

# V THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL



GUYANA – TO MONKEY MOUNTAIN:  
“IF YOU CAN’T GET THERE  
BY ROAD OR BOAT, GO BY PLANE!”

# Preach a Sermon, Preacher

Author Unknown

Preach a sermon, Preacher, but don't preach very long;  
Just tell the love of Jesus Christ, but don't condemn the wrong.  
Say not a thing of doctrines false, lest others be offended;  
Then turn away from us today, and call us narrow minded.

Preach a sermon, Preacher, but don't preach very plain;  
Let others guess at what is meant, don't ever call a name.  
We'll sing your praises long and loud, we'll keep you many a day,  
But make it clear, and you'll hear, "Brother, be on your way!"

Preach a sermon, Preacher, but say nothing of our sins;  
Let us keep on as though we have none, perhaps we'll make amends.  
Please, let us dance, gamble, wear shorts, and take in every show,  
Make us secure and very pure, we're humans, don't you know?

Preach a sermon, Preacher, but speak not to us of duty,  
Just preach about the grace of God, and picture heaven's beauty.  
Leave out the things that we must do, we're busy making money;  
We haven't time, can't spare a dime, won't even be there Sunday.

Preach a sermon, Preacher, when it comes mine to die,  
Tell all my kith and kin about my home beyond the sky.  
Preach the sermon, make strong, preach me straight to heaven;  
That's my only way to get to stay, where Christ's reward is given!

Submitted by Mark McWhorter: [mtmcvb@centurytel.net](mailto:mtmcvb@centurytel.net)

Mark noted, however, regarding this item, that one can not "be preached into heaven. The last lines of the poem are spoken by the lost ones who find out at the end that there is no hope for them."

# A Sound Church

A sound church is not merely a church that sounds good,  
but rather one that is firmly anchored in truth!

“That  
they  
may  
be  
sound”  
Titus 1:13

Sound in **DOCTRINE**

• Titus 2:1

Sound in **FAITH**

• Titus 1:13

Sound in **UNITY**

• John 17

Sound in **ORGANIZATION**

• Ephesians 4:11

Sound in **WORK**

• Titus 3:1

Sound in **WORSHIP**

• John 4:24

Sound in **TEACHING**

• 2 Timothy 4:1-4

Sound in **GIVING**

• 2 Corinthians 9:7-8

Sound in **ZEAL**

• 2 Corinthians 9:2

Sound in **LEADERSHIP**

• Acts 20:28-31



*“But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine.” Titus 2:1*

# Baptism for the Remission of Sins

- **Baptism** is from the Greek word "**baptizo**" meaning a burial, immersion.
- Ephesians 4:4-5 - "There is . . . **one** baptism."

## Mark 16:16 -

"He who believes and is baptized will be saved . . ."

## Galatians 3:27 -

"For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ."

## Acts 2:38 -

"... Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins . . ."

## Acts 22:16 -

"And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord."



## 1 Peter 3:21 -

"The like figure whereunto even baptism does also now save us . . ."

## BAPTISM IS ESSENTIAL FOR SALVATION

- Baptism is for the remission of sins Acts 2:38
- Baptism washes away one's sins Acts 22:16
- Baptism is involved in saving men 1 Peter 3:21
- Belief + Baptism = Salvation Mark 16:16
- God commands baptism Acts 10:47-48
- Christ commands baptism Matthew 28:19-20



IN **DEFINITION**, BAPTISM IS A BURIAL  
WITH CHRIST

Romans 6:4 • Colossians 2:12

IN **FORM**, BAPTISM IS BY IMMERSION

IN **PURPOSE**, BAPTISM IS FOR THE  
REMISSION OF SINS

IN **FACT**, BAPTISM IS BY IMMERSION

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# THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL

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**THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST SALUTE YOU**  
(ROMANS 16:16).



A study of the Bible reveals that there are different kinds of faith, and it becomes apparent that not all faith in God is saving faith.

It is possible to believe in God and Christ in our HEAD (our brain), but that faith may never be incorporated into both our HEAD and our HEART. Of course, we are not meaning our literal, physical heart, but rather that part of us that is the center of our feelings, our convictions, that which governs our actions and thoughts.

### **Some Basic Bible Facts Regarding Faith**

Faith is defined for us in Hebrews 11:1 *“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”* We see then

that developing and maintaining faith is basically a mental activity.

# HEAD Faith or HEART Faith?

**Byron Nichols**

Faith results from our activity...it isn't something that happens to us. Romans 10:17 tells us, *“So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.”* We read or hear things that cause us to mentally agree with or accept them. This faith must develop more fully before it can be saving faith. We know a lot of things in our mind that we never take action upon because we don't believe with real conviction.

Paul exhorts in 2 Corinthians 13:5, *“Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith....”* Paul is obviously implying that faith is not necessarily part of our whole life. He warns that we can think we are in the faith while not actually being in the faith!

In 1 Corinthians 16:13 Paul urges, *“Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong.”* His consistent message is that we can have faith (belief) in our HEAD (mind) that never gravitates down into our HEART.

### **Faith — the Foundation on Which Salvation Is Built**

Jesus said, *“He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does*



*not believe will be condemned*” (Mark 16:16). The Savior said in John 8:24, “... *if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.*” We learn from Hebrews 11:6 that “...*without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.*” It is quite apparent that those who seek the Lord diligently have faith that is not confined to the HEAD only, but theirs is a faith of conviction that functions from the depths of the HEART.

### **HEAD Faith Comes First, and Then Comes HEART Faith**

The thrust of John’s Gospel account is especially exhibited in John 20:31, “*but these were written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.*” Which kind of faith is He talking about in this verse — HEAD faith, or HEART faith? If this is the kind of faith that results in “*life in His name*” (salvation), it surely must be the faith of the HEART.

### **Examples of HEAD Faith and HEART Faith**

“*Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in 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). What kind of faith did these rulers have...HEAD or HEART?

Romans 10:9,10 says, “...*if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*” I ask you — Is this HEAD faith or HEART faith?

It’s true that there are some parts of the Bible that are not very easy to understand, but it is not difficult to know when the Bible is talking about HEAD faith or HEART faith. HEAD faith is basically inactive. We may very well understand and accept what the Bible says about God and Christ, but never put that belief into action, just like those Jewish rulers in John 12.

Do you really believe that God is convinced that your faith is from the HEART when He can’t depend on your presence for worship or your participation in the work of the church?

In Romans 6:17 Paul rejoiced regarding Christians who had “*obeyed from the heart...*” Those who obey from the heart and continue to serve from the heart will never have to be fearful regarding the words of Jesus in Matthew 7:21 where He said, “*Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.*”

What about your faith? Does a serious review show that it is of the HEART, or is it just of the HEAD?



# Signs of Being Born of God

**Jerry Bates**

*Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves Him who begot also loves him who is begotten of Him. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome. For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world-our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? (1 John 5:1-5)*

In the short epistle of First John, John uses the short phrase “born of God” seven times. Of course, this phrase means the same as being “born again”, to which



Jesus refers in John 3 in His conversation with Nicodemus. In that discussion Jesus contrasted a spiritual rebirth to the physical rebirth that Nicodemus had in mind. To be born again simply refers to becoming a true Christian, and Jesus instructed Nicodemus **how** a person can be born again (John 3:3-5). We must be born of water and the Spirit. Water refers to the waters of baptism, and to be born by the Spirit means it is a spiritual birth accomplished by the power of God rather than a physical birth.

On the other hand, in his first epistle, John was referring to the characteristics a true Christian should exhibit. He mentioned three essential characteristics



a Christian must demonstrate: a holy life, a life of love, and a faith in Jesus as the Christ. Of course, each is vitally important to the life of a true Christian. In actuality, they all go together as we can plainly see in the above verses.

John first declared that the Christian believes that Jesus is the “Christ”. The word “Christ” means the “Anointed of God”. To be the anointed signifies that Jesus was anointed by God to be both king and priest. “King” carries the idea of authority, while being a “priest” carries the idea of a sacrifice and a mediator between God and man. Not only must we believe that Jesus is the Christ in order to be born again, but we must also **continue** to believe that He is the Christ.

One of the first false doctrines to be circulated during the early history of the church was the idea that Jesus was God but not really man. He only appeared to be man or only took the *form* of man, much like the angels that appeared to Abraham to warn him about the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Apparently John warned of a similar error when he wrote that whoever denies that Jesus came in the flesh is not of God (1 John 4:2). Today, we have people who believe both extremes. Some would deny that Jesus is man, while others would deny that Jesus is Deity. John says we must believe both, that Jesus came in the flesh and also that He is the pre-existent Word who was born as the Son of God.

In spite of these clear biblical injunctions to believe in Jesus as the Christ and the Son of God, many people who claim to be “believers” — “Christians” — continue to disbelieve. They deny many of the basic fundamental facts of Jesus. They deny His virgin birth. They reject His miracles as recorded in the Bible. While they may admit He did great works, they disallow any miracles as taught in the Gospel accounts. Many would also reject the resurrection. In spite of these denials, they still claim to be Christians because they believe Jesus taught great things and was a good man. John plainly declares this is only an illusion. Being a Christian is much more than having good thoughts about Jesus. It is much more than just believing He was a great teacher. We must believe that He is the Son of God, which means He is of the essence of God (John 5:18). We must believe that God became flesh just as we are. To refuse to believe these basic facts means that one is not truly born of God or even truly a Christian.

Secondly, we see that a natural consequence of faith in Christ is a true love for our brethren. The new birth brings us into a loving relationship with God’s children, and we cannot love God without also loving His children, who are our brethren as well. As a matter of fact, John even declared that love for our brethren is one way we can determine if we truly love God. We cannot love one without also loving the other. Yet sadly, we often find a lack of love exhibited between brethren. This should not be.

Furthermore, John wrote that the Christian lives a holy and a pure life. Love for God and obedience to His commandments go together. Again, you cannot do

one without doing the other. True love for God will always be exhibited by a life marked by obedience to God's Word. Then, John completed the circle by saying that faith in Jesus allows us to overcome the world. Thus, to summarize John's argument, he declared that one born of God believes Jesus is the Christ. A Christian naturally loves God and His children. As a consequence of this love, one lives a holy life. He keeps God's commandments because he has overcome the world, which came about because of his faith in Christ.

Faith indeed is the victory that overcomes the world, but this is far from a mere intellectual faith. True faith is always lived out in the life of a Christian. Faith is the beginning and the end of our relationship with God, but it is not a "faith only" type of faith. Paul expressed a similar sentiment in Galatians 5:6, *"For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything but faith working through love."*

How strong is your faith? It doesn't matter what you may say or think; however, it does matter how you live. Being born of God **is always characterized by faith in Jesus as the Son of God, holiness, and love**. If one does not exhibit these signs, John declared you are not born of God, and therefore, you have no hope for eternal life in heaven. Be sure your life exhibits these characteristics of one who is born of God. †

To be born again simply refers to becoming a true Christian, and Jesus instructed Nicodemus **how** a person can be born again:

*"Jesus answered and said to him, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.'*

*"Nicodemus said to Him, 'How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?'"*

*"Jesus answered, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.'"* (John 3:3-5).

We must be born of water and the Spirit.

Water refers to the waters of baptism.





### *What About Instrumental Music in Christian Worship?*

**Louis Rushmore**

The church belongs to Christ (Matthew 16:18; Romans 16:16) and is obligated to conduct itself according to what Jesus authorized (Colossians 3:16,17). People living in the Gospel Age must heed the words of Jesus Christ rather than the words of Moses or the words of Old Testament prophets. God the Father emphasized this at the Transfiguration of Jesus Christ when He uttered, *“This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!”* (Matthew 17:1-5 NKJV). Remember that Moses (the lawgiver of the Old Testament) and Elijah (representing all the Old Testament prophets) were present at the Transfiguration. Hence, the Father essentially said, “Listen to my Son, Jesus Christ, rather than to Moses or to the prophets.” Jesus Himself stressed that during His earthly ministry when He said, *“He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him — the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day”* (John 12:48).

Further, Jesus Christ is the Lawgiver (James 4:12) and Mediator of the New Testament (Hebrews 9:15). Little surprise, then, that Jesus Christ condemned alteration of divine revelation (Judaism then, Christianity now) with *“the commandments of men”* (Matthew 15:9), and that the apostle Paul also condemned false Gospels (Galatians 1:6-9) and human will instead of God’s will (Colossians 2:23). One must turn **exclusively** to the New Testament to learn what God has authorized, including the topic of worshipful music under Christianity.

**The Old Testament and heaven are incorrect places to look for what God has authorized for worshipful music today.** The Old Testament has been replaced with the New Testament for people now living. It has been *“done away”* (2 Corinthians 3:6-11), *“abolished”* (Ephesians 2:15) and taken out of the way by nailing it to the cross (Colossians 2:14). People living today have been *“de-*

*lived*” from all of the Old Testament, including the Ten Commandments (Romans 7:6,7). Further, the New Testament is a “*better covenant*” (Hebrews 8:6,7). Therefore, the Old Testament is an incorrect place to look for what God has authorized in worship today (including worshipful music).

What may or may not occur in heaven is irrelevant regarding the Christian Age, and often passages about heaven are misrepresented in a vain attempt to justify what God has not authorized for Christian worship. Every soul will be judged at Final Judgment respecting the law of God under which he or she lived (Revelation 20:12-15). Therefore, supposed references to instruments of music in heaven are meaningless regarding what **is authorized** in worship of God **today**. First, Revelation 14:2 really discusses “voice” compared to “harps.” In addition, the Book of Revelation is highly figurative and comprised largely of symbols, so that mention of “harps” in heaven does not literally refer to instruments of music (Revelation 5:8; 15:2). What may or may not occur in eternity is irrelevant regarding Christian worship today.



**Singing is the only type of music that God has authorized for use in worship today.** Instrumental music existed in the first century when the church was begun by Christ, and could have been authorized by our Lord for Christian worship, though He did not authorize instrumental music for Christian worship. Early in human history, Jubal invented “*the harp and flute*” (Genesis 4:21). King Da-

vid introduced instruments of music into Jewish worship (1 Chronicles 23:5; 2 Chronicles 7:6; 29:26; Amos 6:5).

All worshipful music associated with the Lord's church in the New Testament is **singing without accompaniment by instrumental music** (Matthew 26:30; Mark 14:26; Acts 16:25; Romans 15:9; 1 Corinthians 14:15; Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; Hebrews 2:12; James 5:13). A sample of a first century Christian worship assembly identifies singing as the type of worshipful music that had apostolic sanction or authority (1 Corinthians 14:15). "*Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs*" in first century worshipful music were spoken through singing, and the instrument used to make melody was the "*heart*" (Ephesians 5:19). "*Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs*" through singing taught one another spiritual truths (Colossians 3:16), which instruments of music are incapable of doing. The type of music in a first century congregational assembly was singing (Hebrews 2:12). Irrespective of the place or occasion, first century worshipful music involved singing "*psalms*" (James 5:13).

The first century church did not use instrumental music in worship because there is no biblical authorization for it. For hundreds of years after the establishment of the Lord's church, no congregation used instrumental music in worship. Even famous religious leaders throughout history realized that instrumental music is **not authorized** by the New Testament for Christian worship. There was a time when neither the Catholic Church nor denominational churches used instrumental music in worship.

Luther called the organ an ensign of Baal [comparable to idolatry]; Calvin said that instrumental music was not fitter to be adopted into the Christian Church than the incense and the candlestick; Knox called the organ a kist [chest] of whistles. The Church of England revived them, against a very strong protest, and the English dissenters would not touch them. ("Music, Instrumental." *McClintock and Strong Encyclopedia*.)

No one has ever been authorized to add instrumental music to Christian worship! Everyone who respects biblical authority and wants to please God will render to the Almighty worshipful music that He has authorized – singing. Not using instrumental music in worship is a legitimate matter of faith, rather than a mere preference. The churches of Christ are obligated to practice what Jesus Christ has authorized, and He has not authorized instrumental music in Christian worship. †

**Only nine passages of Scripture in the New Testament address worshipful music, so it is not difficult to determine from them what kind of music God has authorized for Christian worship (Matthew 26:30; Mark 14:26; Acts 16:25; Romans 15:9; 1 Corinthians 14:15; Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; Hebrews 2:12; James 5:13).**

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## What Kind of God Exists?

All men are conscious of an objective moral law. Everyone holds that some things are wrong — like murder, rape, theft, and lying. We may tolerate these things in others and even argue that they are okay sometimes, but not against us. Muslim suicide bombers don't mind killing you, but they don't want the American government to kill them. Their moral law is skewed, but they still recognize that there is a moral standard beyond themselves.

Moral laws imply a moral lawgiver. principle of causality. Morality could not “force” as in Star Wars. Morality could a rock. You do not get morality from What is morally “right”, then, has to our universe.

In a “Star Wars” universe, there can be “bad” side. Good side of what? Bad side of the good and the bad?

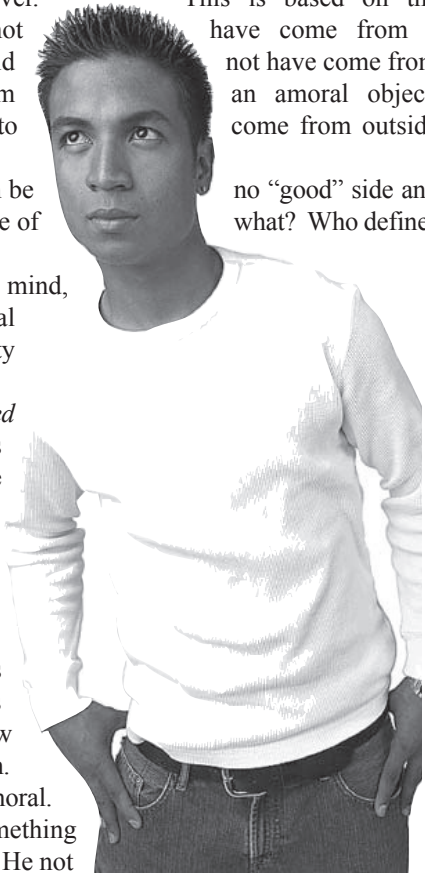
Because law must come from a mind, therefore, there must be a supreme moral Lawgiver. There can be no morality without God.

The God of the universe, Who *created* the universe, is a moral being. He is neither beyond morality nor answerable to a morality over Him. He is, by nature, moral. Only God ultimately knows the difference between right and wrong, because wrong is anything that goes against God's holy nature. **That** is what is wrong. Anything right is what is consistent with His moral nature. **That** is what is right. The only way we can know what is right and wrong is to listen to Him.

You and I can easily define what is moral. It is what is good. Whoever creates something good has to be good Himself. How can He not

This is based on the have come from a not have come from an amoral object. come from outside

no “good” side and what? Who defines



## GOD

share at least part of His nature with His creation? How can His creation not but reflect at least part of His nature?

