

VOLUME FIFTY-ONE

V **THE** **VOICE OF TRUTH** **INTERNATIONAL**

RESTORATION
RADIO
NETWORK
INTERNATIONAL

Give Something

**Give something that belongs to you,
A friendly word, a smile;
It's like a sunbeam in the blue
Out on a golden isle.**

**Give something to a suffering soul
That errs the same as you
And cannot find in life its goal.
Your gift will help you, too.**

**Give something from your heart away
To save a fellow man,
A feeling of warm sympathy
Will do it now and then.**

**The happiness you will bestow
Today - perhaps tomorrow -
In torrents back again will flow
To help you in your sorrow.**

- John Tworoger

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THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST SALUTE YOU

(ROMANS 16:16).



PREACHING THE GOSPEL BY RADIO AND TELEVISION

J. C. Choate
Editor-in-Chief

Jesus commanded us to take the gospel to all the world (Mark 16:15,16). That can be done in many ways. Since we now have radio and TV to reach the masses, wouldn't it be wise to take advantage of these tools to speed up this process?

As a young man I personally heard the gospel first by radio. On becoming a Christian, I decided to preach the gospel, and almost from the beginning I had the opportunity to use radio in that work.

After preaching for years in the U.S.A., in the pulpit as well as on radio and TV, my family and I moved to Karachi, Pakistan to preach that same gospel and to begin the Lord's church. Several congregations were established in that Muslim city during those years of work. We used every means at our disposal to spread the truth, including public preaching, private teaching, advertising in the local papers and theaters, printing and distributing literature, and working to develop local Christians. We even tried to have a radio program on the short-wave station in Colombo, Sri Lanka, "The Giant of Asia", but we were informed that they were not accepting religious broadcasting at the time.

A few years later we moved to Colombo to plant the church. Although we were not allowed to preach on the local radio station,

we were able to advertise our worship meetings and special gospel meetings from time to time.

Another family arrived to carry on the work in Colombo, and we moved to New Delhi, India to begin the church. Shortly thereafter, Sri Lanka opened its powerful short-wave station to religious broadcasting, enabling us to have several radio programs covering India and Asia as a whole.

We put on a weekly radio program in the national language of India — Hindi — and gradually added additional programs in Hindi, Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada, (eventually Paite), and English. In a short time we had signed contracts for 17 weekly programs, and most of those have continued over the years. Many thousands have obeyed the gospel and numerous congregations have been established. Only eternity will reveal all the good these programs have done.

Today we have 13 weekly programs for India and Asia, and two in Sri Lanka itself in English and Tamil. Most of the broadcasts have local brethren as speakers. I have had weekly programs in English, directed to India, and a weekly program in Sri Lanka.

In addition to these broadcasts, for some time we had a number of programs in different cities in Indonesia, though changing circumstances have caused those contracts to be cancelled. Even now, though, we have some 20 weekly programs in the Philippines. Other broadcasts have been aired in Swaziland and Guinea, Africa.

Back in India, it suddenly became possible a few years ago to telecast on local TV cables in Telugu, Tamil, Hindi, English, and Paite. These have been very productive in reaching the masses. Local stations have coverage for many millions, while the cable telecasts can be seen throughout India and Asia. The Telugu programs are even being aired in the Northeast part of the U.S., with viewers writing or e-mailing brother Gootam for literature.

Not only have we been able, personally, to use these mass media tools to give millions of *people the opportunity to hear the truth*, but many other brethren have also used radio and TV throughout the world. “The Herald of Truth” program was on radio first and then

on TV. White's Ferry Road Church of Christ in West Monroe, LA has used radio to bring the Gospel to countries throughout the world for many years. "Search for the Lord's Way", with Mack Lyon as the speaker, is heard on radio and seen on TV throughout the States and in some foreign countries. Timothy Sparks of Ardmore, OK also has radio and TV programs that reach large numbers of people.

Brother V. E. Howard had numerous radio programs, and even after his passing, those programs have continued through the efforts of Winford Claiborne in Lawrenceburg, TN.

Brother Joe W. Gray of Altamont, TN has a series of programs on short-wave radio that can be heard around the world. Also, Don McWhorter has had his radio and TV work going for more than 40 years, reaching most of North America.

Brother Germaine Lockwood developed a network of programs reaching into Russia, Africa and Asia, including much of the muslim world. Since his death, his son has involved others in doing that work. George Bryan has assumed responsibility for programs that are aired eleven times each week throughout the world.

Roy Beasley and others working with Restoration Radio Network (featured in this issue of *The Voice of Truth International*) have multiple broadcasts for America, Africa, Asia and the globe.

Recently, Gospel Broadcasting Network announced that they are working now to cover North America with the Gospel, around the clock, seven days a week, with the goal of reaching the entire world through satellite cable TV. Their telecasts can also be seen online, twenty-four hours a day.

No doubt, many other radio and TV programs, sponsored by churches of Christ, are going into countries around the world. We want to commend all of those who are using these tools to faithfully proclaim the gospel of Christ. I would like to encourage brethren everywhere to investigate and increase the use of radio and TV so that, in the twenty-first century, Christians can again evangelize the entire world. And I would also encourage you who are reading this editorial to search out these broadcasts, listen to them, watch them, and encourage your friends to do the same. †



WHERE IS THE FIRE?

Byron Nichols
Managing Editor

Fire is mentioned numerous times in the Bible, but I want to direct our attention to its mention in Jeremiah 20:7-13. In the first chapter of Jeremiah, we find the Lord calling this young man to be His special spokesman. Jeremiah was extremely reluctant, but God persuaded him, assuring him that He would give him the words to say and

the strength to say them and to deal with any obstacles that he might encounter. The Lord promised that He would not leave Jeremiah alone in his struggles, but that He would be with him.

By the time we get to chapter 20, we see that Jeremiah had accepted his responsibility, but he had encountered a great deal of opposition, including mockery and ridicule. Undoubtedly, God had told him at the beginning about the barriers that would confront him. However, it seems safe to assume from his statements in chapter 20 that Jeremiah had not realized the magnitude of the task that God had given to him. He wanted very much to be the prophet that Jehovah wanted him to be, but his assignment just continued to be a bigger and bigger burden. Finally, beginning in verse 7, he complains bitterly to the Lord, declaring in essence that he absolutely could not go on any further. He was admitting defeat.

Then he stated how he was going to deal with the ordeal (verse 9). Jeremiah stated, *"I will not make mention of Him, nor speak anymore in His name."* His solution for dealing with his opposition was to just keep his mouth shut. His enemies and detractors would no longer have any reason to be his foes, because he was no longer going to be a spokesman for Jehovah!

Jeremiah had hardly finished expressing his utter despair in the first part

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of verse 9 when he followed those words with one of the most remarkable proclamations of conviction and commitment found in the entire Bible! In the second part of the verse, this man of God passionately declared, ***“But His word was in my heart like a burning fire shut up in my bones; I was weary of holding it back, and I could not.”*** Somehow Jeremiah had an awakening — his eyes were opened once again to the importance of his message, the only message that would save his people. His renewed realization of this reality revitalized his determination not to forsake his mission. He tells in verses 11 and 12 of his confidence that the Lord will truly work in whatever ways necessary to enable His servant to carry out his assigned task. Jeremiah’s rejuvenated spirit and sense of obligation are a predecessor to the proclamation of Paul when he said, *“For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel!”* (1 Corinthians 9:16).

Both of these men of God had a fervor that compelled them to do that which was dictated by God. They felt that they **had** to tell the message that they had received from God. They obviously had a choice — they didn’t really **have** to tell it, but their sense of urgency **compelled** them to get the word out.

In spite of his discouragement and difficulties, Jeremiah felt as if he would “burn up” if he didn’t let the word escape from the innermost part of his being! Would you say that we in the church today have that same feeling within us? While not intending to send us all on a drastic “guilt trip”, surely we would have to agree that Jeremiah’s depth of commitment was superior to that of God’s people today. There is a desperate need for all of God’s children today to experience that same fire within our bones!

What Can Cause this Fire?

Let me conclude with a few suggestions as to what can bring about this burning sensation in our spiritual bones:

- (1) Realization of what God and Christ have done for us and for the whole world.
- (2) Heartfelt gratitude for what has been done for us.
- (3) Realization of the lostness of the world.
- (4) Caring that the world is lost.
- (5) Having God’s Word in our heart and soul.

Jeremiah came to have a magnificent obsession, one which must be duplicated in the church today if we are to truly be people “after God’s own heart”.



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Reverence in Its Working Clothes

John Gipson

I've been thinking about Goethe's statement that "The soul of the Christian religion is reverence."

Off of the top of my head, my first thought had to do with Moses as he stood before the burning bush which was not being consumed. God said, "*Do not come near; put off your shoes from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.*" And he said, "*I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.*" And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God" (Exodus 3:5,6).

Then my mind jumped to a crisis in Israel — the death of King Uzziah. A young man saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and he said, "*Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!*" (Isaiah 6:5). Isaiah then heard the voice of the Lord: "*Whom shall I*

send, and who will go for us?" And out of reverence Isaiah responded, "*Here am I! Send me*" (Isaiah 6:8).

Racing ahead to Luke 5:8, I thought of one of Jesus' mighty works. "*But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, 'Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.'*"

I know these brief reflections on reverence are limited, but they are sufficient to convince me of the importance of at least three things:

- [1] We should feel a holy fear in God's presence;
- [2] We should be acutely aware of our sinfulness; and,
- [3] We should respond to God in willing service.

If you want to see reverence in its working clothes, look at the apostle Paul as he declares, "*For to me to live is Christ*" (Philippians 1:21). †

John Gipson works with the Windsong Church of Christ in Little Rock, Arkansas, USA.



Preaching Christ

Wayne Barrier

The Gospel of Christ must be taught for man to understand his responsibility to God. Biblical accounts of conversion to Christianity are often described as the result of early evangelists “preaching Jesus or preaching Christ” (Acts 8:35; 9:20,31). What does this teaching or preaching include? Obviously, it involves teaching the plan of salvation. To be saved and added to the church (Acts 2:38-47), believers were willing to obey the

apostles’ instruction for them to repent and be baptized for remission of sins. What was taught to encourage these believers to become obedient unto salvation? In general terms, three things seem to be included in this initial teaching.

First, early evangelists stressed the fact that Jesus is the long-awaited Savior spoken of by the prophets throughout the ages. The fulfillment of the scores of prophecies regarding the coming of

GOD

a Savior can be easily understood when the Bible is thoroughly studied. Details regarding time, place, circumstances, and events are totally accurate. No prophecies are found to be in error. Peter's sermon in Acts 2 includes numerous references to prophecy concerning Jesus and the establishment of His kingdom. Fulfilled prophecy is powerful evidence that Jesus is the Son of God.

Second, John states that those taught concerning the "signs" revealed by Jesus will be encouraged to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that, in believing, they can have life in His name (John 20:30,31). The "signs" John refers to include accounts of the supernatural power demonstrated by Jesus, and later by the apostles. Jesus healed the sick, gave sight to the blind, controlled the elements of nature, and raised the dead. His power was displayed throughout His ministry. The apostles were given special "powers" on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4) at

the instruction of Jesus (John 14:16). This power is evidence that Jesus is the Son of God.

Finally, the account of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus was persuasive teaching that often motivated hearers to obey. The death of an innocent man of such love and compassion is a moving story. Even more motivating is the account of His victorious resurrection. Victory over death and the confines of earthly human existence was demonstrated and promised to all. Paul states in 1 Corinthians 1:18-25; 2:1-9 that preaching of Christ and His crucifixion is the power of God.

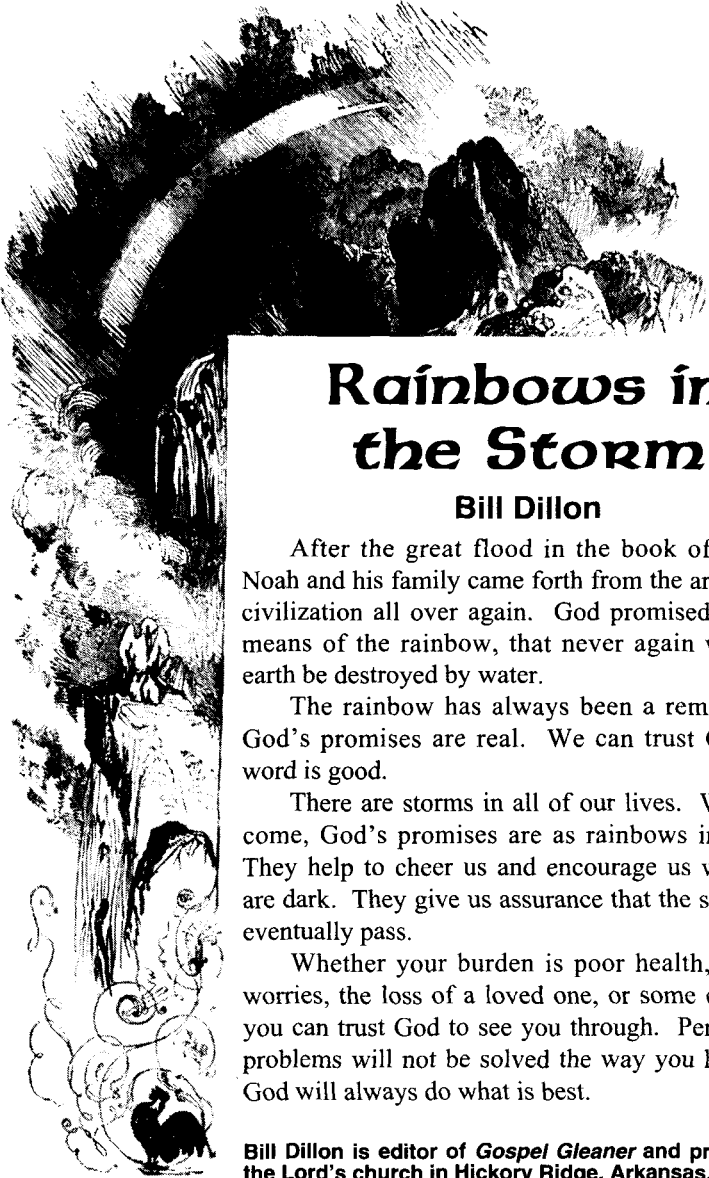
Much must be taught for one to become a Christian, but the starting place in teaching is to reveal these three truths. This approach is effective today, just as it was in the first century.

Man needs salvation. Jesus can and will save us. †

Wayne Barrier lives in Florence, Alabama, USA and is part of the World Evangelism team.

Four Everyday Evangelism Tips

1. Look at other people as those for whom Jesus died.
2. Pray for three specific people by name, asking God to use you to draw them to Christ.
3. Tell them how being a Christian gives your life meaning and purpose.
4. Relax. God is in charge.



Rainbows in the Storm

Bill Dillon

After the great flood in the book of Genesis, Noah and his family came forth from the ark to begin civilization all over again. God promised them, by means of the rainbow, that never again would the earth be destroyed by water.

The rainbow has always been a reminder that God's promises are real. We can trust God. His word is good.

There are storms in all of our lives. When they come, God's promises are as rainbows in the sky. They help to cheer us and encourage us when days are dark. They give us assurance that the storms will eventually pass.

Whether your burden is poor health, financial worries, the loss of a loved one, or some other trial, you can trust God to see you through. Perhaps your problems will not be solved the way you hoped, but God will always do what is best. †

Bill Dillon is editor of *Gospel Gleaner* and preaches for the Lord's church in Hickory Ridge, Arkansas, USA.

GOD ANSWERS PRAYER

Hollis Miller

The Bible clearly teaches that God hears the prayers of His children. But it is equally clear that all prayers are not always answered as the one praying may wish. The apostle Paul prayed three times that something he called “*a thorn in the flesh*” might be removed from him, but God answered: “*My grace is sufficient for you*” (2 Corinthians 12:7-9).

James taught that some prayers are not answered because the one praying asks for the wrong reasons (James 4:3; see also 1:5-8). John wrote: “*This is the confidence we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us*” (1 John 5:14).

It is a mistake to take a single passage of Scripture about prayer and assume that the passage contains the whole of what the New Testament teaches on the subject. That God cares for His children is a very positive New Testament doctrine (1 Peter 5:7). However, caring for us and always, without exception, responding to our prayers exactly as we request are not equal to each other. The apostle John was present when Jesus said: “*Ask, and*

it shall be given you” (Matthew 7:7). But the apostle’s statement cited above evidences that he did not understand Jesus’ statement to be unconditional.

Faith in prayer is always placed in God, never in its own sincerity and devotion. Our vision is too limited and our knowledge too inadequate to always know what is best for us. We do not always know, even with regard to the simple things of life, what should be done. Removing the will of God from prayer is to take away the unlimited wisdom, the perfect knowledge, and the unrestricted foresight that belongs to Him alone. Such removal should not be the wish of any Christian. †

Hollis Miller is an evangelist living in Murray, Kentucky, USA.

***The prayers a man
lives on his feet
are just as impor-
tant as those he
says on his knees.***



Fulfilled Prophecy Gives One Reason to Trust the Bible

Gary C. Hampton

Only God could have known specific events years before they actually happened, involving at times nations that did not exist when the prophecy was written. For

that reason, fulfilled prophecy can be considered one of the strongest proofs the Bible is from God and can be trusted.

George W. DeHoff, in his book

EVIDENCES

Why We Believe the Bible, wrote that the criteria of true prophecy has been listed as the following: The event must be beyond the power of man to foresee; it must not be a vision of hope nor a result of fear; it must not be a scientific or political forecast. The prediction must be written before the event occurs and must be applicable to it. The language of the prophecy must be clear and the fulfillment plain.

When God's prophets challenged the false gods of the people around them, they used this very criteria. Isaiah, for example, wrote, "*Show the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that you are gods...*" (Isaiah 41:23a). In contrast, the true God could say, "*Remember the former things of old, for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure'*" (Isaiah 46:9,10). God's ability to look into the future, thus proving He is God and the Bible is His Word, can be seen in numerous prophecies.

Isaiah's prophecy concerning Babylon (chapter 13) is one clear proof the Bible can be trusted. At the time Isaiah wrote, Babylon was still ruled by a viceroy appointed by the Assyrians. Such may account

for Hezekiah's boastful approach to the embassy sent to him from Babylon in 704 B.C. (2 Kings 20:12-19; Isaiah 39). Israel suffered the painful reward of Hezekiah's pride when Nebuchadrezzar II conquered Jerusalem. During that time it was said Babylon had a wall around it wide enough to race three chariots abreast! The hanging gardens of Babylon were considered one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.

Yet, Isaiah's prophecy clearly looks well into the future to the time when a powerful Babylon would be thoroughly defeated by the Medes. He foretold the city would be destroyed like Sodom and Gomorrah and left uninhabited! Isaiah wrote around 700 B.C., Jerusalem was conquered in 587, and the Medes attacked Babylon in 539. As one writer has said, "So desolate did Babylon become that, when Alexander the Great later decided to restore it, he gave up the task as a hopeless one." Only God could know the details presented by His spokesman!

Though Judah's captivity was not accomplished until well after the time of Isaiah, he foretold the day when the people of Judah would be restored to the land of promise. Among other things, he wrote, "*Who says of Cyrus, 'He is My shepherd, and he shall perform all*

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My pleasure, ' even saying to Jerusalem, 'You shall be built, ' and to the temple, 'Your foundation shall be laid'' (Isaiah 44:28-45:7). This prophecy is particularly telling since Cyrus was called by name some 100 years before his birth and 150 years before he would release God's people!

