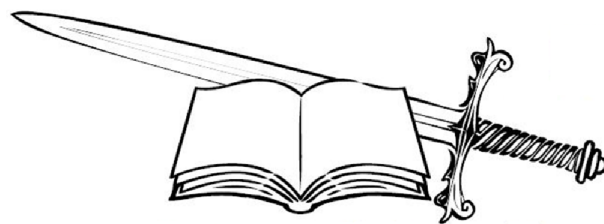




LAUREL RIDGE
Community Church



Men's Newsletter

Spring 2024

"Then the hand of the LORD came upon Elijah; and he girded up his loins and ran ahead of Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel." —1Kings 18:46



Men's Community Groups

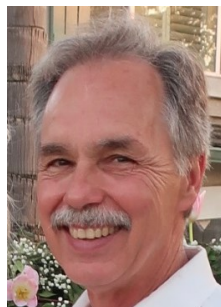
The groups below are open to all men looking for Bible study, prayer, and fellowship. To register, visit laurelridgechurch.org/community-groups or contact the group leaders directly.

Tuesday Evening Bible Study

Time: 6:00 PM

Place: Room 301 at church or online via Zoom

Host: Dennis Ouka
(925) 584-6618
denouka@sbcglobal.net



Thursday Morning Devotion

Time: 6:30 AM

Place: Online only, via the YouVersion app

Host: Dan Mathisen
(209) 612-5028
mathisen.dan@gmail.com



A Process, Not a Painting

by Keith Cook

A human being is never a finished, complete entity like a statue, a car or a painting. We're a process. Physically, we constantly generate new cells to replace old cells that die. We eat and drink, take nourishment from it and eliminate the rest. Mentally and emotionally, we constantly have new experiences, learn new



things, compare what we learn to what we already know, and use that to plan for the current day and future days. God established the processes for all his creations to thrive. Sin broke those processes.

The wages of sin is death, Paul wrote in Romans 6:23. We give thanks to God for the rest of the verse: *but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord*. Eternal life is our future. Our present life is a struggle against the sinful desires of our own flesh. How do we withstand those sinful desires, plus the attacks of the evil one and the temptations of the world?

Because we are a process, who we are right now is the result of countless events we've experienced, lessons we've learned, decisions we've made, hurts, pleasures, failures, achievements and other inputs over many years. What we can do, starting today, is to avoid inputs that —cont'd on page 3



Here's a few photos of our last men's breakfast on February 3rd, courtesy of Heath Westberry:

Our next men's breakfast is set for **Saturday, June 8, 8-9:45 AM** at Laurel Ridge Church. Join us for fellowship, encouragement and a delicious breakfast. Please sign up for the men's breakfast at laurelridgechurch.org/register so we know how much food to prepare.

We need a few good men to cook the meal and set up tables. If you'd like to volunteer, contact Dan Mathisen at mathisen.dan@gmail.com or at (209) 612-5028. ✝



Pastor Eric updated us on Next Steps and community groups.



Time to eat!

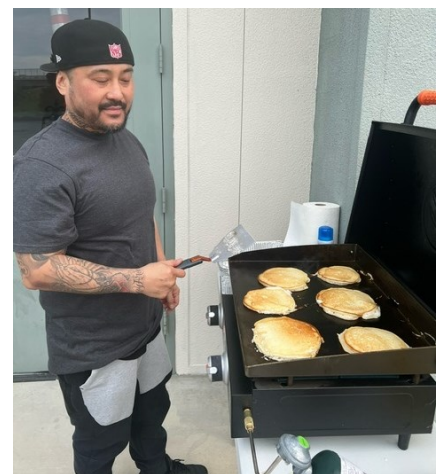


Keith Cook spoke on knowing God's will.

A special thank you to our kitchen and set up crew:

Mike
Derek
Benny
Joe
Dennis
AJ
Jimmy
Dan

... and to Heath for the use of his Blackstone grill.



Derek manning the grill.

A process, not a painting —cont'd from page 1

weaken, lessen and corrupt us and seek inputs that strengthen, enlighten and purify us.

Galatians 5:19-21 lists the inputs that hurt us: *Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these.*

Galatians 5:22-23 lists the inputs that help us: *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.*

As ongoing processes, what we will be is what we've been doing to this point in our life plus what we do from this point on. If we keep doing the same things we've always done we'll get the same results we've always had. If we replace worldly inputs with Godly inputs, our lives over time will show fewer works of the flesh and more fruit of the Spirit.

The first step is to identify the destructive inputs. If you aren't sure what yours are, ask your wife or a good friend. Odds are good they will be happy to help you with that!

Once you have your list of destructive inputs, go to the Lord in prayer and lay those sinful attitudes and behaviors at his feet. A powerful way to do that is to write them on a sheet of paper and burn them in a fireplace or outdoor grill as you give them in prayer to God. Then ask him to remake you so that your life reflects Jesus in all you say and do.

The next thing you must do is one of my favorite Bible expressions: gird up your loins. In the ancient cultures of the Middle East, men wore a loin cloth that hung down, along with their robe, which made running difficult. To gird up your loin meant to tie your loin cloth and robe out of the way, as Elijah did in 1Kings 18:46 so he could run more effectively. Run the way Paul describes in 1Co 9:24, *Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one*

receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. The runner who sets his feet in the blocks and leaps forward at the starting gun but then stops running defeats himself. If you want to remove destructive inputs from your life, remember that those first steps are not enough. You will need to run that race or fight that battle for a long time, maybe for as long as you live. Gird your loins for a marathon, not a sprint.

Finally, replace worldly inputs with Godly ones. Spend time each day in prayer and the Word. Join an accountability group for counsel and support from others. Visualize God's promises each day. Focus on becoming a reflection of Jesus. Desire it with all your heart. Trust the process. Be patient. Setbacks will occur. When they do, confess them, then trust that God forgives you and get back in the race. And win. ✝



Noah had three sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth. Which son was Jesus' ancestor? You can find the answer in Luke 3:36.

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