



**Dover First UMC's Weekly Newsletter**  
**September 5, 2025**

**Let's Worship Together**

Sundays at 10:20 a.m.  
in the Sanctuary

**Nursery Care**

Sunday mornings  
for children 1 to 3

**Preschool**

Sunday mornings  
for children 4 to 6

**Children's Ministry**

Kidz Min Church  
during Sunday Worship

**Youth Ministry**

Youth Group for grades  
middle and high school  
Sundays at 6 p.m.

**Our Website**

Visit [doverfirst.org](https://doverfirst.org)  
for online services,  
special studies,  
announcements,  
opportunities to serve,  
the church calendar  
and ways to give.



**Sunday, September 14th**  
**Please Sign Up in the Lobby**

**Pre-Game Huddle!**

Sign up in the lobby for food, fellowship and fun!

**Game Time!**

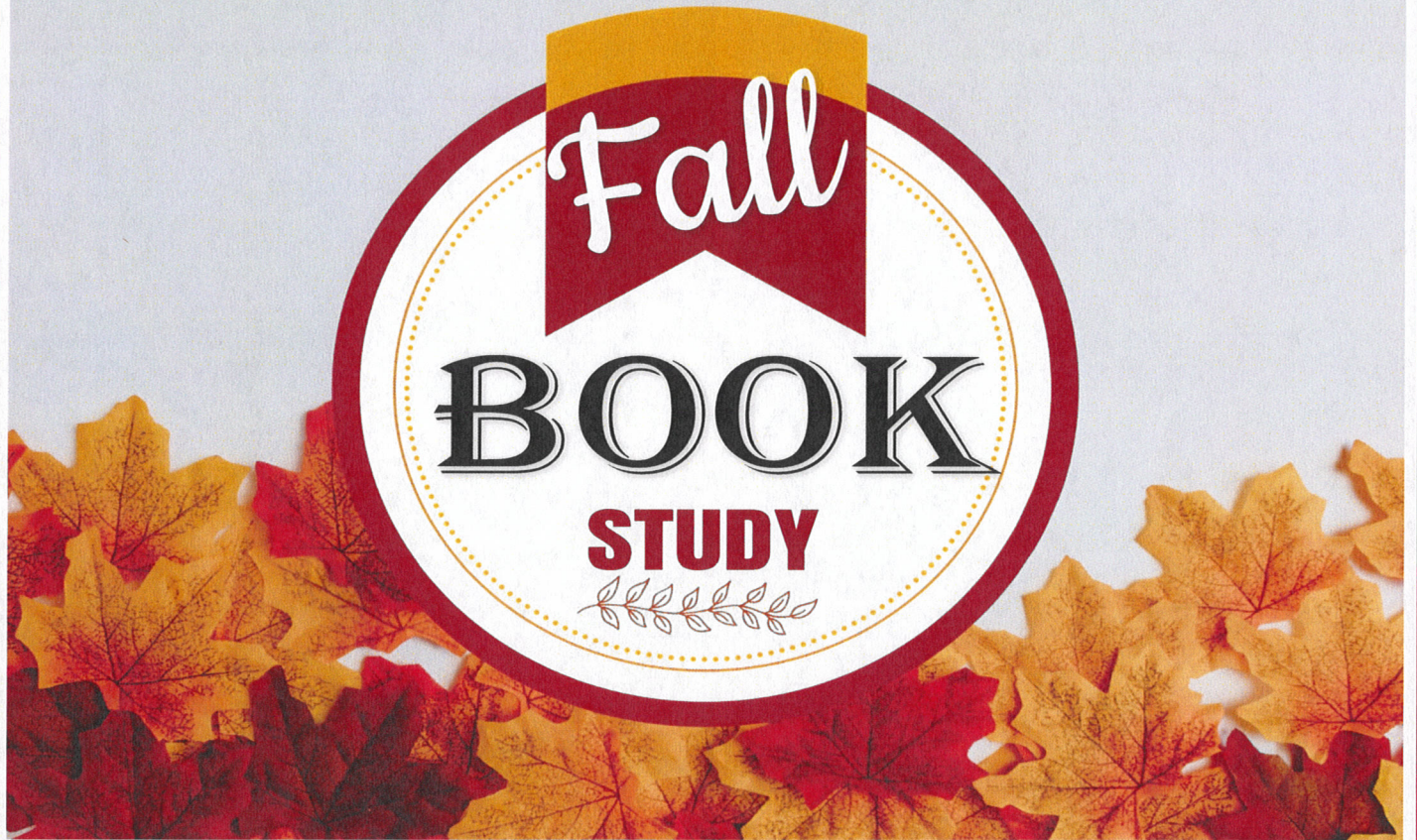
Our worship service begins at 10:20 a.m.  
Wear your favorite team or marching band  
jersey, t-shirt or other game attire to church.

