

# PathLights

*"Your word is a lamp to my feet  
and a light to my path"  
Psalm 119:104*

April 15, 2018

## Struck Out Lately?

by Frank Himmel

Babe Ruth was a legendary hitter, for decades the all-time home run champ. He swatted 714 homers in his career, about one in every twelve at bats. Did you know that he also struck out 1,330 times, nearly twice for every home run he hit? It just goes to show that even the best in the business cannot deliver every time. That is something we would do well to remember in our work for the Lord.

Have you ever "struck out" when asking someone to come to worship with you? If not, you have likely never tried! Do not despair. Just keep swinging; you will find some souls still interested in spiritual things.

Maybe you have "struck out" in an attempt to teach someone the gospel. It may have been at the first study or two, or possibly after months or even years of effort. Does that surprise you? Of course it is disappointing, but the Master Teacher warned us it would be this way. In the Parable of the Sower, Jesus said some folks' hearts are like the soil beside the road: they hear, "then the devil comes and takes away the word from their heart, so that they may not believe and be saved" (Luke 8:12). Neither Jesus nor His apostles reached everyone they taught. Keep sowing.



Perhaps you "struck out" in trying to restore a brother or sister overtaken in a fault, or warning one of potential dangers in the course he was pursuing, or simply trying to encourage one to greater heights of service to God. Sometimes brethren do not respond favorably to admonitions, no matter how sincerely given. Shall we quit? No! "But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called 'Today,' so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin" (Hebrews 3:13).

Preachers, have you ever "struck out" with one of your sermons? Let's face it, not every one is a home run (a big hit). What adds to the frustration is that often there is a great disparity between the amount of work put into a lesson and the visible response to it. Shall we study less or give up preaching? Absolutely not! "Be ready in season and out of season" (2 Timothy 4:2).

Audiences need to remember this, too, Preachers have their good and bad days, just like everyone else. A good preacher is one who consistently has easy-to-understand, Scriptural, useful lessons; not necessarily one who often moves you to tears or entertains.

What we all must remember is that the Lord judges on the basis of efforts, not results. If we work as we should, He will be pleased, and results will come.

"Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary" (Galatians 6:9). ■

# The Spirit of the Sons of Disobedience

by Frank Himmel

Ephesians 2 begins, “And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of the world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience” (vv. 1-2).

In the Bible the expression *sons of* or *children of* may denote being characterized by something. People are sons of what they imitate. Thus, our behavior might show us to be sons of the devil (John 8:44) or sons of God (Ephesians 5:1); sons of darkness or sons of light (1 Thessalonians 5:5). Joseph was renamed Barnabas, which means son of encouragement (Acts 4:36).

Twice in the book of Ephesians, Paul mentions the sons of disobedience. He pictures disobedience as a father, a kind of perverse role model. In our text, the Apostle speaks of his spirit working in his children. What is that spirit, that disposition?

It is the spirit of *pride*. It says my life is my own and no one is going to tell me how to live it.

It is the spirit of *ingratitude*. It says I feel little obligation to live for God in view of all He gives me.

It is the spirit of *self-centeredness*. It says focus on me: my perspective, my wants, my problems, how things affect me. Other considerations must take a back seat.

It is the spirit of *pleasure*. It says that enjoyment and happiness are what life is all about, and I will do whatever I think brings me the most of that.

It is the spirit of *popularity*. It says I am more concerned about impressing people than pleasing God.

The spirit of disobedience might or might not include all these specifics, and it might or might not actually say these things. In practicality, however, this is how it operates. Surely we all need to purge such thinking!

What about Paul’s other reference in Ephesians to the sons of disobedience? It is a stern reminder to all, Christians included: “Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience” (5:6). ■



## Service Leaders for the Week

	Sunday	Wednesday
GREETER	Greg Winget	David Gray
SONG LEADER	Bruce Williams	Gary Hagler
OPENING PRAYER	Steven Turner	
LORD’S SUPPER		
BREAD	Mike Zachry	
CUP	Albert Lee Harrison	
CONTRIBUTION PRAYER	Adam Wilson	
SERMON/INVITATION	Frank Himmel	Gary Hagler
CLOSING PRAYER	Albert Harrison Sr	Adam Gibson