The book of Nahum has an extensive prediction of the destruction of Nineveh. Bernard Ramm wrote, "Obadiah is a prophecy directed at the Edomites in which it is declared that (a) the heathen would conquer them, and (b) the Jews would conquer them. Both of these came to pass. Amos' prophecy was made around 755 B.C. God caused him to speak of the defeat of Damascus at the hands of Tiglath-Pileser, which occurred in 732 B.C. He also prophesied the destruction of Gaza, Ashdod, and Ashkelon, which were accomplished by three separate kings, Hezekiah, Sennacherib, and Alexander the Great. Micah, who wrote about 730 B.C., predicted the destruction of Samaria (712 B.C.) and Jerusalem (587 B.C.). Concerning Samaria, God said, "*Therefore I will make Samaria a heap of ruins in the field, places for planting a vineyard; I will pour down her stones into the valley, and I will uncover her foundation*" (Micah 1:6). In 722 B.C., Sargon captured Samaria. Ramm

says again, "Samaria was on a hill and the stones may be found today literally poured down the side of the mountain, and the foundations of the city will be found to be discovered, i.e., laid bare."

For the Jews, no prophecy may be more distasteful or unlikely than the one made in Malachi 1:11. "*For from the rising of the sun, even to its going down, My name shall be great among the Gentiles; in every place incense shall be offered to My name, and a pure offering; for My name shall be great among the nations, ' says the Lord of hosts.*" The clear fulfillment of these words took place in the church after Jesus had broken down the middle wall of partition and Gentiles over the whole world offered acceptable worship to God. †

Gary C. Hampton is the Director of the East Tennessee School of Preaching in Karns, Tennessee, USA.





Experts Aren't Always Right

Dalton Key

The experts aren't always right.

The experts of Egypt, around the time of Moses, believed the earth was hatched from a winged egg, that man came from white worms found in the sludge of the Nile, and that the sun reflected the light of the earth.

But the experts were wrong.

The experts of ancient Babylon taught that humans were produced by a spitting monster. Wherever the monster spat, a man was formed; wherever a man spat, a woman appeared; and wherever a woman spat, an animal emerged.

The ancient experts were wrong.

Today's experts tell us that the universe has evolved, over a span of several billions of years, from nothing before the "Big Bang", to single-celled organisms, to — finally — you and me.

I don't know about you, but I'd just as soon have the spitting monster theory.

Experts may be wrong, but the Bible is right (Psalms 33:4). And, it is right in affirming that "*God created man in His own image*" (Genesis 1:27). †

Dalton Key is the editor of *Old Paths* and preaches for the North Amarillo congregation in Amarillo, Texas, USA.

Bible Study

Ken Tyler

It is easy to become so involved in our daily activities that Bible study is stifled out. It takes a person who really loves the Bible to study it regularly. Without a genuine love for God's word, Bible study is a hit and miss affair, mostly miss. There are many verses in Psalm 119 that point out how much God's word should mean to the child of God. In this article, I want to draw your attention to a few of them.

First, the Psalmist said in 119:72, "*The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver.*" He said again in verse 127, "*Therefore I love thy commandments above gold; yea, above find gold.*" Does God's word mean this much to you? So many have sold their souls for gold and silver. Please don't let this happen to you.

Second, the psalmist said in 119:129, "*Thy testimonies are wonderful: therefore doth my soul keep them.*" Is this how you feel about God's word? Do you consider it to be wonderful? Notice carefully that the Psalmist kept God's word because of what it meant to him.

Third, the Psalmist said in 119:131, "*I opened my mouth, and panted: for I longed for thy commandments.*" What a marvelous statement! He didn't run away from the commandments of God but longed for them. Do His words mean this much to you?

Fourth, several times in this passage the Psalmist mentions his love of God's word. Listen, "...*I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved*" (verse 47); "*O how love I thy law! It is my meditation all the day*" (verse 97); "*I have vain thoughts; but thy law do I love*" (verse 113); "*My soul hath kept thy testimonies; and I love them exceedingly*" (verse 167). Are these statements characteristic of your feelings about God's word?

John 12:48 makes it plain that we will be judged by the word at the last day. I pray that all of us will love it, study it, and then obey it. The Bible is too valuable to be left lying around in our houses collecting dust. Be a good Bible student. You won't regret it. †

Ken Tyler preachers for the church of Christ in Arab, Alabama, USA.

THE WORD OF GOD

God's words to Habakkuk, "*Write the vision, and make it plain...*" (Habakkuk 2:2) should be the attitude of every worker in the kingdom of God. Far too much that we do in His service is not characterized by the simplicity of plainness.

Preachers need to *make it plain*.

Contrast the clarity of the message of Paul to Agrippa, to Felix, and to all of his listeners, with the lack of this quality in lessons that are taught today. Much of the preaching being done every week

in our pulpits would be just as acceptable in synagogues and "Christian" assemblies that no longer believe in Christ.

Have you ever wondered just how it was that the preaching of the early Christians turned peaceful cities upside down, led to the disfavor and often even the arrest of the preachers, but the preaching done by many today makes them the most popular men in town? How was it that first-century preaching stirred the hearts of the listeners and

caused them to leave their former religions, while much of the preaching today allows the listener to leave the meeting, never knowing that a change is required in his life?

Personal workers need to *make it plain*. When we study with others, they need to see clearly that they are lost. They should under-

stand the necessity of leaving former religions behind them when they come to the Lord. They should realize, without doubt, their obligation in attendance, giving, personal work,

and morality. There is no other way they can carefully count the cost. Personal workers who fail to make it plain render it impossible for the sinner to make a true decision.

Make it plain! This should be the aim for every religious conversation, sermon, Bible class, and home study. Our responsibility is to **reveal** truth, not to **conceal** it! †

Dan Jenkins preaches for the church of Christ in West Palm Beach, Florida, USA.

Make It Plain

Dan Jenkins

The Bible — Our Authority

Joe Magee

“Of making of many books there is no end, and much study is a weariness of the flesh. Let us hear the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man” (Ecclesiastes 12:12,13).

As you browse through the library of any preacher, you will undoubtedly find a number of commentaries on various Bible texts and topics. These are a great help to any preacher or teacher, and often represent many years of study and preparation for the presentation of sermons and Bible lessons. They may not all be written by those of the same belief as the owner. They are valuable, nonetheless, because of the historical background, expression, and/or sentence construction. They may include some valid interpretations of Scripture, some thought which has escaped the reader as he attempted to glean a lesson from a difficult passage.

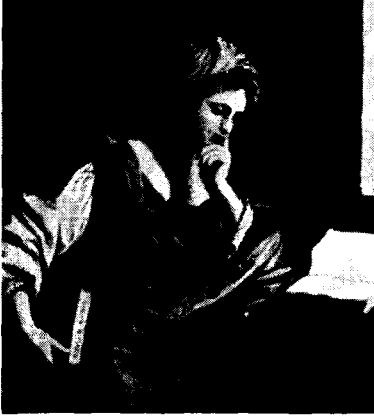
There are religious bodies who prohibit the reading of any material that has not been written by scholars of that particular religion. This constitutes a cult, of which there are many. There is no greater threat to truth than the *closed mind*. But we must recognize also the danger of the *open mind* to the extent that it would accept as truth anything that

is read from one who claims to be an authority.

Then what is the answer to the danger and dilemma of searching for greater knowledge? There is one authority to be reckoned with: the Bible. Admittedly there are difficult passages to deal with, but none which have to do with one's salvation. The Scriptures that direct us toward the right are clearly set forth. Passages that teach belief, repentance, confession of Christ as the Savior, and baptism for the remission of sins are so manifestly set forth that one would need help to misunderstand them. Texts that teach the baptized believer how to maintain his faith and grow in the virtues of Christian living are powerfully stated, with no necessity for explanation.

A good “rule of thumb” in study is simply this: study your commentaries in light of God's Word. Do not study God's Word in light of your commentaries. †

Joe Magee is a Gospel preacher living in Shawnee, Oklahoma, USA.



THE DOOR THAT SHUTS THE LORD IN

Betty Tucker

After Moses died, the Lord spoke to Joshua saying, *"This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success"* (Joshua 1:8).

God very plainly instructed this man who was to take over leadership of His people in the way to achieve success. Joshua was to make the Book of the Law the centerpiece of his life.

The Random House College Dictionary gives the meaning of the word meditate — "to think contemplatively, to reflect". So, Joshua was told to arduously study God's Word, and to make it a part of the very fabric of his being.

Paul continues the thread of

instruction suggested to Joshua. In his letter to the church at Philippi, he clearly outlines the things which are to be reflected upon... *"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are noble, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure...lovely and of good report...if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy...meditate on these things"* (Philippians 4:8).

Meditation Establishes True Values

Joshua did as the Lord told him to do. He contemplated the Word of the Lord and structured his life upon its directives. Addressing the Israelites shortly before his death, he said simply, *"...choose ye this day whom you will serve...But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord"* (Joshua 24:15).

This advice is as good today as

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it was in the days of Joshua. We need make our decision only once, thereby receiving the serendipity of personal adjustment and inner peace. Our course through life is set, and we are no longer pulled in every direction.

Through meditation, we learn to accept ourselves as we are: the good, the bad, and the in-between. We learn to recognize our strong qualities and build on them. We also admit to our weaker tendencies and work to grow stronger in those areas.

Through meditation, we learn to meet whatever difficulties come into our lives in the best way possible. A few years ago, this writer lost the mate who had been sweetheart, lover, husband, and best friend for more than four decades. It has taken these long, lonely months of meditation to learn to accept this cruelest of blows and to find a measure of peace. When the worst thing that could possibly happen becomes a

reality, there is nowhere to go but to God.

Somehow one rises from the Valley of Despair and goes on with life, even to learn to be content. Ever trusting God's promise to His child that He will make "*all things work together for good*" (Romans 8:28), we accept our new role in life. We determine that we will trust in the Lord and let Him direct our feeble steps. †

Betty Tucker is a Christian writer living in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, USA.

The Face of God

In a father's strong arm and a mother's smile,
In the winsome ways of an innocent child;
In the arching sky and the clouds of white,
In the sparkling host of a sable night;
In sun aglow on meadows green,
In the gentle touch of a summer's rain;
In the snow of winter and the flowers of spring,
In the torpid movement of a forest stream;
In the ocean's depth and the mountain's height,
In symphonic songs of birds in flight;
In the roar of thunder and the lightning's place,
In the radiant gleam of a baby's face;
In crimson roses bathed in dew,
In a flame of fire and the heaven's blue;
In the billowing spray of an ocean's wave,
In a sunset sky at the close of day,
I saw the face of God.

— Frank Chesser

Some Truths About Truth

Randall Caselman

Truth is defined as that which is real, genuine, certain, valid, factual. Truth is actuality, that which can be trusted because it is the things that *are*. In the Bible, truth is spoken of as an attribute of God. Twice Isaiah tells us that He is the God of truth. Titus 1:2 contends that God cannot lie. So, that which is revealed by God, inspired by God, breathed by God, is truth and can be trusted as genuine and valid. Note some truths about truth:

1. Truth can be known.

Jesus said, *"You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free"* (John 8:32). We can know truth by studying the Scriptures, which are inspired by the Holy Spirit and which testify about Jesus. John wrote, *"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth"* (John 1:14). Jesus plainly stated that He was the truth in John 14:6: *"I am the way and the truth and the life."* Do we know truth?

2. Truth, when obeyed, sanctifies. Jesus prayed, *"Sanctify them by the truth; your word is*

truth" (John 17:17). As we respond to the guidance of the Spirit, we are cleansed by truth. Paul tells us as much: *"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless"* (Ephesians 5:25-27).

3. Truth sets us free and apart. What is sanctification? Being freed from sin and the eternal consequences of sin. Sanctification sets us free and sets us apart. You see, when we are washed with water by the Word (Ephesians 5:26), we are raised to walk in a newness of life (Romans 6:4). Paul goes on to say that we become instruments of righteousness, living sacrifices (Romans 6:13;12:1). Peter says that we are a holy nation, a royal priesthood, a people belonging to God (1 Peter 2:5,9). As we allow the Spirit of truth to lead us, as we keep in step with Him, we produce His fruit — love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Indeed, this

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fruit sets us apart. Right?

4. Truth should set us ablaze. Remember Jeremiah? *“His word is in my heart like a fire, a fire shut up in my bones. I am weary of holding it in; indeed, I cannot”* (Jeremiah 20:9). If and when we are genuinely convinced that we have the truth of God in us, we cannot hold it back. Like Jeremiah, we are forced to proclaim His truth to others.

His truth sets us ablaze in another way also: it keeps us from sin. David wrote, *“I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you”* (Psalm 119:11). Truth hidden in our heart regulates our attitudes, our disposition, and even our daily behavior.

5. Truth must be contended for. We are instructed to *“contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints”* (Jude 3). “The faith” refers to that body of truth once delivered. This truth is not only to be proclaimed, it is to be defended. Why? Because it is the good news of the Gospel that saves. In Colossians 1:5, Paul speaks of *“the faith and love that spring from the hope that is stored up for you in*

heaven, and that you have already heard about in the word of truth, the gospel....” Indeed, we must contend for the faith, stand up for truth, fight the good fight, keep the faith — because we, as the church of God, are the pillar and ground of the truth (1 Timothy 3:15).

What is truth? What is our relationship to truth? Do we know it? Do we know Him? Are we being led by Him? Are we bearing His fruit? Are we obeying truth? Are we walking in the light? I pray that we are. *“So if the Son sets you free,”* Jesus said in John 8:36, *“you will be free indeed.”* **Indeed!** †

Randall Caselman is the preacher for the church of Christ in Bella Vista, Arkansas, USA.

Five Firsts to Success

1. Give God the **first hour** of the day.
2. Give God the **first day** of the week.
3. Give God the **first portion** of your pay.
4. Give God the **first consideration** in every decision.
5. Give God the **first place** in your heart.



Jesus Christ, the Eternal Sacrifice

Betty Burton Choate

The Head and His Body

“For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ.... Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually....” (1 Corinthians 12:12,27).

The verse does not say, “...so also is Christ’s **body**...”, that is, **one, united**. But it says, “...so also is **Christ**...”, identifying Himself as the head and the church as His body, such an integral unit that the whole is called *Christ*.

Do our minds follow the progression of His emptying of Himself, His self-imposed limitation of His inherent rights and attributes as Deity in order to rescue man from the condemnation of sin? It wasn’t enough for Him to lay aside His own eternal glory and to be born into the confines of a human body; it wasn’t even enough for Him to suffer the humiliation of death by crucifixion because of accepting our sins as His own. During these almost two thousand years since His resurrection, **He has further confined Himself to the position as head over a body made up of humans.**

Often, in seeing the maladies that can strike the physical body, we writhe inside at the horror of having a strong body chained to a broken or worn-out mind, or having a healthy, intellectual mind imprisoned in a paralyzed body. Even the encroaching limitations of old age can almost induce a state of panic. How frustrating and heart-breaking it would be to live, year after year, with such constraints.

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Limitations Imposed by the Body

In a very real way, our resurrected Christ experiences daily the confining limitations of being our Head, for we are His sometimes active, sometimes enthusiastic, sometimes lazy, sometimes rebellious, sometimes paralyzed, sometimes near-dead body in this world.

What is the role of the head in relation to the body? It is the point of origin of thought, of voluntary and involuntary activities. The head sees, aspires, wills; but then it must depend on the coordinated working-together of all the members of the body to carry the visions to fulfillment.

**Does Christ reach down to change hearts with a miracle?
Do angels roam the world, teaching the gospel?**

All that God has done since the beginning of time has been for the purpose of opening the way of salvation to man. Christ died to achieve that goal. But in order for God's work and Christ's death to benefit people, they must know what has been done. Does God speak directly to humans from heaven? Does Christ reach down to change hearts with a miracle? Do angels roam the world, teaching the gospel?

No.

Then, in whose hands does this treasure rest? In the hands of His body. The Head sees the world; He longs after the lost; He wills that all should feel the love and compassion of the gospel. The messages are sent out from the Brain to the eyes, the tongue, the hands, the feet, the heart. When there is coordinated response, what joy He must feel that the plan of the ages is being carried out!

But think, also, of the frustration and the anguish He must experience when the message goes out from the Head but the members of His body refuse to respond to His instructions. Think how often He is imprisoned by our laziness or paralysis. Think, too, of how grieved He must be when the members of His body betray Him, maligning His very Being by the shameful things we do. Would He, the Essence of God, lie, cheat, live immorally, enjoy evil thoughts, use foul language, break up a home, ignore the needs of the helpless? Yet, whatever we do as His body, we do directly to Him.

Weekly, we *partake* of His body so **that we may live in Him**. Daily, we *are* His body so **that He may live in us**. †

Betty Burton Choate is the author of the study, *Jesus Christ the Eternal Sacrifice*. This lesson, and the following lessons by sister Choate, will be taken from that book.

Many Things Happen at Baptism

Jerome Savage

As the above title indicates, Biblical baptism brings about many significant results.

1. We follow the example of Jesus (Matthew 3:15).
2. We obey a commandment (Acts 10:48).
3. We receive remission of sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38).
4. We receive the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:32).
5. We become a babe in Christ (1 Peter 2:2).
6. We become a new creature (2 Corinthians 5:17).
7. We are born again and converted (John 3:5; Matthew 18:3).
8. We put on Christ at baptism (Galatians 3:27).
9. We are baptized into one body (1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 1:22,23).
10. We are added to the church (Acts 2:47).
11. We are translated into Christ's kingdom (Colossians 1:13).
12. We now have a clear conscience before God (1 Peter 3:21).
13. We are now to glorify Him as a Christian (1 Peter 4:16).
14. We are given many spiritual blessings (Ephesians 1:3).
15. The Holy Spirit helps us with prayers and intercessions (Romans 8:26,27).
16. We walk in the light and the blood of Jesus cleanses us (1 John 1:7).
17. There is now no condemnation in Christ (Romans 8:1).
18. We have faith in the operation of God in doing all these things (Colossians 2:12).

There are 128 references to baptism in the New Testament. Why would anyone resist baptism, knowing all these wonderful things happen? †

Jerome Savage preaches for the Jamestown church of Christ near Mineola, Texas, USA.

Sound Doctrine

Tom Kelton

Jesus said, “Go...and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that is commanded you” (Matthew 28:19,20). Paul said, “Until I come, give attention to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation and teaching” (1 Timothy 4:13). “And the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also” (2 Timothy 2:2). “As for you, speak the things which are fitting for sound doctrine” (Titus 2:1).

Preaching that does not strive to communicate God’s truth is not sound preaching. The preacher who avoids doctrine because he thinks it is impractical shirks his Biblical responsibility. He is to speak with the authority of *God*, and no one can do that who is not an expositor of *God’s Word*. Moving stories, moralistic advice, psychology, comedy, and opinion all fall short. Only the authoritative proclamation of the Word fits the intent of God. Those other things are tools for the kind of

ear-tickling preaching Paul cautioned Timothy about: “I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Jesus Christ, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate to themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires; and will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside to myths. But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry” (2 Timothy 4:1-5).

Paul commanded Timothy to stick with preaching the powerful Word, whether convenient or inconvenient, popular or unpopular. There is no closed season on the Word. We are to proclaim it constantly and incessantly. †

Before his death, Tom Kelton was a writer and preacher living in Pharr, Texas, USA.



How do you measure up?

Bless the LORD, O my soul; And all that is within me,
bless His holy name!

Bless the LORD, O my soul,
And forget not all His benefits:

Who forgives all your iniquities,

Who heals all your diseases,

Who redeems your life from destruction,

Who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies,

Who satisfies your mouth with good things,

So that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

The LORD executes righteousness

And justice for all who are oppressed. ...

The LORD is merciful and gracious,

Slow to anger, and abounding in mercy.

He will not always strive with us,

Nor will He keep His anger forever.

He has not dealt with us according to our sins,

Nor punished us according to our iniquities.

For as the heavens are high above the earth,

So great is His mercy toward those who fear Him;

As far as the east is from the west,

So far has He removed our transgressions from us.