So, how do we define “good”? The moral Creator of the universe, to be ultimately moral, would be: **Compassionate** — infinitely so; **Gracious** — infinitely so; **Slow to anger** — infinitely so. Why would He get angry sometimes? Because He would be upset when a created being violated His holy nature and thus forfeited his opportunity to be in His presence. That’s what would anger Him — nothing more and nothing less. His anger would not be capricious; it would be based on His own unchanging moral nature.

The moral Being/Creator would be **Lovingly-kind** — infinitely so; **True** — no falsehood could be in Him at all. We could go on — just looking at ourselves as human beings, we can see what *ought* to be. How can we describe the “good” Being? With these words: ***Loving, joyful, peaceful, patient, kind, trustworthy, gentle, totally in control of self.***

What we have here is the perfect, moral Being, the Being from whom our own morality originates and flows. Just as surely as we recognize that a powerful force exists because the world exists, so we also recognize that a loving force exists because love exists. The same thing can be said about grace, patience, truth, and so forth.

That brings us to one final point. If it is true that hell exists for those who violate His holy nature, then the perfectly moral Being Who is infinite in His love, would not only tell (communicate to) us that hell exists, but would also tell us (communicate to us) how to avoid hell. In other words, the perfectly “good” Being would be a Being Who communicates to us; and He would be a Being Who would communicate to us accurately and truthfully; and He would also have the power to see that His communication was exactly the way it needed to be.

If we are on the same page up to this point, do you know what we have done? We have described neither a god of Hinduism nor of Buddhism, nor the “Allah” of Islam, but the God of the Bible. †

Author Unknown

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**LORD Himself is God in heaven above  
and on the earth beneath;  
there is no other.**

# If Christ Be Not Raised

Raymond Elliott

One of the cardinal doctrines of the New Testament is the resurrection of Jesus Christ. There are 38 references to His resurrection in the books of the New Testament. His victory over death is mentioned at least 13 times in the Book of Acts alone, so it was the center of the preaching of the apostles and other inspired men. If a person believes in the resurrection of our Lord, then all the other miracles listed in the Bible can be easily accepted as being true. Should a person deny the resurrection of Jesus, then the other miracles also would be denied.

In the epistle to the *“church of God which is at Corinth”* the apostle Paul wrote in detail concerning the resurrection, and in fact, the general resurrection at the Lord’s second advent is predicated upon the fact that He Himself was resurrected physically from the dead. To deny one is to deny both. In the time of Paul, the Greeks did not believe in the resurrection of the body. They felt like the spirit relieved of the body was actually a blessing, and the human body would never be resurrected. Even among the Jews there was a sect called the Sadducees that did not believe in the resurrection of the dead (Matthew 22:23). In the great resurrection chapter of 1 Corinthians 15, the apostle dealt at length with this important subject.

Here are some fateful conclusions that must be accepted if Christ was not raised from the dead.

## ***“OUR PREACHING IS VAIN” (verse 14).***

The central theme of the apostolic message was the resurrection of Jesus; that is, *“that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he arose again the third day according to the scriptures.”* The first Gospel sermon that was preached by the 12 apostles dealt with the death and resurrection of Christ (Acts 2:24,30,31).

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### **“YOUR FAITH IS IN VAIN” (14,17).**

Our faith in the deity of Christ rests largely upon His resurrection. If He had not risen, His words were false because He Himself predicted His resurrection. *“Jesus answered and said unto them, destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. The Jews therefore said, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou raise it up in three days? But he spake of the temple of his body. When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he spake this; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said”* (John 2:19-22; see also Luke 9:22; Matthew 12:40). If Jesus was not raised from the dead, He would have been proven to be inferior to death and the grave. The redemptive work of God was accomplished through the resurrection of Jesus. It gave spiritual power to those who believed, to live a life of holiness and to possess the belief in eternal life. Please observe that the term “vain” in verse 14 is different from “vain” in verse 17. “Vain” in verse 14 means “void”, and in verse 17 it means “devoid of force and truth.”

**The empty tomb of Joseph  
of Arimathaea is proof  
beyond any reasonable doubt  
that we serve a risen Savior!**

### **“WE ARE FOUND FALSE WITNESS OF CHRIST” (verse 15).**

The apostles were told by Jesus that they were to be His witnesses (Acts 1:8). If Christ was not raised, the apostles were false witnesses in stating that they had seen him after his resurrection. Either one of the following two things would have to be true: The apostles deceived themselves; or they were some of the world’s greatest liars and imposters. To bear false witness against men is bad, but to bear false witness concerning Christ is even worse.

### **“YE ARE YET IN YOUR SINS” (verse 17).**

A dead Redeemer who has not been raised is no redeemer at all! It is true that Jesus died for our sins, but Paul wrote in Romans 5:10: *“For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be*

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*saved by his life.*” Also, Jesus “*was raised again for our justification*” (Romans 4:25). The resurrection of Jesus lies at the foundation of faith and forgiveness of sins, and without it, a confession of faith in Jesus Christ is meaningless.

### ***“THEY ALSO THAT HAVE FALLEN ASLEEP IN CHRIST HAVE PERISHED” (verse 18).***

Their loved ones who had obeyed Christ and lived for Him, but who had died, were lost if Christ was not raised. It isn’t that they were annihilated, but rather they were before God the Father without an Advocate and Mediator. There was no one to help them. They were in God’s presence with their sins still upon them, if Christ be not raised. If Christ was not raised from the dead, then the term “*asleep in Jesus*” is nothing but a mocking rhetoric, a worthless expression denoting no comfort whatsoever. But Jesus said, “*Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that they have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation*” (John 5:28,29; see also 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17).

**The resurrection of Jesus Christ  
was the central theme of  
the preaching of the apostles  
and other inspired men!**

### ***“IF WE HAVE ONLY HOPED IN CHRIST IN THIS LIFE, WE ARE OF ALL MEN MOST PITIABLE” (verse 19).***

Believers in Christ are worse off than the unbeliever if Christ be not raised. Degrees of pitiableness are regulated by hope. Christians are most pitiable because of their willingness to suffer, to be mocked, and to die because of their hope in Christ, *if* He be not raised from the dead. The apostle Paul described all his sufferings as “*light afflictions*” in comparison to that “*eternal weight of glory*” awaiting him in heaven (2 Corinthians 4:17,18). But such sufferings would be in vain if Christ be not raised. However, the Christian has this precious promise: “*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his*



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*great mercy begat us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (1 Peter 1:3).*

The apostle Paul wrote of the resurrection of Jesus Christ as being an established fact in chapter 15:20-22. During the 40 days between the resurrection of Christ and His ascension back to heaven, He appeared 10 times to different ones, beginning with His appearance to the women (*“Mary Magdalene and the other Mary”*, Matthew 18:1). In 1 Corinthians 15:5-9 Paul mentioned several of the Lord’s appearances: *“And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: after that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.”* The evidence, therefore, is overwhelming that Jesus Christ did in fact arise from the grave.

The lives of Jesus’ apostles were changed after His resurrection. Christianity began to spread with great rapidity throughout the Roman World. Even after nearly 2,000 years, the resurrection of Jesus Christ is having a tremendous impact on the lives of countless men and women who believe in Him as being the divine Son of God. Paul, in his letter to the church in Rome, wrote the following: *“But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness”* (Romans 6:17,18). A “form” is a likeness and the “form” of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ is found in Romans 6:1-4 when Paul wrote that the Christians had died to sin and were buried with their Lord in baptism and were raised to *“walk in newness of life”*.

The empty tomb of Joseph of Arimathaea is proof beyond any reasonable doubt that we serve a risen Savior! †

**Raymond Elliott preaches for the Capitol Heights congregation in Montgomery, Alabama, USA.**

**Without the resurrection  
of Jesus Christ there  
would be no Christianity!**

# Who Is the Holy Spirit?

J.C. Choate (deceased)

This theme of the Holy Spirit is important because so many people are confused about Him and His work. While most of the world would reject Him altogether, others go to the opposite extreme and teach that the Holy Spirit works miraculously today. But what does the Bible say?

The Scriptures show that the Holy Spirit is a personality, the third person in the Godhead. As with God and Christ, He is eternal: He has always been and will always be. He took part in the creation and all of the great events throughout the Old Testament period. In this lesson, we want to learn about His work during the time of Christ and the apostles.

Going back to the birth of Christ, we note that the record says, *“Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying,*

*“‘Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.’*

*“So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: ‘Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,’ which is translated, ‘God with us.’*

*“Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name Jesus” (Matthew 1:18-25).*

Please note the role of the Holy Spirit in all of this. It was the Holy Spirit who inspired Isaiah the prophet to write, *“Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel” (Isaiah 7:14).* Next, Mary was found with child, with the explanation that that which was conceived in her was of the Holy Spirit.

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Finally, all of this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord through the prophet, that a virgin would bring forth a Son and His name would be Immanuel, or God with us.

According to Luke 1, Zacharias and Elizabeth also had a child born to them in keeping with the power of the Holy Spirit, in this case enabling the barren wife of a childless couple to conceive. He was named John and was later known as John the Baptist because he baptized those who would submit to God's will. Being the forerunner of Christ, the one who was sent to prepare the way for the Lord, he said, "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

*"Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. And John tried to prevent Him, saying, 'I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?' But Jesus answered and said to him, 'Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he allowed Him.*

*"When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased'" (Matthew 3:11-17).*

As we saw earlier, Mary was found with child of the Holy Spirit, and thus Christ was born into the world. Now, as an adult, we find Jesus being baptized (immersed in water) by John. As evidence of the Father in heaven being pleased with this, the Spirit of God descended upon Jesus, and God said, *"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."*

In Matthew 4:1 the record says, *"Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil."* How did He overcome the challenges and temptations of Satan? He answered each time with quotations from the Scriptures, whose writers had been inspired by the Holy Spirit.

We read in John 3:34 that Christ received not the Spirit by measure, meaning that He received the fullness of the power of Spirit, enabling Him to do the work He came into the world to do. This statement, by contrast, is implying that others received the Spirit *by measure*, or that there were *limitations* as to what they could do, even with the power of the Spirit.

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Christ chose twelve men to represent Him and to carry on His work after His departure. These men were called apostles. One of the qualifications for an apostle was that he had been with Jesus from the beginning of His ministry through the time of His resurrection. Knowing that as the resurrected Lord, He would return to the Father in Heaven, Jesus told His apostles, *“Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you”* (John 16:7). He said again, in identifying the Comforter, *“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you”* (John 14:26).

The Comforter, the Holy Spirit, would do several things, according to Jesus’ promise: after the apostles were **baptized** in the Holy Spirit ( in Acts 2), He would **comfort them, guide them in all Truth, call to their remembrance all the things that Christ had taught them, enable them to speak in other languages, and to perform miracles to convince the people that they had been sent of God.**

But the apostles could not do all the work that needed to be done, so the Lord gave them the power to lay their hands on chosen disciples so that they might also receive the power of the Holy Spirit. While the apostles had received the **baptismal measure** of the Holy Spirit — and then through the laying of their hands on others, could impart miraculous power to them — these disciples who received the **laying-on-of-hands measure** of the Holy Spirit could not pass the miraculous power to others.

Finally, at the time of baptism in water, for the washing away of sins, all others received the ordinary, or non-miraculous, measure of the Spirit, according to Acts 2:38.

The Holy Spirit worked through the apostles and those on whom they laid their hands, to enable them to perform miracles and to inspire them to write down God’s Word. With the completion of the New Testament, the Spirit works today through the Word, and with us, according to teaching of that Word.

We want to encourage you to hear the Word of the Spirit — the things the Lord has said in His Word — to **believe** in God, to **repent** of your sins, to **confess** Christ as being the Son of God, and to **be baptized** for the remission of your sins. When you have done this, the Lord will save you, add you to His church, and give you the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38,47). †

**J.C. Choate preached the Gospel for 60 years, spending the latter half of those years in mission work in Asia.**

# Sweet Words of Love

Betty Burton Choate

Sweet words of love:

“I have *redeemed* thee...”

The Son of Heaven,  
Weighing out my worth to Him  
Against the bitter cup,  
Laid down His life  
And bought me for His own.

Sweet words of love:

“I have called thee by *My name*...”

Precious gift  
That He would let me wear  
— As though it were my own —  
That name of His,  
Unblemished from the dawn of time.

Sweet words of love:

“Thou art *Mine*...”

No human holds possessively  
A worthless thing,  
Nor does my Lord.  
His words — declaring me His own —  
Exclude all others' claims  
And seal my worth.

Sweet words of love:

“I have *redeemed* thee,  
And called thee by *My name*;  
Thou art *Mine*...”

Commitment — eternal —

Demanded my redemption,  
Freedom from the slavery binding me...  
Yet even that was not enough:

Love bought my soul

But a like love given back to Him  
Was what He wanted

And so, with *His own name*

He honored my unworthiness,

And now, defiant of the forces that would call me,

Wresting from His care the one He loves,

He shields me from the world,

From all that would endanger,

And claims again the triumph of His love:

“Thou...art...***Mine!***”





### *He Lifted Up His Eyes...*

**Betty Burton Choate**

Two men walked along a road on a bright summer day. Bob stooped to retrieve a small sheet of paper fluttering at his feet. “What’s this?” he asked. “Oh.



Nothing important — just a young child’s school paper, maybe even homework. Look, what a struggle it was to form the numbers — he’s probably in first grade. And here he’s missed an addition problem:  $2+2=5$ ! Wrong!” he laughed.

“No, your explanation requires purpose and intelligence,” Bill disagreed. “I would say that over several million years that paper slowly and gradually formed itself. What seems to be a child’s writing and arithmetic problems is only the effect of weathering through the ages.”

Bob looked incredulous, but he said nothing. A little further down the way they topped a rolling hill. Stretching away as far as the eye could see were fields of knee-high ripening grain. “The man who runs this farm is a powerful organizer!” he remarked. “What kind of planning and equipment would it take to cultivate and harvest thousands of acres like this?”



“You’ve got it wrong again,” Bill responded. “This just looks like a farm, but it isn’t that at all. Millions of years ago little rows began to develop, and then finally when the soil was just right, seeds began to blow in from great distances and to settle here. The result is what you see, but it took millions of years to happen.”

“Do you mean no thought and no expertise went into this at all?” Bob asked.

“Nope. It just happened. You know, given enough time, anything can happen!”



Just then a sporty red car whizzed past, and Bob jumped aside to keep from being hit. “Man! Did you see that? He must have been going a hundred and fifty miles an hour! I wonder who made a car with that powerful an engine, to go that fast?”

“Well,” Bill answered, watching the car whip out of sight, “nobody made that car. You know, given enough time, things just gradually evolve. Through a natural selection process, they improve themselves, so that now you see that bright red car flying down the road at a terrific speed. But such a marvel didn’t happen overnight! It took hundreds of millions of years.”

Topping another hill, they could see the outline of a city in the distance. “You know, some smart architects designed those buildings,” Bob said. “It’s a huge city, but beautiful. Sometimes I wonder how anybody has the daring or vis-

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ion, or whatever it takes, to launch into the planning and construction of such monstrous complexes. I wouldn't know where to begin!"

"Where you begin is billions of years ago, when all of this was a primordial plain, with cooling volcanoes and hot-house gases," answered Bill. "You know that physics and chemistry contain all the laws necessary to pull these elements together. Being here, and given enough time, those laws demanded that things come together like this — and so, there you have it! There was no great architect behind the design! And there was no mighty builder laying foundations and putting up walls and making it happen. It *had* to happen because the laws of the universe demand that it happen — given enough time."



By the time night fell, Bob and Bill had reached a wooded area beside a stream. They set up their tent, built a campfire, cooked and ate their dinner, and then stretched out by the fire for a period of relaxation. "You know," Bob said thoughtfully, "when I look up at the stars like this, I'm overwhelmed at the greatness and the power of God! They say there are hundreds of millions of galaxies, that space is endless — yet God had the power to make not only all that is out there, but everything that is in every microscopic cell of every living thing! It makes you wonder what it will be like, one day, to actually be in His presence, to see Him as He is! What will it be like to be judged, to answer for the way we've lived the life He gave us?"

"When I look at those stars," Bill said with a laugh, "I think of the fourteen-and-a-half billion years it took for all of this to make itself! And I don't think of God at all. I made up my mind a long time ago — there's not any God! We're never going to round a corner of existence and suddenly open our eyes to see some powerful spiritual Being whose presence is everywhere. When the writers of the Bible talked about Him being so great and glorious that everything around Him just automatically fell at His feet and worshiped Him, they were lying. There's no great God, and there's no Jesus Christ!"



**That night Bill died, and “...he lifted up his eyes...” (Luke 16:19-31). †**

**Betty Burton Choate works in Winona, MS with the World Evangelism Team.**

# *A Summary of the Bible*

## **Franklin Camp**

There are some things one needs to carefully consider as one engages in the study of the Bible. This book which we are studying is not an ordinary book. It may affect us in one of two ways: properly studied and applied, it will affect us for good in time and eternity; the improper study of it will cause one to lose one's soul.



The Bible is every man's book. It is not intended for some special group. But not only is the Bible every man's book, it is written for the average person. Scholars may study it, but it is not written necessarily with scholars in mind.

No one ever outgrows the Scriptures. The more one studies them, the wider and deeper they become. The Bible is a book which enables one to look into eternity. The best evidence of the inspiration of the Bible is to be found between its covers. No one will ever be a useful Christian unless one is a student of the Bible.

Matthew Henry said, "The Scriptures were written, not to make us astronomers, but to make us saints." It is no wonder that Paul urged Timothy to study the Scriptures, "rightly dividing," or handling aright, the word of truth, that he might be an approved workman before God.

- The Bible is the greatest book in the world. It is the most accessible, and in it one finds truth that can be found in no other book.
- The Bible is the only book that can give a satisfactory explanation of God, the world, man, sin, salvation, service, life here, and life hereafter.
- The Bible acknowledges man's faults, it is patient with man's weaknesses, it is severe with man's sins, and it is honest with his virtues and his hopes.
- To own the Bible is to be rich. To study, to know, and to trust the Bible is to find life. To study the Bible is to be wise; to obey it, to be strong.
- To know the Bible and to handle it aright is the greatest accomplishment within the reach of any person. One may know English, astronomy, literature, music,

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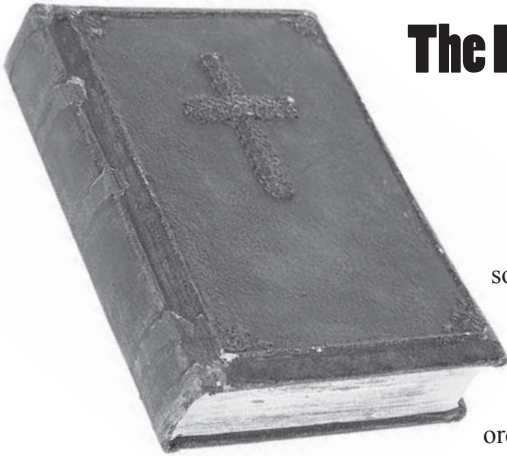
sociology, and philosophy; yet, if one does not know the Bible, he has failed in the only subject that brings all things into their proper relationship and that enables one to know life at its best.