**Post-Game Celebration!**

Stay for the post-game tailgate party.  
Hot dogs, beverages and tableware provided  
Bring your favorite covered dish to share.

**New this year we have old-fashioned games!**  
3-legged race, sack race, egg race, rope pull,  
and water balloon toss for all ages.  
Medals will be awarded.





**Join Pastor Wes for a 5-Session Study  
of the Carmen Joy Imes Book**

***Being God's Image:  
Why Creation Still Matters***

**Tuesdays at 6:30 p.m. in the Lounge  
Beginning on September 9th**

**Please Sign Up in the Lobby**

**Books will be available for \$15**

**You can also download to your Kindle  
through your personal account for \$14.24**



## **The Dover First UMC Family is Reaching Out in Prayer**

During the 2025-2026 school year,  
our church family will be supporting  
the staff of the elementary school  
closest to the church with our prayers.

Personalized cards reminding us to pray  
for the Dover Avenue Elementary  
staff can be picked up in the lobby.

Keep it in your wallet, on your fridge  
or near your favorite place to pray.

Thank you for reaching  
out to our community  
through your prayers  
for encouragement,  
care, peace and joy  
for all school staff  
and students.

**Go, Dover!**







## Welcome to Worship

September 7, 2025

Our nursery for ages 1-3 and preschool for ages 4-6 are available in the *Education Zone* in rooms 1,3 and 5.

### Welcome and Announcements

Prelude                      “Lift Every Voice and Sing”  
arr. Michael Ryan

Call to Worship   Psalm 139:1-6

L:      O Lord, you have searched me and known me!

**All:    You know when I sit down and when I rise up;**

**All:    You discern my thoughts from afar.**

L:      You search out my path and my lying down,

L:      And are acquainted with all my ways.

**All:    Even before a word is on my tongue, O Lord,**

**All:    You know it altogether.**

L:      You pursue me behind and before

L:      And lay your hand upon me.

**All:    Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;**

**All:    It is high, I cannot attain it.**

\*Hymn #153      Thou Hidden Source of Calm Repose

Scripture Titus 1:1-16

Prayer

\*Hymn #361 Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me

Scripture 1 Corinthians 9:19-27

Choir Anthem "Sing and Rejoice"  
Music by Don Besig  
Words by Don Besig and Nancy Price

\*Offering Introduction/Doxology/Prayer/Lord's Prayer

Message Victorious Living  
Pastor Wesley George

Communion

\*Hymn #580 Lead On, O King Eternal

\*Benediction

\*Postlude "Postlude"  
Felix Mendelssohn

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*Welcome Back to Our Choir!*



## Victorious Living

### Scripture: 1 Corinthians 9:19-27

<sup>19</sup> For though I am free with respect to all, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I might gain all the more. <sup>20</sup> To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to gain Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though I myself am not under the law) so that I might gain those under the law. <sup>21</sup> To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (though I am not outside God's law but am within Christ's law) so that I might gain those outside the law. <sup>22</sup> To the weak I became weak, so that I might gain the weak. I have become all things to all people, that I might by all means save some. <sup>23</sup> I do it all for the sake of the gospel, so that I might become a partner in it.

<sup>24</sup> Do you not know that in a race the runners all compete, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win it. <sup>25</sup> Athletes exercise self-control in all things; they do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable one. <sup>26</sup> So I do not run aimlessly, nor do I box as though beating the air, <sup>27</sup> but I punish my body and enslave it, so that after proclaiming to others I myself should not be disqualified.

### Questions

1. In verse 19 Paul speaks of willingly making himself a slave to all people, why would he choose this analogy and what does it mean?
2. In some ways Paul's lifestyle and choices seem contradictory and hypocritical, how do we reconcile his being under the law and not under the law?
3. How does the metaphor of the athlete competing for the prize fit with Paul being a slave to all?
4. How does self-control fit into the lifestyle Paul depicts in the metaphors?

### Background

Related Scriptures: Proverbs 25:28; Titus 1:1-16

Being free was very important in the Roman world where most people were slaves. Paul's words would have been shocking to people who were trying to become free or who themselves were slaveowners.

**Ambrosiaster:** Did Paul merely pretend to be all things to all men, in the way that flatterers do? No. He was a man of God and a doctor of the spirit who could diagnose every pain, and with great diligence he tended them and sympathized with them all. We all have something or other in common with everyone. This empathy is what Paul embodied in dealing with each particular person.<sup>1</sup>

**Pseudo-Dionysius:** The initiate is summoned to the sacred contests, which, with Christ as his trainer, he must undertake. For it is Christ who, as God, arranges the match, as sage lays down the rules, as beauty is a worthy prize for the victors, and more divinely as goodness is present with the athletes, defending their freedom and guaranteeing their victory over the forces of death and destruction. And so the initiate will quite gladly hurl himself into what he knows to be divine contests, and he will follow and scrupulously observe the wise rules of the game.... He will follow the divine tracks established by the goodness of the first of athletes.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Gerald Lewis Bray, ed., *1-2 Corinthians*, Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture 86.

