

THE BIBLE TEACHER

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EDITORIAL



What Kind of Exercise are You Getting?

In our day a lot of emphasis is being put on exercise. There is running, jogging, walking, cycling, swimming, gymnastics, and all kinds of sports. People are trying to stay physically fit and strong. They want to keep their hearts and other members of the body healthy. Along with this, many have bought all types of clothes, equipment, and health foods. In spite of it all, human beings continue to die.

No doubt it is good to take good care of the physical body since we just have one, but do you remember what the Apostle Paul had to say about things like this? After explaining how that in the latter times there would be a falling away, and listing some of the doctrines that would be taught, he said to the young preacher.

Timothy, "If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained. But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness. For bodily exercise profiteth little but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." (1 Timothy 4:6-8).

Paul is saying here that physical exercise is helpful to some extent, but in relation to godly exercise, there is no comparison. He says that godly exercise profits one both in this life and in the world to come.

The Hebrew writer talks about the Christian growing to the point that he can spiritually partake of strong meat, or can understand the deeper things of God. He says this is brought about through the use (exercise) of the senses and thereby being able to distinguish between good and evil. (Hebrews 5:14).

Peter tells us that the mind can be used (or exercised) for bad things as well as good things. In speaking of the wicked of his time, he said, "Having eyes full of adultery, that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children: Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray..." He continues, "For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them to live in error. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage. For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, the dog is turned to his own vomit again; and

the-sow washed to her wallowing in the mire." (2 Peter 2:14,15, 18-22).

In the foregoing passages of scripture, you have Peter describing what happens when people exercise their mental facilities to think, speak, and to engage in evil practices. It means that as they continue that they wax worse and worse in their wickedness. It is not a very pretty picture, is it? Sin can keep progressing in one's life and finally destroy him. (Romans 6:23).

But to understand godly exercise better, let's think about some ways that this is carried out. For instance, what are some of the exercises that we can do?

We can read and study God's word, spend more time in prayer, help the poor, set a good example, teach the gospel to the lost, give more of our earnings to the Lord, always be honest in our dealings with one another, have a forgiving spirit, do unto others as we would have them to do unto us, love God and the souls of men everywhere, etc., and so on.

Physical exercise is hard work, but spiritual exercise is also hard work. You have to really want to do it to stay with it. In other words, you have to be determined. That is why many don't succeed at it. Most are too lazy, too willing to put it off till tomorrow, but tomorrow never comes. So physically they remain out of shape, unhealthy, and maybe die prematurely. Spiritually, they remain weak, sickly, and just try to hang on. Many do drift away and die. The ones who survive, often remain spiritual invalids.

Those who get the proper physical exercise are usually the ones who are trying to take care of themselves. They will probably get more out of life and live longer. Spiritually, those who exercise their minds and grow in knowledge, understanding, and wisdom, and those who get regular godly exercise, are the ones that are going to be strong in the Lord and in his work. They are going to be the ones who get things done, and the more they do the more God will bless them.

To help the Christian to get his exercise and to grow, Peter said, "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and Jesus our Lord, According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. And besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things ye shall never fall; For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth." (2 Peter 1:2-12).

Again, you can see in the foregoing the contrast between the one who exercises his mind and grows in godliness and how the Lord is able to use and bless someone like that. But the one who becomes negligent and forgetful drifts away and is lost to the Lord.

My friend, what kind of exercise are you getting? You may put all of your emphasis on this life, but in the end you will lose it all. Like Paul said, "...godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of life that now is, and of that which is to come." (1 Timothy 4:8). The wise person in the world today is the Christian who enjoys the best of both worlds—the present world and the promise of the world to come and all the good things that will come with it.



