



BEACON

A Publication of Bellview Church of Christ
4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526
850.455.7595

Internet Web Page: <http://www.bellviewcoc.com>
E-mail: bellviewcoc@gmail.com

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BEACON

Vol. LI / No. 1

January 3, 2022

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God's Family

Brad Green

We have been blessed to have visitors on almost every Sunday for the past few months. How edifying it is to meet new people who want to hear and study God's Word. Several of our visitors have attended multiple services with us, and we have been able to develop new friendships with them. As I speak with individuals who visit us, one word has been heard over and over—family. Almost all of the people who have visited us since this congregation began tell me how welcoming the family atmosphere is. What a wonderful and greatly appreciated compliment! We are thankful for our visitors and want always to offer a warm, comfortable, and friendly welcome.

God is glorified when visitors can see and enjoy the familial relationship between God and His children and the brotherly relation-

ship between the Christians who meet together. The Bible teaches that those who are “in Christ” (Eph. 2:13) are “fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the **household of God**” (2:19). One can become a child of God, a member of God's family, through obedience to the Gospel of Christ, which culminates in water baptism.

For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been **baptized into Christ** have put on Christ (Gal. 3:26-27).

Those baptized into Christ are also baptized into Christ's church since the church is Christ's body (Eph. 1:22-23). Thus, we conclude that the family of God are those who God adds to His church (Acts 2:47). Paul told Timothy:

These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: But if I tarry

long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the **house of God**, which is the **church** of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth (1 Tim. 3:14-15).

We preach and practice the truth of God's Word so God and His kingdom, the church, be glorified. God invites all men to become a member of His family. One is added to the family today as those who lived in the first century. One must hear the lifesaving message (Rom. 10:17) and allow the truth to prick their hearts (Acts 2:37). Once an individual believes what he has heard, he must repent of his past sins (Luke 13:3), confess that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God (Acts

8:37), and be baptized to have his past sins washed away (22:16). This is the same plan of salvation preached by the apostles when the Church was established. "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38). If you are not yet a member of God's family, God's invitation is open for you. If you have any questions or if we can be of any assistance to you, please let us know. We love our visitors and rejoice with the angels each time another soul is added to the household of God (Luke 15:7-10).

Lenoir City, TN

A New Lease on Life

Dub Mowery

The above title carries the concept of a fresh start. With the new year to look forward to, let us increase our effort to glorify our Heavenly Father and His cause here upon earth. It is certainly to look back through the past twelve months with a keen perspective. In doing so, we will be better prepared to mentally set our minds to devote our lives more effectively unto the Lord. In doing so, we need to act accordingly rather than excusing ourselves by saying, "I ought to do thus and so!" Good intentions will not suffice.

The following words of the apostle Paul will benefit our effort to move forward:

Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but *this* one thing *I do*, forgetting those things which are behind,

and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus (Phi. 3:13-14).

Each and every one of us need to mentally ask our self: "What have I personally done to glorify our Heavenly Father during the past twelve months?" It could have been our last year in the physical realm. Solomon exhorts us to "Boast not thyself of to morrow; For thou knowest not what a day may bring forth" (Pro. 27:1). Instead of being boastful, we should use our life in an effective way of furthering the cause of our Lord and Savior. It is no longer a matter of what could I have done; but rather, what am I doing right now?

A few years ago, I thought that my life span here upon earth was coming to an end. It gave me a keener perspective on life and my responsibility unto God, His cause here upon earth, and unto my fellow man. I refuse to allow petty jealousy to rule my life. Whatever time the Lord will enable me to remain in this life shall be devoted unto Him and mankind.

My prayer is that the Lord will open doors of opportunity for you and me to glorify Him. This opportunity, of course, cannot be done by compromising His inspired Word. We need to speak out against every false way. In doing so, we, like our Lord, must love the sinner but hate his sin.

Deceased

Views of the Cross (Luke 23:48)

The soldiers saw in Christ a criminal, with cruelty.

The women saw in Christ a benefactor, with sorrow.

His mother saw in Christ a Son, with anguish.

The disciples saw in Christ blighted hopes, with perplexity.

The first thief saw in Christ a malefactor, with hardness.

The second thief saw in Christ a King, with patience.

The centurion saw in Christ divinity, with conviction.

Author Unknown

I Dare You for One Month To:

Not miss a single service of the church. No excuses! Give up those material things which have caused you to neglect your duty to God. Make a few sacrifices! Really put Christ first!

Study your Bible every day, even if it means letting some other important (?) things go, like turning off your TV.

Bring at least one visitor to Bible class and worship.

Visit at least one night a week and not just the ones you know and like the best! This time visit those people you do not know too well or do not know at all.

Make prayer a part of your day. Pray every time you have a decision to make. When you

feel the slightest need, pray! Pray when you do not feel the need! While you are at it—pray for your enemies, for those who hinder the truth by their gossip and laziness! Oh, yes, pray for those who “murmur.”

Put your whole heart into the worship services.

Do all this for just one month, and you will not want to return to your former state! That is if you are really in earnest about going to Heaven and forward for Christ. You will also be surprised at the results...both in yourself and others. Try it; you have nothing to lose and your soul to gain.

Author Unknown

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**Gospel Meeting
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BEACON

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January 10, 2022

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Not By Faith Only

W. L. Totty

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16).

This verse not only declares God's great love for the human race but also states the means of escaping condemnation. However, this verse is, perhaps, perverted as much as any verse in the Bible or more than any other verse relating to salvation. Many denominations will use it in an attempt to make people believe that God meant that if a person would only believe in Christ, he would be saved, but this verse is far from teaching "faith only."

Faith is one of the steps into Christ, but faith alone amounts to nothing. If faith alone would save, the devils would be saved, for James says:

Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe,

and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? (Jam. 2:19-20).

The apostle John also said:

Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess *him*, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God (John 12:42-43).

There is no doubt that those chief rulers believed in Christ, for the Bible says they did, but their faith did not work. Jesus says:

He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me (Mat. 10:37).

Those chief rulers loved the praise of God, but they loved the praise of men more; therefore, they could not be Christ's disci-

ples. A person who believes in Christ but will not obey Him is not saved.

James gives an illustration of how faith connected with works will save. He said:

Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?... Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only (Jam. 2:21-24).

People who teach that faith alone will save completely ignore other plain statements in the Bible. Creeds and disciplines of men often contradict plain statements in God's Word; for example, in the *Discipline of The Methodist Episcopal Church*, 1928: "Wherefore, that we are justified by faith only is a most welcome doctrine, and very full of comfort" (7). That *Discipline*, written to direct the preachers of the Methodist Church, says that the doctrine of "faith only" is full of comfort. Still, to the person who knows and believes the Bible, there is no comfort in the doctrine of "faith only" because it is not taught in the Bible. God says that we are justified by works and **not** by faith only, yet some teachers will say that one is saved by "faith only" and disregard the plain statement of James that we are **not** saved by faith only.

This is not to discredit the importance of faith because it is impossible to please God without faith. (Heb. 11:6). However, there are other steps that an alien sinner must take to be saved. Jesus said, "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye **repent**, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3). Again, **repentance** is unto sal-

vation (Acts 11:18). To those who inquired what to do to be saved on Pentecost, the apostle Peter said to **repent** and **be baptized** for the remission of sins (2:38). Writing to the church at Rome, Paul said, "For with the heart man **believeth** unto righteousness; and with the mouth **confession** is made unto salvation" (Rom. 10:10). The apostle Peter, comparing the salvation of the people in the Christian age with that of Noah and his family, said, "The like figure whereunto *even baptism* doth also now save us" (1 Pet. 3:21). The flood washed away the sins by destroying the sinners, which was a figure of our salvation. Peter says, "baptism doth also now save us." Some will say that baptism is the figure, but that is not true. The figure always precedes the fact of which one is speaking. The flood was the figure, and Peter was writing of our salvation. So, we find four things that God says save us. We must, therefore, obey all those things to be saved.

When Christ apprehended Saul of Tarsus on his way to Damascus and told him to go into the city and there it would be told him what he must do, Saul believed Christ and repented of his sins. Yet, when Ananias (the man appointed of God) came, he told Saul, "arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). If Saul had been saved when he believed, he would have had no sins to wash away.

Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16). The coordinate conjunction connects faith and bap-

tism. It is a perversion of the truth to say: He that believeth is saved and shall be baptized. But then, someone might say: Jesus said, "He that believeth not shall be damned," and did not say he that is not baptized shall be damned. A parallel illustration is He that eateth food and drinketh water shall live, but he that eateth not shall die. It takes both food and water to keep a person alive, but it takes the lack of only one to cause death.

We are baptized into Christ: "For as many of you as have been baptized into

Christ have put on Christ" (Gal. 3:27). Baptism is the only thing that the Bible says puts one into Christ. If one can be saved without baptism, one can be saved out of Christ. But all spiritual blessings are in Christ. (Eph. 1:3). Salvation is a spiritual blessing; therefore, we must be in Christ to be saved; and to be in Christ, we must be baptized (Gal. 3:27).

This shows that the doctrine of faith alone is not true. Let us believe and obey God rather than men.

Deceased

Answer the Call

H. L. Gradowith (Tim Smith)

There's no pain for those who'll meet Him
over There,

No heartaches, no troubles we'll see;

There's nothing uncertain while in our
Lord's care,

So trust Him and you'll be made free!
(CHORUS)

CHORUS

Just trust in the Power of Jesus our Lord

And let Him be your very all;

He shows us the Pathway in His Holy Word

Why will you not answer the call???

There's no disappointment in His Holy
Plan,

There is only peace and true love;

So get your life right and for Him take your
stand,

Then head for your home Up Above!
(CHORUS)

The saints of all ages will welcome us
There,

We'll don There those robes of pure white;
There'll be no more burdens that we'll have
to bear,

There'll be no more battles to fight! (CHO-
RUS)

From our eyes the Savior will wipe ev'ry
tear,

He'll bathe us in His precious care;

Come to Him for He ever longs to draw
near

Unto us here and over there! (CHORUS)

Deceased

Sermon Outlines

The majority of the lessons presented by Michael Hatcher are also in written outline form (PDF). The files can be accessed on our website at:

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January 16

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January 30

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BEACON

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January 17, 2022

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Coexist

Mike Demory

Originally a poster for an art contest in Jerusalem, developed by Polish artist Piotr Mlodozieniec, this logo metastasized into the bumper stickers and T-shirts seen today, the world over. The original, which only had the signs for Islam, Judaism, and Christianity, has since added to the mix, such symbols as Wicca, Science, Baha'i, Hindu, Buddhist, and Taoism. One writer said, "Life is too short to make just one decision and God is too big for just one religion."

Believe me, if it were my decision, I would want everyone to be saved because that would include my family, who stands outside the Lord. The emotional plea that God is too big for just one religion is certainly not a sound argument. Why? Because if God is too big for just one religion, then God is big

enough to offer universal salvation, period. If not, why not? Sadly, in our age of *emotional tolerance*, we find a delicate veneer that is easily stripped away when disagreement in beliefs takes precedence. People love to throw the word around as if they are more tolerant but seldom do they ever completely embrace its character.

There is no tolerance when Muslims kill non-Muslims, or Atheists sue cities for recognizing religious holidays or removing God's mention from schools, currency, and prayers. Where is the tolerance when Hindus and Buddhists refuse lodging or jobs to Christians, or Muslims murder their own who convert to Christianity? The fact of the matter is that true New Testament Christians understand the concept of coexisting. You



will never see or hear of a true Christian strapping a bomb to himself to kill others in the name of God or refusing to rent a house or give a job to a person simply because they are not Christians (at least I hope not). It is the God-given right of every person to choose whether they will obey their Creator or not. It is not for me or anyone else to force upon others what they should or should not believe when it comes to religion.

The only duty God has given to us is to plant and water His truth. God alone gives the increase (1 Cor. 3:6). All the arm twisting our strength can muster is not power enough to honestly motivate the hearts of others to serve God (Rom. 1:16). Coexist? You bet your life we can co-exist, and we must if we are to be faithful servants of the God of Heaven. Jesus reminds us:

Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy: but I say unto you, Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you; that ye may be sons of your Father who is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust (Mat. 5:43-45).

New Testament Christians co-exist because they understand everyone in the world is a product of the same parents—Adam and Eve (Gen. 3:20). They co-exist because this is God’s world, not theirs (Exo. 19:5; Job 41:11), and God desires everyone to repent (2 Pet. 3:9). It is God’s will that His children co-exist with those who are not His children by setting the example of what godly living should be like (1 Pet. 2:21).

However, by God’s definition, co-existence does not mean compromising the truth and tolerating sin. By co-existing, the world means “agreeing to disagree” about doctrine and societal behavior. God chose only one way to please Him.

That way is not found in Atheism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Judaism, denominationalism, or the hundreds of other “isms” invented by men to please the god of this world (2 Tim. 3:13). God’s way is found only in the one church, the church Jesus said He would build—the church of Christ (Mat. 16:18; 2 Tim. 2:10). Only those who choose to follow God through an active, obedient faith will find eternal rest (Heb. 5:9; 11:1-12:1). The Gospel of Christ alone is God’s power to save mankind (Rom. 1:16), not the Koran, Talmud, Tao Te Ching, or Humanist Manifesto. Yes, it is not only possible for us to co-exist in this life, but also a must if we are to please God. However, co-existing and tolerating sin and error are two different things. While God commands the one, He despises the other, and so should we.

Mexico, CO

If you your lips would keep from slips,
Five things observe with care:
To whom you speak, of whom you speak,
And how and when and where.
If you your ears would keep from jeers,
These things keep meekly hid:
Myself and me, or my and mine,
And how I do Or did.

Author Unknown

There Is Nothing Plainer

Foy E. Wallace, Jr.

The plainest statement in the Bible on what to do to be saved is Mark 16:15-16: “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”

Now that verse cannot be simplified, and it cannot be misunderstood, without some help. He shall be saved that believeth and is baptized. It does not read, he shall be saved

that believeth. It does not read, he shall be saved who is baptized. It reads, He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. The principle sentence is, *he shall be saved*. The dependent clause is, *that believeth and is baptized*. The word that points out the fellow—*he*—**that** shows who shall be saved.

This in the simplest statement in all the Bible on what to do to be saved!

Deceased

Retaliation

Bob Wear

It seems that most of us tend to be retaliatory in our thought and action. It seems so easy to be vindictive. With many, the desire for revenge is the greatest desire they possess.

The principles of Christianity permit none of this. Christ said:

Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you (Mat. 5:44).

The reason:

That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust (5:45).

We read again:

Recompense to no man evil for evil (Rom. 12:17).

Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but *rather* give place unto wrath: for it is

written, Vengeance *is* mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head (Rom. 12:19-20).

A fundamental principle we must keep alive in our thinking, and, of course, obey, is: “Be not overcome of evil, but **overcome evil with good**” (12:21).

The law governing Christian conduct is not: an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. Retaliation must not be practiced by those who desire to be Christians. Being a Christian means being different from the people of the world.

Though it may be challenging to do, let us diligently avoid everything related to a spirit of retaliation. We will be happier if thus we do, and more nearly live as God would have us to live.

Deceased

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BEACON

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I Stand in Doubt of You

Charles Pogue

Even a cursory look at Paul's epistle to the Galatians shows the great and growing concern he had for their spiritual wellbeing. His reference to them as foolish Galatians in 3:1 shows his lack of confidence in them. He chastised them for after their knowing God to turn again to the weak and beggarly elements (4:9). He expressed his fear that he had bestowed upon them vain labor (4:11). One of the saddest things he said to them was, "I stand in doubt of you" (4:20).

If you have ever stood in doubt as Paul did, you can imagine the sorrow in his heart. My impression is Paul had more confidence in the church at Corinth than he did for the churches of Galatia. He never said to the Corinthians, "I stand in doubt of you." They had even written Paul asking him some questions concerning marriage (1 Cor. 7:1).

If you have ever stood in doubt of someone you know, it means more than they have problems in their spiritual lives. You have the sense that no matter what you or anyone else says to them, they will not correct the sins in their lives whether it be indifference, abandoning the teachings of Christ, or have become involved in the sinful activities of the world.

To say "I stand in doubt of you" means, you are almost on the verge of giving up. You think to yourself, I have tried everything I know to do, but there is no response. You wonder what do I do next, which way do I turn. You are at a loss over what to do. Over and over, you have appealed to such an individual, but the appeals fall on deaf ears. The only thing left to say is what Paul did, "I stand in doubt of you."

When Jesus' disciples asked Him why He spoke to the multitudes in parables, His answer in part was:

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 should understand with *their* heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them (Mat. 13:15).

When Paul finally arrived in Rome, he called for a gathering with the chief of the Jews. When on another day he made an appointment with them and expounded to them concerning Christ, some believed Him and some did not. When the two factions talked amongst themselves and could not agree, Acts 28:25 says they departed after Paul had spoken one word. He quoted from Isaiah as did Christ in Matthew 13:15. Paul's feeling at the very least had to be, "I stand in doubt of you."

Have you ever spoken over and over to someone close to you who has all but left spiritual things behind? As the old saying goes, "I talked till I was blue in the face." They would not hear, so you stood in doubt they would ever be reconciled to the Lord. The time comes when all one can do is come to grips with the fact that their heart has become so hardened, they will never respond. When that happens, you no longer say, "I stand in doubt of you." Instead, you say, "I am sure. I am sure you will not hear." With tears in your eyes and sadness in your heart, you know it is time to turn to someone who will listen.

If you have someone about whom you must say, as Paul said to the Galatians, "I stand in doubt of you," I can sympathize with you. If you are one of whom it may be said, "I stand in doubt of you," change your life before you become so hardened you will not change, and in the day of judgment, there will be no doubt what the verdict will be.

Deceased

Let God Be True!

Jack E. Orbison

In a Sunday's paper, I read about the judge in Madison, Wisconsin, who seemingly was in deep trouble. A state senator filed a complaint with the State Judicial Commission. A Women's group has 7,000 names of the required 21,000 necessary to have a recall election. The city council and county board passed a resolution condemning the judge. Wow! What awful thing did this judge do?

He simply stated that permissiveness on the part of women and their revealing clothing were to blame for the sexual arousal of some young men.

The tail is wagging the dog again. This is not new, but men with little or no backbone allow public pressure to cause them to oppose a good judge that states a plain truth. Do we get up in arms when the police tell us

not to leave our valuables lying in plain sight in our cars? Of course not. The reason is that we all know that when a thief sees these things, it will arouse him to want to steal. Do we get excited when we are told to remove the keys and lock our cars? Of course not, again for the same reason. We know that it will cause some thieves to steal that car.

I said that this is not new that the people are upset because the judge points out a fact that is not popular. Long ago, a man told another man that he could not live with his brother's wife. This did not please the guilty man. This did not please the woman involved. She used her influence, and due to the weakness of character in her daughter, they worked together to have the righteous man put to death. You will recognize this as John the Baptist.

Several years ago, an article in the *Reader's Digest* told of some men who hijacked a ship. The women decided that the men might get some ideas, so they went to their rooms and put on some clothing less revealing than what they were wearing. Why? They believed that they might arouse some of the men who had captured their ship. No preacher told them this was a danger. No judge told them this was a danger. It was just plain common sense.

I do not know what will happen to the judge. I know what happened to John the Baptist. I know what will happen to any Christian who displays flesh for the world to see. God has pointedly stated that we should be modest in our dress. That means chaste, shy, pure, and appropriate for the

What Am I?

I am a little thing with a big meaning;
I help everybody;
I unlock doors, open hearts, do away
with prejudices;
I create friendships and good will;
I inspire respect and confidence;
Everybody likes me;
I bore nobody;
I violate no law;
I cost nothing;
Many have praised me;
None have condemned me;
I am pleasing to everyone;
I am useful every moment of the day—
I am Courtesy.

Author Unknown

occasion. We live in an age where more and more we see people wearing less and less. We cannot control the world in which we live, but we can control our own lives, and hopefully, the church will not be filled with those who do not love the Lord enough to obey His commands.

The time is now for each of us (men and women) to examine our own lives, attitudes and be sure that we are not only pure but that we dress and act like pure people. We must teach our children to know God's will. Let us begin to dress better and more modestly when we come to church and any time we are seen of others.

Move over, judge, here I come!!!

Deceased

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January 30

Fifth Sunday Dinner; singing
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Sunday Worship Services — 10:00 a.m., 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday Bible Classes for all ages — 7:00 p.m.

Blessings Found Only in Christianity

Paul Vaughn

It is written, “Blessed is that man who makes the Lord his trust” (Psa. 40:4). *Blessed* is used 303 times in the Bible. *Blessed* is defined as the state of “prosperity” or “happiness” (*Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words*). The man who trusts in the Lord is happy because he is God-approved. Trusting in God will bring true happiness and peace of mind; this is a wonderful blessing. Christianity is designed to be a blessing in everyone’s life.

Christianity is a blessing because it helps us overcome the fear of death. Death is a forbidden subject because no one likes to consider this powerful enemy we face daily. Death destroys families because it separates us from our loved ones. Yet, Christianity teaches us that death is not the end of life. Jesus came to teach us about everlasting life.

But has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, *who* has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel (2 Tim. 1:10).

That is a blessing!

Christianity is a blessing because it helps us have a complete life every day. The Lord teaches us what is truly important and the things that are not important. Jesus said, “I have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it* more abundantly” (John 10:10). *Abundantly* in this verse carries the idea of plentiful, overflowing blessings provided only by the Lord. Those outside of Christianity turned their backs on Jesus and all the blessings He supplies.

The greatest blessing found only in Christianity is the removal of sins. It is written, “In Him we have redemption

through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace” (Eph. 1:7). This blessing is beyond verbal description. How happy we can be because of the life and death of

Jesus. Sadly, most people never realize the blessings in Christianity because they are not interested in following Jesus.

Hopkinsville, KY

Church Membership

Howard D. Parker

When people obey the Gospel of Christ and are saved, the Lord adds them to the church (Acts 2:47). In this way, they become members of the church, and no further action is necessary, nor even allowed, to be members of the body of which Jesus Christ is the head. *Church* is used in the New Testament in a general and a local sense. The church in the general sense includes all believers everywhere; the church in the local sense includes a group of believers in a given locality.

When people are baptized and added to the church, the Lord expects them to be identified with some congregation. There is neither precept nor example for “membership at large.” Each local church has the responsibility of planning and executing plans for the spreading of the Gospel, which it may do, assisted by other congregations or by itself, depending on the circumstances, and the only way a member of the church can fulfill his obligation to help carry the Gospel to the whole world is to be a member of some congregation. Again, it is God’s arrangement that church members shall be subject to the church’s elders. Since there are no elders except in local churches, one must

be a member of a particular local church to be in subjection to elders of the church. Any exception to the above would certainly be temporary, such as the beginning of the work in a new locality.

Many church members are not properly taught in this matter and fail to identify themselves with any congregation. They feel no obligation to any particular group. They worship at various places and are regarded as visitors everywhere they go. If they are absent from one of these places, no one thinks anything about it. Although they worship occasionally with some congregation, they feel obligated to no plan or program of work that congregation may have. Furthermore, such members are not subject to any group of elders; they have no elders to “oversee them.” Elders have the responsibility of “feeding the flock” and protecting it from dangers without and within. Members of the church who are not identified with a congregation do not enjoy the provision and protection for which God has made elders of the church responsible.

Many times, church members move from one community to another and begin worshipping with one or more congregations in

the new community, and possibly continue this for months or years, yet claiming membership with the congregation in the community from which they have moved. This way, the church elders where membership is claimed cannot properly oversee such members, and elders of the church or churches where they worship cannot oversee them. When members of the church move to a new community and begin to worship with a different congregation, if that

arrangement is to continue for any length of time, such members should identify themselves with the congregation or one of the congregations if there is more than one in the new community.

There is no divine rule for what is commonly called “placing membership.” Any method which makes it known to the elders and members of the church is all right so long as it is done “decently and in order.”

Deceased

Where Is Happiness?

Clarence Edward Macartney

Not in Unbelief. Voltaire was an infidel of the most pronounced type. He wrote: “I wish I had never been born.”

Not in Pleasure. Lord Byron lived a life of pleasure if anyone did. He wrote: “The worm, the canker, and the grief are mine alone.”

Not in Money. Jay Gould, the American millionaire, had plenty of that. When dying he said: “I suppose I am the most miserable man on earth.”

Not in Position and Fame. Lord Beaconsfield enjoyed more than his share of

both. He wrote: “Youth is a mistake; manhood, a struggle; old age, a regret.”

Not in Military Glory. Alexander the Great conquered the known world in his day. Having done so, he wept in his tent, because, he said, “there are no more worlds to conquer.”

Where, Then, Is Happiness Found? The answer is simple: In Christ alone. He said: “I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you” (John 16:22).

Deceased

One of the strongest motives to induce one to accept any proposition is the promise of joy and happiness. In this particular, nothing equals the Gospel of Christ. The sweetest pleasures known to this world are found in Christian living; it alone has the promise of joys in the life to come.

John T. Hinds, Deceased

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BEACON

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Religious Titles

Michael Hatcher

As one associates himself with the religious world, he quickly finds a clergy/laity system. Some wear their *position* outwardly by the clothing they wear. They put a distinction between themselves and everyone else. Then there are many in addition to those who wear special clothing who will also expect certain titles to be used with their names. What is God's attitude about religious titles?

In condemning the scribes and Pharisees for doing their work "for to be seen of men" and their pride; Jesus also condemns them for religious titles. He speaks of their love for

greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi. But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, *even* Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no *man* your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven.

Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, *even* Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted (Mat. 23:7-12).

Jesus clearly condemns the using of religious titles. Consider some of the one's used today.

Some have used the title of Reverend. *Reverend* is used one time in the King James Version and the American Standard Version (and not in any other major version of the Bible). The one time it is found is in Psalm 111:9: "He sent redemption unto his people: He hath commanded his covenant for ever: Holy and reverend *is* his name." The English term *reverend* is only used for God in the Bible. By what right does anyone take a term that is used only for God in the

I Am Getting Old

You tell me I am getting old;
I tell you that's not so!
The "house I live in" is worn out
And that, of course, I know.
It's been in use a long, long while
It's weathered many a gale.
The color's changing on the roof—
The window's getting dim,
The wall's a bit transparent,
And looking rather thin.
The foundation's not so steady,
As once it used to be;
My "house" is getting shaky,
But my "house" isn't me.
My few short years can't make me
old—
I feel I'm in my youth;
Eternity lies just ahead
A life of joy and truth.
I'm going to live forever there;
Life will go on—it's grand:
You tell me I am getting old?
You just don't understand!
The dweller in my little "house" is
young,
And bright and gay—
Just starting on a life to last
Throughout eternal day.
You only see the outside.
Which is all that most folks see.
You tell me I am getting old?
You've mixed my "house" with me!

Author Unknown

Bible and apply it to himself or some other man? Please do not call me *Reverend*; I am not God.

Many will use the title *Father*. Considering what Jesus said, "And call no *man* your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven" (Mat. 23:9), makes us wonder how anyone would take this religious title to himself. (There is a difference between using *father* as a religious title and using it in the physical sense. Using it physically is not condemned as is seen in Ephesians 6:1-4.)

A couple of terms which some use as religious titles are *Pastor* and *Bishop*. These terms are used for a work or office in the local church which God instituted. There are three terms which identify this work: *elder* referring to the older age of the person (what does that say for those young kids who use this term), *bishop* referring to the work of overseeing the work of the congregation, and *pastor* or *shepherd* referring to the way in which they do their work. These men must meet the qualifications God established in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. However, none of these terms were given by God to be used as a religious title, rather they are different ways of describing the work in which these men are involved.

There are those who will use *priest* for their religious title. This does find its background in the Old Testament worship. The Levitical priest served at the altar. In the New Testament all Christians

are priests. In writing to the saved, Peter says:

Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.... But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light (1 Pet. 2:5, 9).

Every Christian is a priest.

Religious titles are contrary to the nature of Christianity as set forth by the head of the church—Christ Jesus. Listen again as Jesus says, “and all ye are brethren” (Mat. 23:8). Religious titles are used to elevate some above others. Each person has their own personal responsibility to study the Scriptures (2 Tim. 2:15) and prove all things so they can hold fast to that which is good and abstain from evil (1 The. 5:21-22).

Pensacola, FL

Do You Believe in George Washington?

Tim Smith

Did you ever see George Washington, first president of the United States, in person? I do not mean did you ever see a painting of him, or a statue of him, or read a speech written by him, or see a monument built to him. Did you ever stand in the room with him so as to be able to see him and talk to him and hear him talk back? Chances are no one now living ever had that privilege. I did not.

Do you “believe in” George Washington? I mean, since you never saw him and all, do you believe he was real? I know about the books and speeches and monuments and even the house and burial site, but do they really prove that he existed? It could all be a hoax, you know. After all, what he allegedly did was said to have been done over two hundred years ago. If he is real, why does he not show himself in some way that would allow people living today to see him and hear him? Does it make you wonder?

One might object that George Washington simply had too great an impact on the world not to have lived. After all, he was a great General who had military dealings in two great armies and was the first President of the United States and all the history books list him, and well, the proof for his existence is simply too great to reject.

You might have something there, but if that is all you have, what have you got? Literary evidence. Hearsay evidence. Assumptive and presumptive evidence. No living eyewitnesses. No tangible experience with him. What is that?

Hmm! It is not nearly the evidence we have for the existence of God. There is more documentary evidence. There is more literary evidence. There is more hearsay evidence. There is more assumptive and presumptive evidence. If you believe in George Washington, I think, to be consistent, you must also believe in God.

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February 13

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February 20

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February 20

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BEACON

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Not a Member of Any Denomination

Ken Chumbley

Some time ago I stated that “I am not a member of any *denomination* called ‘Christians’ or ‘Disciples,’” and that “I have no more interest in, or connection with, any *party* in religion calling themselves ‘Christians’ or ‘Disciples,’ but not including *all* Christians, or disciples, than any other denomination in Christendom.” And now the *Baptist Gleaner* says: “You say you are not a Methodist, nor Episcopalian, nor Presbyterian, nor Baptist, nor Campbellite, nor do you belong to any party in religion calling themselves ‘Christians’ or ‘Disciples.’ Where in the name of sense do you belong? Who are you anyhow?” Well, I am Brother Srygley, a common sort of Christian, or disciple of Christ, such as we read about in the New Testament, and I belong to the church of God, which includes “all Christians, or disciples of

Christ,” but which is not a denomination in any sense. How would it do, for instance, to say I belong where everybody else belongs who is simply a Christian such as we read about in the New Testament, and such as the *Baptist Gleaner* assures us any man can be without being a Baptist, or a Methodist, or a Presbyterian, or an Episcopalian, or a Campbellite, or anything else of that kind. If I rightly understand the matter, I “belong” where Paul, Peter, John, James, and all the rest of the Christians we read about in the New Testament belong—namely, to the church of God, I know it goes hard with the *Gleaner* to see a Christian keep out of sectarian pens and refuse to herd with denominational flocks, but it admits that the thing can be done, and my heart is fully set on doing it. (F. D. Srygley from editorials in the *Gospel Advocate*

1889 to 1900; Recorded in the book, *New Testament Christianity* compiled and edited by F. B. Srygley).

With these sentiments, I agree wholeheartedly. I am **not** a member of **any** denomination. I am simply a Christian and a member of that same blood-bought church that Paul, Peter, James, John, and other first century Christians belonged to, to which they were added by the Lord when they obeyed the Gospel of Christ. Sadly, some within the church today—as was the case at the end of the 19th century—are not satisfied with doing things in Bible ways and being called by Bible names. They want to be part of a *Church of Christ* denomination, thus making the church of the Lord a denomination among denominations. I refuse to go down that path that would seek to make the church that which it is patently **not**—a denomination. Also, there are others who, because they are enamored of certain

brethren, are—in a different way—denominationalizing the church because of their desire to maintain fellowship with a known and proven, false teachers. Thus, setting up a standard for fellowship that is different from that revealed in Holy Writ. By setting such a standard, different to that of the divinely inspired New Testament, these brethren have begun going down that slippery slope that leads to the establishment of standards in **other** areas that differ from the New Testament pattern—and as a result, denominationalizing themselves.

May we take note of and refrain from anything that would cause us to denominationalize the precious body of Christ because we desire to change God's standard for our own. We need to be simply Christians—with no denominational tag and no standard of authority that is not the divinely revealed standard of the Word of God.

Deceased

If I Were a Boy Again

Bernard Webber

After the death of a great college president, somebody found the following among his papers:

- If I were a boy again, I would try to find out from good books how good men lived.
- If I were a boy again, I would study the Bible even more than I did. I would make it a mental companion. The Bible is a necessity for every boy.
- If I were a boy again, I would more and more cultivate the company of those

older whose graces of person and mind would help me in my good work. I would seek good company.

- If I were a boy again, I would study the life and character of our Savior persistently that I might become more and more like unto him.

This man was great and good, and if he felt that he should do certain things if he were a boy again, indeed the boys of today will do well to think about these things.

Deceased

Fact or Fiction

In specific locations, the contour of the hills gives an amazing illusion that the law of gravity is askew.

I have read about a hill near Los Angeles, California, where thousands of motorists stop their cars, shut off their engines, release the brakes and seemingly roll uphill. But a plumb level placed on the ground where the cars “roll uphill” will show immediately that the cars are rolling downhill. The eye can be deceived; the level cannot.

In every aspect of life, we must make judgments. We must be careful to make those judgments based upon an objective standard. Even our senses are not infallible guides, nor are our emotions. Therefore, it is not safe to form judgments solely based on our senses or emotions. We must prove all things, test all things (1 The. 5:21). These principles are of vital importance for our salvation from sin.

Our salvation is not based on the way that we **feel**. Our feelings (consciences) are much too fickle and subjective to be sure guides. In Acts 8, we read about a man who served as the treasurer for the queen of Ethiopia, who had been to Jerusalem to worship and was on his way back to his homeland. As he traveled in his chariot, he was reading from the Isaiah the prophet. A preacher named Philip came to him and asked if he understood what he was reading. The Ethiopian replied, “How can I, except some man should guide me?” (8:31). He asked Philip to study with him. “Then Philip opened his mouth,

and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus” (8:35).

When Philip “preached Jesus” to the Ethiopian, he included the proper response to the good news of Jesus. When they came to some water, the Ethiopian asked, “what doth hinder me to be baptized?” (8:36). Then both Philip and the Ethiopian went down into the water where Philip baptized him. Now notice the effect that his obedience had upon the Ethiopian: “he went on his way rejoicing” (8:39). Why?