<sup>2</sup> Gerald Lewis Bray, ed., *1-2 Corinthians*, Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture 88.

## *Victorious Living*

### **Reflection**

One of the most horrendous elements of slavery is that one person strips another person of their volition. The slave has no will but does what the master wants. Yet, Paul willingly compares himself to a slave. Why, because he wants to communicate the degree to which his life revolves around helping others to encounter Jesus. Paul wants us to understand that he is modeling mature Christianity when he says he is intentionally laying down his wants and desires, to listen to the cares, requests, and demands of those he wants to see grow in Jesus. This is no small feat. What Paul is talking about is completely contrary to what we as humans generally do. We are often extremely selfish creatures, doing what brings us pleasure and prosperity. Paul's self-sacrificial aim is Jesus' ideal and cuts across our natural path. This is part of what makes the training metaphor so powerful for me. Training volition to conform to Christ is a very apt metaphor since the goal is to achieve a skill that is not natural.

A common phrase for most people is "practice makes perfect". In coaching though that phrase is altered—and I believe this is more accurate— "practice makes permanent." The idea behind this phrase is that your competition will reflect your training. What you put into the training is what you can expect to get out of the training. The adage reflects the fact that you can practice doing a task a million times but if you practice it wrong every time then you will do it wrong when it counts.

This is why Paul emphasizes self-control, because it is the discipline to do things the right way all the time. Self-control is where focus meets action. Self-control is saying that I am going to practice the right way of living today and maintaining that thought throughout the day. Self-control is denying the selfish wants that are natural to us in order to make ourselves better. We all understand this with activities like diets and training regimens. We understand the importance of exercising self-control if we want to loose weight or gain strength or speed. Paul is asking us to consider that in light of our spiritual lives and goals. Paul wants us to focus on how we live out our faith, specifically in how we treat others. For him disciplines like prayer and scripture reading, while good in their own right should also lead us toward being "a slave to all".

The goal of the Christian life is not simply to have an excellent relationship with Jesus. The Christian life is about having our relationship with Jesus show in our relationships with others. Self-control is the mental awareness to practice the other Fruit of the Spirit in our daily lives. It takes discipline to say that I am going to be more loving, or I am going to bring joy into the world. Self-control is the discipline to bring these realities to mind while life is happening all around you. We all understand how life can be chaotic, how life does not always go smoothly or conform to what you want. Self-control is about thinking about showing others the fruit of the Spirit even in the trying times.

Self-control is saying that I am going to start my day with prayer and scripture because that will allow God to speak to me and help me grow. It is making a daily disciplined habit of connecting to God because that is where growth in the Spiritual Fruit happens. Self-control is then keeping that time in the forefront of your mind, reminding yourself to respond to others out of the Fruit of God not from a place of selfish desire.

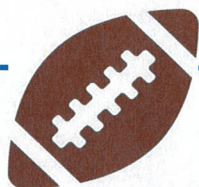
This is the practice Paul talks about, the practice of not simply self-denial but learning to be something different. We learn this because victory is a life that emulates God. Our ultimate goal is to live with God and this requires us to train. The victory is a life with God and so training includes the kind of self-sacrifice that God made. May we commit daily to the kind of discipline that allows us to train for the victory that we hope for. May we take every day as a chance to practice the kind of discipline that leads to the Holy Spirit producing fruit in our lives.

# This Week at Dover First UMC

## Sunday

10:20 a.m.      Worship Service  
Communion

## Next Sunday Fall Kick Off!



**10:20 a.m.      Worship Service**  
Let's wear our  
favorite team or  
marching band  
shirts to church

**11:30 a.m.      Covered Dish  
Tailgate Party!**  
Sign up in the lobby

## Today's Altar Flowers

Altar  
In Loving Memory  
of Ruth Render  
by Her Family

Organ  
In Memory of  
John and Sandy Gribben

## Monday

No Events

## Tuesday

2 p.m.      Mary Hannah  
Ladies Circle  
Lounge

6:30 p.m.      God's Image  
with Pastor Wes

7 p.m.      WMM Church  
Spanish-Speaking

7 p.m.      Boy Scouts  
Scout Room

## Wednesday

6:30 p.m.      Cub Scouts  
Education Zone

7 p.m.      Choir Rehearsal

## Thursday

7 p.m.      WMM Church  
Spanish-Speaking

## Friday

No Events

## Saturday

No Events

**If your group or class is starting up after the summer break,  
please email [doverfirst@gmail.com](mailto:doverfirst@gmail.com) to be added to the calendar.**