associate editorial

Man and Worship

Worship has always been a vital matter in the eyes of God. He has always, in every age, revealed to man how He desired to be worshipped by His people. In the Patriarchal age, before the Law was given through Moses to God's people, we have an example of worship in the story of Cain and Abel. While God then accepted Abel's worship because it was done according to His will, at the same time He rejected his brother's worship because he didn't worship God according to His command. Then, in the second age, The Mosaic age, we recall the account of two priests, Nadab and Abihu, who attempted to worship God by burning incense. However, God considered them disrespectful because they offered in worship something other than which He had actually commanded in that age. Instead of using the fire that God had ordained they substituted a "strange fire and as a result were burnt to death. These two instances from the Patriarchal age and the Mosaic age should serve as an example and admonition to us today in this Christian and final age, that God would not accept any kind of worship, no matter how sincerely engaged in, but that He accepts only the true worship that He has authorised in His revealed will. Christians today should worship God according to the same pattern of worship He had ordained for the early church as prescribed in the New Testament. The Scriptures clearly show that in each Bible age God set forth specific avenues of worship for His people during that age. According to the New Testament the Christian worship consists of five acts, namely, the Lord's supper, Bible study, Prayer, Singing and Giving, (Acts 2 : 7; 1 Corinthians 11 : 23-29; 1 Corinthians 16 : 1, 2; Ephesians 5 : 19).

Since the literal meaning of the verb "worship" is to adore, our worship therefore must be with love and adoration for our Creator. If we truly love God then we will keep His commandments (John 14 : 15), and therefore we will worship only as He has authorised. But even when we worship in God's way we must be careful that for our worship to be acceptable to God it must be from the heart and not merely an outward act. Jesus spoke of the people of His time and said, "These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honour Me with their lips but their heart is far from Me." (Matthew 15 : 8). Their worship was merely a lip-worship or mouth-worship. Many today do the same even in the church. While they may be singing, or praying, or reading, or partaking of the Lord's supper, but their hearts or minds are not present in God's worship. Right then while worshipping with their lips, they might be in their thoughts, fishing, working or playing. etc. God would not accept such worship. Jesus said, "God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and truth." (John 4 : 24).

Another thing that Christ noticed about those people, who were worshipping Him with their lips only, was, "And in vain they worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." (Matthew 15 : 9). They weren't worshipping God according to His will, but they had accepted teaching, doctrines and commandments of men and were worshipping Him according to them. Many are doing the same today also. Suppose, if Christ was here on earth today and if He would visit different churches who worship Him according to their creed book and according to man-made doctrines, would He not say the same about them today? What would He say about a Special Choir, various instruments of music, occasional, and not weekly, observance of the Lord's supper? When we do not comply with God's will, our worship becomes vain, and we stand condemned before our God in the company of Cain, Nadab and Abihu and such like. Again, Christ foretold, "But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipper will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him." (John 4 : 23). To worship God in Spirit means to worship Him with all sincerity and adoration; and to worship Him in truth

means to worship according to His will, since God's word is truth. (John 17: 17). God is not going to accept all or any form of worship. He will accept only that which He Himself has authorised.

Motivating Factors

G. Devadanam

It is definitely not an advice for an "Auto-Suggestion" as some might be tempted to think. As we have seen before, the fact that God is invisible and that He is Omnipresent keeps Him not far from any one of us. Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, and an inspired man also made this concept very plain to the scholars of his day on Mars Hill. (Acts 17:27).

However, recognizing the presence of the invisible God has been one of the motivating factor for godly living. And Biblical history provides examples to testify this fact. In the climax of lustful temptation, Joseph, by faith could envisage the presence of the invisible God; it motivated him to flee fornication at the cost of false accusation and the imprisonment that followed (Gen.39). Amidst the glory of sinful pleasures which would be carried but for a season, Moses could visualise the invisible by faith and left pharoah's house for an eternal glory. (Heb. 11:24-27).

With all God's goodness and omnipresence, if man were a mere temporal being, he may not see the need for recognizing the invisible God. Because God has been so gracious that He provided all the physical blessings for man in His creation and laid down principles to govern it. So, for anjoying the physical blessings one might not feel even to thank his creator.

But the fact is that man is an eternal creature, intended for an eternal fellowship with his creator. And this can not be denied, too, God is too holy to fellowship with any thing contrary to His nature. Therefore, man of a necessity, has to seek to fellowship with his maker, or else his eternity would be at stake. The

eternal existence of man must be a motivating factor to seek his God. This takes every thing within man to please God, which in turn motivates him to find out what God would have him do.