- The one who seeks to know the Bible will endeavor to study its contents book by book, meet its characters as they unfold through the pages, study its types, its doctrine, its topics, paragraphs, sentences, and words. This is a lifetime work.
- The Bible is the one book that can save many a heartache. The following was found on the fly-leaf of a Bible placed by the Gideons in a motel in Birmingham, Alabama: “May God bless the man who placed this book here. I am a young lady, twenty-one years old, fatherless and motherless. Tonight this book saved me from taking a wrong step. May the next reader find in it the comfort that I did.”
- There is no greater accomplishment in life than to be able to rightly divide the Word of truth. It is worth all the sacrifice that is necessary to give to such a study. One can never be great in the true sense of that word who does not know the Word, love it, live it, delight in it, and teach it without perversion and without misrepresentation.
- The one who studies this book and knows how to handle it is in a position to render the greatest service to the world. No wonder Paul told Timothy, (1) to study, (2) to be a workman, and (3) to seek to be approved of God. There is no higher ambition on earth.
- The Bible is a mirror that enables us to see ourselves. It is food which supplies the strength that we need, a lamp to guide our way, a hammer to break and to build, a sword to fight and to defend, the seed to plant and grow, and the goal to own and to become our reward.

There are no experiences in life for which the Bible does not furnish a passage. May these thoughts lend encouragement to all of us to become diligent students of the Word, that we may know the way of life and find the life that is life indeed. †

**Franklin Camp (1915-1991) was renowned as a Gospel preacher, but more so as a diligent and outstanding student of the Bible, having studied it six hours a day for nearly 50 years. He preached mostly in the states of Alabama and Georgia, USA.**

**“...the words that I have spoken will judge him in the last day...” (John 12:48)**



# The Preeminent Place of Purpose

David Deffenbaugh

I was recently shown a rock by someone who was rather proud of it. It wasn't a particularly pretty rock. Nor was it a rock containing any precious metal or gem.

It was just a rock, very plain and ordinary. The reason the rock was kept, and with much pride, it should

be added, was that this rock had been used for years to prop up a mother's bed that had a broken leg (the bed, not the mother). So long had the rock been so used that it had been worn to a slight bowl-shape on one side. Its value was sentimental, but to one person anyway, the rock has served a wonderful purpose, and thus, was a valued treasure.

Purpose is important. It can completely transform one's perceptions and appreciation. When we misunderstand something's (or someone's) purpose, we're likely not to appropriately appreciate that thing (or person).

It seems that many people think the Bible's purpose is to make them wealthy, healthy, successful, happy, or whatever. They seem to approach it with the question, "What can the Bible do *for* me?" That's the wrong question. It should be, "What will the Bible do *to* me?"

The purpose of the Bible is to make man acceptable to God. For instance, the book of Leviticus is a collection of many of the specific precepts and commandments that make up the Law of Moses. What was the purpose of all those commandments, instructions, directives, and prohibitions? That's clearly explained in the later portions of the book, "*Moreover, I will make My dwelling among you, and My soul will not reject you. I will also walk among you and be your God, and you shall be My people*" (Leviticus 26:11-12). God wanted these people to be His, and in order to do so it was necessary for them to be holy as He is holy (19:2).

This purpose continues throughout the Scriptures. Paul describes God's intent that His church be acceptable to Him in these terms, "*...that He might sanctify her,*

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*having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless” (Ephesians 5:26-27). Peter adopts some familiar Old Testament terminology when he writes, “But you are ... a people for God’s own possession...” (1 Peter 2:9). God’s desire is for a people He can embrace, fellowship, and claim as His own. To that end, His revealed Word informs us of our predicament in sin, the salvation that is possible only through Jesus Christ, the church as the body of the saved, and the kind of lives to be lived by redeemed people.*

When we realize the Bible is all about changing and shaping and directing us, it is remarkable how our changed perception of its purpose allows it to be effective to that end. †

David Deffenbaugh preaches for the Center Hill congregation in Paragould, Arkansas, USA.

**The purpose of the Bible is to make man acceptable to God.**

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# *The Power of Example*

Wayne Jackson

The Greek New Testament contains several terms that are rendered by the English word “example.” The word *deigma* denotes that which is shown, hence, a specimen. Jude declares that the permanent destruction of wicked Sodom and Gomorrah serves as an “example” of the eternal punishment of hell (Jude 7). The term *hupodeigma*, literally, “to show under,” suggests a model, either for good or bad. We should not follow Israel’s “example” of apostasy in the wilderness (Hebrews 4:11). The Greek *tupos* denotes a print (cf. John 20:25), or it can suggest a “pattern” (Hebrews 8:5). Therefore, elders are to be “examples” to the flock of God (1 Peter 5:3). *Hypotuposis* in secular Greek was an outline or sketch. In the New Testament it can denote a behavioral example or a pattern or doctrine (see 1 Timothy 1:16; 2 Timothy 1:13). The word *hypogrammos* (literally “to write under”), was employed in ancient Greek for a child’s writing exercise in copying the alphabet. This term is used to describe the “example” of the sinless Christ who passively endured suffering and confidently committed His care unto the Father (1 Peter 2:21).

### *Some Facts About Example*

The Bible repeatedly appeals to the power of example. Note the following:

God is our example. The Lord commanded His ancient people: “*You shall be holy; for I Jehovah your God am holy*” (Leviticus 19:2). Similarly, Christ admonished: “*You therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect*” (Matthew 5:48). The example of Jehovah’s loving kindness was a great motivation in David’s life (Psalm 26:3). Heaven’s example in extending forgiveness for our transgressions can surely encourage us to be compassionate concerning those who have offended us (see Ephesians 4:32).

Christ is our example. Jesus was such a marvelous pattern in a great variety of ways. He was an example of righteous living. He never yielded to sin (Hebrews 4:15). He delighted in doing His Father’s will (Psalm 40:8) and pursued that course with diligence (John 8:29). The Lord was a fitting example in serving (John 13:15) and in suffering (1 Peter 2:21ff). There is a vivid commentary on the influence of Christ in the Book of Acts. We are told that the Jewish rulers, in observing Peter and John, “*took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus*” (Acts 4:13). What a commentary on the Savior!

## THE WORD OF GOD

Christians are to be good examples. Paul frequently urges the readers of his epistles to follow his example to the extent that such reflects the life of Christ. To the Corinthians he wrote: “*Be ye imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ*” (1 Corinthians 11:1). Paul encouraged Timothy to be an example to others “*in word, in manner of life, in love, in faith, in purity*” (1 Timothy 4:12). No one can argue with a good example. It is simply there! That is why Peter tells the Christian woman who is married to an unbeliever that if she cannot reach her spouse with verbal instruction in the Word, perhaps she, without uttering a word, could convince him by her manner of life (1 Peter 3:1).

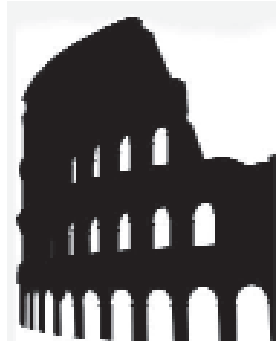
### *Examples and Authority*

There is considerable controversy these days about whether or not apostolic “example” is a legitimate means of establishing the authority for a religious practice. For instance, does the solitary example of the church observing the Lord’s Supper on the Lord’s Day constitute a binding example?

First, let us simply raise this question: Does the New Testament itself endorse the principle that example can bear the force of authority? Consider the following: (1) In Acts 11, when Peter, before the brothers in Jerusalem, argued the case for accepting Gentiles into the church, he cited the example of the Spirit’s operation upon the household of Cornelius as proof that these people were entitled to Christian status. To refuse the Gentiles would be withstanding God (11:15-17). (2) In Acts 15, when a question arose as to whether Gentiles would be required to practice circumcision in order to be saved, both Paul and Barnabas, as well as Peter, demonstrated by the citation of examples that the Lord had miraculously worked through them among the Gentiles, granting salvation without submission to the law of Moses. Thus, circumcision was not to be bound as a matter of salvation (cf. 15:4, 6-12). Examples can be binding (cf. 2 Timothy 1:13).

Back to the question of the Lord’s Supper. How do we conclude that the example of observing the communion on Sunday (Acts 20:7) is a binding precedent? The answer: the overall context of the New Testament (i.e., biblical information on the same subject elsewhere) establishes a spiritual connection between the Lord’s Supper and the first day of the week. The components of the communion (bread and fruit of the vine) are reflective of the Savior’s death (Matthew 26:26-28), and the first day of the week commemorates His resurrection (John 20:1ff). Obviously, therefore, Sunday becomes a binding example for the time of the Lord’s Supper. †

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## Romans 13:8-14

**Jerry Bates**

1. Is it wrong to borrow money from someone else? (v. 8)
2. Why did Paul say that if we love one another, we have fulfilled the law? (v. 8)
3. To what law was Paul referring? (v. 9)
4. What does it mean to love your neighbor? (v. 9)
5. Who else in the New Testament also said that we should love our neighbor as ourselves? (v. 9)
6. How is love the fulfilling of the law? (v. 10)
7. In 1 John 3:16,17, John tells us that loving our brother means to be willing to die for him or to help him with his needs. Why does he imply that love means actively helping someone else, while Paul seems to imply that love for our brother simply means to do no harm to him? (v. 10)
8. When should one become alert and clear thinking? (v. 11)
9. To what does “works of darkness” refer? (v. 12)
10. How does one put on the armor of light? (v. 12)
11. What does it mean to walk properly as in the day? (v. 13)
12. What is revelry? (v. 13)
13. Does putting on the Lord Jesus mean the same as putting on the armor of light? (vs. 12,13)
14. Is it ever right for one to fulfill the lusts of the flesh? (v. 14)

(see the back cover for answer)

8 Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law. 9 For the commandments, “You shall not commit adultery,” “You shall not murder,” “You shall not steal,” “You shall not bear false witness,” “You shall not covet,” and if there is any other commandment, are all summed up in this saying, namely, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” 10 Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

11 And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. 12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. 13 Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. 14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.”

NOTES: This text has two divisions. The former talks about love for our neighbor, while the latter discusses purity. Paul assumes that everyone loves his/her self, thus he says we should love others just as we love ourselves. Love is a never-ending debt that we owe to everyone. We will never reach a point where we can say we have loved enough. When we love another, we automatically fulfill the law, because love will not allow us to do anything that might in some way harm our neighbor. We might obey the law outwardly without love, but one cannot truly love without also obeying the commandments.

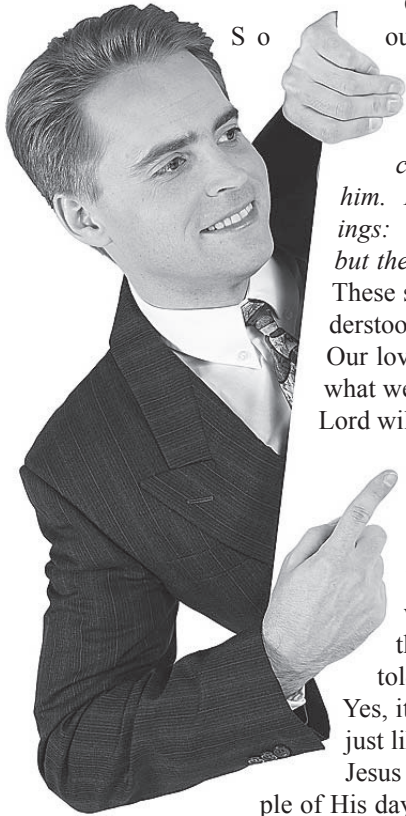
In the second half of this text, Paul encourages us to wake up. Believers are pictured as being asleep. This emphasizes the urgency of the situation. Works of darkness or sin are often associated with night. We are encouraged to abandon all works of darkness and devote ourselves to a lifestyle that is suited to the day. We should never justify some sin in our lives by simply saying, “No one is perfect.” While that is true, it does not excuse sin.

Paul mentions three pairs of words referring to three different categories of sin. This shows that Christians are not immune to temptation and can easily engage in such activities as described in this section. Nevertheless, we must never excuse such behavior. We should strive to exhibit the same holy character that Jesus exhibited while here on earth.

# The Marks of Salvation

Grady Miller

Only a few simple passages of Scripture will establish the absolute necessity of our obedience to the commands of God in order to be saved from sin. Indeed, these few verses confirm that no one will be saved who does not render obedience to the Lord in this life.



## **Obedience is the mark of love for God.**

our Lord Jesus taught: *“If ye love me, keep my commandments”* (John 14:15). *“If a man loves me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father’s which sent me”* (John 14:23,24). These statements are much too plain to be misunderstood; if we truly love Jesus, we will obey Him. Our love is manifested or proven, not so much by what we *say*, but by what we *do*. True love for the Lord will lead to obedience.

## **Obedience is the mark of saving**

**faith.** The Bible gives a record of those who were weak in faith as well as those who were strong. What was the difference between them? Those strong in faith did what God told them to do, when God told them to do it, and how or in the way God told them to do it; those weak in faith did not.

Yes, it is just that simple. Our faith is evidenced just like our love for the Lord — by what we do!

Jesus rebuked the faithless and disobedient people of His day, saying, *“Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?”* (Luke 6:46). He warned that *“not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven”* (Matthew 7:21).

## SALVATION

James testified that Abraham had a “perfect” faith because he both believed in God and did what God told him to do (James 2:21-23). True faith — saving faith — leads to and includes obedience. The faith that saves is the faith that obeys.

**Obedience is the mark of salvation.** This simply cannot be denied: *“He that doeth the will of God abideth f o r -*

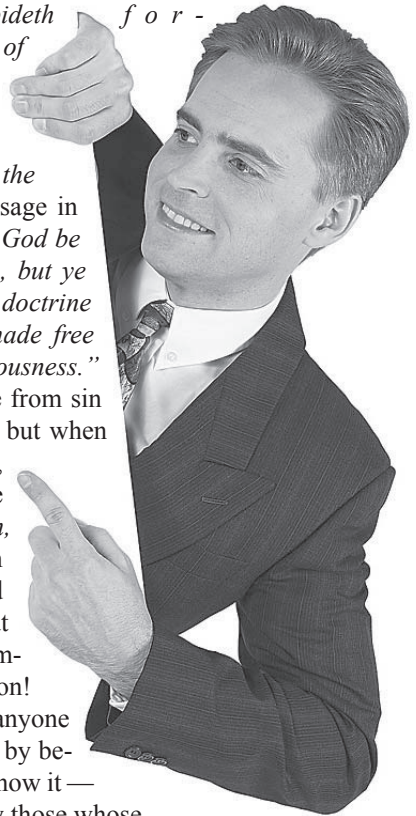
*ever”* (1 John 2:17); Jesus is *“the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him”* (Hebrews 5:9); Peter addressed his first epistle to those who had *“purified [their] souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit”* (1 Peter 1:22). An important passage in this connection is Romans 6:17,18: *“But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.”* Here is proof positive that we are set free from sin — not at the moment we first believe — but when our faith leads us into obedience. In fact, we may be assured of salvation if we are obedient: *“We do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments”* (1 John 2:3). Assurance of salvation is not a good feeling or a warm glow; we can know that we are saved if we do what God has commanded. Obedience is the mark of salvation!

In view of these Scriptures, how can anyone still hold to the false doctrine of salvation by belief only? The way to be saved — and to know it — is to believe on Jesus and obey Him. Only those whose faith leads them to obedience have the assurance and promise of eternal life.



**Grady Miller preaches for the Lord's church in Colorado Springs, Colorado, USA.**

**The way to be saved — and to know it — is to believe on Jesus and obey Him. Only those whose faith leads them to obedience have the assurance and promise of eternal life.**



## SALVATION

# Life

Frank Chesser

The image of God bursts forth from the dark interior of the mother's womb. He greets life, robed in unexcellable loveliness. Each day is kissed by the spirit of spring as the wonders of babyhood permeate the home. There is a "*time to be born*" (Ecclesiastes 3:2).

The days take wings as crawling becomes walking, and the days of infancy are reserved for albums and memories. A child becomes a boy, a girl, embracing youth as though it will last forever. Shaving, high heels, dating, graduation, courtship, and marriage, the cycle of life which commenced in Eden continues on its unaltered course.

With immeasurable swiftness, the carefree days of youth give way to the weighty responsibilities of adulthood. A child becomes a man with a child of his own. A day now seems like an hour used to be, as time seems to gather speed with each passing year. The mirror reveals a touch of gray, a furrow in the brow, a loss of tightness in the skin. The years of parenthood appear long, yet short with a backward look. Grandchildren and retirement, once a dream, now a reality.

The sun of life is now setting. Time among man grows short. Youth is only a memory. Reflecting on the nature of life from Adam onward, aged Joshua declared, "*I am going the way of all the earth*" (Joshua 23:14). So must all men. Every man has his time with life, his time with death. There is a "*time to die*" (Ecclesiastes 3:2).

As the curtain descends, what can be said for your time with life? In the process of making a living, have you neglected to make a life? To what can you point as justification for your transient moment on earth?

Is the sum and substance of your life's work a handful of material things? Has God been a stranger or companion? When life bows to death and time gives way to eternity, will you be able to say, "It is well with my soul"? †

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



## SALVATION

# Bible Baptism and Gospel Salvation

Perry N. Hall



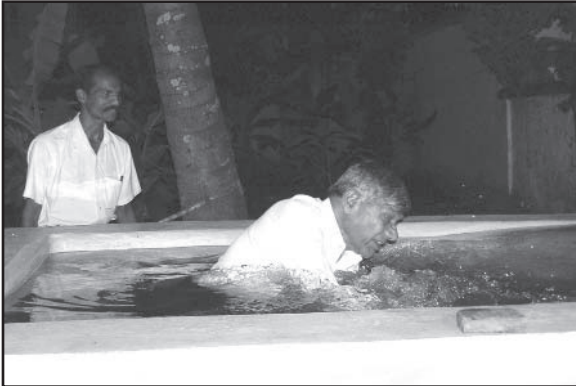
Here we are into the third millennium and a world is still lost in sin. Due to an exploding population, there is a greater need now for men to be cleansed by the blood of Christ than ever before in the history of the planet. But this period of history has been labeled “the post-Christian era,” for some say that Christianity is in decline. If this is true, it is due, in part, to man’s unwillingness to accept the Bible as the Word of God and to follow its teachings. Many who profess to be friends of Christ continue to deny certain teachings, substituting in the place of divine revelation the doctrines and commandments of men.

In no area is this more apparent than the area of Bible baptism and its relationship to Gospel salvation. It is unbelievable, but the average individual who professes to be a follower of Christ denies any connection between the two, though

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they submit to a denominational baptism of sorts. But it is in the immersion of the penitent believer that one re-enacts the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, this coming into His death, where His blood and its benefits are reached (1 Corinthians 15:1-4; Romans 6:3-6).