Because he knew he had done what the Lord wanted him to do to be saved from his sins (cf. 8:38). His feelings of gratitude and joy followed his obedience to the truth of the gospel of Jesus. His salvation was not based on the way he felt, but knowing that he had obeyed the truth did stir his feelings.

Our salvation is not based on the way we feel but upon our obedience to Christ as commanded in the written Word of God. “These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life” (1 John 5:13).

Feelings come, and feelings go,
And feelings are deceiving;
My warrant is the Word of God;
Nothing else is worth believing.
I'll trust in God's unchanging Word,
Till spirit and body sever;
For though all things shall pass away,
His Word shall stand forever.

Author Unknown

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“Numbered with the Eleven”

Brad Green

Though very little is known about Matthias, God reveals to us a great deal by introducing him as “numbered with the eleven apostles” (Acts 1:26). First, we learn that he was qualified to be an apostle. Matthias had

compared with us [the 12 apostles] all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection (1:21-22).

Matthias had watched and learned at the very feet of the Master Teacher for about three years and had witnessed Jesus’ humility, service, obedience, power, death, resurrection, and ascension firsthand. Second, we know that Matthias had “an honest and good heart, having heard the word,” he kept

it and brought forth fruit with patience (Luke 8:15). We know this because Peter and the other apostles “prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all *men*, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen” (Acts 1:24). Third, Matthias loved God more than he loved anything on earth. Jesus says,

If any *man* come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple (Luke 14:26).

Matthias had also counted the cost of discipleship (14:27-33) and was willing to endure the baptism of suffering which accompanied all the apostles (Mat. 20:22-23) even to the point of death (Rev. 2:10). We learn all about Matthias simply because God says that Matthias “was numbered with the eleven apostles.”

Nothing in God's Holy Word would imply that Matthias did anything but serve faithfully until death. In the Bible, there is no mention of Matthias being jealous of Peter, seemingly the most outspoken of the twelve, or accusing Peter of taking "too much" upon himself (see Numbers 16). There is no inference that Matthias ever sought special prominence in Jesus' kingdom (cf. Mat. 20:20-21). It seems that Matthias was not interested in how much would be written about him in the providentially preserved New Testament of Jesus Christ. He was simply content and honored to be "numbered with the eleven."

Many today, even in the religious world, are extremely fascinated (or obsessed) with

themselves. Seeking renown and special recognition, many do what they do to "be seen of men" (6:5) and love "the praise of men more than the praise of God" (John 12:43). It should not be our desire to be *known* and offered the "best seat in the house" everywhere we go (cf. Luke 20:46-47). Jesus says, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, "We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do" (17:10).

If, when we pass from this life to the next, all that can be said of us is that we were **numbered** "with the saints, and of the household of God" (Eph. 2:19). How beautiful Heaven will be.

Lenoir City, TN

Doctrinal Discipline

Thomas L. Campbell

Occasionally this question is asked: "Why stress doctrinal subjects so much when the world so sorely needs lessons on morals and morale?" This old world certainly does need many lessons on morals and those things that will give stamina of mind and spirit to face the tragic problems of life—especially in these war-conscious days. Still, the great crying need of the world is religious doctrinal truth. The modern indifference to the fundamental teachings of the church to which the modern individual belongs is the basic evil of the age.

The American people have lost their convictions in their efforts to be *broad-minded* toward other religious groups and in their

attempt to be *non-legalistic* in their attitude toward the Bible. This, to them, has robbed the Bible of its strength and power and deprived the people of purpose. You cannot teach people such philosophies as, "You can be saved out of the church as well as in it," "One church is as good as another," "just so you live an honest life," "There is nothing in a name," etc., and expect people to attend to or sacrifice for nonessential institutions or principles. The beautiful church buildings, which once housed a thousand worshipers but now have dwindled to a scant handful, are tragic evidence of this truth.

Unless people begin again to view the Bible as the holy Word of God, in which God

says what He means and means what He says, we can expect the prevalent decadent moral and religious conditions to increase. It is always important to perceive the spiritual principles behind each command, but it is essential to obey each command as written (2 John 9; 1 Cor. 4:6; Rev. 22:18-19). As the New Testament church, we are accused by the “doctors of divinity” as *legalists*, meaning that we interpret the letter of the command but observe not its spirit. This is the old charge of “water salvationist” revamped. This charge is too unfair or insane to be honored with a polemic denial. The “Disciples,” otherwise known as the “Christian Church,” are especially adept in referring to us as *legalists*; but, then, they should not be too severely censured, for they have never been guilty of reading 2 John 9, 1 Corinthians 4:6, and Revelation 22:18-19 too closely.

The lack of “doctrinal” discipline is the great indirect producer of these chaotic conditions: juvenile delinquency, increased liquor consumption, and lack of religious zeal. We are what we believe. Faith is a conviction of unseen things (Heb. 11:1). Faith comes from the Word of God (Rom. 10:17). However, the modern man snubs the Bible, the church of the Lord, and the plan of salvation; therefore, he has little or no faith. This simply means he has no convictions. A man with no convictions is unpredictable, sinful, and dangerous. He can be expected to fall at the altars of ancient gods—the Baal of lust, the Moloch of easy money, and the Dagon of might and power. The world terms the preaching of the Bible, the proclaiming of

the New Testament church, and the commending of the plan of salvation “doctrinal teaching.” Do not preach it! It is taboo in polite religious society! It is little wonder, then, that vice and crime are increasing.

To grasp a moral or spiritual principle, we must have something in mind to tie it to. Speeches and articles on morals and morale find their most enthusiastic acclaim and acceptance among those who already believed and practiced morality before the speech. They believed that man should not play the beast—a fundamental teaching (doctrine) of the Bible. To this conviction, then, they could tie all thoughts harmonizing with this teaching and pronounce the proper “amen.”

Suffice it to say that others who have not the high ideal of man’s great place and function were bored, went to sleep, or wished they were. In every man and woman, there must be a deep conviction that the Bible is the true and only Word of God and that in His Word, He has given us infallible and understandable facts, commands, promises, and warnings. When men believe and obey the Bible, vice and crime diminish, righteousness is loved, and the nation is exalted. To believe the Bible, all creeds, traditions, speculative teaching must be laid aside; the commands of God must dictate the terms of salvation and ways of service. A little more *doctrinal* preaching, backed up with the fire of hell, would help this age immeasurably and produce in us all more obedience, good morals, and spiritual morale.

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“Face to Face”

Jimmie Gribble

The apostle John wrote to the “elect lady”:
Having many *things* to write unto you, I would not *write* with paper and ink: but I trust to come unto you, and speak face to face, that our joy may be full (2 John 12).

John also wrote to Gaius:

I had many *things* to write, but I will not with ink and pen write unto thee: but I trust *I* shall shortly see thee, and we shall speak face to face. Peace *be* to thee. *Our* friends salute thee. Greet the friends by name (3 John 13-14).

The word translated *face* is used some 79 times in the New Testament. This word is translated twice as “edge,” meaning the edge of a sword, Luke 21:24 and Hebrews 11:34. This word is translated four times as *face*, the above passages mentioned above by John.

The remainder of the time, this word is translated as *mouth* or *mouths*.

One can understand John’s desire to see the elect lady and her children and Gaius to speak to them face to face. Face to face is always a good *position* for saints of the Lord. Here, though, the face-to-face was not just to see and enjoy one’s company; it was an opportunity to impart to them the message that he had for them. There is nothing wrong with *writing*; John wanted to speak to them literally “mouth to mouth.”

Notice some of the passages where this word is used:

But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God (Mat. 4:4).

A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is

good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh (Luke 6:45).

Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus (Acts 8:35).

Then Peter opened *his* mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him (10:34-35).

And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel (Eph. 6:19).

Let us use our mouths to impart the knowledge of God's Word to those that need

it—writing if need be. And certainly, face to face, when possible. If we do use our mouths properly, then,

Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is (1 John 3:2).

That ye may with one mind *and* one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 15:6).

Beloved, Jesus said, "My mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God, and do it" (Luke 8:21). May all of us "hear" and "do" God's Word.

Portsmouth, VA

Be of Good Cheer

Charles Pogue

John records these words of Jesus to His disciples in John 16:32-33:

Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and *yet* I am not alone, because the Father is with me. These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye may have peace. In the world ye have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

Both Matthew and Mark record the disciples fled in fear when Judas led the officers out to arrest the Lord (Mat. 26:56; Mark 14:50). Despite those men fleeing, Jesus was not alone. As He told them, "the Father is with me."

In this life, the children of the Father are often forsaken by loved ones and friends. Let us not be downcast, however. If we are faithful to the Father, He will be with us. Christ will be with us, and we can face whatever difficulties come our way, and we all know those are diverse and many. Let us remember as the wise man wrote: "A glad heart maketh a cheerful countenance; But by sorrow of heart the spirit is broken" (Pro. 15:13). As we would say, regardless of what comes your way, "Keep your chin up." We all need to be reminded of that from time to time, do we not?

There is one indisputable reason why the child of God should not be so down-

cast that peace of mind is lost. The reason is stated well by Matthew 9:1-2:

And he entered into a boat, and crossed over, and came into his own city. And behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, be of good cheer; thy sins are forgiven.

The forgiveness of sins is inseparable from salvation. When Paul spoke to king Agrippa, he described to him the mission the Lord revealed Paul would have. Among Paul's words, in Acts 26, to Agrippa are the ones from verse 18:

to open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive remission of sins and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in me.

We are familiar with chapter 22 of verse 16, Ananias came to Paul (then known as Saul) and told him to arise and be baptized and have his sins washed away. We know, then, those who have their sins washed away in baptism are those who receive forgiveness of sins as stated in Acts 26:18. We also know, those who obey God in such a way, and are faithful to Him, have the promise of the inheritance Paul spoke about to Agrippa in that verse.

The conclusion of the whole matter is, if one is obedient to God, although all kinds of difficulties come to us all if we are faithful children of God, we should be of good cheer because we will overcome the world and the eternal inheritance of heaven will be ours when this life is over.

Deceased

Just Suppose

Just suppose the Lord should begin tomorrow to make people as sick as they claim to be on Sunday.

Just suppose the Lord would take away the child whom the parents use as an excuse for staying away from church services.

Just suppose the Lord should make some people as poor as they say they are when asked to help finance His program.

Just suppose the Lord should have everyone stoned for covetousness as He did Achan.

Just suppose the Lord should strike dead all who lie about giving as prospered, as He

did Ananias and Sapphira for lying about money matters.

Just suppose the Lord let some parents look into the future and see what their example and lax control did for their children.

Just suppose all Christians live consistently and prove that they loved the Lord by their lives.

Yes, just suppose, and then by the help of the Lord, go forth and live and serve as if eternity were coming soon.

Author Unknown

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Their Own “Bible”

Lee Moses

The reader is probably aware of the proliferation of Bible translations (most often Paraphrases) that have flooded the market in recent years. The reader may not be aware of one “Bible translation,” which takes a particularly perverted approach to the sacred text. The *Princess Diana Bible* attempts to justify homosexuality by whitewashing the passages that warn against homosexuality and teaching that heterosexuality is a sin (Flood). The first couple in the Garden is changed to Aida and Eve, and similar rewrites of the Biblical text occur throughout the *translation*. Consider also the justification the author makes for his *Bible*: “There are many different versions of the Bible, I don’t see why we can’t have one.”

This is individualism and “personal choice” gone to seed. It is not anything new

for “every man [to do] that which...[is] right in his own eyes” (Jud. 17:6). It remains true that “every one that doeth evil hateth the light, and cometh not to the light, lest his works should be reproved” (John 3:20). For years there have been many homosexual activists who have tried to claim that the Bible does not condemn homosexuality. But this is a new low to say, “We’re not just going to put our spin on the standard [God’s standard]; we are going to make our standard and call it God’s standard.”

When we acknowledge that there is a God, we acknowledge that there is Someone above us and a standard higher than ourselves. There is one standard for every man and woman, and to which every man and woman must conform (Mark 16:15-16; John 12:48; Eph. 4:4-6). When “the books

are opened” at the Judgment, do we think the Judge will let us choose which books those will be? God has revealed what His standard would be on that day, and for this, we must be thankful. We do not each have the right to choose (or make) a Bible that suits our personal preference in any

respect. It is God’s own Bible; we must make it our own.

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Water Tests

Two-thirds of our body is made up of water. Three-quarters of the earth is covered by water. Water is a necessity of life. In the Bible, there are tests involving water which have been vital for men to pass.

The Universal Flood

When “God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt” (Gen. 6:12), He chose to send a universal flood. The people of that time faced a test. Those who were righteous while “the longsuffering of God waited” (1 Pet. 3:20) would be saved. Noah and his family were the only ones found righteous before God, and they were saved by water in the ark (Gen. 7:1; 1 Pet. 3:20). With the exception of those eight faithful souls, mankind perished.

The Crossing of the Red Sea

To escape Egyptian bondage, the children of Israel had to pass through the Red Sea (1 Cor. 10:1). Many people say we are saved by “faith only,” but God’s people, Israel, had to do something, and we do today as well. Israel “walked upon dry *land* in the midst of the sea; and the waters *were* a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left. Thus

the Lord saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore” (Exo. 14:29-30). The people of God were saved by water, and the enemies of God were destroyed by water.

The Water Test of Gideon’s Army

The soldiers of Gideon’s army were led to a stream, and those three hundred who lapped up the water from their hands, proving their watchfulness and devotion, were allowed to stay with the army, but those who bowed down on their knees to drink were sent away (Jud. 7:1-7). The three hundred knew their mission. They alertly got a drink and were on their way while the others carelessly failed to watch for the enemy. Today, we are led to the stream to drink. Our spiritual character and watchfulness for our enemy Satan are often tested (1 Pet. 5:8; 2 Cor. 16:13). Do we pass or fail?

Naaman’s Water Test

Naaman was “a mighty man in valour, *but he was* a leper” (2 Kin. 5:1). Elisha sent a message to Naaman, telling him the procedure he could follow to be cleansed of his leprosy.

He could “Go and wash in Jordan seven times” (5:10) and be cleansed. But, this was not what Naaman wanted to hear. He wanted to be cleansed in the Abana and Pharpar rivers of Damascus (5:12). He wanted things his way, and after all, these were clean rivers of water. The difference lay in the fact that his way was different from God’s. Neither then nor today can anyone change God’s Word (Rev. 22:18-19; Gal. 1:6-9). Be baptized? What does God’s Word say (Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16; etc.)? Be added to the church you can read about in the Bible, or “the church of your choice”? What does God’s Word say (Mat. 16:18; Acts 2:47)?

Baptism for the Remission of Sins

Today, the penitent believer is baptized to be saved (Mark 16:16; 1 Pet. 3:21), for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38), to wash away his sins (22:16), to walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:4), to get into the body of Christ, the church (1 Cor. 12:13). These passages could not be clearer in their teaching. Like Marshall Keeble said, “There is water in the plan.” If we try to be cleansed of sin in any other way, we are dipping in the Pharpar. Man must drink water if physical life is to be sustained and be baptized in water for the remission of sins and remain faithful if eternal life is to be attained.

Our eternal destiny will be determined by whether or not we pass God’s water tests. Let us make our “calling and election sure” (2 Pet. 1:10).

Author Unknown

The Hero of Calvary

H. L. Gradowith (Tim Smith)

The light of my life has been shielded
from me,
In darkness I stumble and barely can
see...

The Prince of the dark is now lurking
about,
He’s trying to fill my very heart with
doubt...

CHORUS:

He would hold back all of life’s goodness
from me,
All comfort and respite he’d fain let me
see...

Not a moment’s rest and never any peace
And from his devices he’d grant no re-
lease!

CHORUS:

So long, long ago he set his sites on me
From his vileness not one relief can I
see...

And from early morning on ‘til dark of
night
Each moment is for my very life a fight!

CHORUS:

Then I met him! The hero of Calvary!
And from this fight he finally set me
free!

No more must I be tossed about like a
wave,

He fought for me...Fought my very soul
to save!

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Rheba Stancliff

Restored

Elaine Brooks was restored to Christ on March 2 and has placed membership with the Bellview congregation. Please keep Elaine in your prayers and offer her encouragement.

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March 13

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March 20

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Destroying the Bible

Howard Winters

It is said that there are more ways than one to skin a cat; there are also more ways than one to destroy the Bible. Jeremiah prophesied in a time of apostasy and warned Israel (and occasionally Judah) of pending destruction that was coming upon it because the leaders, prophets, and the people had abandoned the Word of God and committed adultery with stones and with stocks (Jer. 3:9). That is, they had turned from the living God and His revelation to dead gods (gods made of stones and sticks), which could not speak. An indication of the extent of their departure is seen from the incident where King Jehoiakim cut to pieces and burned the scroll containing the Lord's words through Jeremiah.

Now the king sat in the winterhouse in the ninth month: and *there was a fire* on the hearth burning before him. And it

came to pass, *that* when Jehudi had read three or four leaves, he cut it with the penknife, and cast *it* into the fire that *was* on the hearth, until all the roll was consumed in the fire that *was* on the hearth (36:22-23).

It is sad to read of such disrespect for the Word of God among the leaders of Israel, but the next verse is even sadder. It says, "Yet they were not afraid, nor rent their garments, *neither* the king, nor any of his servants that heard all these words" (36:24). We have revealed here a reprobate attitude—the king cut to pieces and burned the Word of God, and yet none of them were afraid; none of them feared the terrible consequences that must follow such irreverence and disrespect for the holy. How far they had departed from the days of when God had brought them out Egypt, across the Red

Sea, through the wilderness, over the Jordan, and placed them safely in the land which flowed with milk and honey. What a sad commentary on a nation so blessed by divine love to have to say that it no longer feared God nor trembled at the destruction of His Word.

But are the majority of men different in our day? Not in the least. While they do not destroy the Bible by literally cutting it to pieces and burning it (even Catholicism has discontinued this vile practice), they do so by false interpretation and application, by denying its inspiration and inerrancy, by changing and modifying its doctrines, by substituting *eisegesis* for exegesis, by adding to or taking from its holy teaching to make it

fit the creeds and doctrines of men, by applying the historical-critical method while ignoring the historical-grammatical approach, by practicing what it does not teach rather than to limit themselves to doing only what it says, by making it conflict in its doctrine of grace and its doctrine of obedience, by seeing it as only a human record of historical events, by changing it to fit man's desires rather than accepting it as filling his needs, and by a thousand other ways of rejecting it to replace its divine teaching with the systems of men. This method of destruction is usually more effective than destruction by knife and fire.

Deceased

The Unity of the Church

Foy E. Wallace, Jr.

The book of Psalms has been appropriately called "the hymn book of the Bible." There are more than twenty-five hundred verses in its one hundred fifty chapters, and doubtless that many songs have been composed from them through the centuries and millenniums since their sentiments swelled the bosom of Israel's sweet singer. Many of these verses were chanted in the worship of early Christians, and they will be sung in every generation wherever people are found worshiping God until we learn the "new song" in Heaven, "when all the redeemed singers get home."

To rob our modern productions of the sentiments and psalms of David would be, indeed, to impoverish our worship of praise.

A Song of Unity

Psalm 133 is a song of unity: "Behold, how good and how pleasant *it is* For brethren to dwell together in unity!" (133:1). There is nothing more stifling and stultifying to the soul's emotions than strife and division. Nothing is more soothing and beneficent to the spirit than peace and unity.

In the psalmist's refrain, unity among brethren is like "the precious ointment upon the head" (133:2). The Easterners perfumed with fragrant oil. Unity perfumes

the church and sweetens the atmosphere like the precious oil “That ran down upon the beard, *even* Aaron’s beard: That went down to the skirts of his garments” (133:2).

The Unity of the Spirit

Exhorting the brethren to “keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:3), Paul outlines, in Ephesians 4:4-6, the basis of unity. “*There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.*” The “unity of the spirit” is the unity the Spirit teaches, or that results when the Spirit’s Word is obeyed.

There is one God—**unity in worship**. A divided worship cannot be rendered “in spirit and in truth.” Wherever and whenever rendered, true worship must have the two elements—the right spirit and the right act; for God is one, and “seeketh such to be his worshippers.”

There is one Lord—**unity in authority**. Human authority in religion is wrong. Christ is Lord, and His Word only is authority.

There is one faith—**unity in message**. The Spirit, which guided “into all truth,” does not impart conflicting messages. The Gospel promotes unity, and where there is division, something else has been preached.

There is one baptism—**unity in practice**. Modes of baptism! We might as well talk about shades of white. There is no such thing.

There is one body—**unity in organization**. The church is one body. It is impossible to have “spiritual unity” and “organic” division. Unity is both spiritual and organic.

There is one Spirit and one hope—**unity in life**, desire, and expectation.

Thus, Paul outlines the only basis of unity. Let the world cease its efforts toward amalgamations, federations, alliances, and unions and adopt the divine standard and foundation of unity—oneness in Christ.

The Prayer for Unity

The Lord’s prayer in John 17:1-21 was an ardent petition for unity. “May they all be one.” Jesus is praying for the unity of believers! Yet, it has not touched the heart of those promoting denominationalism in the world, nor even brethren who sow discord and stir factions in the church. Denominationalism is the misrepresentation of Christianity—an offensive caricature—and the authors of perversions in religion are enemies of Christ, professing and even honestly thinking themselves to be His friends.

But “charity begins at home.” We cannot, with good grace, preach unity and practice division.

I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and *that* there be no divisions among you; but *that* ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment (1 Cor. 1:10).

Paul’s beseechment should be not only our preachment but also our practice. The unity of Christians is the only hope of bringing the world to Christ. Jesus knew it and therefore prayed that “they all may be one; as thou, Father, *art* in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us” (John 17:21).

Deceased

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after the afternoon service, in
the library.

March 20

Visitation cards for Group 2 will
be handed out.

March 20

Elders/Deacons' meeting will be
held after the afternoon service,
in room 1.

March 30

Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00
p.m., in the auditorium.



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Sunday Worship Services — 10:00 a.m., 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday Bible Classes for all ages — 7:00 p.m.

What Are We Doing to Our Children?

Paul Vaughn

It is incredibly heartbreaking to recall the events in Newtown, Connecticut, on December 14, 2012. The killing of innocent children is hard to imagine and difficult to accept. Our sympathy and prayers are extended to the families of both the children and adults killed.

What are we doing to our children? The list of murders and carnage is growing at an accelerated rate. In 1999, Columbine, Colorado, 15 students were killed at a high school. On July 20, 2012, there were 12 killed at a movie theater in Aurora, Colorado. It was April 16, 2007, when a student at Virginia Tech killed 32 and wounded 17 of his fellow students. The list of innocent lives taken by violence keeps on growing.

This country has a particular mindset that blames this needless carnage on guns. But

guns are no more to blame than a truck driven by a drunken driver in Carroll County, Kentucky, in 1988 when a man intoxicated drove the wrong way on Interstate 71 and killed 24 children and three adults. Was it the truck's fault? No! It was the driver's fault who chose to get drunk and then drive while under the influence. His choice brought devastating and deadly consequences.

During the past 50 years, parents have allowed television and the entertainment industry to bring up their children. Television has grown more and more violent and brutal in its programming. Children no longer grow up watching such gentle and docile programs as "Captain Kangaroo" or "Leave It to Beaver." Instead, they see murder, violence, and brutality paraded before their

eyes. Added to the violence of television programs are computer games. Together, they make a recipe for danger. William Bennett said, "Television, the movies, and world advertising are the sites in our culture where the most powerful forces of imagination are harnessed to produce some of the most effective symbolic devices ever seen or heard" (*The Broken Hearth* 34). All one has to do is observe the way many of our young people behave to see the evil results of violent movies, video games, and television.

Children are brought into this world pure. Broken homes and the resulting moral collapse of our society are responsible for killing our children, not guns!

In the days following the Newtown massacre, one of the television interviewers asked, "Where was God when this happened?" Our nation took God out of the schools decades ago. Sadly, many seek to remove God from every facet of American culture. The violent deaths of so many children and adults show how successful we have been in removing God from our thinking. The high divorce rate, out-of-wedlock births,

The Power of Words

A careless word may kindle strife;

A cruel word may wreck a life;

A bitter word may hate instill;

A brutal word may smite and kill;

A gracious word may smooth the way;

A joyous word may light the day;

A timely word may lessen stress;

A loving word may heal and bless.

Author Unknown

single-parent families, and cohabitation instead of God-ordained marriages are just a few of the results of our godless society. We could remove every gun in this country, and there would still be killing of innocent children. It is past time for us to return to the Bible and its God-given standard of morality. Once more, "the Golden Rule" (Mat. 7:12) needs to be taught in our homes and schools; only then will we see this senseless slaughter cease!

Hopkinsville, KY

Is Your Indifference Showing?

Foster L. Ramsey

The church members of Laodicea were lukewarm, and the Lord knew of their lukewarmness because of their works. They did not quit altogether; they still had their membership in the church, but they did not exhibit any zeal or enthusiasm for the work and worship of the

church. Their indifference brought forth from Christ the words, "I will spew thee out of my mouth" (Rev. 3:16).

Just as the works of the Laodiceans showed them to be indifferent, even so, do our works today. Many members exhibit indifference even though they do some

things necessary to church work and worship. Our indifference is showing when:

1. We attend only one service in the week.
2. We can go to sleep during that service.
3. We do not care whether the church meets its goals in attendance and finances.
4. We expect others to do our work.
5. We engage in a program retrogression instead of going forward.

6. We establish priorities that place our pleasure and selfish desires ahead of the church's success.
7. We spend all our energies criticizing other members of the church.
8. And the greatest evidence of all—we do not care whether souls are being saved or not.

Take inventory of your spiritual life!
Would Jesus have the same attitude toward us that He had toward the Laodiceans?

Deceased

Musings of a Worshiper???

We finally made it!—In the nick of time,
Wonder if I gave Jr. his dime?
Is **he** going to lead the singing? **We** need a change;
He sings too fast and has too high a range.
My! It is hot—and fans do not help much,
With all this singing, standing and such.
Who is that one who is going to lead the prayer?
Never saw him before—I would remember that hair.
I can say one thing—he is long winded enough,
God does not expect all those words and stuff.
“Sister, would you please stop kicking my knee?”
My kids make a football out of me.
Look at that hat!—Glad I do not have to wear it!
“Junior, turn that loose and do not tear it.”
A sermon on giving? That is all I need,

Wonder if **he** has a house full of kids to feed?
I give a dollar, just let him holler!
Vacation next month, Oh! What a dream;
A tour of Texas—we will fish in the Gulf Stream.
I believe that preacher has two sets of lungs,
He has preached so long, I forgot when he began.
Coming to church is so tiring for me,
I am getting so sleepy, I can hardly see.
Hope my roast is not burning and has not gone dry.
Oh! It is so hot I think I will die!
Well, finally, he is all thru his preaching.
He sure does **his** share of teaching.
Come on kids, let's run home and eat our dinner.
“Good morning, Preacher, a fine sermon for a sinner.”

Author Unknown

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April 3

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April 10

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The Law of Atrophy

Guy N. Woods

Most speakers and writers have favorite expressions that they often use and come to be recognizable characteristics of their style. An analysis of the words of our Lord shows that He, too, was given to the repetition of sentiments, one of which was:

whosoever hath, to him shall be given,
and he shall have more abundance: but
whosoever hath not, from him shall be
taken away even that he hath (Mat.
13:12).

This expression, or one similar, occurs several times in the books of the Gospel, and in a variety of circumstances: (1) In the foregoing instance it was used to justify parabolic teaching, (2) twice the Lord utilized it in teaching about **what** and **how** we are to hear, (3) it also occurs in connection with the condemnation of the one-talent man and, still farther, (4) in the

parable of the pounds.

It is paradoxical but, nonetheless, a fundamental law of life, governing every aspect thereof. **It is the law of atrophy.** That which we use we have, all else we only appear to have (Luke 8:18). The principle is, **use or lose!** The unused manna of the wilderness wanderings bred worms and stank; food, when long stored, spoils; water unstirred becomes stagnant; and muscles unexercised wither. The principle finds illustration in all the affairs of life. Skillful surgeons, talented artists, acute businessmen remain so only by their constant use of their faculties, and neglect leads to loss of abilities formerly possessed. Through mental and moral exercise, we keep our sensibilities of right and wrong strong (Heb. 5:14), and the alternative is moral

stagnation (Eph. 4:17-19). The Greeks excelled in mental and intellectual development in the ancient world, but because they had not “learned Christ” (4:20), they were in a state of moral decay in the first century.

To this principle, the Lord directed attention to His figure of the fruitless tree and barren branches.

And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire (Mat. 3:10).

I am the vine, ye *are* the branches...If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast *them* into the fire, and they are burned (John 15:5-6).

Growth is of the essence of Christianity, and its alternative is unproductivity and to lose how growth is achieved.

Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, As newborn babes, desire

the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby (1 Pet. 2:1-2).

But grow in grace, and *in* the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ (2 Pet. 3:18).

The **direction**, **duty**, and **details** of Christian growth are set out in these passages.

There is a pragmatic method by which we may determine the progress and extent of growth. Am I daily adding to my store of Biblical knowledge, thus growing stronger and more mature in the Christian life? Am I more skillful in the word of righteousness, more adept in resisting false teachers and confuting their teaching? Have I raised myself above the petty jealousies of the day, and do I exhibit a more patient and understanding attitude toward those in need of patience rather than criticism and rebuke? Do I engage more actively and successfully in soul-winning, and have I been able to bring others to the truth more effectively than I did a year ago? Am I faithful and regular in attending the church's ser-

Do Not Worry

A businessman who was a chronic addict of the worrying habit determined to find out what he was fretting about as he analyzed his worries.

He discovered that forty percent of his worries were about things that likely never would happen; thirty percent were over past decisions which could not be changed; twelve percent concerned others' criticism of himself which did not matter anyway; ten percent dealt with his health, which he was trying his best to protect as it was. Only eight percent, he decided, were legitimate worries.

Author Unknown

vices, and do I manifest a more worshipful and reverent demeanor than before? Has my liberality increased to the point that there is no suspicion of covetousness in my heart and life?

These are reliable tests of growth in grace and in the knowledge of the truth to which all of us are enjoined. May we weigh them carefully.

Deceased

Spiritually Single—Married—Divorced?

Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so *let* the wives *be* to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it (Eph. 5:22-25).

The spiritual marriage of the Christian to his Lord is a sacred relationship. No closer union is known to man than the marriage union. There the Lord chose that relationship to illustrate our union with Christ. There are many likenesses that the text presents.

One who has never believed, repented, confessed the name of Christ before men, or been baptized may be considered *single*. They think they need no companion, spiritually speaking, feeling no obligation to the Lord and His church. They will not allow Him to be head, and they disdain His love. They are lost and without hope of eternity (Eph. 2:1, 12) unless they obey.

Those who have been made alive “together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved)” (2:5, 8) have been reconciled to God by the

blood of Christ (2:13). Because they are *married* to Christ, they enjoy peace, the covenant of promise, hope, prayer, and citizenship in heaven (2:12-19). They realize that the privileges oblige them to the responsibilities of the *marriage* and show their love by keeping His commandments (1 John 5:3).

Those who are spiritually *divorced* are those who once enjoyed the privileges of the close union with Christ but went back into the worldliness from which they were delivered (2 Pet. 2:20-22). They have left their first love, become lukewarm or completely cold in the Lord’s service, and forfeited the blessings here and hereafter (Rev. 2:4; 3:16; Heb. 4:1). However, though we have committed grievous crimes against Christ and God, they are unwilling that any should perish and desire the return of faithfulness (2 Pet. 3:9). Through the word of reconciliation, the adulterous ones can return by repentance and prayer (2 Cor. 5:18-20; Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:9-2:1). Those who remain in the adulterous condition have no right to the tree of life (Rev. 2:10; 22:14).

All are in one of these states; where do you find your life?

Author Unknown

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Randall Johnson Elaine Brooks

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BEACON

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“Second Chance after Death?”

Dub Mowery

Both the Mormon Church and the Catholic Church teach that there will be a second chance for those who die in sin after this life. However, these two religious groups approach this concept differently. The Mormon Church interprets 1 Corinthians 15:29 to justify a member of their church being baptized for their loved ones or others who die without having their sins forgiven. “Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?” Instead of studying the subject discussed in its context, the Mormons lift the passage from its context. It has been rightfully said that “A text taken from its context becomes a pretext.”

The subject in verse 29 is the same as the rest of the 15th chapter. That subject is the

resurrection of the dead. The first part of the chapter emphasizes the fact and proof of Christ’s resurrection from the dead. Our resurrection to eternal life is based upon the Son of God. Some at Corinth denied that the saints would be resurrected. This was answered by Paul, who wrote, “Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?” (15:12). The Son of God was resurrected from the dead for Christians to be resurrected to eternal life. With this in mind, Paul further said, “But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: And if Christ be not risen, then *is* our preaching vain, and your faith *is* also vain” (15:13-14). This placed those members of the body of Christ at Corinth who denied the general resurrection in a dilemma. They

accepted the fact of the resurrection of Christ but denied the general resurrection of the human race (John 5:28-29).

The passage in 1 Corinthians 15:29 does not teach anything close to the false concept that living saints can be baptized for those who died without receiving forgiveness. Salvation is not by proxy! Every person will have to give account for how he has lived.

Another passage of Scripture is often used by those who teach a second chance after death.

For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; Which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing,

wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water (1 Pet. 3:18-20).

Many conclude from this passage that Christ preached to lost men after they died. The passage above does not say *when* the Son of God preached to those rebellious spirits of the antediluvian period who were—at Peter's writing—confined in the prison of the Hadean realm. Their disobedience took place while Noah and his sons were building the ark. God gave the human race 120 years in which to repent (Gen. 6:3), and it was at that time, Noah, “a preacher of righteousness,” preached unto them. They rejected his preaching, and he saved only his family (2 Pet. 2:5; Gen. 7:13). Jesus preached to them through Noah in the same sense that He later preached to the Gentiles (Eph. 2:17). Our Lord never personally preached to the Gentiles of the Christian dispensation. The apos-

Shun Bribes

Leroy Brownlow

Never take a bribe. Never give one. Do not price yourself down low enough to be bought, for you are worth too much, and do not price the other fellow up high enough to buy him, for he is not worth it. A bribe has a repulsive stench acquired by being passed from one decay to another rot. Avoid it. Right is not to be sold in the market. Favors are not to be auctioned to the highest bidder. Remember—bribes and miseries go together. This is seen in the lowest and unhappiest man of all history—Judas. He took a bribe. He ended up a suicide.