Nonetheless, any motivation, man's faith and his godly living must be based on the word of God alone. Any thing that man wants to do to please his maker or to try to keep fellowship with HIM besides the revealed will of God, would be as Sinful as it was when Abel tried to please God with his gift.

How Much Faith Do You Need?

T. Pierce Brown

In Luke 17:5, the apostles said, "Lord, increase our faith." They felt a lot like most of us. "If I had more faith, I could do greater things." At that point, it is my judgment that most commentaries do not do justice to the lesson Jesus taught. The ones I remember say something like this, "The grain of mustard seed is small. If you just had a small amount of faith you could do great things."

No doubt this is true, **provided some other conditions were met**, but it appears to me that his statement is concerned with the other conditions, rather than with the "size" of their faith. Why?

He said they had a little faith (Matthew 8:26; 14:31; 17:20). So, if just having a little faith would allow them to do the "impossible" tasks, then they could already be doing them. It is not the **SIZE** of the faith he is emphasizing, but the **NATURE** or **QUALITY** of the faith!

That is, I do not think he is saying, "If your faith was as **BIG** as even a grain of mustard seed you could do great things," but "Though you know your faith is small, for you asked for it to be

increased, if it were AS (not as BIG AS, but had the qualities of) a grain of mustard seed, you could do tasks which seem impossible." Now, how small is a grain of mustard seed? It is small, but that is not the important point, for they ALREADY had THAT kind of faith! The important things are: it has in it a germ of life; it has power to grow; it has power to, and does, appropriate God's gifts in accordance to his laws, etc.

The point is, they did not need an INCREASE in faith as much as they needed an ACTIVE, OPERATIONAL faith. If a grain of mustard seed is dead, it does not matter whether it is small or large, it will produce nothing. But if a grain of mustard seed is alive, active, and appropriating the gifts of rain, sunshine and earth then it will produce greatly. So it is with YOUR faith!

The real truth is, you do not need to pray for an INCREASE in faith. It does not come that way! If you will have a faith AS the mustard seed and DO WHAT YOU CAN, WHERE YOU ARE, WITH WHAT YOU HAVE, it does not matter whether it is big or little; it will grow, and with its increase, it will produce "exceedingly abundantly above all that you are able to ask or think." (Ephesians 3:20).

Some Day You'll Need Him

The night of the disaster of the "Titanic" was a dark night. Those who survived that tragic incident said that there was little thought of God and things eternal aboard ship that night. The dance floor was crowded; the ship's orchestra was grinding out jazz. Then came the great tremor throughout the ship as that mighty iceberg plowed its way into the side of the proud vessel, and the ship listed and began to sink. Some who were rescued from those dark icy waters and who lived to recount their experiences, said that as the ship began to sink many on the dance floor fell to their knees in prayer, and the orchestra, which had been playing jazz, began to play "Nearer My God To Thee."

And dear heart the time is coming when you will need him. "Every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess. . ." How much better to confess him willingly now than to be compelled to confess him later! Why not stand for him while it is yet day, for the night cometh—

And then you'll need him;

Yes, you'll need him—

Need his cleansing power in your soul.

Come to him without delay;

Take the Saviour while you may,

For some day, in your heart,

You'll surely need him!

Author Unknown

"What Is Your Goal?"

Thomas W. Hartle

This is a very plain and simple question. Yet how few individuals would give the correct answer. How many would base the answer upon God's word? We should admit that in the ordinary walks of life all men have a goal in mind. Some aim to become great sportsmen, professors, technicians, carpenters, doctors, artists, etc. Others seek dancing, entertainment, and the pleasures of life.

The purpose of this article is to remind the Christian of his life and proper goal and to instruct the unbeliever of the goal he must accept. Many of us have at times avoided an open air meeting, to present the message of the gospel, or found it boring to spend time for worship of God.

That is not the right mind for things of the Spirit. In this

case there was no real spiritual goal in the heart. Perhaps some who attend worship services, do so because of family tradition, or because mother and father force the issue. There is little thought at all that in God's sight we are sinners, despite the fact that the Bible declares, "All have sinned and come short of the Glory of God" (Romans 3:23) and that "God commandeth all men everywhere to repent." (Acts 17:30).