This being the case, it is easy to see why water baptism stands between the sinner and salvation (Mark 16:16; 1 Peter 3:20,21). Baptism is the dividing line between the sinner and receiving the remission of sins (Acts 2:38), thus having one's sins washed away (Acts 22:16). Salvation is in Christ (Ephesians 1:3; 2 Timothy 2:10). The penitent believer is baptized into Christ (Romans 6:3), where he or she puts on Christ (Galatians 3:27), becomes a new creature in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17), and becomes an heir of the promise (Galatians 3:27-29).



Being led by the teachings of the Spirit, baptism stands between the sinner and being a member of the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12,13), of which Christ is the Head and Savior (Ephesians 5:23), and where reconciliation is found (Ephesians 2:16). Baptism stands between the sinner, the

new birth, and citizenship in the Kingdom (John 3:3-5).

The sinner cannot be a glad receiver of the Gospel if baptism is refused (Acts 2:41). Gospel obedience to that *"form of doctrine"* brings deliverance from the slavery of sin (Romans 6:3-18) and causes one to be *"of Christ"* (1 Corinthians 1:12,13). Baptism stands between the sinner and rejoicing because of the remission of sins (Acts 8:35-39). The enlightened individual cannot have a clear conscience until baptism, for it is the appeal to God and answer for such (1 Peter 3:21).

Dear friend, why do you tarry? Arise and be baptized with Bible baptism and have your sins washed away in the blood of Christ! The Gospel is God's power to save (Romans 1:16), and it must be re-enacted in our obedience to receive salvation (Romans 1:5; 16:25-27; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; Hebrews 5:8,9). †

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## SALVATION

# HAS MAN OUTGROWN THE GOSPEL?

Allen Webster

Times change. Today's "new" is tomorrow's "old," this morning's "break-through" is this afternoon's "castaway," this year's "popular" is lost in next year's "latest." The "up-to-date" is soon "out-of-date."

Truth doesn't change. It reads the same today as yesterday and as it will tomorrow. It is "*once for all delivered to the saints*" (Jude 3). Some feel they have outgrown the ancient Gospel. The idea that there is a standard which is absolute is, to them, obsolete. The concepts of sin and spiritual death are replaced by the exaltation of self and sensuality. The idea of self-denial now to gain heaven later is given a passing thought — and then passed on. Bible concepts — power in the blood, a virgin-born, sinless, sacrificial, miraculously-raised Savior are but myths of a bygone era. Post-moderns have "grown up." They don't need the Gospel anymore. Or have they? Has man outgrown the Gospel?

## NOT UNLESS HE HAS FOUND ANOTHER FOOD FOR THE SOUL

Vegetables and fruits have been on kitchen tables since Eve prepared meals in the Garden, but no one is calling them outdated. Noah must have grilled the first T-bone just after the Flood, but — though several thousand years have passed — steakhouses still do pretty well. **What nourishes the spirit?** The Gospel fills those who "*hunger and thirst after righteousness*" (Matthew 5:6). Baby Christians first take the "*sincere milk of the word*" (1 Peter 2:2) and progress until they can eat "*strong meat*" at God's table (Hebrews 5:12-14). No one has found a substitute for God's "soul food."

## NOT UNLESS HE HAS FOUND ANOTHER CURE FOR MAN'S MOST SERIOUS DISEASE

Medical treatments have been around at least since Moses (Leviticus 12:1-4; Deuteronomy 23:10-14), but nobody's in a hurry to close hospitals and pharmacies. A cure for sin (forgiveness) is still man's most basic spiritual need (Romans 3:23; 6:23). We all have ancient Israel's contagion: "*From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and purifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment*" (Isaiah 1:6). The only antidote has "Gospel" on the label (Romans 1:16). †

**Allen Webster is the Editor of *House to House/Heart to Heart*, as well as serving as the preacher for the Lord's church in Jacksonville, Alabama, USA.**

# *The Church Jesus Built*

**Jimmy Clark**

*“And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it”* (Matthew 16:18). The apostle Paul wrote to the Ephesian brethren, *“Now therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone,”* (Ephesians 2:19,20). Paul, therefore, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, was revealing that the church Jesus promised to build was already built, with the saints at Ephesus being members of it.

There is probably more ignorance and confusion over the church that Jesus said He would build than over anything that has ever been built or established. Since Jesus and His apostles gave strong emphasis to it, then it is beneficial for all to look into it. Consider three things about the church Jesus built.

**His Church Is Not of Human Invention.** Too many have the attitude that being a member of any church is simply a matter of personal choice and taste. The general atmosphere of religious-thinking people today is that freedom of religion is freedom to be right in whatever one may choose. Pluralism and relativism have so influenced the thinking of people that few are looking into the pages of the Bible to see which church today is the church Jesus built. Even in the first century, the church was being called another sect of Judaism (cf. Acts 28:22). Paul revealed that Deity had the church in mind before the beginning of time. *“To the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord”* (Ephesians 3:10,11).

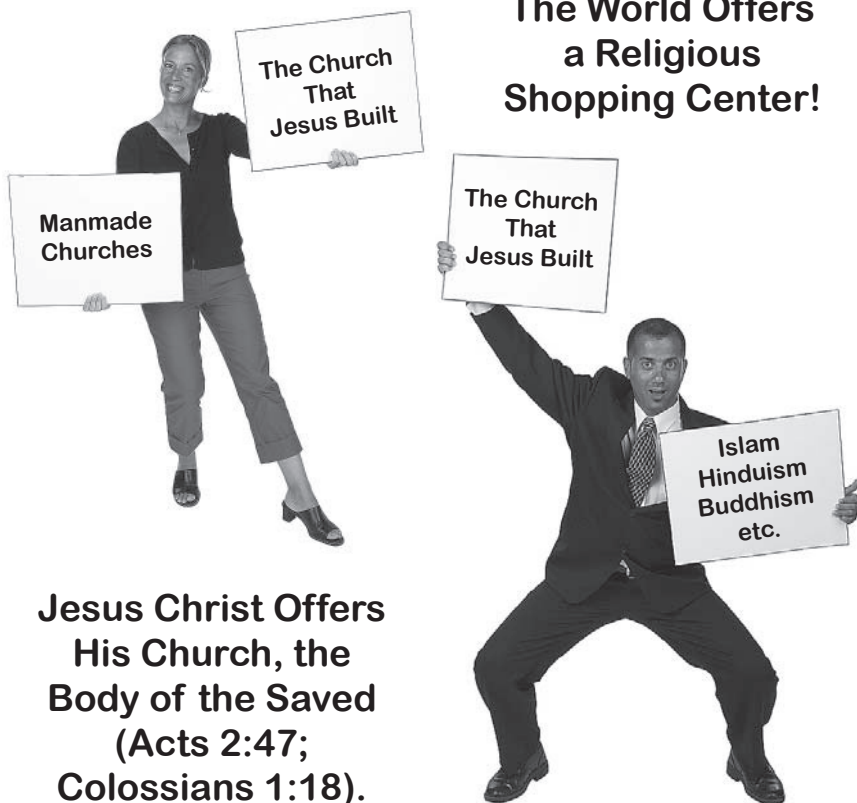
**His Church Is Necessary for Eternal Salvation.** Too many believe that church membership has nothing to do with salvation. While it is viewed as a good thing, spiritually, it is not overwhelmingly believed to be tied to salvation. Paul stated to the elders of the church at Ephesus, *“Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood”* (Acts 20:28). Paul wrote in the Ephesian letter, *“In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace”* (Ephesians 1:7). To be in Christ is to be in His church. Paul wrote in Galatians, *“And I was unknown by face to the churches of Judea which were in Christ”* (Galatians 1:22). Paul

## THE CHURCH

wrote further in Ephesians, *“For the husband is the head of the wife, as also Christ is the head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body”* (Ephesians 5:23). There is but one body (cf. Ephesians 4:4), and that one body, His church, will be saved by Him (cf. Acts 2:37-47; Hebrews 5:9).

**His Church Is Noticeable Today.** One only has to take the New Testament references to the church Jesus built in the first century, compare all religious groups to that standard, and thus be able to tell which is of God and which is of man. The Bereans knew that the Scriptures made things so (cf. Acts 17:11). Reject everything that is of man; accept only what is of God. †

**Jimmy Clark preaches for the Bethel Church of Christ in Athens, Alabama, USA.**



## THE CHURCH

# *Today's Church in Today's World*

**Greg Tidwell**

*"But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope the steadfast love of the LORD never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is thy faithfulness. 'The Lord is my portion' says my soul, 'therefore I will hope in him'" (Lamentations 3:21-24).*

Christianity is always current. As Jeremiah noted long ago, God's way of salvation is *"new every morning."*

My mentor, Jim Bill McInteer, taught me this lesson, the mission statement of his publishing house; "New Testament Christianity in This Present Age."

When the church was established on the day of Pentecost, it was built according to the pattern: *"Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit"* (Acts 2:38).

The same Gospel which provided remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit in the first century will provide forgiveness of sins and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the twenty-first century.

This concept is central to the restoration idea: if you follow the same pattern, you get the same results. It is just that simple.

*"...I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings"* (1 Corinthians 9:22,23).

The apostle Paul understood the need for accommodation in teaching the Gospel — not accommodating the *Gospel* itself because *God's divine pattern is not open to revision* — but accommodating *the methods* used to present the unchanging Word of God.

We are free to engage our own day on *its own terms* precisely because the message is eternal and unchanging.

We have an obligation to be *today's church engaging today's world with the message of Jesus Christ.* †

**Greg Tidwell is the preacher for the Fishinger and Kenny Church of Christ in Columbus, Ohio, USA, and he also serves as the editor of the Gospel Advocate.**

## THE CHURCH

### *“I Love Thy Kingdom, Lord”*

**Paul White**

The songs we sing in our worship to God are extremely important to the edification of any local body. Therefore, we should carefully consider the words of each hymn and sing with gratitude in our hearts to the Lord. One of the most thought-provoking songs is “I Love Thy Kingdom, Lord”. The words found in the second verse are especially significant and worthy of careful attention “...For her my tears shall fall, For her my prayers ascend; To her my cares and toils be given, Till toils and cares shall end; Beyond my highest joy I prize her heavenly ways...”

We would do well to carefully consider these words and honestly examine ourselves. Do we really love the church enough to shed tears for it? Do we mourn over the fallen? Do we grieve over indifference in ourselves and procrastination in others? What about our prayers? Do we spend much time in secret praying to the Father for the spiritual and numerical growth of this local body? Do we pray without ceasing for the harmony and purity of the church? As Bible teachers, are we praying for wisdom as we warn and teach every soul? How often do we speak privately to God about our leadership? Are we praying for their physical and spiritual health?

What about our labor in the kingdom? Are we overflowing in the Lord’s work? Are we reliable in the work? Can we be trusted to complete an assignment? Diligence in the kingdom is necessary to prevent further distractions. A church that is distracted in her work is headed for discouragement, and the extent to which we love the Lord’s church is determined by what we are willing to sacrifice in order to do the work in a timely and excellent manner. Whatever our hands find to do, then by the grace of God, let us do it with all our strength.

I’ve never been interested in simply giving people something to casually think about. Seems to me this just produces groups of people who are content with gathering dust while sitting around merely discussing future plans. What stirs me up for God is motivating people with the truth of Scripture, then seeing them get in gear because of their love for the Lord and His church. Let us all today examine ourselves with reference to our love, concern, and dedication to the local body. Singing the great hymn, “I Love Thy Kingdom, Lord” with the spirit and the understanding will go a long way in renewing our passion for the church. Since we are the bride, let’s adorn ourselves as such. †



## Quick Commentary on Crucial Verses

### Deuteronomy 8:2,3

And you shall remember that the Lord your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not.

So He *humbled you*, allowed you to hunger, and *fed you with manna* which you did not know nor did your fathers know, *that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord.*

The vital lessons we are to learn by our challenges and adversities are that **we are to live entirely by God's Word**, trusting Him not only to **know** what is best but to **do** for us what is best. His Word is complete, so we lack nothing in spiritual direction. His providential oversight in our lives will be there to reinforce the strength we are developing through our faithfulness to Him.

The accurate saying is, "Those who don't know history are doomed to repeat it."

The same is true of Christians. The Old Testament gives us a record of thousands of years of God's interaction with man. This passage in Deuteronomy, directed to the Israelites, is just as applicable in principle to Christians today.

We, too, are wandering through a wilderness — a world broken by sin. If God shielded us from every negative, observant folks in the world would decide to get behind that shield, not because of a love for God and surrender to Him, but for selfish gain. So, on the one hand, God promises in Romans 8:28 that all things will ultimately be worked together for our good — but He also realizes that strength and commitment are more deeply developed in our souls by measured challenges. So He allows us to be tested, not so **He** can see if we will be faithful, but **for our own knowledge of ourselves.**

# CASTING YOUR CARE UPON THE LORD

Bonnie Rushmore

Each one of us travels through mountains and valleys as we sojourn through life on earth. How do you handle the lows of life? Are you prone to fret, worry, and become anxious? Or, are you like the proverbial ostrich — burying your head in the sand — pretending the difficulty is an allusion and not really there? Perhaps you become angry and blame others or God for the problem. Or, do you turn to God in prayer, trusting in His Word? “...*we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose*” (Romans 8:28 NKJV).

Jesus frequently spoke on the topic of being anxious or of worry. He taught in Matthew 6:25-34 that we are not to become “anxious (NAS),” “worry (NKJV)” or “taking thought (KJV)” for the necessities of life. He further admonished that if God provides for the animals and grass, He will provide for His children. The Greek word “merimna” as used in this passage means, “‘to draw in different directions,’ distract, hence signifies ‘that which causes this, a care, especially an anxious care’” (*Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words*). Jesus taught that we should not worry about physical life. When we place God first in life, God will care for us. Jesus was not saying that we should sit back and wait for the necessities of life to be handed to us on a silver platter. He taught that we should **not worry** about obtaining the necessities of life as we work to provide for ourselves and our families.

Jesus gently rebuked Martha for worrying about the meal while Mary listened to the teachings of our Lord. “*And Jesus answered and said to her, ‘Martha, Martha, you are **worried and troubled** about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her’*” (Luke 10:41-42). Yes, Martha had the responsibility of caring for the guest in her home, but that concern should not overshadow the need to listen to the Words of our Savior.

Jesus warned the disciples of the coming difficulties they would face. He further taught that they were not to worry about how to answer those in authority when questioned (Luke 12:1-12).

## DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY



When Jesus walked on the Sea of Galilee, Peter asked to join Christ on the water. As Peter walked atop the water toward Christ, he became anxious and began to sink. Jesus rescued him and then rebuked him stating, “*O you of little faith, why did*

*you doubt?*” (Matthew 14:22-38). Jesus linked Peter’s anxiousness with a lack of faith. Throughout His time on earth, Jesus condemned those who allowed the cares of this world to overshadow the love and care God has for His children.

Peter and Paul also taught against worry or being anxious. Peter said in 1 Peter 5:6,7, “*Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.*” We must turn our worries over to God because He loves and cares for us.

Paul said in Philippians 4:6,7, “***Be anxious for nothing***, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Paul taught us that we should not worry. We will have peace when we turn our troubles over to the Lord!

Worry is probably one of the most difficult sins for Christians to overcome. Today’s society is awash with immorality and economic woes. We are concerned about the future of our nation for our children and grandchildren. Then, there are the low points in our lives. It may be health issues, the loss of a job, difficulties with a child, caring for an elderly parent, etc. With all these struggles in life, we can easily lose sight of our Heavenly Father who cares for us. We may go to God in prayer, turning all our concerns over to Him only to pick those problems back up when the prayer is over. Often, we fail to leave our concerns with God, and thus we have not followed the instructions of Paul in Philippians 4:6,7.

So how do we as Christians overcome the sin of worry? First, we must have a deep, abiding faith in God, trusting God to keep His promises.

## DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

Second, we need to study God's Word. A study of Bible characters who kept their faith during troubling times will encourage us to do likewise. Some of these individuals would include: Joseph, Daniel, David, Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, Stephen, Peter, and Paul. These men remained faithful to God even when their lives were in jeopardy. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego went into the fiery furnace without worry. **They knew God would protect them or take them home to heaven. Either choice was a good choice for them.** Read Hebrews, chapter eleven, for a longer list of men and women who exhibited great faith.

Third, we need to change our hearts from anxiousness and worry to faith and peace. Wise King Solomon stated, *"For as he thinks in his heart, so is he"* (Proverbs 23:7). To change the heart, we must think on the things of our Lord. *"Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy — meditate on these things"* (Philippians 4:8).

**Worry** is the one sin with which almost every Christian struggles. Our Father said through the pen of the apostle Paul that *"all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose"* (Romans 8:28). This is the verse that gives me hope and encouragement during the valleys of my pilgrimage upon this earth. I know what the Scriptures teach; however, putting those passages into practice can be difficult from time to time. I wish I could say that I have overcome the sin of worry, but alas I still succumb to the temptation of the devil and sometimes fall into his snare. When I do fall, God will welcome me back into His loving arms when I repent and ask for His forgiveness (Acts 8:21,22).

Will you turn to God and repent of the sin of worry, making it the occasional slip rather than an everyday practice in your life? God is waiting with open arms to welcome you back into His fold! †

**[Associate Editor's Note: Bonnie Rushmore, my dear wife, is fighting stage 3 pancreatic cancer. For months she endured doctors practicing medicine with various procedures and surgeries in several hospitals in two states until they dismissed her, all the while having failed to ascertain that she had cancer. Not satisfied, she and I opted for surgery to remove an obstruction that other doctors had merely determined to chisel through without surgery and through which to insert a stent. To our surprise and dismay, in that surgery the real cause and severity of her illness was discovered. Extensive surgery past, months of chemotherapy lie ahead. Some days Bonnie feels relatively good, but on other days pains, tiredness, and tears visit her. Those circumstances are a major resource from which Bonnie has written a very good article for all of us. ~ Louis Rushmore]**

**DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY**

**Christ Sent Me Not to Baptize,  
But to Preach the Gospel**

**A.L. Franks**

The statement is made: “Baptism is not essential to salvation, because the apostle Paul wrote, *‘Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel’*” (1 Corinthians 1:17).

**Argument:** If baptism is really necessary for salvation, the apostle Paul would not have written what he did in 1 Corinthians 1:14-17. He stated, “. . . *I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius.*” He added, “*For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel . . .*”

**Response:** Serious Bible students soon learn to consider **the context** when studying Scripture. The context of the passage under consideration deals with the sin of division within the congregation. Corinthian Christians had become contentious. They were claiming allegiance to men. Individual members were saying, *‘I am of Paul and I of Apollos and I of Cephas . . .’* (1 Corinthians 1:11,12). The church was divided.

The inspired apostle, in writing 1 Corinthians, sought to correct the problem of division. He asked, “*Is Christ divided? . . . Were ye baptized in the name of Paul?*” The sinful state of division at Corinth was caused, at least in part, by converts who were too closely attached to the one who baptized them. Therefore, Paul wrote, “*I thank God that I baptized none of you . . . , lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name.*” He then added, “*For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel . . .*” (verse 13-16).

