

ISSUE

21.20

BULLETIN OF
THE OLSEN
PARK CHURCH
OF CHRIST

Faithful Sayings

May 19,
2019

Services

Sunday: 9:00 AM

10:00 AM

11:00 AM

Wednesday: 7:00 PM

Elders:

Pat Ledbetter
Brady McAlister
Jeff Nunn

Deacons:

Steve Dixon
Ryan Ferguson
Ben Hight
Blake McAlister
Walker McAnear
Ryan Matney
Sam Nunn
Lance Purcell
Justin Smiley
Kevin Wise
Trevor Yontz

Evangelist:

Kyle Pope



Is Someone Watching You?

By Kyle Pope

In George Orwell's fictional novel, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, he painted a frightening picture of a totalitarian government he feared could have been realized in the not-so-distant future. Written in 1949 as the "cold war" was just beginning, Orwell envisioned a place much like the repressive environment of the communist ruled former Soviet Union. In Orwell's imagined world, every activity of the citizens of Oceania (the name he gave to this place) was under constant surveillance by the repressive government personified by the imposing figure known as "Big Brother." The mantra of this tyrannical state expressed the reality under which every citizen had to live—"Big Brother is watching you."

Orwell's dark vision was never fully realized. 1984 came and went and Western countries maintained their liberty. The Soviet Union itself dissolved in 1991, and few truly communist nations have survived to the present. Even so, Orwell's ominous saying—"Big Brother is watching you" has become a part of our vocabulary. Whenever concern rises that government

might intrude too much into the lives of private citizens, it is not uncommon to hear the current leaders characterized as “Big Brother,” and their actions compared to Orwell’s vision. This was true when George W. Bush passed the Patriot Act in 2001, and it was true of President Obama’s moves towards increased gun control, and the Affordable Care Act, (or “ObamaCare”). We simply don’t want to feel as if “Big Brother” is watching us.

As Christians we appreciate privacy because we recognize in the record of history the fact that governments opposed to the doctrines of Christ have often moved to persecute those who seek to follow Scripture. But, I wonder if we ever stop to consider another type of *surveillance* that goes on around us all the time. It is not carried out by our government, although it might be engaged in by individuals who serve in the local, state, or federal government. It doesn’t involve cameras, microphones, or computers, although it might happen as we use any of these devices. It can happen any place, at any time, and involve anyone, even though we are often totally unaware of it. *What is this pervasive intrusion into our privacy?* It is a simple consequence of being a Christian—there is always someone watching us, and shaping his or her own view of what it means to be a Christian by what can be seen in us.

It could be the little child who stumbles down the aisle at church. He sees if we sleep. She notices when we use our smart phone to send a text, or check a score when we ought to be studying our Bibles. Children notice and learn from us when we skip services, but they also can learn from us how important our commitment to God can be. They notice our priorities and will probably adopt them in their own lives. Paul urged Timothy to **“be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity”** (1 Tim. 4:12, NKJV).



It might be that person we have never even spoken to, but they know us. They see us in the restaurants we frequent. They are in line with us at the grocery store. They watch us pay our bills, or see how we drive. They sit on the other side of the building when we come to church, or they watch how we act in Bible class. From our perspective, we wouldn't even guess that they even know we are alive, but they are watching us. Our attitude, our temperament, our diligence sends a message to them and colors their view of what it means to serve Christ. Paul told the Philippians **“let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ”** (Phil. 1:27). Peter tells us this should be **“conduct honorable among the Gentiles [i.e. *the nations*]”** which even in the face of false accusation can result in the fact that **“they may see your good deeds and glorify God”** (1 Pet.2:12).

It could be that the one who watches us is that older person, discouraged by a wicked world, who looks to us to see if they can **“really find faith on the earth”** (Luke 18:8). The old watch the young—not just to catch them doing wrong. It might be that younger person, trying to build faith, who looks to us to see if faith is real—is it more than a show? Does it really stand through the storms of life? Do they see in us a house built on rock, or a shaky framework, built on the shifting sands of weak and flimsy faith (cf. Matt. 7:24-27).

It might be those who exercise authority over us. They know we claim to a Christian, but they see us when we are lazy at work. They see us ignore the teacher, or mock efforts that are made to teach us. They watch us break traffic laws. They see us disobey them as parents. They see us reject their guidance as elders in the church, or hear when we back-bite their efforts as husbands in the home. And yet, through all of these actions we continue to affirm our faithfulness to God, love for His word, and desire to wholly serve Him. Paul taught an attitude in our treatment of those over us that serves them **“as to the Lord, and not to men”** (Eph. 6:7; Col. 3:23). This must not be **“with eyeservice”**—i.e. when we know they are watching, but we serve



them **“as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart”** (Eph. 6:6).

Sometimes, this surveillance is done by those who are close to the breaking point. They have nearly lost hope. Their faith is wearing thin. The world has a strong hold on them. They are just about to go under, when in desperation they take

one last look at us to see, **“if there are any who understand, if there are any who seek God”** (Psa. 14:2; 53:2). *What do they see?* Will they catch us on a day of bitterness? Will it be a time we are busy with a petty and selfish focus on ourselves? Will it be a time we are wrapped up in a quarrel? Will it be when we struggle with our own sinful worldliness? Or, will they see a faithful soul who loves the Lord? Will we give them hope to fight against Satan another day? Will our own conquest over our struggles help them see a way to escape **“the snare of the devil”** (2 Tim. 2:26)?

We can be assured at all times, truly *someone is watching you!* Is your light shining? Will what they see lead them to **“glorify your Father in heaven”** (Matt. 5:16), or cause **“the name of God”** to be blasphemed **“because of you”** (Rom. 2:24)?



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Welcome Visitors

We are so glad that you joined us today.
Please come again.

● **Let us know if you have any questions.**