ONE'S REACTION

One's reaction could be, "Oh, no! After all, who is God to tell me, a respectable person, who does no harm to anyone, who pays his way through life, who gives to charity, that I am a sinner?" This attitude is no better than that of the Pharisee in Luke Chapter 18, who prayed aloud, "God I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican." Jesus said that the publican was more justified when he smote on his breast, saying, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

The publican, thank God; aimed at the right goal, thus pleasing God. He realized, and admitted that he was a sinner. Recall that Jesus said, "Wide is the gate and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." (Matthew 7:13, 14).

SELF-RIGHTEOUS ATTITUDE

Many adopt the self-righteous attitude of the Pharisee, which places them in the broad way. Few are of the humble, penitent type who take the narrow way that leads to life. This is the path to life with the correct goal. We can look for no better example of proper goals than Jesus who had one goal in mind, to please God, even though the road led to Calvary. It is recorded that when his appointed time was come, "He set his face steadfastly toward Jerusalem." That was his goal. It meant life and hope for the world steeped in sin, although it cost great sacrifice on Calvary. How thankful should we be.

TO LIVE IS CHRIST

Paul once wrote, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is

gain." (Philippians 1:21). Think of that bold statement, "To live is Christ!" Dear friend what is your goal? If we expect to live, it means more than just believing, singing, praying, giving etc. It means a self-denial of all things; it means crucifying self. Did not Jesus teach us in Matthew 6:21 "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be, also?" Paul admonished his brethren, "One thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 3:13, 14.) Yes, for Paul to live was Christ!

Nothing else in the world was of any value to Paul but Christ! Again he said "I go bound in the Spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying bonds and afflictions abide in me." He then boldly declared: . . . "But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, that I might finish my course with joy and the ministry, which I received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God." (Acts 20:22-24). That should be the pre-eminent attitude and spirit of every Christian.

GLORYING IN INFIRMITIES

On another occasion Paul said: "I rather glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me." (2 Corinthians 12:9). He also spoke of being in perils of robbers, in perils in the sea, being beaten with rods, stoned, a night and day in the deep, 39 stripes, painfulness, hunger, thirst, etc. (See 2 Corinthians 2:23-27). Can one imagine the physical pain and not marvel at the attitude that led to his admonishing his brethren to press on and to live is Christ? Yes, his goal was fixed. When he wrote "Be ye followers of me even as I am of Christ," he meant more than preaching, praying and giving, he meant suffering too. "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet, not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." (Galatians 2:20).

There was no longer any worldly aim or goal for Paul but to

win Christ. He said, "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world," and "Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil." (2 Timothy 4:10, 14). In spite of this opposition and failure, Paul was not moved from his goal. Having put his hand to the plough, he was not allowing anything to move him. "He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it." (Matthew 10:39). "No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." (Luke 9:62).

This determination and zeal of purpose was so fixed and rooted in the whole being of Paul, that he could say, "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things to come, nor things present, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8:38-39).

CONCLUSION

Paul's goal was to please Christ and to be like him! We, as sinners, are no different to Paul, and thus should endeavour to make Christ our goal in life. As Christians we should not question the admonition of Paul, but, by the grace of God endeavour to possess the spirit, confidence, courage and determination of Paul, so that nothing should swerve us from that heavenly goal. And be assured of this fact, that when one makes Christ his goal, he shall enter into the Holy City where "there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be anymore pain, for the former things are passed away." (Revelation 21:4). For Christians or sinners, this is a challenge for you to make the proper decision. God is challenging you!

Returning Home To The Father!

Bill Swetmon

It was the desire to do as he pleased that prompted the young prodigal to gather all his possessions and journey into a far

country. He wasn't concerned about his reputation, the honor of his home or his father's business. The far country allured him. When he arrived, he found a dreary land of famine. What appeared as luscious fruit turned out to be bitter gall. It wasn't long until the spell was broken and he came to his senses. He remembered his father's house and turned homeward.

He had taken his fling at the world, but after that he confessed to his father, "I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." But the father said to his servants, "Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry; for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry." (Luke 15:21-24).