As a father pities his children,

So the LORD pities those who fear Him.

For He knows our frame;

He remembers that we are dust.

Psalm 103 — David



Noah and Us

Rod Kyle

Why don't we all get along better in this post-flood world? After all, we are all related. We share a common parentage through Noah (Genesis 9:1). In fact, Noah can still teach us a thing or two if we are prepared to learn.

Consider the following:

1. Noah lived in a world immersed in violence, immorality, and unrighteousness — Genesis 6:5,10-12. What about our world today? Is it an improvement over Noah's day (Romans 3:11,12)?
2. Noah received a promise from God (Genesis 6:3,17). Have we been given a similar promise (Acts 1:11; 1 Thessalonians 4:16)?
3. Noah did his best to live right (Genesis 7:1). Are we challenged to do the same (Titus 2:11-14)?
4. His test of faith was to build the ark (Genesis 6:22). Must we, too, be obedient to have a faith that pleases God (James 2:26)?
5. Was Noah surrounded by spiritually ignorant people who refused to do God's will until it was too late (Matthew 24:37-39)? Is this also the case in this present world (2 Corinthians 4:4)?
6. Were Noah and his family the only ones saved from the flood by being in the Ark (1 Peter 3:20)? Today, must we have a faith that leads us to be baptized into Christ's church, which is God's ark of spiritual safety today (1 Peter 3:21; Acts 2:41,47)?

What does our common forefather teach us today (Romans 15:4)? Noah's life taught lessons not lost on Jesus (Matthew 24:37-39). Jesus therefore warns us, "*For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah*" (Matthew 24:37). With this warning in mind, need you ask, "Where am I? In the ark or ...?" †

Rod Kyle is an evangelist in New Zealand.

THE LORD OPENED HEARTS

T. Pierce Brown

In Acts 16:14 we read, “*And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.*” Most preachers and members of denominational bodies assume from this reading, along with their preconceived Calvinistic doctrine of “effectual grace”, that God did some miraculous act in opening Lydia’s heart. Conversion is indeed achieved by the power of God, and unless God opens the heart, one cannot be turned from the power of darkness into light. But when one takes all the Bible says about the subject, it is not hard to see how God opens the heart of a person.

Before we examine this passage in more detail, let us look at some other related Scriptures. In Luke 24:45 we read, “*Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures.*” How did he do this? The same way any teacher opens the understanding of a pupil. He explained the meaning of the Scriptures to them. We may note in Romans 1:31 that Paul says about some that they were “*without*

understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful.” What caused them to be without understanding? Romans 1:28 shows it clearly. “*And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient.*” They did not want to know the will of God, so God did not open their understanding.

Jesus said in John 7:17, “*If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.*” So for a person’s understanding to be opened, he first must *want* to know. Then if he wants to know, and there is some person to explain to him what he wants to know, he understands what he did not understand.

Since Jesus said that a person understands with the heart, when the understanding is opened, the heart is opened. So, Jesus said clearly in Matthew 13:15, “*For this people’s heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and*

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should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them."

Even a passage like Hebrews 11:3 casts light on the subject. *"Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear."* If it is through faith that we understand, and faith comes by hearing God's Word (Romans 10:17), then it should be apparent that understanding comes when one has the Word of God explained to him.

This Greek word, "opened — dianoigo (dee-an-oy'-go)" is the same word that is used in Luke 24:32, *"And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?"* Also, it is the same word in Luke 24:45, *"Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures."* Surely it is easy to see that when he opened the Scriptures and explained the meaning to them, their understanding was opened. Since they understood with their hearts, their hearts were opened.

Now let us look again at Lydia's situation. Acts 16:14 clearly says, "Lydia — heard us". When she listened with an attentive, obedient mind, and she heard the

Scriptures, she understood, her heart was opened, and since she already had a willing mind, the result was *"that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul."*

When any honest, sincere person wants to do the will of God, the Word of God has the power within itself to enlighten a person's understanding, or open the heart. David said it this way in Psalm 119:130, *"The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple."*

We know of nothing in the Bible which suggests that God has to give some extra miraculous light for us to see the light that His Word gives, regardless of the misconception of a great number of religious persons in that regard. Can you imagine God giving us a flashlight to help us on our journey, then having to give us a candle to see the light we have? †

T. Pierce Brown lives and preaches in Cookeville, Tennessee, USA.

Instead of complaining about all the things we don't get that we want, why not be grateful that we don't get all the things we deserve?

SALVATION

Sin is transgression of the law (1 John 3:4). Sin is neglecting to do God's will (James 4:7). Sin brings guilt for our conscience and damnation for our soul.

Many remedies are used to ease the pain of guilt and calm the fear of judgment.

Some try to ignore sin. They try to hide the evidence and put it out of their mind. But God knows.

Some try to deny the sin. They lie about it. They think if they can convince others that they are not guilty, God will also be deceived. But you cannot fool God.

Some try to redefine sin to make it a mere mistake or a cultural taboo. But God's will cannot be changed to conform to the times.

Some try to excuse sin. They feel that what they did was caused by other people or a bad environment. God does not accept excuses.

Some think that grace will cover their sins without their repentance. They think, "God is so gracious, He will overlook my sin." Such is a perversion of grace. God is both gracious in His goodness, but also severe in His judgment.

There is only one remedy for sin — the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. He bore our sins in His own body. The only way for this sacrifice to be effective in covering my sins is by repenting and doing the Lord's will. This alone removes our sins from the mind of God and lifts the guilt from our convicted soul. †

Jimmy Jividen is a writer and preacher living in Abilene, Texas, USA.



Watch your thoughts; they become words.
Watch your words; they become actions.
Watch your actions; they become habits.
Watch your habits; they become character.
Watch your character; it becomes your destiny.

God Accepts the Imperfect

Ron Bryant

The only kind of people who inhabit this earth are imperfect people. We are each painfully aware that even though we may desire to be all that we ought to be, we are not. To be sure, there are occasions when we are more nearly perfect than others, yet we must confess that even our desire to be all that we ought to be is not always what it ought to be. We are imperfect.

Imperfect people do not possess perfect faith, perfect love, or perfect salvation. It is man's lack of perfectness that called the perfect one, Jesus, into the world. He came to seek and save the imperfect. He came to give imperfect people a standing and a relationship with God, through the perfect redemption that He alone could provide.

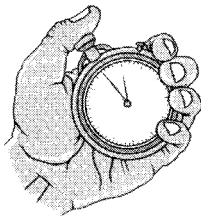
At our best, our faith and love are going to be less than perfect. Faith and love, at times, vary in the best of us. Our love and its application reaches toward the sublime, and, while it exists because of the perfect love of God, our love is not sublime.

The perfect will of God calls for our obedience, and our love for Him moves us to yield and to obey from the heart, but we are not perfect in our obedience. Yet, the good news is this — it is God's good will to accept us in Christ. God looks on our hearts. He looks at the genuineness of our love, not its flawlessness. God weighs the unfeigned nature of our faith, not its perfection. He regards the sincerity that produces our efforts to obey Him, not the excellence of our efforts.

God looks at the desire of our hearts, not the perfection of our actions. He wants us to humble ourselves before Him, and asks that we cease our rebellion and yield ourselves to Him. God longs to write upon our hearts the fact that our hearts belong to Him alone. He has chosen to give Himself to those who, though imperfect, are seeking to know and honor Him. Man's imperfection is no excuse or barrier to seeking to give oneself to God. †

Ron Bryant preaches for the church of Christ in Hollister, Missouri, USA.

The Christian's life is the world's Bible.



5-MINUTE BIBLE STUDY ON PATIENCE

Hebrews 6:12 “That you do not become _____, but _____, those who through _____ and _____ inherit the promise.”

James 1:3 “Knowing that the testing of your faith produces _____.”

2 Peter 3:9 “The Lord is not _____ concerning His promise, as some count _____, but is _____ towards us, not willing that any should _____ but that all should come to _____.”

Galatians 5:22,23 “But the _____ of the _____ is love, joy, peace, _____, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no _____.”

James 5:7,8 “Therefore be _____, brethren, until the _____ of the Lord. See how the _____ waits for the precious fruit of the earth, _____ for it until it receives the early and latter rain. You also be _____. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.”

1 Thessalonians 5:14 “Now we _____ you, brethren, _____ those who are unruly, _____ the faint-hearted, _____ the weak, be _____ with _____.”



Hebrews 6:12: sluggish, imitate, faith, patience
James 1:3: patience
2 Peter 3:9: slack, slackness, long-suffering, perish, repentance
Galatians 5:22,23: fruit, Spirit, long-suffering, law
James 5:7,8: patient, coming, farmer, waiting, patiently, patient
1 Thessalonians 5:14: exhort, warn, comfort, uphold, patient, all

THE CHURCH



“Restore Such a One in the Spirit of Meekness...”

Dale Grissom

“Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted” (Galatians 6:1). Restoring the erring is an area in which the church is badly failing.

It is reported that only fifty percent of new converts remain faithful for over five years. Brethren, this just ought not to be. We must do a better job of nurturing our babes in Christ — encouraging, teaching, loving, and bonding, making them feel a welcome and important part of the family of God.

The apostle Paul admonishes us to restore the erring in the spirit of meekness. How can we accomplish this if we don't care about our brethren? And how can we truly care for someone we barely even know? The church is the family of God, and as such we must work to develop a genuine love for each other. Only by spending time in prayer for each other, and by spending time getting to know each other, can we build that bond that God would have us to build. If we have the love we should have for our spiritual family we will be grieved

THE CHURCH

when a brother or sister goes back into the world.

Every person who obeys from the heart the Gospel plan of salvation becomes a child of God, and God adds him to the church (Acts 2:47). He will always be a child of God. Though he may become unfaithful, he does not cease to be a part of God's family: he is instead a wayward child. Consider the children of Israel, how time and time again they were unfaithful. God grieved over their sins, yet forgave them each time they repented and turned back to Him.

Each of us must truly become our brother's keeper. We must work to set the proper example for others, and we must encourage and build each other up. We must not be timid about talking to one another about matters that concern our souls and where we will spend eternity. May each of us determine to become more spiritually-minded and more sensitive concerning the needs of our brethren.

Christianity is a serious business; we are preparing for eternity. Let's be sure

we don't take it too lightly — our souls are dependent upon it! †

Dale Grissom works with the Lord's church in Dexter, Missouri, USA.

In Your Home Congregation

- Who is nurturing the ones who "don't fit", those with no one in their age group, their marital situation, their race or their social background?
- Who is nurturing the weak person who keeps falling back into old habits of sin?
- Who is nurturing the "unloveable" whose genes, upbringing, and/or bad decisions have scarred their lives?

All souls are precious to God, *not only the ones we deem "beautiful"*. The compassion of Christ requires us to reach out to those who need Him most.

What Makes a Strong Church?

J. Robert Swain

When God sent the prophet Samuel to Jesse's house to select a new king for Israel to replace King Saul, no one present — not even the prophet — knew what to look for. No one could see the qualities that God saw in the youngest of Jesse's sons. In 1 Samuel 16:6,7 God tells us that men look at the physical, outward appearance on which to base their opinions and judgments, but God looks at the heart. So it is with individual Christians today and with congregations also.

We still look at the outward appearance to determine success in a body of believers: how big the building is, types of programs offered, or how many members there are. While these things may be evidence of a maturing growth, God is still looking at the hearts of His people. Consider the following to make your congregation strong:

A church that strives for unity is a strong church. Jesus prayed for unity among His believers (John 17:20-26). Paul pleaded with the Corinthian church (1 Corinthians 1:10) to be united and speak the same thing. Christians who are willing to humble themselves and their opinions to the authority of the scriptures will make

a church strong. Christians who are willing to place the physical and especially the spiritual well-being of their fellow Christians above their own personal well-being will create unity. In Psalm 133:1, King David reminds us, "*Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for Brethren to dwell together in unity!*"

A church that prays is a strong church. There is power in prayer. A church that gets serious about prayer is a church striving to be closer to God. Such Christians will also, in the process, re-evaluate themselves and correct their shortcomings. James 5:16-18 reminds us of Elijah who prayed and God listened. Verse 16 says that God will hear righteous people. The church that humbly prays can expect answers to their prayers.

A church that trains its membership is a strong church. A local congregation of the Lord's church cannot be stronger than the Biblical knowledge of individual members who attend there. For far too long in our brotherhood, there seems to have been a passive response to ignorance of the scriptures. The Hebrew writer scolded the congregation to which he was writing (Hebrews 5:12-14) by say-

THE CHURCH

ing that they should have been stronger and more mature by now! Bible study, both in the classroom and as individuals, must be a top priority if a church is to be strong. Paul encouraged the young man Timothy (2 Timothy 2:15) to *“be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a workman who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”* If we prepare ourselves, **God** will be pleased. If we don't, **we** should be ashamed! A church that learns to use the scriptures can train others, can teach others, and can lead others. With training comes confidence to give an answer for the hope that we have (1 Peter 3:15).

A church that shows its faith by what it does is a strong church. As we are told in Ephesians 2:8,9, we are saved by the grace of God. Our actions and efforts for God are not to gain our salvation. Rather, we do what we do because of the salvation that we already have through Christ's death, burial, and resurrection! James 2:18 says that we show our faith in Christ by what we do. We cannot show the world Christ's love by doing nothing. In the same vein, the people of the world will not listen to our words until they first see our concern and love for them. A strong church puts its faith into action, puts its sermons into practice, and strives to be active

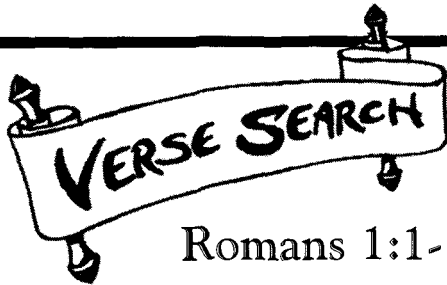
individually and collectively in the lives of the people they hope to influence for Christ.

A church that humbly relies on God is a strong church. Attitude is everything. Corinthians 13 tells that all types of wonderful and sacrificial actions are pointless if they are done for the wrong motives and with the wrong attitude. Every church should want to grow — not just to be big, but to bring others to Christ. Never forget to give praise where it is due! Never forget where we would be without Christ's sacrifice on the cross. Never forget to be humble in His church. In His encounters with individuals, Jesus was always interested in and excited about those who humbled themselves to become closer to God. So it is in His church.

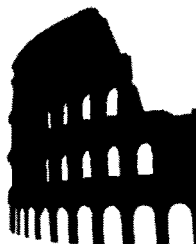
Let's learn to look not at the outward appearance but at the qualities that lie within. Sometimes it's not the big churches but the little churches that do great things for God because of what is living within their hearts! Whether big or small, let's not get caught up with quantity, but concentrate on quality.

Remember, Christ changed the world, starting with twelve men. If we strive to be strong in His service, we will grow! †

J. Robert Swain is a missionary living in Winona, Mississippi, USA.



Romans 1:1-17



1. Who is the writer of Romans and to whom is the book written? *(vs. 1 & 7)*
2. Who does the writer serve? *(vs. 1)*
3. Has the writer ever visited Rome before? *(vs. 13)*
4. What four things does the writer want to do when he visits Rome? *(vs. 11, 12, 13 & 15)*
5. To which Old Testament lineage does Jesus belong? *(vs. 3)*
6. Which act of Jesus proved Him to be the Son of God? *(vs. 4)*
7. Which nations did Jesus die for? *(vs. 5)*
8. What did the writer call the church in Rome? *(vs. 6 & 7)*
9. For what did the writer thank God, regarding the church in Rome? *(vs. 8 & 9)*
10. Why is the writer not ashamed of the Gospel? *(vs. 16)*
11. What does the Gospel reveal? *(vs. 17)*
12. If you want to be “just” in God’s sight, how must you live? *(vs. 17)*

(See inside of back cover for answers.)

Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God **2** which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, **3** concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, **4** and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead. **5** through Him we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name, **6** among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ; **7** To all who are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints; Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

8 First, I thank my God through Jesus for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world. **9** For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of His Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers, **10** making request if, by some means, now that I may find a way in the will of God to come to you. **11** For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift, so that you may be established – **12** that is, that I may be encouraged together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me. **13** Now I do not want you to unaware, brethren, that I often planned to come to you (but was hindered until now), that I might have some fruit among you also, just as among the other Gentiles.

14 I am a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to wise and to unwise. **15** So, as much as is in me, I am ready to preach the gospel to you who are in Rome also. **16** For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. **17** For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “The just shall live by faith.”

Romans 1:1:1-17, New King James Version

The Secret to Waking Up



the Pew
Potatoes
John Mark Wilson

This Is Section Two of Your Personal Work Notebook

(Chapter eight of John-Mark Wilson's study book and work-guide, **The Secret of Waking Up the Pew Potatoes.**)

You may copy and enlarge the following pages to compile in a folder for ready use!

Remember: This Bible study works *only* if **you** work!

When you use this notebook, you are obeying

Acts 20:20

"And how I kept back nothing

*that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you **publicly** and **from house to house.**"*

WE MUST ESCAPE POTATO MODE!

Romans 13:11

"... now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed."

Ephesians 5:14

"Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."

Never forget that you and I are only tools for God's use!

We plant, and God gives the increase.

Won't you plant the seed of the Gospel?

30-Minute “Getting Back to the Bible” Study

Are You Saved?

Are you willing to let the Bible decide?

“Jesus Loves You. He Wants You Saved”

You must have an *Open Heart* and an *Open Bible!*

1. Are we commanded to understand what the will of the Lord is?
_____ Ephesians 5:15-17
2. If we love God, we will _____.
1 John 5:3
3. Has Jesus given us an understanding, so we can obey Him? _____
1 John 5:20
4. If Christ asks you to do something in our study today, will you obey Him? _____
5. All scripture is _____ of God and is profitable for instruction in _____.
2 Timothy 3:16,17
6. If we do not follow God’s Word, it will still _____ us. John 12:48
7. Are we allowed to add or subtract from God’s divine message?
_____ Revelation 22:18,19
8. To have salvation we must enter through what door? _____
John 10:9,10
9. The GOSPEL is the power of God unto what? _____
Romans 1:16
10. What three things make up the Gospel of Jesus? His _____, _____
and _____ 1 Corinthians 15:1-4
11. Can there be more than one saving Gospel? _____
Galatians 1:8,9
12. By what are we called to be Christians today? _____
2 Thessalonians 2:14
13. We need the Gospel because we are separated from God by _____ or
_____. Isaiah 59:1,2
14. All have _____. Romans 3:23. Does this include you and me?

15. If we die while still in our sins, we receive wages of eternal
_____. Romans 6:23
16. Christ died for you, a sinner, because He _____ you. Romans 5:8

CHURCH GROWTH

17. We are justified by Jesus' _____ . Romans 5:9

18. Jesus shed His blood for the _____ of the _____ .
Matthew 26:28

*(We need to reach His blood so that we may have forgiveness
and eternal life.)*

19. Through God's divine grace, Jesus tells us of some instructions we must
_____, in order to receive His free gift of eternal life.
Hebrews 5:8,9

20. We must have _____. Hebrews 11:6

21. This comes from truly hearing God's _____. Romans 10:17

22. The _____ believe and tremble. James 2:19 Are they saved?

23. The _____ believed in Him, but would not confess Him.
John 12:42

24. Is simply believing, enough to be saved? _____

25. We must _____, which is a change of heart and mind. Luke 13:3

26. We must _____ Jesus as the Son of God. Romans 10:10

(We still haven't mentioned blood. Let's see where He shed His blood.)

