

Pleasant Valley
Church of Christ

3317 Amidon
Wichita KS 67204
(316) 838-4195
www.letjesusleadus.org

Schedule of Services

Sunday

Classes 9:30 am
Worship 10:30 am
Evening 6:00 pm

Wednesday

Classes 7:30 pm

The Pleasant Valley Church of Christ is a non-denominational group of believers who are committed to following Jesus in our attitudes, our relationships, and our worship. If you want the same thing in your life, please contact us. We'd like to help.

Unless otherwise noted, all scripture quotations are from the New King James Version Bible, Thomas Nelson Publishers.

Wings



*"But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles" (Isaiah 40:31)*

January 6, 2008

Little by little

by David King

"I will not drive them out from before you in one year, lest the land become desolate and the beasts of the field become too numerous for you. Little by little I will drive them out from before you, until you have increased, and you inherit the land" (Ex. 23:29-30).

When God gave Canaan to the Israelites, He did not expect, or even want, them to completely subjugate the entire land immediately. Israel was still numerically small, and although God could have easily helped them drive out all their enemies at once, He knew they were not ready to hold it. Indeed, it took Israel seven years to complete the conquest of Canaan (compare Josh. 14:7, 10 and Deut. 2:14). The slow takeover was not a sign of laziness on Israel's part, but part of God's plan. Had they tried to take the whole land too quickly, they would have spread themselves too thin, thus endangering their survival.

This is one of those universal laws that governs every area of life. New Year's resolutions to lose weight or get out of debt are not fulfilled instantaneously, but require commitment to a long-range program of incremental improvement. In the business world, reckless growth may produce fantastic sales figures for a short time, but the boom will quickly turn to bust if a company is not capable of handling the large increase in responsibilities. Military campaigns must account not only for taking ground, but holding what is taken.

It's no different in Christianity. Look at the growth pattern of the early church. The gospel was confined to the walls of Jerusalem for the

first few years, allowing the new religion to gain a strong foothold before launching out. When the apostles began to venture out, it was in slow measured steps: Judea, Samaria, then Syria, Cilicia, Cyprus, and onward in an ever-expanding series of concentric circles. The new religion could not expand faster than its ability to absorb its gains.

An individual's personal development is governed by the same rule. As Christians, each of us is obligated to increase in faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control, and other positive character traits (2 Pet. 1:5-8). But these qualities are not instantly conferred on us the moment we are baptized. They require a lot of patient study and practice, which takes time: "Solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Heb. 5:14).

It follows, therefore, that Christians should not be expected to meet certain performance standards for which they are not prepared. Not all can be teachers, nor should they be (Jas. 3:1). Novices should not even be considered when selecting elders and deacons (1 Tim. 3:6,10). Only the spiritually mature should be entrusted with the role of restoring the fallen (Gal. 6:1).

The way to heaven is a long journey, taken one step at a time—"little by little." The one who cooperates with that fact is more likely to finish the journey. We should set our expectations high, but not so high that we get discouraged and flame out before the task is done.