In verse 22, the Greek literally has it, "Bring ye out a robe, the first," and is so translated by many scholars. In W.E. Vine's *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* the Greek word "protos" is defined as literally the first robe. This little word throws a new light on the parable. The father had preserved the son's first or former robe. It was the one he wore before he took his journey. Now that he is back home, he receives his original robe.

With one little word Jesus tells us how God forgives when we repent and come back home. When God forgives he forgets and restores to us all the privileges of sonship. He puts us back in our original place, and he loves us as though we had never broken covenant with him.

Perhaps a child of God in error and rebellion is reading this article who needs to repent and come back home. You no doubt can remember how good it was to be at home in the Father's house (the church). Why not determine right now that you will attend worship this Sunday, confessing your negligence and sinfulness, and returning to your original place of sonship? God will be faithful and just to forgive you of all your sins and to cleanse you from all unrighteousness. (I John 1:9).

We should be thankful to God for this beautiful Parable in which our Lord shows the amazing grace of our Father that is extended to every prodigal.

And when I've ended life's weary race,

And look with rapture upon His face,

I'll sing this song of redeeming grace:

When God forgives He forgets.

Tragedy And Troubles

Tom Kelton

I faced tragedy and troubles in different forms when I was in a mental hospital twenty-two times from 1963 to 1971. I imagine that many that read this have also faced tragedy or troubles in various forms.

God's word has a lot to say about trouble and tribulation and how we can turn them into stepping stones to victory in our lives.

1. **Tragedy comes to everyone, but Jesus promises us peace.** "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." (John 16:33).

2. **Tragedy makes us doubt God's love for us.** We wonder how a God who loves us could allow accidents, troubles, problems, and sickness to come into our lives.

"In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord . . . my soul refused to be comforted: I-remember God, and was troubled: I complained, and my spirit troubled: I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed . . . I am so troubled that I cannot speak . . . will the Lord cast off for ever? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies?" (Psalm 77:1-9).

3. When tragedy comes, we look for a way of escape. Our first reaction is to run away from the situation or close our eyes and hope it will disappear.

“My heart is sore pained within me: and the terrors of death are fallen upon me. Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and horror hath overwhelmed me. And I said, oh that I had wings, like a dove! For then I would fly away and be at rest.” (Psalm 55:4-6).

4. When tragedy comes, other people are unable to comfort us. There is no one who can completely identify with our own personal hurt heartache—no one except Jesus.

“Reproach hath broken my heart; and I am full of heaviness: and I looked for someone to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none.” (Psalm 69:20).

5. We can give our troubles to the Lord. We do not have to carry them all ourselves. If we commit them to the Lord, he takes them and carries the burden for us.

“Yet man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward. I could seek unto God, and unto God would I commit my cause.” (Job 5:7-8).

6. God wants us to call upon him in times of trouble. Then the Lord is able to work for us.

“Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.” (Psalm 50:15).

7. We can hope in God. When we look to God, we no longer feel alone and helpless. His presence gives us hope.

“Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance.” (Psalm 42:5).

8. God will help us in times of trouble. We don't ever need to feel alone in times of crisis because God is with us.

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." (Psalm 46:1).

"He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him, and honour him. (Psalm 91:15).

9. God will not forsake us when trouble comes. If we ask him to help us, he will always respond.

"The Lord also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble. And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee: for thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee." (Psalm 9:9, 10).

10. God will revive us in the midst of trouble. The Lord will give us strength that will sustain us during our trials.

"Though I walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt receive me . . . thy right hand shall save me." (Psalm 138:7).

We don't learn all these lessons right away. In fact many of us never learn them. However, these spiritual resources are ours if we will seek them by faith. They can be "our comfort in our affliction." (Psalm 119:50).

Who Is To Blame?

Edsel Burleson

A young mother, hearing a terrible outburst from an adjoining room, called out "Tommy, stop pulling the cat's tail." Tommy yelled back, "I'm not pulling the cat's tail; I'm only standing on it. He is the one that's doing the pulling."

Among the earliest recorded words from the lips of mankind were the efforts to blame another for one's mistakes. When the Lord questioned Adam as to whether he had eaten of the fruit

forbidden him, the man said, "The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And the Lord God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat." (Genesis 3:12,13).