27. Jesus shed His blood in His death on the _____.
Colossians 1:20

28. How do we get into Christ's death, where He shed His blood? We are
_____ into Christ Romans 6:3,4

29. When we get into Christ, we are a new _____.
2 Corinthians 5:17

30. In Acts 2:38, we are told to _____ and be _____ for
_____.

31. When does Jesus' blood wash away our sins? Be _____ and
wash away your sins. Acts 22:16

32. All must believe and be _____. Mark 16:16. Can I be saved
without baptism _____?

33. This is because Jesus' blood, in death, flowed from His side. The water
was in the blood and the blood was in the _____. John 19:34

34. When we are baptized correctly, the Lord adds us to His _____.
Acts 2:41,47

35. The body = _____ Colossians 1:18. How many bodies
does Jesus have? _____ Ephesians 4:4

CHURCH GROWTH

36. Does Jesus want us to be united in His one church? _____
1 Corinthians 1:10
37. Did Jesus build or plant His **church** or **churches**? _____
Matthew 16:18
38. For if we have been *planted* together in the likeness of His _____
we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection. Romans 6:5
39. What about doctrines planted by men? _____
Matthew 15:13
40. Jesus purchased His church with His _____, which saves us.
Acts 20:28
41. In Jesus' one church (or body), we receive _____ spiritual blessings.
Ephesians 1:3
42. If *All* spiritual blessings are "in Christ", how many are outside of Him?

43. When Jesus comes again, He is coming to save His _____.
Ephesians 5:23
44. When the Ethiopian Nobleman learned the truth about Christ and His
church, how long did he wait to obey the Gospel and become a
Christian? _____ Acts 8:34-38
45. Now that you have learned the truth, when should your day of salvation
be? _____ 2 Corinthians 6:2 †

John-Mark Wilson works with the Apple Hill Church of Christ in Jonesboro, Arkansas, USA.

Has the Lord Blessed you ...

with life, food, health, comfort, answered your prayers and in thousands of other ways this past week? You can say "Thank you, Lord" by doing your best to heed His command to do "the will of My Father in heaven" (Matthew 7:2). The reward is an even greater blessing!

Editor's Note:

A "restoration movement" is simply that: restoring in the given locality what was already in existence. The church or body of people for whom Christ died was begun on the Day of Pentecost in AD 33. These articles are an over-view of the American movement to restore that body to the North American continent.



The American Restoration

Dr. Joe D. Gray

19th Century — The Middle Years

In 1827, Walter Scott, a talented, scholarly, effective young preacher, invaded the Eastern Ohio Valley with the gospel of Christ. He was a missionary to the west; an evangelist determined to reach the masses of the lost with the first-century message. He was confident that truth could be taught in such a manner as to convert large numbers. Scott was joined in his work for a number of years on the "Western Reserve" by a young convert named William Hayden. Hayden was the antithesis of Scott, but he learned quickly. He was useful to Scott mostly because of his musical ability. Scott is reported to have said, 'Give me my Bible, my head, and Brother William Hayden, and we will go out and convert the 'world'. (H. Leo Boles, 'Biographical Sketches', "GA", LXXI, 3, January 17, 1929, p. 54).

Walter Scott was the restoration leader who first realized a consistent Biblical truth — to reach the masses, one's message must be uncomplicated. Deep, detailed exegesis of scripture may be necessary and may be applauded by scholars, but the masses must be reached by the simplicity of truth (See 1 Corinthians 1 & 2). Although he was a classical scholar, Scott understood that individuals and societies are not changed by a message which is too technical, detailed, or intellectual. He believed that listeners must see clearly a personal application of a message if their lives were to be changed.

The Church: Today's Opportunity

Scott could certainly see the scriptural simplicity of the message (as can people of any age) in the study of the lessons of the Master Himself. All

CHURCH HISTORY

successful evangelistic thrusts since the beginning of Christianity have centered around a simple and urgent message. Walter Scott was among the many who were concerned with the lack of impact of the powerful message of the restorers. He preached the message accurately, while initially reducing it to an understandable minimum. This was in the likeness of Peter's Spirit-led approach on Pentecost (Acts 2). Peter proved to the listeners that the Jesus they had killed had been raised from the dead and was then at the right hand of God (vs. 22-36). "What shall we do?" the believers asked.

"Repent and be baptized, in His name, for remission of sins, ... Receive the gift of the Holy Spirit," answered Peter. *"... as many as gladly received the word were baptized..."*

"There were added unto them about three thousand souls..." commented Luke as guided by the Spirit. Could anything be more simple? You can almost see the 1, 2, 3 approach of the Holy Spirit!

Scott is credited with originating what is called the 'five finger' approach to teaching conversion. His first-principle sermons centered around the story of Jesus — His death, burial, and resurrection. Scott then asked who in the audience would like to become a Christian — who desired to be saved? He extended his right hand and described the five steps involved for all — faith, repentance, confession, baptism, remission of sins and the gift of the Spirit. People understood. People, with longing but no previous understanding, suddenly knew how that they could come to Christ. There was no waiting for some mysterious experience, no mourner's bench, no vote by the church. And the listeners, in faith, began to move forward to the water and to the Lord.

The restoration movement gained a new dimension — growth. The numbers of converts were massive. Membership in this mid-century increased from a few hundred to half a million. The church became the fifth largest religious group in the country. The men of the mid-19th century continued to stand firm upon the faith grown through study and practice during the first third of the century. They continued to expose the evils of creeds, ministerial pastors, societies and denominationalism in general. Interaction with others of like-faith was expanded and different movements merged into a powerful entity — multiple congregations of the church of Christ.

The simplified message struck a chord in the hearts of thousands. Exhilaration led to a confidence in the Christians' hearts at being used by God to bring death to division and restoration to the New Testament church.

CHURCH HISTORY

As the crisis of States' Rights and slavery cast a pall of gloom over the nation, the people of the Lord's church, in majority, took their stand in that dispute, but retained their focus on the spiritual fight to be won. They were harbingers of a great period of success for the church of the Lord.

Yet, in the midst of grand victory, there is always a seed, a danger, of defeat. Society is so constructed that no one direction ever long holds total sway. In the center of the mid-century success, the missionary society, the instrument of music, and the beginning of the era of 'higher criticism' were thorns destined to disturb.

19th Century — Last Third

In order to usher in the expected victory of truth for God, the members of the church realized the central necessity of missions. The world had to be taught, if it was to lay down its sinfulness and bask in the peace of the Lamb. Thus, even in the midst of the momentum of success, the seeds of self-injury were sown. It was not a war between brothers at Shiloh or Manassas that brought near defeat to the church. Those battles were largely political and of insufficient importance to divide the fellowship of Jesus.

The war that afflicted the church in this period was an internal division. Societies and musical instruments and so-called science were front and center. The dreaded enemies the Christians had fought so diligently in the past rose up again to haunt them. Brethren argued and, in many instances, forgot their main mission. The supporters of the Society proclaimed that the church in its autonomous organization was insufficient to accomplish the work of evangelism assigned to it by God. "We can do whatever is not forbidden in the Scriptures," added those who chose to listen to the strains of the organ. And some of the 'scholarly' sort thought that perhaps, just perhaps, the Scriptures are not infallible or understandable as they had formerly believed.

The loss of internal unity was the dagger that pierced the onward movement of the church of the Lord. The splintering of its united perspective of the scripture brought defeat where victory should have stood. Growth slowed; churches divided; focus was deflected.

As was true a 100 years earlier, gloom and pessimism permeated the hearts of good and sincere men and women when they turned to view the religious world that surrounded them. As the 19th century came to a close, the victory, which had seemed so certain in mid-century, had been lost, and there was no agreement on how to begin again. †

From: "The Church: Today's Opportunity" by Dr. Joe D. Gray, Altamont, Tennessee, USA.

There Is Power in God's Command

Francis David

Our God created the whole universe. He is Almighty God.

In the book of Genesis we read about the history of creation. This particular book tells us how God, by His command and power, brought all things into existence. We must know that this universe is not self-created, but it is the handiwork of a great power. The first verse of Genesis says: *"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."* In this book we read again and again that God said something, or commanded, and it was done. Without a doubt, we can say that there is power in God's command.

In the inspired book, the Bible, we read about many characters, from whom we can learn many things. In the Second book of Kings, chapter five, there is a very famous character. This man, Naaman, was an Army commander or chief. He had a very prominent position and was well respected by his people. But the sad thing was that he was a leper. He was willing to pay any price to get rid of this terrible disease.

There was a little captive girl in Naaman's house who was from Israel. She waited on Naaman's wife. This girl said to her mistress, *"If only my master were with the prophet who is in Samaria! For he would heal him of his leprosy"* (verse 2). When Naaman heard this, he agreed to go to meet the prophet. When he reached Samaria with all his servants, he sent a message to Elisha, God's prophet. Elisha sent a message back to Naaman, *"Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored to you, and you shall be clean."*

The scriptures tell us that when Naaman heard this, he got furious! He thought that the man of God would come to him and pray for him and touch him, and he would be cured. He said, *"There are many better rivers than the Jordan in my country. Why should I dip in the Jordan only?"* He forgot that there was power in the command which came through the prophet. He got mad and went away in a rage, determined to return home.

CHRISTIANITY IN ACTION

However, his servants told him, "Why don't you do what the prophet says, master. It is not a hard thing to do. He simply told you to dip seven times in the Jordan." We read, "*So he went down and dipped seven times in the Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God; and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.*"

What a remarkable story! No, there was no power in the waters of the Jordan. But there was power in the command of God, which came through the prophet. Suppose Naaman had dipped himself four or six times? Nothing would have happened. But as soon as he dipped the seventh time, his leprosy was gone! My friend, today God's word tells you to do certain things. If you really believe in the Bible and the power of God, I know you will not hesitate to obey those things.

We learn from this story that whatever God asks us to do, we must do it. If you really believe and trust in God, you will obey Him without any doubting. God said in His word that one must be baptized for the remission of sins. In Mark 16:16 Jesus says, "*He who believes and is baptized will be saved...*" Now we ask, who will be saved? One who believes and is baptized.

How many times have we heard this and how many times have we read this verse, but still, like Naaman, we get mad and say, "There is no need for baptism, just believe in Jesus and you will be saved"? Some say that baptism is just an outward sign, but I tell you, when God has put this in His word, it has significance. There is power in His command. There is no power in the water, but there is saving power in God's command. Do you believe this? There is no need for argument and vain reasoning. When God says it, I do it and that settles the matter.

Have you been baptized? Have you obeyed the one true gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ? He died for you, was buried and rose again on the third day, for you. He is the author and finisher of our salvation (1 Corinthians 15:14; Hebrews 12:2). Today, if you believe in Jesus, you can confess Him as the son of God, repent of your sins and then be baptized for the remission of your sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 8:36; Romans 10:10; 6:3,4; 1 Peter 3:21; Galatians 3:27). When you do this, the Lord will add you to His one true church (Acts 2:47). †

Francis David is a Gospel preacher in New Delhi, India.

Jesus invested His life in you. Have you shown any interest?

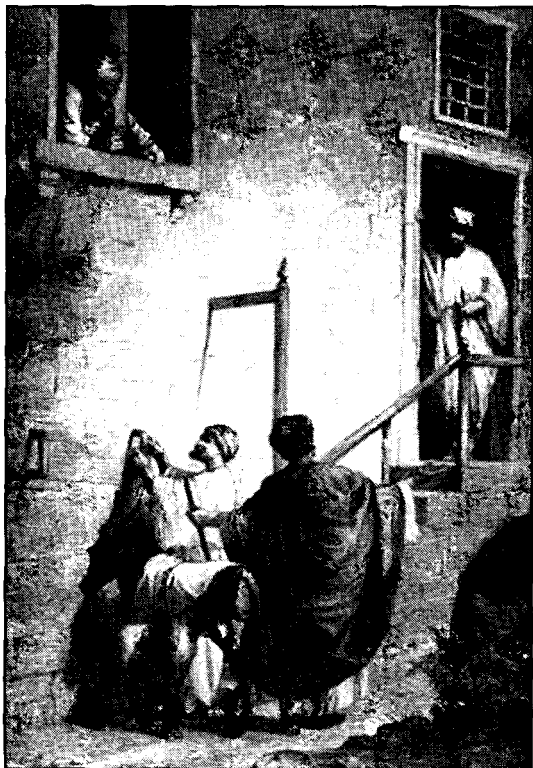
The Lord Needs You

J. Randal Matheny

As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, "Why are you untying that colt?" They replied, "*The Lord needs it*" (Luke 19:33,34).

Jesus had sent two disciples into Bethany to get the colt for what we call today the triumphal entry. He told them where to find it and what to say to the owners: "*The Lord needs it*".

In one sense, the Lord needs nothing of ours nor of us. To an Israel addicted to formal religion He declared:



"I do not need to take a bull from your household or goats from your sheepfolds. For every wild animal in the forest belongs to me, as well as the cattle that graze on a thousand hills. I keep track of every bird in the hills, and the insects of the field are mine. Even if I were hungry, I would not tell you, for the world and all it contains belong to me" (Psalm 50:9-12).

He wanted sincere worship from Israel, not because He needed it, but as adoration of the heart on the worshipers' part.

There is nothing I can do for God. He has no personal need that I can

CHRISTIANITY IN ACTION

fulfill. As God, He is self-sufficient and complete.

In another sense, however, the Lord has seen fit to use our lives and acts for His kingdom. Jesus told the Twelve:

"You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that remains, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name he will give you" (John 15:16).

What Jesus says to the Twelve here is also true of every Christian. By His graciousness, He has made Man a part of His work to save others.

In this sense, then, it is appropriate to say, as Jesus did of the colt, that He needs us.

So when a mother is discouraged about her children, the Lord needs you to cheer her.

When a child is frustrated or sad or hungry in this world, the Lord needs you to care for him.

When you meet someone who has yet to obey the divine commandment, the Lord needs you to teach that person.

When false teachings creep into the church, the Lord needs you to stand up and speak the truth clearly and lovingly.

When funds are in short supply to do the work, the Lord needs you to be generous.

When tempers flare and harsh words begin to fly, the Lord needs you to act as a peacemaker.

In the family, the Lord needs you to fulfill your role. In society, He needs you to be salt and light. In the church, He needs you to be a pillar for truth and a platform for peace.

To be coworkers with God, as Paul said in 2 Corinthians 6:1, is a humbling and glorious thought.

To have been chosen by him to go and bear fruit in this world as a part of His great mission fills our heart with awe, gives speed to our feet, and strength to our hands when we hear Him say, *"The Lord needs you."* †

J. Randal Matheny is a missionary working in San Jose dos Campos, Brazil. He is founder and editor of the online e-zine at www.forthright.net.

There is no better exercise for strengthening the heart than reaching down and lifting people up.

Our Prayers

Eliseo Hinojos

We followers of Christ have several weapons at our disposal in order to complete our mission in the world. The first of these is, of course, the *Holy Scriptures*. There is another weapon which is very powerful which we often do not make use of as we should. Prayer is one of the most powerful weapons the Christian has. I believe that we do not use it as we should because we have not considered the advantage of communicating with God. Prayer is the only way by which we voice our needs and desires to Him. We have no other means of talking directly to our Creator.

Romans 12:12 says that we should be in constant prayer to God. This is repeated in Colossians 4:2. James 5:13-18 tells us that the prayer of a just person is powerful. "Just persons" are those of us who are in the way of following Christ.

The prayer of faith can raise up the sick. Without doubt, prayer can *work wonders and by it the Lord hears our petitions, praises, and giving of thanks.*

We can chat with our relatives, friends and brethren for hours. But



to God we sometimes speak only for five minutes a day. Some of us can't even dedicate five minutes to speaking to God.

We are ignoring our Creator. He tells us that we should speak to Him of everything, just as we speak to our friends. Let's remember that the Lord no longer calls us servants but friends.

Let us not ignore our God but put ourselves in communication with Him. Let us take advantage of that opportunity, which He has given us, to speak to and confide in Him. Not many people in the world have the privilege of speaking with the Creator of the universe, but we do have that blessing. Yet — too often — we are wasting it. †

Eliseo Hinojos is the preacher of the Spanish speaking congregation which meets in Cactus Drive Church of Christ in Levelland, Texas, USA.

Searching for the Sheep

Tom Steed

"What do you think? If a man owns a hundred sheep, and one of them wanders away, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go to look for the one that wandered off? And if he finds it, I tell you the truth, he is happier about that one sheep than about the ninety-nine that did not wander off. In the same way, your father in heaven is not willing that any of these little ones should be lost" (Matthew 18:12-14).

Evidently sheep have a tendency to wander off and get lost. There is a continual reference to this kind of behavior throughout the Scriptures. I don't know much about sheep, but I know a little about people. The grass looks greener over there. There are things that catch our attention over there, and before long, we are over there, away from where we should be. Business calls us. Ball games call us. Rest calls us. Temptation calls us. Before long, we have neglected Bible reading and good works. We have neglected being where we should be.

The Bible is clear. The good shepherd leaves the sheep that are in the fold and goes out and looks for the lost ones. He knows who is missing. He is willing to go out and look for them and finds a



CHRISTIANITY IN ACTION

genuine pleasure and happiness when they are found and restored to the flock.

We need to restore a genuine sense of enthusiasm for finding and restoring those who are lost. It is great fun for the remaining sheep to be together, but we must go and look for those who are away.

I don't know if sheep are like people in that they enjoy being

away from the flock. The grass may be greener over there, for awhile at least. Until the wolves come along. Until it gets dark and lonely. Until the dangers outweigh the fun. But sheep belong in the flock. Let us renew the joy of seeking and finding lost sheep. †

Tom Steed works with the Lord's church in Auburn, Alabama, USA.



I Am a Soldier of Christ

I am a servant, a willing slave of Christ!

I am a brother, a soldier in the army of the Lord

I am a member of the church of Christ. There are things I will not do and places I will not go!

I am forgiven of the past, blessed in the present, and full of hope for the future.

I am saved and secure in Jesus Christ!

I am settled in Him and in His church. I cannot be frightened away by enemies, pulled away by friends, or bought away by money! I will not faint, fall away or quit. I refuse to be stilled, silenced or seduced!

I will not give up, dry up, nor shut up! I will get up, speak up, read up, pray up, until my feet lie turned up or till Christ takes me up!

I do not have my own way! I do not have to be first. Nor the one to get the credit for what is done! I refuse to be discouraged and stop, hurt and hindered! I do not need to be flattered, commended, or honored to be faithful.

I love His word and His church. Anger never makes me quit and offences will never make me stop.

I am a soldier. I will fight! I am a servant. I will serve. I am a brother. I will love. I am a son. I will obey. I am a member. I will work. I am a citizen. I will be responsible. I am a disciple. I will follow. I am fulfilling the law of Christ!

— Parker Henderson

Delighting the Heart of God

Bobby Dockery

The Bible teaches that worship, rightly given, brings joy to the heart of God (Proverbs 15:8). Jesus insisted that the worship which pleases the Father must be offered in spirit and in truth (John 4:24).

Often, however, that which goes by the name of worship falls far short of the Father's expectations. Richard Adams, in his novel **Shardik**, perceptively observed: "Worship yields nothing to the slipshod and half-hearted. I have seen worship which, if it had been a roof they had built, would not have kept out a half-an-hour's rain: nor had they the wit to wonder why it left their hearts cold and yielded them neither strength or comfort."

