

# Announcements!

**Weekly Bible Study** We invite each of you to attend the mid-week Bible Study, held upstairs each Tuesday evening beginning at 6 pm. We encourage you to attend these vital and exciting studies!

**Children's Church** Children's Church is available upstairs on the 2nd-5th Sundays starting at 11:00 am. Ages 2-10 are welcome to attend. Please sign your children in and out. A snack is served. Please pick up your children promptly after services. ALL DONATIONS ARE WELCOMED. If you are interested in serving in Children's Church, please see Sarita Agee.

**Christmas Tea** Our annual "Christmas Tea will be held immediately following today's worship services. You don't have far to travel for the Tea, since it will be held about 20 feet behind you! Please come and share some sweet treats with us.

## Words of Wisdom: The Fence...

There once was a little boy who had a bad temper. His Father gave him a bag of nails and told him that every time he lost his temper, he must hammer a nail into the back of the fence. The first day the boy had driven 37 nails into the fence.

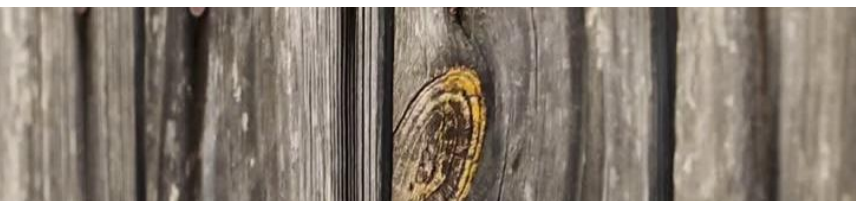
Over the next few weeks, as he learned to control his anger, the number of nails hammered daily gradually dwindled down. He discovered it was easier to hold his temper than to drive those nails into the fence. Finally the day came when the boy didn't lose his temper at all.



He told his father about it and the father suggested that the boy now pull out one nail for each day that he was able to hold his temper. The days passed and the young boy was finally able to tell his father that all the nails were gone. The father took his son by the hand and led him to the fence.

He said, "You have done well, my son, but look at the holes in the fence. The fence will never be the same. When you say things in anger, they leave a scar just like this one. You can put a knife in a man and draw it out. It won't matter how many times you say I'm sorry, the wound is still there."

"A verbal wound is as bad as a physical one."



Welcome to the

# Everlasting Covenant Church



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"The Everlasting Covenant Church", Birmingham, AL

"THE\_ECC2015"

## Eric R. Agee, Jr., Pastor

December 23, 2018

### Vision Statement:



Enhancing Our Knowledge of Jesus Christ,  
Empowering All Believers for Ministry, and  
Encouraging Continuous Dedication to the Lord.

# Order of Services

Fellowship | Refreshments – 9:30 a.m.

Sunday School – 10:00 a.m.

Morning Worship Services – 11:00 a.m.

Announcements & Recognition of Visitors

Call to Worship: Scripture Reading & Prayer

Tithes and Offerings; Prayer of Thanksgiving

Praise and Worship Selections

Sermon

Invitation to Christ

Benediction

## Wise Men...

Taken from <https://www.christianitytoday.com/history/2016/december/magi-wise-men-or-kings-its-complicated.html>

They're the three men in glittering velvet robes and fake beards in the living nativity at church. Sometimes they tow a live camel. Bearing gifts, they traversed afar, following yonder star through the back of the sanctuary in the grand crescendo of our beloved annual Christmas pageant. I'm speaking, of course, of the Magi. Or is it wise men? Wait, kings?

Perhaps if Luke the historian had written about them in his Christmas account, we might have had precise details. But Matthew's account is vague, shrouded in mystery: "Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem..." (Matt. 2:1).

Intrigue swirls around these festooned foreigners. Where did they come from? With a wink Matthew writes, "the East." Indeed, his description is so utterly "specific" that church traditions in dozens of countries claim to be their country of origin. And who were they? Technically speaking, Matthew calls them magi—but what are magi? Are they kings? Wise men? Sorcerers? Astrologers?

Christians have been trying to nail down their identity for millennia. As early as A.D. 200, Tertullian was laying out arguments that the Magi, while astrologers by trade, were considered kings. To the contrary, John Calvin felt strongly about anyone who would label them "three kings": "Beyond all doubt, they have been stupefied by a righteous judgment of God, that all might laugh at [their] gross ignorance." Adding a further wrinkle, first-century naturalist Pliny the Elder wrote several chapters about the Magi wherein they sound more like something from a Harry Potter novel. He details their skill in magic arts—including pouring boiled earthworms in the ear to cure a toothache!

Despite the disagreement, here are a few facts. The word magus is of Persian origin; however, Basil indicated that they were not confined to a specific empire but "scattered all over the country." First-century Jewish historian Philo referred to Balaam from Numbers 22–24 as a magus. This anachronism indicates that by the first century A.D. it may have been adopted for more general use. Herodotus's accounts of magi in his Histories (440 B.C.) portrays them as conniving political figures vying for royal power. Various kings in the ancient world frequently consulted these men because of their skill in interpreting omens, signs, and the stars.

Read the rest online!

# Sermon Notes

Scripture: \_\_\_\_\_

Subject: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

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