The apostle is not, for one moment, minimizing the importance of baptism. He is not saying baptism is *unnecessary*. Rather, Paul was making the point that his work, role, or job was not to baptize those he converted. Someone else could and did do the actual baptizing; yet, all who heard and believed the Gospel were baptized (Read Acts 2:38-41; 18:8). Paul, with his own hands, baptized very few of the Corinthians. He personally recalled having immersed (baptized) Crispus, Gaius, and the household of Stephanas. He recalled baptizing no one else in Corinth. Yet all who were converted to Christ through the preaching of the Gospel were baptized.

When the Gospel was/is preached, baptism was/is preached (See Mark 16:16; Matthew 28:18-20). Teaching the need for baptism is a part of gospel preaching and is declared by Scripture to be a necessary step to be taken by the believer as evidence of his faith in Jesus as Savior. Baptism is essential. So teaches the Gospel; so teaches the Bible, and so teach those who preach the Gospel today. †

**A. L. Franks is the editor of Magnolia Messenger and lives in Kosciusko, Mississippi, USA.**

DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

# Baptism – A Beginning

Jimmy Jividen

Why is there rejoicing when one is baptized? One of the reasons is that baptism means a **new beginning**. *“Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come”* (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Baptism is a **new birth**. When one is begotten by the Word of God and is born of the water and Spirit, he becomes a citizen of the kingdom of God. Jesus said, *“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God”* (John 3:5). As a child, he can call God, *“Abba, Father.”* He has family care and becomes an heir.

Baptism is a **resurrection**. It is an event in which one dies to his old self and is buried in baptism, after which he is raised to walk in *“newness of life”* (Romans 6:4-6). Baptism is that act which makes all things new. As Jesus was resurrected from physical death, so we are resurrected from a spiritual death.

Baptism is a **salvation event**. Following the analogy of Noah’s salvation when the world was destroyed by water, Peter said, *“And corresponding to that, baptism now saves you...”* (1 Peter 3:21). Just as Noah’s obedience saved him and his family when the world was destroyed by water, so shall one’s obedience in baptism bring salvation when the world is destroyed by fire.

**Baptism is a New Beginning.**

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



**A muddy river in India results in a happy baptism. A babe in Christ is born; a new Christian life begins.**



DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

# ***Old Things Often Are the Best***

**Hardeman Nichols**

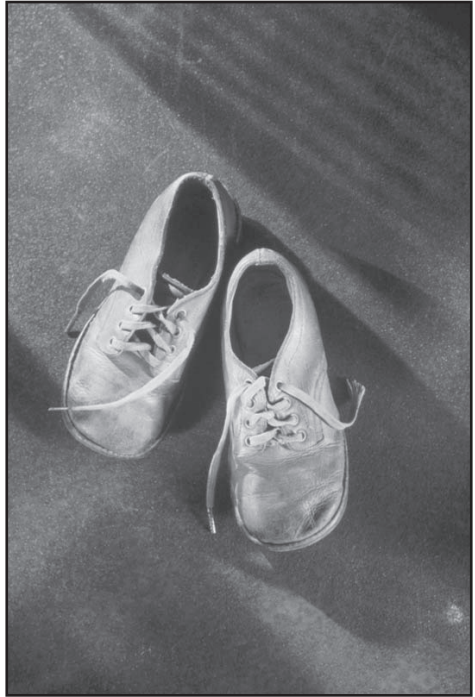
It is easy during the holidays to be captivated by whatever is new. Children and grownups alike want new things: new toys, new clothes, new cars, and for some even new houses. For many, the approach of the new year brings with it a desire for a new start — to be better in our homes, on our jobs, or at school. We make new and better resolutions. These things are commendable, provided they do not cause us to have a disdain for all that is old.

At the same time, we seem to be pulled by an ambivalent force in the opposite direction. We are magnetically drawn to old friends. The pair of old shoes feels better than the new ones. Even the shiny new car may not be as easy to drive as the old one, or the new house may not be as comfortable as we thought it would be, especially when the

first payments are due. One easily could begin to yearn for the old because it is so familiar, but our choices should be based upon a better foundation than that.

It is possible for us to become so enamored by the new that we disdain anything that is old. The answer lies in the proper evaluation of all things. When it comes to religion, the primary question we must ask is this: Is this in harmony with the God-given principles of the Scriptures? That means that in our service to God, the True is wrapped up in the things that are old.

The Bible is our guide always; it is the one old book we dare not discard. Jesus said, *“Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away”* (Matthew 24:35). He also said, *“He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not My*





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*words, hath One that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day*" (John 12:47,48).

It is easy to become enamored by the new: new fads, even new changes introduced into the worship of God. Some like anything different, and they seem never to stop and ask, "Is this permitted by the Scriptures?" It is enough for them if it is not the same old fare. They want to try everything that is unusual.

There always have been people with that attitude. The philosophers on the Areopagus were described as wanting any new doctrine: "*For all the Athenians and strangers which were there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing*" (Acts 17:21).

God wants us to search for the true, rather than some new way. The prophet Jeremiah said, "*Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.*" The old was contemptible to them: "*They said, 'We will not walk therein'*" (Jeremiah 6:16). May we never disregard God's Son and His way, for He has said, "*I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father; but by Me*" (John 14:6).

We should want the church that is as old as the New Testament. It is Christ's church, for He built it, as He promised in Matthew 16:18, "*Upon this rock I will build My church.*" That church never can be replaced by a new one. Paul said, "*Unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end*" (Ephesians 3:21). **When it comes to the church, if it is new, it isn't true.**

The Word of God also has prescribed the proper avenues of approach to God in worship, and they are as old as the New Testament. Jesus taught, "*God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth*" (John 4:24). To worship in truth is to worship Him according to the teaching of His Word, which is the truth (John 17:17).

The old institutions of worship that were followed by the early disciples are clearly ordained: "*They continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine*" [which they both sang and proclaimed in the Gospel message] "*and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers*" (Acts 2:42). They met for worship upon Sunday. The Bible says, "*upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them*" (Acts 20:7). Breaking bread is here a description of the Lord's supper, which they observed each week.

These old things are so valuable and irreplaceable; will you guard them securely as a treasure in your heart? †

**Hardeman Nichols preaches for the Pleasant Grove Church of Christ in Dallas, Texas, USA.**

DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

# *Dying Before Baptism?*

Kyle Butt



The New Testament clearly states that water baptism is necessary for salvation: *“He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned”* (Mark 16:16) [see Lyons and Butt, 2004]. But one of the most frequently used arguments against the necessity of baptism for salvation is the idea that “God would not do that.” The question is asked, “What if a sincere believing person is on his way to be baptized and dies right before he gets to the water? Are you telling me that God would send that person to hell just because he did not make it to the water?”

At first glance, this argument may seem legitimate. Upon further investigation, however, it is easy to see that it is simply a play on emotions, and in no way disproves the necessity of baptism for salvation.

The same “God-would-not-do-that” argument could be used against almost any commandment in the Bible. For instance, the Bible repeatedly says that a person must believe that Jesus is the Son of God: *“...Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame”* (Romans 10:11); *“Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins”* (John 8:24; et al.).

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Suppose, then, that a Christian had just begun to tell the story of Jesus to an older gentleman, when suddenly that gentleman has a massive heart attack and dies. He did not get to hear the rest of the story, and thus he did not have the opportunity to believe. Should we, therefore, do away with the biblical command to believe in Jesus Christ, simply because a theoretical scenario can be concocted in which a potential convert dies moments before his compliance? To ask is to answer. Nor, with a wave of the hand, can we do away with the biblical command to be baptized for the forgiveness of sins “...*Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit*” (Acts 2:38).

Consider also the fact that the Bible plainly states that God wants all people to be saved. In 2 Peter 3:9, the inspired apostle wrote: “*The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.*”

The Old Testament prophet Ezekiel was instructed by God to convey this message to the Israelites on God’s behalf: “‘*As I live, says the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live*’” (Ezekiel 33:11).

The apostle Paul told the young

preacher Timothy that God “*desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth*” (1 Timothy 2:3-4). Therefore, if a person truly and honestly wants to become a Christian by being baptized for the forgiveness of his sins as God commanded, then God (Who wants all to be saved and is watchful of each individual human) certainly would provide an opportunity for that person to obey His commandment to be baptized.

If no sparrow falls to the ground apart from God’s knowledge, according to Matthew 10:29, “*Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father’s will...Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows*”, and if God is no respecter of persons as is stated in Acts 10:34, “*Then Peter opened his mouth and said, ‘In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality’*”, then we can be sure that His providential care will ensure that each person is given a fair opportunity to respond to His commands.

“*He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges Him — the words that I have spoken will judge him in the last day*” (John 12:48). †

**REFERENCES:** Lyons, Eric and Kyle Butt (2004), “Taking Possession of What God Gives: A Case Study in Salvation,” [Online], URL: <http://www.apologeticspress.org/articles/2546>.

Kyle Butt writes and lectures for Apologetics Press.

# Leading a Lost Soul to Christ

Jack Harriman

When I have opportunity to study with someone who believes the basics but has not understood and obeyed the Gospel, I follow this plan:

**First**, I establish the fact that we live under the New Testament and not the Old Testament, and the significance of that fact. The Old Testament was a covenant made exclusively between God and the nation of Israel at Mt. Sinai (Deuteronomy 5:1-3; Psalm 147:19,20). The Gentile world was never under this covenant, and the Jewish world, since the death of Jesus, is no longer under it. So, we must get our instruction from the New Testament.

**Second**, I establish a common sense approach to Bible study. All the facts must be gathered. For example: When they came to arrest Jesus, Mark says that one of those who stood by drew a sword and cut off the ear of the servant of the high priest. Matthew informs us that it was a disciple of Jesus who used the sword. Luke says it was the right ear that was amputated. John identifies the swordsman as Peter and the victim as Malcus. Then the student must reason accurately from all the facts. Any Bible subject must be approached in this way.

**Third**, I apply all this to the question of how and when one becomes a saved person by studying the Great Commission accounts. Matthew says one is to be baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (28:19). Mark says that one must believe and be baptized to be saved (16:16). Luke adds the element of repentance and remission of sins (24:46). So, one becomes a saved person when he hears the Gospel and believes it, repents of past sins, and is baptized for the remission of sins.

**Fourth**, I confirm this conclusion by a brief study of Acts 2. They heard the Gospel and believed it (verses 14-37). When they asked what else they should do, they were told to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus for the remission of their sins (verse 38).

I emphasize two things about believing, repenting, and being baptized. **First, this stands together as a unit.** Not one of these can be omitted and still result in the remission of sins. **Second, there is a logical progression from faith to repentance to baptism to salvation** — which progression has been distorted by some of our religious neighbors.

**Question:** Where are you in your obedience?

†

Jack Harriman is a Gospel preacher living in Fayetteville, Arkansas, USA.

# Let's Be Personal Evangelists

**Darrell E. Beard**



One who goes to others for the purpose of teaching the Gospel and winning them to the Lord is called an evangelist. Possibly you have not thought of yourself as an evangelist because you do not stand in the pulpit and preach a sermon. Every Christian ought to be a personal evangelist in that he goes to others (family members, friends, neighbors, etc.) with the Word of God and seeks to win them to the Lord. Preachers and other Christians, however, can become so busy with “church work” that they neglect personal evangelism. Let each Christian ask himself, “Why should I be a personal evangelist?”

**1. Let's be personal evangelists in order to save the lost.** We live in a lost world! Christ commands us to *“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost”* (Matthew 28:19). Pulpit preaching, important as it is, will not do the job by itself. Mass evangelism by newspapers, radio, and television programs, etc. is helpful, but more is needed. Personal contact is still the most

**Every Christian ought to be a personal evangelist in that he goes to others (family members, friends, neighbors, etc.) with the Word of God and seeks to win them to the Lord.**

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effective way of reaching the lost. The early church grew because *“daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ”* (Acts 5:42). This example from the Apostles served to show other disciples the way to successful evangelism.

2. **Let’s be personal evangelists to restore the erring.** In almost any community, there are at least as many members of the church of Christ who have fallen away as those who make any pretense of being “faithful.” These people are lost! In fact, Peter indicates that their spiritual state is more desperate than if they had never heard the Gospel in the first place (2 Peter 2:20-22). They need to be brought back to the Lord. This is the work of any faithful child of God. *“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”* (James 5:19,20).
3. **Let’s be personal evangelists to encourage the weak and fainthearted.** Some are in danger of growing discouraged and “dropping out.” Some are going the wrong way because of ignorance or weakness. Thus, fellow Christians are to *“comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as ye do”* (1 Thessalonians 5:11). Personal evangelism makes Christians stronger, both those who visit and those who are visited. When there is much personal work going on among members, a congregation is edified and stimulated.
4. **Let’s be personal evangelists to save ourselves.** If we do not seek to save others, we may become unfruitful branches who will be broken off the vine and cast into the fire (John 15:1-8). This is not to say that this is the only way to be fruitful. It should be natural for those who are saved to turn to the lost. Being mindful of the plight of the lost and being active in trying to save them is the most effective way of keeping ourselves faithful and zealous in serving God. Let us forever destroy the notion that the teaching and leading of others is just the work of “church leaders.”

Personal evangelism is part of a fruitful, productive life. Each congregation should strive to provide training and encouragement for Christians to be effective personal workers. Individual Christians should seek to grow spiritually so they will become such. †

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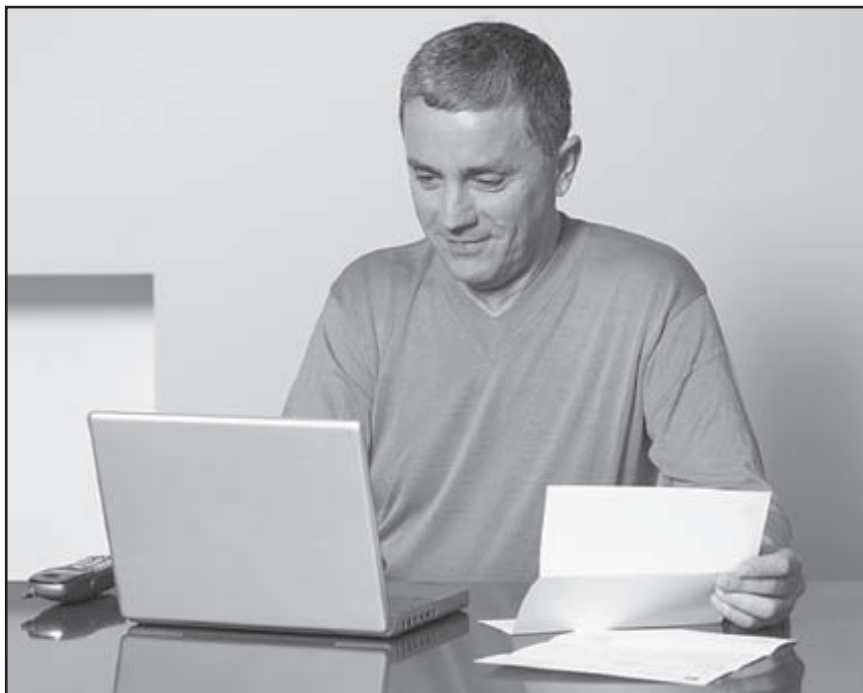
**Christians can become so busy with “church work” that they neglect personal evangelism.**

# ***A Love Letter to Non-Christian Friends and Family***

**Brad Harrub**

Dear friend,

I have been contemplating this letter for a long time, and have only now gotten up the courage to write it. Even as I pen these words, my stomach churns in nervous anticipation. The reason for it is quite simple. I want you to know about the very best thing that has ever happened in my life. I want to make sure before I die that I introduce you to my “first love”. You often comment that I seem so happy all the time. Allow me a few minutes to explain why. But before I explain, let me share with you why it has taken me so long to write this letter.





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Our relationship stretches back through many smiles and many tears, and throughout that time I knew that you were someone I could count on. Each one of those smiles and tears represents a lifetime of cherished memories. You know my favorite foods, that I love lasagna and don't like liver. You stood by my side on several occasions when it seemed like the entire world was against me. You have lifted my hand high as we celebrated victories and held my hand through my defeats. In many ways we are like two peas in a pod. And, it's this relationship that has kept me from writing this letter. I cherish our relationship so much that I don't ever want anything to jeopardize it or see it falter. So I beg you to read the remainder of this letter full of love, compassion, and an open mind — knowing that it was written out of my love for you.

You and I have a tremendous amount in common — always have, and probably always will. However, there is one thing that we don't have in common. A while back I made a decision in my life that started me down a different pathway — a pathway on which I desperately want you to join me. Some time ago I began studying the Bible, and I soon realized that I was only “playing” Christian. I was a “member” of a strong local church that had many members, and was there almost every time the door was opened. However, it became evident fairly quickly that the church that I was attending was doing things that were not described in the Bible. Sure, we met each Sunday for worship, and we sang songs of praise, but a great deal of the service was devoted to traditions that men had incorporated into the worship service. In fact, a large part of the worship service could be classified as entertainment. As I read through the New Testament, I quickly discovered that entertainment, and these traditions of men, were not a part of the original church that Christ established.

You and I both know that religions are a dime a dozen these days. Seems like there is a church building on almost every street corner. But I began to ask myself if all of these religious groups were the same in God's eyes. After looking through the Scriptures I realized they were not. Even though many of them do very altruistic acts for the needy, and even though they have many sincere people in their pews, they still were not carrying out Christianity the way God Himself ordained. They are sincere — but they are sincerely wrong according to the Scriptures.

So, here's what I did (and what I encourage/beg you to do). I began looking in the Bible for examples of the church that Jesus built. In Matthew 16:18, Christ told the apostle Peter that “*upon this rock*” (the rock of truth that He was the Son of God), He would build His church. So I began investigating the details about His church. I read in Acts chapter 2 where it was started in Jerusalem. I continued reading in Acts to see how those early Christians worshipped and how others

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became Christians. And, I began to see a divine pattern. I quickly realized that many of the books in the New Testament were written to different congregations of the church that Christ had founded. In fact, many of the books in the New Testament were letters written by Paul to various churches that were scattered abroad. In each of those letters, there are instructions and commands of things that we should and should not be doing.