“He who is greedy for gain troubles his own house, But he who hates bribes will live” (Pro. 15:27). “A wicked *man* accepts a bribe behind the back To pervert the ways of justice” (17:23). “To show partiality *is* not good, Because for a piece of bread a man will transgress” (28:21). “The king establishes the land by justice, But he who receives bribes overthrows it” (29:4).

Deceased

the Paul was the Lord's "earthen vessel" to take the Gospel unto the Gentiles.

The Word of God emphatically stresses that mankind has only this present life to prepare for eternity. We will be judged by how we live here in this physical world. Paul wrote:

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it* be good or bad (2 Cor. 5:10).

Hebrews 9:27 also tells us that we must face judgment according to our spiritual state at death. This is also vividly shown in the story of the rich man and Lazarus, which tells us that an individual's spiritual condition cannot be changed in the next life (Luke 16:26).

Those who do not obey the Gospel of Christ will be eternally lost (2 The. 1:7-9). The Scripture does not teach that anyone will have a second chance after death.

Deceased

A Week of Good Thoughts

Suppose we start this very day
To live our lives in a different way;
Supposed we vowed and constantly tried
To help those in trouble on life's wayside;
If we showed by our deeds a hint of His love

Wouldn't earth be a bit more like heaven above?

On Monday: Look for a smile today and return it with one of your own. Give someone faith and hope; it is such a beautiful loan.

On Tuesday: Gather a thought that is kind, one that is sincere and deep. Be sure to pass it along, for such are too precious to keep.

On Wednesday: Forget yesterday's sorrow, mistakes, sadness, and pain. Lift your heart with hope as flowers to sun and rain.

On Thursday: Offer a word of comfort and prayer to help someone in need. A thoughtful little gift, some flowers, or a smile makes us all rich indeed.

On Friday: You shall not pass this way again, so do any good you can do. Do not put it off till tomorrow, or the chance may be lost for you.

On Saturday: Today will soon be a memory, so do not let it come to an end, without a smile, without a song, or just a word from a friend.

On Sunday: Do not let worry and care depress you or brush your joy away. But arise and give thanks to God above, for His love and another "Blest Day."

"Let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others" (Phi. 2:3-4).

Author Unknown

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Karen Diamond Elaine Brooks
Randall Johnson Carla Burleson
Rheba Stancliff Linda Worley
Tia McLeod (Paul & Phyllis
 Brantley's daughter)
Sharon Hewitt (Karen Hatcher's co-
 worker)
Andrea Ayliffe (Carl Ayliffe and
 Charlotte Grant's sister)
Leigh Thompson (Pam Busch's
 employer's wife)

Sympathy

Our deepest sympathies are extended to Pam Busch in the death of her sister Linda Ness on April 1. Please keep Pam and her family in your prayers.

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BEACON

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Peter Not the Pope

Batsell Baxter

The Catholic contention that Peter was the first pope is only an attempt at justification. At Caesarea Philippi (Mat. 16:18-19), Jesus told Peter: “Upon this rock I will build my church.” The word “Peter” in the original is *Petros*, which means a little rock that can be pushed about or thrown. At that time, Peter was such a character. In his early ministry, he denied the Lord. It was hard for Peter to “stay put.” Even after quite a bit of Christian growth, he wavered in the face of Jewish opposition at Antioch. Certainly, the Lord would not have built His church on such a shaky foundation.

The Solid Foundation

In the statement, “Upon this rock I will build my church,” Jesus uses the word which is *Petra* in the original. This means a solid rock—a rock that cannot be moved. Peter

was not that kind of rock. Jesus here makes a contrast. In contrast to the small, shaky stone, Jesus will build His church upon a solid ledge. It is such a solid foundation that no power on earth can shake it. No man can ever become that solid, even though he should have years of growth in grace and the knowledge of the truth.

What Was It?

What was this foundation upon which Jesus said He would build His church? It was a fact, which is the confession that Peter had made, that Jesus is “the Christ, the Son of the living God.” With that fact established, the church is on solid rock; it is on shifting sand without that fact. If Jesus were not the Christ, there would be no foundation for the church, but the foundation is secure since He is the Christ. No power can shake it.

No Successor for Peter

If Peter had been the foundation of the church and it had been the Lord's will to have a successor, the successor would have been provided. Still, the fact is that several generations passed without anybody even claiming to be a successor to Peter. Peter was dead, and the church had no supreme head on earth. There may have been men who wanted it, but the force of conviction in the churches

was that no man would dare to try it. Finally, after ecclesiasticism had taken firm root and the church had split into the Greek or Eastern Church and the Roman or Western Church, a claimant arose to be the head of it. After the claimant arose and set himself up, the Roman Church objected strenuously. John the Faster was condemned by the whole Western Church for his ungodly ambitions to rule the church, but his ambitions were hardly cold before Hildebrand at Rome put himself in the saddle and proclaimed himself the head of the church.

Some Justification Attempted

Such a ribald and un-Christian usurpation of power was nauseating even to the apostate church at Rome. It took quite a deal of pushing, pulling, and politicking to put it over. Still, the pope's throne was unsteady. Finally, an inventive ecclesiastic hit upon the idea that Peter was the first pope and that this grand usurper was his successor. It was all an invention to justify personal ambition and pride. Of course, after the first pope had established himself, he had a successor in every generation, and sometimes there were rival claimants for the throne, and the rivalry was settled by murder. This succession of popes is sordid history, and now the claim is made that Peter is the first one. Peter lived and died a good man and humble servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no evidence that he had any such ambition characterized by the unworthies who claim to be his successors. The claim is just a travesty upon a good and faithful servant of the Lord.

Deceased

Pointed Paragraphs

John T. Hinds

Neither honesty nor love will protect against mistakes. Honest mistakes need correction, just as do other kinds.

Any vital truth learned should be passed to others, both by words and examples. Available opportunities should be used.

Perfect examples are the ideals toward which we should strive regardless of all faults that may appear in our imitations.

The most vital proposition in the world is of no value to one who will not decide to accept it or fails to remain with it after accepting it.

One evidence of the truly great is the prompt and decisive rejection of what is wrong or wholly out of place even though the opposite course might result in temporary gains.

Deceased

Easter Observance

It is common knowledge among Bible students that there is no vestige of authority in the Bible for the special observance of the particular first day of the week, commonly called “Easter Sunday.” *Easter* does appear one time in the Authorized Version in Acts 12:4. It is a translation of the Greek word *pascha*. This word is found twenty-nine times in the Greek New Testament. Twenty-eight times it is translated as *Passover*. It should be translated as *Passover* here. In the Revised Version, it is rendered *Passover*. There is no authority on textual grounds whatever for rendering it *Easter*. Adam Clarke said: “Perhaps there never was a more unhappy, not to say absurd, translation than that in our text.”

Further, out of respect to the Passover season, Herod deferred bringing Peter forth from prison to the people—that is, to be tried and executed. Herod was on the side of the opposition to the church. If the *pascha* of this verse had been a peculiarly “holy day” among Christians, he would have had no respect for it. The translation of *pascha* by *Easter* in this verse is absurd. As it is now regarded by the denominational world and a few poorly informed members of the church, Easter is a mixture of paganism, Judaism, and Christianity. *Easter* derives from an Anglo-Saxon goddess; the other elements’ origin is obvious.

God has prescribed that all worship acceptable to Him be in spirit and in truth. Since He has made no provisions for any kind of special observance of so-called

“Easter Sunday,” it cannot be in truth. It cannot, therefore, be pleasing to Him. It is not a great surprise if denominational preachers do not know any better. Still, it is surprising that some professed preachers of the Gospel do not know better than to join hands with denominationalism to celebrate “Easter Sunday” in performances unknown to the New Testament. To this extent, such men are not sound in the faith. All loyal Christians will condemn their actions.

Author Unknown

Preach It Brother

Charles Pogue

Preach it brother preach it loud not long
but clear

Preach what these sinners around me
need so badly to hear

Wait—what’s that topic you said the one
for this morning you chose

Brother you’ve done quit preaching gone
to meddling around my toes

You should preach to all the of rest but
not a sermon applying me

If I don’t like the words you say I’ll get up
abruptly and leave

You know what that means don’t you?
my dollar won’t be in the plate

That’s why it’s the last thing we do should
you get to talking to straight

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Leigh Thompson (Pam Busch's
 employer's wife)

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Was Jesus a Revolutionary?

John Chowning

On June 11, 2021, in Lipscomb University's Collins Auditorium in Nashville, Ibram X. Kendi—a lecturer from Boston University—was the keynote speaker at the 41st annual “Christian Scholars Conference.” A self-professed “preacher’s kid” whose parents embraced Liberation Theology, Kendi was taught to view Jesus as a revolutionary who commissioned His followers to liberate the oppressed from the powers on earth which were oppressing them. This theology, Mr. Kendi points out (in <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=azJh4N69Q5k>), is markedly different from “Savior Theology,” which views Jesus as commissioning His disciples with saving individuals “who are behaviorally deficient” (i.e., sinners).

While there is much about Mr. Kendi, his zealous promotion of Critical Race Theory

—a hybrid of Liberation Theology, Post-modernism, and Cultural Marxism, and his international best-selling book, *How to be an Antiracist*, which deserves thoughtful scrutiny, the taproot of his worldview is the belief Jesus was a revolutionary. If this belief is wrong, then all the fruit that springs from it is also wrong because a corrupt tree brings forth evil fruit and good fruit only grows on a good tree (Mat. 7:17-18). To accurately address this question about Jesus, it must be stated more precisely. One way of doing this is by adding the adjective *political*: Was Jesus a political revolutionary? **Certainly Not!** is the New Testament’s resounding answer.

- What political revolutionary or his ally allows an oppressor’s soldiers to continue their military service when asked for advice on what to do (Luke 3:14)?

- What political revolutionary instructs his disciples to carry a despised oppressor's burden two miles, not just the one mile demanded by the law (Mat. 5:41)?
- What political revolutionary instructs his followers to love their enemies, bless those who curse them, do good to those who hate them, pray for those who spitefully use and persecute them (5:43-44)?
- What political revolutionary compassionately provides aid and healing to a household member of a leader in the oppressor's army (Luke 7:1-10)?
- What political revolutionary rejects a militarized coup attempt (John 6:15) so he can be arrested with barely any conflict and no coup attempt twelve months later?
- What political revolutionary commands his follower to put up his sword when an armed multitude comes to arrest him (Mat. 26:52)?
- What political revolutionary pursues healing an enemy's servant wounded by one of his loyal followers (Luke 22:50-51)?
- What political revolutionary truthfully states, "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence" (John 18:36)?

Mr. Kendi and all other adherents to Liberation Theology appear to have an abject

inability to distinguish Jesus of Nazareth from bloodthirsty, power-driven political revolutionaries like Mohammed and Karl Marx.

Now, consider the question when it is asked more precisely by adding the adjective *spiritual*: Was Jesus a spiritual revolutionary? **Absolutely!** is the New Testament's emphatic answer. As prophesied by Isaiah, the good news of spiritual victory in Christ can enrich the poor with every spiritual blessing (Eph. 1:3). It can heal those whose sins have left them heartbroken and riddled with guilt. It can free those enslaved in sin's shackles. It can bring sight to those deceived and blinded by the cruel and ruthless god of this world. It can liberate those who have been buffeted and bruised by Satan.

The New Testament of Jesus Christ revolutionizes. A spiritual revolution of regeneration and newness of life results by burying the spiritually dead who desire to be dead to sin in the watery grave of baptism. Old things have passed away; all things become new (2 Cor. 5:17). Rather than conforming to this world and its spiritual uncleanness, these new creatures in Christ are being transformed by renewing their minds (Rom. 12:2). A spiritual metamorphosis is occurring. Deceitful lusts no longer corrupt (Eph. 4:22) because they are put to death (Col. 3:5). Abstinence from fleshly lusts which war against the soul (1 Pet. 2:11) replaces indulgence (4:1-4). As the works of the flesh are uprooted, the fruit of the Spirit flourishes.

Though Mr. Kendi and others may denigrate it as “Savior Theology” and seek to persuade people to believe it is bad for our world, this is precisely what was eternally purposed by God and is the good news found in Christ. Jesus is a spiritual revolutionary. His kingdom—the kingdom of heaven—is not a political entity (John 18:36). He spiritu-

ally liberates people personally and individually. He liberates from this world’s most powerful and vicious of all oppressors—Satan and sin. Because of this, His stepfather Joseph was instructed to call His name Jesus—“Savior”—because “he shall save his people from their sins” (Mat. 1:21).

Fort Wayne, IN

It Is So Easy to Be in Error

Charles Pogue

Whether one believes the religious doctrines of man, never having obeyed the first principles of the Gospel of Christ, or if one is a member of the Lord’s church, it is so easy to end up in error. It only takes one of three things: do not study, do not reason correctly about what one has studied, or conclude that he does not care what the Scriptures teach. Instead, he will believe what he wants to believe and live how he wishes.

We know we can always expect one or more of those three, perhaps all of them (especially the last two), to be a problem with those in fatal denominational error. Sadly, however, these are becoming more and more of a problem with members of the church. We have seen for decades now the consequences of those things. Some congregations are so far out in left field that they are not recognizable as congregations of the Lord’s church in what they teach or practice, and faithful brethren wish they would change the name on their signs and above their doors.

Individual Christians have become so guilty of one or more of the three that they do not recognize error when they hear it or have come to such a mindset of inclusion that the only ones they have an issue with are those who stand up for the truth and object to that which is false.

The only way anyone is going to protect himself from falling into the traps of the three things we have mentioned is to humble himself before God and realize that what we have received by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and given to us through chosen apostles and writers of the New Testament, is essential that we know, understand, and obey. One who fails in any step of the process will find himself separated from the Lord both in this life and that one which is to come.

It takes diligence and commitment to study God’s Word, and it takes backbone to oppose that which in the very slightest degree departs from what is written. But, it is so easy to be in error.

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“The Man or the Plan?”

Brad Green

When studying religious matters, it is not uncommon for a strange “counter-debate” to occur regarding what some consider necessary and unnecessary (or *insignificant*) matters. This argumentation is many times referred to by a somewhat catchy *slogan*—“the Man or the Plan”—with which many try to separate the preaching of Jesus (considered *necessary*) from the preaching of procedure, plan, or pattern (deemed by some as *unnecessary* or *insignificant*). It should be first emphasized that no Biblical matter is *insignificant*. God’s Word must be rightly divided (2 Tim. 2:15). Though a Bible topic may not directly apply to those living under the New Testament system of Law, God had a significant reason for having it written—“whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we

through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope” (Rom. 15:4). It must also be emphasized that for anything regarding salvation to be considered necessary or unnecessary, the determination must be made by God—“whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven” (Mat. 16:19).

The New Testament very clearly and explicitly commands the preaching of Jesus. Peter and the other apostles went “and daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ” (Acts 5:42). Later, the apostle Paul proclaimed, “we preach Christ crucified” (1 Cor. 1:23) and “we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord” (2 Cor. 4:5). Conflict arises when those desiring to separate Jesus

from His plan to save *unrightly* divide Paul's statement, "I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2). The false assertion then is made that Paul was only interested in "the Man" Jesus and determined that everything else (i.e., "the plan") is *insignificant*. This is an overt act of eisegesis—reading and/or asserting something into the Biblical text that is not there. The simple solution to determining what it means to "preach Jesus" is to examine what the Lord, Himself preached. Certainly, all would agree that anything that Jesus preached must be considered *significant*. Further, Jesus commanded the apostles to preach "all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Mat. 28:20), thus making the words of the apostles the words of Christ.

You Cannot "Preach Jesus" Without Preaching Faith. Jesus says, "if ye believe not that I am *he*, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24).

You Cannot "Preach Jesus" Without Preaching Repentance. Jesus says, "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3).

You Cannot "Preach Jesus" Without Preaching That One Must Confess the Deity of Christ. Jesus says, "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven" (Mat. 10:32).

You Cannot "Preach Jesus" Without Preaching Baptism. Jesus says, "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16).

You Cannot "Preach Jesus" Without Preaching About the church of Christ. Jesus built the church (Mat. 16:18), purchased the church with His blood (Acts 20:28), and is the head of the church (Eph. 5:23). Jesus "loved the church, and gave himself for it" (5:25), and He will return again to take the church home to heaven (5:27).

You Cannot "Preach Jesus" Without Preaching That Salvation Is in His Church. Salvation is "in Christ" (2 Tim. 2:10), and to be "in Christ" is to be in his church, "which is his body" (Eph. 1:22-23). Jesus "is the saviour of the body" (5:23), there is only "one body" (4:4), and that body is the church (1:22-23).

You Cannot "Preach Jesus" Without Preaching About Obedience. Jesus is "the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Heb. 5:9) and commands, "be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Rev. 2:10). Jesus still implores, "Come unto me, all *ye* that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke *is* easy, and my burden is light" (Mat. 11:28-30).

It is impossible to separate "the Man" from "His Plan." As demonstrated, preaching Jesus means so much more than merely preaching about His life. To preach Jesus, one must preach about His love (John 3:16), His grace (Eph. 5:8-9), and His wrath (John 2:13-16). One must

preach about what Jesus did to bring about salvation, why He did it, and the conditions enjoined upon it. To ignore or reject all that the Bible teaches regarding Jesus, His teachings, and salvation is to put one's soul in jeopardy. Not one of God's words is "insignificant." God's Word "*is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all

good works" (2 Tim. 3:16-17). It is "quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4:12. God's Word is "able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 3:15).

Lenoir City, TN

That "Difficult" King James Version

Bill Jackson

Those in love with the modern-speech translations (and some of them do not even come near being translated) very often speak of the King James Version, and how so very difficult it is to comprehend. It is really too bad that Great Grandpa and Great Grandma, who had very little formal education, did not know that the volume could not be understood. They did the best they could in obeying God's will, living the Christian life, bringing up children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, worshiping according to the New Testament pattern, and teaching and baptizing their neighbors into Christ.

And it is too bad that the pioneer preachers did not know the King James (all they had) could not be understood. With their "lack of knowledge," all they did was live by truth, preach the truth, and convert people from sectarianism as they took the King James and put the denominational doctrines to flight in debate!

Many in our time have turned their children away from the truth in urging upon them some wild version because they, "can't understand that old King James." Yes, those very youngsters who can understand chemistry, biology, zoology, calculus, geometry, and physics. It must really "blow their minds" to run into a word like *charity* and then have to see that *love* is the modern-day word. And look at some of the preachers! All they have is a high school education, and perhaps four years of college, or two years of preacher training, including a study of Greek, and then they cannot comprehend the King James Version.

Brethren, let's face it. It is the "love of the new and different, even if it is harmful" that is behind the craving of these new and wild productions. One need not be very bright to see that!

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Phyllis Brantley's family)

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God's Caveats

Mike Demory

How often do we consider God's admonitions to take care of the things we listen to and what we do or fail to do? This is something that we should always keep at the forefront of our minds, for **if** we do, it just may save us from harm. Several Greek words have been translated "take heed" because these caveats have various aspects. One such warning is found in Mark 4:24, where Jesus says, "take heed what ye hear." While Luke records it this way, "take heed therefore how ye hear" (Luke 8:18). Jesus is speaking metaphorically to the mind's eye, meaning we are to take care of what we understand or how we understand. This is what Paul taught the Ephesians when he instructed them, "be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine" (Eph. 4:14).

When Jesus warned what and how we should hear, He was stipulating that we must carefully weigh the things that are taught by examining them, as did the Bereans (Acts 17:11). Too many Christians have become lazy, depending upon someone else to tell them what God has said, never taking the time to make sure they have not been led astray. Sure, studying requires using the precious time God has put into our care. It may even mean we have to think, but it will surely be worth it all in the end. How many of us take the time to check out the articles we read, the sermons and Bible classes we hear, or even the words others speak outside the Lord's church? There are even times when we should be "heeding" the words that come out of our mouths because we tend to repeat

what we have heard without carefully examining those words for the truth.

This is true when brethren are found in mob fashion, casting aspersions upon those who stand foursquare for the truth. Toes have been stepped on, lifestyles challenged, and rather than submit to God's will on the matter, God's mouthpiece becomes the troubler (1 Kin. 18:17). Once again, we find the same Greek word applying to such a scene. "But if ye bite and devour one another, **take heed** that ye be not consumed one of another" (Gal. 5:15); and "Beware [take heed] lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men" (Col. 2:8). While some may say that Colossians 2:8 does not apply, in one sense, it most certainly does because of brethren who make spoil of preachers through the traditions of men and not of Christ. Brethren must "take heed" to how we treat one another, especially those hirelings who are just as much our brothers in Christ as the average member.

Another Greek word used to set forth God's caveat requires our mental capacity and our physical exertion. Here the author of the Hebrews letter stipulates, "Therefore we ought to give the **more earnest heed** to

the things that were heard, lest haply we drift away *from them*" (Heb. 2:1—ASV). How many of us can genuinely admit we are giving our all to make sure we are following God's will in all matters (2 Cor. 13:5)? One crucial thing Christians often forget is that they must "*be ready **always** to give an answer to **every** man*" (1 Pet. 3:15). Are we? Or do we think that only applies to the preacher?

Notice the attitude of the first century Samaritans, "the people with one accord gave **heed** unto those things which Philip spake" (Acts 8:6). All the people that heard Phillip preach the good news were united in their understanding and devoted themselves to that teaching. How many congregations today can honestly say every person is of the same mind (Phi. 2:2)? If not, why not? Has God not given us a caveat concerning our believing and teaching the same thing? Remember, Jesus said, "**If** ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). Taking heed is serious, and we will all answer to God one day as to whether we did that very thing. Failing to take heed destroys peace, unity, and brotherly love. Will you heed God's caveats?

Mexico, MO

Mothers

Ken Chumbley

On May 8, Mother's Day is celebrated in this country. In England, it is celebrated at a different time, varying each year during March or early April. However, as Christians,

we should honor mothers always. Under the Law of Moses, the children of Israel were commanded: "Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the

land which the LORD thy God giveth thee” (Exo. 20:12). In the New Testament, we find reference to this command when Paul commands Christians:

Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth (Eph. 6:1-3).

We are also shown how Jesus loved and honored His mother, even when being put to death on the cross on Calvary:

Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother’s sister, Mary the *wife* of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own *home* (John 19:25-27).

The following poem by Edgar A. Guest, born in Birmingham, England, not far from

my home, but raised in Detroit, Michigan, speaks well of mothers:

Gentle hands that never weary toiling in
love's vineyard sweet,
Eyes that seem forever cheery when our eyes
they chance to meet,
Tender, patient, brave, devoted, this is al-
ways mother's way,
Could her worth in gold be quoted as you
think of her to-day?
There shall never be another quite so tender,
quite so kind
As the patient little mother; nowhere on this
earth you'll find
Her affection duplicated; none so proud if
you are fine.
Could her worth be overstated? Not by any
words of mine.
Death stood near the hour she bore us,
agony was hers to know,
Yet she bravely faced it for us, smiling in her
time of woe;
Down the years how oft we've tried her,
often selfish, heedless, blind,
Yet with love alone to guide her she was
never once unkind.
Vain are all our tributes to her if in words
alone they dwell.
We must live the praises due her; there's no
other way to tell
Gentle mother that we love her. Would you
say, as you recall
All the patient service of her, you've been
worthy of it all?
May we always honor our mothers not
only on this day but every day. To all of our
mothers and grandmothers, “Happy Mother’s
Day.”

They Never Leave Us

They never quite leave us,
The friends that have passed
Through the shadows of death
To the sunlight above.
A thousand sweet memories
Are holding them fast
To the palaces they blessed
With their presence and love.

Author Unknown

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The Sin of Softness

Roy Lanier

The historical reference to Eli in 1 Samuel 1-4 is a classic example of “softness.” Softness results when personal sentiments and private affections collide with moral duty and prevail! Thus, divine duty yields to inferior impulses. Many good men, as did Eli, know their duty but fail to perform it.

Eli had good things going for him: kind treatment of Hannah; fatherly training of the boy Samuel; submission to Samuel’s first prophecy, which was a stern rebuke to the family of Eli; and the godly devotion to the ark which was lost in battle. Yet, Eli’s failure to restrain his sons (3:13) caused the destruction of his family, the loss of the ark, the pollution of worship, and fornication with the women around the tabernacle.

Eli’s tragedy was softness. He had a fatal lack of stern resolve, a foolish tenderness

which hindered his doing right, a weak indulgence by restraining not his sons, and he was blind to the powers he could have used as either father or judge!

We have softness in our nation. Criminals go unpunished by finding loopholes in the law, riots and illegal strikes go unrestrained, filth in films and print spreads into all communities, obscenities and flag burning are indifferently shrugged off, and a growing disrespect for authority and law prevail. This is even among God’s ministers (Rom. 13:1-8; 1 Pet. 2:13-17).

We have softness in our homes: disobedient children who are not made to mind, unrestrained children who do as they please and are masters of their own lives as their parents indulge them; and untaught children whose parents just do not love them enough

to teach them modesty, manners, and respect. It takes a good balance of authority and affection, either one of which without the other is valueless.

We have softness in the church: rebels are allowed to refuse activities that the churches have planned; immoral members who lie, cheat, steal, commit adultery, and become drunkards are tolerated; and the unspiritual who absent themselves and show a listless unconcern are allowed to portray a form of godliness but deny the power thereof.

Preachers and teachers are tolerated who would not disturb anyone. Bishops who fail to teach and lead are used because of their good “business sense.”

The path of responsibility is always one with anguish. We cannot do God’s work; He will not do ours. We stand in jeopardy as a nation, as homes before God, and as souls before our maker. We must not fail because of softness.

Deceased

Which Son Did His Father’s Will?

Tim M. Smith

During His confrontation with the chief priests and elders, Jesus asked them whether John’s baptism was from heaven or men, and they refused to answer. Then He spoke to them the parable of the two sons:

But what think ye? A *certain* man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to day in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir: and went not. Whether of them twain did the will of *his* father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen *it*, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him (Mat. 21:28-32).

Even though the chief priests and elders refused to answer the question Jesus had asked them about the source of John’s authority, and even though they claimed not to know whether John’s mission was human or Divine, Jesus made an application of the principle involved, in such a way as to indict them for their self-righteous hypocrisy.

The Israelite people in the first century could be compared with a man’s two sons. One son made great claims about honoring his father. He spoke great swelling words about his willingness to work in the father’s vineyard. However, upon examination, the fruit of any such labor was not to be found. His honor to his father was in words only. The other son was openly rebellious. He did not intend to honor his father or work in his vineyard—but later, he repented of that attitude and went to work. Jesus’ question to the priests and elders was, “Which son did his

father's will—the one who said he would work but did not, or the one who had not intended to do such work but changed his mind and did the work his father asked?" His question implied that one of the two sons did indeed obey the father. The priests and elders correctly identified the obedient son as the one who repented and did the work. Then Jesus made application of the parable: When John came preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, a Divinely commissioned message and pointed to Jesus as the "Lamb of God, which taketh

away the sin of the world" (John 1:29), it was, for the most part, those who had earlier rebelled against God's will who were led to repent—the harlots, tax collectors, and other *hardened* sinners. On the other hand, those who talked long and loud about their devotion to God and claimed to be faithful workers rejected God's chosen messenger and His message. As Luke writes, "But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him" (Luke 7:30).

Deceased

Christian Growth

Bob Wear

In the Word of God, there is much teaching concerning the growth and development that the individual must make. After being born into God's family, spiritual growth must begin, and it must be a growth that continues until the end of our brief time on earth. The apostle Peter wrote:

Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby (1 Pet. 2:1-2).

In the second letter, the apostle Peter wrote: "But grow in grace, and *in* the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 3:18).

The apostle Paul, in the second letter to the Thessalonians, wrote:

We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the

charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth (2 The. 1:3).

It becomes easy to see that the children of God must grow.

There are two things that, when done, will cause the growth so necessary to our spiritual well-being. They are learning the will of God and doing the will of God. In other words, we must have food and exercise. As we learn the will of God, we are eating the food necessary for spiritual growth, and as we do the will of God, we are engaging in the exercise essential for spiritual growth. An example: I learn that God has said that I must do good unto all men (Gal. 6:10), and, having a desire to please God, I begin to do this. Thus, I grow spiritually.

The conclusion is growth results from knowledge and doing the will of God.

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- Andrea Ayliffe (Carl Ayliffe and Charlotte Grant's sister)
- Doug Mowery (Debra and Denise Mowery's brother)

Please Remember

Every Sunday

Ladies' Bible Class will meet after the afternoon service, in the library.

May 15

Visitation cards for Group 2 will be handed out.

May 15

Elders/Deacons' meeting will be held after the afternoon service, in room 1.

May 29

Fifth Sunday Dinner; singing and a devotional service at 1:00 pm.



YouTube Channel

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Wednesday Bible Classes for all ages — 7:00 p.m.

Christian Worship

(Is Community Church Worship Scriptural?)

(Is the Community Church Movement Scriptural?)

Donald R. Fox

“Oh! the drums go bang and the cymbals clang and the horns they blaze away” (O’Connor and Stamford) as the band plays on with vigor. Singers of the chorus and the musicians are at par with trained professionals. The worshipers, with arms raised, are swinging to the beat of the music. No doubt, all are enjoying themselves! Most of the congregation participates with the enthusiasm and ecstasy of the moment. There is a flood of so-called Community Churches in our neighborhoods. These churches entertain folks, and they will grow in number; this is certain.

In researching Community Churches, they have a statement of beliefs that covers many denominational creeds and doctrines.

There are also affiliations with movements such as the “Consultation on Church Union (COCU), the National Council of Churches, and the World Council of Churches.” One in this movement is “**The International Christian Community Churches.**” Their statement says that they “celebrate the diversity of God’s people and their mission to bring others to Christ. All of our churches are open.” Local Community Churches are diversified in beliefs with the approach, come as you are. Their dress code may be casual. Those attending these worship services are not pressed to be obedient to any code, creed, or doctrine. Again the idea seems to be, “We accept you no matter what

you believe.” “We are tolerant and judge not, so come and worship with us.”

It is prevalent to have this tolerant and liberal type of worship in today’s society. Such has become the norm! So goes the many as they conduct their worship. It is also our observation that the parking lots are always full. Yes, “Let us entertain you!” Question: “Is there Biblical New Testament authority for these worship services?” We also add: “Is there any Scriptural authority for this Community Church Movement?”

Without going into a deep Biblical study on what constitutes Christian worship, we can, in plainness, prove what Christian worship was in the First Century. We find that Christians worshiped on the First Day of the Week. “And upon the first *day* of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight” (Acts 20:7).

The New Testament Records Five Aspects of Authorized Worship

1. Teaching—Preaching as Worship: “Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine” (2 Tim. 4:2).
2. Praying as Worship: “And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Acts 2:42).
3. Singing as Worship: “Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord” (Eph. 5:19). “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in

all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord” (Col. 3:16). Note: There is no reference to instrumental music in church worship found in the New Testament (Schaff 460-465).

4. Contributing as Worship: “Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first *day* of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as *God* hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come” (1 Cor. 16:1-2).
5. The Lord’s Supper as Worship: “The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?” (10:16).

Works Cited

O’Connor, Shamus and John J. Stamford. “Mac-Namara’s Band.” 1917. Feb. 11, 2016. <<http://parlorsongs.com/issues/2002-3/thismonth/featureb.php>>.

Schaff, Philip. History of the Christian Church: Volume I, Apostolic Christianity, A.D. 1-100.

Saltillo, MS

He who has a thousand friends
Has never one to spare,
And he who has one enemy
Will meet him everywhere.

Author Unknown

Ten Ways to Get More Out of Life

Sometimes, our life can become dull, bleak, and routine. But it does not have to remain that way. The following are ten suggested ways to get more out of life:

1. Recognize that life is a gift from God not to be taken for granted (Jam. 1:17; cf. Gen. 2:7; Acts 17:24-25).
2. Put more into life: Get involved in the work of the Lord, helping others less fortunate by teaching them the saving Gospel of Christ (Mat. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16). The returns on that investment are enormous (Job 42:10; Mat. 25:14-17, 19-23; Rev. 2:10).
3. Never worry about tomorrow (Phi. 4:6; cf. Mat. 6:25, 34). All the worrying in the world will not achieve anything except an early grave. Instead, let us give our cares and concerns to the Lord (1 Pet. 5:7; cf. Psa. 55:22) and then focus on getting those things done that need to be accomplished today (Pro. 16:3; 1 Cor. 15:58).
4. Do not live in the past. Living in the past causes us to miss opportunities to achieve present goals (Phi. 3:13-15).
5. Live one day at a time. While there is nothing wrong with planning for the future, today is the only day we must accomplish the goals the Lord has set for us (Mat. 6:33-34).
6. Never expect to be free from problems. If it were not for problems, we would never be mentally and spiritually challenged to grow and develop into the individuals God wants us to be (Jam. 1:1-3, 12; 1 Pet. 1:3-7).
7. Focus on the positive aspects of life instead of the negative. Do away with any negative thinking by replacing those thoughts with positive thinking and action (Phi. 4:8; Gal. 6:10; Tit. 3:8).
8. Maintain a cheerful and positive disposition around co-workers. Our positive influence will change the lives of those around us for good (Phi. 4:4; 1 The. 5:16; cf. 1 The. 1).
9. Take a break from the monotony of our everyday schedule by going for a walk. Walking will reduce our stress level, but we just might also be surprised at what pops into our mind (Psa. 119:58-59; Luke 15:17).
10. At the end of each busy day, have a quiet secluded place to go and commune with the Lord (Mat. 6:6). A place to recharge our spiritual batteries. Our Lord was often found in a quiet and secluded location, communicating with His Father (14:23; Mark 6:46; Luke 6:12; Luke 9:28).

By applying the above suggestions, we will lead more meaningful and productive lives for the Lord and His kingdom (1 Cor. 15:58).

Author Unknown

Sermon Outlines

<http://www.bellviewcoc.com/sermons.html>

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“In Remembrance”

Brad Green

On Monday, May 30, 2022, our nation will observe Memorial Day. Memorial Day was first recognized to honor Union and Confederate soldiers after the Civil War but was extended after World War I to honor all Americans who died in war. This national holiday deserves the utmost respect; without those who gave their lives for our freedom, we might not have the opportunity to freely choose what we will or will not do on a given day. Sadly, many probably do not know the reason for Memorial Day. The date of observance was changed nearly forty years ago to create a convenient three-day weekend. Since then, Memorial Day, to some, has simply become the mark of the beginning of the summer vacation season. Ironically, the purpose of the day to be remembered has been forgotten. The only

way to halt this unfortunate trend is to teach and remind people of why we celebrate Memorial Day in the United States.