It is very hard for one to say, "It was my fault." As children, though there was no doubt about the guilt, when questioned, the usual reaction was, "Yes, I did, but..." And the blame was then placed on another.

Parents are often reluctant to accept the fact that their child has made a mistake. A mother stood before the judge with tears in her eyes and said, "Your Honor, my son is not responsible for all these horrible things they said he did. The boys he's been running around with are to blame!" A father shouted at a high school teacher, "You are to blame for my daughter's poor marks!"

The children of Israel blamed their sinful actions on the failures of their fathers. They insisted, "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge." (Ezekiel 18:2). The Lord responded that that old excuse had been used over and over and he didn't want to hear it anymore. He told them later in the chapter (verses 4 and 20) that one was responsible for his own actions and any amount of "rationalization" to relieve one of guilt was useless.

The apostle Paul was emphasizing the same truth when he wrote to the Roman Christians "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God." (Romans 14:12).

Somewhere the blame must stop. Pity the poor child about whom this was written:

"College Professor:

Such rawness in a pupil is a shame. Lack of preparation in the high school is to blame.

High School Teacher:

My word, what crudity; the boy's a fool!

The fault, of course, is in the middle school.

Middle School Teacher:

Kindergarten blockhead! Of all the gall.
To call it preparation. Better nothing at all!

The Mother:

Poor helpless child. He's not to blame.

His father's folks are just the same."

"He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy." (Proverbs 28:13).

Are There Many Ways To Heaven?

Kathy Huebner Elliott

Most of the religious world that claims to be Christian, believe that all good, moral, sincere people worshipping God in different ways in the various churches are on the way to heaven. There are different denominations all claiming to be on road to heaven, yet in some points differing so far as being direct opposites of each other! Some examples follow:

1. Infants and children are lost in sin and in need of baptism.
2. Infants and children are safe, innocent, not having the ability to understand or choose to obey God.
3. Baptism is not essential to salvation.
4. Baptism is essential to salvation.
5. Once saved, always saved.
6. Once saved, you can choose to leave God and be lost.
7. People are predestined to either heaven or hell with no choice of their own wills.

8. Each person is able to choose a life of obedience to God and able to gain his promises.

The list goes on and on in confusion? But I Corinthians 14:33 says, "For God is not a God of confusion, but of peace."

Our Lord, Jesus Christ, did not teach many ways of salvation or doctrine, but one only. He said:

"Enter ye in by the narrow gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many are they that enter in thereby. For narrow is the gate, and straitened the way that leadeth unto life, and few are they that find it." (Matthew 7:13,14).

Jesus taught that many sincere people that have done great works in the Lord's name will be cast out on judgment day because they did not do the will of God. He said, "Not everyone who saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father who is in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and in thy name cast out demons, and by thy name do many mighty works? And then I will profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity." (Matthew 7:21-23).

These shall be sincere people to whom the Lord will say, "Depart from me." If not why will they stand and try to justify themselves before Jesus and God Almighty.

Jesus addressed the question of a follower according to Luke 13:23-30. "And one said unto him, Lord are they few that are saved? And he said unto him, Strive to enter by the narrow door: for many, I say unto you, shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able... and he shall say, I tell you, I know not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and the gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and yourselves cast forth without. And they shall come from the east

and west, and from the north and south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God. And behold, there are last who shall be first, and there are first who shall be last."

UNITY

Jesus' prayer for unity is recorded in John 17. I encourage you to read it all.

"And I am no longer in the world, and these are in the world and I come to thee. Holy Father keep them in thy name which thou hast given me, that they may be one even as we are." (John 17:11).

"Sanctify (to set apart-Young's Analytical Concordance) them in truth: thy word is truth. As thou didst send me into the world, even so sent I them into the world . . . Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on me through their word; that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us: that the world may believe that thou didst send me." (John 17:17-21).

"Till we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a fullgrown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: that we may be no longer children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, in craftiness, after the wiles of error. . . ." (Ephesians 4:13-14).

"Now I beseech you brethren, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and there be no divisions among you: but that ye be perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it hath been signified unto me concerning you, my brethren, by them that are of the household of Chole. that there are contentions among you. Now this I mean, that each one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were ye baptized into the name of Paul?" (1 Corinthians 1:10-13).

