

# CHRISTIAN WORKER

“We are workers together with Him...” (2 Corinthians 6:1)

VOLUME 111, NUMBER 10

## WHAT MEAN THESE STONES?

Ronnie Scherffius

Israel's crossing the Jordan River (Josh. 3:1-17) was a memorable event in the nation's history. It marked another chapter in the fulfillment of God's promise to give the land to Abraham's descendants (Gen. 12:6-7; 17:8; 26:3; et al.), and the circumstances surrounding their crossing (Josh. 3:14-17) served as a declaration to the Canaanites that the people of God had arrived (Josh. 2:1-11). The crossing of the Jordan River has also been an inspiration to songwriters. How familiar are the words: *“On Jordan's stormy banks I stand, and cast a wishful eye; To Canaan's fair and happy land, where my possessions lie”* (Samuel Stennett, 1787).

So grand and meaningful was that day that Joshua ordered to set up twelve stones, both as a memorial of the event and to serve as a means to teach future generations of God's power and faithfulness (Josh. 4:1-24). The memorial would cause children to ask, “What mean these stones?” and provide an opportunity for their fathers to instruct them in the ways of God.

There are other occasions in Israel's history where we find particular emphasis placed on teaching children about God (Ex. 12:26; Dt. 6:7, 20; Ps. 78:3-6; Isa. 38:19). We have received a similar admonition from the inspired apostle (Eph. 6:4). As a people of God, are we giving heed to this grand admonition to teach our children about the God of heaven? Are we seizing every opportunity to cause them to remember the faithfulness of God and the sacrifices of the Savior? Better still, are we “setting up stones” that will create opportunities for us to build up a faith in our children so that they might fear the Lord God forever?

Can our children ask, “What mean these stones” when

we fail faithfully to give them regular opportunities to hear about spiritual matters? Do we bring them to Bible classes and worship services and involve them in youth activities? And what about gospel meetings? Remember when families traveled to attend gospel meetings? Are we teaching our children about God in the home? Today, families spend more time on the ball field, basketball court, or on vacation than feeding on the Word of God.

Many curiosities and questions arise in the minds of youth

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# FROM THE EDITOR:

## “LET THE BEAUTY OF JESUS BE SEEN IN MY OBEDIENCE”

Bryce Mayfield

Obedience is an appealing characteristic. Not only to God and Jesus (John 14:15), but also to mankind. Parents, consider the pleasant thought of asking your children to wash the dishes and, with a simple, “Yes sir” or “Yes ma’am,” they immediately obey without raising objection. Such a thought would likely make any parent smile. This could be because obedience is learned and takes discipline or because this character trait has, seemingly, become less common in our society. Whatever the case may be, obedience is a great way to “Let the beauty of Jesus be seen in me.” Making such an appealing characteristic a part of my life can accomplish the wonderful exhortation contained in this hymn. In the rest of this article, I hope to convey how the beauty of Jesus can be seen in our obedience.

If we truly desire to display the beauty of Jesus in our obedience, we must look at Jesus. Our Savior was perfectly obedient! His obedience, despite any circumstance, serves as the perfect example for us (1 Peter 2:21,22, NASB 95). Consider the attitude of Christ while He was on this earth: “*For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent me*” (John 6:38, NASB 95). When the Messiah came to this earth, His purpose was to glorify God in His obedience to Him. We see this mindset in Jesus from a very young age. At twelve years old, we find young Jesus in the temple saying, “*Did you not know that I must be about My Father’s business?*” (Luke 2:49, NKJV). From His youth to the last night before His death on the cross, we see the obedience of our Savior. In Gethsemane, we find the Son of God collapsed on the ground saying, “*My Father, if this cannot pass away unless I drink it, Your will be done*” (Matthew 26:42, NASB 95). From His childhood to the cross, we see the obedience of Jesus Christ. It is so important to look at Jesus because His obedience serves not just as an example, but also as a motivation for us to follow in His steps.