God reveals to us in His Holy Word that He has set apart a day of remembrance which is enjoined upon all men living today. It is a “**Memorial Day**” that, like our national holiday, has lost its importance in the minds of men. Men have moved (without authorization) God’s ordained “**Memorial Day**” for convenience. Men have chosen to take emblems that God commanded to be used on His “**Memorial Day**” and have combined them with man-made functions, tarnishing and dismissing the original meaning God consecrated for each. Men scorn those who teach that God’s “**Memorial Day**” must be followed and practiced precisely according to God’s pattern by com-

mand and example. Some cry, “it becomes too common,” when reminded of the often occurrence God prescribed for His “**Memorial Day**,” and for that reason, they choose to ignore it—except for perhaps a couple of times per year when they so choose for themselves. This “**Memorial Day**” is not enacted to remember the death of just any man. It does not memorialize the blood, tears, and terrible sacrifice of just any individual. It does not commemorate an act that granted physical freedom merely for the time being. God’s “**Memorial Day**” is a day to remember the greatest sacrifice ever made for man (Heb. 9:24-28), memorialize the sinless blood which was shed voluntarily for the sins of the whole world (Mat. 26:28; Heb. 4:15; 1 John 2:2) and commemorate the act which offered freedom from damnation and the hope of eternal life (Rom. 6:23; John 3:16). Jesus, the Christ, instituted the feast memorializing His death by saying, “Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.... This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink *it*, in remembrance of me” (1 Cor.

11:24-25). Those faithful to the Lord have been assembling “upon the first *day* of the week” (Acts 20:7) to worship God continually ever since the establishment of Christ’s kingdom (2:38-47; cf., Luke 22:18). Why would anyone choose to neglect and forsake the Lord’s “**Memorial Day**,” which God appointed to be on every first day of the week and at which we partake of the unleavened bread and grape juice (Mat. 26:26-29) to remember the sacrifice made by the sinless Son of God (John 1:29)?

It is good and necessary that we remember that the freedoms we enjoy as citizens of the United States came at an awful cost. Many gave themselves as sacrifices for the cause of liberty. How much more then should we honor and cherish the greatest of all sacrifices—the death of God’s sinless Son? Should we not dedicate our lives to Him by simply obeying His commands (John 14:15)? As with anything of great importance, the only way to preserve its value and respect is by teaching. The apostle Peter reminds us:

I now write unto you; in *both* which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour (2 Pet. 3:1-2).

Let us continue to study, teach, and practice God’s Word faithfully and never forget the words of Jesus shortly before His death, “This do in remembrance of me” (Luke 22:19).

Write these on the flyleaf of your Bible:

Bunyan: “Prayer will make a man cease from sin, or sin will entice a man to cease from prayer.”

Moody: “This Book will keep you from sin, and sin will keep you from this Book.”

Author Unknown

Lenoir City, TN

Modern Judaism

Jack Hardcastle

Judaistic teachers among the professed believers in Christ were aggressively opposed and condemned by Paul. They were more dangerous enemies than the idolaters or heathen philosophers because they preached Jesus as the Son of God and then dethroned Him by dividing His authority with Moses. “The Gentile Christians must be circumcised and keep the law of Moses” was their contention. Because they preached Christ, many of the people received them as ministers of Christ and died believing that they were right. They never learned until too

late that to be justified by the law was to fall from grace (Gal. 5:4).

We have many Judaistic teachers in the world today. Anyone who contends for the keeping of the law of Moses or any part of it in the Christian life and worship falls into that category. Nearly every denomination excuses one or more unauthorized practices by citing the law of Moses or some example under the law. One cannot be faithful to Christ and contend for the practice of a system that He died to take out of the way (see Col. 2:14).

Deceased

If God Went on Strike

It's just a good thing God above
Has never gone on strike
Because He wasn't treated fair
For things He didn't like.
If He had ever once sat down
And said, “That's it—I'm through,
I've had enough of those on earth,
So this is what I'll do—
I'll give my order to the sun,
Cut off your heat supply,
And to the moon—give no more light
And run the oceans dry
Then just to really make it tough
And put the pressure on
I'll turn off air and oxygen,
'Til every breath is gone.”
Do you know He'd be justified

If fairness was the game
For no one has been more abused
Or treated with disdain
Than God—and yet He carried on
Supplying you and me
With all the favors of His grace
And everything—for free.
Men say they want a better deal;
And so on strike they go
But what a deal we've given God
For everything we owe.
We don't care who we hurt or harm
To gain the things we like
But what a mess we'd all be in
If God should go on strike.

Author Unknown

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“If Any of You Do Err...”

Ken Chumbley

An erring brother is one who, at one time, was a faithful Christian but one who has now erred from the Truth.

Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins (Jam. 5:19-20).

One who errs could be an elder, a deacon, a preacher, or any other church member. Sadly, in the day in which we live, many preachers and elders find themselves in the situation of being erring brethren, either because of their having embraced false teaching or because of their fellowship with a known false teacher who has not repented and turned from the error. By upholding the impenitent false teacher, these elders and preachers violate John’s announcement:

Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into *your* house, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds (2 John 9-11).

Note that James stated above regarding the erring brother: He is a *sinner* who is guilty of “a multitude of sins.” Having erred from the Truth, such a one needs to be *converted* to the Truth and faithfulness. We should do all we can to convert such ones.

The opposite of the erring brother is the faithful one. The faithful Christian does not practice sin or walk in sin. Note another passage from John: “Whosoever

is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God” (1 John 3:9). This does not mean that it is impossible for one “born of God,” a faithful Christian, to commit even a single act of sin. To conclude such would place one in conflict with what John had previously stated in the same epistle:

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us (1 John 1:7-10).

We note that if a Christian says he never commits a single act of sin, he is self-deceived, and “the truth is not in him.” Further,

such a claim accuses God of lying—because He says that we do sin.

However, the faithful Christian does not continue to **live a life** of sin. This is precisely what is indicated by the tense of the Greek verb, translated as *sin* in the phrase, he cannot sin: **he cannot not keep on sinning** (3:9). If one continues to live a life of sin, it also means, as the inspired John states: God’s “word is not in us.” The faithful child of God walks in righteousness because God’s Word is in him. The Word of God is the *seed* (Luke 8:11) that controls his life. David, the sweet singer of Israel, wrote: “Thy word have I hid in mine heart, That I might not sin against thee” (Psa. 119:11). If we “walk in the light” (i.e., if this is our constant life pattern) and confess our sins, then the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, keeps on cleansing us from all sin (1 John 1:7).

Deceased

“What Sign Were You Born Under?”

Dub Mowery

You have probably been asked more than once the above question. When someone inquires me this question, my impulse is to say, “Since I am not a superstitious person, it does not concern me.” Actually, at this moment, I cannot tell you what my supposed zodiac sign is. It is shocking in an enlightened age that anyone would take astrology seriously. It is not a truly scientific endeavor.

We are not condemning astronomy which is a legitimate scientific approach to

studying stars and other heavenly bodies. Astrology enthusiasts believe that the position of stars at any precise moment can influence every human being. They further claim that a person born under a particular zodiac sign can determine their future destiny by the stars’ position. This irrational concept has been around for a long time. God’s inspired prophets of the Old Testament era condemned astrology and the worship of stars. Isaiah warned the southern kingdom

of Judah that the astrologers, the stargazers, and the monthly prognosticators could not save them from their enemies (Isa. 47:12-14; also read Jer. 10:1-2). Stephen declared of ancient Israel:

Then God turned, and gave them up to worship the host of heaven; as it is written in the book of the prophets, O ye house of Israel, have ye offered to me slain beasts and sacrifices *by the space of* forty years in the wilderness? Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your god Remphan, figures which ye made to worship them: and I will carry you away beyond Babylon (Acts 7:42-43).

They had acknowledged a star named Remphan as their god.

People throughout the United States consistently read the daily horoscope in their newspapers to determine what was in store for them that day. A large percentage of these people take these supposedly foretelling of the future seriously. Others claim they do so for their amusement in a similar manner in which one reads a fortune cookie at a Chinese restaurant. I ignore the posting of a horoscope in newspapers just as I would witchcraft. Brethren, who seriously participate in such shenanigans, are pleasing the devil, not the Lord. We should avoid saying, "You can thank your lucky star!" God is the one to whom we should express our gratitude.

Deceased

Sure, I'm a Christian

Well, no, I don't get to Bible study much. I would have to get up an hour earlier, and since I must get up early during the week, I like to sleep late on Sunday, you know. We don't go much on Sunday nights to worship, that is. You see, after a little trip on Sunday, it's hard to get back in time. Wednesday nights? I'm always too tired or have something to do.

Visit the sick? I'm not good at that anyway and feel like somebody that can do a better job ought to do it. Besides, it always depresses me. I guess I was not "cut out" for that sort of work. If I have any free time, I need relaxation. No, I don't seem to get much out of it. As for giving, well, that's mighty hard to do nowadays; it takes so much to live on.

Heaven? Yes, I'm going. What do you imagine that I'm faithful for? If it weren't for that, I wouldn't be here most Sundays and partake of the Lord's Supper. I think anybody who claims to be a Christian should be present most Sundays for the Lord's Supper. At least, that's what I've always been taught.

We wonder who did the teaching!

Author Unknown

Plutarch tells the story of Demaratus, who, being asked in a certain assembly whether he held his tongue because he was a fool or for want of words, replied: "A fool cannot hold his tongue."

Author Unknown

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Elward Brantley Phyllis Brantley
Sharon Hewitt (Karen Hatcher's co-
worker)
Andrea Ayliffe (Carl Ayliffe and
Charlotte Grant's sister)
Kelly White (Paul and Phyllis
Brantley's friend)

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June 5

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Sunday Bible Classes for all ages — 9:00 a.m.

Sunday Worship Services — 10:00 a.m., 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday Bible Classes for all ages — 7:00 p.m.

Are We Alone?

Paul Vaughn

One question that man has often asked is, “Are we alone?” For years men have looked to the heavens searching for intelligent life. Scientists have giant telescopes examining the solar system for life. They have also been listening with massive disks seeking to hear signs of intelligent life. Are we alone? No, we are not alone; there is intelligent life in Heaven.

God is in Heaven. It is written:

Therefore know this day, and consider *it* in your heart, that the Lord Himself *is* God in heaven above and on the earth beneath; *there is* no other (Deu. 4:39).

David said:

God looks down from heaven upon the children of men, To see if there are *any* who understand, who seek God (Psa. 53:2).

The intelligence of God is beyond any conception of man. God created the earth and all the celestial bodies in the heavens by His wisdom and power. “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Gen. 1:1). The unity of the solar system is evidence of the Divine Creator. The Scriptures teach that the universe is held together by the power of the Lord Jesus. It is written:

For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist (Col. 1:16-17).

Consist is defined as:

“to stand,” denotes, in its intransitive sense, “to stand with or fall together, to be constituted, to be compact”; it is said

of the universe as upheld by the Lord, Col 1:17, lit. (*Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words*).

The universe is held together by Lord Jesus. It is not just by chance, as modernists teach.

We are not alone. God is in Heaven, and He is speaking to everyone. We do not need to purchase giant disks pointing to Heaven to listen to His Words. All one must do is

open the Bible and let God speak to us from His wonderful Words. Paul said:

All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

Yes, God is speaking from Heaven, but very few are listening.

Hopkinsville, KY

What Do You Hear?

F. F. Conley

Two men were walking along a crowded city sidewalk. Suddenly, one of them remarked, "Listen to the lovely sound of that cricket." But his friend could not hear the sound. He asked his companion how he could detect the sound of a cricket amid the roar of the traffic and the sounds of the people. The first man, who was a zoologist, had trained himself to hear the sounds of nature—yet did not explain. He simply dropped a half dollar from his pocket onto the sidewalk, whereupon a dozen people began to look about them. "We hear," he said, "what we listen for."

It is quite obvious that we hear what we want to hear and what we are trained to hear. A baby is born to a young couple. She is concentrating on being a good mother. The young man is a member of the fire department of his city. The baby cries in the night. The mother is awakened. The young father sleeps on. The fire alarm sounds, and

he immediately awakes and is on his way to his post of responsibility. The young mother does not hear the fire alarm. We hear what we have been trained to hear.

We need to be trained to hear the cries of those who need the necessities of life. Let us train our ears to hear the urgency of the Master when He says, "Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest" (John 4:35).

Let us train ourselves to hear good things about people. So many are trained to hear the gossip and the unpleasant things about people. So many are trained to hear the gossip about fellow Christians.

A few days ago, a congregation member said, "I heard something good about you from people outside the church." He has trained himself to hear good and encouraging things. Our Lord said, "Take heed what ye hear" (Mark 4:24).

Deceased

Three Things That Satan Wants You to Do!

We who are Christians have a cunning, deceitful, and busy enemy. He seeks to turn those who follow God away. He even tempted our Lord. His name is **Satan**. Concerning him and his activity, Scripture says, “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world” (1 Pet. 5:8-9). Christian, notice three courses of action in the above text: (1) Be sober: be aware, alert, and awake. (2) Be vigilant: be watchful, careful, and on guard. (3) Resist: struggle against, and do not give in. Consider three things that the devil wants to do:

1. Satan Wants to Keep You Out of the Lord’s Church. The saved are in the church (Acts 2:47). The devil does not want you to become a Christian; he does not want you to be part of the saved. You who read these words, who have never obeyed the Gospel are right where Satan wants you to be. He is happy! The church preaches the Gospel (Eph. 3:10), glorifies God (3:21), and acts under the leadership of Christ (Col. 1:18), so Satan is glad you are not part of this activity—he already has you!

2. Satan Wants to Get You Back into the World. If Satan fails in keeping you out of the church, he will do everything he can to get you back into the world. Indeed, the Bible teaches that a Christian can stop serving God and return to the pollution of the world (2 Pet. 2:20-22;

Heb. 10:28-31), and Satan will rejoice if that happens to you. He has succeeded in the past (2 Tim. 4:10; Jam. 4:4) and will be working hard to weaken your faith, corrupt your morals, exhaust your resolve, undermine your convictions, and get you to quit the service of God. If you let him, then he will succeed!

3. Satan Wants to Make You Worthless to the Cause of Christ. If Satan cannot keep you out of the church or get you back into the world, he will try to make you ineffective to the cause of Christ. He will seek to get you uninvolved in the church and her work. We are to be zealous and active in the service of God (1 Cor. 15:58; 1 The. 1:3; Jam. 2:17). So, if Satan can keep us ignorant and apathetic, make us lazy and discouraged, and get us self-absorbed and self-concerned, he will be successful in making you worthless to the cause of Christ. He cannot do this if you do not let him! Are you a Christian? Are you active and involved in the work of God? Are you seeking first the kingdom? If not, you have succumbed to the enemy! Do not be ignorant of Satan’s devices (2 Cor. 2:11). Resist the devil (Jam. 4:7). Be vigilant against the old serpent (Rev. 12:9-10). Do not befriend the world (1 John 2:15-17). Always allow God to guide your life in all ways and at all times!

Author Unknown

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Elward Brantley Phyllis Brantley

Please Remember

June 12

Deacons' meeting will be held before the afternoon service, in room 1.

June 19

Visitation cards for Group 2 will be handed out.

June 19

Elders/Deacons' meeting will be held after the afternoon service, in room 1.

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Assuming Responsibility

Stan Harvey

Assuming responsibility seems to be a challenging trait for some to develop. From one's youth, he has been exposed to the demand, "Be Responsible!" One is most often taught, "You are responsible for your actions." The trouble with humans is the desire to shift or pass responsibility to others! In the Scriptures, when God asked Adam and Eve, "Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?" Adam answered, "The woman whom You gave *to be* with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate" (Gen. 3:10-13). Whether it is "pointing a finger" or "putting the blame" on someone else for the uncomfortable circumstances in their life, the cause remains very much at the forefront—a **refusal to accept responsibility for one's actions**. Remember,

"a weakened sense of responsibility does not weaken the fact of the responsibility."

Folks blame their parents, spouses, employers or employees, co-workers, circumstances, and peer pressure—they even blame God (cf. Jam. 1:1-13) for much of their misfortune, but it is most difficult for some to blame themselves. Some of the most heinous criminal acts in our nation and the world of recent years have seen misguided and troubled individuals/terrorists calmly walking into a place of former employment or a crowded restaurant or crashing into an unsuspecting building and then start shooting or proceed to blow themselves up—usually killing from a dozen to thousands of people before either killing themselves or being killed in the process. Reasons are often given for the tragic events: the person(s) per-

ceived they are being treated unfairly. One does not have to imagine how the victims and families felt about being treated unfairly! After the murder of Abel, God asked Cain, “Where *is* Abel your brother?” He said, ‘I do not know. *Am* I my brother’s keeper?’” (Gen. 4:8-9).

It is not hard to think that Cain, too, blamed God because God was disapproving of the sacrifice he had earlier offered while He was accepting the sacrifice of Abel. One can almost hear Cain say, “I was not treated fairly!” Long ago, Aristotle was credited as saying, “We become what we are as persons by the decisions that we ourselves make.” Solomon gave instructions long before Aristotle, “For as he thinks in his heart, so *is* he” (Pro. 23:7). God forcefully declared, “Be-

hold, all souls are Mine; The soul of the father As well as the soul of the son is Mine; The soul who sins shall die” (i.e., each will be responsible for his sin!) (Eze. 18:4).

From a Christian’s perspective, “responsibility is their response to God’s ability.” One man wrote, “Responsible persons (both physically and spiritually) are people who have taken charge of themselves and their conduct, who own their actions and own up to them—who answer for them” (cf. Job 19:4).

My dear friend, in the final scheme of things, “So then each of us shall give account of himself to God” (Rom. 14:12). Without a doubt, it is a principle that the world needs, too!

Copied

Father

F is for Faithful. Fathers should be faithful to God first, then to their families. As a child growing up, I did not have to worry about my father and mother not being faithful to each other. They realized marriage was for life or “unto death do us part.”

A is for Affection. There were a lot of worldly possessions that I did not have as a child but I did not realize it at the time. The greatest of all possessions was to experience the warmth and love of both my father and mother. The bumper sticker asks, “Have you hugged your kid today?”

T is for Time. We hear so much about time and rightly so. There is nothing equal to the fact that as a father you spend time

with your children. Little Johnny or little Suzie will be grown before you know it!

H is for Heritage. What are you, as a father, leaving behind for your children? Have you worked above and beyond to give your child material things, but neglected their spiritual wellbeing? The greatest heritage a son or daughter could have would be the privilege of having a Christian father.

E is for Example. As you know, your example is powerful. My own father’s example as a kind and compassionate man has influenced me greatly. Also, his example in regular church attendance instilled within me the great importance of putting the church first.

R is for Reprove. *Reprove* means to correct or to rebuke. So often we as parents believe that if we reprimand our children that we do not love them, but the Bible teaches right the opposite. Fathers have a great responsibility to see that their children are brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

We, as sons or daughters, are indebted to our earthly fathers. This is especially true if they are the type of fathers that God would have them to be. We should respect the wisdom of the “hoary head” and never refer to our dad as the “old man.”

Author Unknown

Which?

There are two ways of beginning the day—with prayer or without it. You begin the day in one of these two ways. Which?

There are two classes of people in the world—the righteous and the wicked. You belong to one of these two classes. Which?

There are two great rulers in the universe—God and Satan. You are serving under one of these two great rulers. Which?

There are two roads which lead through time to eternity—the broad and the narrow road. You are walking in one of these two roads. Which?

There two deaths which people die—some “die in the Lord,” others “die in their sins.” You will die one of these two deaths. Which?

There are two places to which people go—heaven or hell. You will go to one of these places. Which?

Ponder these questions! Pray over them! May the issue be your salvation from “the wrath to come.”

Author Unknown

Pride Rebuked

The life and death of our Lord Jesus Christ are a standing rebuke to every form of pride.

- *Pride of birth:* “Is not this the carpenter’s son?” (Mat. 13:55).
- *Pride of wealth:* “The Son of man hath not where to lay *his* head” (Mat. 8:20).
- *Pride of personal appearance:* “He hath no form nor comeliness” (Isa. 53:2).
- *Pride of reputation:* “Made himself of

no reputation” (Phi. 2:7).

- *Pride of superiority:* “I am...as he that serveth” (Luke 22:27).
- *Pride of ability:* “I can of mine own self do nothing” (John 5:30).
- *Pride of will:* “I seek not mine own will” (John 5:30).
- *Pride of resentment:* “Father, forgive them” (Luke 23:34).

Author Unknown

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Visitation cards for Group 2 will be handed out.

June 19

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BEACON

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Josephus and John the Baptist

B. C. Goodpasture

Josephus, the celebrated Jewish historian, was descended from an ancient and honorable line. He was the son of Mattathias. According to his statement, his mother was “a daughter of Jonathan, the first of the Asmonæans to rule over Israel in the capacity of high priest.” He was born in Jerusalem in AD 37 and died about the end of the first century. His early years were spent in diligent study of the Jewish traditions and the Old Testament. At the age of fourteen, he was so renowned for learning that chief priests and rabbis sought his advice on difficult points of the law. Later, he studied under the ablest Pharisaic, Sadducean, and Essene masters. In his late teens, he became infatuated with the teachings of the ascetic Bannus, but at nineteen, he adopted the teaching and manner of life of the Pharisees. When he was

twenty-six, the authorities in Jerusalem entrusted him with an important embassy to Rome. Later, he returned to Palestine and fought for a time with his countrymen against the Romans, but seeing the futility of further resistance, he surrendered himself to Vespasian, the Roman general. He was able to ingratiate himself into the favor of the Romans, who showed him much consideration. In Rome, he was given apartments in the emperor’s private house, Roman citizenship, and a pension.

It is chiefly as a historian that Josephus is remembered and appreciated. He wrote not only as a Jew but also as a Roman citizen in Rome, as a favored object of imperial consideration and generosity. He sometimes suppressed facts that might be unacceptable to his Roman admirers or dealt

with them inadequately. There are regrettable glosses and inaccuracies in his writings, but, as a whole, he has made a valuable contribution to the literature of his period. We would know relatively little about the Herods, the temple of Herod, and the destruction of Jerusalem if we did not have the writings of Josephus. His writings would throw much light upon Jewish history and customs, even if he did write with pro-Roman sympathy.

Josephus wrote four separate works, which have been preserved. These are *Jewish Wars*, *Antiquities*, his *Life*, and two books in defense of Judaism, commonly designated *Against Apion*. The *Antiquities* contains the testimony concerning John the Baptist. It follows:

Now, some of the Jews thought that the destruction of Herod's army came from God, and that very justly, as a punishment of what he did against John, that was called the *Baptist*; for Herod slew him, who was a good man, and commanded the Jews to exercise virtue, both as to righteousness toward one another and piety toward God, and so to come to baptism; for that the washing (with water) would be acceptable to him, if they made use of it, not in order to the putting away (or the remission) of some sins (only), but for the purification of the body; supposing still that the soul was thoroughly purified beforehand by righteousness. Now, when (many) others came in crowds about him, for they were very greatly moved (or pleased) by hearing his words, Herod, who feared lest the great influence John had over the people

might put it into his power and inclination to raise a rebellion (for they seemed ready to do anything he should advise), thought it best, by putting him to death, to prevent any mischief he might cause, and not bring himself into difficulties, by sparing a man who might make him repent of it when it should be too late. Accordingly he was sent a prisoner, out of Herod's suspicious temper, to Macherus, the castle I before mentioned, and was there put to death. Now, the Jews as a punishment upon Herod and a mark of God's displeasure to him (*Antiquities*, XVIII, 5, 2).

While Josephus is mistaken about the design of John's baptism and the cause of his death, he confirms the Sacred Record at many points. His testimony is unequivocal and decisive at these points:

1. He identifies the harbinger of the Lord as "John that was called the Baptist."
2. He affirms his integrity and religious character before the Jews. "He was," says Josephus, "a good man."
3. He commends his preaching. He "commanded the Jews to exercise virtue, both as to righteousness toward one another and piety toward God, and so to come to baptism."
4. He associates John the Baptist with Herod Antipas. According to the Gospel record, this is the Herod who John reproved on account of his adulterous marriage with Herodias, his brother Philip's wife (Mat. 14:3). If was Antipas who "sent and beheaded John in the prison."

5. He admits that John had great influence over men. “Herod feared the great influence John had over the people.” “And when would have put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet” (14:5).

Thus Josephus, who was an unbeliever, confirms the historicity of John the Baptist and his work. There was nothing in the religious or political surroundings of Josephus to prejudice him in favor of the Baptist. The influences under which he lived and wrote would rather prejudice him against John.

This passage from Josephus has never been seriously questioned as genuine. The strongest possible testimony is the admission of an opponent. Josephus’ misunderstanding of the purpose of John’s baptism is no more difficult to understand than erroneous teaching relative to the design of Christian baptism. The points of inaccuracy in the record of Josephus show that his word, whatever else may be said of it, was not the result of collusion with the friends of John in particular and Christianity in general.

Deceased

A Life of Trust

V. E. Howard

The beauty of a life of trust is incomparable. God is not ashamed of those who believe, trust, and obey. At one time, God said that “it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart” (Gen. 6:6), but this was because of the unbelief, disobedience, and corruption of man. If we are faithful and obedient and a friend of God, as was Abraham, He will not only be glad to be the God and Father of His creation (man) but will rejoice to be man’s greatest friend. No, God does not regret His creation of man if we love and obey. To show His appreciation, He has promised a city with many mansions in which the faithful may dwell. At the end of our faith, we may expect this promise—the salvation of our souls (1 Pet. 1:9). To this end, our faith must grow, but it must be fed and cultivated to grow. It

is fed by the Word of God, cultivated by obedience, and tested by trials. May our will always be subjugated to the will of God, with the sincere determination to obey faithfully, to the best of our ability, every command of Christ.

Deceased

Look Up!

Sometimes our ego prompts a right to the head that knocks us flat, but he is a friend who fears not to land the punch. Such a knockout tends to bring amnesia to our ego, and flat of the back is a good position from which to look up!

Author Unknown

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Rheba Stancliff Linda Worley

Elward Brantley Phyllis Brantley

Andy Waites (Dot Dodd's
grandson)

Jim Richmond (Dot Dodd's son-in-
law)

Toby Busch (Bill & Pam Busch's
son)

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June 29

Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00
p.m., in the auditorium

July 3

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Liberty

Brad Green

As we celebrate the Fourth of July, it is good and profitable to commemorate the day our nation was born. The United States of America declared its independence from Great Britain in 1776 and held its first Presidential election in 1789 as a free and sovereign new nation. Since then, the U.S. has been and continues to be the great beacon of freedom's light to the rest of the world. For 246 years, our nation has served as the foremost example of the prosperity derived from a free and entrepreneurial society. We should be most thankful to God for our freedom and the blessing of living in this beautiful country.

Much can be learned from comparing the liberty gained by the United States in 1776 and the liberty one can achieve in Christ. First, before this nation was conceived in lib-

erty, men had to acknowledge that they were living in bondage. Our forefathers declared the history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an **absolute tyranny** over these states (*The Declaration of Independence*—emphasis added).

Before one can be born again into the freedom in Christ, one must first acknowledge that he is in bondage to sin. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23).

Second, upon the understanding that the American Colonies were suffering at the hand of despotism, men chose to do something about the problem. In 1775, Thomas Jefferson wrote:

In our own native land, in defense of the freedom that is our birthright, and which

we ever enjoyed till the late violation of it—for the protection of our property, acquired solely by the honest industry of our fore-fathers and ourselves, against violence actually offered, **we have taken up arms**. We shall lay them down when hostilities shall cease on the part of the aggressors, and all danger of their being renewed shall be removed, and not before (emphasis added).

Our nation’s founders determined that they would need to take appropriate action to be free. In like manner, once an individual concludes that he is in bondage to sin, he must take appropriate action to lay hold upon the freedom which can only be found in Christ. The New Testament teaches that one must have faith (John 8:24), repent of past sins (Luke 13:3), confess that Jesus is the Christ (Rom. 10:9-10), and be “baptized into Christ” (Gal. 3:27) to enjoy Spiritual liberty and eternal salvation. As our nation was born out of tyranny and into freedom, men can be born again spiritually (John 3:5)—out of sin and into Christ.

Had our founding fathers not acted in harmony with their conclusions, they would

not have enjoyed the freedom which came from breaking the enslaving bands of Great Britain. If an individual does not act in obedience (Jam. 2:17, 24) and according to God’s Will (Col. 3:17), he cannot know the freedom in Christ. Today, we relish the liberty attained by our ancestors who, “with one mind resolved to die freemen rather than to live slaves” (Jefferson). However, with eternity in mind, we should resolve today to break away from the powers of sin and devote our lives to living as free men in service to the Most High God.

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Lenoir City, TN

Know Your Bible

Frank J. Dunn

Why must you know your Bible?

To have everlasting life. In praying to the Father, Jesus said, “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” (John 17:3). The Bible is the only source of

the perfect, saving knowledge of God and Christ.

To know the greatest book ever written. The Bible is the greatest book because God is its author. There were forty penmen but only one author. All the writers were “moved

by the Holy Spirit” (2 Pet. 1:21). “All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God” (2 Tim. 3:16). No other book can compare with the Bible. It is truly God’s book!

To know who you are. Only from the Bible can you know your origin, purpose, and destiny—where you came from, why you are here, and where you are going. We are not a product of evolution. We are a product of Divine creation. God made man in His image and a morally responsible, living soul (Gen. 1:26-27; 2:7). Our purpose is to glorify God and become as Godlike as possible in preparation for the Judgment and our accountability to God (Rom. 14:11-12).

To be saved from sin. The Bible is the only book with its central message, the salvation of sinners. The Bible alone answers the world’s greatest question: “What must I do to be saved?” “The Father sent the Son *to be* the Saviour of the world” (1 John 4:14). He saves sinners by His Gospel, “the power of God unto salvation” (Rom. 1:16). Therefore, Jesus said, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:15-16).

To identify the church of the Lord and know its importance. When one obeys the Gospel by being baptized into Christ, he is born again of water and the Spirit into the family of God (John 3:3-5). This is the spiritual body of Christ, the church of which He is the head (Eph. 1:22-23). Christ has only one body (4:4) and one church (Acts 2:47). In the New Testament, members of the Lord’s

church were Christians only (11:26) and the only Christians.

To find the Christian way of life, worship, and service. The inspired Scriptures are the only doctrine of the New Testament church. The Scriptures alone furnish us completely unto all good works (2 Tim. 3:16-17). The inspired Word teaches us that “denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world” (Tit. 2:12).

To reach the highest goal—“the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Phi. 3:14). Paul counted all things “*but* loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord” (3:8). We should strive to be like Paul, who, near the time of his departure from this life, could say, “I have fought a good fight, I have finished *my* course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing” (2 Tim. 4:7-8).

Deceased

Riches

R. M. McCann

The man who loves beauty has riches untold.

The rain is his silver, the sun is his gold.
He gives more to life than a millionaire can,

And he’s richer than ever, that fortunate man.

Deceased

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Randall Johnson Carla Burleson
Rheba Stancliff Linda Worley
Phyllis Brantley

Please Remember

June 29

Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00
p.m., in the auditorium

July 3

Visitation cards for Group 1 will
be handed out.

July 10

Deacons' meeting will be held
before the afternoon service, in
room 1.

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BEACON

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Minister: Michael Hatcher

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Sunday Worship Services — 10:00 a.m., 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday Bible Classes for all ages — 7:00 p.m.

Rising to the Occasion

Mike Demory

We read of several occasions when the people of God saw the perfect opportunity to serve God and did so with all their heart. In the wilderness, the Israelites had left the bondage of the Egyptian Pharaoh, now preparing to serve the God of Creation. Moses instructed them, “Take ye from among you an offering unto the Lord: whosoever *is* of a **willing heart**, let him bring it, an offering of the Lord” (Exo. 35:4-9). Notice that it was a free-will offering to the Lord for those of a willing heart. The purpose was to gather enough of the world’s goods to construct the tabernacle and its amenities. In verse 29, we are told, “The children of Israel brought a willing offering unto the Lord, every man and woman, whose heart made them willing to bring for all manner of work.” So willing were the people to serve the Lord that Exodus

36:5-6 tells us that Moses had to command the people to stop offering. What dedication! What love and reverence these people held for God!

Centuries later, after the Israelites had enjoyed all the blessings of being a mighty nation, having their own land, and being admired by the world, the Hebrew people had turned from God and served pagan gods. Jehovah punished them for their disobedience but eventually allowed them to return to their homeland. The prophet Nehemiah was serving the king of Babylon but was concerned for his people. He was allowed to go to Jerusalem to assist his brethren in rebuilding the city walls. Although there was much adversity among their neighbors, Nehemiah built enough confidence in the people to get the work

done. The record says, “So built we the wall; and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof: **for the people had a mind to work!**” (Neh. 4:6). Notice the attitude of these two groups of people who succeeded in their jobs. They had a willing heart and a mind to work.

Brethren, there is nothing that we cannot do when we achieve the same mindset. When we have a willing mind plus a willing heart to do things secular, there is nothing that will stop us. However, the same must be true in our service to God. It is sad to say that only ten percent of the members possess a willing mind and heart in seeing that the work is done in many congregations. Many of you have risen to the occasion having that willing heart and mind, desiring to learn and know God biblically, assisting with and being involved in putting together a pantry, helping fold our monthly articles, and supporting the work in Haiti numerous times. However, where we lack in our rising to the occasion is getting everyone to attend every service, every Bible class, and Sunday night service. Illnesses are understandable, but putting family, friends, board meetings, sports, or other things ahead of serving God is missing the point of Matthew 6:33 “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness.” When Jesus spoke to the people, telling them they must hate father, mother, brother, sister, aunt, uncle, friends, etc., to be His disciple, meaning, He must come **first** in every area of our lives (Luke 14:26-27). Priorities are what He was speaking about. Until we grow spiritual enough to

understand that it will be hard for us to rise to the occasion in the way God would have us to do. I have had to make hard decisions, “do I continue taking Karate class or in Bible study with the lost more important?” “Do I stay until the end of the Cowboy game and miss evening services, or do I leave early enough to make it to services?” “Do I take part in boards or other organizations knowing they always meet on Wednesday or Sunday, which would conflict with services?” I am sure you can guess my answer to myself. What would Jesus do in this situation? I must go with God every time if I desire to hear those words, “Well done, *thou* good and faithful servant” (Mat. 25:21).

God will receive the glory due Him every time we lovingly and willingly rise to the occasion and put God first in all that we do. Praise God for His infinite mercy, grace, and lovingkindness.

Mexico, MO

Prayer

J. Ellis

Prayer should be the key of the day and the lock of the night.

Prayer is the door of heaven's treasure house, and faith is the key that will unlock it.