Paul makes it very clear that the Lord's people are not to be divided. He reproved them for calling themselves after men. The present widespread religious division is not over what the Bible teaches, but over human opinions and doctrines. The use of the scriptures as the only authority. No human creeds, no human canons, etc.; or any man-made laws need to be added to them!

"Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16, 17).

The Bible itself emphasizes unity based only upon the word of God!

Denominational groups have made an attempt at unity through "church council meetings" and accepting each others' differences. In New Testament times, Christians did not accept errors of other religions. They corrected errors, refuted false teachers, and ideas of people which conflicted with the gospel. It may sound good to say "I can't judge other peoples' religion," and leave it at that. Doing so, no one gets hurt feelings, but no differences are solved either. Jesus said, "Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment." (John 7:24).

You can be sure that God will judge all aspects of worship, and if a doctrine, or practice or any part of our religion is not approved of in God's word, or if it is an error, telling someone about it is not only destructive or wrong, but very important to that person's soul! We are not one denomination arguing against other denominations. But we must practice New Testament Christianity. This is our duty as Christians. Ignoring religious differences is the opposite of our Lord's prayer for unity, and only accomplishes stronger walls between believers in Christ, and encourages divisions.

There is a world-wide church today that is striving to pattern itself after the church of the New Testament. The Bible alone is our only authority in religion.

I have been in three denominations. Like most of the world, I believed all of the churches were all right. It is confusing though when you are told two or three different ways to be saved! My husband (who has only been in one denomination) and I studied the Bible with a deacon in a denominational church and then we studied the Bible with an evangelist in the church of Christ and we learned from that evangelist the undenominational concept of the church we read about in the Bible. We then did what the New Testament teaches that people must do to become Christians, and that means we became members of the church we read about in the New Testament.

There is only one way that leads to heaven, the strait and narrow way; the one that our Lord Jesus died for.

The Belief Of Unbelievers

Basil Overton

Unbelievers seem to take pride in boasting that they are not so "intellectually weak" that they must lean on faith. However, unbelievers do lean on faith; they do believe! They do not believe the truth; but they do believe something; In many cases what unbelievers believe requires more stretching of the credulity than believing the truth requires.

"Now when Jesus came into the direct of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, Who do men say that the Son of man is? And they said, some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." (Matt. 16:13. 14—RSV). When Jesus lived in Palestine many people believed many different things about him which were not true. What they believed was harder to believe than to believe the truth about him. Often unbelievers believe things about God, the Lord Jesus and the Bible which are more difficult to believe than to believe the truth.

REASON AND FAITH

Unbelievers say that reason should be our guide instead of faith. However, when one reasons he must use certain laws, axioms, principles, and truths. From these he may reason and draw conclusions. But, why would one use such laws, axioms, principles and truths when he reasons? Obviously, because of his faith in them. One cannot reason without having faith in something! The person who thinks he can dispense with faith and wholly rely on reason is probably the most unreasonable person of all. His faith is more difficult than the faith required to believe in God and to accept the Bible as his word.

BELIEVING GOD EXISTS IS REASONABLE

When one says he cannot believe in God on the ground that such would involve him in leaning too heavily on faith, he actually does lean very heavily on faith. If one does not believe God exists, he believes God does not exist. One cannot know that God does not exist without knowing everything for if there was one thing he did not know, that one thing might be the fact that God exists. No unbeliever would affirm that he knows all things. No believer can know that there is no God; he may believe there is no God, but he cannot know there is no God. Which requires the more faith, to believe there is a God, or to believe there is no God?

It seems that one would have to stifle his reason, choke his common sense and crucify his conscience to believe that God does not exist is to believe that there is a universe full of law and order and design but no God who is the lawgiver and the designer. Apparently, this is too difficult for a reasonable person to believe.

Man could never have known God by observing the heavens and the earth. Certainly man could reasonably conclude that some power and being superior to himself must surely have brought into being the universe, but to know who this being was and what this power was, God had to tell man. To know who the Creator is, and what he is like, man must look in the Book which the Creator wrote about himself which is the Bible. One could not determine

what a painter was like or who he was by just looking at one of his paintings. Because God has told us about himself in his Book, we can look into his universe and conclude that is very reasonable that God is indeed the Creator of the heavens and the earth.

