



FIRST  
EVANGELICAL  
FREE  
CHURCH

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# In The First Place...

## ATTENDING TO THE WORD OF GOD

*“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.” Deut. 6:4-9*

My professor, Dr. H. Wayne Johnson, has pointed out that in this passage we find the structure for worship on Sunday morning, which revolves around the Word of God; we are to first hear, then respond to the Word of God, in that order. His structure not only applies to our weekly Sunday morning worship, however; it also applies to our daily reading of Scripture. This month I'd like to deal with the first part of Dr. Johnson's structure; in August I'll handle the second part. I hope these articles will help us to approach God's Word more appropriately.

This passage is often referred to as the Shema. The reason it is called the Shema is because the first word, in Hebrew, is *shema*, which means “hear.” Our relationship with God is initiated by God – he speaks to us first, in his Word. Our responsibility is to first hear or attend to God's Word – only then can we respond to it. While at first blush this first part seems to be the simplest part of Dr. Johnson's structure, it is actually more difficult than you would think. We live in a world where it is hard to attend to anything. Our media saturated lives result in boredom with anything that doesn't stimulate our senses or entertain us. Our busy lives make it hard to find time to hear God's Word, and when we do read it our minds are often flooded with the host of things we have going on. Paying attention to anything is frankly very difficult for many of us, but if we're going to respond to God appropriately we have to understand God's Word.

**“Our responsibility is to first hear or attend to God's Word – only then can we respond to it.”**

So how do we attend to the Word of God amidst the chaos of our lives? We need to find time to pay close attention to his Word and we need to remove distractions that inhibit us from attending to God's Word. I challenge you to do that this month. Evaluate your schedule – is your schedule filled with the right stuff? There are a lot of good things to do, but not all good things are best things. Is your schedule helping you and your family attend to the Word, or is it hindering you? Television and internet surfing are not only major time wasters; they also desensitize us – they make it harder for us to pay attention to anything. So one way we can remove distractions and pay attention to God's Word is by limiting our time in front of the TV and on the internet.

When I say we need to remove the distractions from our lives and reevaluate our schedule, I'm not recommending a retreat from the world. We have a tendency to separate our religious lives from our professional and personal lives; we compartmentalize our lives. But that is the very thing we must not do, if we want to really attend to the Word of God. Quite to the contrary – if we want to attend to the Word we must keep the Word ever before our eyes and ever on our lips (*talk of them when you lie down, rise, etc. – bind them on your hand, write them on your gates, etc.*). We have to saturate every part of our lives with the Word of God; our private and public lives; our personal and corporate lives; we need to attend to God's Word in the midst of family, work, school, relationships, sickness, sorrow, etc.

I challenge you to make space within your life this month to attend to God's Word. Next month we will look at how deep “hearing” will lead us to a deeper response to God's Word.

Pastor Josh Black

## CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

### KIDS GREAT GETAWAY

Kids Great Getaway summer camp is July 20-24 for kids entering 4<sup>th</sup> thru 6<sup>th</sup> grades. Registration brochures are available at the Welcome Center and the church office.

### MOMMY & ME PLAYGROUP

Mommy & Me meets on the second and fourth Monday of the month from 9:00-10:30 a.m. during the summer. Moms, babies, toddlers, and preschoolers welcome!

**July 12** - McLaughlin Park's water fountains on 7th St. in Valley Center. Kids wear swim suits and bring sunscreen.

**July 26** - Meet at Leah Will's home

Contact Jill Yowell for more information or if you have questions.



### FIRST FREE'S 60TH ANNIVERSARY

On Sunday, July 25, First Free will celebrate its 60th Anniversary. We will worship together in one service at 10:00 a.m. with former Associate Pastor Steve LoVellette as our guest speaker. Sunday evening there will be a Song and Hymn Sing in the Worship Center at 6:00 p.m. followed by an ice cream/pie social.



