four facilities: Coleman Low FCI, a low-security Federal Correctional Institution; Coleman Medium FCI, a medium security Federal Correctional Institution with an adjacent satellite camp for minimum-security female offenders; Coleman I USP, a high-security United States Penitentiary; and

Coleman II USP, a high-security United States Penitentiary. They collectively house more than 7,000 inmates.

The Prison Visitation Support program has been in existence for five years. Blanchard sees the difference it has made in inmates’ lives.

“It gives them hope and encouragement. It’s an opportunity to talk with someone about things

other than those in the prison system,” he said. “The inmates are so grateful to have someone to talk with, knowing that what they share is held in confidence.”

Laughs and stories are often shared among the volunteers and inmates. There also are times of compassion, personal reflection and spiritual growth.

“For the volunteers, it’s

so meaningful to know that you made a difference in the life of someone that day, and that you have an opportunity to impact their life,” Blanchard said. “We need to remember that some of these men and women at Coleman and other prisons will be returning to society, and they may be living in our communities. We have the opportunity to help them prepare for the re-entry

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WHAT I BELIEVE

RELIGION LETTERS

We must be baptized in order to be saved

In his letter of June 30, Alvin Berry appears to be taking the same path to what he calls salvation as did Billy Graham and many others — that Jesus Christ is the son of God and accepting him as one’s savior is all that is needed.

But Berry isn’t looking at the big picture.

Second Timothy 3:16-17 says: “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in

righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

This clearly indicates that we are to consider all Scripture (the big picture).

In Mark 16:15-16, Jesus told his disciples: “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.”

So Jesus himself tells us we must be baptized to be saved.

In Acts 2 when Peter preached the first gospel sermon, he told

those who were convicted by it and told them what they must do to be saved, “Repent and be baptized for the remission of sin and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

Here we learn two things, we must repent of our sins and baptism brings about remission.

Berry told us about Romans 10:9-10, where we are told that we must confess Jesus Christ to be the Son of God. Read verses 13 and 14 of Romans 10 and you find that we must also hear the gospel and call on the name of the Lord.

First Peter 3:21: “There is also

an antitype which now saves us, namely baptism, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.” NKJV.

When we look at the big picture we must hear the gospel, believe the gospel, repent of our sins, confess Christ, and be baptized for the remission of our sins. Then and only then are we saved or “born again.” That is what I believe.

Do not take one verse or phrase of Scripture and say “this is all that I need to be saved.” All that will get you a very warm seat in hell.

JAMES S. FRANKLIN | Fruitland Park