As followers of Christ whose goal is to radiate the beauty of Jesus, we must be obedient ourselves. Not only is obedience essential to inherit eternal life (Matthew 7:21), it is also necessary to display the beauty of Jesus. Jesus was obedient, so if I am not obedient, I am nothing like Jesus, and therefore, I cannot display His beauty in my life. The point seems simple enough, but why is obedience so important concerning demonstrating the beauty of Jesus in my life? When we are obedient, we are conveying an important message both to ourselves and to those around us. When we are obedient to God, our actions claim that a love for God is worth more than a love for the world and the things therein. What is so beautiful about sweating blood, nails being hammered into flesh, and a crown of thorns being crammed onto the precious Lamb of God? Jesus’ love for God: “*But so that the world may know that I love the Father, I do exactly as the Father commanded Me...*” (John 14:31, NASB 95). His beautiful example shows that there is nothing on this earth that is more valuable than loving God through obedience (John 14:15). When we obey God, we show ourselves and the world that same message. Think back to the illustration we began with. It is appealing that a child obeys his mother and father, but how much more so when that child obeys out of love and respect for their parents? It’s a beautiful thing! When we obey God out of love and respect for Him, we display the beauty of Jesus in our lives. In doing this, we not only please God and Jesus, we also share Jesus to the world by our example. Dear brothers and sisters, may we truly “let the beauty of Jesus be seen in our obedience.”

CW

# ARE THERE IDOLS IN MY LIFE?

Alex Simmons

When it comes to the concept of idolatry it can be easy to consider the subject as an ancient issue. After all, in America it is not common for people to have what we often recognize as “idols.” You know...those little wooden figures or the small gold pieces, that Indiana Jones might find. The truth is, those things are not typically found in the American household; they are found in old Myan temples or archaic tombs in Egypt. When we examine Scripture, we notice idols were constantly mentioned during the time of the Old Testament, but not as much as time went on. Now, these are just a few examples, but you can understand why our minds tend to believe idolatry is an old issue. However, we would all be wise to recognize idolatry is just as prevalent today as it was in the past. In fact, it could even be the case we have idols in our own lives without realizing it. With that in mind, let us consider three questions to ask to help us determine whether or not there are idols in our life.

First, we need to ask ourselves, “Where is my time going?” When we look to God’s Word we learn several principles about time. The Bible teaches that time is limited (James 4:13-16), that time should not be wasted (Acts 24:25), and that time needs to be used wisely (Eph. 5:16). Having said that, where are we spending our time? If we are spending more time in Facebook than we are God’s Book, we might have an issue with idolatry. If we are concerned about the amount of time that worship takes, but we have no problem spending 4 hours at the ball game, we might have an idol. Where is your time going? If most of our time is devoted to secular things rather than spiritual things, we might want to rearrange our priorities (Matt. 6:24).

Second, we need to ask ourselves, “Where is my money going?” In the United States alone, a family with two kids in sports spend an average of 1,600 dollars a year. For subscriptions, the American household spends over 900 dollars a year, and when it comes to vacation the average spent is at least 3,000 dollars. Now, certainly there is nothing wrong with allowing your kids to play sports, having some subscriptions, or going on vacation, but are we giving more to those things than we are to God? Do we enjoy putting money into those things, but we have a hard time putting money in the plate (2 Cor. 9:7)? If we are not careful, we can easily take God’s blessing (James 1:17), and use it to worship something else.

Finally, we need to ask ourselves, “What are we emotionally invested in?” The truth is we can become invested in many

different things. Some people invest in their hobbies, others invest in their work, and some invest in pure recreation. Once again, just as it is the case with time and money, there is nothing wrong with investing in various aspects of life, but we must keep our priorities straight. If we are more excited to go to a movie than the house of the Lord, we have our priorities mixed up (Ps. 122:1). If we invest more emotion into a football game than we do worship services, we have our priorities mixed up (John 4:24). Truly an idol can be anything you please when its investment is greater than God!

Without a doubt, sometimes we convince ourselves idolatry is simply an ancient practice, but there is no denying it is alive and well today. While idolatry may not look like it used to, may we never forget there can very easily be idols in our lives if we are not careful with our time, money, and emotion.

CW

## THE THREE HURDLES

John Haffner

When talking with friends and neighbors about religious matters, we should be aware that not everyone is at the same point. For example, one may be active in a manmade religious group and even study the Bible regularly. Another may have only a smattering of Biblical knowledge and an abundance of questions regarding God’s character and existence. Still another may be an avowed atheist. What’s more, all these individuals may live on the same street!