Matt and Christi Brown announce the birth of **Brooke Elizabeth** on June 13, 2010

Jamin and Leah Will announce the birth of **Joseph Daniel** on June 21, 2010

BJ and Leslie Parsons announce the birth of **Kali Amber** on June 22, 2010



*Dear First Free Family,  
Thank you for praying for us with the passing of my mother. Your heartfelt sympathies have been greatly appreciated. Thank you so much for the beautiful Dracina plant. It was comforting to have the whole family together to celebrate her life. We are grateful that she is no longer suffering and is home with her Lord and Savior.*

*Steve and Pam Ingebretson*

*Dear First Free Family,  
We want to express our appreciation to our church family for your outpouring of kindness at the death of my mother. Thank you for the plants, flowers, meals, and the many cards.*

*Dotty and Phil Thengvall*

*Dear First Free Friends,  
Thank you for the lovely calla lily, your cards, visits, prayers, and words of encouragement and support as I recover from hip surgery. I look forward to seeing you soon on Sunday morning.*

*Evelyn Hill and Family*

*Dear First Free Family,  
Thanks for all of your kindnesses: the calls, cards, and especially the prayers for our family. Thanks for the beautiful ivy plant you sent, and for providing lunch for us after the service. What a blessing to be part of God's family at First Free!*

*The Guggisberg Family*



STUDENT MINISTRIES



It's summer time! Summer team activities with the high school and middle school programs have launched and are going great! Around mid-March, Jeremy Krause contacted me asking if I would be interested in heading up the high school summer team program. Immediately I started thinking about how my experience in the high school program has affected me and I wanted to share that with others. The one thing that stands out to me as I reflect on my time in high school ministry is the example set by the young volunteer workers. I looked up to them so much and desired to have a faith like theirs. They are people who love Jesus and are aware of their sin and His grace. I want to share my life and that example with the high school students this summer.

The middle school group just got back from their Student Life Camp and it has been great hearing testimonies of how God met them there. The high school students are getting ready to leave for the biennial Challenge Conference. This year it is being held in Columbus, Ohio at the convention center. We are all pumped to learn more about God and experience His love for us.

So along with this goes pool parties, food fight night, weekly worship, games, and teaching on Wednesday nights. The high school group is going over the doctrine of the Trinity this summer. I am excited to see how the Lord teaches us. I am praying for myself, along with the students and other student ministry staff, that we can learn more and more about the grace of God and how fortunate we are to be His children!

Andy Sutton  
Summer Team Intern

## FIRST FREE BOOK CLUB

The First Free Book Club meets the 3rd Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m. in the church library. The remaining summer schedule is below:

- July 15** - "Prayers for Sale" by Sandra Dallas
- August 19** - "Fields of Grace" by Kim Vogel Sawyer



Contact Helen Finley for information.

## MEN'S MINISTRY

### MEN'S BREAKFAST

The Men's Breakfast is Saturday, July 10, at 7:30 a.m. in the gym. Join others for this time of food, fellowship, and prayer. A \$3.00 donation is appreciated.

## MORE LETTERS...

*Dear First Free Family,  
Thank you for the plant you sent for my mother's funeral. All the flowers and plants helped brighten a difficult day. Our church always welcomed mom, and Pastor Phil visited and read Scripture and prayed with her. She never had a church home in her whole life. I know that her last six years in Wichita had an impact on her spiritual life, and our church was a part of that.*

*Thank you,  
Jackie Little*



## DAY OF PRAYER

Thursday, July 1

6:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

**Come to the Chapel any time that day to pray.**

## First Free Women

### NEXT MONTH!

Mark your calendars for *A Taste of... First Free Women!* on Monday evening, August 30, where we warmly welcome women new to the church and look ahead to Fall.

### SCRAPBOOK CROP!

**Friday, July 9, 5:00 - 11:00 p.m.**

**Saturday, July 10, 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.**

Contact Nancy McCollum for more information or to reserve your spot!

