



*For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth... in every place.
(1 Thessalonians 1:8)*

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Schedule of Services

Sunday

Worship	9:30 AM
Bible Study	10:30 AM
Worship	6:00 PM

Wednesday

Bible Study	1:30 PM
Bible Study	7:00 PM

Bible Call

(618) 667-9603

www.collinsvillecoc.org

YOU CAN'T CALL A DANDELION A ROSE

A young boy played on a little league football team. He was quite a competitor and gave all he had in every game. Once, in a losing effort, as he walked off the field, someone tried to comfort him about the loss. He quickly replied, "We didn't lose. We just ran out of time." His rationalization did not change the outcome however.

You can call a dandelion a rose, but that doesn't make it one. To call a dandelion a rose is misguided. It is being dishonest. It is to deceive. Many do the very same thing with sin. To many, murderers are merely misguided. Premarital sex and living together unmarried are called love—or maybe a convenience. Homosexuality is called an alternative lifestyle. Drunkenness is called a disease. Adultery is called an extramarital affair or a meaningful relationship. There are white lies, delinquents who are products of society, dress that is fashionable and on and on. But there is no mention of sin. However, it does not matter what we call it. It does not matter how we rationalize. Sin is still sin!

According to the apostle John, sin is lawlessness (1 John 3:). The word translated "lawlessness" literally means "going beyond the mark." God has drawn lines in the sand, so to speak, with His law—with His commands. When one goes beyond a mark He has drawn, it is sin. It doesn't matter how far beyond the mark one goes.

To illustrate, in a basketball game, one cannot step over the in bound line when throwing the ball in. The referee will call an infraction even if you just have your toe on the line. It does not matter whether it was intentional or not. The one stepping over the line broke the rule. He went over the line. It is an infraction. It does not matter what he calls it or how he excuses it. He might excuse it by saying it was an accident. He might have tripped. He might not have known the rule. It does not matter. It is an infraction.

So it is with sin. Not matter what one might call it or rationalize about it, sin is still sin. It is a work of the flesh (1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Galatians 5:19-21). How is it that we deceive ourselves about sin? I realize there are sins of

weakness. None of us are perfect, and sometimes we just fail. We know and understand we have failed. We feel the guilt. We want to do something about it. We repent and ask forgiveness. That's what God expects (1 John 1:9). However, there are sins that are committed and just ignored. Sometimes we convince ourselves it is not sin. How does that happen? There may be different ways. It might be something that we convince ourselves because it is pleasurable to us. Sin is pleasurable (Hebrews 11:25). Being pleasurable, we give in to the pleasure, even though there might be a little prick of the conscience. The pleasure drives us to commit the same act again, with similar results. Eventually, the conscience becomes calloused, and we have convinced ourselves there is nothing wrong. Or, it might be that, when the conscience is pricked, one begins to rationalize. If the sin is a gray area, or a sin regarding which one has little knowledge, rather than study to learn, he rationalizes that it is not openly condemned and continues in the sin. It is pleasurable. It is desired. For instance, some will rationalize with "Oh! That's the preacher's opinion" rather than study the matter thoroughly.

Why is it that we rationalize and convince ourselves of these things? Is it because we want the best of two worlds—the pleasures of sin and the hope of God? However, we must realize there is no middle ground (Luke 11:23cf.).

Do not let Satan deceive you. He is called the "deceiver of the whole world" (Revelation 12:9). He is crafty (Ephesians 6:10-11). One cannot love the world and God at the same time (1 John 2:15-17). One must choose whom he will serve (Matthew 6:24; Romans 6:16).

It doesn't matter how hard we try to convince ourselves. A dandelion called a rose is still a dandelion. Likewise, sin called by any other name is still sin!

TLM

A False Doctrine of Mormonism Revealed and Refuted

The Mormon Church is the product of Joseph Smith's imagination, absurd claims and false teaching. In the late 1820's, this man allegedly unearthed a set of "golden plates" that had been buried near his home in northern New York. He claimed that the inscription found on these tables contained God's final revelation to mankind. The Book of Mormon is the result of his supposed translation of the writings from these "golden tablets." By the mid 1830's, several naive souls were duped into following this man and his foolish doctrine. Followers of Joseph Smith view him as a prophet of God.

Proponents of Mormonism claim Biblical authorization for their "Final Testament." They assert that passages in the writings of Ezekiel describe the Book of Mormon. Ezekiel's message says, *"Again the word of the Lord came to me saying, 'As for you, son of man, take a stick for yourself and write on it: 'For Judah and for the children of Israel, his compassion.' Then take another stick and write on it: 'For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel his companion.' Then join the one to another for yourself into one stick, and they will become one in your hand'"* (Ezekiel 37:15- 17).

According to the so called scholars in the Mormon Church, the *"stick of Judah"* represents the Bible and the *"stick of Joseph"* symbolizes the Book of Mormon. They believe that Ezekiel's message is a prophecy divulging that the Bible and the Book of Mormon would eventually represent God's complete, unified, and accurate message for mankind. Advocates of the Mormon faith sincerely believe that the Book of Mormon is the fulfillment of this prophecy and that members of the Mormon Church are truly "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints."

What does the Bible say? It is essential to note that this Mormon theory is not substantiated in the Scripture! In fact, the context itself explains the meaning of God's message to the prophet Ezekiel (Ezekiel 37:15- 27). According to the framework of these passages, *"the stick of Judah"* represented the southern kingdom made up of two tribes (Judah and Benjamin) and *"the stick of Joseph"* stood for the northern kingdom (which included ten tribes). As Ezekiel joined the two sticks together, it symbolized how God would someday reunite His people (Ezekiel 17-20).

It is also stated in the prophetic message that God

"will make them one nation in the land" and "one king shall be king over them" (Ezekiel 37:22,24). What exactly does this mean? The message in its immediate context identifies that God would someday gather a remnant from among the heathens wherein they had been scattered and He would bring them into their own land as a united people. However, the ultimate fulfillment of this prophecy is realized in the establishment of the church, the new Israel (II Samuel 7:12-14; Isaiah 11:1-5; Ezekiel 37:27; II Corinthians 6:16; Romans 2:28,29; 9:6; I Peter 2:9). In the Lord's church, all people are united under the cross of Jesus (Galatians 3:26,27; 6:16; Ephesians 2:13-19).

It is disheartening to see religious minded people misuse and abuse the Scripture (II Peter 3:14-16). God's message to mankind is stated in very simple and clear terms (I Corinthians 14:33). True Bible students will always approach God's Word with respect as they attempt to rightly divide *"the word of truth"* (II Timothy 2:15). Brethren, I pray and trust that our God will bless each of you with a beautiful Lord's Day and an awesome week.

In brotherly love,

Kevin E. Key

**Mabery's
Minutes**



Let me encourage you to consider attending PTP. The name "Polishing the Pulpit" comes from the early years when it was a preacher's workshop.

However, it has grown into a major event for the whole family. I think there were around two-thousand in attendance last year. There were over two-thousand lessons given. There were tracks for preachers, elders/deacons, women, teens/children, evangelism/missions, marriage/family and more. The 2012 dates are August 17-23. If you cannot stay for the entire program, you can go for the special "Spiritual Weekend" series. PTP is held each year in Sevierville, TN.

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