Seeing this diversity and uniqueness, we must be careful to approach each one wisely. Going to the atheist with Bible verses indicating the need to be baptized would be a fruitless endeavor. Likewise, approaching a denominationalist with materials to prove God’s existence would accomplish little. To order our evangelistic efforts, it would be helpful to imagine three hurdles for each person to overcome: the three essential questions with which we are all faced.

### 1) Does God Exist?

The crucial beginning question asks whether there is a Creator, an Intelligent Designer. Or could it be that the material universe (and mankind specifically) is merely the product of random chance? Observation of the natural world fills mankind with awe. We find a great diversity of both living and nonliving

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# Second Quarter Class Schedule/Oct 2025 - Jan 2026

## Southwest School of Bible Studies



Chapel @ 8:30 AM / Lunch @ 11:50-1:00

Time	First Year	Time	Second Year
<b>Monday</b>			
9:00-9:50	Hermeneutics 2 - Steven Lloyd	9:00-9:50	Greek 3 - Trent Kennedy
10:00-10:50	Cong. Development 2- Kennedy/Lloyd	10:00-10:50	Cong. Development 3- Kennedy/Lloyd
11:00-11:50	GSP	11:00-11:50	GSP
1:00-2:20	Godhead - Steven Lloyd	1:00-2:20	Psalms 2- Clay Bond
2:30-3:50	Leviticus - Clay Bond	2:30-3:50	Isaiah 2 - Trent Kennedy
<b>Tuesday</b>			
9:00-10:20	English Grammar 2 - Matt Gibson	9:00-11:50	Rhetoric - Justin Guess
10:30-11:50	Luke - Trent Kennedy		
1:00-3:50	Numbers - Clay Bond	1:00-2:20	1 Corinthians - Matt Gibson
			Matthew 2 - Matt Gibson
<b>Wednesday</b>			
9:00-9:50	Hermeneutics 2 - Steven Lloyd	9:00-9:50	Greek 3 - Trent Kennedy
10:00-10:50	Cong. Development - Kennedy/Lloyd	10:00-10:50	Cong. Development - Kennedy/Lloyd
11:00-11:50	GSP	11:00-11:50	GSP
1:00-2:20	Godhead - Steven Lloyd	1:00-2:20	Psalms 2 - Clay Bond
2:30-3:50	Leviticus - Clay Bond	2:30-3:50	Isaiah 2 - Trent Kennedy
<b>Thursday</b>			
9:00-10:20	English Grammar 2 - Matt Gibson	9:00-11:50	Jeremiah/Lamentations - Steven Lloyd
10:30-11:50	Luke - Trent Kennedy		
1:00-3:50	Deuteronomy - Mel Hutzler	1:00-2:20	1 Corinthians - Matt Gibson
		2:30-3:50	Matthew 2 - Matt Gibson
<b>Friday</b>			
9:00-9:50	Hermeneutics 2 - Steven Lloyd	9:00-9:50	Greek 3 - Trent Kennedy
10:00-10:50	Cong. Development - Kennedy/Lloyd	10:00-10:50	Cong. Development - Kennedy/Lloyd
11:00-11:50	GSP	11:00-11:50	GSP
1:00-3:50	Intro to Preaching - Matt Gibson	1:00-3:50	Church History - Steven Lloyd

See Academic Calendar for Special Events

forms around us, all of which coexist and depend upon one another—everything from the detailed activities of an ant or the intricate workings of the human eye all the way up to majestic and colossal mountain ranges and beautiful far-off stars and planets. There must be an impressive explanation for the visible wonders of the material world. These are not only the thoughts of poets and artists, but also of scientists! The law of cause and effect indicates that every effect must have an adequate and antecedent cause. The law of biogenesis states that life arises from pre-existing life, not from nonliving material. The laws of thermodynamics (especially the second) show that the universe is not eternal. Like a wind-up clock, the universe is gradually running down. Rational minds ask, “Who or what wound up the clock in the beginning?” We must conclude there exists a Being greater than and outside of the universe—the Uncaused Cause.