For instance, I know that in many churches you officially “join” the church, or they vote you in. But I never found this process in my study of the New Testament. In fact, the New Testament is very specific that God is the one who adds people to the church (Acts 2:47). However, He only adds those who have complied with His will. And dear friend, it is with a humble and compassionate heart that I admit that I am scared that maybe you have not complied with His commands. For instance, the Bible instructs that we must **hear the Gospel** (Romans 10:14-17; James 1:21-25), and we must **believe in Jesus Christ** (John 8:24; Mark 16:16). And, while many people have done these steps, relatively few have taken the next steps of **repenting of their past sins** (Acts 3:19; Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30) and **confessing the name of Jesus Christ** (Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10; Acts 8:36-38). After someone has done this, they are ready to be **buried with Christ in baptism** so that past sins can be forgiven. This act of baptism, “*for the remission of sins*”, is mentioned throughout the book of Acts (see chapters 2, 8, 9, 10, 16). The importance of being immersed can be identified by the words of Jesus found in Mark 16:16 when He declared: “*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.*”

In Matthew 16:18, Christ said He would found one church — “*my church.*” In Ephesians 1:22-23 we read where the church is called the “*body*” (with Christ being the head). A few chapters later, in Ephesians 4:4, we are told there is only “*one body*”. My plea with you today is that you will do whatever it takes to make sure you are in that one body, and ensure that God has added you to the church (Acts 2:47). Read through the New Testament and see for yourself what the Bible says regarding the church, and then ask yourself this simple question: **Am I a member of the church that Christ purchased with His blood?** If not, why not?

It’s funny that I can talk to total strangers about this — and have done so many times in the past, and yet I remain silent around those to whom I am closest. I never talked to you about heaven and eternity because I didn’t want to mess up what we had here on Earth. But see, I realize that this earthly relationship is temporary. One day the memories that you and I share will fade away. And, I don’t want to leave this life without telling you about Christ and how He changed my life. Therefore, I am penning this letter in hopes of extending our friendship into eternity.

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Please allow me to paint a picture so that you can understand the genuine urgency of this letter. Suppose you were sitting in the first class section of a luxury Boeing 747. There you are sipping on a drink, relaxing, reading a magazine, when all of a sudden someone comes up, and tosses a parachute into your lap without saying a word. You might become a little agitated that someone would toss a bulky parachute into your lap, and then just walk on by. You might even decide to push it aside or onto the floor so that you could return to your drink and magazine. That parachute would be nothing more than a nuisance. And, after a while you might even resent the person that tossed it in your lap.

Now, suppose the person who had given you that parachute also took the time to tell you the airplane was going to crash. How different would your attitude be towards that parachute and the person who gave it to you? Well dear friend, one day soon, our plane will go down. Hebrews 9:27 states very plainly that *“it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.”* I simply want to make sure you have a parachute that will save you from destruction. Don’t resent me for delivering the message. Please understand that I am simply wanting to do what I can while I still have the chance.

While the world around us thinks the majority of people will end up in heaven, this is not what Jesus Christ Himself told us. In Matthew 7:13-14, He cautioned us to: *“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”*.

Please do not be mad at me. Please do not shy away from me. Please do not despise me. For this letter was not written to drive a wedge into our relationship. But rather it was written out of love and compassion, hoping that we can stand hand-in-hand before Almighty God. Yes, I am a happy person — because I know and love my Savior, and He is my best friend. Please consider what I’ve said. Look through the Scriptures on your own. Examine where you stand. I want nothing more than to introduce my earthly best friend to my spiritual best friend and Savior, Jesus Christ. Thank you for allowing me this short opportunity to tell you about Him.

Sincerely, Your friend, Brad



**Brad Harrub (mail@Focuspress.org) is one of the editors of *Think Magazine*.**

# My Giving



**Dan R. Owen**

*“The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it” (Psalm 24:1).*

Our God needs nothing because He possesses everything. All good gifts come from His benevolent hand (James 1:17). This being true, it is curious that God wants gifts from those who serve Him. God wants us to give to Him because He wants our spiritual service. Those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth. Giving is a spiritual thing. It gets to our heart, our devotion, and our willingness to sacrifice for God and His cause.

Our giving is a good measure of our relationship with God because it is close to our hearts. Jesus said, *“Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also”* (Matthew 6:21). Consider these truths about my giving and yours from God’s perspective.

## WORSHIP

### **My giving is an offering to the Lord.**

Giving gifts or offerings to the Lord goes as far back as the sacrifices of Cain and Abel. Abraham gave a tenth of the spoils of war to God by giving it to the priest, Melchizedek. Jacob vowed to give a tenth of everything he had to the Lord. God called for an offering when the tabernacle was constructed. He instructed His people in the Law to give a tenth to Him by depositing it with the Levites. The prophet Malachi made it clear that giving a gift to God is a very personal thing, a reflection of the esteem or honor which we hold for God. My gift makes a statement about how I feel about God. Giving is personal!

### **My giving is also an act of obedience.**

The law of Moses commanded all kinds of giving. Through the prophets, God commanded it. *“Bring ye the whole tithe into the storehouse,”* he said. Often, those who wait on the table and say the prayers before our giving neglect this truth. The precise time in the service at which we give is a matter of convenience, but our giving is not simply a matter of convenience. It is a matter of obedience. It is a submission to the Lordship of Jesus. Paul commanded the church at Corinth to give on the first day of the week (1 Corinthians 16:1,2). This was also what he had taught the Galatian churches to do. The entire Bible suggests that giving is an obligation. God does not tell us in the New Testament how much to give, but He makes it clear that He wants us to give out of a loving and generous heart.

### **My giving is an investment.**

It is sowing in expectation of reaping. If we invest in spiritual things, we will reap eternal life (Galatians 6:6-8). Those who sow generously will reap generously (2 Corinthians 9:6). My giving is part of what is involved in laying up treasures in heaven.

### **My giving is also my fellowship in the work of God.**

Paul told the Philippians that by giving to support him, they were having fellowship in the preaching of the Gospel (Philippians 1:5). The Macedonian churches were eager to participate in giving for the poor Christians of Judea so they could have fellowship in the service to the saints (2 Corinthians 8:4). When I give, I have a very personal fellowship and participation in every good work done by the church with that money. †

**Dan R. Owen preaches for the Broadway congregation in Paducah, Kentucky, USA.**

# Ten Good Reasons for Attending Bible Class

Clarence DeLoach

**1. From the standpoint of GODLINESS:**

It teaches the Bible — which is the basis of our faith in God and leads to Christ as our personal Savior and Lord.

**2. From the standpoint of EDUCATION:**

It trains the mind and heart along the lines of things eternal.

**3. From the SOCIAL standpoint:**

It enables one to enjoy the friendship and fellowship of other Christians.

**4. From the standpoint of PERSONALITY:**

It helps to develop the Christian character necessary to face life's problems victoriously.

**5. From the standpoint of CHARACTER:**

It is the chief aim of Bible classes to teach us to be examples as Christians in word or deed.

**6. From the standpoint of INTEREST:**

It presents interesting lessons that promote insight and understanding.

**7. From the standpoint of FAMILY:**

It has a class for every age, so that the whole family can attend together and profit from the teaching.

**8. From the standpoint of SERVICE:**

It affords simple opportunity to serve God and the church in activities that are not available elsewhere.

**9. From the standpoint of IMMORTALITY:**

It turns our eyes heavenward and makes us realize that we must prepare for a life beyond the mortal grave.

**10. From the PRACTICAL standpoint:**

The hour or so spent in Bible class each Sunday (or Wednesday night) could not be expended more profitably. †

Clarence DeLoach has preached for many years and now lives in Cookeville, Tennessee, USA.

# THE POWER OF PRAYER

**Dalton Key**

Inspiration mentions Epaphras as Paul's "dear fellow-servant," and as "a faithful minister of Christ" unto the Colossian brethren (Colossians 1:7). Epaphras is recognized of heaven for his "great zeal" for the church at Colosse, and for the neighboring congregations in Laodicea and Hierapolis (Colossians 4:13). Moreover, this "servant of Christ" is described as "always laboring fervently" for the church's growth and maturity (Colossians 4:12).

But how did Epaphras direct his great zeal? In what way did he labor fervently? Read Colossians 4:12 closely: "*Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.*" He revealed his zeal for the church, and he worked for the church by praying for the church.

It is true that, as health and opportunity permit, we must do more than merely pray for the Lord's cause. We are admonished to "*preach the word*" (Acts 8:4), to exhort and edify one another (Hebrews 3:13; Ephesians 4:29), and to "*do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith*" (Galatians 6:10).

Yet, we often place too much emphasis upon our efforts and too little upon the tremendous power of prayer. The apostles encouraged the Jerusalem brethren to select "*seven men of honest report*" to "*serve tables*" — thus allowing the apostles to give themselves "*continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word*" (Acts 6:3,4). Jesus taught "*that men ought always to pray, and not to faint*" (Luke 18:1). Paul frequently asked for the prayers of his brethren and promised his readers that he was praying for them (Colossians 4:1; 1:3).

It is humbling, but nonetheless true, that more can be accomplished through an hour of ardent prayer than by a week of self-reliant work, or a year of needless



## WORSHIP

worry. “More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of,” wrote Tennyson. Or in the more worthy words of Holy Writ, “*The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much*” (James 5:16).

The church desperately needs godly leaders, evangelists, servants, teachers, and willing workers who will give themselves to a ministry of prayer. Our



**Could it be that we have not because we ask not?**

world is on a collision course with the second death. The saints of God must shine as beacons of light in a darkened world, pointing lost humanity to the life-giving Savior. But we can't possibly do it alone, of our own strength. We must rely heavily upon the power of prayer.

Brother or sister in Christ, you can be engaged in a mighty work for the Lord, regardless of age, infirmity, handicap, or hindering circumstances! You can harness a great zeal for the church and labor fervently for your Master, despite any and all physical limitations! You can pray. †

Dalton Key is the Editor of *Old Paths* and preaches for the 10th and Rockford congregation in Tulsa, Oklahoma, USA.



# 5-MINUTE BIBLE STUDY

## GOD LOVES THE WIDOW

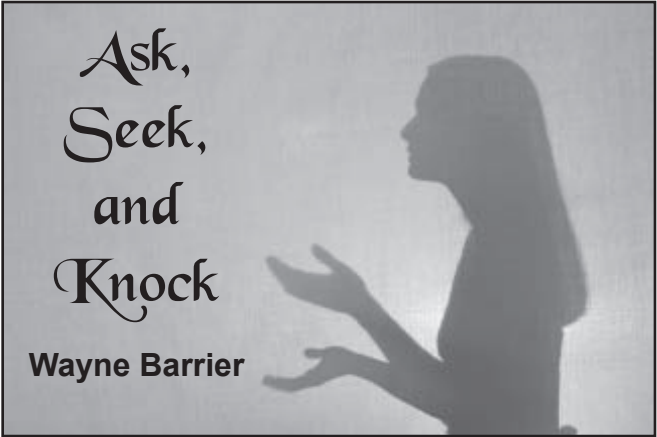
**Paula Bates**

1. You shall not pervert justice due the stranger or the \_\_\_\_\_, nor take a \_\_\_\_\_ garment as a pledge. Deuteronomy 24:17
2. When you reap your \_\_\_\_\_ in your field, and forget a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it; it shall be for the \_\_\_\_\_, the fatherless, and the widow, that the \_\_\_\_\_ your \_\_\_\_\_ may bless you in \_\_\_\_\_ the work of your hands. Deuteronomy 24:19
3. The \_\_\_\_\_ of a perishing man came upon me, and I caused the widow's \_\_\_\_\_ to sing with joy. Job 29:13
4. Now in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a \_\_\_\_\_ against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were \_\_\_\_\_ in the daily distribution. Acts 6:1
5. Pure and undefiled \_\_\_\_\_ before God and the Father is this: to visit the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ in their \_\_\_\_\_, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world. James 1:27
6. A father of the fatherless, a \_\_\_\_\_ of widows, Is God in his holy habitation. Psalm 68:5



- |                                  |                               |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Fatherless, widow's           | 4. Complaint, neglected       |
| 2. Harvest, stranger, Lord, God, | 5. Religion, orphans, widows, |
| 3. Blessing, heart               | 6. Defender                   |

Jesus taught a short lesson on prayer in Matthew 7:7-11, “*Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him*



# Ask, Seek, and Knock

**Wayne Barrier**

*that knocketh it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?”*

Not a day goes by without the need for help from our Heavenly Father. We struggle with difficulties everywhere we turn as we live in this world. We have health problems, money troubles, family difficulties, spiritual challenges, security issues, etc. We often do all we can do and see no way to resolve the problem. Jesus taught us that God will help His children. We can ask, seek, and knock and God will answer our requests.

God will provide what is best for us every time. He knows what we need better than we ourselves know. What a blessing to know that we need only to ask to receive the impossible, or to seek and find the unfindable, or knock and the door of relief, rescue, and safety is opened. We cannot visualize the solution in any of these troubled situations, and God delivers. What a blessing! God's love for His children exceeds any love we can imagine.

Are you a child of God? Can you ask, seek, and knock when you need powerful help? Jesus died to make it possible for us to be children of God. The path to God is through belief, repentance, baptism, and faithful service. Why would any person reject the blessing of answered prayer? †

**Wayne Barrier lives in Florence, Alabama, USA, and does mission work in several countries.**

# *Are You Fully Committed?*

David R. Kenney



***“No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God” (Luke 9:62).***

In Patrick Morley’s book, *Devotions for the Man in the Mirror*, he touches on a point that I have often thought about relating to commitment. He writes: “Over the past few decades, many of us started off on the wrong foot with Jesus Christ. It is the proposition that Jesus can be ‘Savior’ without being ‘Lord.’ It is the idea that one can ‘add’ Christ, but not ‘subtract’ sin. Many of us have merely added Christ to our lives as another interest in an already busy and otherwise over-crowded schedule...” (13-14).

When my son was learning to walk, we would walk behind him with our arms stretched out like guardrails, with hands at the ready to catch him if he stumbled. We would wobble behind him as he wobbled across the floor for the first times. Eventually, we did not need to follow behind him any longer in this fashion. Why?

## DAILY CHRISTIAN LIVING

Because he learned to walk on his own. It would be an odd sight for me to walk behind him in that fashion now. In fact, if I did he would probably say, “Cut that out!”

When people first become Christians, they need mature Christians to walk beside them, as I walked alongside my son, ready to steady him if he stumbled. Just as babies learn to walk on their own as their bodies physically develop, so should maturing Christians be able to walk spiritually on their own. They ought to walk with Christ, guided by the Scriptures, on their spiritual journey to live in the heavenly home with Him. They should not require the same level of “hand holding” from other Christians, as they required at first.

Now, I am not speaking about needing encouragement. We all could use encouragement from fellow Christians — one of the reasons we assemble together. However, there comes a time when we ought to be able to stand and walk on our own. We ought to become mature Christians who are walking with new converts as they start their spiritual journey. If not, then something is wrong and out of place, just as if I was still following my 11-year-old son around as though he was 11 months old.

If a person is not maturing the way he should, then what might be the problem? Maybe he thought, as Morley suggests, that he accepted Jesus as his Savior but was not looking for *a Lord*. Perhaps, he needs to be reminded that Christianity is not just something one adds to his digital calendar when he can fit it in. **Christianity is a transformation of one’s entire life** (Romans 12:1-2). If our calendars are just too busy for worship and service in the church, then we need to clear our calendars! Perhaps, we need to be reminded that Jesus will not accept a life **partially** dedicated to Him! *“So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be my disciple”* (Luke 14:33 NKJV). *“And another also said, ‘Lord, I will follow you, but let me first go and bid them farewell who are at my house.’ But Jesus said to him ‘No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God’”* (Luke 9:61-62).

We need to remember that people are judging our commitment to Christ; they are watching us. Also, Jesus is judging our words, actions, and our hearts. *“These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me”* (Matthew 15:8). If you are able to do more for the Lord and His church, then do it! If you have to be asked to attend services, to participate in worship, to teach class, or to get involved, then perhaps you are not maturing. Could this stem from a commitment problem? **Jesus is both the Lord and Savior of mankind! Be fully committed and dedicated!** †

David R. Kenney is a Gospel preacher serving the Wadsworth Church of Christ in Wadsworth, Ohio, USA.

# How to Put and Keep God First

**Marilyn LaSrape**

Most of us are familiar with the Lord's commandment of Matthew 6:33. *"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you."* In what has become known as the Sermon on the Mount, the teachings of Jesus the Christ are such that we will be challenged by them all of our lives! How do we obey the command of Matthew 6:33?

**First, to put and keep God first we must come to recognize that God does not and will not ever take second place to anybody or anything!** He stated that candidly to the children of Israel in Exodus 20:1-3. *"And God spoke all these words, saying: I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me."*

What are some of our modern day gods or idols? The list is practically endless because it could and most times does vary from person to person. For the



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purpose of this writing, only a few can be mentioned. Some people have family members as their gods. Some have members of the church as their gods. Some have friends and co-workers as their gods. Still others have their money, pleasure, entertainment, jobs, sports, careers, school/college, homes, cars, lands, clothes, and on and on we go with the gods and idols of this world! God still says none of those relationships or material possessions can come before Him and our seeking His will for our lives.

**Second, to put and keep God first we must be avid students of the Bible.** Jesus said in Matthew 5:6, “*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.*” God’s Word is our daily food — not a supplement every once in a while! We must strive for the spiritual excellence of Job when he said, “*I have not departed from the commandment of His lips; I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food*” (Job 23:12).

**Third, to put and keep God first we must pray without ceasing.** How can we do that? We need to have our minds transformed and set on things above. We are to let the Word of Christ dwell in us richly! (Colossians 3:16) This is a guarantee that our minds will be fertile ground, nourished in the words of faith as we pray daily. Colossians 4:2 says, “*Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving.*” 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 reads, “*Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.*”

**Fourth, to put and keep God first we must capture and subdue the last frontier — our thoughts!** Paul in writing to the church at Corinth told them they had to cast down arguments “*and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ*” (2 Corinthians 10:5). What different turns our lives may have taken in certain situations if only we had **seriously thought** before we had said or done anything!

These points are but a smidgen of the many that could be explored. Jesus Christ is our supreme example of setting priority in our pursuit of a relationship with God. Perhaps He said it best and most precisely in John 8:29, “*And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him.*” Now that’s putting and keeping God first! †

**Marilyn LaSrape is a monthly Staff Writer for Gospel Gazette Online and has been an elder’s wife with all that entails for many years. She resides in Hewitt, Texas, USA.**



# The Abundant Life of Stewardship

Demar Elam

**Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh**, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought Joseph from the Ishmaelites (Genesis 39:1). Joseph had been successful in Potiphar's house because God was with him. Potiphar had observed that God was with Joseph and had made all Joseph did to prosper in his hand. Because of this, Joseph found favor in Potiphar's sight. Potiphar made him overseer of all that was in his house.

**Joseph was given a stewardship.** He was entrusted with all that Potiphar owned. God blessed Potiphar for Joseph's sake. Stewardship involves management, overseeing, and being in charge of something not your own. It does not imply ownership. Joseph had been entrusted and empowered with all the possessions of the Egyptian and with the responsibility and trustworthiness that comes with it. Stewardship demands faithfulness: *"Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required in stewards that one be found faithful"* (1 Corinthians 4:1,2).

Stewardship involves integrity and accountability: He also said to His disciples: *"There was a certain rich man who had a steward, and an accusation was brought to him that this man was wasting his goods. So he called him and said to him, 'What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your stewardship, for you can no longer be steward'"* (Luke 16:1,2).

