



*For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth... in every place.  
(1 Thessalonians 1:8)*

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## Schedule of Services

### Sunday

Worship	9:30 AM
Bible Study	10:30 AM
Worship	6:00 PM

### Wednesday

Bible Study	1:30 PM
Bible Study	7:00 PM

### Bible Call

(618) 667-9603

[www.collinsvillecoc.org](http://www.collinsvillecoc.org)

## PERFORM LIKE A CHAMPION

The following phrase was seen on the wall of a gymnastics class. "If you want to perform like a champion, you must practice like one!"

It has been well documented that those who participate and win in the Olympics spend their lives preparing for the games. They know very well that the phrase above is needful for the one who would be a winner. They realize that they must discipline themselves to give their best each day in practice. They realize the need to be diligent not only in their daily practice, but in every aspect of their daily routine. They must receive the proper rest. They must have the proper nutrition. They must work daily to develop the proper strength and agility.

Christianity is depicted as a contest, like the contests in the Olympic games. It is depicted as a wrestling match, as one wrestles against the principalities, the powers, and the world rulers of darkness (Ephesians 6:12). It is depicted as a race in which one must run with endurance, putting aside the things that weigh him down and the things that ensnare him (Hebrews 12:1-2). The difference in the Christian struggle and the Olympic game is that every Christian can be a winner, taking home "the gold" (1 Corinthians 9:24). The apostle Paul used these metaphors, however, because there are some similarities, or parallels.

As the athlete must be disciplined, so also the Christian (1 Corinthians 9:25-27). The Christian must discipline himself to crucify the flesh and put away the sinful ways of this life (Romans 6:6; Ephesians 4:22), living as God would have him live. As the athlete cannot perform like a champion if he does not practice like one, one who is religious cannot worship like a Christian on Sunday unless he lives like one daily. Jesus challenged His disciples to give of themselves daily, sacrificing themselves daily (Luke 9:23).

As the athlete must receive proper rest for the body to recuperate, so the Christian must receive proper rest and peace from the troubles and strife in this life. There is no better peace that can restore the soul than that which is found in prayer. It is through the avenue of prayer that one finds "peace that passes understanding" (Philippians 4:6-7).

The Lord Himself often sought to depart to a quiet place for the peace of prayer (Mark 1:35). In order to worship like a Christian on Sunday, one should be diligent and steadfast in prayer through the week. One should pray daily (Colossians 4:2).

As the athlete must have the proper nutrition to build and sustain muscle, so the Christian must have the proper spiritual nutrition to build spiritual strength. He should partake of the spiritual milk which is without guile that he might grow unto salvation (2 Peter 2:2). He should partake of the meat of God's word to enable him to discern good and evil (Hebrews 5:14). It is through the word of God that one receives the proper guidance (Psalm 119:105), counsel (Psalm 119:24), wisdom (Psalm 119:98), and understanding (Psalm 119:104) for life. The instruction from God's word equips us for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16-17). In order to worship like a Christian on Sunday, one should be diligent and steadfast in studying and meditating upon God's word daily (2 Timothy 2:15).

As the athlete must meet the daily challenges of training, so the Christian must meet the daily challenges of this life. One should not become discouraged because of difficulties. Rather, one should rejoice that every challenge presents the opportunity to develop the strength and endurance to succeed (James 1:2-4). God will not allow one to be challenged more than he is capable of handling (1 Corinthians 10:13). In order to worship like a Christian on Sunday, one should be strong as he faces the challenges of each day (1 Corinthians 16:13).

May each of you press on to spiritual maturity and to the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus (Philippians 3:12-14, 20-21). "If you want to perform like a champion, you must practice like one!"

TLM

## Remembering to Put God First

**Y**ou don't have to mention that God is first in a relationship. That should be understood." [That] statement was made to me by a sister in Christ and I could not help pondering its meaning. I agree with the fact that for Christians it should be understood that God is first in every aspect of their life. Whether in acquaintance, friendship, dating, marriage or family God should reign foremost in our hearts. After all you are to "love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind" (Matthew 22:37). However, I cannot agree that we do not have to mention it to one another. In the Bible we read, "Therefore I intend to remind you of these qualities, though you know them and are established in the truth that you have" (2 Peter 1:12). "These qualities" mentioned here are found in verses 5-10 which keep one from becoming spiritually reprobate or unfaithful. The purpose is to continuously remind Christians of "these qualities" so they can remember who they are and whose they are.

When we come together to worship the same thing takes place. In song we "let the word of Christ dwell in us richly, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your heart to God" (Colossians 3:16). In prayer we pray according to His will knowing that the Lord will hear us (1 John 5:14). The Lord's Supper centers around the words of Christ, "Do this in remembrance of me" (1 Corinthians 11:24-25). Our giving is done remembering that God gave us all we have in the first place, so we ought to cheerfully give back to Him (2 Corinthians 9). We preach and teach God's word that we may have a fortified faith. We are to be a God-centered, God-believed and a God-redeemed people.

"Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near" (Hebrews 10:22-25). Without each other we run the danger of forgetting who we are. If you try to survive spiritually without the church ask yourself: Who is going to stir you up to love and good works? Who is going to encourage you? And, how can you do that for others outside the church?

We need one another so we can remind each other to put first things first. God. We need to keep the main thing, the main thing in our lives. Ask each other: How is your faith? How have you put God first today? Then tell them how they can help you remember to put God first. May we stand together, stand strong and stand united for the Lord God Almighty.

- Robert E. Guinn

### Mabery's Minutes



We have both the men's and women's retreats coming up in the very near future. I encourage you to make plans to attend. Take advantage of the efforts made by those who have worked so hard to put together opportunities for you to grow spiritually. Christianity is a process. God wants every individual to progress toward greater maturity. Spiritual growth will not happen by accident. Don't let Satan lull you into a comfort level with your spiritual life. Plan to grow. Pursue intently the goal of spiritual maturity and ultimately to the glory of heaven above. Don't think it will just happen.