

Back in the dim reaches of the mid 20th Century, discussions concerning how congregations should use their money, what sort of collective cooperation is proper, how the meetinghouse should be used all resulted in more detailed arguments – can a water fountain be in the building? Can we pay toward the support of children’s homes in light of James 1:27? Can we send money to a college that teaches Bible courses?

If you have not heard these discussions in their fullness, they may be appropriate for you as a learning activity. But if we were to study those issues, if and when we get to the point that we’ve said all we can about them, can we train ourselves to move on?

Make no mistake – it is important to study the Bible in as much detail as we can absorb. We need to stand ready to teach the Word in its full glory. We also need to be sure

that we don’t keep riding our hobby into the ground and forget the more important matters of sin, obedience, salvation, and a full righteous life of service to the Lord. Our goal is a home in heaven with God; it is not to win debate points. ~

Morris Fraser

We meet on James M Harvell Rd next to the public library in Navarre. Call for directions and more information (850) 939-8109

Navarre church of Christ
8490 James M Harvell Rd
Navarre, FL 32566

Place Stamp Here

Assembly Schedule

Sunday

Bible Class for all ages_9:00 AM

Morning Worship Service_10:00 AM

Evening Worship Service_6:00 PM

Wednesday

Bible Class for all ages_7:00 PM

This entire publication and previous issues are available online at navarrechurchofchrist.net along with some more useful information

VISITORS ARE WELCOME!

NAVARRE MESSENGER

March 4, 2018



Your Favorite Hobby Horse

People often become stressed out in this modern world. They worry about making the car payments, paying the mortgage, feeding and clothing their children, doing a good job at work so they will be promoted or receive a raise.

They worry a lot about matters they can’t always control. They are concerned about political activities, the condition of wars around the world, whether a gunman will shoot up a school or a business, how much traffic exists

on their way to and from work.

People, including Christians, become stressed about having stress.

It has ever been this way. Lot

worried about the conflict between his herdsmen and those of Abram (Genesis 13). And so did Abram. They owned so many cattle and other herds that they were getting in each other's way. So Abram and Lot decided to separate. Lot got his choice of location and chose the area of the valley of the Jordan, noting its rich pastures.

Perhaps Lot thought that his herds would do well there and that would not only stop the herdsmen's bickering but relieve the stress he felt in dealing with those problems. Of course, it turned out stress became a major part of Lot's life when he was captured by warring kings (Genesis 14), his house was attacked by evil men in Sodom, the city was destroyed and his wife died in their escape (Genesis 19).

Jonah tried to avoid God's command to teach the evil city of Nineveh (Jonah 1-2), but as he escaped his ship was caught in a storm, the

sailors blamed Jonah for their plight and threw him overboard, where he wound up in the belly of a large fish. Pretty good example of stress, all caused because Jonah didn't do the job God wanted him to do.

Lot had no choice but to escape God's wrath and Jonah had to endure three days inside the fish. They didn't have time, it appears, to get involved in a relaxing pastime. We may think we are riding a never-ending carousel of work and life, but in this modern age and country we do have time to relax.

Doing something different than we are used to doing can relieve stress. It may be a vacation, or simply watching TV or sitting on the front porch and watching the world go by. Or we may try to do something a bit more productive.

We may fish. We may hunt. We may engage in any num-

ber of athletic events, even if it's a weekend softball or basketball game. We may go on a picnic with family and friends. The idea ultimately is to relieve stress.

But we are so attuned to goal-setting that our pastimes often become more serious. People collect stamps or coins, looking for rare or costly or simply interesting pieces that improve their collections. Some people collect books, as much for their cost or rarity as their enlightenment. Or they collect cars or any number of more expensive items. Concentration on these activities can be consuming.

We call these activities "hobbies." Properly used, they can relax us, educate us and entertain us.

Originally, a hobby, or hobyn, was a small horse which could carry an individual in certain times of activity or danger to inform or warn

others. The term eventually became attached to any pleasurable activity and soon was applied to a child's toy that was a stick with a horse's head on one end – a hobbyhorse. And that toy grew into a more realistic copy of a horse.

Hobbies can be pleasant, stress-relieving, rejuvenating. Sometimes they even can become a profitable business, as a sideline or as a major source of income. But they also can take over one's life if the hobbyist doesn't keep it in its proper perspective.

At that point a new concept of hobby becomes evident – what is called "riding a hobbyhorse" or "riding a hobby." This occurs when the hobbyist is so taken with his activity that he can't think of anything else. The formal definition of that is "to concern oneself excessively with a favorite notion or activity." It may also be called a fixation.

Someone may warn you about such a one with the words, "You don't want to get him started." That may be advice to avoid the hobby-rider.

If someone can't stop talking about "my cute grandchildren" that may indicate a mild case of hobby riding. A sports fan who won't stop talking about the World Series or the next college football game or fantasy leagues, even when discouraged, probably is riding his hobby into the ground. It can get tiresome, and soon he can't tell anyone how important his hobby is because they've tuned him out.

Hobby-riding exists in the Lord's church as well. We're not talking about God's commandments or the need for us to spread the gospel. Those are everlasting needs. But when we quite legitimately study specific issues, we may get to the point that we have said all there is to say; there is no more to dis-

cuss. From then on, we're simply repeating the same old thing with no hope of improvement.

Jesus warned his disciples to stop teaching when listeners refused to listen any more (Mark 6:11). He told them to "shake the dust off your feet," a condemnation of the hard-heartedness of those who were listening to their teaching.

Even with studious and dedicated Christians, hobby-riding can appear. If you hear such a one always bring any topic back to his favorite issue – his fixation, his hobby – you can be assured that he only wants to talk about what he wants to talk about. He may know a lot of scripture, but he is only interested in making the point he is comfortable with. You can be assured that he will not sway anyone's beliefs on that topic or be swayed to change his opinion, because he can't let go of his hobby.