## 2) Is the Bible His Inspired Word?

After establishing the existence of God, one would naturally desire to know more about Him and His will. Is the Bible truly inspired? Or is it only the product of men? Many key characteristics separate the Bible from other works of literature and show its divine origin: First, consider that the Bible contains predictive prophecy. To give just one example, Isaiah named Cyrus as the coming leader to allow the rebuilding of Jerusalem about 200 years before the fact (Isa. 44:28; 45:1). There are approximately 800 prophecies in the Old Testament, about 300 of which have a specific focus on Christ. The “holy books” of other world religions do not come close to the Bible in this regard. Second, the Bible demonstrates scientific foreknowledge, mentioning facts related to oceanography (Psa. 8:8), astronomy (Job 26:7; 38:33), and many other fields. Third, the Bible contains verifiable history regarding the Hittite nation (Ex. 23:28), King David (1 Sam. 16:13), Pilate (Mt. 27:2; Lk. 3:1), and numerous others. Finally, when you add to all this the high code of ethics and unity of message found throughout, you can see that the Bible did not come from the mind of man.

## 3) What Must I Do to Be Saved?

Only after the first two hurdles do we reach this final and most important question. The Bible tells of sin, the transgression of God’s law, which brings separation and eternal punishment (Isa. 59:1-2; Jam. 1:15; Mt. 25:32, 46). We share in this common problem (Rom. 3:10, 23). The Bible also reveals how Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, who willingly took on the form of a servant to live as a man and to die as a sacrifice to save sinners (Mt. 1:21; Lk. 19:10; Jn. 1:1, 14; Php. 2:5-8; 1 Tim. 1:15). Those who hear and believe His teaching, repenting of their sins and confessing Christ as Lord, choose to be immersed in water for the remission of sins and to be added by the Lord to His church

(Mk. 16:15-16; Acts 2:37-38, 47; 1 Pet. 3:21). Once we have been united with His death, we live as new people with a new purpose (Rom. 6:5-6; 2 Cor. 5:17-21).

We want to win souls (Prov. 11:30). To do so requires wisdom. We must remember that each soul stands at a different point along the path of understanding. May we run life’s race with endurance and assist others as well (Heb. 12:1-2). By thoughtfully addressing these three fundamental questions in their proper order, we can help remove obstacles and guide honest hearts toward the truth.

CW

# PERHAPS

Joey Davis

I was asked recently if there is any possibility of looking at a current event and definitively labeling it as the providence of God. I responded that such is not possible because in providing today, God does not show His hand as He so clearly did when He, in time past, effected His Will by miracles. We cannot definitively label a good outcome as God’s providence. Even Jesus reminded us that the evil and good are often equal recipients of God’s blessings in the form of rain and sun (Mat. 5:45), and Solomon said that time and chance happen to all men (Ecc. 9:11). The follow-up question was also a really good question. It was something along the line of, “Then how are we to know if a situation is God’s providence?” The seeming thought is that if we do not know, then we might miss an opportunity to respond and use God’s helping hand effectively. There are some fundamental realities about God’s providence that will help us with these kinds of questions and concerns.

First, the fact of God’s providence is certain, whether we can track and label it or not. Mordecai’s statement to Esther is very helpful. He said, “For if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father’s house will perish. Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this” (Est. 4:14).

Several important details about providence can be gleaned from this statement: One, Mordecai and Esther were no better than we are about identifying God’s unseen hand, hence the “perhaps.” Two, God’s providential deliverance “will arise” somehow some way, that is a certainty in the matter. Three, the variable yet to be introduced was Esther’s involvement in the providential working of God for the benefit of a nation. Esther

could respond as if she had come to this place and time for this involvement, or she could fearfully refuse and likely perish. However, we see that she leaned into the boisterous wind of uncertainty, trusting that God was at work, and we know from our very informed perspective that He was at work.

Second, we do not need to accurately label a series of unfolding events as providence to know how best to respond to the situation. In the previous example, Mordecai did not say, "This is definitely God putting you in the place to do something, therefore you must do something." The best he could offer was "perhaps." Would knowing really impact what Esther needed to do in that situation? Not at all. Admittedly, it probably would have been comforting to know that everything was going to work out fine, but that is an unnecessary luxury for God's people who are willing to trust and act.