Joseph was faithful with what had been entrusted to him. He possessed integrity, a characteristic needed by all good stewards. Potiphar's wife cast her eyes on Joseph because he was *"handsome in form and appearance"* (Genesis 39:6). She asked Joseph to lie with her, but Joseph refused saying, *"Look, my master does not know what is with me in the house, and he has committed all that he has to my hand. There is no one greater in his house than I, nor has he kept back anything from me but you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"* (Genesis 39:8,9). Joseph was faithful regarding the

## DAILY CHRISTIAN LIVING

stewardship that Potiphar had given him.

**Christians have a stewardship of their earthly possessions.** Christ intended for His children to enjoy the abundant life of stewardship. Jesus said, *“The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that that they may have it more abundantly”* (John 10:10). Being good stewards of God will bring great happiness to our lives.

Try being a giver rather than a getter. Why do many have the mistaken idea that receiving from others is better than giving? Poor stewardship results from a lack of faith in the promises of God. God has given some awesome promises to good and faithful Christian stewards. The first step to abundant living is to realize God owns everything and has only entrusted His children with a stewardship regarding material possessions (Genesis 14:19; 1 Chronicles 29:11; Job 41:11; Psalm 24:1; 50:10-12; Haggai 2:8). The term “mine” is an accommodative term.

Christians need to pray, “Oh, Lord, increase my faith!” Faithful stewards believe the promises of God relating to material blessings. God promised, *“Honor the Lord with your possessions, and with the first fruits of all your increase; So your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will overflow with new wine”* (Proverbs 3:9,10).

Christians have God’s assurance: *“He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work”* (2 Corinthians 9:6-8).

Jesus assures the joy of abundant living by saying, *“Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom, for with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you”* (Luke 6:38). Sufficient faith will cause faithful Christians to act, thus receiving the promised blessings. Give and it will be given to you!

God challenged those living in Malachi’s day: *“Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and try Me now in this,” says the Lord of hosts, ‘if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it’”* (Malachi 3:10).

If we are not enjoying the abundant life of stewardship, perhaps we need to ask ourselves, “Why?” †

**Demar Elam is President of Philippines Theological College and lives in Athens, Alabama, USA.**

# *Living Without Defenses*

Sheila Gibson

I'm learning to live without defenses. I'll probably still be learning this when I'm 80, or 100, or 53...doesn't matter the age I ultimately achieve, the lesson will be ongoing; I'm sure of that. I've touched on this before, one of my recurring themes. It is recurring because the lessons are never-ending, and just when I think I've rounded a corner, there's another opportunity to learn all over again.

And what does it mean, to live without defenses? It does NOT mean to live weak. It does NOT mean to be a doormat, or a "yes" person, or to avoid all conflict. It DOES mean that I choose to offer grace and understanding when someone differs with me. I choose to give the benefit of doubt to intention, even to action. I choose to live strong, and to live with expectation.

Expectation is tricky. Sometimes my expectations have created disappointment: in myself, in others, in circumstances. But when the expectation is adjusted — not lowered, but adjusted — to seeing the potential that is unleashed by my actions, the real joy begins. What circumstances can I change, or impact, or better, or encourage, or simply comfort, if I act out of strength rather than defensiveness?

It's a life-posture that's a deliberate choice, throughout my day, weaving through my interactions and thoughts. It helps me to consider: What am I feeding myself? What am I showing those around me? How do I handle hurt, disappointment, sadness?

The only way I can make sense of life is to believe that **we each have purpose**, and *we find the purpose and our gifts by sharing and giving with abandon*. It is growth of faith. For me, the faith is in

## DAILY CHRISTIAN LIVING

God, in the perfect grace I can only imperfectly copy, and the spark of miracle in everyday life.

The goal, the aspiration, doesn't make me saintly, or superior... It keeps me grounded in gratitude, and challenges me to adopt an attitude of graciousness.

**“Hurt people hurt people. That’s how pain patterns get passed on, generation after generation after generation. Break the chain today. Meet anger with sympathy, contempt with compassion, cruelty with kindness. Greet grimaces with smiles. Forgive and forget about finding fault. Love is the weapon of the future.” Yehuda Berg**

I’ve been fortunate, and have experienced a lot more love in my life than hurt. But the lesson still applies. I can’t pretend to know how people who have suffered great injury and loss at the hands of others can adopt this stance. But I know that this is one of the secrets of the universe, and healing, paying forward, and joy, stem from this choice.

Another very well-known rabbi once said: “... *If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses*” (Matthew 6:14,15) ~ The Great Physician.

Forgiving, living without defenses, showing grace and patience...these words come across as passive. The behavior is anything but. I find I need much more strength to bite my tongue, to show kindness when I’m struggling, to assume the best when I suspect the worst. Am I living **authentically**? Absolutely not! The authentic me is not the nicest person I know. The authentic me is often grouchy, rude, intolerant, impatient, selfish...pretty, huh?

Am I living **intentionally**? Yes. What I choose to show the world is the person I want to be, and am trying to become. Always, always, the first thing to recognize is that this is not about perfection...I’ll never be that. I have to forgive myself as often as I forgive those around me. I don’t have life all sorted out and neatly packaged. This is about the trying, the choosing, and the goal. And that’s all it can be about, because there is no magic formula to get what I want out of people or my circumstances. Simply put, *living without defenses is the formula for changing myself.* †

**Sheila Gibson is a Christian, living in Ketchikan, Alaska**

# God's Pattern for Marriage

Travis L. Quertermous



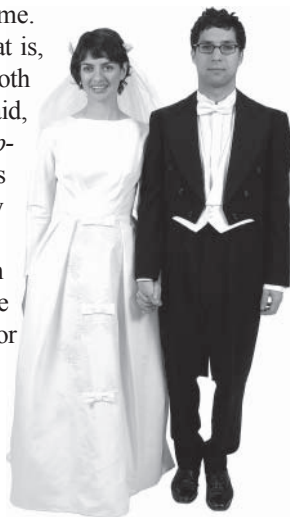
In Genesis 2:24, God said through Moses, *“Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.”* This is a foundational passage in the Bible on marriage. It occurs right after God Himself performed the first wedding ceremony between Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. In light of the crisis that many families find themselves in today, Genesis 2:24 teaches us many truths about marriage that we all need to learn.

We learn that marriage is heterosexual and monogamous, that is, between one man and one woman. Just a few years ago that would go without saying, but with many advocating homosexual marriage and plural marriage, it must be emphasized that such is contrary to God’s pattern for the home.

Marriage is designed by God to be permanent, that is, a man shall be joined to his wife for as long as they both shall live. In commenting on this point, Jesus Christ said, *“Therefore what God has joined together; let no man separate”* (Matthew 19:6). When so many of our marriages are ending in divorce, this is a lesson we desperately need to learn.

Finally, marriage is for those who are mature enough and ready enough to leave father and mother and have their own home. So many marriages fail because one or both spouses are too immature and selfish to be truly one flesh (or one person) with their partner.

Let us all strive to uphold God’s pattern for marriage and to make our homes Christian homes in every sense of the word.



**Travis L. Quertermous is a Gospel preacher working with the church of Christ in Dexter, Missouri, USA.**

## THE CHRISTIAN HOME

# *The ABC's Of Parenthood*

### Copied

*A*lways trust your children to God's care.

*B*ring them to worship and Bible School.

*C*hallenge them to high goals in life.

*D*elight in their achievements in school or on the job.

*E*xalt the Lord in their presence at every opportunity.

*F*rown on evil.

*G*ive them love.

*H*ear their problems.

*I*gnore not their childish fears.

*J*oyfully accept their apologies.

*K*eep their confidence.

*L*ive a good example before them at all times.

*M*ake them your best friends.

*N*ever ignore their endless questions.

*O*pen your home to their friends.

*P*ray for them by name daily.

*Q*uicken your interest in their spirituality.

*R*emember their needs.

*S*how them the way of salvation.

*T*each them to work and be responsible men and women.

*U*nderstand they still need you, even when they are older.

*V*erify your statements.

*W*ean them from bad company.

*X*pect them to obey.

*Y*earn for God's best for them.

*Z*ealously guide them in biblical truths. †

## THE CHRISTIAN HOME

# Dedicated to Teens

Carroll Sites

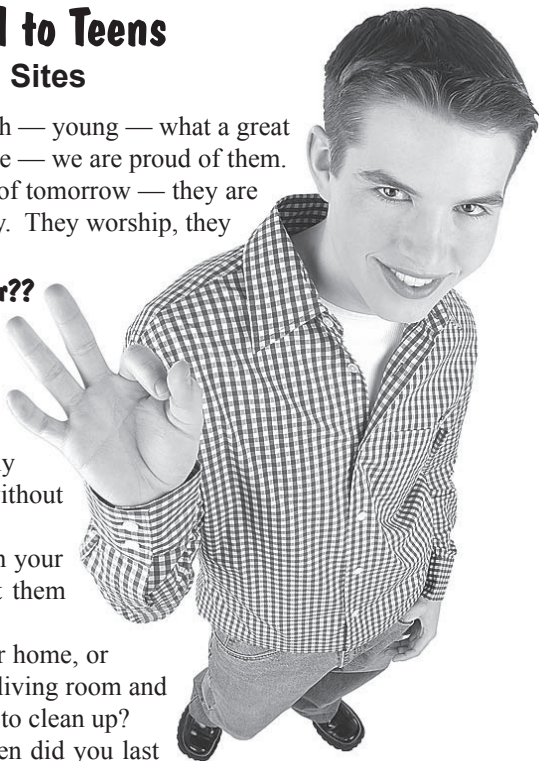
Teens — teenage — youth — young — what a great time of life. Our young people — we are proud of them. They are not only the church of tomorrow — they are a vital part of the church today. They worship, they serve, they study, they pray.

### Are You a Successful Teenager??

1. When did you last hug Mom without wanting something?
2. When did you last make an attempt to be especially pleasant to your Dad without asking him a favor?
3. Do you take an interest in your parents' friends and treat them with respect?
4. Do you take pride in your home, or do you leave trash in the living room and "spills" for someone else to clean up?
5. How about the car? When did you last fill it with gas?
6. When did you last tell Mom the dinner was good and that you appreciate her cooking?
7. Are you on time when Mom or Dad offers to drive you somewhere or pick you up?
8. Are you where you are supposed to be, or do they have to look for you?
9. When did you last do exactly as you were told without saying, "Wait a minute" or ask, "Do I have to?"
10. Are you proud of your Mom and Dad?

Teens — did you read? How did you fare? Are you successful?? Thanks for learning...knowing...and growing! YOU will be the Moms...the Dads...the Leaders of tomorrow. May God bless you.... †

**Carroll Sites works with the Lord's church in Higden, Arkansas, USA.**





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## PROVERBS 17:22

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While at the mall the other day I noticed a man and wife window-shopping. A beautiful young woman was walking in their direction. She had the man's undivided attention, and as she walked past the couple she smiled at him.

Without looking up from the item she was examining in the window, the wife asked, "Well, was it worth the trouble you're in?"



### Some different definitions:

**Avoidable** \ud-voy'-dud-buhl\': What a bullfighter tries to do.

**Baloney** \buh-lo'-nee\': Where some hemlines fall.

**Burglarize** \bur'-gler-ize\': What a crook sees with.

**Counterfeiters** \kown'-ter-fit'-ers\': Workers who put together kitchen cabinets.

**Eyedropper** \i'-drop-ur\': A clumsy ophthalmologist.

**Heroes** \hee-rhos\': What a guy in a boat does.

**Paradox** \par'-u-doks\': Two physicians.

**Pharmacist** \farm'-us-sist\': A helper on the farm.

**Selfish** \sel'-fish\': What the owner of a seafood store does.

**Sudafed** \sood'-a-fed\': Brought litigation against a government official.



A friend of mine is a very busy veterinarian, and he has this sign displayed very prominently in his office: "ALL UNATTENDED CHILDREN WILL BE GIVEN A FREE KITTEN."



Teacher: "If I gave you 2 cats and another 2 cats and another 2, how many cats would you have?"

Johnny: "Seven, sir."

Teacher: "No, listen carefully. If I gave you 2 cats and another 2 cats and another 2 cats, how many would you have?"

Johnny: "Seven."

Teacher: "OK, let me put it to you differently. If I gave you 2 apples and another 2 apples and another 2, how many would you have?"

Johnny: "Six."

Teacher: "Good. Now, if I gave you 2 cats and another 2 cats and another 2, how many would you have?"

## PROVERBS 17:22

Johnny: "Seven."

Angry Teacher: "How do you get seven from  $2+2+2$ ?"

Very angry Johnny: "Because I've already got a cat at home!"



A small boy told his father, "The principal thinks I'm very responsible. Every time something goes wrong at school, he thinks I'm responsible."



The kindergarten class had settled down to its coloring books. Stevie came up to the teacher's desk and said, "Miss Smith, I ain't got no crayons."

"Stevie," Miss Smith said, "you mean, 'I don't have any crayons. You don't have any crayons. We don't have any crayons. They don't have any crayons. Do you see what I'm getting at?'"

"Not really," Stevie said. "What happened to all them crayons?"



One day a professor was giving a big test to his students. He handed out all of the tests and went back to his desk to wait. Once the test was over the students all handed the tests back in.

The professor noticed that one of the students had attached a \$100 bill to his test with a note saying, "A dollar per point."

The next class the professor handed the tests back out. The student got back his test score and \$64 change.



Stan Kegel tells of a census taker who knocked on a lady's door. She answered all his questions except one: she refused to tell him her age.

"But everyone tells their age to the census taker," he said.

"Did Miss Maisy Hill and Miss Daisy Hill tell you their ages?" she asked.

"Certainly," he replied.

"Well, I'm the same age as they are," she snapped.

The census taker simply wrote on the form, "As old as the Hills."



The parents had just finished tucking their five young ones into bed one evening when they heard sobbing coming from three-year-old Billy's room. The parents rushed to the room and found him crying hysterically. He had accidentally swallowed a penny and was sure he was going to die. No amount of talking could change his mind.

In an effort to calm him, the father took a penny out of his pocket and pretended to pull it from Billy's ear. Billy was delighted. In a flash, he grabbed the penny, swallowed it, and demanded cheerfully, "Do it again, Daddy!"

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## TEXTUAL STUDIES

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Paul wrote to the great church at Ephesus and encouraged them to *“Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God”* (Ephesians 5:1,2).



# Live a Life of Love

Harvey Porter

*“Be  
of God.”*

learn most  
what they see  
learn a language  
countless other things  
or older brothers and sis-  
imitators. If we always hear  
our home, we learn it. If we see  
“Actions speak louder than words.”

*imitators*

Children

by imitating  
and hear. They

this way, as well as  
they see their parents

ters do. We are by nature

fighting and bickering in

love and kindness, we learn it.

There should be a clear-cut image of what is good in the mind of the young child. This comes by father and mother talking of God and Jesus and telling Bible stories. We have to see clearly what God is like, and then set our minds to be like Him. We will have others who are godly to help us along the way. Their lives will be an inspiration to us and a good example to follow. But God is the main pattern, and Jesus is the great example. This is not an option — we are commanded to imitate God. We must see to it that we do it. We must be conscious of trying to fulfill this command.

Paul said that we are *“as dearly loved children.”* Isn’t that an inspiration! We are God’s children, and we know that He loves us dearly, His Word tells us over and over. His blessings demonstrate it daily. We must live up to the desires of our Father for His children.

## TEXTUAL STUDIES

We are then urged to “*live a life of love.*” Not only are we loved by God, but our life must be characterized by love also. We must love God with all our being (Matthew 22:37). We are to love others as ourselves (Matthew 22:39). “Others” includes all those with whom we come in contact. And the amazing thing is that we ought to love ourselves, but not more than God and others. There is a priority system in love. This is the great problem in our world: we put self first, sometimes others second, and often God last.

The Christian life is characterized by love. It is indispensable. Our world needs it. The home needs it. Every individual needs it. We dare not just talk about it; we have to put it into practice. We must not love only those who love us, but we are to love others, even enemies. This is the nature of God. He is love; it is His very essence. It is no wonder that He wants His children to have the same nature and outlook on life. Indeed, we are to live a “life of love”.

Then Paul came back to a living example so it will be easy for us to imitate. He said, “*as Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.*” The great example of love is Jesus Christ. The world has never seen love like this. No wonder His story is called “Gospel”, which is good news. He loved us so much that He was willing to die for us. And Paul said that was a sacrifice that was very pleasing to God. God wanted us saved; He, too, loved us. Jesus wanted us saved and was willing to die in order to save us. Love permeates the whole story.

We follow both God and Jesus. Love and sacrifice become a part of our living. We, too, are willing to love and sacrifice for others and for God. This is at the heart of Christianity. It is not primarily what we can get out of God for ourselves, but what can we do and what can we return. Our love stands at the top of the list of what God needs and wants from us. This is what those around us and those who are our family want from us more than anything else.

We ought to be honest with ourselves. Are we really living a “life of love?” Would that great word describe most of our words, our actions, and our days? Love is a rare commodity in our world, but not in heaven. Live so you will be prepared to live there in a never-ending “life of love”. †

**Harvey Porter (1929-1998) preached for many years in Albuquerque, New Mexico, USA**

**We have to see clearly what God is like,  
and then set our minds to be like Him.**

# A Suitable Presentation

Mike King

Peter's second epistle was written for the purpose of stirring up the pure minds of his readers who were believers. They had been removed from their comfort zone where they were surrounded by brethren and strong congregations in the region of Palestine. Political persecution from the Roman Government, primarily as a result of Nero's opposition to Christianity, brought about the stoning of Stephen and the great "Diaspora," or a forced migration of Christians into Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia (1 Peter 1:1).

There were those who were referred to as "scoffers" who were motivated by ulterior and lustful motives and who challenged whether the Lord would actually return (1 Peter 1:3ff). They were saying that nothing had changed from the time of the deaths of the patriarchs and prophets concerning the coming of the Lord. They were counting time and became impatient with there being no fulfillment of His promised coming.

Peter, through God's inspiration, reminded them that time with God is not of essence, whether a year or a thousand years; with God they were the same (2 Peter 3:8). He wanted his readers to know that God will keep His promises, but it will be according to His schedule and not theirs. He reminded them of the destruction of the ungodly in the days of Noah when wickedness reigned and the participants perished (2 Peter 3:5-7). God's grace and mercy could have been interpreted as negligence, but do not forget that God was longsuffering in those days, about which Peter has already advised them in his earlier epistle (1 Peter 3:21).

All men are to be assured that God WILL come and He WILL fulfill His promises that were made long ago. God's primary concern is the salvation of the souls of men. It is the will of God that not one soul should perish, but respond to His authoritative Word, which has the capability of breaking and reconditioning the hearts of sinful men through repentance (2 Peter 3:9). Paul taught that the Word was God's means for bringing about change in the hearts of men and saving them (Romans 1:16). If the saving message could be allowed to "*dwell richly in all wisdom*" in the hearts of men (Colossians 3:16), it would bring about sorrow toward God, which would in turn lead them to repentance (2 Corinthians 7:10). Sorrow is not the same as repentance, but merely a means to that desired and necessary change (Acts 2:38; Luke 13:3,5).