Consider some essential components of the worship which delights the heart of God:

1. **Worship Requires Relationship.** Jesus spoke of the One we worship as "the Father" (John 4:23,24). This implies that a relationship exists between worshipper and the One who is worshipped. Only those bound to God by close family ties can approach Him in adoration and praise. It is tragic that many people try to worship God without ever having established a relationship with Him. Their efforts are doomed.
2. **Worship Requires Preparation.** Jesus said that God was to be worshipped in spirit and truth (John 4:24). To worship "*in spirit*" means that worship must come from the heart; must be offered with the right attitude. Anything worthwhile requires preparation. We prepare for careers, for marriage, for social occasions. Surely, then, we must prepare before entering the presence of the Creator of the Universe. We must anticipate our appointment with God! Before we seek His presence we must rid our lives of sin. We must cleanse our hearts (Hebrews 10:23). Then we must focus solely on God!
3. **Worship Requires Obedience.** Jesus taught that we must worship "*in truth*" as well as "*in spirit*" (John 4:24). Worship involves our response to truth. We must accept the acts by which God has authorized us to approach Him in worship. God is Spirit. Our experience of the spiritual realm is necessarily limited. The only way we can know how to please God in worship is for Him to show us what He wants! The New Testament reveals a pattern for our worship. We are taught

WORSHIP

not to go beyond that which is written (1 Corinthians 4:6). Worship must recognize and submit to the sovereignty of God! Worship is not concerned with what *I like* or what *I want*, but what *God* wants!

William Temple provided a classic definition of worship in these words:

To worship is to quicken the conscience by the holiness of God,
To feed the mind with the truth of God,
To purge the imagination by the beauty of God,
To open the heart to the love of God,
To devote the will to the purpose of God.

Such worship brings joy to the heart of God. †

Bobby Dockery is a writer and preacher in Fayetteville, Arkansas, USA.

What If Jesus Came to Our Assembly?

**What if Jesus came into our next assembly?
Where would He sit? What would He say?
What would He do?**

**What would you say? What would you
wear? How would you act? How would you
worship?**

"That will never happen," you think.

**In Matthew 18:20 Jesus said, "Where two
or three have gathered together in My name,
there I am in their midst."**

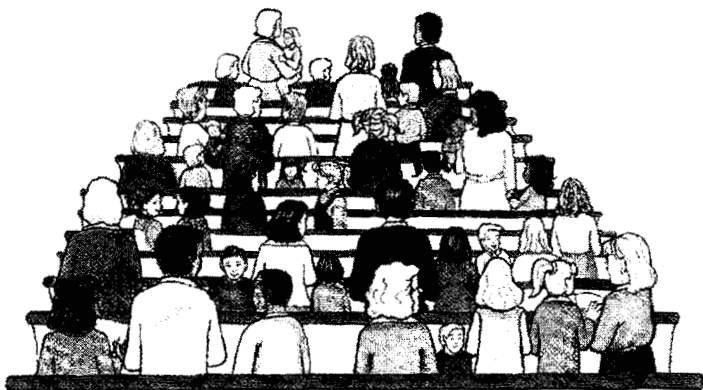
**Jesus has already been here! The question
is, how will you act the next time you're in
worship ... with Jesus by your side?**

— Bulletin Digest

Some Suggestions for Teaching Our Children How to Worship

Randy Kea

1. Begin in the home. Teach them to be quiet and listen when the Word of God is being read. Teach them to bow their heads during prayer. Turn off distractions, like the radio or television, during prayer and worship.
2. Take them to the restroom before services begin.
3. Do not allow them to run in the aisles or run up and down between pews at the place of worship.
4. Have them sit beside you until they have proven that they can behave.
5. Do not let them crawl on the floor or under the pew during services.
6. Leave the toys, especially noisy ones, in the car. Bring paper and crayons or pencils, books and/or coloring books with a Biblical theme. Do not let them color or write in the song books or Bibles.
7. Do not allow them to talk aloud during services. That means you, as a parent, must not talk aloud or whisper loudly.
8. Face the front. Discourage your children from "rubbernecking" to see what is going on behind them. That means you must set the example.



9. If you are late (and some are invariably so), do not come bursting through the doors during a prayer, Scripture reading, song, or other act of worship. Wait until there is a pause, then come in quietly and be seated.
10. Do not leave until the congregation is dismissed.
11. Take an unruly child out as quickly as possible so as not to disturb others. Discipline the child and return to your seat. This may take a few times to work. Be patient and consistent.
12. Children should not be allowed to play when they are taken out of the worship services. I have heard that some parents will allow their children to play in the foyer or hall while services are being conducted. That is not teaching them to worship God.

(Note: These suggestions have been taken and adapted from an article by Ben Vick of Indianapolis, Indiana, and you are urged to seriously consider the points made.)

The Psalmist said, *"God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him"* (Psalm 89:7). †

Randy Kea preaches for the Forest Park Church of Christ in Forest Park, Georgia, USA.

Does Christianity Make a Difference?

Sometimes people think that being a Christian makes no real difference in daily life. They think: "It is true that Christians gather with other Christians on Sundays to worship, and their worship may be different from that of many of the people around them, but on their job and in their homes, and in their general behavior they are like everyone else. Their standards and morals are the same."

Is this true? Does Christianity make a difference, or not?

The Bible says, "...present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God" (Romans 12:1,2).

If a Christian is true to the name he wears, his daily life shows God's influence over every thought and word and deed. Christians are to be living proof of the perfection of God's will among men.

Next: Do I Think Differently?

MAMA'S NICKEL

A Tribute to a Mother's Love

*To be a mother in
depression years
Was very hard and
filled with tears.
My mother never
had a maid;
Rarely cross word
ever said.
Up at five, or earlier
still,
The house — the
home — with love to fill.
The husband — children on
their way —
In time to wisely use the day.*



*She swept; she baked; she washed the walls;
She mopped, she taught and that's not all.
Mama sewed. She could not buy
The clothes for us to look our best.
The peddle rocked as cloth she stitched.
She sewed for me and all the rest.*

*She sewed for many neighbors, too.
The pennies charged were all too few.
For several years I did not know
How the pennies offered so
Had come into her thrifty hand
For her children and the Popcorn Stand:*

*Sewing machine — small sliding drawer
In the left side swinging door.
Was her secret hiding place
For meager funds — no other trace.*

*Not far away, beside the park,
The Popcorn Stand — a work of art.
Tiny, tiny little place, hard to see
Any working space.
Penny sweets were everywhere;
Nickel candy, too, but rare.*

*One day when I was very small,
My best friend, older, and so tall
Came by the house and showed to me
A nickel — a nickel, dazzling new.
“Come,” he said, “go with me
To the Pop Corn Stand.*

*This nickel Pappy gave, you see.
Come,” he said, “and go with me.”
I viewed his coin with pacing heart;
Empty pockets, how they hurt.
How could I go and watch his glee
Even though he shared with me?
“Wait,” I said and went inside.*

*Monday laundry was mother’s pride.
Into her bedroom, nothing sounding
to the machine, young heart pounding.
And, there midst thread and many needles
Were several pennies and one bright nickel.
She won’t know, I falsely thought;
“It’s wrong,” I said, as battle fought.*

I turned; I knew that I must go.

*My heart was fast; my feet were slow.
Once more I looked — it still was there.*

*Mama's nickel — bright and rare.
I lost — and soon through all the thread,
Grasped the coin into my hand
(but not my head).*

*In my pocket — so I could not see,
I put the thing — to hide the deed.*

The Popcorn Stand looked vastly strange;

*No single candy looked the same.
I made my choice and walked away;
The taste is bitter to this day.*

*Oh, how I wish that I could say
I did not hurt my mom that way.
I walked so slow — yet far too soon;
It was not long and I was home.
And she was there — in the sewing room
Needle gliding with a zoom.*

*I was not brave — I looked in fear;
Hanging head I felt her near;*

*She took my hand, in joyful tears
Said not a word that I could hear.*

*And yet, in silence, she said to me,
"Son, I know your heart, I know your deed.*

*And though I sorrow in your shame,
I know that you are just the same.*

*My son, who loves the Lord and right
Wandered briefly into night*

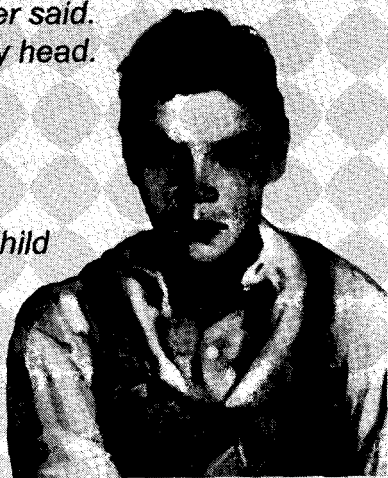
*But never left the way we know.
He is the same, his life will show."*

*I hugged her as a child will do;
I was so shamed my whole soul through.
I, in turn, said not a word,
But, I am sure she must have heard
The beating of a breaking heart,
The growing of a child, in part
Because a mother had the trust —
The smile in anguish a mother must
Possess to teach her child each day
Through error which will come its way.
And thus the guidance into day.*

*I washed and dried; I mowed and raked,
I had to do whate'er I could
I certainly wanted done what should.
The nickel soon was back in place.
I attempted not to leave a trace.
And never word was ever said.
The pain, the pain was in my head.*

*My mother cared;
My mother taught.
Help me, dear Lord,
Act as I ought,
And let me help a little child
Feel this confidence awhile
Of a nickel lost, a soul,
a smile.*

**(Excerpts from a poem
by Dr. Joe D. Gray)**



WHAT BELIEVERS NEED TO KNOW

David Dorantes

We all know many things about the Bible: names, dates, and events which took place, whether in the Old Testament or in the New Testament of the first century. Many brothers and sisters have learned these things down through the years, but, of all that we have read that is useful to us, John speaks of specific points that are of utmost importance. In his first letter, we can count seven things which all Christians must know, things that will help us in the future to lead a better Christian life.

7 Things That We Must Know:

1. One day we shall be like Christ (1 John 3:2). In this life, we desire above all things to become like Christ. The very name that we wear, "Christian", carries the meaning of "one who belongs to Christ". But that is not what John has in mind. He is speaking of the second coming, when Christ is manifested. In that day, when Christ returns, we shall become just as He is, in form. Our body shall be changed to an immortal substance like that of Christ. This is what we must know.

2. Christ has taken away our sins (1 John 3:5). John tells Christians that Christ took away our sins, because many act as though He has given only a temporary pardon of sins. In our time, many Christians have difficulty in forgiving themselves. As a result, guilt comes, a guilt which leads them to sin again after having been cleansed. Satan puts into their minds a doubt that their baptism really cleansed them of their sins. This doubt so convinces the Christian that his doubt itself becomes sinful, leading to discouragement with the faith. John emphasizes that we are cleansed of our past sins only if we continue in the light (1 John 1:7).

3. When we love one another, we have passed from death to life (1 John 3:14). The first way that we show our cleansing from sin is by how we treat our brothers and sisters. At times, we forget that our mate also is

DAILY CHRISTIAN LIVING

our brother or sister. Love, the Bible says, covers a multitude of sins (James 5:20). Those sins can be faults or weaknesses of our brethren in their treatment of us. The way we love our mate and our brethren in the faith demonstrates whether or not we truly are being renewed by the word of God. We must love one another with an unselfish love. By that, we shall know that we have passed from death to life.

4. God lives in us by His Spirit (1 John 3:24). The Holy Spirit within us is the sign that shows that we belong to God. King David cried out to God that He not take away the Spirit of God from him (Psalm 51:11b). Sin can cause a Christian to lose that Spirit of God that has been given to him. God cannot live in those who practice sin. Nevertheless, God desires to return to His temple not made with human hands.

5. We have eternal life (1 John 5:13). This subject is one that we must know well in order to enjoy our Christian life. Many think that life will come only after we die, but the truth of the matter is that we already have eternal life, though we cannot take possession of it until we die. One might say that we have our reserve ticket in heaven, but that we cannot go there until we leave this body.

6. God answers when we pray (1 John 5:15). The next subject we need to know pertains to prayer. John reminds us that God always listens to our prayers, and also answers them. It is difficult to know exactly what God's reply is when we don't hear Him answer with our ears. But we know that He is listening every time we speak. Ordinarily there are three answers that God gives. The first is "yes", the second is "no", and the third is "not now, but later".

7. Regeneration implies separating oneself from sin (5:18). John emphasizes to his brethren that all these things of which he has spoken are for every Christian to be regenerated in his spiritual life. We have now been changed from our carnal nature and consequently must change our life. All the previous advice that John has written will help the Christian to be a new creature.

I hope that each one of us will keep in mind that we now belong to the living God and, consequently, we have the responsibility of becoming like him. The Christian can change when he listens to the counsel of God over that of men.

May God bless and keep you.



David Dorantes is minister of the Church of Christ in Springfield, Tennessee, USA.

DAILY CHRISTIAN LIVING

Few men accomplished more in a lifetime than the late George Benson. He pioneered missionary efforts in the 1930's in China and the Philippines. A small, struggling Harding College called him to its presidency. By the time he retired,

it was a large, respected, financially stable institution of learning. He also assisted several other Christian colleges in fund-raising and administration. The Freedom Foundation awarded him more medals than any other person. He made countless

Earth Is a Place for Work

Ancil Jenkins



speeches all over the world. At the very end of Benson's biography, Dr. John Stevens quoted someone who told him, "Dr. Benson, I wish you would quit working so hard and take a much deserved rest," to which Dr. Benson replied, "Earth is a place for work; heaven is a place for rest" (**Before Any Were Willing**, p. 277).

The concepts of work and leisure are often misunderstood. Work is part of God's plan for man. Because of Adam's sin, the earth is cursed and requires man's toil to produce. Yet work is not a curse of man, but, rather, a blessing. *"That everyone may eat and drink, and find satisfaction in all his toil — this is the gift of God"* (Ecclesiastes 3:13). *"So I saw that there is nothing better for a man than to enjoy his work, because that is his lot. For who can bring him to see what will happen after him?"* (Ecclesiastes 3:22).

So often, people do not find satisfaction in what they do. This is indicated by the fewer hours worked today as compared to the past. George Barna notes that twenty-five years ago the average man spent forty-nine hours a week in work and today spends only forty-two. Women also work less, a thirty-one-hour week instead of thirty-nine just a quarter of a century ago. Although we spend more time in commuting and other activities, the

amount of time used in recreational activities increased 10% during this period.

This is not to say that recreation and play are wrong or unnecessary. What is needed is a change in attitude. Our goal on earth is not to find all the time possible for leisure. Jesus enjoins us to seek first the kingdom of God and to serve both God and man (Matthew 6:33). We are to work so that we can have enough to live and to have some to give to those who have need (Ephesians 4:28). After this comes rest and recreation. To put these activities in any other order of priority only invites physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual disaster.

Let's never lose sight of our promised rest. *"There remains therefore a rest for the people of God"* (Hebrews 4:9). *"Then I heard a voice from heaven saying, Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on. Yes, says the Spirit, they will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them"* (Revelation 14:13). This rest is only a ceasing of earthly labor. We will continue to work, serving God day and night before His throne. There is no work here so hard that the rest in heaven will not make up for it. To this end, may we labor and toil to serve Him. †

Ancil Jenkins is a writer and preacher in Jamestown, Tennessee, USA.

No Regrets

David R. Pharr

Life has great moments of joy which we cherish in our memory as long as we live. There are also experiences which we would like to forget. Almost everyone remembers certain events with regret. These regrets may be only mildly disturbing. In some cases, however, they may so frustrate a life that they lead to mental breakdown or illness. We may think that it would be grand if we could go back and undo the mistakes of the past, but we can't. However, while we are unable to erase what is past, we can determine to live now so that there will be no regrets in the future.

In Genesis 25:29-34 we read that when Esau was hungry he sold his birthright to his brother Jacob for something to eat. This was a rash, thoughtless act. In that ancient society the "birthright" of the oldest son provided for great advantages. Even though Esau was overwhelmed with hunger, there was no excuse for having dealt so lightly with something so valuable. How he came to regret this is described in the New Testament. *"Lest there be a fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat*

sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected; for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears" (Hebrews 12:16,17).

This story illustrates the need of making decisions and taking actions which will not later be the cause of regret. Esau could not change what he had done, though he tried diligently. No doubt the memory of his folly troubled him as long as he lived. A children's nursery rhyme illustrates this reality.

"Humpty Dumpty had a great fall;

And all the king's horses and all the king's men

Could not put Humpty Dumpty back together again."

It is a certain and obvious truth that we reap as we sow (Galatians 6:7,8). The notion, however, that somehow the consequences can be avoided accompanies every temptation. Satan would have us believe that we need never regret our transgressions. But there will be regrets in the day of Judgment. There are also regrets that come in this life.

One of the harvests which follows the fruition of sin is a lifetime of remembrance and shame.

Some are plagued by memories of dishonesty or of worldliness. Some look back with regret to periods of heavy drinking and of the lax behavior which attended such license. Others look back to immorality with great shame. Still others — near the end of life — remember years spent with too great a concern for material possessions, only to realize finally that they have thought little about spiritual things. The regret of some is that they know they have been self-centered and selfish.

Still others are disturbed, not by what is considered a major sin, such as lying, stealing, or adultery, but by the fact that they have failed to live their lives to the glory of God. They had the least concern for the things that mattered most.

As we have said, there is no way that the fact of our mistakes can be changed. We can, however, live henceforth so that there be no regrets. Memory of foolish deeds may disturb us, but that memory can be a useful tool in helping us make better choices now. If we have memories of regret about the past, think of the inward shame of future regrets when we realize that we learned nothing by our mistakes.

We don't want to leave these

thoughts without this assurance: No matter what our regrets may be — and even though we cannot undo the past — we can find perfect *forgiveness* through our Lord Jesus Christ. *"Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson they shall be as wool"* (Isaiah 1:18). †

David R. Pharr preaches for the Charlotte Avenue Church of Christ in Rock Hill, South Carolina, USA.

What Kind of People Did Jesus Call?

He called **working people**. — If you have a job to do, you want someone who will work.

He called **willing people**. — The willingness to serve must precede the serving.

He called **obedient people**. — The Lord had no place for those who would not follow directions.

He called **believing people**. — Men who did not accept His claims or trust His promises would be a handicap to His work.

He called **learning people**. — He had a message that people needed to hear, but that message must be learned before you can teach it to others.

He called **imperfect people**. — Actually there are no others to call.

— Ardron Hinton



DELIVERED TO SERVE

Cecil May, Jr.

"We, being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, may serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of our life" (Luke 1:74,75).

In the Spirit, Zacharias speaks of deliverance promised by the Lord, for whom his son John, also as promised, would prepare the way. God delivers us, not to do abominations (Jeremiah 7:10), not to continue in the sin from which we have been delivered (Romans 6), but to serve Him.

We are delivered to serve God without fear: *"Our God is a consuming fire" and we are to serve Him "with reverence and **godly fear**" (Hebrews 12:28,29), but we do not have to be afraid of Him, in the ordinary sense. Through Christ we may "come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:16). Even when we were undeserving of His love, He loved us, and gave His Son for us. Now that, through His*



BIBLE FIND

CHRIST
 CONCEITED
 CRUCIFIED
 DESIRES
 ENVYING
 FAITHFULNESS
 FLESH

FRUIT
 GENTLENESS
 GOODNESS
 JOY
 KINDNESS
 LAW
 LONGSUFFERING

LOVE
 PASSIONS
 PEACE
 PROVOKING
 SELFCONTROL
 SPIRIT

K K G L P T Y P X D Z F G W L
 X I O N S E A O E E A T O A O
 S V N I I S A T J I F I O L N
 E S R D S Y I C T F L R D M G
 U H E I N E V H E I E I N H S
 C D O N C E F N Q C S P E V U
 W N O N E U S D E U H S S Y F
 S R O Z L L O S Z R A X S L F
 Q C J N Z X T K X C E E H B E
 N B E L O R T N O C F L E S R
 Z S F R U I T S E R I S E D I
 S P R O V O K I N G J O G Z N
 Z I K D U J E M H K J D Q O G

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another” (Galatians 5:22-26).

DAILY CHRISTIAN LIVING

Son, we are His children, what is there good for us that He would withhold (Romans 5:8-11)? Because we know Christ has secured our acceptance, we may serve without fear.