Prayer is the ladder between heaven and earth.

Prayer is not overcoming God's reluctance; it is laying hold of His highest willingness.

Deceased

What Is Our Personal Responsibility to the Local Church?

Do you feel any responsibility to contribute to the work of the local congregation? We do not mean just giving money on the first day of the week, but actually being involved and active in the work of your home congregation.

Paul wrote, “So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God” (Rom. 14:12). The Bible also says, “For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every

secret thing, whether *it be* good, or whether *it be* evil” (Ecc. 12:14). These passages teach that we will each, as individuals, stand before God and give an account of our lives. I will give an account of how I used my talents and abilities in fulfilling my responsibility in the church.

Our individual responsibility in the church might be compared to a clock: For a clock to keep good time, each part, however small, must do its work and do it well. If one part stops working, it will slow the clock down or stop it altogether. Each part must do its work and its own work. This simply illustrates that each member of the Lord’s body has work to do in the church and the local congregation. We cannot expect others to do the work that we should be doing. We cannot expect others to do our work for us. We cannot expect the work of the church to go smoothly and be successful if we do not do our part.

The Lord has not given us all the same talents and abilities, but He has given us all talents and abilities (Mat. 25:14-15). Jesus says that talents were given “to each according to his own ability.” Some may have more talents than others, but we must each use our talents to serve Christ. Just as in the case of the one talent man (25:14-29), we will be lost if we hide our talent (fail to use it).

Author Unknown

A Little Less of Me

Let me be a little kinder, let me be a little blinder
To the faults of those about me; let me praise a little more;
Let me be when I am weary just a little bit more cheery;
Let me serve a little better those that I am striving for;
Let me be a little braver when temptation bids me waver;
Let me strive a little harder to be all that I should be;
Let me be a little meeker with the brother that is weaker;
Let me think more of my neighbor and a little less of me.

Author Unknown

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Randall Johnson Carla Burleson
Rheba Stancliff Linda Worley
Phyllis Brantley
Andy Waites (Dot Dodd's
 grandson)
Jim Richmond (Dot Dodd's son-in-
 law)

Please Remember

July 10

Deacons' meeting will be held
before the afternoon service, in
room 1.

July 17

Visitation cards for Group 2 will
be handed out.

July 17

Elders/Deacons' meeting will be
held after the afternoon service,
in room 1.



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BEACON

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Lay Aside Every Weight and Sin

Charles Pogue

Following the great chapter on faith of Hebrews 11, chapter twelve begins with these words:

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset *us*, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God (12:1-2).

The reference to running a race is one of those indications the likely writer of Hebrews is the apostle Paul in so much as he made a comparison of living the Christian life to the running of a race in 1 Corinthians 9:24-27. In both passages, the writer warns against

encumbering himself with things that would hinder his running the race.

In Hebrews 12:1-2, learning from the great cloud of witnesses discussed in the previous chapter, the Hebrew Christians in danger of leaving Christ and returning to the law of Moses were cautioned not to be hindered by two things. The first of these was to lay aside every weight. The weight here is about an incumbrance. The incumbrance is one the runner is responsible for laying upon himself. During his training and the actual running of the race, he does not hoist upon himself anything which would slow him down. Many of those who train for a race do so with weights tied around their ankles, but when it comes time to run the race, the weights are removed. The Christian does not dare load upon himself anything which

would slow him down or divert him from the course of living the Christian life. The key is to remove from himself the things of this world, which John describes in 1 John 2:15-17 as lust and the vainglory or pride of life. Those who put the things of the world above God the Father and Christ will be severely hindered, yea, prevented from running the race.

The second thing the writer admonishes Christians to lay aside is sin which so easily besets us. The devil is skillful in using those things which he can cleverly disguise to the point one may not recognize it for the sin it is. Any sin, though, whether it be one the person readily identifies as sin or is somewhat camouflaged by Satan to enhance its deception, must be left behind to run the race of life successfully to the end.

Let us further notice the use of *every* by the writer. It is not sufficient to lay aside some or even most of the weights and sins which beset us; we must leave them all behind. This was the intent when we arose from the watery grave of baptism (Rom.

6:3-4). It would be futile to say, I have not committed murder, only adultery, for the same Lord exposed them both as sin, and James tells us if one keeps the whole law yet offends in one point, he is guilty of all (Jam. 2:10). That is, he is guilty of violating God's law.

We are not left without assistance in laying aside such weights and sins, and Hebrews 12:2 identifies it. "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith." If we keep our eyes on the cross Jesus endured on our behalf, glorying in His immeasurable love for us with the cost of His life, He is there with His example and His Word to help us do the right and leave the wrong behind.

Hebrews 12:1-2 are wonderful words not only because they follow the great chapter of faith but because they are in and of themselves a wonderful recipe for running the race with confidence and completeness that, as Paul reminded the Corinthians, he did so to receive an incorruptible crown.

Deceased

"You Are Unloving"

Tim Smith

Has anyone ever told you that? I have heard that a few times through the years and things similar to it: "You are too negative," "You need to be more concerned with the spirit of the law and less concerned with the letter of the law," and more. Before finishing any article (this one included), I ask myself several questions about what I have writ-

ten—Is it correct? Is it needed? Is it balanced? Are there two or more ways of seeing the issue considered? Have I proven my point clearly? Am I speaking the Truth in love?

I love the Lord—first and foremost. I love my brothers and sisters in Christ. I love the lost—alien sinners and erring brethren. I love the liberals—they are lost, mistaken,

misguided (sometimes), ignorant (sometimes), and even hypocritical, but I love them anyway. I hope to call to their attention the errors of their ways so they might repent before Jesus comes or they die, for, lacking such repentance, He will spew them out of His mouth. Like them all, every line of this article is written with love.

Is it unloving to point out the error of one's way to him? Jesus did it. Paul did it. Peter did it. If you took out every book of the Bible that says something to us about the importance of living right and not living wrong, what would you have left? Not much. While it might be unpleasant to read of your sin, please stop accusing me (and others) of being unloving because we earnestly contend for The Faith (Jude 3). If we did not love, we would not try to correct it.

If what you read on these pages is wrong, prove it, and let me know; I do not wish to go to Hell for teaching false doctrine. If what you read on these pages is right and proves that you are doing something wrong, repent—for Judgment indeed comes. If you are proven wrong, and you refuse to repent, then you are the unloving one, for Jesus said, “If you love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15).

1 John 4:7-8

“Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.”

I remember an old saying about throwing a rock into a pack of dogs—which one barks first? Make sure that what you are doing is proper—it would be a shame to come so close to the Truth only to miss Heaven because of liberalism in whatever form. I do love Jesus. I do love you and long for your salvation. That is why I try to reach you with the Truth.

Deceased

Just What Can We Do?

“I cannot usher.”

“I cannot lead in prayer.”

“I cannot sing.”

“I cannot preach.”

“I cannot teach a Bible lesson.”

“I cannot come for Sunday school.”

“I cannot go—see, we have no car.”

“I cannot drive our car—my nerves.”

“I cannot come to midweek services.”

“I cannot help out in the Lord’s
Supper.”

“I cannot give—just have no surplus
money.”

“I cannot come for Sunday-night
worship, either.”

“I cannot speak to visitors—I’m so
timid.”

“I cannot visit where a Christian is
needed.”

“I cannot—uh—er—sorry—call on
George.”

Question: Just what **can** you do?

Answer: Make a pile of excuses.

Author Unknown

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Randall Johnson Carla Burleson

Rheba Stancliff Linda Worley

Phyllis Brantley

Tia McLeod (Paul & Phyllis

Brantley's daughter)

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July 17

Visitation cards for Group 2 will be handed out.

July 17

Elders/Deacons' meeting will be held after the afternoon service, in room 1.

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Bible Classes on Isaiah

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BEACON

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Wednesday Bible Classes for all ages — 7:00 p.m.

Why Are So Many Members of the Church Worldly?

Franklin Camp

Worldliness is conforming to the world. *Worldliness* is anything that is opposed to being transformed. *Worldliness* is “world-like-ness” in anything. *Worldliness* is anything that is not Christ-like or that hinders “Christ-likeness.” *Worldliness* is sin. After careful study, I have concluded that worldliness is the greatest threat facing the church today. I am convinced that most of our problems, individually and collectively, are rooted in this one problem. I believe that at the bottom of the attendance issues, small contributions, and the lack of development of Christians, will be found in worldliness. Just a moment in reflection will show this is true. Who attends the services of the church faithfully—the most spiritual or the worldly members of the church? Who is most concerned with their development in the Chris-

tian life—the spiritual or the worldly member? Definition Too Limited! I am also convinced that our definition of worldliness has been too narrow.

If this is true, I am afraid preachers, and teachers have contributed to worldliness by leaving the wrong impression on some. Too often we have confined the term to some few things, which were undoubtedly worldly, but were far from covering everything that should be included in the term. Many church members think that because they do not dance, wear immodest clothes, and a few other similar things, they are not worldly, yet in God’s sight, they are. I do not mean to suggest by this that these things are not worldly and that they should not be condemned, but we should not leave the impression that worldliness is confined to these. Have you

ever wanted any particular thing more than all else in the world and been willing to go to any extreme to attain it? Have you decided what you want your life to count for, or have you ignored such a decision? Would neither of the above be worldly when measured by God's standard? Please consider the following points:

First, I would say the cause is a failure to evaluate life properly. Too many church members have not learned life's actual values. They are interested in finding *happiness* but do not know where it is to be found. It has never dawned on them that happiness is determined by what one is. Look at the beatitudes and note the emphasis on character. Substitute the word *happy* for the word *blessed* and re-read the beatitudes. Someone describes Paul in prison as follows: "with life and all that men count dear behind, and with the horrors of a barbarous death before him, alone, unfriended and suckered, he is yet the happiest man in Rome. Among the millions within her wide walls, not another heart is so buoyant with hope, so lifted with you." This was true of Paul because he had learned life's values. He was happy because of what he was.

Second, so many church members are worldly that they have never tried to reach their potential in Christian living. Life will not remain a vacuum. It will be filled with something. If all Christians made a determined effort to fulfill their lives with good, there would be no place for the worldly. Too many are satisfied to just *get in* the church and do as little as possible! The natural result

of such is filling the void left with worldliness. God knew what he was doing when He said, "seek ye first the kingdom of God" (Mat. 6:33). This is not just an arbitrary command. It has as its basis the building of a life that is spiritual. The way to get worldliness out is to put something in its place! As long as members of the church refuse to fill their lives with service for God, there will be worldly members.

The third reason for so much worldliness in the church is indifference. This is perhaps one of the greatest hindrances to the problem's solution. It is much easier to travel the path of least resistance, to take the road mapped out by others, than to find out whether it is correct. So many church members live day after day not caring that they have no influence for good and are not interested in learning why. They are afraid if they got interested, it would upset their lives, and they just do not want this to happen. Let the preacher present any lesson, and they refuse to give it even a passing thought.

The fourth reason for worldliness in the church is that some do not want to pay the price necessary to be spiritual. The story is told of a young woman who, having observed the charming life and broad influence of a fine Christian woman, went to her and said, "I would give the world if I could only have your influence." The lady replied, "that is exactly what it costs." There is a price for everything, and spirituality is no exception. Until more Christians are willing to pay the price of spirituality, the church will be filled with worldliness.

The fifth reason for worldliness in the church is that custom rather than the Bible guides many. Many church members want the Bible on the plan of salvation, the church, its organization, and worship, but they do not want the Bible on worldliness. Do they ever give chapter and verse for their worldly practices? No. Their theme song is: “everybody else is doing it” and “I can’t see any harm in it.” That is precisely what denominational people say about instrumental music. Why

reject their plea for instrumental music and then turn right around and use their old worn-out arguments for your worldly practices? Then some say, “I can do it, and it won’t hurt me.” Suppose you could. Can a conscientious Christian be happy when he knows he is giving his time and lending his influence to that which degrades more than it uplifts?

Let us face the threat of worldliness and build spiritual lives.

Deceased

What We Do with the Scriptures in Order to Obey God

Johnny Oxendine

The Bible (the study of and obedience to) requires a discipline becoming increasingly remote from contemporary concerns. This is even more evident when attempting to engage people in serious Bible study, where it is notoriously difficult to relate the gripping (and sometimes technical) aspects of the Biblical narrative (or mosaic of types) to those who lack an overall interest (or proficiency) in either reading, history, or especially salvation (actual and thematic). This is why we think education is critical to the church’s future, even though it is of little interest to many youths in our society. To scoff at this is virtually to scoff at the Word itself! How often did Jesus say “have ye not read” (Mat. 12:3; etc.), or “ye do err, not knowing the scriptures” (22:29)?

Sometimes when we are reading the Bible, we need to understand how (and why) a particular passage is written or phrased the

way it is to create the effects that God wants (we all know Acts 2:38—and yet it is of critical importance the way God has laid it out for us: “repent and be baptized”). We attempted to appreciate better the last two verses of Jonah 4 in our Wednesday night class.

Then said the Lord, Thou hast had pity on the gourd, for the which thou hast not laboured, neither madest it grow; which came up in a night, and perished in a night: And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and *also* much cattle? (Jon. 4:10-11).

It is indeed remarkable how people can have such concerns for temporal, material, and self-serving things compared to spiritual things.

San Mateo, CA

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Randall Johnson Carla Burleson
Rheba Stancliff Linda Worley
Paul & Phyllis Brantley
Tia McLeod (Paul & Phyllis
Brantley's daughter)
Connie Drobac (Aleacia Godwin's
aunt)

Please Remember

July 31

Fifth Sunday Dinner; singing
and a devotional service at 1:00
pm.

August 7

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be handed out.

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BEACON

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July 25, 2022

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Tampering

Ken Chumbley

None of us like to have someone tamper with something we have made or something we have said or written. We regularly see where it has been charged—often rightly so—that the news media, written or spoken, have changed, misquoted, or misapplied something that another has said or written. We hear someone who takes a *sound bite* of what another has said and then, by quoting out of context or adding something to what has been said, makes it appear as though the one who had spoken had said what the commentator wants it to mean. When such misrepresentation is engaged, it leaves people with damaged—often *irreparably* damaged—reputations in the eyes of others. This is slanderous.

It is equally slanderous to apply such to what God has said. Jehovah God does not

like to be misquoted or misrepresented or have His Word misapplied. Yet, this is popular today, much of it being done under the guise of giving us “modern translations.” Many of these are not truly *translations* since they do not provide us a word-for-word rendering of the original—but prefer to give what is called a “dynamic equivalence.” One of these is the New International Version. This is an implied admission of taking liberties with the sacred text. Others are simply paraphrases and not translations, such as The Living Bible. These are often nothing more than commentaries that give us one man’s thoughts as to what he thinks or wishes God had said.

That man should be so bold as to change what God has said is amazing. However, Satan—from the beginning—has always

done so. Remember how in the Garden of Eden, he added the word *not* to what God had said, thus making it appear that God said the exact opposite of what He stated—and in so doing, deceived Eve into committing sin. When Satan tempted Jesus, as recorded in Matthew 4, Satan quoted Scripture—but misapplied it to tempt Jesus. However, Jesus was not deceived and was easily able to refute Satan.

God has warned man repeatedly not to tamper with His Word. In Deuteronomy 4:2, Moses, under inspiration, wrote, “Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish *ought* from it.”

In the middle of the Bible (Pro. 30:6) and at the end (Rev. 22:18-19), we find similar warnings, thus indicating how seriously God takes this matter. In the text in Revelation, fearful punishments are added to emphasize the point. Paul also warns us about perverting (changing or twisting) the Word of God and tells us that the curse of God is upon the one who will do so (Gal. 1:6-9).

May we, therefore, heed the Scripture’s warnings and not tamper with the Word of God. May we take care that we do not use or promote that which claims to be a *Bible* that tampers with God’s Word.

Deceased

Waiting to See Which Way the Wind Blows

Dub Mowery

When dark clouds hover over us, we are prone to gaze up unto them with anxiety. Or, if the wind picks up, we look toward the direction it is blowing. It is natural for us to attempt to anticipate what the weather conditions will be within the next few hours or even the next day or so. This is why we listen to the daily weather reports on television and the radio.

The expression: “Waiting to see which way the wind blows” is an analogy from weather observation. It figuratively has reference to someone delaying making a decision or taking any action on a given situation until he learns what other people are going to do. This indicates an individual lacks the moral courage to act on his own. The Bible reveals that most are frequently wrong about

a given issue or situation. The Son of God warns:

Enter ye in at the strait gate: for 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 (Mat. 7:13-14).

Regardless of what others do or do not do about any situation or issue, we still have our responsibility to the Lord.

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad (2 Cor. 5:10).

So, have the moral fortitude to stand up for what is right. The old saying: “Everyone’s

doing it!” will not cut the mustard on the Day of Judgment.

Remember, the winds often bring stormy weather. Just so, if an individual feels compelled to let others decide for them on moral and Biblical issues, that person will easily be misled. “So then every one of us shall give

account of himself to God” (Rom. 14:12). The apostle Paul could well be describing many in the church today when he wrote:

That we *henceforth* be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, *and* cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive (Eph. 4:14).

But the truth was he was stressing how those in the church should not be carried about with every wind of doctrine. Paul was pointing out that when God’s complete revelation was given, it would be the standard to avoid false doctrines.

It is a pity that many brethren fail to turn to the inspired Word of God on matters of faith. Division over such issues as the false practice of the Reevaluation/Reaffirmation of elders could have been avoided.

Deceased

God’s Word— Beginning and End

There is a unique harmony in the Bible. Take, for instance, a comparison of the first two and the last chapters:

In Genesis, the earth is created; in Revelation, it passes away.

In Genesis, the sun and moon appear; in Revelation, there is no need for a sun or moon.

In Genesis, there is a garden, the home of a man; in Revelation, there is a city, the home of the nations.

In Genesis, we are introduced to Satan; in Revelation, we see his doom.

In Genesis, we hear the first sob and see the first tear; in Revelation, we read: “God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying” (21:4).

In Genesis, the curse is pronounced; in Revelation, we read: “There shall be no more curse” (22:3).

In Genesis, we see our first parents driven from the tree of life; in Revelation, they are welcomed back.

Author Unknown

Me and Myself

I have to live with myself, and so
I want to be fit for myself to know.
I want to be able as days go by
Always to look myself straight in the eye.
I don’t want to stand with the setting
sun,
And hate myself for the things I’ve done.
I never can hide myself from me;
I see what others may never see;
I know what others may never know.
I never can fool myself, and so
Whatever happens, I want to be
Self-respecting and conscious free.

Author Unknown

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Connie Drobac (Aleacia Godwin's
aunt)

Please Remember

July 31

Fifth Sunday Dinner; singing
and a devotional service at 1:00
pm.

August 7

Visitation cards for Group 1 will
be handed out.

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Sermon Outlines

[http://www.bellviewcoc.com/
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Bible Classes on Isaiah

[http://www.bellviewcoc.com/
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Is Censorship all Bad?

Mike Demory

Censorship is defined as the suppression of speech, public communication, or other information. This is done because such material is deemed objectionable, harmful, sensitive, obscene, or slanderous. Socrates was sentenced to death in 339 BC for being guilty of corrupting the minds of youth with his philosophical teachings. There is nothing wrong in and of itself with suppressing corruptive speech or information. God said, “Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people” (Pro. 14:34). Satan will use any means of corrupting the minds of humanity, and it is God’s people who must stand at the gate of reason and sound the alarm when the devil’s servants are asserting their debauched thinking into society.

In Acts 19:19, in Ephesus, after the seven sons of Sceva were overthrown by an evil spirit, Jews and Gentiles turned to the Lord because this evil spirit knew Paul and the Lord Jesus. Those with the mystic arts piled their books of spells and burned them. This is what one might call *Self-censorship*. Something Christians must learn to do more and more as games, movies, TV shows, and books are becoming increasingly perverse. The onslaught of the Cancel Culture, so-called racism, wokism, and LGBTQIA+, is being aware of what our children and grandchildren are taught in school. Texas is again in the limelight of fake news media because they stand against perverseness. Fifty books have been found in elementary to high school libraries (and they could be in public libraries as well) that have been earmarked

for elimination because of their content. Every State should be doing the same. Following is a list of thirty-two of these books:

1. *Lawn Boy*
2. *All Boys Aren't Blue*
3. *The Handsome Girl and Her Beautiful Boy*
4. *Losing the Girl*
5. *Me and Earl and the Dying Girl*
6. *The Nerdy and the Dirty*
7. *Jack of Hearts and Other Parts*
8. *Forever for a Year*
9. *Drama*
10. *Better Nate Than Ever*
11. *Five, Six, Seven, Nate!*
12. *The Bluest Eyes*
13. *Out of Darkness*
14. *L8r, g8r*
15. *Fun House, A Family Tragicomic*
16. *Gender Queer*
17. *This One Summer*
18. *We are the Ants*

19. *The Breakaways*
20. *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*
21. *It's Perfectly Normal*
22. *Beyond Magenta*
23. *Monday's Not Coming*
24. *More Happy Than Not*
25. *George*
26. *What Girls are Made of*
27. *I am Jazz*
28. *So You've Been Publicly Shamed*
29. *Go With the Flow*
30. *Last Night at the Telegraph Club*
31. *Weird Girl and What's His Name*
32. *Flamer*

The titles sound innocent enough, don't they? Which is how good the devil is. Eighteen of the fifty books not listed deal with racism, wokism, and shaming whites. The above list of thirty-two books deals with rape, gender identity, sexual abuse, fornication of every stripe, the promotion of transgenderism, homosexuality, and self-gratification. Half the books contain explicit graphics, pictures, and wording. Librarians and school boards are objecting to the removal of these books as parents continue to file complaints (and rightly so). School districts say this is the most complaints they have received in the past two decades. What has changed that has caused this awakening by parents? First and foremost, the advent of CRT (Critical Race Theory) for one, as well as the rapid infusion of the homosexual agenda into every area of society.

Christians are supposed to be a positive influence on society for good. Whether a

His Loving-Kindness

It is marvelous (Psa. 17:7).

It is precious (marg.) (Psa. 36:7).

It is better than life (Psa. 63:3).

We are drawn by it (Jer. 31:3).

We are betrothed in it (Hos. 2:19).

We are quickened by it (Psa. 119:88).

We are preserved by it (Psa. 40:11).

We are crowned with it (Psa. 103:4).

We should think of it (Psa. 48:9).

We should praise it (Psa. 138:2).

We should speak of it (Isa. 63:7)

Author Unknown

community likes it or not, Satan's henchmen will undoubtedly cry out for censorship. Despite being labeled troublemakers, we must do all we can to ensure our children and grandchildren get pure teaching. Turning a blind eye to the ungodly propaganda of Satan and his cronies are not training up our children in the way they **should** go (22:6). No one needs to be saddled with such things as choosing a different gender, or sexuality, particularly our children. Jesus said:

but whoso shall cause one of these little ones that believe on me to stumble, it is profitable for him that a great millstone should be hanged about his neck, and *that* he should be sunk in the depth of the sea (Mat. 18:6—ASV).

Not all censorship is wrong. There needs to be a lot more of it. Let us choose to fear the Lord and find the knowledge of God (Pro. 2:5).

Mexico, MO

Importance of Self-Control

Growing is a great part of being a Christian. Every Christian should constantly strive to make their calling and election sure. Through a study of 2 Peter 1:5-11, the reader can find commands teaching the Christian how to do this. By adding what many call "The Christian Graces" to our lives, we can be sure that we will be given an abundant entrance into Heaven when we leave this earthly realm. One of the attributes that the Bible calls on us to take up in 2 Peter 1:5-11 is temperance or self-control.

Self-control follows knowledge. The King James Version reads, "and to knowledge temperance" (2 Pet. 1:6). A better translation of this passage is found in the American Standard Version, where it is translated, "and in *your* knowledge self-control." Because of our increase in knowledge, we gain self-control. Temperance is an essential quality. Solomon taught, "*He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; And he that ruleth his spirit than he that*

taketh a city" (Pro. 16:32). The Christian can buffet or govern his body. "I buffet my body, and bring it into bondage: lest by any means, after that I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected" (1 Cor. 9:27—ASV).

Self-control is vital to our spiritual health. The Bible warns us of what will happen if we do not use self-control. James said, "to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth *it* not, to him it is sin" (Jam. 4:17). If a Christian knows to do good and does not do it, knows what evil is, and goes ahead and does it anyway, he has a serious problem. If we do not do what we know is right, we sin. If a person does this, he needs to work hard at discipline and self-control. The Christian must add this quality to his life. We must avoid those things we know to be sinful. We must do those things that are right. We must have self-control.

Author Unknown

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Phyllis Brantley
Connie Drobac (Aleacia Godwin's
aunt)
Nancy Travis' mother

Please Remember

August 7

Visitation cards for Group 1 will be handed out.

August 14

Deacons' meeting will be held before the afternoon service, in room 1.

August 21

Visitation cards for Group 2 will be handed out.

August 21

Elders/Deacons' meeting will be held after the afternoon service, in room 1.

August 31

Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00 p.m., in the auditorium.



Proverbs 1:7-8

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: But fools despise wisdom and instruction.”



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Foes of the Family

Winfred Clark

Thinking people and casual observers must see by now that the family defined by the Bible is in a battle for survival. When you speak of a family, you speak of something as old as man. It started in Eden with God's blessings (Gen. 2:22-25). The first mention of a man and his wife is in Genesis 2:25. No other institution reaches beyond that, but it has forever had its foes.

Easy Divorce

Over one million couples will learn of "divorce granted" this year from some court in our land. That means millions of people are to be affected by the breakup of a family. Some are now saying one out of two marriages will end in divorce. To what would one attribute such a victory for this foe of the home?

One thing is the legal side of the coin. Divorces are being made easier and easier. In California, there is a no-fault divorce, so one does not have to give a reason for the divorce. One judge specializes in group divorce, on one occasion giving sixteen at the same time. Thus, the embarrassment is removed, and divorce comes easily.

Sometimes it is made easier by those who preach and teach. Some now would justify one's being divorced and remarried for reasons other than the one the Lord gave (Mat. 19:9). We are now told (though it is not new) that if one was divorced for some cause other than fornication before he was baptized, he could remain with his or her second, third, or fourth partner after he was baptized, thus making it easy for the divorced person to live on in adultery just

as he did before his baptism. We are told that baptism changes the nature of adultery into something pure, wholesome, and undefiled (Heb. 13:4).

Sometimes counselors advise people to divorce because they are not compatible. This is in spite of Paul's admonition that those who are married should not seek to be loosed (1 Cor. 7:27).

Some try to salve the conscience by saying, "It would be better for the children." Anybody knows that is a cop-out. This is nothing more than an excuse for one to run from an obligation. This ignores the effect the breakup of the home has on children. It is hard for a child to lose a parent by death or divorce. At least, though, children could say about death that if the parent had the choice, he (or she) would still be with them. This could not always be the reasoning in the case of divorce.

Indeed, we know that a home where war is the norm and not the exception is a hard place for a child, but if two people try, they can work through their problems. Even that gives the children more than they have where divorce finally raises its ugly head.

Loose morals also contribute to easy divorce. Divorce is not hard for those who have their eye on the back door at the time

of marriage. They approached it as though they were buying an article that could be exchanged if they were unsatisfied.

Divorce will come easily if one goes into marriage without the intent to be faithful, reserving the right to live as though not married. Such would untie him or her legally from a partner to who he or she was never committed from the start.

Evils of Drugs and Drink

Does anybody doubt the effects these have on the home? Ask a few battered and bereaved wives who have lived with drunkard husbands. Ask some young lady trying to raise a small child in a drug-infested home and circle of friends if such things are not foes to today's homes. Imagine a young lady married to a man who must smoke his *joint* with his friends while she tries to protect her child from such influences.

Does your heart not go out to Abigail, who was married to Nabal, who was given to drunkenness (1 Sam. 25)? Think of all the shame she had to endure and the uncertainty that faced her day and night because she never knew what to expect.

Yes, these are foes of the home and family that the faithful must oppose.

Deceased

Kindness

A. M. Burton

There is a story of an old man who carried a little can of oil with him everywhere he went, and if he passed through a door that squeaked, he poured a little oil on the hinges.

If a gate was hard to open, he oiled the latch. And thus, he passed through life lubricating all hard places and making it easier for those who came after him.

People called him eccentric and cranky, but the old man went steadily on, refilling his oil can when it became empty and oiling the hard places he found.

Many lives creak and grate harshly as they live day by day. Nothing goes right with them. They need lubricating with the oil of gladness, gentleness, or thoughtfulness. Have you a can of oil with you? Be ready with your oil of helpfulness in the early morning to the one nearest you. It may lubricate the whole day for him. The oil of good cheer to the down-hearted one—oh, how much it may mean! The word of courage to the despairing—speak it!

Our lives touch others but once, perhaps, on the road of life, and then, mayhap, our ways diverge, never to meet again. The oil of kindness has worn the sharp, hard edges off many a sin-hardened life and left it soft and pliable.

A word spoken pleasantly is a large spot of sunshine on a sad heart. Therefore, “give others the sunshine, tell Jesus the rest.”

Deceased

Sowing and Reaping

Sow a thought, and reap an act;
Sow an act, and reap a habit;
Sow a habit, and reap a character;
Sow a character, and reap a destiny.

How important, then, that our children and we read the right books, go to the right places, and associate with the right people. “Evil companionships corrupt good morals” (1 Cor. 15:33).

Author Unknown

Some Reflections

Robertson L. Whiteside

Esau sold his birthright for one mess of pottage. Reuben lost his birthright by fleshly indulgence (1 Chr. 5:1-2). Many people sell their interest in heaven for as little.

No earthly condition is more restful and satisfying than a peaceful and happy home. By selfishness, ill will, and strife, many families make a hell of what should be a near Eden.

While cultivating peaceful and friendly relations with the Philistines, Isaac was a

party to conditions in his home that caused bitterness between his two sons. When the father pets one child and the mother pets another, trouble is apt to come.

Esau and Jacob were so different in disposition that trouble would likely have sprung up between them without the help of Isaac and Rebecca. Still, it is pretty certain that their course made the feelings between Esau and Jacob more intense than they otherwise would have been.

Deceased

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room 1.

August 21

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August 21

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in room 1.

August 31

Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00
p.m., in the auditorium.



Psalm 27:11-12

“Teach me thy way, O LORD, And
lead me in a plain path, because of
mine enemies. Deliver me not over
unto the will of mine enemies: For
false witnesses are risen up against
me, and such as breathe out cruelty.”



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The Blessing of Law

Brad Green

Many in the religious world attempt to divorce God from law. The desire to do so stems from a disdain for *commandment-keeping*. It is impossible, however, to separate God from law. The laws of nature, which govern the seasons, movement of planets, and the universe, were spoken into existence by God (Psa. 33:6-9). Though being a faithful Christian entails more than just keeping commands, obedience to God's law is necessary for salvation (John 14:15; Heb. 5:8-9). The contempt for law may derive from the heart that does not want to be bound or constrained by limitations. This manner of thinking leads one to consider law as a curse. True freedom, however, is not defined as the absence of boundaries or limitations. True freedom requires law. We can confidently and safely walk downtown because the law

keeps murderers and thieves off the streets. By following "the perfect law of liberty" (Jam. 1:25), we can "Stand fast...in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage" (Gal. 5:1). Law is a blessing. Perhaps this fact can be illuminated by examining the consequences of denying that we are amenable to law.

First, if there is no law, there is no sin. The inspired John states, "sin is the transgression of the law" (1 John 3:4). Since "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23), then law must exist. Second, without law, chaos reigns. The apostle Paul reminds us that "God is not *the author* of confusion, but of peace" (1 Cor. 14:33). If God did not provide man a law by which to adhere, then man would be left to do that

which is “right in his own eyes” (Jud. 21:25). I can think of nothing more chaotic than for every man to determine for himself what is right and what is wrong. Jeremiah proclaims, “O Lord, I know that the way of man *is* not in himself: *It is* not in man that walketh to direct his steps” (Jer. 10:23). Third, without law, man could not know for sure if he is saved or lost. What a sad situation. Many find themselves in this situation because they reject the law and rely on their *feelings*. No matter how saved one may *feel*, he cannot **know** he is saved without law.

If one simply obeys the Gospel plan of salvation—hear (Rom. 10:17), believe (Heb. 11:6), repent (Luke 13:3), confess (Acts 8:36), be baptized (Acts 2:38), and live faithful unto death (Rev. 2:10)—then he can

know that he is saved. Jesus implores, “If ye continue in my word, *then* are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:31-32). True freedom exists only if we obey the Word of God (i.e., God’s law), and if one is faithful to that law, he can know he is saved. Today, the New Testament, or law of Christ, is in effect, and we must be loyal and true to it.

We should be thankful that God has given us a law to govern our lives. The law of God provides peace instead of chaos, supplies us with God’s plan to save man, and gives us a standard by which we can determine our faithfulness and whereby we can know if we are saved. The law of God and His Christ is truly a blessing.

Lenoir City, TN

Judah, Israel, and the Gentiles

E. M. Borden

Bible students know that the name Judah and the name Israel refer to the two kingdoms under Rehoboam and Jeroboam. The name Israel came from God when Jacob, the father of the twelve tribes, was called Israel. Regardless of what might have happened, all the descendants of Jacob were Israelites. The name Judah was applied to the Jerusalem kingdom. The name was taken from the name Judah, one of Israel’s sons. The name Jew was also used. Those who went away with Jeroboam were taken captive and were scattered among the nations. They lost their identity. Judah remained, in a way, until

Christ came. It was said in Genesis 49:10: “The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, Nor a lawgiver from between his feet, Until Shiloh come; And unto him *shall* the gathering of the people *be*.” Then Christ came through the house of Judah. Was He an Israelite? He certainly was, for He was included in the promise: “In thee shall all nations be blessed.”

The name Israel has been laid aside. Isaiah said that the Israelites, twelve tribes, would be called by a new name (Isa. 62:2-3). That new name was not given until the Christian dispensation. Those who were

Gentiles were included, for they were to see the righteousness of God before the new name was to be given. Now, there is neither Jew nor Greek, for we are all one in Christ. A particular preacher in Los Angeles spends much of his time trying to prove that certain nations, including England and the United States, are Israelites. Well, what if they are? Are they any better for being so? Whether Jews, Israelites, or Gentiles, we must come to Christ to be saved. Let us hear what Paul said: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye *be* Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 3:28-29). That promise came down through the tribe of Judah.

