



*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](http://www.collinsvillecoc.org)

## IT DOES NOT REALLY MATTER

In a previous article, it was pointed out how people often rationalize away their sins by calling them by something other than sin. The little boy could not face losing the game so he said they just ran out of time. Calling a dandelion a rose does not make it smell any better. Likewise, one can call a sin by another name, but that does not change it.

There are ways in which people deceive themselves other than rationalizing with different names and terms, however. For instance, someone might experience some chest discomfort or discomfort in one or both arms, back, neck or jaw. Often, such matters are passed off with a wave of the hand, so to speak. We convince ourselves that it is nothing. We convince ourselves that it really does not matter. Yet, we are warned constantly that such symptoms are possible warning signs of an impending heart attack. Rather than seeking out and depending upon a doctor's opinion, we will rationalize our way into deeper trouble.

So it is many times when it comes to our spiritual lives. When it comes to what many call grey areas, we begin to rationalize. When it comes to what many consider as "small" sins that are insignificant, we begin to rationalize. I guess we convince ourselves that God does not really care about those matters and will overlook them. We must figure that, in time, He just lets it go.

I remember some years ago a man that was approached about a sinful matter. It was not what most would consider a major thing. In fact, though the Bible is clear on the matter, some try to place the matter in the realm of opinion, or in that "grey" area. Admittedly, one must make a diligent and thorough study of the matter for a full knowledge. The man approached was not concerned about the matter. He was not interested in studying further. He was not interested in learning more. He merely replied with a shrug of the shoulders, "If that's all I have to worry about..." and walked away.

Friend, the last I read in the Bible, the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23). Paul did not write, "The wages of sin is death, except for small, insignificant sins." Our God

is a holy and righteous God (Habakkuk 1:13). He expects us to be holy as He is holy (1 Peter 1:15-16). Matters that may seem trivial to many men are not trivial to God (Proverbs 6:16-19). Time might help wounds heal, but the Bible does not teach that time forgives sins, even small ones.

Another way we often deceive ourselves is to act as though and convince ourselves that God does not see our sins. We may feel safe and secure when the elders, the preachers, and our brothers do not know of our sins. There may be those times in secret that there is no one there to help us overcome temptation. There may be those times when we are among those in the world and we act like the world. Our brothers and sisters will never know the difference. It is probable that our conscience will bother us in such situations and we turn back to God in repentance. Yet, if we are not careful, we can harden our conscience. When that is the case, we begin to forget about God. We may think He, too, does not know of our sins. I remember reading the story of a little girl who had been given specific instructions by her mother about playing in the attic. She always obeyed those instructions until one day temptation overcame her. Before disobeying, however, she scratched out the eyes of the old man in a picture hanging in the attic. It had not been her discipline but the old man that had kept her from yielding to temptation. We may be able to scratch the eyes out of our conscience, but we cannot scratch the eyes out of God. He knows the secrets of the heart (Psalm 44:21; Psalm 139:1-3).

Always remember that God knows your sin and will not overlook your sin. Yet, He will forgive your sin (Acts 2:38; 1 John 1:9).

TLM

## I Just Want to Fit In

### Trent E. Key

**T**he need for social acceptance can play a significant role with how we act in order to fit in with our society. Television commercials encourage us to buy their product because “everyone is using it.” Clothing departments encourage us to wear the name brands because those brands are the “in things to wear.” And those that don’t participate in the popular choice aren’t considered to be a part of the “in crowd.”

Teenagers often face peer pressure from their peers in this way. As teenagers, we were pressured by our peers to do certain things in order to be accepted – have sex outside of marriage, use foul language, lie, participate in the use of drugs and alcohol, etc. In the minds of most, fitting in with the popular crowd brings happiness and an ease to life. Even though society believes it controls the popular choice, does that make the popular choice right? Our society is simply trying to persuade us to be something that we are not.

As Christians, we are to shine as lights throughout the entire world (Matthew. 6:13-16). The Scriptures teach that people must see a difference in our lives compared to the lives of those in the world. Often, because we are different, the world will bring social persecution upon us as we shine our lights. Even though the world sees us as social outcasts, consider our outcome as Christians.

Choosing to shine as lights in the world will do two things. First, it will either cause those who are of the darkness - those of the world - to abstain from the light or provoke them to become a part of it. In other words, those who participate in ungodly activities will flee from those participating in godliness. Light is known for exposing the things that are hidden in the darkness. And for that, a person might become embarrassed and regretful of his actions. If he is truly attracted to the light, his conscious will produce godly sorrow leading to repentance (2 Corinthians 7:10).

Second, those who shine as lights will attract others who are trying to shine as lights too. ***“When we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus, His Son, cleanses us from all sin”*** (1 John 1:7). Those of who have similar personalities and characteristics often are attracted to each other.

The saying, “opposites attract” is not true with light and darkness. As Christians, we do not have to give ourselves over to the ways of the world in order to be a part of the “in crowd.” Jesus Christ shed His blood so that we could be a part of His crowd (John 3:16)! Jesus distinguished that people are either in the church – His crowd, or outside of the church - the world’s crowd (Matthew 16:18; Matthew 7:21-23).

Christianity isn’t the popular decision for most today. Jesus Christ wasn’t a popular choice in His day either. Peter, an apostle of Christ who knew that Jesus was the Christ and

the Son of God, denied any accusation that linked him to Jesus. He understood that being with Jesus could have caused him pain and even death. The most significant incident that declared Jesus’ unpopularity was the suffering He endured during the painful and horrific death on the cross because people chose to be against Him - the true Light (John 1:9).

How do we overcome the peer pressure and the thoughts of believing we do not fit in? Understanding there is more than this earthly life is the beginning of it all. Most things our peers pressure us to do are often things that God does not want us to participate in. These actions often cause us to put Christ through open shame yet again (Hebrews 6:6).

It doesn’t matter what our peers say we should do, or how society says we should act and respond toward others. But what does matter is the plan that God has laid out for us and the pattern by which we are to live.

Jesus declared,

***‘Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. And where I go you know and they way you know.’ Thomas said to Him, ‘Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?’ Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me’*** (John 14:1-6).

The words of Jesus reveal it clearly. Society might decide the popular choice for the world. But the true choice has already been laid out before us. Jesus Christ is the Way, Truth, and Life.

**Mabery's  
Minutes**



This weekend and next are the scheduled men’s and women’s “retreats,” February 4 and 11 respectively. Weekends are precious. Everyone has

projects to complete or catch up on. Yes, there are basketball games, shopping trips, and other matters that could take our time, too. Consider this, however. Where better could you spend 3-4 hours of your time? Consider the fellowship with those of like precious faith. Consider the lessons for growth provided by knowledgeable and well-prepared speakers. There are many things you could do. I challenge you to think of your spiritual being. Feed yourself spiritually!

Collinsville Church of Christ  
1400 Troy Road  
Collinsville, IL 62234  
Phone: (618) 667-6708  
Email: [collinsvillecoc@att.net](mailto:collinsvillecoc@att.net)