We are delivered to serve God in holiness: We are to serve in holiness because God is holy (1 Peter 1:15,16). Holiness has two aspects: (1) separated to God; (2) separated from sin. A lamb is sanctified (made holy) when it is chosen for sacrifice to God, but in order to be sanctified, it must be without blemish or deformity. *"God's firm foundation stands, bearing this seal: 'The Lord knows those who are his,' and 'Let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity'"* (2 Timothy 2:19). *"This is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from fornication"* (1 Thessalonians 4:3).

We are delivered to serve God in righteousness: There is a *"righteousness which is by faith in Jesus Christ"* (Romans 3:22), equivalent to forgiveness of sins. If we stand before the righteous God as righteous in His sight, it is not because we have not sinned, but because our sins are forgiven. From another Biblical emphasis, though, righteousness is doing right. We are to serve God with right doing. God's servant does not continue in sin. *"If you know that he is right-*

eous, you may be sure that everyone who does right is born of Him" (1 John 2:29). *"He who does right is righteous, even as he is righteous"* (1 John 3:7). Nor may the servants of God choose their own path of conduct. God Himself marks out the righteous path. *"All thy commandments are righteousness"* (Psalm 119:172).

We are delivered to serve God all the days of our lives: We are to serve with perseverance, holding fast our confidence and the rejoicing of our hope firm to the end (Hebrews 3:6). Let us watch, therefore, for we know not the hour the Lord may come (Matthew 24:42). Let us endure to the end that we may be saved (Matthew 24:13).

We are delivered to serve. †

Cecil May, Jr. is Dean of the Bible Department at Faulkner University in Montgomery, Alabama, USA.

**To serve
God is the
deliberate
love-gift of
a nature
that has
heard the
call of
God.**



Foundation for Marriage

David Tarbet

In the Garden of Eden God established the foundation for all society — the home. Only because of disobedience did mankind fall from that original design and intent for the home and, in the fall, both men and women suffered loss of

happiness. It is vital that we go back beyond the cultural standards of our modern society, back beyond the traditions of our forefathers, and even back beyond later changes imposed upon God's original intent by the hardness of human hearts

THE CHRISTIAN HOME

(Deuteronomy 24), to the original plans of God as described in Genesis chapters one and two.

In Genesis one, we are informed that God created both male and female "in His image" — giving them a part of His very nature, that is, "authority" over the created world — over birds of the air, fish of the sea, cattle, and every thing that creeps on the earth. Adam and Eve were placed in the beautiful garden with a mutual responsibility to "keep it". The original home was an economic unity in which male and female worked together to use nature's resources for their mutual benefit and blessing. In the first marriage, both Adam and Eve felt a responsibility to bring out the best in all the created world around them. They shared a sense of divine accountability.

The first couple had a common dream: to multiply and fill the earth. They did not live a self-centered life, but anticipated the birth of children and were thankful when they received their sons and daughters as gifts from God. Children were considered a blessing, not a burden.

In marriage, Adam and Eve found the answer to loneliness. It was "not good" to be alone, but in family love, both discovered wonderful fulfillment and the answers to

their heart-hungers. They were "one" — in ambition, in heart, in body, in spirit.

There was no question in Adam's mind but that when he was given his wife, he was given God's ultimate blessing, and he treated her with respect. He was so excited when he discovered her! "At last!" he may have shouted. Marriage began with a commitment to make it last. There was to be no "third party", and both Adam and Eve understood this clearly. Marriage was not a "We'll try it, and if it doesn't work out, we'll call it quits" experiment. It was for keeps. And they were very glad to have it that way. In that kind of commitment they found security and completion.

The basic reason so many people are unfulfilled in marriage today is that they have lost the vision of the Garden of Eden. Sexual license, divorce, boredom, violence, and abuse inevitably follow a loss of appreciation for God's plan as expressed at the beginning of time. †

David Tarbet preaches for the White Rock congregation in Dallas, Texas, USA.

The old-fashioned man of today is one who tries to make one wife last a lifetime.



Five Reasons God Hates Divorce

Glenn Colley

God hates divorce. The Bible says He does (Malachi 2:16). In my years as a preacher I have come to find this fact almost too obvious to even state. What would a god be like who didn't hate it? There's a disgusting awfulness following the kind of bitterness that brings two people — who at one time kissed as they committed to a lifetime of devotion — to saying, "My lawyer will be talking to your lawyer."

Let me share with you just five of the reasons God hates divorce:

1. Because it is not good for man to be alone (Genesis 2:18-20). I heard an unhappy wife say once, "I'm staying with him. It's better than being alone...."
2. Because the loneliness of divorce creates new temptation (1 Corinthians 7:2,5). Paul here writes that while it isn't sinful to separate as you make the effort to work things out, the separation must be temporary. "*Come*

THE CHRISTIAN HOME

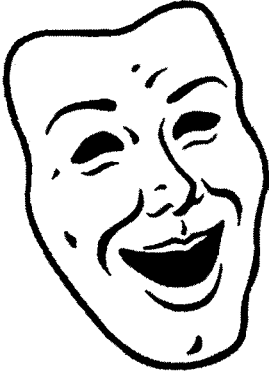
together again, that Satan tempt you not for you incontinency." Incontinency simply means lack of self-control. The Bible clearly teaches that not everyone is a candidate for re-marriage (Matthew 19:9; Romans 7:2,3), and therefore divorce may mean either living single for the rest of one's life, or remarrying and committing adultery in the process. It is inevitable that such an arrangement of aloneness would produce temptations.

3. Because it is a result of sin, somewhere (Matthew 19:9). Just because no adultery is committed doesn't necessarily mean that no sin is involved in a divorce. When one whose mate hasn't committed adultery asks for a divorce he is suggesting that he wishes to break his solemn vow to remain with this person "in sickness and in health, in adversity and in prosperity, and forsaking all others to be faithful until death do us part." Choosing to break a promise has always been the same as deciding to lie (Revelation 21:8).
4. Because your prayers will be hindered (1 Peter 3:7). Peter here discusses how to have a good marriage and ends with this motivation: "*That your prayers be not hindered.*" People wrapped up in trying to divorce their spouses often create a distance from God.
5. Because of the responsibility to children (Ephesians 6:1-4; Titus 2:4,5). Too many today live as if they believe they have not only the prerogative of divorcing their spouses, but also to some degree, their children. Who can possibly measure what happens to a child's heart when his parents split? Furthermore, how frightening to consider that marriage break-ups may be thus passed down from generation to generation.

There are strong reasons to hate divorce, and equally strong reasons to do all you can by the grace of God to remain married. †

Glenn Colley is the preacher for the West Huntsville church in Huntsville, Alabama, USA.

It isn't the things that go in one ear and out the other that hurt as much as the things that go in one ear, get all mixed up, and then slip out of the mouth.



Visiting a big city, a Christian farmer entered a fancy restaurant for lunch. When his meal was served, he bowed his head and quietly gave thanks to God for the food.

There was a group of rowdy teenagers at a nearby table, and one of them taunted him in a loud voice, "Hey, farmer, does everyone do that where you live?" The old man looked at the young man and calmly said, "No, son, the pigs don't."



With all the new technology regarding fertility, a 65-year-old woman was able to give birth to a baby recently. When she was discharged from the hospital and went home, her relatives came to visit. "May we see the new baby?" one asked. "Not yet," said the mother. "I'll make coffee and we can visit for a while first."

Thirty minutes had passed, and another relative asked, "May we see the new baby now?"

"No, not yet," said the mother. After another few minutes had elapsed, they asked again, "May we see the baby now?" "No, not yet," replied the mother.

Growing very impatient, they asked, "Well, when **can** we see the baby?"

"When he cries!" she told them. "When he cries?" they demanded. "Why do we have to wait until he cries?"

"Because, I forgot where I put him!"



A few thoughts concerning dogs:

Someone said, "We give dogs time we can spare, space we can spare, and love we can spare. In return, dogs give us their all. It's the best deal man has ever made."

Dogs need to sniff the ground; it's how they keep abreast of current events. The ground is a giant dog newspaper containing all kinds of late-breaking dog news items, which, if they are especially urgent, are often continued in the next yard.

I wonder if other dogs think poodles are members of a weird religious cult.

My friend wanted a boat more than anything. His wife kept refusing, but he bought one anyway. "I'll tell you what," he told her. "In the spirit of compromise, why don't you name the boat?"

Being a good sport, she accepted. When her husband went to the dock for his maiden voyage, this is the name he saw painted on the side: "For Sale".



My sort of exercise!

I came across this exercise suggested for seniors, to build muscle strength in the arms and shoulders. It seems so easy, so I thought I'd pass it on. The article suggested doing it three days a week. Begin by standing on a comfortable surface, where you have plenty of room at each side.

With a 5-lb. potato sack in each hand, extend your arms straight out from your sides, and hold them there as long as you can. Try to reach a full minute, then relax. Each day, you'll find that you can hold this position for just a bit longer.

After a couple of weeks, move up to 10-lb. potato sacks. Then 50-lb. potato sacks, and then eventually try to get to where you can lift a 100-lb. potato sack in each hand and hold your arms straight for more than a full minute.

Once you feel confident at that level, put a potato in each sack.



There was a little old lady, who every morning stepped onto her front porch, raised her arms to the sky, and shouted: "**Praise the Lord!**"

One day an atheist moved into the house next door. He became irritated at the little old lady. Every morning he'd step onto his front porch after her and yell: "**There is no Lord!**"

Time passed with the two of them carrying on this way every day. One morning, in the middle of winter, the little old lady stepped onto her front porch and shouted: "**Praise the Lord! Please Lord! I have no food and I am starving. Provide for me, oh Lord!**"

The next morning she stepped onto her porch and there were two huge bags of groceries sitting there.

"**Praise the Lord!**" she cried out. "**He has provided groceries for me!**"

The atheist neighbor jumped out of the hedges and shouted: "**There is no Lord! I bought the groceries!**"

The little old lady threw her arms into the air and shouted: "**Praise the Lord! He has provided me with groceries and made the Devil pay for them!**"

It's Not My World, Anymore

Donny Weimar

The whole world blacked out. In his hand lay the most destructive power Jerry had ever known — a pink slip. His car, gone. His wife's medical bills, insurmountable. His house, not anymore. It was not possible. But, it was true. He went numb and sat there with his eyes bulging and his jaw on the floor. Jerry's whole existence depended upon his career.

How does the Christian cope when financial ruin puts our checkbooks on the chopping block?

We begin by turning to the single greatest source of comfort ever to be — God. Paul opens his second letter to the Corinthians saying, *"Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort."* Jehovah is our refuge and strength, *"a very present help in*

troublesome times" (Psalm 46).

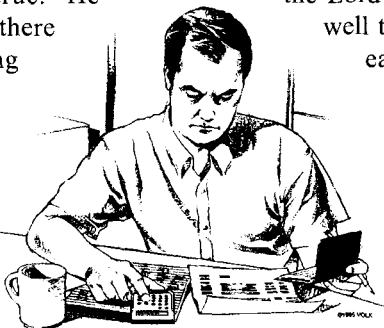
The Christ knows pain all too well, having been tempted with the same stressful emotions that we encounter throughout our lives (Hebrews 4:14,15). It is because

the Lord understands us so well that He has granted

each of us personal access to God's throne of grace *"that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need"* (Hebrews 4:16). We are strengthened with

a greater ability to cope when we pray.

The greatest preventative measure to avoid emotional distress over losing possessions is to *love God* more than we love our possessions. Take time today to read Matthew 6:25-34. Realize now, before disaster strikes, that your



COMFORT AND REASSURANCE

faith is more valuable than your gold. Jesus says, "*Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?*" (Matthew 6:25).

Accept each day as it presents itself; tomorrow is a concern of its own. By placing greater emphasis on our faith, and on our trust in the God of deliverance, we are better equipped to deal with the realities that too often beset us. If and when financial ruin does hit, we will not have lost everything — not our most valued possession — faith. You see, Christians accept that this world is not ours to keep (1 Peter 2:11). And, because we are just passing through, nothing this world has to offer or to take away is able to separate us from God's love (Romans 8:38,39).

Hope is the Christian's consolation when financially ruined. We look forward to living in our Father's house (John 14:1-4). We long for eternal life with the Savior (John 3:15). Since we brought nothing into this world, it is certain that we can

carry nothing out. Therefore, we treasure our eternal home more than the temporal present.

Blessed be the name of the Lord (Job 1:21). †

Donny Weimar is a gospel preacher in Collinsville, Texas, USA.

The Grace of God

He gives me hope and courage
To face each newborn day.
He guides me through the shadows
To light and show the way.
He comforts and sustains me
In times of my distress.
He gives me inspiration
To find true happiness.
He grants to me forgiveness
When I may go astray.
He helps me in my trials
And does my fears allay.
He never does forsake me
In moments of despair,
And when I need a helping hand,
I always find Him there.

— Harold F. Mohn

The "Write" Direction

Mike Vestal

People everywhere are in desperate need of encouragement. Just getting through the day in this sinful world can sometimes be terribly difficult. As Christians, we must see the importance of encouragement, of inspiring one another to greater hope, love, and service in the Lord (cf. 1 Thessalonians 5:11; Hebrews 10:24). We should try to take advantage of encouraging others through every possible medium — our words, actions, and prayers.

After preaching a sermon on the value of written encouragement, I received a note from a little girl named Micah, who is only eight or nine. She had written not only to me but to several others too! I got another note from her just the other day, and it included this precious line: "You are doing better now than the first time I wrote you." I couldn't help but laugh. But you know, she's exactly right! Written encouragement from Christians is like a spiritual blood transfusion — it lifts up and strengthens those who might be "running low" (Romans 14:19; 15:2).

Why should we practice the art of written encouragement?

It Shows Purpose. Writing to someone shows the investment of time, doesn't it? (cf. Ephesians 5:16). Often the mere thought and the expense of effort mean more than the actual words written. God Himself showed deliberate purpose in giving us the Bible, the greatest word of encouragement ever written (2 Timothy 3:16,17; 2 Peter 1:19-21).

It Shows Practice. How often have we had good intentions about writing others, but simply never got around to it? God blesses the faith that works through love (Galatians 5:6). When written encouragement is done, it's done. There's something concrete about it.

It Shows Precision. Most of us cannot *say* things we can *write*. Written encouragement allows us to carefully choose our words and to say exactly what we desire to say.

Written encouragement is powerful encouragement in the right direction! A postage stamp is still the bargain of the century for the encouragement it can give. †

Mike Vestal preaches for the University Church of Christ in Tyler, Texas, USA.

God Alone Can Forgive

J.A. Thornton

Introduction

- A. Where does forgiveness take place?
- B. Think of where forgiveness takes place on our part!

I. God Is a Forgiving God

- A. He did not drive Adam and Eve from the garden without hope (Genesis 3:15).
- B. God so describes Himself (Exodus 34:6,7).
- C. Complete cleansing (Isaiah 1:16-19).
- D. God blots out sins (Isaiah 43:25).
- E. Forgiveness is complete under the new covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hebrews 8:8-12).

II. Only God Can Forgive

- A. Mark 2:7, though spoken by the Scribes and Pharisees, was a statement of truth.
- B. Jesus stated this principle (Matthew 19:26).
- C. The wages of sin (Romans 6:23).
- D. God is just and could not consistently forgive sin without someone paying the penalty.
- E. This motivated God to give His Son (John 3:16).
- F. God could not die, so Christ had to come as a man to die (Philippians 2:5-8).
- G. He tasted death for every man (Hebrews 2:9).
- H. God's love is amazing (1 John 3:16; 4:16-21; Romans 5:8-10).

III. God Is Impartial (Romans 2:11; Acts 10:34,35).

- A. He has declared all under sin (Romans 3:23).
- B. A common Savior is provided for all (John 3:16).
- C. All are invited (Matthew 11:28).
- D. The same conditions of pardon are for all (Acts 2:38; 17:30; 15:9).
- E. There is one standard of conduct (1 Timothy 3:16).
- F. There is one common church for all (Galatians 3:26-29).
- G. There is one judge (Romans 14:12; Revelation 20:12). †

J.A. Thornton works with the Lord's church in Booneville, Mississippi, USA.

Our Path in Confusion

Proverbs 14:12-15

Andy Jooste

Introduction

- A. Taking the wrong turn at a junction in good faith: missing an important meeting.
- B. Suffering follows wrong decisions based on wrong directions — Rehoboam (1 Kings 12:8).
- C. Human tendency to blame God in time of confusion and uncertainty.

I. God is not the author of confusion

- A. Confusion is contrary to divine character (1 Timothy 2:4; 1 Corinthians 14:33).
- B. Righteous judgment is impossible if “all roads lead to Rome” (Acts 17:31).
- C. Cosmic order is evidence of God’s existence (Psalm 19). Truth is absolute, not relative.

II. Why chaos exists in the world

- A. Moral chaos portrayed in Romans 1 — because people rejected the knowledge of God.
- B. Moving the ancient landmarks (Proverbs 22:28). Land ownership, chaos, and lawsuits regarding it.
- C. Chaos in the time of the judges (Judges 21:25).

III. Jesus is the way that is right and cannot be wrong

- A. The way must be of God (Jeremiah 6:16; 10:23; Isaiah 35:4,8).
- B. The only Incarnate God is Jesus (John 1:18; 14:6).
- C. That way established by many infallible proofs (Acts 1:2). The significance (Romans 1:4).

Conclusion

- A. There is no excuse for religious confusion (John 4:23,24).
- B. There is no other path to salvation (1 Peter 1:17-25).

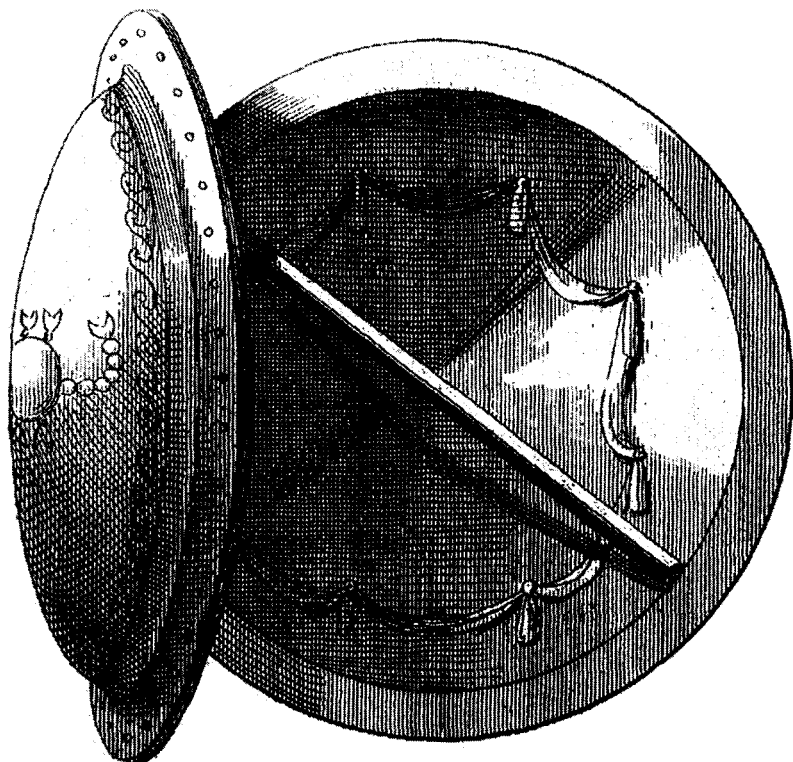


Andy Jooste is a preacher in the Republic of South Africa.

Do Not Be Afraid

Loy Mitchell

“After this, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision: ‘Do not be afraid, Abram, I am your shield, your very great reward’ ”
(Genesis 15:1).