Here is a quotation from that preacher in Los Angeles: "If God had made a covenant with the Gentile nations, he would have said so." The covenant was made with Judah and Israel (Heb. 8:8). Jesus was a Jew, an Israelite. The apostles were Israelites, for they were in a line from Jacob to Christ. "To the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Rom. 1:16). Paul said he was a Jew (Acts 21:39). He was also an Israelite, a descendant of Jacob, Israel. What

How True!

The rich are not all righteous men,
Nor the humble in the ditch;
But faithful souls rise from the glen,
And the golly are always rich.

Author Unknown

we were in the past does not matter now. Those who are Israelites according to the flesh have no advantage over others, for all Jews and Gentiles must obey the Gospel to be saved. Cornelius was the first Gentile convert to Christianity. Peter, on this occasion, said: "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him" (10:34-35). Cornelius became a Christian. Here, the Gentiles have an interest in the name Christian. The name Israel was laid aside, but that Los Angeles preacher is still worried about it. If you have obeyed the Gospel, you are a Christian, not an Israelite according to the flesh. Jesus said: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me" (John 10:27). Who are the Lord's sheep now? His sheep are those who have obeyed the Gospel.

"Judah and Israel are different." Yes, they are different, yet all belonged to one family, the family of Israel. All were of Israel. All came from Jacob, Israel. They were, at one time, the chosen of God. The Gospel came to us through the Israelites. As I have said before, the name Judah came from Judah, the tribe with Benjamin that remained in Jerusalem under Rehoboam. Those who went away with Jeroboam kept the name Israel, those who remained in Jerusalem took the name Judah, and those who remained with Jeroboam were called Israelites. Christ was of the tribe of Judah and became the great lawgiver in the Christian dispensation.

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August 21

Visitation cards for Group 2
will be handed out.

August 21

Elders/Deacons' meeting will
be held after the afternoon
service, in room 1.

August 31

Fifth Wednesday Singing at
7:00 p.m., in the auditorium.



Psalm 33:6-9

“By the word of the LORD were
the heavens made; And all the host
of them by the breath of his mouth.
He gathereth the waters of the sea
together as an heap: He layeth up
the depth in storehouses. Let all the
earth fear the LORD: Let all the
inhabitants of the world stand in
awe of him. For he spake, and it was
done; He commanded, and it stood
fast.”



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Wednesday Bible Classes for all ages — 7:00 p.m.

Remember Lot's Wife Do Not Look Back

Charles Pogue

One who has decided to leave the world and obey the Gospel must remember the account of Lot's wife in Genesis 19 and not look back. As God said He would, He rained fire and brimstone on Sodom after Lot, his wife, and two daughters fled the sinful city. Contrary to God's instruction in verse 17, Lot's wife looked back and was turned into a pillar of salt. As Lot's wife should not have, the newborn babe in Christ must not look back to the life from which he came. Be it understood, the same warning applies to any child of God.

One must not turn back to old priorities. The person of the world puts the things of the world ahead of God. Some of those things may not be sins unless placed ahead of God. Even those, if placed ahead of the kingdom of God and His righteousness in

importance, become sin. The first phrase of Matthew 6:33 is, "But seek ye first." That is a command. Why is that the Lord's instruction? For one thing, if one does not seek the spiritual above the carnal, he places himself in the perilous possibility of deserting the Lord and His church altogether. As did the church at Ephesus, he will leave his first love (Rev. 2:4).

The newborn babe in Christ and every other Christian must not look back to sinful companionships. Jesus said in Luke 6:22:

Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you *from their company*, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake.

Why would the Lord say such a thing? One reason is if one remained in the company of such men, they could pull him back

into sin. Paul instructed the Corinthians to come out from among idolaters (2 Cor. 6:17). Paul set the backdrop for that instruction in the first letter when he told them evil companionships corrupt good morals (1 Cor. 15:33—ASV).

The Christian is not to look back to the old way of life. How sad it is when one is delivered from the grasp of sin only to return to missing it and eventually return to committing the sin itself. Paul gives a powerful recipe for avoiding such in Philippians 4:8:

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things *are* honest, whatsoever things *are* just, whatsoever things *are* pure, whatsoever things *are* lovely, whatsoever things *are* of good report; if *there be* any virtue, and if *there be* any praise, think on these things.

If one thinks upon that which is good, he will do that which is good. If he thinks upon the evil, he will likely return to practicing it. In Jesus' prayer to the Father on behalf of His apostles, He prayed not that they would be taken out of the world but kept from evil (John 17:15). How would it be accomplished? Verse 17 says, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." Why else would David say he loved the law of the Lord, and it was his meditation all day? (Psa. 119:97). Because it kept his mind on righteousness rather than wickedness. By keeping one's mind on that which is of God, including God's promises, he will not return to the life of sin.

One must not look back and return to religious error. While many man-made doctrines are easy, they are just as false as they

are easy. It is easy for the ill-informed to believe the doctrine of salvation by grace alone and its cohort, once saved always saved. It is easy for one to believe the falsehood of the perseverance of saints while he partakes in drunkenness, fornication, and other lusts of the flesh while believing he is

What We Hear Today

B.C. Carr

From the same pulpits where brave and faithful men stood we are hearing:

1. Salvation is by grace alone. There is nothing man can do toward his own salvation.
2. Others are saying we are saved by faith alone.
3. We are told that instrumental music is a matter of tradition or opinion.
4. Pattern theology is to be rejected. We should be less rigid in our beliefs.
5. The "old paths" mentality should be rejected.
6. We should not believe we are the only true church.
7. The Scriptures should not be used as proof texts.
8. We need to give women a more prominent role in the church.
9. Preachers are swapping pulpits with denominational pastors.
10. Fellowship among all who believe in Christ should be practiced.

Deceased

still saved. Growing in the knowledge of God's Word will keep him from man's errors, making it impossible for false teachers to deceive him.

After reminding the Hebrews of the great people of faith in chapter 11 of that epistle, the apostle then wrote in Hebrews 12:2:

Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despis-

ing the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

If we keep our eyes upon Jesus and the cross, knowing the joy set before Paul is also awaiting us, we will not be like Lot's wife and look back. We will be as Paul who pressed toward the mark for the prize set before him (Phi. 3:14).

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Worship Assembly Tips

Have you ever heard someone say, "I just don't get much out of the worship assemblies"? This may be more of a commentary on the person than the meeting. Some suggestions may help us improve the quality of our worship when we assemble on the Lord's Day:

- 1. Make worship assemblies a priority:** It is the most important commitment of the week. It is nothing less than a meeting with God.
- 2. Do not bring God leftovers:** God has always demanded the "first fruits." He cannot be satisfied with the scraps. Get plenty of sleep on Saturday night and come to worship with an alert and refreshed mind.
- 3. Prepare your mind:** Discipline begins in the mind. So does discipleship. Train your mind to concentrate on things of the Spirit.
- 4. Be on time:** Rushing in late makes it difficult for you to settle into meditation and disturbs other worshippers. Get up a little earlier if it is necessary.
- 5. Make your worship God-centered—**

not man-centered: Worship is primarily a giving situation. Those who say, "I don't get much out of worship," are wrongly focused. It is in the giving of ourselves that we get.

6. Bring your Bible: Coming to worship without your Bible is like going out to drive your car without your car keys.

7. Sing: Singing is not an option; it is commanded. Those who violate this command are just as guilty as if they neglected the worship assembly in the first place.

8. Practice "flexible seating": Experience has shown that some church members would rather switch congregations than pews.

9. Be friendly before and after: Christians are God's "family." Family members should know and love each other.

10. Listen carefully to the sermon: Taking notes may help. Follow along in your Bible. Take the message seriously. It will encourage the preacher. It will show non-Christians that you are earnest.

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Please Remember

August 31

Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00
p.m., in the auditorium.

September 4

Visitation cards for Group 1 will
be handed out.



Ephesians 2:13-17

“But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition *between us*; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, *so* making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.”



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What to do When Your Nation is in Decline

John Chowning

The Jews' rejection of Jesus, her Messianic King, sealed her doom. Not one stone of the temple would be left upon another (Luke 21:6). Political turmoil, religious apostasy, indifference, social chaos, and the persecution of Christians were all on the immediate horizon (21:8-19). The Most-High who rules in the kingdoms of men (Dan. 4:25) and determines the rise and fall of every nation (Acts 17:26) would encompass Jerusalem with armies (Luke 21:20) and execute God's righteous judgment on that generation (21:21-32). And, as the Jewish historian Josephus so thoroughly documents in his extensive writings, Jesus' prophecy was fulfilled precisely as predicted.

No patriot wants a front-row seat to watch as his beloved nation declines and falls. The prophets Jeremiah and Habakkuk

had such a vantage point, and it broke their hearts. Jeremiah rightfully earned the nickname of "the weeping prophet" because he ever strove to prevent such a catastrophe. His repeated warnings of Jehovah's certain wrath upon all ungodliness and unrighteousness fell upon impenitent ears.

Though I am not a prophet or the son of a prophet, each of us has a front-row seat to watch America's increasing decline. As the open embrace of humanism with its toxic tentacles ever increases among our fellow citizens, the principles of righteousness will proportionately decrease. Respect for God, authority, the rule of law, marriage, and innocent human life is not insignificant matters; they are the essential building blocks of a morally vibrant society. The testimony of history and Scripture is plain: Moral and

spiritual decay within a nation always results in oblivion because “Righteousness exalteth a nation: But sin *is* a reproach to any people” (Pro. 14:34).

What are Christ’s disciples to do during such a time of national decay? Jesus’ words in Luke 21:33-36 contain our Lord’s concise counsel. He states:

Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away. And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.

For a disciple of Jesus to make and keep the main thing during such times, they need to:

Focus on the imperishable, not the perishable. Not only do nations rise and fall, but the very earth on which they exist will also pass away. The only kingdom on this earth which cannot be moved (Heb. 12:28) is the eternal one the God of heaven set up in the days of the Roman Empire (Dan. 2:44). It is eternal because its Constitution—God’s Word (Luke 8:11)—is imperishable (1 Pet. 1:23). Like the flower of grass, a nation’s glory withers and falls away, but the word of the Lord endures forever (1:24-25).

Take heed to yourself. Satan seeks to distract people, so they do not make and keep the main thing. Distraction from God and His Word is a spiritual snare. It is intention-

ally designed to take your attention and focus off seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. The cares of this life are thorns that destroy the fertility and productivity of good soil (Luke 8:14). While thus distracted, God’s Day of Judgment will come upon you, and you are unprepared for it. Tragically, you will have an eternity to mourn your lack of preparation.

Watch and pray. Continuous spiritual alertness is imperative. Being alert in prayer is part of a Christian soldier’s armor (Eph. 6:18). Spending time in prayer and making supplication and intercession for all who are in authority (1 Tim. 2:1-2) is commanded. Spending time following the daily “news” and allowing it to generate cares and fears in your heart is not. We all watch something. I decide whether I am watching and praying

Time

Time is money—we have no right to waste it.

Time is power—we have no right to dissipate it.

Time is influence—we have no right to throw it away.

Time is life—we must value it greatly.

Time is God’s—He gives it to us for a purpose.

Time a sacred trust—we must answer for every moment.

Time is wisdom—we have no right to be ignorant.

Time is preparation for eternity—we must redeem it.

Author Unknown

about things related to the kingdom of heaven or matters only related to the kingdoms of this earth. Watching and praying over spiritual things will prepare me to stand

before the Son of Man. Watching and paying attention to worldly things will not. Beloved, make and keep the main thing.

Fort Wayne, IN

A Debt We Cannot Pay

Dub Mowery

A large percentage of people are deeply in financial debt. They owe for such things as their house, automobile, medical expenses, credit cards, and personal loans. Our society is one that lives on borrowed money. Not only is this true, but our nation is deeply in debt! As a nation we owe trillions of dollars. It does not seem many of our elected officials are concerned about this. Perhaps this is because they are more politician than statesman.

There is no question we owe a debt in which it is impossible for us to pay. When we sin there is no way, on our own, we can escape the consequences of it. It is only in Christ the price of our sin can be paid. He purchased the redeemed in His church with His own blood (Acts 20:28).

Jesus spoke a parable bringing this truth out with emphasis on our need to forgive others as the Lord has forgiven us. Hear His Words concerning this:

Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The ser-

vant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt. But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellowservants, which him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took *him* by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt. So when his fellowservants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses (Mat. 18:23-35).

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September 4

Visitation cards for Group 1 will be handed out.

September 11

Deacons' meeting will be held before the afternoon service, in room 1.

September 18

Visitation cards for Group 2 will be handed out.

September 18

Elders/Deacons' meeting will be held after the afternoon service, in room 1.



1 Timothy 2:1-2

"I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, *and* giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and *for* all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty."



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Jonah's Responses

David Ray

The four short chapters of the book of Jonah provide a simple, four-point summary of man's options for doing God's commandments, whether concerning evangelism, worship, or daily Christian living.

Chapter 1—Running away from God

Chapter 2—Running back to God

Chapter 3—Running with God

Chapter 4—Running ahead of God

This outline is far from original; it was probably used as early as the days of Jonah himself! But it shows us how people of all ages have treated God's commandments: obediently or disobediently. There are no other options.

First, Jonah disobediently ran away from God's commandment to go to Nineveh and preach repentance to those dreaded Assyrians, the dominant world power of the day.

Jonah has been called the "patriotic prophet" because of his ill feelings toward Assyria and his resistance to this evangelistic campaign God commanded. Instead of going to Nineveh, he got on a ship to Tarshish. Of course, we are familiar with how God gave Jonah three days and three nights of personal time to rethink his decision.

Second, after seeing the error of his way, Jonah obediently ran back to God. In his prayer (Jon. 2), he seemed to fully recognize the seriousness of running away from God and His commandments. He confessed his grim situation—separated from God—and truly acknowledged God and His way by saying, "Salvation is of the Lord" (2:9). Sometimes, it seems as if more of God's people could benefit from some alone time in a big fish.

Third, after going in the opposite direction from God, Jonah finally completed the appropriate “180” by returning and running with God. Having been given a second chance at obedience (3:1-2), “Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord” (3:3). Perhaps there is not another phrase in the Scriptures more important than “according to the word of the Lord.” It is truly a statement of obedience. If Jonah had perceived this two chapters earlier, he could’ve avoided a hideous experience. But, like children rebelling against their parents, sometimes we don’t learn that our Father is right and always has our best interest at heart until we find out on our own (usually the hard way).

God’s ways are always right! He has never been wrong, never misunderstood any-

thing, never made a mistake, never added too much, or left anything out. God has never had to say, “Oops!” He has never left His people wondering what He wants and expects of them. He has given His people the instructions and commandments they need for all things (2 Pet. 1:3); yet, those same people often ignore His Word and feel the need to do it another way. After all, times change. Surely God didn’t know what the world would be like two thousand years later! He did know, and His ways will still work, but only if we trust and obey Him, not adding to or subtracting from His instructions (Deu. 4:2; 12:32; Pro. 30:5-6; Rev. 22:18-19).

Fourth, Jonah ran ahead of God in his assumptions of what was right and just. He said to God, “I knew that thou *art* a

In the Minority

When Noah was building the ark, he was very much in the minority—but he won!

When Joseph was sold into Egypt by his brothers, he was in a decided minority—but he won!

When Gideon and his three hundred followers, with their broken pitchers and lamps, put the Midianites to flight, they were in an insignificant minority—but they won!

When Elijah prayed down fire from heaven and put the prophets of Baal to shame, he was in a notable minority—but he won!

When David, ridiculed by his brothers, went out to meet Goliath, in size, he was in a decided minority—but he won!

When Martin Luther nailed his theses on the door of the cathedral, he was a lonesome minority—but he won!

When the Roman soldiers crucified Jesus Christ, He was a conspicuous minority—but He won!

Author Unknown

gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil” (Jon. 4:2). In other words, “I didn’t want to come here and preach because I was afraid the Ninevites might actually repent, and if so, I knew you would forgive them!” Jonah did not want this! He sulked because God didn’t destroy the city. It’s amazing how quickly he forgot about the second chance he’d been given! I imagine we’re all guilty of this memory loss at times.

God values judgment and justice among His people (Gen. 18:19), but sometimes His people don’t understand how His mercy works with these. Never forget that we all are deserving of His wrath. If we don’t receive it, it’s because we have repented and been baptized for the forgiveness of our sins, and He has mercifully forgiven us.

Do we alone deserve such mercy? Aren’t the “Assyrians” in your family and office worthy of the same opportunity? What about those “Ninevites” in your neighborhood?

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Pillar and Ground of Truth

Catholics sometimes quote 1 Timothy 3:15, which states, “the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth,” to prove that the church is invested with authority to legislate in divine matters (See *Father Smith Instructs*, Jackson, p. 35; *The Question Box*, p. 96). The phrase “pillar and ground of the truth” **does not mean** that the church is the originator of truth or that it can make or change the laws of God. It simply means the truth’s upholder, defender, and proclaimer. The apostles often praised churches for **proclaiming** the truth, “For from you sounded out the word of the Lord...is spread abroad” (1 The. 1:8). They commended them for **defending** the truth, “in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers with me” (Phi. 1:7—ASV). However, no single verse in the Holy Scriptures indicates that the church **has the authority** to originate truth or decree laws for God.

The apostles and prophets (and they alone) were commissioned by the Lord not to originate truth but to reveal it. “Forever, O Lord, thy word is firmly fixed in the heavens” (Psa. 119:98—Catholic Edition RSV). Their task was **once and for all** completed, for they gave us the written New Testament of Christ.

The church’s responsibility today is simply to follow, defend and proclaim the truth they revealed. *The Catechism for Adults*, page 54, says, “The Catholic Church alone has the authority to rule and to teach.” However, the authority is not in the body but the Head (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18). The ruling is not in the kingdom but the King (Heb. 7:1-2; Rev. 1:5-6). The authority is not in the church but Christ (Mat. 28:18; 1 Pet. 3:22). The church is not the Savior but simply the body of the saved (Acts 2:47; Eph. 5:22-24).

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Bill Busch

Sympathy

Our deepest sympathy is extended to Nancy Travis in the death of her mother, Bonnie Rutledge, on August 28. Please keep Nancy and her family in your prayers.

Please Remember

September 11

Ladies' Bible Class will meet after the afternoon service, in the library.

September 11

Deacons' meeting will be held before the afternoon service, in room 1.



Deuteronomy 10:12-13

“And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, To keep the commandments of the LORD, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good?”



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Why Christians who Have Fallen Away Refuse to Return to the Lord

Mike Demory

Although there is a common belief that men cannot fall from God's grace, the Bible teaches otherwise. Why else would the Holy Spirit include such things as the pig returning to the mud hole (2 Pet. 2:22) or the warning to the Galatians that if they chose to follow the Old Law, they would fall from grace (Gal. 5:3-4)? There is little that we know of Hymenaeus and Alexander other than the fact that Paul had turned them over to Satan so they would learn not to blaspheme (1 Tim. 1:19-20). It is possible that Hymenaeus joined with another man by the name of Philetus to continue to overthrow the faith of others, which shows his resolve not to return to the Lord (2 Tim. 2:17). Prayers are sometimes lifted-up for such wayward brethren in hopes that they will

repent and return to the true path of righteousness. However, our prayers often go unanswered, not because of God, but because the heart of the individual no longer loves the truth. While many excuses are offered as to why men and women will not repent, the following are the real reasons they refuse to return to the Lord.

Love of Sin

Rejection of the Gospel is the number one reason why people never become Christians in the first place or refuse to return to the Lord. The devil is very good at packaging sin as something pleasurable without after-effects. Sin always appears to be something other than what it is, a cruel taskmaster. Paul reminds us that we should never allow sin to rule our lives to the point that we obey its

every lust (Rom. 6:12). Christians who have turned away from the Lord have forgotten that they once were made free from sin and had become servants of righteousness (6:18-20). Peter warned of those who had gone astray by forsaking the right way because they became enticed by sin, particularly the lusts of the flesh (2 Pet. 2:15-20). How sad that those who once had known the way of righteousness now love the ugliness of sin.

Love of Ease

Jesus spoke of two paths; one is narrow and requires dedication, while the other is wide and is easy to go through (Mat. 7:13-14). Many have turned their back on the Lord due to pure laziness. Taking the easy way is the path of those who commit suicide, which backsliding Christians commit spiritually speaking. Jesus never said that being a Christian would be easy. He said it would be just the opposite (5:10-11). While unrepentant brethren have believed the lie that unfaithfulness is easier, God said, “the way of the unfaithful *is* hard” (Pro. 13:15).

Love of Lies

The prophet Jeremiah described the shame of Israel’s unfaithfulness to their God when he wrote, “Because you have forgotten Me And trusted in falsehood. Therefore I will uncover your skirts over your face, That your shame may appear” (Jer. 13:25-26). God had hoped that shaming them would open their eyes to their fallen condition, but like so many unrepentant Christians today, they hardened their hearts. Some brethren do not realize they have fallen away from the Lord while attending congregations that

have long taught contrary to the Word. Paul warned the Galatians about the lies they had accepted when he said, “I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel” (Gal. 1:6-9). Children of God who have fallen away often opine that they see the Scriptures differently than they once did. In other words, they have swallowed the lie that one doctrine is as good as another. Whether the lies of different interpretations or that God is responsible for one’s situation, the love of lies has reaped multitudes for the cause of Satan.

Love of Man’s Approval

Possibly one of the primary causes of Christians falling away from the truth has to do with the approval of others. They care more about what others think than what our Lord thinks. Paul reminds us that as Christians, we are to *transform* our minds or thinking (Rom. 12:2). John warned that caring more about the world proves a lack of love for God (1 John 2:15), and James says it makes us God’s enemies (Jam. 4:4). Many continue to please others because they are no longer servants of Christ (Gal. 1:10).

There are many reasons why some Christians have chosen to fall away and refuse to return to the Lord, and these examples are just a few. How truly sad, despite the encouragement and prayers of the faithful to get the unfaithful to return to their Lord, they continue to “crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put *Him* to an open shame” (Heb. 6:6).

Mexico, MO

We Must Grow

Bob Wear

After becoming a member of the Lord's church, being a Christian is a process of growth and development. Peter, an apostle, said: "But grow in grace, and *in* the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 3:18). Paul, in the second letter to the church of the Thessalonians, said:

We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth (2 The. 1:3).

Some were rebuked for not growing: For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which *be* the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat (Heb. 5:12).

The members of the Corinth church were not growing:

And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, *even* as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able *to bear it*, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas *there is* among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? (1 Cor. 3:1-3).

Failure to grow is most unfortunate for the souls of men. God's plan requires progress and definite results. He demands fruitfulness. We must grow.

There is much in the inspired writings concerning growth. Peter, directed by the Holy Spirit, writes:

Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby (1 Pet. 2:1-2).

Deceased

Much Talking

The tongue is an unruly member. Being forked can bless or curse, speak the truth, or lie. One should not tell all he knows but be sure he knows what he tells. Some talk to say something; others because they have something to say. He is blessed and knows how to punctuate the conversation with periods. Be not like the married man who summed life up this way, "During courtship, I talked, and she listened. The first year she talked, and I listened. Now we both talk, and the neighbors listen."

Author Unknown

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Nelda King Heather Stark

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September 18

Visitation cards for Group 2 will
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September 18

Elders/Deacons' meeting will be
held after the afternoon service,
in room 1.



1 Samuel 2:1-3

“And Hannah prayed, and said, My heart rejoiceth in the LORD, Mine horn is exalted in the LORD: My mouth is enlarged over mine enemies; Because I rejoice in thy salvation. *There is* none holy as the LORD: For *there is* none beside thee: Neither *is there* any rock like our God. Talk no more so exceeding proudly; Let *not* arrogancy come out of your mouth: For the LORD *is* a God of knowledge, And by him actions are weighed.”



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A Lasting Memorial

George W. DeHoff

Men have ever erected memorials to honor significant events and cause them to be remembered by coming generations. Thus, Jacob erected a heap of stones at the scene of his dream of a ladder reaching to heaven with angels ascending and descending. Joshua erected a monument of twelve stones where Israel crossed through the Jordan to enter the promised land. The Passover was instituted to commemorate the first Passover in Egypt. No one can tell how many millions of people have lifted their eyes to the sky to behold the rainbow—a monument that God will not again destroy the whole population by water.

Lord's Supper Instituted

The most significant monument of all time is the Lord's Supper. When men are conscious that death is just ahead, their

actions have added significance. Our Lord instituted the Supper on the night of His betrayal (1 Cor. 11:23). It is not a church ordinance originated by a preacher or bishop to control the other members; it is the Lord's ordinance given by the Head of the church.

The Elements

The elements of the Lord's Supper are plain unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine. Jesus, taking the bread, said, "This is my body," and concerning the fruit of the vine, He said, "This is my blood" (Mat. 26:28). It is a common practice in the Bible to say, "This is," meaning, "This represents." Christ said: "I am the true vine" (John 15:1); "I am the door" (10:7); "The seed is the word of God" (Luke 8:11). Genesis 41:26-27 states, "Seven good kine are seven years-

...seven lean kine...are seven years." "Seven empty ears...are also seven years." The idea of representation is clearly understood when a man exhibits a photograph and says: "This is my mother." The bread and wine are not actually the blood and body of Christ, nor do they become such when blessed. That is a false doctrine originated by the Catholics. Jesus meant: "This bread represents my body, and this fruit of the vine represents my blood." We eat bread; we drink the cup.

Names for the Communion

There are four Scriptural names for this service: the breaking of bread (Acts 2:42), the table of the Lord (1 Cor. 10:21), the communion (10:16), and the Lord's Supper (11:20). There is no necessity for one who knows the truth to call it the eucharist, the sacrament, or a mass.

Commune With Christ

Christ is with us in the communion service (Mat. 26:29). We commune with Christ and not with man. Some have thought: "If

there is a hypocrite present, I cannot commune." Such a person would not have the right attitude for communion even if no hypocrite were present. Imagine one looking over an audience of five hundred and deciding whether a hypocrite was there before communing! Only God could look into their hearts in the first place, and, in the next place, who appointed us to judge in this matter? All Christians are to commune. The unbaptized do not commune because they are not Christians. The table is in the kingdom. Each man is to examine himself (1 Cor. 11:28). The Baptists and other groups say: "We will examine you, and if we approve you, you can eat." The idea of man conducting an examination is in the Bible, but he is to examine himself, not others.

"In a Worthy Manner"

The Bible tells us not to eat in an unworthy manner (11:27). It does not say only worthy people can eat—none are worthy of eating at the Lord's table. It does not say: "If

The "Layman's" Beatitudes

Blessed is the man whose calendar contains prayer-meeting nights.

Blessed is the man who does not remain away from the church because it drizzles.

Blessed is the man who can stay over an hour in a church service.

Blessed is the man who loves the Lord's work with his pocket and heart.

Blessed is the man whose watch keeps church and business time.

Blessed is the man who leaves the back pew for the late comers.

Blessed is the man who does not have a summer "layoff" from his religion.

Blessed is the man whose eyesight will stand as much reading of the Bible as the Sunday newspaper.

Author Unknown

you sin, you had better not commune.” It simply says for us to commune sacredly, solemnly, seriously—in a worthy manner, befitting the high and holy institution of the Lord’s Supper. Do not refuse to commune if you have sinned when the Lord’s day comes. You will then have two sins to straighten up instead of one. If you sin, ask God to forgive you, and then commune like the Bible teaches. Those who realize their unworthiness are the ones who are in the right spirit to commune.

“When Shall We Commune?”

Upon the first day of the week, the disciples came together to break bread (Acts 20:7). “I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day”

(Rev. 1:10). “Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together as the manner of some is” (Heb. 10:25). And does not 1 Corinthians 16:1-2 teach that God’s children will assemble every first day of the week?

The communion service is in memory of our Lord’s death until He comes again; it shows our faith in His second coming and our dependence upon His blood as our atonement. No Christian will let trivial things keep him from the communion service. He will try earnestly to be there every Lord’s day, just as our Lord intends that He shall be.

Deceased

Dedicated Servants

Tim Smith

We, as Christians, are to be dedicated servants in the Lord’s vineyard. We are dedicated to Him in all things. He is paramount in our business decisions, our home life, and our pleasure pursuits, in all. We do not decide to do something that takes us farther from Him—it is simply not what a dedicated servant of His would do. If we find ourselves in a situation where we have drifted, we do all that is within our power to get back to safety. It is just what the dedicated do.

We recognize the importance of influence. We do not wear clothes that would cause someone’s thoughts to stray. We do not go places that would lead others to sin. We do not support causes that oppose

His. We will not allow our names to be used to endorse or compliment those things, people, groups, movements, or educational institutions that oppose Him in any way.

We recognize the importance of example. We will not do what is wrong—among other reasons—because of the example it would set. If we sin in a public way (i.e., forsaking the assembly, drinking, illegal drug use, etc.), we will repent in a public way—in no other way can the damage of a bad example be combated. We truly seek to lead others to Jesus in all we do, say, and are.

Are you a dedicated servant?

Deceased

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No Holds Barred

(An idiom meaning without restrictions or rules).

Donald R. Fox

I received an interesting e-mail from a friend on March 30, 2012. We were discussing our society and the changing of times. My friend commented that there is coming a time, and maybe it has already arrived, that our society can expect to see no holds barred. My friend went on to describe a woman who was a guest singer on an American Idol TV show (March 2012) and used the idiom “no holds barred.” The guest singer was wearing a dress with hardly any top. Jumping around, the singer had to turn her back on the audience to *fix* her top. She went on to say that the MC said after the song that it got a little risky at one point.

This guest singer showed the world that she did not care if her dress was indecent. If her dress was too risqué, who cares; no

holds barred. The word risqué is defined as “verging on impropriety or indecency.” Have we, as a society, sunk to the level we are without restrictions or rules? Stated another way, have we reached the point that we do not recognize “verging on impropriety or indecency”? What is normal today? Do we recognize any restrictions on personal conduct?

The earliest reference I can find to no holds barred is from *Manitoba Daily Free Press*, February 1892: “Wm. Gibbs, the Kansas man, and Dennis Gallacher of Buffalo engaged in a wrestling match at the opera house here tonight. Gibbs was strangled into insensibility and may die. The match conditions were best two in three falls Greco-Roman style; no holds barred.”

There Is an Absolute Standard of Morality
We often hear it said that there is no absolute code of moral behavior to follow. Many persons think that everything in the world is only relative in value. To believe in absolute authority in the realm or [sic] morals is considered unsophisticated, naïve, and medieval. We are told that good is good only because certain cultural environments have accepted it as good; that evil is evil only because certain social norms have classified it as evil (Amick 275).

In spite of the fact that many educated persons deny its worth, there is a code of moral behavior that is constant and absolute. There is a voice of authority to tell us how to behave toward one another so the

very best in human benefit will result. There is a standard of moral conduct that humans can follow with complete confidence. This voice of absolute authority is the voice of God! This example of perfection is Jesus Christ! This code of absolute value is found in the Bible! (Amick 276-77).

It is sad to realize that many in the world community have completely rejected or ignored the true and everlasting standard.

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; Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate,

A Personal Question for Preachers

Price Billingsley

With Paul it was a small thing that he should be judged by men, but it was a matter of life and death as a steward of the Word of God that Jehovah should judge him faithful. Ezekiel phrased this terrible law by saying that if one did not speak to warn men with this Word that he should answer with his own life for the failure. Paul said that in his preaching he shrank not to warn and keep back nothing, though this cost him dearly in public esteem. How vital it is to remember the vast difference between the truth and the whole truth! For there is very much truth that is so pleasant that nearly everybody likes to hear it. But also there is much truth that is bitter and which most auditors deeply dislike to hear. I assure you there is nothing personal in asking this question of you. But we ought to know if a man is trustworthy with the Word of life and death. If you shrink and dodge in preaching the whole Truth, may we not doubt that you are in Paul's class?

Deceased

deceit, malignity; whisperers, Backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them (Rom. 1:28-32).

There Are Restrictions and Rules. Therefore, Man Is Without Excuses:

Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou con-

demnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things. But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things (2:1-2).

For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God (10:3).

Works Cited

Amick, Fred A. *Hearing for Eternity*, Vol. II. N.p.: n.p., n.d.

"No holds barred." <<http://www.phrases.org.uk/meanings/no-holds-barred.html>>.

Saltillo, MS

"What Is a Family?"

Warmth when the world is cold—safety when the world is hostile—a place of love in a world of hate—a place of light amid darkness.

This is a family—a family is many things:

It is love around the table or in front of the fireplace—devotion sitting on a pew together—a mother singing as she prepares supper—father happily playing with laughing children.

A family is a yell squad when victory is won—a place of understanding and starting again when a defeat must be endured.

It is a very private organization—only bona fide members are allowed in—as a poet said, "all of us are we—and everyone else is they." It is held together with the glue of love and the cement of mutual respect.

The family is a shelter from the storm—a safe and friendly port when the waves of life become too wild. No person is ever alone if he is a member of a family.

The smile of a mother—the robust laughter of a father—the giggle of daughters—the shouts of sons—that is a family.

They may taunt one another—fight, fuss, and bicker among each other. But, when trouble threatens from outside forces, instantly the ranks close, and the troops unite against the common foe.

A family is all these things—but, most of all, a family is a group of human beings working together to build something beautiful and lasting.

A family is a colony of heavenly bliss—right here on earth.

Author Unknown

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BEACON

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The Doctrine of Christ

Brad Green

Doctrine is translated from two Greek root words: one meaning “words” and the other defined as “teachings.” Jesus, Himself is the pure embodiment of the Word.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.... And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth (John 1:1-3, 14).

Jesus is also the fulfillment of the words of the Old Law.

Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot

or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled (Mat. 5:17-18).

The question then is, what words did Jesus teach? Jesus said:

All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: **Teaching** them to observe **all things whatsoever I have commanded** you: and, lo, I am with you always, *even* unto the end of the world” (28:1 8-20).

The inspired men who penned the books of the New Testament only had the authority to teach that which Jesus taught them. These men were also commanded to teach **all things** that Christ commanded them to teach. Therefore, the only logical conclusion that can be made is that all New Testament words, which inspired men penned, were

written by the authority and command of the Christ. Therefore, all New Testament words are Christ's teachings.

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us **by his Son**, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds (Heb. 1:1-2).

There are several false views promoted regarding the Doctrine of Christ. Perhaps the most prominent is the teaching that the Doctrine of Christ is the doctrine **about** Christ. This view is an attempt to eliminate works of obedience in relationship to salvation. If abiding in the Doctrine of Christ only means faith in the incarnated Christ and His ministry on Earth,

then all those who believe in Jesus and His ministry are in fellowship with God (2 John 9). Inspiration defines the Doctrine of Christ as much more than just the life of Christ and His works. The record of Acts 8:35-38 dictates that confessing "that Jesus Christ is the Son of God" (8:37) and water baptism (8:38) are included in preaching Jesus (8:35).