An even more helpful example to this point is captured in the letter to Philemon. Onesimus ran away from his master, Philemon. While a fugitive of sorts, Onesimus encountered Paul, by whom he was taught the Gospel. Now, the new convert, Onesimus, is headed home to Philemon with a letter in hand from Paul. Consider Paul's reasoning with Philemon about what had transpired: "For perhaps he departed for a while for this purpose, that you might receive him forever, no longer as a slave but more than a slave—a beloved brother, especially to me but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord" (Phe. 15-16). Notice that Paul did not say that God's unseen hand purposefully broke your hold on Onesimus so that he could come to me and obey the Gospel. What he did say was "perhaps" this has unfolded in correlation with God's unseen hand. Paul then proceeds to tell Onesimus how to respond to the "perhaps" of God's providence. This advice includes receiving him as a "beloved brother" and "as you would me." Additionally, Paul advised Philemon to allow him the opportunity to absorb any damages resulting from the incident. In reality, did Paul tell Philemon to do anything other than what might reasonably be expected as part of Christian deportment? Not really. However, the reminder of God's active involvement with an unseen hand would certainly encourage the proper response.

For us, there are practical lessons in these accounts. We must trust that as God's eternal purpose is unfolding in our world, God has not stepped away--He remains actively invested in the outcome. This no longer involves miraculous intervention, but it does involve His unseen hand for and through the lives of individuals, groups (i.e., congregations of God's people), and events. Knowing that we have His help, even though we cannot see His hand, should remind us and motivate us to look at unfolding events through the lens of "perhaps." Then, we should respond in ways that reflect our confident trust in our God, who is determined to provide. In the Colossian letter, we read:

Tychicus, a beloved brother, faithful minister, and fellow servant in the Lord, will tell you all the news about me. I am

sending him to you for this very purpose, that he may know your circumstances and comfort your hearts, with Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They will make known to you all things which are happening here (Col. 4:7-9).

Did God, through a runaway slave, orchestrate the salvation of a soul and the aid of an apostle? Perhaps.

CW

## LEARNING TO PRAY LIKE JESUS

John Baker

Jesus probably spent more time in prayer than anyone who has ever lived. So fervent was His prayer life that the disciples (who already knew a thing or two about prayer) once begged, "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1). Far more insightful and fascinating than the amount of time Jesus spent in prayer is the content of Jesus' prayers and petitions. In an effort to be more like Him, we should ask, "What would Jesus pray for?"

**He would pray about God's will** — "May Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6:10). Jesus subjected His will to the Father's (Jn 17:4), and thus became our perfect example. Our prayer life ought also to focus on God and His will. Prayers are many times concerned too much with our own will and too little with God's. James rebukes this attitude in us: "You ought to say, if the Lord wills we will live and also do this or that" (James 4:15). The Lord wants us to be concerned with His will being accomplished in our hearts, in our lives, and in the lives of others!

**He would pray for His enemies** — One of the most heart-wrenching prayers in the entire Bible was uttered on the cross: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). Jesus prayed for those who were guilty of putting Him to death. While God will not forgive an impenitent sinner, Jesus realized how desperately these men needed the salvation He was providing. How much more should Christians be willing to forbear persecutions in bringing others to the Lord? We should bless our enemies by praying on their behalf (Matt 5:44-45).

**He would pray for unity in the church** — Before His death, Jesus uttered a magnificent prayer on our behalf in John 17: "that they may be one, as You, Father are in Me, and as I am in You, that they may be one in us" (John 17:21). Jesus was not praying for unity at the expense of truth, but make no mistake, He was praying that Christians be united in God's cause. Around our brotherhood today there are churches that have been splintered and fractured by personality disputes, sin in the church, and

the continual turmoil of brethren trying to be, “Greatest in the kingdom.” Mark these words: Jesus prayed for the kind of unity that only comes with a firm commitment to the truth and a humble spirit displayed on the part of all. Let’s pray for more churches like that.