I. Do Not Be Afraid

- A. Why would Abram need this message? The Bible does not explain, but perhaps he was afraid of enemies or potential enemies. Chapter fourteen tells of his great victory over the army that had

CHARTS AND OUTLINES

taken Lot captive. Could it be that he was afraid that he would die without having a son? God reassures Abram: *"Do not be afraid."* Abram needed that message and so do we today. We have our Lord with us!

- B. *"When I saw Him, I fell at His feet as one dead. He put His right hand on me, saying, 'Do not be afraid: I am the first and the last, the living one. I was dead, but behold! I am alive forever and ever, and I have the keys of death and Hades'"* (Revelation 1:17,18).

II. I Am Your Shield

- A. God was the shield of Abram. He protects His people from their enemies. What a blessing and comfort.
- B. *"Blessed are you, O Israel! Who is like you, a people saved by the Lord? He is your shield and helper and your glorious sword. Your enemies will cower before you, and you will trample down their high places"* (Deuteronomy 33:29).
- C. *"But You are a shield around me, O Lord, my glorious One, Who lifts up my head"* (Psalm 3:3).
- D. *"My shield is God most high, Who saves the upright of heart"* (Psalm 7:10).
- E. This great God is still our shield and protector today!

III. Your Very Great Reward

- A. God would give Abram a son of his own, and he and his descendants would inherit the land of Canaan. God's rewards are so wonderful! There is a reward for those who patiently endure, *"if we endure, we will also reign with Him; if we deny Him, He will also deny us"* (2 Timothy 2:12).
- B. There is a reward for sacrifices made freely. *"For everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands for my name's sake shall receive a hundred-fold and shall inherit everlasting life"* (Matthew 19:29).

Conclusion

- A. Let us fear not.
- B. Let us remember that God is our shield and that our reward is great. †

Loy Mitchell is a former missionary to Zimbabwe and preaches in Dyersburg, Tennessee, USA.

Andrew — a Model for Our Time

Guy Orbison, Jr.

Although we have little information about one of the first disciples of Jesus, we can glean much concerning his character from what we do have. Andrew is the kind of man who deserves our attention. Notice these characteristics:

He played second fiddle to his brother without jealousy or resentment.

When he is introduced to us, it is in this manner: "*Andrew, Simon Peter's brother*" (John 1:41; see 6:8). Barclay said, "It is clear that Andrew lived under the shadow of Peter." Many times my lovely wife, Mary, has been introduced as "the preacher's wife", as if she had no identity beyond mine. There is always difficulty in handling this second-fiddle role, as was clearly revealed to me on the occasion when I was introduced as "Mary's husband". It is good for the spirit not to think too highly of oneself. To humble ourselves is to reflect the very nature of Christ.

He was always bringing others to Jesus.

When Andrew realized that Jesus was the Messiah, he went looking for his soon-to-be-famous brother and brought him to Jesus (John 1:40-42). It was Andrew who brought the lad with the loaves and fishes to the Lord (John 6:8,9). And it was Andrew who was responsible for bringing a group of Greeks to see Jesus (John 12:20-22). The brief notice that Andrew receives in the New Testament must be indicative of his general nature and concern. He wanted everyone to know Jesus.

Now, there's a man I'd like to know. A man without selfish ambition who has a genuine concern that people come to know his Lord. I wonder if I'll find such a man in my time. I wonder if I could be such a man? †

Guy Orbison, Jr., works with the Lord's church in Durango, Colorado, USA.

Judas -

What a Waste!

Ray Hawk

He had every opportunity laid at his feet. People could have remembered him in the best of ways. He had a second chance and blew it. Perhaps he thought he was too much of a failure, and that's the reason he did what he did. Perhaps he thought he could never be forgiven, and his was the only way out. Perhaps he did not think his sin could be forgiven — it was too great. I suppose we will never know, this side of eternity, what caused Judas Iscariot to end his life rather than seek Jesus' forgiveness. He could have. Peter did (Matthew 26:75).

Judas was called by Jesus to be one of His apostles. Out of those who followed, he was among the chosen few. Perhaps Judas did not



realize the greatness to which he had been appointed. He had something to write home about. His name would be remembered as long as there was history. An apostle of Jesus Christ! Ah, the opportunities!

He had abilities that Jesus recognized. After all, did he not take care of the money bag (John 13:29)? No doubt he knew something about bookkeeping. When

BIBLE CHARACTERS

Jesus sent the twelve out, Judas was among those who were commissioned to "*Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead*" (Matthew 10:8). When they returned, Judas was among those who reported what they had preached and accomplished. What excitement must have welled up within him as he gave his report!

How many of us are in an even better position than was Judas to realize the greatness into which we have been called? Yet, how often do we see ourselves sin? How often do we betray our Master by our words and behavior? We have the privilege of being with God now and throughout eternity. We have the opportunity of having our name written in heaven. Even though our names may never find their way into man's history books, if we are children of God, they have been written in the Lamb's book of life! How terrible it would be to see them erased because we threw it all away like Judas.

Peter turned to Jesus, Judas turned to the noose. If only Judas had repented, as did Peter. How many will go through life think-

ing they aren't worthy enough to go to heaven? Actually, none of us are worthy of that reward (Romans 3:10,23). But Jesus was. He is our Savior. Judas thought it was all about what he had done, when it really is all about what Jesus has achieved for us.

A lot of opportunities cross our paths during this lifetime. Don't miss the ones that God gives you. Follow His Son Jesus. †

Ray Hawk works with the Campbell Street Church of Christ in Jackson, Tennessee, USA.

Do Not Despair

**Do not despair,
Let not dismay
Impair your vision
For today...
Though sunny skies
Have disappeared,
While thunder sounds
And storm-cloud nears;
Do not lose hope
For He abides...
A Faithful Friend,
Close at your side.**

— Anna Lee Edwards McAlpin

Should I Be Baptized Again?

Owen Cosgrove

- 1. Are all baptisms equally acceptable to God?** By what authority does one say "all baptisms"? The Bible teaches that there is "one baptism" (Ephesians 4:5). It is a burial or planting (Colossians 2:12; Romans 6:3-6) in water (Acts 8:36-39; 10:47,48) for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16), and to put one into Christ (Galatians 3:26-29; 1 Corinthians 12:13).
- 2. Aren't sprinkling and pouring also baptism?** Emphatically, no! New Testament baptism requires water (Acts 10:48), much water (John 3:23), going to water, going down into water, being buried or planted in water, and coming up out of water (Acts 8:36-39; Romans 6:3-6).
- 3. Aren't all baptisms acceptable, just so they are immersion?** No, it is important not only that baptism be immersion, but that it be preceded by the right things and that it be for the right purpose.
- 4. What do you mean, preceded by the right things?** In the New Testament, baptism is to be preceded by faith (Mark 16:15,16), repentance (Acts 2:38), and confessing one's faith in Christ (Acts 8:36-39; Romans 10:9,10; Matthew 10:32,33). Obviously, if one did not believe in Christ, or was not willing to repent, or denied the divinity of Christ, immersing him would be of no spiritual value.
- 5. What do you mean, baptism should be for the right purpose?** New Testament baptism is for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38), or to wash away sins (Acts 22:16). Baptism that is not for the remission of sins or to wash away sins is different from the baptism of the New Testament.
- 6. Is there any example of people being re-baptized in the New Testament?** Yes. In Acts 18:24-19:7, some disciples of John the Baptist had not been baptized in the name of Christ or in order to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, so they were baptized again.

BIBLE QUESTIONS

7. I felt very good about my first baptism. If I am baptized again, won't I be admitting that I was wrong? We must walk by faith rather than by mere feelings. If one's former baptism was not according to the Bible, it was wrong. It is bad enough to be wrong and not to know any better. It is far more serious to know better and not to correct the situation.

8. My first baptism was when I was very young, and I have serious doubts about my understanding of what I was doing. What should I do? By all means, be baptized again and remove all doubt.

9. I am a little embarrassed after all of this time. Christ was not too embarrassed to die for us. He wants you to make your calling and election sure (2 Peter 1:10).

10. What if I just decide to take my chances? Would you take your chances with a faulty car title or property deed if it could be so easily corrected?

11. I just hate to put others to any trouble over such a minor thing. This is not a minor thing. It is eternally important. †

Owen Cosgrove is involved in printed evangelism in many countries and preaches for the Northside church in Waxahachie, Texas, USA.





Was Jesus Created?

Wayne Jackson

In Colossians 1:15 Jesus is called "*the first-born of all creation*". Does this indicate that Christ was created?

No, it does not. The Greek word for "first-born" is *prototokos*, and it can simply denote that which is "first or chief" in rank. In the Old Testament, Ephraim (a synonym for the kingdom of Israel) was said to be Jehovah's "firstborn" (Jeremiah 31:9), yet technically Ephraim, God's son — from whom the appellation was derived — was younger than his brother Manasseh (Genesis 48:14). "Firstborn" was thus used of Ephraim because he was to be the greater of the two (Genesis 48:19).

In a prophecy that is obviously Messianic, and one that may form the background of Colossians 1:15, God announced: "*I will make him my first-born, the highest of the kings of the earth*" (Psalm 89:27). The future tense form of the verb excludes the idea of a literal origin. The Jews even referred to God, the Father, as "the firstborn of all the world" to denote His role as Creator. Paul may employ the term in a similar way in Colossians 1:15. The Second Person of the Godhead (i.e., Christ) is eternal (Micah 5:2; John 1:1). †

Wayne Jackson is the editor of *Christian Courier* and lives in Stockton, California, USA.



When Was Saul Saved?

Frank Chesser

Prior to his conversion, Saul (later called Paul) was an avowed enemy of Christ and Christianity. He described himself as doing "*many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth*" (Acts 26:9). He was a "*blasphemer, and a persecutor and injurious*" (1 Timothy 1:13).

However, on the road to Damascus, he met and acknowledged Jesus as Lord (Acts 9:1-6). Many people believe that Saul was saved at that point. But even a casual reading of the text will reveal that such was not the case.

BIBLE QUESTIONS

If Saul was saved at that very moment:

(1) He didn't know that he was saved. Instead of rejoicing in his salvation, he inquired of Jesus, "*What wilt thou have me to do?*" (Acts 9:6). Whoever heard of a man being saved and yet not knowing it? Saul's very question is proof of his recognition that something remained for him to do in order to be saved by grace and blood.

(2) God Himself didn't know it. Instead of informing Saul that he was saved by his "faith only", God instructed him to "*go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do*" (Acts 9:6). Note the terms "must" and "do". Contrary to the thinking of many, man has to "do" something to be saved. That's not human interpretation; that's just what God said.

(3) Saul didn't act like a saved man. Instead of expressing great joy and happiness over his salvation, he was "*three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink*" (Acts 9:9). That's a strange way for a just-saved man to act. Saul knew he was not yet saved. He had asked what to do. God said he would be told, though giving him no specific time. Saul waited in darkness, in prayer and fasting for three anxious days.

(4) Ananias the preacher didn't know it. Instead of arguing that Saul was already saved by his "faith alone", Ananias went to Saul and told him what he needed to do (Acts 22:12-16).

(5) He was saved while still in his sins, for God, through Ananias, told him to "*arise and be baptized*". He was still in his sins, for he had to be baptized to have his sins "*washed away*".

Why does Scripture connect baptism with the washing away of sins? Because of some special power in the water or in the act of baptism itself? God forbid! The power to wash away sins is in — and only in — the blood of Christ! But when is man cleansed by that blood? When he completes his obedience to the Gospel in the act of baptism. Baptism is the culminating act of obedience that puts one into the death of Christ (Romans 6:3,4) where Jesus shed His blood (John 19:33,34) in order that the penitent believer might have his sins washed away by that blood.

What washes away sin? Only the blood of Christ (Revelation 1:5). **When** does the blood of Christ wash away sin? When one completes his obedience to the Gospel in baptism (Acts 22:16).

Saul was not saved by grace and blood until his faith moved him to complete his obedience in this divinely ordained act. †

Frank Chesser preaches for the Panama St. congregation in Montgomery, Alabama, USA.

Quick Commentary on Crucial Verses

Philippians 2:5-11

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, *being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.* And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The word "Christian" means "Christ-like". If we presume to wear the name, we must learn to have His thinking and attitudes.

As one of the Godhead, participant in the creation of all things, the Christ existed in the form of God before His birth in human flesh, and He was equal with God. John 1:1-3 describes Him *as God, and with God.*

But for the love of humanity, the Word took the form of humans — bondservants — *emptying Himself of the option to use the powers and rights inherent in the Godhead, because He was choosing, instead, to partake of humanity in order that He might die to save humans.*

Because of the obedience of Christ as the Son, and because He took the sins of mankind and died for them, God has exalted Him above everything and has decreed that everything in heaven and on earth must confess the Lordship of Jesus and worship Him. It is through honoring Christ in this way that we bring ultimate glory to God the Father, as we openly confess His Son and His sacrifice for us.

Having taken the form of man, becoming "the Son of man" at the same time He was born as "the Son of God" (Hebrews 1:5,6) through the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit, Christ behaved as an obedient son to His Father. He humbly submitted to all that was required of Him in the role of Savior: that He die for the sins of mankind. Hebrews 5:8 says that He *learned obedience* by the things which He suffered, and it was through this suffering and obedience that He was "perfected" as our Savior.

The Neglected Book of Philemon

Maxie B. Boren

“Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, to Philemon our beloved friend and fellow laborer” (Philemon 1:1).

In my considered judgment, the one-chapter book of Philemon is largely overlooked by most brethren as they read the Bible. Some have even asked, “I wonder why God put the book of Philemon in the Bible?” What a shame, because those verses are filled with good thoughts God wants us to ponder, teaching us some great lessons on how Christian love works in the lives of His people.

While it is true that Philemon is not a doctrinal treatise, such as Romans and Galatians, it is so very instructive as to the matter of human relationships and how we should treat one another. It was a letter written by the apostle Paul during his first imprisonment in Rome, about A.D. 62, to a Christian man named Philemon who lived in or near Colosse. The letter pertains to Philemon’s “runaway” bondservant, Onesimus. The latter had

somehow made his way to Rome and found Paul there, restrained, but in his own “*hired dwelling*”, and able to teach and preach (Acts 28:30,31). Onesimus was converted by Paul during that time, and thus, the letter written to Philemon urged him to receive Onesimus back without harshness, but tenderly.

Before making any request of Philemon, Paul first assured him of how thankful he was for him, and how gratified he was that Philemon was an encourager of brethren. This is **Lesson #1** — Christian love encourages others! (verses 4-7). The request follows, and **Lesson #2** is learned — Christian love always makes a *request* of others instead of *demands* (verses 8,9). **Lesson #3** is that Christian love reaches out to the helpless (verse 10). Onesimus was a runaway slave, without social status, legally a fugitive, and economically a pauper. But this mat-



wrong relationships into right relationships! Such was Paul's most earnest desire, to reconcile these two. The great apostle was willing to "stand good" for whatever wrong Onesimus may have committed, and this is **Lesson #6** — Christian love has a will-

tered not to Paul, who valued his soul and taught him of Jesus.

Lesson #4 teaches us that Christian love has a sense of right that it will not violate. Look carefully at verses 12-14. Paul's first impulse might well have been to keep Onesimus in Rome so that he might attend to his own needs, but without Philemon's approval, this was not an option. To send Onesimus back was the right thing to do. Right is right, and wrong is wrong, and it never is right to do wrong. Paul did what was right!

Lesson #5 is seen in the request that Paul made of Philemon, to receive Onesimus back, no longer as a bondservant, but as a brother (verses 15,16). Christian love wields an influence that changes

ingness to spend and be spent for others (verses 17-19; 2 Corinthians 12:15). **Lesson #7** — Christian love has an expectancy that always looks for the best in others...Paul felt confident that Philemon would "go the second mile" in complying with his request, as verse 21 states.

My prayer is for the church to study carefully the book of Philemon and learn these lessons, applying them in our relationships with one another. We need to know the Lord's will concerning love (John 13:34,35; 1 Corinthians 13:1-7; 1 Corinthians 16:14; 1 John 3:14, 1 John 3:16-18). †

Maxie B. Boren is an evangelist for the Brown Trail congregation in Bedford, Texas, USA.

An Old Familiar Passage

David Deffenbaugh

"And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him" (Hebrews 11:6).

This very familiar passage from one of the best-known chapters in the Bible is in continual need of emphasis and study. Each phrase of the verse contains understanding needed today.

"And without faith it is impossible to please Him,..." The highest calling of human existence is to please God. The self-indulgent philosophy of modern society cares nothing for pleasing God. This has even become evident in religion. People are encouraged to join the church of their choice without consideration ever being given to what pleases God. When one becomes disgruntled with a particular doctrine, it is not at all unusual to see folks simply find a church that teaches that point more to their liking. Faith is absolutely required to please God. But what is this faith?

"...for he who comes to God must believe that He is". Certainly,

to please God one must accept the reality of His existence. It is God's affirmation that mankind is without excuse when it comes to belief in Him. *"For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse"* (Romans 1:20). Why is it, then, that we continually hear a godless explanation for our universe's origin? Simply because man has deemed himself smarter than God, and has deemed his ability to reason and think more weighty than divine revelation.

"...and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him." It is of significance that this phrase begins with the word *and*. Faith is much more than acknowledging God's existence. As a matter of fact, the mental process of acknowledging



God and His Son does not constitute faith. Faith demands seeking God. To seek God is to do His will. Polls have indicated that the vast majority of people in our nation believe in God (when they are allowed to define Him). But polls also indicate that the vast majority also determine for themselves what is right and wrong. That is not seeking God. Moses said, *"Let me know thy ways that I may know thee"* (Exodus 33:13).

It must be the intent and purpose of our lives to please God. We can do only that when we demonstrate faith. That faith is much more than a recognition of God's exist-

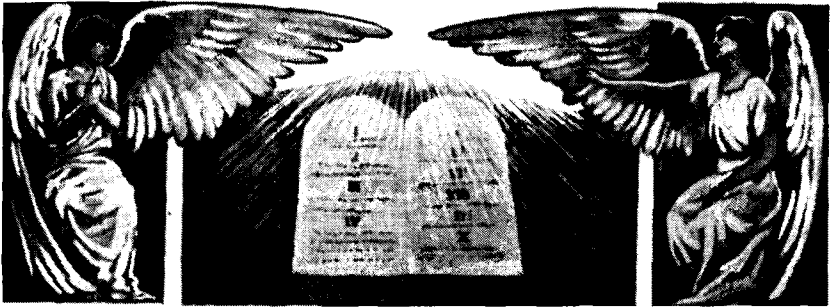
tence. It is actively seeking Him by doing His will.

Sometimes it's the old familiar passage that we need to reread and relearn. †

David Deffenbaugh is the pulpit preacher for the South College Church of Christ in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, USA.

I'm an optimist, because I don't think pessimism and faith are easy bedfellows.

— John Stott



The Lord's Command

Mike Benson

It was bedtime back on Tuesday, March 7th; I was reading from my **One Year NIV Bible** and highlighting excerpts which caught my attention. The daily reading had already been pre-chosen, and I simply had to turn to the appropriate date and study the assigned chapters. This evening's particular selection came from Numbers 8:1-9:23. It addressed the arrangement and lighting of lamps (verses 1-4), the installation of Levites (8:5-22), and their length of service (verses 23-26), instructions pertaining to delayed observance of the Passover feast (9:6-14), and certain divine provisions for the nation's guidance by the cloud (9:15-23).

As I worked my way through the inspired text, I couldn't help but be struck by a certain profound repetition. Over and over again I found phraseology to this effect:

"Just as the Lord commanded..." (8:3)

"Exactly like the pattern the Lord had shown Moses..." (8:4)

"Just as the Lord commanded..." (8:20)

"Just as the Lord commanded..." (9:4)

"They must follow all regulations..." (9:12)

"At the Lord's command..." (9:18)

"At his (the Lord's) command..." (9:18b)

"The Lord's order..." (9:19)

"At the Lord's command..." (9:20)

"At His command..." (9:20b)

"At the Lord's command..." (9:23)

"At the Lord's command" (9:23)

TEXTUAL STUDIES

If my count was correct, I noticed that at least 13 times the Lord through Moses told Israel what to do, as well as how to perform these aforementioned tasks. The nation was obliged to discharge certain specific religious duties — “*just as the Lord commanded*” — and it was evident that there could be no deviation or amendment, neither could Israel resign herself from Jehovah’s instructions. His will was clear, explicit, and unalterable.

