



PRAYER REQUESTS

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JULY 22, 2012

- **Mark McCollum, Pam Richard's Parents, Sasha Tompkins & La Donna Gammill** all need your prayers as they continue to seek great results.
- **Bobbye Wright** had a serious fall and could use prayers.
- Beverly and Clifford Gunn, Judy Roybal, JO Vick, Dick and Judy Bird, Belle Yokum, Willie Johnson, Larry Reeder, Koben Puckett, are all in need of prayers.

Announcements

- **Mark McCollum** continues to need ongoing prayers as he continues he chemotherapy treatments.
- **Beverly Overton** had a horse accident and had a concussion and spinal fracture. She is improving, but could certainly use our continued prayers.
- On **Wednesday** evening we will meet at **7:00 PM for our Bible Class. Please join us.**
- **Pam Richard's** father is not doing well in his battle against cancer and could use some extra prayers.
- Check the back table and box for our donation items this month for the **Portales Christian Children's' Home.**



Silas Shotwell will bring the lesson today
Men Serving this Month

- **Announcements:** Tom Oliver
- **Scripture:**
- **Song Service:** Mark McCollum

Happy Birthday

July 27— Jarrett Richards

July 28— Madison Foster

Anniversaries—

None this week

Calendar of Events

August 5— Potluck

August 15— Working for the Master at 6

August 20— First Day of School for Teachers

August 22— First Day of School for Students

The Ones by Rubel Shelly

Human beings are spiritual beings. We speak freely of our minds, hearts, or spirits -- knowing full well that we aren't talking about physical organs. Maybe you prefer the term personality or character. But you know these terms are more than alternate ways to refer to the brain or to a set of bodily processes.

Religion is not serving our spiritual lives very well these days. Don't believe it? The March 12 issue of "Time" cited "The Rise of the Nones" as one of the ten ideas changing the lives of Americans. "The fastest-growing religious group in the U.S. is the category of people who say they have no religious affiliation. Sometimes called 'the nones' by social scientists, their numbers have more than doubled since 1990; major [surveys](#) put them at 16% of the population."

Syndicated columnist Leonard Pitts Jr. offers this explanation: "Religion has become an ugly thing. People of faith usually respond to that ugliness -- by which I mean a seemingly endless cycle of scandal, controversy, hypocrisy, violence and TV preachers saying idiotic things -- in one of two ways. Either they defend it -- making them part of the problem -- or they regard it as a series of isolated, albeit unfortunate, episodes. But irreligious people do neither."

He is correct. So, if you are a Christian, you would be wiser simply to admit the point. Be embarrassed over it. Apologize for it. Then ask God both to forgive you of any part you have had in scandal, hypocrisy, or offense and to [help](#) the people who call themselves his children to act more like their father.

The problem isn't new. Old Testament prophets lamented the fact that people were putting attendance at religious events in the place of integrity and gifts to good works in the place of compassion to their neighbors. So both Amos and Isaiah strongly spoke for the LORD God:

"I cannot bear your evil assemblies... Even if you offer many prayers, I will not listen" ([Isaiah 1:13-15](#) NIV).

Jesus made the same point about religion in his day by quoting Isaiah:

"You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you, for he wrote, 'These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me'" ([Mark 7:6](#) NLT).

So why do we still not get it? Why does "organized religion" still drive people away from God? If religion is getting in the way of your quest for God, just remember that God and religion are not the same. Please don't give up on God because of us.

Learn to do good. Seek justice. Help the oppressed. Defend the cause of orphans. Fight for the rights of widows ([Isaiah 1:17](#) NLT).

That would be a beautiful alternative to "religion" as too many know it.

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URL: http://www.heartlight.org/articles/201207/20120720_thenones.html

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Posted: 07/13/2012 URL: http://www.heartlight.org/articles/201207/20120713_evil.html
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