

THE MONTHLY YOUTH CHALLENGE

December 22, 2013

About one year ago, Brother Matt Jones, one of the Forrest Hill ministers, and I began an effort to help our youth grow in the knowledge of the Gospel. We have called it the “Monthly Youth Challenge.” Each month, a topic, along with memory verses, is assigned to the youth of the participating congregations. Each member is given a study guide on the material that either Matt or I have created. The participants are required to study the assigned topic independently of parents, preachers, elders, or Bible commentaries. The purpose for this is to equip them with the ability to properly study the Word of God. Also, the desire is for each child to be able to use the whole Bible as its best commentary. Though we understand that many sound and faithful men have written great commentaries on the various books of the Bible, we want our youth to rely upon the Bible itself as their main source of understanding.

The MYC takes place on the second Sunday of each month at 3:30 pm and the location is rotated amongst the participating congregations. The purpose for this is to make it as convenient as possible for parents and students, alike. Sunday is already a day that has been set aside by member families and does not require an additional day during the week. The MYC takes about an hour to complete, which gives participants time to return to evening worship services.

Some of the past challenges have been:

1. Have a Bible study with a non-Christian (a lot of time was spent with them on technique).
2. Be able to distinguish between the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of time, as taught in Matthew 24.
3. Defend baptism as essential to salvation.
4. Come to a scriptural understanding whether or not the use of the instrument and hand clapping is accepted by God in worship to Him.
5. Effectively present the plan of salvation to someone and understand the six steps that lead to salvation.
6. Be able to explain **why** dancing is sinful.
7. Know why we go to church and that it is a scriptural statement to say.
8. Understand what the Bible teaches on heaven.
9. Have a religious conversation with a friend via text messaging.

What Brother Jones and I have designed is a very practical way for our youth to be able to “*be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear*” (1 Pet. 3:15). The topics are decided upon by asking the youth what challenges they are facing in everyday life as they interact with their classmates at school, the work place, or social events. We also want to give our young people an opportunity to be able to associate with other Christians of their age group and to be able to get better acquainted with them. This is done by having each team comprised of children from the various congregations that participate. The teams are randomly chosen at each meeting, except for the previous month’s winning team, which is allowed to remain the same.

The challenges are carried out in the same manner they would be encountered in daily life. Each team member must be able to answer the questions asked in relation to the challenge and are expected to be

able to quote the assigned memory verses. The proctor takes upon himself the necessary role in order to fulfill the challenge. Another one of our goals is to teach our young people not to argue about or try to win an argument while discussing the Bible with someone, but instead to endeavor always to present “the truth in love” (Eph. 4:15). We continually teach these young men and women that if one is offended by the Gospel, that cannot be helped, but if one is offended by the presentation of the Gospel, then the technique must be amended.

Our next MYC will be held on January 12, and the challenge is to be able to successfully defend the Gospel against the five tenets of Calvinism. Brethren, many adults are not able to adequately do this, but a majority of our youth can do so now after having devoted many hours of study to this effort.

Parents, please join with the elders and our youth leaders to encourage our young people to participate in this very valuable work as we help them prepare for eternity. Anyone interested in helping with this work can speak with Brother Eric Howell or me and we will be glad to partner with you in this effort. With the help of each member, the Monthly Youth Challenge can be one of our most effective tools in making sure our children get to heaven!