SOME GOOD COMMENTS BY A GREAT SCHOLAR

The distinguished and erudite scholar Dr. Archibald Alexander established Princeton Theological Seminary in 1812 and was its first professor. He held that professorship until 1840, and then taught polemic theology at Princeton until he died in 1851. Dr. Alexander wrote several very practical books, one of which is entitled: *Moral Science*. The following are some pertinent excerpts from that book:

“Again we may demand of an Atheist what other evidences of the existence of God he would require. Let him suggest something, which, in the form of evidence, would be more satisfactory to him, and he will not find it easy to fix on any evidence which is stronger or more suitable than what we already possess.

“It may appear strange to some that we challenge the Atheist to demand any clearer or stronger evidence of a Supreme Being than that which is already before us. But let the attempt he made to conceive of some evidence of this truth which would be more satisfactory, and better adapted to be a standing proof to all nations, and we have mistaken the matter, if the result will not be that the existing evidence is as good as any which they could ask.

“It is true we do not see God, and the reason is he is a spirit; and a spirit, from the very nature of the case is invisible. We can not see the souls of our nearest friends; we know that they exist, not by any direct perception of the intelligent substance, but by the actions which they perform through the instrumentality of the body.

“As the First Cause, if there is one, must be from his nature invisible, the only way by which he can be conceived to make known his existence, is by setting before us some work, in which

his wisdom, power, and goodness may be manifested; and by the contemplation of which a rational mind may infer, that a being does exist, to whom these properties belong.

“The simple question then is, could there be exhibited stronger evidences of wisdom than we have in the structure of the body of man, and in the constitution of his mind? Could the various species of animals in the earth, air, and sea, be formed with more consummate wisdom than they are, in relation to the climate in which they live, and the provision made internally and externally for their subsistence, and the propagation of their kind. Examine also the vegetable world. Call in the aid of glasses to inspect the concealed structure of the vessels; contemplate the leaf, the flower, and the mature fruit, and say whether you can conceive of contrivances more exquisite. If any man thinks that animal and vegetable bodies could have been constructed with more wisdom, let him point out in what respects these works of nature are deficient in wisdom . . . The internal structure of the gnat is as wonderful as that of the elephant; and in the manifestation of wisdom in the creation there is wonderful variety. No two species are exactly alike; and the difference is exactly such as it should be to accomplish the special end in-view. The more intricate our examination of the contrivance and evident design in the organization of animal and vegetable bodies, the stronger will be our conviction and the greater our admiration.

“It is not denied that miraculous displays are a decisive proof of a Great First Cause, who is possessed of omnipotence; but what we maintain is, that the evidence of omnipotence is not greater than in the natural effects which are constantly produced before our eyes If another sun were placed in the heavens, which is as great a miracle as we can imagine, it would be a proof of mighty power, but not a stronger proof than the existence of the natural sun.”

While it is true that the existence of God implies many things which are beyond the capacity of the human mind to conceive, and many things which are higher than human reason's ability to reach and grasp, it is also true that believing the premise that God

Almighty does exist is not in any way contrary to human reason. Much which we all believe is higher than human reason but not contrary to human reason. We do not consider something unreasonable just because we do not understand it. What more reasonable exercise of the human mind can be conceived than the exercising of the intellect in believing that God as he is revealed in the Bible does really exist? The intellectual difficulties involved in trying to conceive of God's existence cannot reasonably be posed as a just cause for not believing that God exists, because just as many, Perhaps more, difficulties are involved in trying to conceive of this universe without including God.

BIBLE LECTURESHIP

The church of Christ very cordially invites you and your friends to the Special Bible Lectureship which will be held from 12th to 15th March, 1987, each evening at 6.30 P.M., at the regular meeting place of the church of Christ:

**E-10, Defence Colony
(Near Andrewsganj Bus Stop)
New Delhi.**

The Speaker will be Mr David W. Hallett, Teacher, Alpha Bible College.

**Note : All Lectures Will Be Translated Into Hindi.
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ALL ARE WELCOME

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