Another false view is that the Doctrine of Christ only consists of the words printed in red. Friends, neither the color of the type nor the font of the print were inspired by God. The words themselves are God's; the art of printing belongs to men. The first "red letter" edition of the Bible was not printed until 1900 and was the product of a magazine editor, Louis Klopsch.

A third false teaching regarding the Doctrine of Christ is that the Four Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) are not a part of the New Testament. They assert that since the context and events recorded in these books occurred during the Mosaic Law, the books should be considered a part of the Old Testament. The proponents of this view are primarily attempting to dismiss Jesus' teachings about Marriage, Divorce, and Re-Marriage (Mat. 5:32; 19:9). There are many flaws to this false doctrine. One, the Gospels were all written between A.D. 60-65. Jesus nailed the Old Testament to the cross (Col. 2:14) some 30 years earlier. What sense does it make to think that 30 years after nailing an old system of law to the cross, Jesus would add four more books? Second, all of the books

I Would Rather

I would rather be a "has been"
Who had fought for noble cause,
Although I had lost the battle,
Thank to be a "never was."

I would rather toil and labor
For a principle of right
Than to ride to easy riches
Won by mailed fist of might.

I would rather have a record
Of an honest, humble name
That to win success and honor
That had caused distress or shame.

Author Unknown

of the New Testament were either written around the same time or before the four Gospels. Common sense demands that we acknowledge the Gospels as “the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God” (Mark 1:1).

Let us accept the entirety of the New Testament as the Doctrine of Christ, rightly divide the word of Truth (2 Tim. 2:15), and abide therein, so we may have fellowship with God (2 John 9).

Lenoir City, TN

Pressure

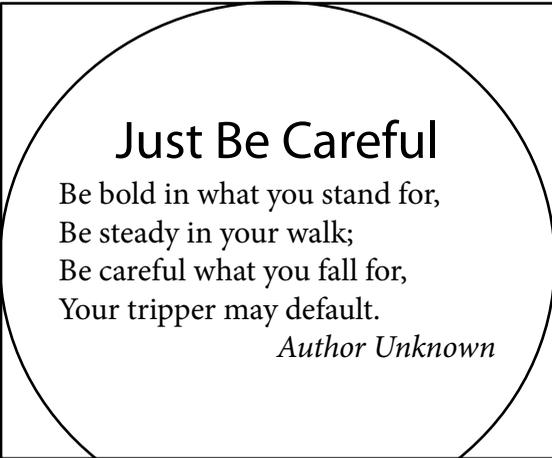
We are living in a world that is filled with pressures. We have family pressures, social pressures, political pressures, and others too numerous to mention. All of these are exerting their power upon us, and we often yield to them to the point of surrendering Christian principles. Pressure is one of the greatest things with which Christians of today must cope. Sometimes members of our families will prevail upon us to do things that the Bible condemns, and eventually, because of the pressure, we compromise. In doing so, we are denying the Word of God as our source of Authority and guidance and are following the wishes of others rather than the will of God.

Those who employ pressure to get what they want are not limited to any one class of people, and many Christians are among this group. If a preacher or teacher is proclaiming the truth “too plainly,” they will immediately begin to pressure others to help pressure the preacher so that he will *soften* his preaching. Preachers are told that if they do not *line up* with this group of Christians or another group of Christians, they will be unable to find places to preach. Many compromise for the sake of convenience and not conviction. We need to be aware that the Scriptures say:

but sanctify in your hearts Christ as Lord: *being* ready always to give answer to every man that asketh you a reason concerning the hope that is in you, yet with meekness and fear (1 Pet. 3:15).

Years ago, two men lost their lives because they were unwilling to compromise with those who would pressure them. They were Stephen and John the Baptizer. Today, we should be willing to defend what we believe, even if it means that others will ridicule us and our convictions. If we realize when we are doing the Lord’s will that He will be pleased, it should matter very little what others think.

Author Unknown



Just Be Careful

Be bold in what you stand for,
Be steady in your walk;
Be careful what you fall for,
Your tripper may default.

Author Unknown

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Dot Brantley

Restored

Jenny Sheline was restored to Christ on September 28, and has placed membership with the Bellview congregation. Her address is posted on the bulletin board. Please keep Jenny in your prayers and offer her encouragement.

Please Remember

Every Sunday

Ladies Bible Class will meet after the afternoon service in the library.

October 9

Deacons' meeting will be held before the afternoon service, in room 1.

October 16

Visitation cards for Group 2 will be handed out.

October 16

Elders/Deacons' meeting will be held after the afternoon service, in room 1.

October 30

Fifth Sunday Dinner; singing and a devotional service at 1:00 pm.



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Tell Him His Fault

Charles Pogue

Jesus said in Matthew 18:15, “Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.” There are several things that one is required to have to comply with this command of the Lord. Without these character qualities and sufficient thought given to whatever the problem might be, unnumbered wrongs are never made right. The predominant point in this article is to deal with that situation in which one has committed a trespass but does not realize it. The offended one must tell him his fault. Some might, on the surface, say, “that kind of trespass is impossible to commit.” No, it is not impossible. It has happened many times.

Of thing that will prevent the offended one from approaching the offender (or an

alleged offender for that matter) is a lack of love. Without love, if one is offended, the likelihood of him sitting around and silently stewing about the problem is great. In such cases, a good and thorough reconsideration of 1 Corinthians 13 would be in order. If one has been trespassed against but will not let it be made known, he may be more lacking in love than the one who committed the trespass against him.

A second thing that will prevent the offended one from approaching the offender is a poor attitude that allows him to jump to conclusions. It is far too common for an individual to say, “He did me wrong, and he knows it, and until he apologies to me, he is anathema to me.” Along with Christ’s requirement that an offended one takes action, the reality may be that the one who commit-

ted the trespass may not realize that he did something that caused a rift between him and his brother. Someone has said, “Cowards jump from bluffs, and fools jump to conclusions.”

A third thing that is needed to approach an offender is a backbone. One who lacks the courage to say to someone, “you did me wrong,” or “you did something that is just inherently sinful,” is among the cowardly group ready to jump from the bluff. The coward may be in the worst condition because cowards do not love enough to correct one who has done wrong, and his attitude prevents him from taking personal responsibility in almost every circumstance. The fearful are among those listed in Revelation 21:8 who will have their place in the lake of fire.

We should never fool ourselves. If someone does us wrong without realizing it at the time of the action, they will quickly catch on that there is a problem somewhere if we, the offended, do nothing. The offender notices that the person no longer speaks to him. Instead, they realize it when they are avoided

like the plague. They are no longer treated or communicated with the way they were in the past. If he does not realize what he has done, he will ask himself, “what did I do?” He may even be unsure whether he did anything to cause a division. Perhaps, he thinks he is being blackballed when he is not, but on the other hand, maybe he is. That is not a comfortable feeling, and perhaps for him to pass the courage test himself, he should ask if he has committed a trespass. However, that is for a different article. Here, the subject is the responsibility of the offended one, not the offender.

Silence is not golden when a trespass is involved. Instead, it is the absence of love, an indication of a poor attitude, and a lack of courage. If, of course, one has committed an offense against you or me, and we follow the procedure Jesus outlined in Matthew 18, we have protected our souls even if we are unsuccessful at reclaiming the brother. If, however, we are sinned against and say not a word, our end will be the same and as frightening as his.

Deceased

Stealing a Reputation

Paul Vaughn

Perhaps, the greatest thief is the one who goes about stealing another’s good name. God hates the lying tongue. It is written, “These six *things* the Lord hates, Yes, seven *are* an abomination to Him: A proud look, A lying tongue, Hands that shed innocent blood, A heart that devises wicked plans,

Feet that are swift in running to evil, A false witness *who* speaks lies, And one who sows discord among brethren” (Pro. 6:16-19). Again, it is written, “A lying tongue hates *those who are* crushed by it, And a flattering mouth works ruin” (26:28). A lying tongue carries the same punishment as murder. Yet,

there are multitudes who seek to destroy a good person's reputation because of jealousy and envy. Their goal is to steal not material treasures or wealth but a good name. The robbers of reputations take something of greater value than money.

The destroyers of reputations unleash a terrible plague that eats away at the respect and honor of another who is innocent. This evil influence can reach the hearts of many wise and good people who turn their ears to

the ruiners of reputations. The thieves of reputations break every moral rule of conduct set forth in the Scriptures. Jesus said, "Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets" (Mat. 7:12). This moral code established by the Lord will never change nor grow out of date. Therefore, everyone should make a sound moral judgment and never seek to steal anyone's good name.

Hopkinsville, KY

Plan for Worship to Make It More Meaningful

Come: Never miss a worship service unless it is necessary. Of George Washington, it was said: "No company ever kept him away from church."

Come Early: Rushing into the assembly at the last minute is not conducive to worship, neither yours nor other worshippers.

Bring the Entire Family: The worship hour is not a convention where you simply send a family delegate.

Be Seated Close to the Front of the auditorium. Leave the back seats for those who may arrive late and mothers with small children.

Be Reverent: The meeting house is not a theater or place of amusement. You come to worship God, not to laugh, whisper, and visit. The worship services deserve our utmost reverence.

Be Considerate of Others: Do not make a haystack of yourself at the end of the row and expect others to crawl over you to reach a seat.

Participate: Be a good listener during the sermon. Be sure you sing. Join in the worship. Do not just sit as a spectator.

Be Thoughtful of Strangers: They are our guests. Treat them with the same courtesy as you would if they should visit you in your home.

Contribute Generously: God loves a cheerful giver. Freely ye have received, freely give. Remember, your offering is to God.

Author Unknown

Matthew 15:8-9

"This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with *their* lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men."

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Hindsight: 20-20

Tim Smith

In retrospect, most of us are much wiser than in prospect. We usually have 20-20 hindsight—or at least we think we do. “If I had that to do over, I would do it this way...or that way...but I wouldn’t make the same mistake again...” Notice, if you will, the last phrase particularly closely—“the same mistake.” You probably would not make the same mistake again, but would you make another? The best that we can do is the best that we can do—it makes sense if you think about it. While not everything in our past lives is just as we might wish it to be, and while it could have been better, no doubt, could it not also have been worse? Even much worse?

I am not so sure that most would do things differently—even with the benefit of hindsight—because most take the path of least

resistance and so following they would be as likely as not make either the same mistake or one comparable to it—if not worse. It is, I believe, good to look back and question our decisions. It helps me to do so. I try to recall the facts at hand at the time and the various applicable forces at work, thereby seeking an understanding of the motives and factors. Then I try to form some sort of opinion about the present and future, how to deal with situations, etc.

While learning from the past, know this: We do not live in the past; we live today. We cannot go back and do over what we failed to do then. The bell cannot be *un-rung*, and the feathers that the wise old preacher of fables had the gossip woman release into the wind to illustrate his point cannot be gathered up again. You can usually do noth-

ing to undo the actions of the distant yesterday. Where does that leave us, then? Simply here: Try to do the right thing always. Give it your all. Repent of past mistakes. Make such restitution as is possible. Ask for forgiveness. If you see the bell vibrating, try to still it, but usually, by the time reflection is made, the bell is not ringing anymore. If you see the feathers on the ground, pick them up—although, with the wind and all, they

are probably long gone by the time of reflection. All else attempted, get on with life. Do not allow a bad yesterday to prevent you from being productive and faithful today and tomorrow.

We lay our cross down at His feet and take another one—and He promises to help us bear it. May we be wise enough to come to Him ere it is too late.

Deceased

The Greatest Purchase

John Wanamaker, one of America's multimillionaires, when he was eleven years old, bought a Bible. He loved this Bible and read it. Years later he said, "I have made purchases costing millions of dollars, but my greatest purchase was made when I was a country boy eleven years old. Then I bought a small

red-leather Bible for two dollars and seventy-five cents. I paid for the Bible week by week as I earned the money. That little red Bible has counted for more than anything else in my life. It was the greatest purchase I ever made."

Author Unknown

Forgiving a Brother

Ken Chumbley

When should one forgive a brother who has sinned? Can one forgive before the one who has sinned seeks forgiveness? This is a matter that has, from time to time disturbed brethren. Below are some questions that were received and answered by some brethren regarding this matter.

From *Questions Answered by Lipscomb and Sewell* (260-261).

Question

If a brother in the church offends us, is it right for us to forgive him whether he

comes and asks us to or not, or must we hold it against him until he comes and asks our pardon? Would it not be more Christlike to forgive him and try to love him as much as lieth in us, whether he comes and asks us to or not?

Answer

Christ never forgave anyone his sins until he repented of them, nor do we see how anyone can. Christ loved them while yet sinners, was anxious for them to repent, suffered and died to bring them to repentance. We should be like him; should love

men, be willing to suffer that they may be brought to repentance, and be kind gentle, longsuffering to help them to turn; but there is and can be no forgiveness with God or man without repentance; and when a man sincerely repents, he will confess and ask forgiveness of whomsoever he has offended.

Question

Brother Sewell: Does not the Bible teach us to forgive our enemies whether they repent and ask forgiveness or not? I heard a preacher of the gospel say there are no passages in the Bible where anyone ever forgave another unless he repented. I say the Bible teaches us that we must forgive whether they repent and ask our forgiveness or not.

Answer

Here is a passage that settles this question: "Take heed to yourselves: I thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him" (Luke 17:3-4). There are two sides to this question. If one does us wrong, it is our duty to tell him of this wrong, and thus rebuke him for his wrong. Then, if he repents, we must forgive him; but if he will not repent he is not worthy of forgiveness. But we have no right to hold malice against him, nor in any way take vengeance upon him. But we can follow the rule given in another passage, which is to take one or two with us; and if he refuses to hear the church then let him be as a heathen or a publican—that is, let the church withdraw from him and leave him with other sinners. That may cause him

to repent. If not, the Lord will attend to his case in due time (see Matt. 18:15-17). But no Christian has the right to punish, hold malice against, or abuse another. It is a fact that God himself does not forgive sinners that will not repent. All such will be lost at last. Let a Christian in such cases do right in all things, no matter what the backslider or rebellious member may do. But if the wrongdoer will not repent, he will be sure of his deserts at last.

From *Question and Answers Volume II*,
Guy N. Woods (41).

Question

"Should I forgive a man even though he does not repent?"

Answer

Our Lord said, "If thy brother sin, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him" (Luke 17:3). Jesus forgives only those who repent (Acts 2:38), and he expects no more of us. It is, indeed, impossible to forgive one who does not repent since forgiveness is the acceptance of a relationship which existed before the sin. Unless the rebellious brother desires this relationship it is impossible to establish it. We must ever be ready to forgive and we must entertain no malice or bitterness in our hearts. But, we can forgive only when penitence is shown. Those who question this conclusion (and there are always those who thus do, not knowing the true significance of forgiveness), remember that the Lord's order is (1) if a brother sins against you, *rebuke* him; (2) if a brother repents, *forgive* him (Luke 17:3).

Let us keep in mind that we should always remain ready to forgive once one repents.

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Restored

Cathy Beck was restored to Christ on October 16. Please keep Cathy in your prayers and offer her encouragement.

Patricia Grim was restored to Christ on October 16. Please keep Patricia in your prayers and offer her encouragement.

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Will the Earth Abide Forever?

Mike Riley

A querist asks, “Can someone explain what Solomon is saying in Ecclesiastes 1:4? I understand the part about a generation passing away, but what does he mean, ‘but the earth abideth forever?’ ”

Solomon is saying in this verse that while the earth remains the same (relatively speaking), the generations of men are ever-changing. What profit can there possibly be from the toils of life when the life of men is so brief? (cf. Job 7:7; Psa. 78:39; Jam. 4:14).

In the Bible, *forever* does not always denote an absolutely endless existence. In Ecclesiastes 1:4, the Hebrew word *owlam* means “long duration” or “age-lasting.” This same word is used in Exodus 12:13-14 and Numbers 25:13 to describe the duration of the Passover and the Levitical priesthood. Both lasted until the end of the Mosaical dis-

penation of time (Eph. 2:15; Col. 2:14; Heb. 7:11-24; 8:1-8; 9:14-15). In this verse, Solomon uses the term *forever* in a comparative sense, not an absolute one. We can better understand this by examining the following Scripture passages regarding the end of the heavens and the earth: Psalm 102:26; Isaiah 51:6; Matthew 24:35; 2 Peter 3:10-12.

One other passage regarding *forever* is found in Isaiah 32:14. The prophet depicts the horrible punishment to be visited upon Jerusalem because of the nation’s transgressions. He says the holy city will be deserted and become the haunts of various animals “forever.” However, note Isaiah 32:15 (ASV). Isaiah declares that these conditions will prevail **only** “until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high” (a prophecy of the spiritual

blessings to be experienced during the Christian dispensation—Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2:16-21). Underline *forever* in Isaiah 32:14 and draw a line to *until* in Isaiah 32:15. The word *until* clearly shows that the word *forever* can be used in a qualified sense. The context **must** determine the meaning of a word in each situation!

We also know that this present evil earth will not last “forever” because, according to our Lord’s instructions, the duration of the teaching of the Gospel of Christ will come

to an end, i.e., “unto the end of the world” (KJV), or at “the end of the age,” or Christian dispensation (Mat. 28:20—ESV).

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Galatians 5:6

“For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.”

Is the Church an Unloving Body?

Bill Jackson

It is extremely wearisome in our day to hear those who would *restructure* the church chastise her so harshly as an unloving body. Those who say so much about *love* use the most unloving language in speaking of the Lord’s body! Those who say so much about “Jesus, Jesus” tend to forget that the church is “his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all” (Eph. 1:23). Some today speak of the church as though we were the most vicious and hateful people on earth, completely devoid of love.

Are we that unloving? This writer thinks not. I, with all you readers, have been in countless congregations where, just from the association before and after the services, it was obvious that these folks care about one another. In those services, by announcements of concern and wording of prayers, it is seen that the membership cares about itself and those around it. Notes of thanks

are read from families that have known sickness and sorrow, expressing appreciation for expressions of love that had been manifested in their time of need.

Church budgets provide for evangelism, here and abroad, and in addition to funds for the orphaned and widowed in homes, local congregations take care to see to needs that may arise locally, within the church, and without. Here is pure and undefiled religion (Jam. 1:27). It has been this writer’s experience that, rather than being unloving and unconcerned, the church of our Lord has manifested love toward all, in every type of situation, and hundreds of ways, in a commendable fashion.

To be sure, the church is made up of men, and none of them are perfect (1 John 1:8, 10). It is granted that we do not have, nor will we have, any godly virtue to the perfect degree. The goal before us is to strive for perfection

(Mat. 5:48; Phi. 3:14). But to admit that the church is imperfect is not also to admit that we have no love within us. What is the problem here, then?

Bible love is a virtue put to work. Indeed, faith is motivated by love (Gal. 5:6). Unless love is included in the action, then it is useless (1 Cor. 13:1-3). There is the talking kind and the doing kind. Some, who, speaking

so unlovingly about the church having no love, talk love to death and end up with nothing but talk. I like the doing kind, and so does the Lord. Bible love is demonstrated at every service where the saints come together and are seen by all in the lives of most of the members of the body. The church is a loving body. The love is in the doing.

Deceased

Is It I?

G. K. Wallace

During the Passover supper, Jesus told His apostles that one of them would betray Him (Mat. 26:20-22). The apostles—"every one" began to ask, "Is it I?" From this, we may learn:

1. The possibility of evil may lie slumbering in every heart. Sin is like a rattlesnake—coiled and ready to strike. Let no man be so foolish as to say that the sins committed by others are impossible to him. Paul said, "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10:12). Temperament, no doubt, shields us from much but does not guarantee us from evil. There are sins "we are inclined to" and sins we "have a mind to," but to all sins, we may "be tempted." The tendency to do wrong is common to all—Adam, Cain, Noah, David, Solomon, and Judas Iscariot. Self-distrust is helpful for all of us because temptation assails all men.
2. There could be and sometimes is a fixed determination to do wrong even

though we know it is evil. Balaam was determined to do wrong even though he knew what was right (Num. 24:1-9). Today, we still have those who go "in the way of Cain" and run "riotously in the error of Balaam" (Jude 11). Some in the church at Pergamum held the doctrine of Balaam (Rev. 2:14). Balaam was the ancient counterpart of the present-day liberal. Balaam taught that adultery and fornication were matters of indifference, and joining in false worship was a matter of preference.

3. No length of service can guarantee against rebellion and treachery. Many ships have crossed the ocean only to be wrecked at the home harbor. Armies have been victorious in hundreds of battles and then destroyed at last. John said, "Be thou faithful unto death" if we expect the crown of life (2:10).

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Present-Day Revelation from God?

Randy Kea

All modern-day religious beliefs and practices are based upon claims for “present-day” revelations from God.

The Catholic Church—Catholics believe the Pope is the “voice of God.” His word supersedes the Bible. If what he says conflicts with Scripture, Catholics would choose to follow the Pope. If they followed the Bible, they would not be Catholics (1 Tim. 4:15).

Modern Protestant Denominationalism—All mainline Protestant groups believe in a “direct operation” of the Holy Spirit. Listen to their preachers carefully. They all have the Holy Spirit working apart from the Scriptures upon the minds and hearts of people. A rejection of the final authority, via the so-called *inner leadings* of the Holy Spirit, has produced modern denominationalism.

The Jehovah’s Witnesses—This cult believes that their “Watch Tower Society” is the medium through which God leads people today.

The Mormons—They claim to believe in the Bible. However, they also believe the writings of Joseph Smith are authoritative. They maintain present-day *apostles* are necessary. Extra-biblical revelation is the foundation of this modern cult.

Pentecostalism—For decades, Pentecostal preachers have claimed the Holy Spirit is guiding them directly. These groups continually advocate that spiritual gifts and miraculous powers are available today.

The Bible—The New Testament affirms that it is the final and complete revelation from God. The following three passages

strike down the claims of the above false religions:

- Jude 3, “Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort *you* that *ye* should earnestly contend for **the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.**” “The faith” (the Gospel) is a “once and for all” delivered unit of truth.
- John 16:13, “Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, **he will guide you into all truth:** for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.” Jesus promised His apostles that “all truth” would be revealed to them. If this promise is true, no truth was given after the first-century apostolic period.

- Galatians 1:6-9, “I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But **though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.** As we said before, so say I now again, If any *man* preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.” Anything this side or outside of the first century New Testament Gospel brings a double curse from God.

The New Testament is the final revelation from God and bears no substitution.

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Handling Adversity

“My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials” (Jam. 1:2).

How can James write this? Did he know something that could help us in the current crisis? To appreciate what James wrote, perhaps a short story can help. Imagine a few young elementary kids at home in the springtime. Maybe it is not too difficult to grasp the total weight of this home-bound scenario. A parent comes up with a plan to prevent everyone from going stir crazy while also achieving some valuable work. The children are told to take seeds from a

packet. Each seed will be pushed slightly into some loose soil along a straight line. They are also to separate their seeds about three inches apart. One child soon complains that her fingernails are getting dirty. Another becomes upset that his brother is planting more seeds quicker than he is, and that brother is grumbling because the sun is so bright. What happened?

Each child became focused on something other than the parent’s goal. If we were to ask them what matters, we would probably hear: keep my fingers clean, be as fast as

others, or get away from the sun. Yet, being in the sun, getting their fingers dirty, and planting seeds at whatever speed achieved the parent's goal.

Now consider James' explanation for the command, "Consider it nothing but joy when you fall into all sorts of trials" (1:2). It is because

knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing (1:3-4).

When we encounter the adversity of trials, what matters most to us? James had his eye on a larger prize than our current comfort. He gazed at a result that could reach into eternity, Christian maturity.

Several sentences later, he echoed these thoughts when he penned:

Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him (1:12).

Because of James' outlook, he counsels those of us who wish to live wisely to consider it nothing but joy when we encounter various trials. Nobody likes the discomfort of adversity. This is not about feeling comfortable; this is everything about knowing what matters in the long run and how trials can help us grow and mature as Christians.

Author Unknown

Too Great a Price?

Al Brown

Sometimes faithfulness to God can be very expensive.

Family hostility may require a child to turn his back on his father in order to serve the Lord.

Friends may be lost.

Christianity may cause a person to lose his job.

Sinful practices that were cherished before we were baptized have to be abandoned.

Certainly, money which was used for immoral purposes must now be devoted to Jesus.

Time that was given over to worldly activities must be given up.

Some think the sacrifice is too great. They may even think the Lord has no right to demand so much. To put all this into proper perspective, try to realize that the reward we receive is far beyond anything we can even imagine (Rom. 8:18). The sacrifice the Son of God gave for us to have such an inheritance is precious beyond calculation. Our situation was hopeless. We were lost in sin, yet Jesus took our place and did for us what we could never do for ourselves (8:3-4). Though we give everything we have, including our very lives that still could not earn our soul's salvation.

What a price He paid! What a debt I owe!

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November 6

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November 13

Deacons' meeting will be held
before the afternoon service, in
room 1.

November 20

Visitation cards for Group 1 will
be handed out.

November 20

Elders/Deacons' meeting will be
held after the afternoon service,
in room 1.

November 30

Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00
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“A Stitch in Time”

Sterl A. Watson

We should exercise care to avoid anything that might even lead to trouble or even a misunderstanding among Christians. Denominationalism does much toward defeating the Lord’s purpose. Denominationalism is even worse in the church than on the outside. Who has heard of a divided congregation bringing many souls to Christ? When trouble arises, success ceases so far as saving the lost is concerned. In many instances, trouble arises over things wholly uncalled for. Carelessness causes about as much heartache as any one thing. Possibly no man escapes the ravages of carelessness completely. Many a child has suffered disease and poverty because of carelessness on the part of parents. Many men have been brought to want and disgrace on account of carelessness. Especially is this true in financial affairs. I

have a good friend who lost a hand by handling explosives carelessly. Likely, there is more money love in the world than any other kind, yet men are usually careless with money.

The specific purpose of this article is to avoid heartaches in the church over money. If care is exercised, much happiness will result. In our congregation, several men do bookkeeping and accounting. These brethren give freely of their time and labor. One can obtain financial information about the church any time it is desired. The books are kept in good order. The money is carefully counted and handed to the man who attends upon the finance. There is no such thing as members saying, “Wonder what in the world is going with the money?” and not receiving an answer. Perhaps this is the case with most

congregations, especially the larger ones. There are, however, many rural churches and some of the small congregations in cities that a few suggestions may help.

In the first place, some members do not give liberally because of the way the money is handled. The banks are insured and are about the safest place for any extra money the church has on hand. I know of a brother who acts as treasurer for his home congregation. He is loved most dearly and respected as a scrupulously honest man. There is nothing wrong with his honesty, but his judgment is terrible. He had several hundred dollars of the church money in fruit jars in his home. He remembers some bank failures and no longer trusts the banks. Well, what if his house should burn? What if thieves were to break in and take all of it? He just never would recover from the unnecessary sorrow it would bring. If a bank failed, the brethren would take their loss and not blame him a particle for it. As it is, they have cut their contributions down pitifully.

I knew of another brother in charge of the money, who was really in charge. He refused to issue checks when authorized by the elders to do so. One of our faithful evangelists (not I) conducted meetings for that church, and the brethren had to make up the money to pay him because the man refused to issue a check. Such a man as that should be put in place or out of the church. He ultimately killed the interest in giving.

No man ever handled the church money for long that was not asked to give an account of his stewardship. Other members may have

unbounded confidence in you and may shift the responsibility of counting the money, bill paying, and everything right onto your shoulders. If they do so, refuse to take it until others have assisted you in counting it. They may have an abiding confidence in you, but should the contributions go down; someone will begin to wonder why.

Another thing that will spur the interest in giving is: "Place regular, itemized statements in the hands of the members." People want to know where the money is being spent and what for. The one who handles the money should let the congregation know that they have a perfect right to inquire into the church finance at any time. It is very seldom that brethren put a dishonest man in charge of the money, but sometimes they select one with poor judgment. One time I received a call for a meeting. Without provocation, the call carried assurance of good support. The meeting was well attended, and several were baptized. The brother who cared for the money (one of the purest and best of men, he was) handed me an envelope containing fourteen dollars, with the explanation that he had used the other in caring for the poor and the sick. He had not consulted anyone, either. That thing might have caused trouble had it happened in some places. The brother just used poor judgment.

A brother from Missouri wrote me asking if it were wrong to use money from the treasury to buy fuel to heat the meetinghouse. The man in charge of the money refused to pay for the fuel because it was

placed in the treasury for the support of preaching. They got the matter settled by offering to let the objecting brother pay the fuel bill out of his account. Of course, it was a small church, but some of the best

talent in the whole church started in small churches.

The rural churches have been allowed to go down too much. Like most everything else, we place much emphasis on centralization. The Lord had only a few (levelheaded) men to start with. The business affairs of a small church should be as carefully attended as the larger ones. That is one thing that will help to make the smaller churches larger. There is nothing unscriptural about a building fund, where one is needed or soon will be needed. We should look ahead in such matters. However, if the treasury is running over with money, and if there are no plans to circulate it to save souls, the contributions will go down and stay down. Not many Christians are interested in hoarding money uselessly—perhaps none. It would weigh little in our favor, on the judgment day, to be able to present our Lord with a bank account of several thousand dollars and lost souls standing on every hand. If all weak church members were supplied with a Gospel paper, they would soon acquire enough added strength to place the money back into the treasury tenfold. When a preacher goes to a place to conduct meetings and finds one or more Gospel publications in almost every home, he usually finds a church that gives liberally and supports him well for his effort. Nearly every congregation could well afford to do a little of this kind of mission work. Seldom do you find a church suffering much external pain that is internally healthy.

I Understand (Psalm 50:15)

Hast thou been hungry, child of mine?

I, too, have needed bread.

For forty days I tasted naught,
Till by the angels fed.

Hast thou been thirsty? On the cross
I suffered thirst for thee.

I've promised to supply thy need,
My child; come unto me.

Perhaps thy way is weary oft,
Thy feet grow tired and lame;
I wearied when I reached the well,
I suffered just the same;

And when I bore the heavy cross,
I fainted 'neath the load;

And so I've promised rest to all
Who walk the weary road.

Doth Satan sometimes buffet thee,
And tempt thy soul to sin?

Do faith and hope and love grow
weak?

Are doubts and fears within?

Remember, I was tempted

By this same foe of thine;

But he could not resist the Word,

Nor conquer pow'r divine.

Author Unknown

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I Made a “Mistake!”

Mike Demory

According to Webster, a mistake is thinking wrongly of someone or something, an instance of incorrectness, wrong judgment, or opinion. Society is rapidly accepting the idea that a mistake is a repeated, willful act that someone admits to once they are caught. Take, for instance, Olympic winner Michael Phelps, who admits to willfully attending a Frat party and smoking pot or being ticketed for drunk driving. He has attributed these incidents with a *mistake*. However, compared to the above definition of a *mistake*, we must conclude that Mr. Phelps did not have an instance of wrong judgment but instead willfully and with intent involved himself in sinful behavior.

Unfortunately, young people no longer have true role models to look up to. Men and women in leadership positions have the

opportunity to nurture the minds of the young who will one day take their place in society. Yet, Congressmen, Senators, Presidents, CEOs, and celebrities no longer accept responsibility for poor behavior, merely chalking it up to a *mistake*. Once multitudes begin getting away with sinful behavior by flippantly declaring they made a *mistake*, society will slip into the abyss of chaos.

Our new government of *change* and *hope* has found potential leaders who again made a *mistake* after years and years of not paying their taxes. Ironically, Paul spoke of this mindset when addressing the Corinthians. “For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death” (2 Cor. 7:10). This is what we find coming from the mouths of politicians, celebrities, etc. who

acknowledge *mistakes* after the fact. Only when they are caught in the act, do they suddenly get teary-eyed and condemn their actions. If we are to believe that they are truly repentant of their sin, then I ask, where is the restitution? True repentance requires restitution as a fruit of repentance, yet our leaders only pay the amount they owe, not the penalties and interest expected of the average citizen.

King Saul proudly told Samuel that he had performed all the commandments of the Lord, yet one simple question by Samuel exposed the lie (1 Sam. 15:13-14). Immediately, Saul ducked responsibility, blaming the people (15:15-21). Only after hearing that God rejected him from being king did Saul admit he had made a mistake (15:24-25). Over and over, we find examples in the Scriptures of men and women who

consciously and willfully sinned. Sins that could not be considered a mistake.

Mistakes are temporary lapses in judgment when it comes to doing something. They are an *instance* in which we may consider doing something or even begin to take part in it, but after thinking about it and deciding such would not be right, we back away from that action. Let us say Mr. Phelps attended the Frat party and got caught up in the moment, but as he was putting the bong to his mouth, he decided it was wrong, took it away, and left the party—that would be a mistake. However, actively participating and staying at the party is not a mistake. No more than not paying your taxes for several years until the time that you are being considered for an important government job. It is possible to make mistakes in life. We all do and will continue to do so as we

Show Your Love for Jesus by Meeting with His People—Your Brethren

Tim Smith

It is hard to prove that we love Jesus if we are habitual *forsakers* of the assembly. We may say with our lips that we love Him, but people are so busy listening to what our actions say that they are unable to hear our vain verbal profession. If you are not sick or necessarily detained by work, you need to be in Bible Class and Worship when His people come together. What better can you do with your time? What effect does forsaking have on your influence? What effect does it have on your example? If everyone attended as you do, how strong would the church be? If you **cannot** be there, you cannot; nothing can be done. If you **can** but **choose** not to be there, with all love and sincerity, I say that you are without excuse. Please rectify the matter before it is everlastingly too late.

Deceased

learn things the hard way. But not everything is a mistake. Adam and Eve did not make a mistake in eating the fruit of the tree. They made a conscious choice because lust got the better of them. David, too, allowed lust to conspire within him so he could have Bathsheba.

As Christians, we must remember that God has given us the power of free choice. It is a tremendous responsibility that has captured men's and women's souls since the beginning. God has given us all, His Word that pertains to life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3), as well as helping us doctrinally, righteously, and correctionally (2 Tim. 3:16-17). As the adage goes, "to err is human," how-

ever, there is a big difference between making a temporary error (mistake) and willfully taking part in a sinful activity with no intention of stopping unless caught. Jesus said that we are only to forgive those who repent—truly repent (Luke 17:3). If Mr. Phelps and others are sincere about the *mistake* they made, then their repentance must move them to stop the sin they have been involved in; to speak out about the damage it does to society is true repentance. A mistake? Most certainly, what we have seen in recent weeks is not a mistake! May we all be responsible citizens and admit our sins before we are caught.

