



# Your NAWE Companion

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## Watch Your Own Soul, Too

Tony Elder, *Conyers, GA*

While enjoying a family cruise, my wife and I were taking a walk along the upper deck of the ship. In certain spots it was quite windy, causing me to either keep my head tilted down or place my hand on top of my head in order to guard against my cap being blown off. At one point we suddenly heard someone yelling and looked around to see a man pointing to his hat that was being blown across the deck. Fortunately the railing hindered its flight long enough that I was able to run over and grab it before it went overboard. As I raised back up feeling grateful I was able to provide this successful rescue, a gust of wind blew my own cap off my head and into the ocean. While I was glad to help someone else and would do so again, my own loss dampened the sense of victory. I was disappointed, not that I had chased after the other man's hat, but that I hadn't kept one hand on my own head-covering at the same time. The other man felt so badly that he found me later to graciously insist on giving me a replacement cap he had purchased for me in the ship's gift shop.

This incident should serve as a good reminder to us. While we are rightfully seeking to save and minister to those around us, let's be sure to keep one hand on our own hats. Don't ever let down the guard over your own soul. Many people are guilty of the opposite fault. They focus so completely on themselves, even on their own spiritual needs and growth, that they don't pay enough attention to the needs of those around them. However, let's not go the other direction either. Let's not get so wrapped up in our quest to help others that we let our own relationship with the Lord suffer loss. It shouldn't be an "either/or" proposition; it should be "both/and". We can help rescue others while also safeguarding our own salvation and growth.

Paul declared, "I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified" (1 Corinthians 9:27). He didn't neglect his own walk with the Lord while ministering to others. He made sure he practiced himself what he proclaimed to others. Paul saw the possibility of someone, even himself, preaching to others while neglecting to nurture his own soul, resulting in what he refers to as becoming "disqualified", seeming to indicate a loss of reward or even of salvation itself.

Later Paul wrote some instructions to a younger colleague about cultivating his spiritual growth. He concluded by saying, "Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you" (1 Timothy 4:16). Paul makes it clear that the goal is to save others and ourselves. We shouldn't neglect either one.

Maybe like Paul (see Romans 9:3) there are those for whom we'd be willing to give up our souls in order to see them saved. However that's not an option. Everyone has to make their own choice. What we can do is to give ourselves sacrificially to serve, preach, and seek the lost sheep. We can go chasing after souls getting blown along that broad road toward destruction. Nevertheless we can hang onto our own hats at the same time, making sure we stay on the right road, abide in His Word, and grow in grace.

Seek the lost. Help those in need. But guard your own soul, too.

April—May 2019



### Praise & Prayer

Praise God for the cross and the resurrection!

Continue to pray for Shelley Garrett and family upon the recent death of her father.

Pray for the family of Dr. John Niehoff upon his recent death, as well as the Wesley Biblical Seminary family where he served as president. Praise note: the seminary has announced that Dr. John Oswald will be serving as interim president.

Pray for special services being offered and special opportunities our churches and pastors may have to minister during the Easter season.

Pray for our Ministers' & Wives' Retreat:

- for our speaker
- for safe travels
- for a time of spiritual & physical refreshing

## Ministry Resources

### Rethink Church

*Wesley Community Fellowship*

Our church recently did a book study of *Letters to the Church* by Francis Chan. We found it to be a good resource to help us rethink what we do as a church and why. The author humbly admits to some past arrogance and a change in his attitude and perspective regarding these matters. As a result of fresh insights he received into what the Bible teaches concerning the church, especially the examples of how they worshiped in Acts and as revealed in Paul's letters, along with what he experienced in other countries, he has begun a network of house churches.

Whether or not you come away with the desire to begin a house church, this book will help you evaluate the way you are "doing church" and to consider if there might be better ways to do so. Are we basing what we do more on tradition or the Bible, more on what we're comfortable with or what might actually be more effective?

There are a couple of helpful resources we used to accompany the book—a video in which Francis Chan gives a brief introduction and challenge in connection with each chapter—as well as a study guide. You might not agree with everything in the book, but it can certainly be a good starter for some needed discussion about what our churches are doing today and changes we might need to make.

## Calendar



**April 23-25:** It may not be too late to make your reservation for our Ministers' & Wives' Retreat at Desoto State Park. There may yet be rooms available. Call today and be sure to let them know you are part of the NAWE group. Don't miss this wonderful time of inspiration and fellowship.

DESOTO STATE PARK

1299 Blalock Drive NE  
Fort Payne AL 35967  
(256) 845-5380

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**July 16-18:** Annual Meeting at Danielsville, GA