It is not by accident that Moses laid this recurrent stress. “*The things that were written previously* (i.e., in the Old Testament) *were for our instruction...*” (Romans 15:4; McCord). God through Moses wanted not only to impress obedience upon fleshly Israel, but also upon spiritual Israel — the church (Galatians 6:16). While we live under a different covenant from our ancestors (Hebrews 8:7-13), it is clear from the scriptures that we too must execute the Lord’s wishes (John 14:15). Whether it pertains to how to worship, when to worship, the role of women, how to enact forgiveness, church discipline, rebuking error, standing for the truth, our attitude in giving, submitting to our elders, or repenting of sin, etc, the Lord wants us to do His will and to do it in the prescribed way (Colossians 3:17). He has revealed it to us in His Word. Beloved, let’s avail ourselves individually and collectively of the guidance He has not only provided but has commanded. †

Mike Benson is a Christian living in Evansville, Indiana, USA.



Wisdom

I have lived, sir, a long time. And the longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see for this truth ... that God governs in the affairs of men. And if a sparrow cannot fall on the ground without his notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without his aid? We have been assured, sir, in the sacred writings that except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it. I firmly believe this; and I also believe that without his concurring aid we shall succeed in this political building no better than the builders of Babel; our project will be confounded and we ourselves shall become a reproach and a byword down to future ages.

— Benjamin Franklin

FROM THE HEART OF...

EVANGELISM THROUGH

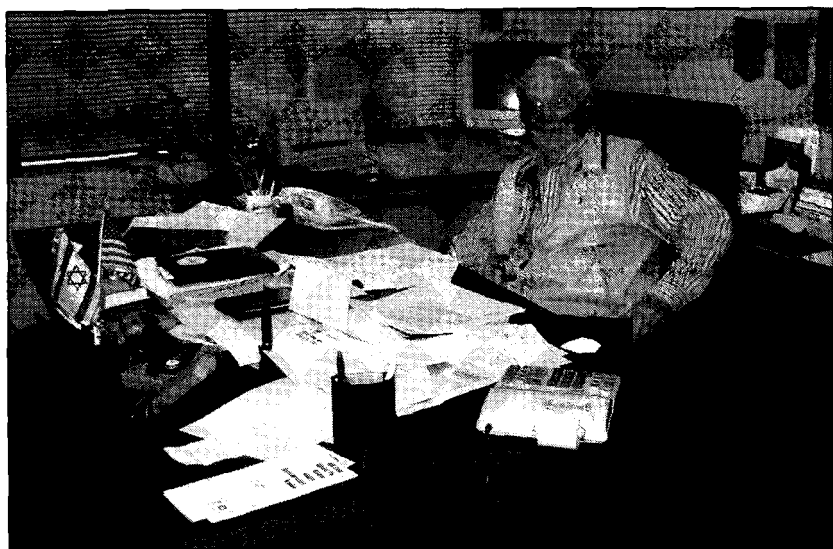


RESTORATION RADIO NETWORK INTERNATIONAL

Roy Beasley

**RESTORATION RADIO CAN BE A
MISSIONARY'S BEST FRIEND**

A friend whom I had not seen for years recently told me about going with a group on a mission trip to Africa. There he met some people who came to be baptized. They said, "We already know about the church of Christ. We listen to Roy Beasley on the radio!"



Roy Beasley has developed Restoration Radio Network International from a single program in 1973.

Of course, this made me feel great! But, besides feeding my ego, it illustrates a point that I have been trying to make for more than 30 years: Radio can be a powerful tool for evangelism. I cannot think of another way of reaching more people in less time and with less expense than radio. It may indeed be the evangelistic angel of Revelation 14:6,7.

It has been pointed out to me that the population of the world is growing so rapidly that if **every gospel preacher** in our brotherhood taught and baptized a thousand people every day, we would never reach all of humanity. On the other hand, if **each member of the Lord's church** converted just one person per year, we could evangelize the world in **just 23 years!** — **a repeat of the history of the church's outreach in the first century!** That shows the power of multiplication. However, we have to be realistic. We know that is not happening, and may never happen again. However, there is another way that we can evangelize the world in a short period of time. That is by radio. Read again Revelation 14:6,7.

Worldwide, radio is more popular now than ever before. Clarence Jones, a pioneer religious broadcaster, called radio waves "highways in the skyways". More people, by far, listen to radio than watch TV or play with

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the PC, even in our own country. In Third World countries there are far more radios than TVs. There, radio is today what it was in the United States in the 1930s: "the golden era of radio". People depend upon radio for entertainment, information, and spiritual sustenance. Radio waves reach to the far corners of the earth. There are few places where there are no radio signals. They are instantaneous, and they present a wonderful opportunity to preach the gospel to all the world.

I have often thought that if I were a part of an eldership with missions in mind, I would first concentrate on preparing the field for planting the seed. Farmers and gardeners can relate to this. No missionary should ever be sent into a field "cold turkey". With modern-day technology, that is no longer necessary.

The first step should be heavy radio saturation of the target area. No expense should be spared. This will pay off well. Of course, this prior preparation might even prove the place unworthy of further effort. In such cases, work could be concentrated in other areas that would produce better results. Even Jesus warned against wasted efforts (Matthew 10:14). This first step should be taken months before the planned arrival of the missionary family.

Too often time is wasted, spinning wheels, trying to get started in a new place. And, by the time the missionary gets started, it is time to leave. We should learn from inspired history. After all, the way was prepared for the coming of Jesus by His cousin, John, the Baptizer. No wonder Jesus was able to launch so quickly into His earthly ministry.

Another advantage to making foundational preparation is that the people would be given an opportunity to become somewhat acquainted with the church of Christ. Curiosity and expectation should be aroused. Bible correspondence courses and other gospel literature should be offered. The new missionary would immediately have prospects. Hence, there must be a plan for follow-up on everyone, especially preachers and other religious leaders. The names and addresses of prospects should be compiled. If I were an elder, I would want our missionary to have all the ammunition possible and to be able to hit the ground running.

When I started Restoration Radio Network International in 1973, I was in a mission area in southeastern Indiana. I was concerned about finding the most effective way of getting started. Most of the people there had never heard of the church of Christ. So, I decided to start a daily five-minute radio program three times a day during the week and a thirty-minute weekly program on Sundays.

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I found that most people in small towns give preference to listening to their local radio station — not the big, powerful stations, not even TV, as you might expect. They listen to the local news, the obituaries, and what people have for sale, as they go about their daily affairs. They want to know what is going on in their community. So, we placed our programs at drive-time in the mornings and afternoons and at noon-time right after the news. It was a hit from the start! It seems that almost everyone in that whole county and the surrounding areas listened to our programs. One day, the station manager said to me, “Roy, your program is an asset to our station”.

As I see it, here were several reasons for its success:

- ◆ It was well prepared and professionally produced.
- ◆ It was different in content and in presentation from most religious programs. This got the attention of the listeners!
- ◆ It was appreciated for our “thus saith the Lord” approach and the firm stand we took on basic morality and spirituality. We were kind and considerate but made no apologies for truth!
- ◆ It multiplied opportunities to preach the gospel to other audiences. It provided opportunities to do good such as helping the needy, visiting the sick, etc.
- ◆ It promoted good will toward the church in the community.
- ◆ It helped to eliminate many misconceptions about the church. It helped to identify excellent prospects.
- ◆ It helped to comfort the aged, bereaved, sick, and shut-ins.

Our format was not devotional but evangelistic. I strove to present the whole gospel in an easy, pleasing manner, and soon it began to pay off. More and more visitors came to our services. This led to baptisms and restorations. The radio announcer and his wife were converted. Former church affiliates were identified. I am convinced that what happened there in that small mid-western community can be duplicated in other places. It’s just a matter of hard work and making better use of our God-given tools of evangelism, such as radio.

In those places where there are missionaries, radio can be a great help. Adrian Limbawan reported a dramatic increase in conversions in the Philippines after we began our radio and TV programs there. The same has been true in Africa and other places.

Again, if I were an elder, I would insist on a professionally-produced, high-quality, daily radio program. I am convinced that more prospects can

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be produced by radio than in any other way. Follow-up then becomes a priority.

But, let me hasten to add: Radio is not a substitute for other areas of work. It is no substitute for the personal touch. It is *in addition to* everything else needed to evangelize. It compliments and brings it all together. It multiplies opportunities! Radio is an effective tool in evangelizing the world.

ADVANTAGES OF SHORT-WAVE RADIO

Restoration Radio Network International is heard by millions of people almost daily in more than 100 countries! How is this possible? By Shortwave radio.

Radio Vatican was the first international religious station. It went on the air on February 22, 1931. They hired the famous inventor of the wireless radio, himself, Guglielmo Marconi, to supervise the construction of the 10,000 watt transmitter. WCJB, "The Voice of the Andes", was the next to come on the air. It was started in a converted sheep shed on the outskirts of Quito, Ecuador. It began with a 250-watt transmitter, but in 1940 it was boosted to 10,000 watts, enough power to literally be heard around the world.

Shortwave radio uses very high frequencies from 5,000 kHz to 15,000 kHz. Since the higher the frequency the shorter the wave of the signal, it is called "Shortwave". These short waves are beamed hundreds of miles up into the sky and are bounced off the ionosphere. This signal continues bouncing back and forth for thousands of miles around the earth, depending upon the power of the transmitter. That is why a Shortwave station in the United States can be heard so clearly in Russia or China. Water reflects radio waves very well, but rough land causes losses of signal strength.

Television is not much of a factor in most Third World countries because it is usually state-controlled and has limited programming. TV sets are often too expensive for most people in those countries. There is also a high illiteracy rate in the Third World. But, they have Shortwave radio. Many are light-weight portables with excellent reception, and sell for under one hundred dollars. So, Shortwave radio becomes the best means of reaching with the gospel those who live in distant and remote areas of the world.

We have also found that many people in foreign countries seek out English-speaking Shortwave broadcasts and listen on a regular basis. One



Taping a lesson to be broadcast over Restoration Radio Network International.

listener in China wrote us; "I listen to your broadcast because I want to improve my English!" That's O.K., because as he is improving his English, he is hearing the gospel! English is the universal language. It is the primary language in many parts of the world. It is taught in schools. People listen to English-speaking broadcasts not only to improve their English but because they are interested in everything American, even religion. Hence, Shortwave is an ideal way to take the gospel to them.

Jesus said, "*Go into all the world...*", and we as His disciples should be concerned about how to best accomplish this great mission. If we depended upon personal contact alone, we would never get the job done. With close to 7 billion people on planet earth, we simply do not have the personnel to accomplish the task. We probably have less than 500 missionaries at present, but even if each member — two million or more — were a missionary, we still couldn't do it. There are simply too many people. And they are dying ... dying at the rate of one every 21 seconds, 50 million each year. Dying without Christ. But, thank God, we have Shortwave radio available to us at a low cost. We are so used to hearing many gospel programs, especially in the "Bible Belt", that we take our opportunities for granted. There

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is not much excuse for most people not to know the truth in our part of the world. But we can do the same thing throughout the world by Shortwave radio. We can give nearly every person on earth the opportunity to hear and obey the gospel. And we can do it **now by shortwave radio.**

- * Reach millions of people at one time from one station.
- * Reach many different countries at one time from one station.
- * Reach many different cultures at one time from one station.
- * Reach countries where our program would not be permitted on local radio stations because of political and religious reasons.
- * Attract non-Christians because broadcasting to other nations and cultures builds interest and good will.
- * Receive confidential responses from our listeners because Shortwave implies distance and distance implies anonymity.
- * We can literally reach the world and tell everyone about what is important for them today.
- * Thus, we will be practicing good stewardship because Shortwave radio can be very economical, reaching a vast audience.

REACHING OUT IN LOVE TO A LOST WORLD

Miles Cotham

On the south side of Nashville, Tennessee, there is a band of devoted Christians that is reaching out to the world by radio and TV with the good news of Jesus Christ. It is not the first and by far not the only media effort in the brotherhood, but God has blessed it richly over the years, so that it is now heard in more than 120 countries around the world.

Years ago, Roy Beasley, a gospel preacher, decided it was time that he expanded his outreach to the lost. Starting with only a reel of tape and the use of the recording equipment at a local radio station in an Indiana mission area, he began what would in time become a world outreach program. He wondered at the time if anyone listened. Thirty-three years later, RRNI has produced thousands of programs that go into the world in English, French, three Philippean dialects, and soon-to-be Arabic and Spanish.

Restoration Radio believes that only the gospel in its simplicity and purity should be preached. Its very name implies that Christians are to restore the teachings of the Apostles, which came directly from God Himself. It is believed that no creed of man is needed and that the gospel of Jesus Christ is all-sufficient.

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Restoration Radio does not own radio stations. It purchases air time from powerful radio stations located in strategic places around the world. The advantage is that there is no expense in building and maintaining expensive facilities, antennae, personnel, and equipment. Also, we are not tied to one target area. If an area proves unproductive, we can easily change to another.

Restoration Radio has a follow-up program called "The Apollos Program". There are workers in Kenya, Malawi, the Philippines, Haiti, and other places. They follow up on listener response, adding the "personal touch" that is so important in soul-winning. Over the years, over 47,000 conversions have been reported, and more than a thousand congregations started as a direct result of Restoration Radio's efforts.

It is impossible to go into all the world in person, but the gospel can be taken into all the world by the use of the technology available for mass communication. Perhaps one day soon you will hear RRNI's "God Speaks Today" on your local radio station or on international short-wave.

THE APOLLOS FOLLOW-UP PROGRAM

James E. Jones

A number of years ago, I had the privilege of teaching together with the late brother Clayton Pepper at The Great Commission School in Nashville, TN. Brother Pepper introduced me to the work at **Restoration Radio Network, International.**

After joining the team at Restoration Radio, I became a part of the operation which Brother Pepper had set up, called "The Apollos Follow-Up Program", very appropriately named after Apollos in Acts the 18th chapter. Although the work of Restoration Radio had been established several years earlier, it had become apparent that there was a need for personal response to the thousands of letters we were receiving from our radio listeners from around the world. Brother Pepper was a master at being able to look into the future with precise vision and determining the best strategy for meeting critical needs.

The program is very simple, yet effective. We send a reply to every piece of correspondence received. Many of our listeners live in Third-World countries and have never before heard of the church of Christ. In response to their inquiries, we send materials introducing them to the Lord's church and the plan of salvation.



Part of the Restoration Radio Network team, reading and answering the stacks of mail that come in response to the radio programs broadcast throughout the world.

Through these efforts, thousands have been brought to Christ, and many congregations of the Lord's Church have been established. We are seeing strong, self-supporting churches emerge, with good leaders who are able to carry on the work without a missionary working with them.

Also, in many places, we have established what we refer to as Christian Learning Centers in order for members, and non-members as well, to be taught. We also have programs to help train men to preach and teach and become strong leaders in the church. In each of our Christian Learning Centers we also have a World Bible School Center.

We believe this is as our Lord commanded in giving the Great Commission when He said, "Go teach, baptize, and teach". He selected twelve men, and, with that arrangement, the Gospel was preached in the entire world in a few short years (Colossians 1:23).

Radio continues to be a most effective way of preaching the Gospel to a lost and dying world, but the follow-up program is a very vital and integral part of what we do here at Restoration Radio. †

Roy Beasley manages the Restoration Radio Network International. The web site for more information is www.rrni.org.

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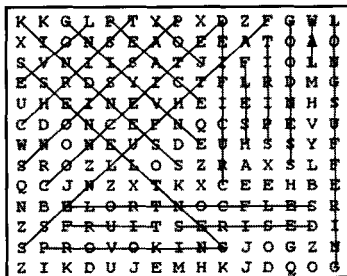
ANSWERS TO PUZZLES

Verse Search (from page 40)

1. Apostle Paul wrote to the church in Rome.
2. Jesus Christ
3. No
4. Impart spiritual gifts, be encouraged by their faith, have some fruit among them, preach the gospel.
5. King David
6. Christ's resurrection from the dead.
7. All nations.
8. Called of Jesus Christ, beloved of God, saints.
9. Their faith was known throughout the world.
10. The gospel is God's power to save everyone.
11. The righteousness of God.
12. "The just shall live by faith."

Bible Find

(from page 72)



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

Log for Restoration Radio Network International as of January 1, 2006

RADIO LOG

Station	Target Area	Time
1. WSLM-AM, 1220 kHz	Salem, IN: South IN/ North KY	M-F 6:30-6:35 AM
2. WSLM-FM, 98.8 MHz	Salem, IN: South IN/ North KY	M-F 6:30-6:35 AM
3. WSLM-AM, 1220 kHz	Salem, IN: South IN/ North KY	M-F 2:30-2:35 AM
4. WSLM-FM, 98.8 MHz	Salem, IN: South IN/ North KY	M-F 2:30-2:35 AM
5. WMSK-AM, 1550 kHz	Morganfield, KY: West KY	M-F 12:55-1:00 PM
6. WMSK-AM, 95.3 MHz	Morganfield, KY: West KY	M-F 12:55-1:00 PM
7. WLFG-FM, 100.1 MHz	French Lick, IN: Southwest IN	SUN: 7:30-7:45 AM
8. WHYC-FM, 88.5	Fairfield, NC: East NC	M, W, & F, 12:00-1:00 PM
9. KNDF-AM, 1270	Honolulu, HI: HI	SUN 7:30-8:00 AM
10. RADIO VISION 2000-FM, 102.2 (French)	Ft. Lauderdale: FL/Haiti/Caribbean	SUN 2:00-3:00 PM
11. RADIO VENUS-FM, 105.5 (French)	Ft. Lauderdale: FL/Haiti/Caribbean	SUN 8:00-9:00 AM
12. RADIO EAST AFRICA SW, 15190 kHz	EAST AFRICA	SUN. 3:30-4:00 PM
13. RADIO AFRICA SW, 7190 kHz	WEST AFRICA	SAT. 10:00-10:30 AM
14. RADIO 4 AM	Uganda, AFRICA	M-F 8:00-8:05 AM
15. BEACON OF HOPE SW	MIDDLE EAST	SUN 3:45-4:00 PM
16. RADIO TAIWAN FM	TAIWAN/CHINA	SUN 0030UTC
17. EUROPEAN GOSPEL #2 SW (French)	MOROCCO/MAURITANIA	FRI 12:30-1:00PM
18. EUROPEAN GOSPEL #2 SW (Spanish)	SPAIN/WEST AFRICA	FRI 12:00-12:30 PM
19. RPN, DZBS RADIO	Baguio City, PHILIPPINES	SUN. 6:30-7:00 AM
20. DWPR	Dagupan, Pangasinan, PHILIPPINES	SUN 5:30-6:00 AM
21. DWLY	Baguio City, PHILIPPINES	T & TH. 7:00-7:30 AM
22. DZTP	Candon, Ilocos Sur, PHILIPPINES	SUN 8:00-8:30 AM
23. DWDC	Solano, Nueva Vizcaya, PHILIPPINES	SUN 5:30-6:00 AM
24. DZCV	Tuguegarao Cagayan, PHILIPPINES	SUN 2:00-2:30 PM
25. DZKI	Iriga, Camarines Sur, PHILIPPINES	SUN 7:00-7:30 AM

TV LOG

SAT 6:30-7:00 AM

Baguio City, Philippines

RPN, DZBS-TV 12