Mexico, MO

Self-Control

F. M. Carmack

The greatest difficulties we contend with in this life are found in the world around us—the external circumstances—but within our hearts. It has been very justly remarked that "the greatest victory of a man's life is not that which he achieves over his enemy, but that in which he subdues himself." How few ever achieve that great victory! Self-control is one of the highest objects, if not the highest, to be obtained in education: yet how few of the educated (so-called) can say to their passions: "Thus far shall ye come, and no farther!" How few have brought the discordant elements of their natures into such complete subjection that they can say to them with authority: "Peace, be still"! So long as any appetite or

unhallowed passion is unrestrained, the soul is bowed down in the meanest servitude. No man who is thus subdued by the supremacy of passion can feel secure. He is in continual, imminent danger, for he is not a freeman, not a master of his actions. If there be but one unbridled passion, one will subjugate the entire man. With what rigid self-denial, then, should we live so we may bring ourselves into complete subjection to correct rule! With the mind thus rigidly educated, we may go forth amid the many temptations and allurements to vice which beset the pathway of life with confidence, feeling that so long as we are masters of ourselves, we are masters of our destinies.

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Interpreting Scripture

Dub Mowery

When two people discuss a religious topic on which they disagree, one of them will often say to the other, “Well, that’s just your interpretation!” Or one of them will go as far as to declare: “You interpret the Bible the way you want to, and I’ll interpret it the way I want to.” This erroneous concept that the Word of God can be interpreted however an individual chooses has long been the norm of the average person’s approach to the inspired Scripture. Just what does the word *interpret* mean? *Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary* gives the following definition of *interpret*: “To explain or tell the meaning of; to elucidate.” If we understand a particular passage of Scripture, there is only one correct explanation. Any other view of that passage is incorrect and, therefore, should be rejected. Two people can disagree on Scrip-

ture and be wrong, but there is only one correct interpretation.

The Roman Catholic Church believes it has the sole right to interpret the Bible. Their explanation of the verse in 2 Peter 1:20, which says, “Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation,” is that an individual cannot understand the Scripture without it being interpreted for them by the officials of the Catholic Church. This is an instance in which a passage is taken out of its context. That passage does not refer to those who read the Scripture to learn the Heavenly Father’s will for them. It references the Old Testament prophets who wrote the prophecies found therein. Let us now consider verses 20 and 21 together: “Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private

interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake *as they were* moved by the Holy Ghost.” These two verses simply tell us that what the prophets foretold and taught was not their concepts but that which was given unto them by the Holy Spirit.

We are responsible for learning what the Lord would have us do. The apostle Paul stressed this principle in his letter to the church at Philippi. “Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in

my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling” (Phi. 2:12). Neither those Philippian Christians nor we are given the green light to determine right from wrong religiously separate and apart from the inspired Word. The Philippian letter was Paul’s instruction to them in doing the will of God. Jesus Christ assures us that the truth is obtainable (Mat. 5:6; John 5:39; 8:32).

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The Conversion of Saul

The conversion of Saul of Tarsus from a deadly enemy of the Christ to Paul, His greatest devotee (Acts 9, 22, 26), is one of the remarkable narratives of history. Consider some implications of his conversion:

Physical ancestry is meaningless in the Christian age. Under Moses’ law, one became a child of God by physical birth to Jewish parents. Saul was a Jew, but he had to be born again (John 3:5) to become a child of God. Under Christ’s law, “God is no respecter of persons” relative to one’s birth (Acts 10:34-35).

Mere piety, sincerity, and zeal will not save one. Saul was very religious, sincere, and zealous in his religion, but he was lost (24:14; 23:1; 22:3-5).

One may be sincerely religious and still oppose Christ. As noted, none could have been more sincerely religious than Saul, yet this did not prevent him from being the foremost persecutor of the church

of Christ in its infancy. Some of the sincerest religious people continue to be enemies of the Christ.

How one treats the church of Christ is how one treats the Christ of the church. When Jesus appeared to Saul, He asked: “Why persecute thou me?” (9:4). No evidence exists that Saul had ever seen, much less persecuted, Jesus in person. The Lord’s question implies that the mistreatment of His church equals the mistreatment of the Lord. Those who persecute, ridicule, or neglect the church do so to its Head.

Men are not saved at the point of mere belief in the Christ. Saul acknowledged his faith in Jesus when he appeared to Him (9:6; 22:7-10). If he was saved when he believed, neither the Lord nor Saul knew it, for Jesus told him to go into the city where he would be told what he “must do.” If he was saved by faith alone, he was saved before his sins were forgiven (22:16). Faith,

apart from obedience, is merely a *devil level* of faith: “the devils believe and tremble” (Jam. 2:19).

Baptism is the consummating act in God’s plan of salvation. Saul was not forgiven of his sins (saved) when: he saw the Lord, he heard the Lord speak and answered Him, he confessed his faith in the Lord, he fasted and prayed for three days, Ananias enabled him to see again, Ananias told him

to be baptized. Saul’s sins were forgiven (“washed away”) **when** he was baptized and **not before** (Acts 22:16), or words have no meaning. This passage does not suggest that water cleanses one of sin. Only the blood of Christ can do so (John 1:29; Rev. 1:5; 7:14). Baptism is when the cleansing occurs; Jesus’ blood is **what** does the cleansing (Rom. 6:3-4).

Author Unknown

Loving Encouragement

“Your child will walk again,” said a wise physician to a polio victim’s parents, “if you keep up a regular course of exercise that I will prescribe for him, and if you do not wait on him more than necessary, but insist that he try to help himself.” At first, the exercises were painful, and the child cried out. But though the parents’ hearts were full of pity, their concern for his future would not let them give in.

They continued hour after hour, day after day, month after month, kindly but firmly encouraging their little boy to exercise his partly paralyzed legs and follow the routine of a normal child as nearly as possible. Now a young man, this once crippled youngster walks without the trace of a limp. Is this not an illustration of how God loves us and how we are to love and help others?

Author Unknown

“A Religion That Won’t Take You to Bible School and Worship That Won’t Take You to Heaven”

Imagine for a moment that you found yourself the teacher of a Bible school class. The students of the class come spasmodically. The parents never insisted that they learn their lessons each week. No parent ever asked you how his child was doing in class. No parent ever asked you if his child was participating in class discussions or if his child was behaving well in class. No parent ever compli-

mented you on your work with his child. How long would you want to keep the class?

Suppose that when children in your class were absent, you called on them in their home, and the parents let you know in no uncertain terms that the absence of their children was no concern of yours. How long would you last?

Author Unknown

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Confession of Sin

Guy N. Woods

How widely must sins be acknowledged?

Every sin, of whatever nature, must be confessed and acknowledged to God. **Any** sin, unrepented, creates a barrier between the guilty and the Lord, rendering fellowship impossible. The alienation resulting does not disappear with the passing of the years, nor does it cease to exist though the sin which produced it is no longer committed. It is, however, not a hopeless and irreversible situation; the remedy is available and effective: “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). The erring child, who turns from sin and returns to the Lord, in penitence, and with confession, the Lord in mercy and love gladly receives, restores, and forgives forevermore. Repentance and confession are conditions prece-

dent to forgiveness. Without full acknowledgment, there can be no forgiveness.

But, to what extent should sins be confessed **to others**?

That there is an obligation to this end follows from the clear and unmistakable charge of the Lord’s brother, James: “Confess *your* faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed” (Jam. 5:16). The implication is clear and the reason why such is to be done is obvious: that we may be able to pray “one for another” to the end that we “may be healed.” This is necessary if we are to have the assistance of our brothers and sisters in restoring us to spiritual health. It is not possible to pray for another’s forgiveness unless we know the one for whom the supplication is being made is penitent since we are forbidden to pray for those who are

not (1 John 5:16). He that does not reveal to others his sorrow for sin and his sincere repentance for all such, renders powerless his brethren to intercede with the Father in his behalf.

The sins contemplated by James are *faults*, defections from the right way **known** to others. There is no rule of reason nor revelation, making it obligatory to publicize every type of transgression nor establish a confessional after the Catholic order in which every weakness or imperfection is specified and described. There is no indication that the Lord wants His people to confess **to others** sins known only **to Him**, but John's clear teaching in 1 John 5:16 forbids it. The principle is that the acknowledgement should be as public as the sin. Sins of public nature and known to the church

must be confessed to the church; sins known to one or a few must be confessed to the one or the few. Sins known only to God should be confessed **only to God**. He that truly repents will desire that all, who know of his defection, be informed of his penitence, but he will avoid any action which would extend the influence of his wrong to those not involved. Where this sound and fundamental principle of New Testament teaching has been disregarded, the cause of Christ has suffered greatly from the circulation of such information among those not involved but who experienced discouragement and doubt from the sin and fall of a fellow disciple, the tragic fact of which they need never have known.

The wondrous blessing of forgiveness manifests the divine favor beyond description. By it is heaven made possible—a realization that should stir the hearts of us all and prompt every disciple to the utmost effort in conforming to the will of God. A brother, not a preacher, asked to speak to an audience, said: "If I were a preacher, one text would be enough, but seeing I am not skilled in this work, I shall take three texts." First, he read 1 John 1:7: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." Pausing, for a moment, to allow this verse to find its way into the hearts of his hearers, he then quickly said, "That's my sins away." Then he read his second text, Philippians 4:6-7: "In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplica-

Repent of Sin Itself

A. T. Pierson

The Spartan lad was taught that there was no wrong in anything he did but that the wrong was being found out. Consequently, when one lad had stolen a white pet fox and hidden it under his tunic, he allowed the fox to gnaw into his very breast and yet made no sign. The theft of the fox was nothing but being found out was everything! Regret for the consequences of sin, the exposure of sin, or the penalties of sin, is no real element of godly repentance.

Deceased

tion with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus” (ASV). He said, “That’s my cares away.” Turning to his third text, 1 Thessalonians 4:17, he read: “then we that

are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (ASV). Looking at the audience with a happy smile, he said, “That’s myself away!”

Deceased

Thoughts for Meditation

John T. Hinds

Those who want to worship God because of the deep sense of their dependence upon Him will want to come into God’s house—church—where that worship should be offered.

Only an unwavering faith that one has that he is right will protect him against the blighting influence of false doctrine. Weak faith opens the door for all kinds of errors. Endorsing false teaching is sin (2 John 9-11).

Careful consideration of God’s love, Christ’s sacrifice, and the promises of eternal life cannot fail to reach hearts that respond to justice and truth. To such hearts, the worship of God is the source of the greatest gladness.

As tests show the strength that materials have, so too trials demonstrate who will stand against evils. Only those Christians that resist evil are dependable servants of God. The real defense of the church rests with them.

Spoken truth must be heard, and written truth must be read to accomplish the desired results. In the early days of the

church, the people heard the apostles speak; now, we read what they wrote. A blessing rests upon those who read and keep the truth (Rev. 1:3). Paul told Timothy to “give heed to reading” (1 Tim. 4:13).

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Is It a Good Joke?

A genuinely good joke is worth a whole lot, but they are few and far between.
When some woman blushes with embarrassment,
When some heart carries away an ache,
When something sacred is made to appear common,
When a man’s weakness provides the cause for laughter,
When profanity is required to make it funny,
When a little child is brought to tears,
When everyone cannot join in the laughter—

It is a poor joke!

Author Unknown

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Nelda King Carla Burleson
Dot Brantley Linda Parks

Please Remember

Every Sunday

Ladies Bible Class will meet
after the afternoon service in
the library.

December 4

Visitation cards for Group 1 will
be handed out.

December 11

Deacons' meeting will be held
before the afternoon service, in
room 1.



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BEACON

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Sunday Bible Classes for all ages — 9:00 a.m.

Sunday Worship Services — 10:00 a.m., 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday Bible Classes for all ages — 7:00 p.m.

“River of Evil”

Paul Vaughn

During the flood season, the mighty Ohio River often overflows its banks. Flooding is nothing new for the residents who live along the river. There is another river overflowing, unlike the Ohio River that often destroys personal property; this river destroys the mind and soul of man. It is a “River of Evil” assailing the mind with pornography. This *Evil River* can flow into every home through printed pages, television, art, or the Internet. The pollution flowing through this *River of Evil* has your children in its wake.

Children are being attacked, Satan wants their minds and souls, and one of his tools is porn. Pornography affects their values, morals, and conscience. In a recent study by the University of New Hampshire, researchers found that 42 percent of young people between the ages of 10 and 17 have

viewed online pornography. The study found that “two-thirds of those exposed to porn didn’t want to see the images and didn’t seek them out. Most of these were ages 13 to 17, though a disturbing number were 10-11-years old” (Parker 15A). Responsible parents are concerned about what their children see on the Internet. Yet, it was found that “unwanted porn exposure occurred despite the use of filtering and blocking software in more than half the homes with Internet access” (Parker 15A).

What can be done? Watch over your children while they are using the Internet as if they were floating down a dangerous river. Be concerned about what they watch, hear, and read. It is written, “And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture

and admonition of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4). Teach your children to listen to and live by God’s Word. Time is running out. *The River of Evil* seeks to carry your children to the dark, murky world of pornography.

Work Cited

Parker, Kathleen. “As Young as 10, Kids Bombarded With Online Porn.” *The Tennessean*. 103:41, February 10, 2007.

Hopkinsville, KY

Does The Poverty of the Parents Morally Justify the Killing of Unborn Children?

Thomas B. Warren

In a letter to “Dear Abby,” Julia Child (a well-known TV culinary artist) tries to justify, morally speaking, abortion on the ground of, for example, the poverty of their parents. Her argument put in a logically precise way, would look like this: (1) If the parents of an unborn child are poverty-stricken and already have at least six children, then the killing of the unborn child is morally justified (on the ground that such would reduce the living expenses of the family and, as a result, there would be more money for the rest of the family), (2) John and Mary Smith (who are expecting another child) are poverty-stricken and already have six children, (3) therefore, the killing of the unborn child (of John and Mary Smith) is morally justified (on the ground that such would reduce the living expenses of the family and, as a result, there would be more money for the rest of the Smith family).

It seems to me that at least most people would wonder what Ms. Child would say if the argument were written this way: (1) If the parents of one-year-old Johnny Smith are very poor and already had six children

before Johnny was born, then the killing of Johnny is morally justified (on the ground that such would reduce the living expenses of the family and, as a result, there would be more money for the rest of the family), (2) the parents of Johnny Smith are very poor and already had six children before Johnny was born, (3) therefore, the killing of Johnny Smith is morally justified (on the ground that such would reduce the living expenses of the family and, as a result, there would be more money for the rest of the family).

Indeed no one who is not totally morally degenerate would defend the view that the poverty of his parents would morally justify the killing of one-year-old Johnny so the rest of the family could have more of this world’s physical comforts. But, if a person recognizes the sin of killing (murdering) one-year-old children, that person ought also to recognize the sin of killing (murdering) children who are still in their mothers’ wombs. (Psa. 139:11-16).

Deceased

The Sorrow of this Life

Charles Pogue

Solomon wrote, “A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance: But by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken” (Pro. 15:13). Most, if not all of us, at one time in our lives, face situations that bring sorrow to our hearts, and as Solomon writes, breaks our spirits. The serious illness of a loved one or even one’s own health problems can bring sorrow to the heart.

For the faithful child of God, it is not wrestling with a physical condition one finds himself or a loved one in that brings the greatest sorrow of heart. The greatest sorrow comes his way when a loved one has been caught up in sin. The sorrow and anxiety he must face in such situations can cause adverse physical reactions, such as feeling like he has a fever, yet he checks it, and the thermometer shows a normal reading. He may lie awake at night, and for hours sleep does not come, if it does at all.

Dealing with the sorrow of loved ones who are caught up in sin when they should know better can produce a sense of loneliness and despair, especially if the one is the person one is closest to upon this earth. Paul

expressed to the Romans that he had continual heaviness and sorrow in his heart for his kinsmen, the Israelites to whom the adoption pertained and the promises were given (Rom. 9:1-5). Yet, in large part, Israel rejected the righteousness of God and established their own righteousness (10:3).

Those who suffer great sorrow should look at Paul and ask how he dealt with it. Doubtless, the answer is multifaceted. He kept busy doing the Lord’s work. He looked toward the heavenly home when all the sorrow of this life would be gone in the blessed home of heaven. Have you ever thought how wise it is of God who declared through His only begotten Son there would be no marriage in heaven? Was it not the case? How many men or women might potentially look around and say, where is he? Where is she?

What did Paul write before he expressed his sorrow for Israel in Romans 9? In Romans 8:18, he wrote, “For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time *are* not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” Are there those close to you who have either refused to obey the Gospel or who, upon obeying it, have not remained faithful? We cannot get around it. There will be sorrow connected with such circumstances in this life, but let us all serve God faithfully in our lives and look to the glory which shall be revealed in us.

Romans 10:3

“For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.”

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Sympathy

We extend our sincere sympathy to Jenny Sheline in the death of her great-uncle, Everett Beery, on November 28. Please keep Jenny and her family in your prayers.

Please Remember

December 11

Deacons' meeting will be held before the afternoon service, in room 1.

December 18

Visitation cards for Group 2 will be handed out.

December 18

Elders/Deacons' meeting will be held after the afternoon service, in room 1.

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BEACON

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God Breathed!

Chuck Taylor

How ought we to look at Scripture? Hebrews 1:1-2 says, “God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by *His Son*.” God has spoken to us! So often, man has a skewed view of the Word of God, as though it is nothing more than a fairytale or myth, but it is so much more than that! How can one see the importance of the point that the Word of God is just that, God’s Word? We must look at Scripture from where it originated, from the mind of God! We need to see Scripture from the thoughts of God rather than the thought of man.

Additionally, we must realize that a God powerful enough to create and sustain everything on this planet in such intricate and amazing detail can also preserve His Word

through the ages from the wear and tear of time. It is fresh and new to all generations. He has also held it together from the attacks of men. From this, we know that the Word of God is the sole authority for all religious matters. Trusting Scripture’s simple, repeated claims make for its inspiration and authority!

We should see Scripture as the breathed-out message from God and not like a comic book or a set of library books to be sliced and diced with condescending contempt. People should study the Scriptures reverently and submissively rather than looking for ways to attack and undermine them. Scripture is a process by which one can be guided through life. A process by which we can reshape our thinking, renew our minds, and remake our character.

We need such confidence in Scripture that we feel compelled to share it gently and zealously with others in the world around us. If people spent less time debating the authenticity of it and focused more on its effect on changing a person, more people would be persuaded to obey it. Second Timothy 3:16-17 says:

All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

All Scripture is God-breathed!

Copied

There Are Voices That Call

J. A. McNutt

One of the great battles of this age, and every age, is an attempt to conquer and control the minds of men. There are powerful appeals to the low, sensual, and evil desires in the hearts of men. There seems to be a determined attempt to undermine and destroy the moral standards that once made America great. Our homes are being destroyed, our families are fragmented, and our children are left without moral training and direction. However, not all is lost because we still have the Word of God and some faithful men who preach God's Word in a sinful and rebellious world. So, there are still voices vibrant with hope and inspiration, and these voices summon us to rise to pursue high ideals and to live righteous lives. There are still lights that shine in the darkness, and the Gospel is still God's power unto salvation to all who believe and obey the truth (Rom. 1:16).

Jesus pronounced a blessing upon His disciples when their ears and eyes were open to spiritual instruction, saying, "Blessed *are* your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for

they hear" (Mat. 13:16). One can see and hear just about what he wants to hear and see along the pathway of life. He can feed on filth and rejoice in evil or feast on the Word of life and rejoice in righteousness.

All Should Hear and Obey the Gospel

Paul says God has chosen us unto salvation through sanctification and belief of the truth, "Whereunto he called you by our gospel" (2 The. 2:13-14). The call of the Gospel is optional, or our response to it is because we have the power to accept or reject it as we see fit. The Gospel call is an intelligent, understandable message addressed to man's mind. It begins with teaching and results in hearing, learning, and then coming unto God (John 6:44-45).

1. Hear the Gospel of Christ (Rom. 10:13-18).
2. Believe in Christ (Heb. 11:6; Acts 16:31).
3. Repent all past sins (Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30).
4. Confess that Jesus is God's son (Rom. 10:9-10; Acts 8:37).

5. Be baptized (which consists of a burial or immersion for the remission of sins) (Rom. 6:1-8; Acts 2:38; 22:16; Mark 16:16).

We make no apology for the “five steps” or acts of faith mentioned above since we are encouraged to “walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham” (Rom. 4:12). In fact, walking by faith is characteristic of all of those who seek to please God. Let us also bear in mind that when salvation is affirmed based on one condition in a passage of Scripture, it can never be received without that condition being met, although it may require a great deal more. “Whosoever will” may come in humble, submissive obedience to the Gospel of Christ (Heb. 5:9; Mat. 7:21), while vengeance from God awaits those who obey not the Gospel (2 The. 1:7-9).

Reject the Call of the World

The world’s call is a powerful and sensual appeal to the lusts that result in sin and separation from God. “For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world” (1 John 2:16). The attraction of wealth, the pursuit of sinful pleasure, and the desire for worldly fame, or power, never brings lasting peace or satisfaction. It is like the desert mirage, with its false promise of water, for the fevered lips and swollen tongue of a man dying of thirst.

Heed the Call from Within

We are told that “to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth *it* not, to him it is sin” (Jam. 4:17). The preaching of the Gospel brings a conscious knowledge of right and

wrong and results in recognition of our sinful condition, and the need of repentance. Peter’s audience on Pentecost were convicted of having crucified and slain their Lord and were “pricked in their heart” and said, “Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?” (Acts 2:37-38). It was through such preaching that Stephen’s hearers were “cut to the heart” (7:54) and Paul’s preaching caused sinful Felix to tremble (24:25). The only acceptable response to such preaching is faith in God and obedience to His will.

The Final Call to Men

The final call that will be issued to all men is not optional. It is the inevitable call of death, and our summons to judgment (Heb. 9:27). When the Lord descends from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God is sounded, none will fail to heed the summons (1 The. 4:16).

The other calls that we have mentioned are optional. You can hear and obey the Gospel or reject it. You can walk in the ways of the sinful world or refuse its temptations. You can heed the promptings of a good conscience or ignore its protests against evil until it becomes seared and dead, but you cannot evade death. You have no power to escape the final judgment to come (John 5:28-29). So, why not prepare now, my friend?

Deceased

Hebrews 9:27

“And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.”

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Dot Dodd

Please Remember

December 18

Visitation cards for Group 2 will be handed out.

December 18

Elders/Deacons' meeting will be held after the afternoon service, in room 1.



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BEACON

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December 19, 2022

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Sunday Worship Services — 10:00 a.m., 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday Bible Classes for all ages — 7:00 p.m.

Christmas on Sunday

Ken Chumbley

Christmas Day falls on the Lord's Day, Sunday this year. The media has noted that some religious groups are either canceling Bible study and worship or changing the times of these services. What is the reason for being given? The reason is that they value their families and want them to be able to spend time together. After all, one has to consider opening the presents, preparing the Christmas dinner with all of its trimmings, and all the other activities associated with "Christmas Day." Thus, because of the difficulty of fitting in Bible study and worship with all of these *important* activities, they have canceled services because it is *inconvenient*.

Such statements come from some of the same people vociferously saying we must put "Christ back into Christmas" and that "Jesus

is the reason for the season." How inconsistent? They want people to remember that, according to them, Christmas is all about the Christ, and they are locking the doors of their meeting places to those who have accepted their message. How long before some so-called churches of Christ do the same thing? After all, some already do so for Super Bowl Sunday! The principle is the same, and the *logic* behind such decisions is the same!

Where will such silliness end? So-called *Easter* falls each year on a Sunday. How long before some decide that valuing family time involves closing the church doors so the family will not be inconvenienced trying to schedule Easter egg hunts, etc., around Bible study and worship? What about Mother's Day, Father's Day, the 4th of July, etc.? Indeed, trying to schedule everything involved with

those days around Bible study and worship is just as difficult!

We could take this further: what about celebrating family birthdays that fall on a Sunday? Indeed, any special event that falls on the first day of the week. Certainly, all of these make it *inconvenient* to schedule around worship and Bible study!

For these reasons, some would say they would never want the church doors locked. However, there are some for whom the church doors might just as well be locked since they chose to absent their family from the assembly for such as we have been discussing.

Does not closing the church doors for “Christmas” or any other man-made day or

purpose make a mockery of one’s claim to love Christ and the Heavenly Father above all others because it is *inconvenient* for the family? Does it not mock the claims of some Christians to love Christ and the Heavenly Father above all others? Such action is “for-saking the assembly,” which is condemned by the Scriptures (Heb. 10:25).

We trust that all who read this will assemble with the saints next Lord’s Day, December 25, to worship the Lord, no matter how *inconvenient* it seems, that we may genuinely honor our Savior and God by worshipping Him in the way and manner that He has appointed.

Deceased

The world would be a better place to live if we had more scientists like the great Pasteur. He once wrote: “Posterity one day will laugh at the stupidity of our modern materialistic philosophy. The more I study nature, the more I stand bewildered before the works of the Creator...I pray daily during my work in my laboratory.”

Author Unknown

Right Attitudes for Faithfulness

It is clear to every Bible student that you cannot be faithful to the Lord if your attitude is not in keeping with the teachings of Christ (Phi. 2:5; Col. 3:17). Attitude has to do with the content of your mind, your disposition, and the control you exercise over your emotions. The simple truth is the New Testament is loaded with teaching, examples, prohibitions, and

warnings about attitude. This spiritually healthy instruction should be the basis of our discipline over our mind. Your attitude toward God is basic. All other phases of attitude are rooted in your attitude toward God. We must hold Him in the highest esteem, revere Him, worship Him, and obey Him with wholehearted love and trust (Ecc. 5:1-2; Mat. 22:37; Rom. 12:1-2; Pro. 1:7).

Once your attitude toward God begins to weaken, all other phases of attitude will likely deteriorate. Let us be aware of this and constantly monitor our attitude toward God, seeking to enrich our relationship with Him. Your attitude toward Christ is a component of your attitude toward God. If God is your father, you will love His Son (John 8:42). If you love God and want to obey Him, you will have a favorable and grateful acceptance of His Son, Jesus Christ. You will regard Him as the perfect expression of deity and humanity, the spotless Son of God who died for you to be free from sin and enjoy eternal life. Likewise, you will read and

study His attitude with the highest esteem, seeking to imitate Him in all your behavior.

Your attitude toward others develops out of your reverence for Deity. If you believe in God and follow His Son, your behavior toward others will be based on that. You will seek to do all God has said about how to treat people. You will study and follow Christ's compassion and His boldness in seeking to save the lost. His relationship with others becomes your pattern (see 1 Pet. 2:18-25). Growth and faithfulness depend upon the constant development of our love for God (Mat. 22:37-38; Heb. 11:6).

Author Unknown

Would You be Happy in Heaven?

Toby Miller

The Bible teaches most assuredly that there will be no unhappiness in Heaven (Rev. 21:4). Therefore, those who would be unhappy will not be there. Examine yourself (2 Cor. 13:5), your activities, your innermost thoughts, and your real desires. If God took you to Heaven today, would you be happy? If not, do not worry, you will not be there.

Do you desire the company of Jesus only in emergencies? Do you get upset when the preacher goes beyond the 20-minute limit? Do you let the world dictate to you how to conduct your life and the fads and fashions you must adopt to be socially acceptable? If serving God in this life makes you unhappy, do not worry; you will not have to serve Him in the next life;

you will not be in Heaven. If you dislike having to "obey His commandments" now (John 14:21), you need not be concerned about having to obey His commandments in Heaven because you will not be there; you will be in the "other place" (Mat. 25:41).

The only way you can love God is to learn of Him (John 6:45). The more you understand the nature and effects of sin and realize what God has had to do to make forgiveness possible, the more you will love Him. The more you love Him, the better you will serve Him. That is what life is all about. God is determining who will and will not serve Him, to determine who will and will not be in Heaven.

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Please Remember

January 1

Visitation cards for Group 1 will be handed out.

January 8

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January 15

Visitation cards for Group 2 will be handed out.

January 15

Elders/Deacons' meeting will be held after the afternoon service, in room 1.

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BEACON

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Living Sacrifices

Mike Demory

Perhaps no greater sham has been foisted upon Christendom by the devil than the idea that no authority from God is required in religious matters, most notably in giving. Christianity finds its foundation in the sacrifice of our Lord, “For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich” (2 Cor. 8:9). What better motivation to induce Christ’s disciples to give bountifully, than the example of the one whom we claim to follow? Yet, many claiming to be Christians continually rob God (Mal. 3:8; Eph. 4:28; Rom. 2:21; 13:9).

Financial schemes meant to support the works of the church were invented to circumvent God’s authority. Schemes such as Rummage, Garage, Cake Sales, Dinners,

Raffles, Fair Booths, Red Pot Bell Ringers, asking for community donations, and renting out portions of the church building for secular use, just to name a few. Each of these and more does nothing to help the individual Christian cultivate the God-ordained way of giving and cripples spiritual growth. How can one be a “living sacrifice” when they know others will be called upon to give?

Many reason that it is harmless because the money goes to God’s cause. But how is God glorified in a process that violates His will? Is there anything wrong with having a dinner? No, not in and of itself, if it is free. The same thing with a Rummage or Garage sale that gives its items away without cost. The yearly red pot bell ringers take credit for the good they do with the money received from the world, yet their members provide

nothing other than labor (a clear violation of God's way of giving). The Salvation Army does not even provide the labor, but they hire outside their church to raise money, with no glory for God. Then one of the more popular ways of raising money is the ever-popular raffle (gambling). Gambling is justified as innocent entertainment and a good source of revenue. Local businesses participate by donating some items, albeit a car, motorcycle, big screen TV, etc., while it is a good source of revenue. Otherwise, businesses, governments, and denominations would not be promoting its use. There is no authority to do it, let alone participate.

Does the Bible specifically state, "Thou shalt not gamble?" No more than it says, "thou shalt not use drugs; thou shalt not speed, or thou shalt not use tobacco." But the principles are implied throughout the Word of God. Christians are commanded to be "faithful stewards" of everything God has put into their care (1 Pet. 4:10; Luke 12:42; 1 Cor. 4:2) because all things belong to God (Psa. 50:10-12; Job 41:11). Gambling violates

the second law, to "love thy neighbor as thyself," which would never work ill to their neighbor (Mat. 22:39; Rom. 13:10). Gambling of every sort promotes stealing from the "hard luck" of their neighbors and violates our duty to look out for the welfare of others over our own (1 Cor. 10:24; Phi. 2:3-4).

In short, the devices of men destroy God's way of supporting the church's work. We are commanded to give on the first day of every week as we have prospered (1 Cor. 16:2). We are to give liberally and cheerfully (2 Cor. 9:5-7) so others may be eased of their burdens, and our love for our fellowman is demonstrated (8:13-24). We are required to have Bible authority in everything we believe, teach, and practice (Col. 3:17). If there is no word from God on a subject, then it is a sin if we choose to do it anyway (Rom. 14:23; 10:17).

Giving as God authorizes us to give will assist us in spiritual growth and help us be true "living sacrifices."

Mexico, MO

When Did It Begin?

- Use of Holy Water—Began (AD 210); required (AD 1009).
- Infant Baptism—Introduced (over strong opposition) (AD 250).
- Sign of the Cross—Introduced (AD 310).
- First Human Creed—The "Nicene Creed" (AD 325).
- Veneration of Dead Saints and Angels Introduced (AD 375).
- Mariolatry—The veneration (worship) of Mary (AD 410).
- Latin Mass—Began (AD 394).
- Purgatory—"Second chance" for those who die in sin (AD 593).
- Latin Language used in prayer and worship (AD 600).
- First Pope—Boniface III assumed title of "Universal Bishop" (AD 607). But died out shortly thereafter, not until AD 858 when Nicholas I established the Title of

- Pope was Catholicism accepted.
- Instrumental Music—First used in Catholic Church (over strong objection) (AD 670).
 - Kissing Pope’s Feet—(AD 709).
 - Worship of Cross, Images and Relics—(AD 788).
 - Holy Water—(AD 850).
 - Veneration of St. Joseph—(AD 890).
 - Canonization of dead saints—(AD 995).
 - Fasting on Fridays & Lent—(AD 998).
 - Mass introduced by Roman Catholic Church (AD 998).
 - Celibate Priesthood—Introduced (AD 385); enforced (AD 1079).
 - Rosary—(AD 1090).
 - Indulgences—(AD 1190).
 - Transubstantiation—(AD 1215).
 - Auricular Confession—Confession of sins to a priest (AD 1215).
 - Bible Forbidden by Catholic Church—(AD 1229).
 - Sprinkling for Baptism—Universal Catholic practice (AD 1311).
 - Seven Sacraments—(AD 1439).
 - Ava Maria—(AD 1508).
 - Original Sin—Introduced by Tertullian in AD 200 but gained universal acceptance when John Calvin reintroduced it in AD 1536.
 - Limited Atonement—Introduced by John Calvin in AD 1536.
 - Eternal Security—Introduced by John Calvin in AD 1536.
 - Tradition equal in authority to the Bible (AD 1545).
 - Apocryphal books added as defense against English Bibles being printed by Protestants (AD 1546).
 - Sabbath Worship—Introduced by Peter Chamberlen in London (AD 1651). Has gained wide acceptance as more denominations meet on Saturday for convenience’s sake.
 - Dispensationalism—Introduced in AD 1830 by John Darby, founder of the Plymouth Brethren Church.
 - Immaculate Conception—(AD 1834).
 - Papal Infallibility—(AD 1870).
 - Mary affirmed as “The Mother of God” (AD 1931).
 - Assumption of Mary—(AD 1950).
 - Full Preterism—(AD 1970).

Author Unknown

A Morning Resolve

John H. Vincent

I will this day try to live a simple, sincere, and serene life; repelling promptly every thought of discontent, anxiety, discouragement, impurity, and self-seeking; cultivating cheerfulness, magnanimity, charity, and the habit of holy silence; exercising economy in expenditure, carefulness in conversation, diligence in appointed service, fidelity to every trust, and a childlike trust in God.

Deceased

BEACON

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Sick

Remember in your prayers:

Nancy Travis Bill & Peggy Crowe
Karen Diamond Elaine Brooks
Nelda King Rheba Stancliff
Carla Burluson Linda Parks

Please Remember

January 1

Visitation cards for Group 1 will be handed out.

January 8

Deacons' meeting will be held before the afternoon service, in room 1.

January 15

Visitation cards for Group 2 will be handed out.

January 15

Elders/Deacons' meeting will be held after the afternoon service, in room 1.

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