**He would pray for those who are struggling in faith** — As He prayed on a mountaintop, Jesus witnessed His disciples struggling in the midst of a storm (Mk 6:47-48). Jesus knew this storm was testing their faith in Him, and we should have no doubt that He prayed for them. How often are we concerned for those we see who are struggling? Many of us have daily opportunities to minister to people that need our love and encouragement, but we do well to remember Jesus’ example: He prayed for His disciples before He walked out to them on the sea. Let’s remember those who are struggling with storms of their own when we pray.

**He would pray with gratitude** — When Jesus rejoiced, it was because He was grateful to God (Luke 10:21-22). The Bible inseparably links the characteristics of real, lasting joy and gratitude toward God (cf. Phil 4:6-7). Our prayers ought to reflect a genuine sense of thankfulness for God’s abundant blessings (James 1:17). One of the greatest sins we can commit is to fail to be thankful (cf. Rom. 1:21). Learning to pray like Jesus means that we should spend more time, “counting our many blessings” as we pray.

How’s your prayer life? Do you pray like Jesus?

CW

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when hearing such inspired accounts as the creation, the fall of man in the Garden of Eden, the global flood, the ten plagues, Israel’s crossing the Red Sea, and the fall of Jericho. What great questions arise in the hearts of our children when they observe their parents partaking of the Lord’s Supper, giving of their means every Lord’s day, or hearing the gospel proclaimed from the pulpit? What golden opportunities are missed when we fail to set up stones by faithfully providing opportunities for our children to hear the Word of God!

**Can our children ask, “What mean these stones” if we do not live before them daily, the Christian life, and make decisions that focus their attention on spiritual matters rather than worldly affairs?** Imagine the great opportunities to teach the fear of the Lord when asked such questions as, “Why am I not allowed to go school dances?” “Why do you not drink alcohol like Johnnie’s parents?” “Why do we attend worship services even on vacation?” “Why do we not watch that television program; everyone else is?” “Why do I miss ball

practices/games when the coach schedules them for Wednesday night?” How can our children ask, “What mean these stones?” if we fail to set up memorial stones of faithfulness to God in our own lives?

**And if our children ask, “What mean these stones,” will we be able to give a Bible answer to establish them in the faith of God’s Word?** The Hebrews writer rebuked his readers, saying, “For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God” (Heb. 5:12). We ought to be as Abraham, of whom the Lord said, “For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord” (Gen. 18:19). How can we bring our children up “in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” if we are destitute of Bible knowledge and lacking in spiritual understanding?

“What mean these stones?” Brethren, let us purpose in our hearts and prepare ourselves to soundly teach our children, to live a life before them that is characterized by godliness, and to provide for them opportunities to study and to learn about their Creator. Let us not set up stones of stumbling but memorial stones that will direct their hearts and minds to their Savior and King.

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“To Know Jesus and...make Him known”

## From the Director's desk

Thank You Cody and Courtney Westbrook!



Trent Kennedy  
*Director*  
SWSBS

**B**rother Cody Westbrook and his family have ended their time serving the Southwest church of Christ as the local preacher. Their family is loved and will be missed. Many have offered words of thanksgiving and encouragement to the Westbrook family, on behalf of the faculty and staff of SWSBS, I want to offer our sincerest “thank you!” to them as well (cf 2 Thessalonians 2:13).

Cody, a 2009 graduate of SWSBS, served the congregation AND the school for over 10 years. Cody taught many courses in history, Old Testament, and New Testament where his love for Paul's epistles were clear to all. Courtney (whose dad is alumnus Kirk Tooley), served the school in many ways. Foremost in my mind, she served in the Wives' Program as the instructor of the book of James. I know that all the ladies who attended her classes benefitted greatly as well.

The SW congregation will miss the Westbrook family. We will miss both Cody and Courtney's contributions to the work of the school. For the past 10 years, SWSBS students and graduates have looked to Cody both as an example of a gospel preacher and as an advisor (cf. 1 Corinthians 4:16; Proverbs 11:14). We know that Cody and his family will do a great work in West Huntsville, Alabama. It is our hope that the strong relationship we have with Cody and the great confidence the administration has in him will bring him back on special occasions for teaching in short-term capacities. No matter what, Cody has been and will continue to be a champion and friend of SWSBS.

Cody and Courtney, thank you for all you have done. May God bless your future endeavors!

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