## TEXTUAL STUDIES

The day of the Lord will come, and it will be like unto a *“thief in the night”* (2 Peter 3:10). The Lord had previously taught that no man would know when the promised fulfillment of His coming would actually occur. He was very explicit in advising them that even He did not know, but His Father only (Matthew 24:36-44). Jesus also referenced what happened in the days of Noah and the flood as being similar to the coming of the Lord: that it would be sudden, finding some prepared and others not. All that we now know will pass away and melt with fervent heat, in addition to all the works that have been represented within it (2 Peter 3:10).

Verse 11 seems to be the key issue of the entire chapter. It is of great importance that there is a realization that everything is going to be destroyed! Peter gives strong emphasis to the kind of people they should be found to be when all this happens. The Lord will make available *“...new heavens and a new earth, in which dwells righteousness”* (2 Peter 3:13). Now if righteousness dwells there, just



what kind of persons do they think they should be to receive that promise? They would be expected in all areas of life to exhibit a holy manner of life and godliness (2 Peter 3:11-13).

Paul's admonitions were consistent with Peter's. He said that men

would be judged by things done in the flesh, whether bad or good (2 Corinthians 5:9-11). In following verses he said that they were knowledgeable of the terror of the Lord; that is the reason why they were persuading men! Peter is feeling that same compulsion with the believers to whom he is writing. They both want to make sure that God's people are properly adorned, as the bride of Christ for the arrival of the Groom and the carrying her with Him to that heavenly home (Revelation 21:2). What manner of person are we? What *“manner persons ought [we] to be?”* †

**Michael L. King preaches for the New Albany congregation in New Albany, Mississippi, USA.**

# The Beatitudes Beyond the Sermon on the Mount

Kevin L. Moore

The Greek word *makarios* (“blessed”) appears thirteen times in the Gospel according to Matthew, all employed in the teachings of Jesus. Nine of these are found in the opening words of the Sermon on the Mount, commonly known as “the Beatitudes” (5:3-11). The Latin *beatus*, from which this designation is derived, means “fortunate,” “blissful,” or “happy.” However, “blessed” is probably the better rendering of the Greek term since it directs our focus upward and implicitly acknowledges God from whom these blessings proceed (cf. James 1:17). The word occurs four more times in Matthew’s Gospel beyond Chapter 5, the subject of our current study.

## Blessed are the Faithful

In Chapter 11, as the imprisoned John the Baptist was seeking words of reassurance, Jesus summarizes the results of His ministry (verses 2-5) and affirms in Verse 6, “*And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me*” (NKJV). To be a follower of Christ at this time was clearly not easy, and the difficulties would only intensify in the weeks, months, and years to come (cf. 10:16-25; John 15:20,21; 16:1-4,33). Being a Christian is still not without its challenges. The world in which we live is consumed with religious turmoil, injustice, unbelief, and sin. God’s people regularly find themselves in the unpopular minority and at times may feel intimidated, discouraged, and overwhelmed. But let us never forget that we are the ones who are truly blessed, ever mindful of the Lord’s exhortation: “*And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me.*”

## Blessed are the Attentive

In Matthew’s 13th chapter the word “blessed” is used again, this time as Jesus explains the reason He taught in parables. Comparing spiritual perception with the physical ability to see and hear, the Lord observes that many have the latter while lacking the former (verses 10-15). He then says to His faithful followers, “*But blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear*” (verse 16). When people do not “see” and “hear” the truth, even when it is plainly communicated, it is essentially because their minds are closed and their hearts are



## TEXTUAL STUDIES

hardened. Since the will of God is readily available and understandable to all who genuinely seek it (Matthew 7:7; John 7:17; Ephesians 5:17), may we be among those who are blessed because of eyes that see and ears that hear.

### **Blessed are the Receptive**

In Chapter 16, the Lord asks His disciples what others were saying about Him, and various responses are given. When He then inquires about their own convictions, Simon Peter confidently declares: *“You are the Christ, the Son of the living God”* (verse 16). Jesus then pronounces a blessing and makes an intriguing observation: *“Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven”* (verse 17). Exactly how the heavenly Father revealed this information to Peter is not disclosed, but to be on the receiving end of divine revelation is obviously a blessing. Today, the will of God is conveyed through His written Word (Ephesians 3:1-5; 2 Timothy 3:16,17). Therefore, as we read, study, and learn from the Sacred Scriptures, how blessed we are! Alternatively, if the revealed Word is neglected and our Bibles collect dust and cobwebs as they remain unused for extended periods of time, let’s appreciate the converse reality of what we’re missing! Only when the Lord’s directives are wholeheartedly welcomed into our lives can it rightfully be said, *“Blessed are you...”*

### **Blessed are the Prepared**

In view of the unexpectedness of Christ’s Second Coming, emphasis is given in Chapter 24 to the importance of spiritual readiness (vv. 36-44). Accordingly, to be considered *“a faithful and wise servant”* (verse 45), there are delegated responsibilities that must be fulfilled. Thus, Jesus observes, *“Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing”* (verse 46). The rest of the chapter describes the tragedy of unpreparedness, so there can be no excuse for being caught off guard and foolishly ignoring the certainty of divine judgment. To persevere in active, loyal, obedient service to the Lord is to enjoy heaven’s richest blessings.

Blessed are the **faithful**, whose allegiance to Christ is without reservation. Blessed are the **attentive**, whose minds are set on things above. Blessed are the **receptive**, who eagerly embrace the Word of God. And blessed are the **prepared**, who dutifully anticipate the Lord’s return. †

**Kevin L. Moore has worked with the Lord’s church in Porirua, New Zealand, but now teaches Bible at Freed-Hardeman University in Henderson, Tennessee, USA.**

# He Didn't Start or Stop

Jack W. Carter

I love to read about Daniel. Even as a very young man, he had a relationship with God that few, if any of us, would want to compare to our own.

It is especially interesting to know that from the time he was a teenager until the time of his death, Daniel had to live away from his homeland. It might seem to us that as a result of Daniel continually manifesting such faith, God would have allowed him to return to his home in his final years. However, God placed him where he was needed, and there he served.

Even as an older man, and even after he had distinguished himself and was appointed one of the governors in the empire of the Medes and Persians, Daniel was called upon to demonstrate the character of his faith.

Darius (the Mede), the king ruling the Empire at the time, and who was actually a friend to Daniel, was conned into issuing a decree that anyone who petitioned any god or man other than the king for a period of thirty days should be cast into the den of lions. This was purposely done by the enemies of Daniel in an effort to destroy him.

Facing such a challenge, one might expect that Daniel would either stop petitioning his God for the period of the thirty days, or that he would at least have tried to hide his prayer sessions. He might even have begun a special, intensified prayer life in secret in a frantic effort to protect himself from his enemies.

The significant reality is that Daniel didn't change a thing. He didn't start or stop anything. He just went on with the life that he lived everyday. God help us all to live the faith of Daniel. †



**We are sad to announce the death of Jack W. Carter in January, 2013. He had been a fervent and devoted servant of the Lord, having lived most of his life in the State of Colorado, USA.**

## BIBLE CHARACTERS

# Philemon, a Refresher of Hearts

**Maxie B. Boren**

Along life's way, one meets folks with almost every kind of disposition. Some are optimistic and cheerful, and others are pessimistic and grouchy. Some smile and some frown. Some seem to have positive attitudes, and some are almost always negative. Why this is the way it is, I'm not quite sure, but I don't want to be one of those grouchy, difficult people.

One thing I know is that a true Christian will have a song in his heart and a good word to say. Such an individual sets out to be an encourager of others. May their tribe increase! Philemon was such a man. In verse 7 of the New Testament book that bears his name, the apostle Paul said, *"I had much joy and comfort in your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you, brother."* Since Philemon is believed to have been a convert of Paul, we might well imagine that he was heavily influenced by the apostle and imbibed the spirit he saw in his teacher and mentor. Paul, in turn, appreciated seeing such a sweet attitude in Philemon, one he had taught. To be an encourager of others is always commendable.

When Paul himself was on his way to stand before Caesar, he and those on board the ship experienced a perilous voyage on the sea, and especially so in one great storm, during which he allayed the fears of the mariners in declaring, *"I exhort you to be of good cheer; for there shall be no loss of life among you...for there stood by me an angel of the God whose I am, whom I serve, saying fear not, Paul; you must stand before Caesar...wherefore, be of good cheer; for I believe God that it shall be even so as it has been spoken to me"* (Read Acts 27:9-25). His words of encouragement must have been "music to the ears" of those fearing for their lives.

As Paul made his way toward Rome, travelling up the Appian Way, being human, he must have been burdened by all that he had experienced and by what he surely perceived was awaiting him. But brethren in Rome, when they heard he was on his way, went to meet him, *"whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage"* (Acts 28:15).

## BIBLE CHARACTERS

Christians need to have the spirit of Christ, and if we don't, we are "*none of His*" (Romans 8:9). Christ came to bring salvation (John 3:16,17; Luke 19:10, etc.), to light up a world steeped in darkness (John 8:12), to provide an "*abundant life*" (John 10:10) to those who would respond to His invitation (Matthew 11:28-30). He came preaching "peace" for troubled hearts (Ephesians 2:17; John 14:1), and proclaiming, "*be of good cheer, for I have overcome the world*" (John 16:33)! While there is only one Christ Jesus, and none of us can ever measure up to Him, we can follow His example and spread cheer and hope as we have opportunity (Mark 16:15,16; Galatians 6:9,10). †

**Maxie B. Boren is a Gospel preacher and an elder in the Brown Trail congregation in Bedford, Texas, USA.**

### *Good Advice*

**Walk like Enoch**

**Worship like Abel**

**Work like Nehemiah**

**Weep like Jeremiah**

**Obey like Job**

**Lead like Moses**

**Pray like Daniel**

**Win like Paul**

**Live like Christ**

# Stubborn as an Amaziah

**Neal Pollard**

So far as I know, it is not a proverb or even a saying. But, it could be. No mule has anything on this king of Judah. When he is introduced to us, the Holy Spirit through the penman has these positive words: *“He did right in the sight of the Lord”* (2 Chronicles. 25:2a). There are not many kings of Judah (and none in Israel) of whom this could be said. But Scripture continues, *“...yet not with a whole heart.”* He honored the law of Moses (25:4), but he showed from the earliest days of his reign a fighting spirit. He assembled Judah, appointed them for battle, took a census, and even hired 100,000 men of the northern kingdom to combat the Edomites.

For a man who gets relatively little notice in Scripture, he was repeatedly given warnings. After hiring the Israelites as mercenaries, Amaziah receives a visit from a man sent by God. The prophet tells him not to let the army of Israel go with them to battle; then tells him, *“God has the power to help and to bring down”* (verse 8). Ultimately, Amaziah would ignore this message.

After routing Edom, Amaziah brought their gods back, *“set them up as his gods, bowed down to them and burned incense to them”* (verse 14).

This provoked God’s anger, so He sends a prophet to rebuke the Judean king (verse 15). Amaziah promptly threatens the prophet if he does not be quiet. The prophet replies, *“I know that God has planned to destroy you, because you have done this and have not listened to my counsel”* (verse 16). Nowhere does Scripture indicate Amaziah even paused to contemplate the warning.

Instead, his next move is to challenge Israel’s king, Joash, to fight (verse 17). Joash, though far from righteous, tells him a brief parable with a clear message: *“Now stay at home”* (verse 19). Of course, Amaziah did not listen and was humiliated in battle and plundered by Israel (verses 21-24). That is all we know about Amaziah until he slinks off the stage of life fifteen years later, being assassinated by conspirators (verse 27).

King Amaziah is one of the best biblical examples of the high cost of stubbornness. What about us? Are we those capable of distinguishing and following wise counsel? Do we listen, or do we have to learn the hard way? Beware! Stubbornness can be costly. Various people are actually called “stubborn” in Scripture, and it is never a good thing (see Pharaoh, Israel in Moses’ generation, Israel in the period of the Judges, etc.). No one should be gullible, but neither should one be incapable of receiving counsel. Don’t be as stubborn as an Amaziah! †

**Neal Pollard is the preacher for the Bear Valley church in Denver, Colorado, USA.**



# BIBLE Men of the Bible

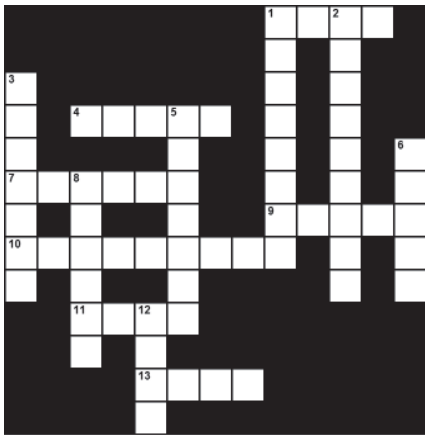
Bonnie Rushmore

## Across

1. Name the king who pouted because Naboth refused to sell him his vineyard. 1 Kings 21:1-4
4. Who took silver and gold from the city of Jericho even though God commanded against such? Joshua 7:1-26
7. Name the prophet who foretold of a great famine during the time of Claudius Caesar? Acts 11:28
9. Who was the first High Priest? (Numbers 18:1; Hebrews 5:1, 4)
10. Name the king of Gerar to whom Abraham lied about Sarah being his wife. Genesis 20
11. Name the first man. Genesis 2:1-19
13. Who was killed by his brother in a jealous rage? Genesis 4:1-12

## Down

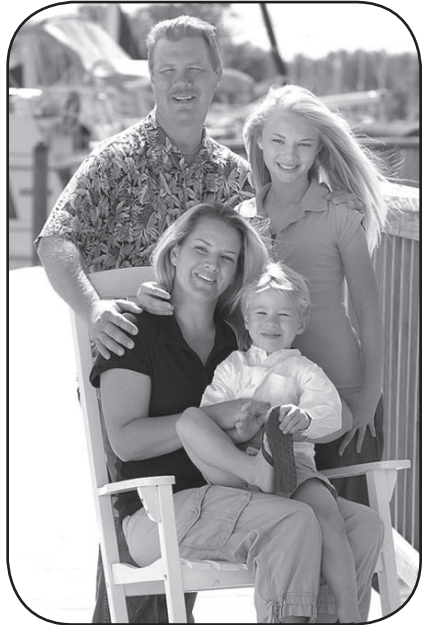
1. Which son of David was the rightful heir to be king, but his brother ordered his death? 1 Kings 2:12-25
2. Name the Persian king who held a beauty pageant for a replacement wife. Esther 2
3. Who was called the "friend of God"? James 2:23
5. Name the man whose hair caught in the branches of a tree. 2 Samuel 18:9-14
6. Name the captain of Saul's army. 1 Samuel 14:50
8. Name the prophet who foretold of the revolt of the ten northern tribes. 1 Kings 11:26-12:20
12. Name the king that Saul kept alive when he was told to kill all. 1 Samuel 15:1-9



# Now That I Am a Christian, What Am I to Do?

**Ken Tyler**

1. Walk in newness of life (Romans 6:3-4).
2. Desire the sincere milk of the Word that you may grow (1 Peter 2:1,2).
3. Wear the name Christian responsibly (1 Peter 4:16).
4. Continue steadfastly (Acts 2:42).
5. Edify (the act of building) the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 14:12).
6. Seek the things that are above (Colossians 3:1,2).
7. Tell others about the Savior (Acts 8:4).
8. Add the Christian graces (2 Peter 1:5-11).
9. Attend worship faithfully (Hebrews 10:25).
10. Give as you have been prospered (1 Corinthians 16:1,2).
11. Do not forsake the Lord (2 Timothy 4:10).
12. Be faithful unto death (Revelation 2:10).



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





# Should I Be Worried?

**Mike Hinton**

The Scriptures contain oft-repeated admonitions not to worry. In Luke 12:22-31 Jesus pointedly told His disciples that they were not to have an “... *anxious mind*...,” relying instead on God’s providence. They were given this warning even as it relates to physical necessities like food and clothing. (See also Matthew 6:25 ff).

Unfortunately, anxiety seems to be a hallmark of the human condition. You would likely have more success in telling an English bulldog not to drool, than getting an adult American not to worry. If somehow the life you have led has been so sheltered as to permit you to largely avoid worry, then be grateful, but not too judgmental. Your own stoic resolve may yet be tested by an anxiety-producing event, such as having your child deployed to a war zone.

I believe it is very important that we correctly interpret all that the Bible has to say about worry. I know some Christians who have, by way of cruel paradox, become “worried” that they might worry too much (an excellent example of

## BIBLE QUESTIONS

a self-fulfilling prophecy). Others gravitate to the opposite extreme, where irresponsibility often masquerades as a worry-free attitude. The Bible guides us toward a path between these extremes.

First, note that there are some circumstances that warrant a level of anxiety. Jesus, being human as well as divine, exhibited some appropriate concern at times. In Gethsemane, we see clearly the dread Jesus had of His impending ordeal (Matthew 26:38-44). In the prayer of Jesus recorded in John 17 we find evidence of His concern for the disciples once He returned to heaven (verse 15).

**Unfortunately, anxiety seems to be  
a hallmark of the human condition.  
You would likely have more success  
in telling an English bulldog not to drool...**

Notice that the Scriptures specifically instruct us to maintain a prudent level of concern in some situations. In Mark 13:32-37 we are told with emphasis to be watchful and alert for the coming of the Lord. In Luke 10:2 and again in John 4:35, Jesus conveys a strong sense of urgency concerning the harvest of souls. We are also told to give due diligence in tending to our needs and those of our dependents (1 Thessalonians 4:11,12; 1 Timothy 5:8). Additionally, we are counseled in Proverbs 22:3 to be aware of potential problems and prepare for them.

One might argue that those are not really examples of anxiety or worry. However, we must remember that the line between prudent concern and outright worry is at best a very fine one, and quite possibly only a matter of semantics.

A better course is for us to prioritize our “concerns,” and we are given good advice on this in Luke 10:38-42. Martha shouldered the burden of responsibility as she extended hospitality to Jesus, a noble sacrifice by any standard. Mary, however, did not intend to miss this opportunity to hear the words of life from Jesus. Jesus gave His approval to Mary’s prioritization. Concerns about the kingdom of God should be our priority as well. *“Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you”* (Matthew 6:33). †

**Mike Hinton is a worker for the Lord in Blanchard, Oklahoma, USA.**

# *Remember How Short My Time*

**E. Claude Gardner**

### **Introduction**

- A. The text: Psalm 89:47,48
- B. Sympathy to the family
- C. The text warns us of the frailty and brevity of life.

### **I. Discussion**

- A. Life is so short: “Remember how short time is”.
  - 1. Life is as a cloud that vanishes, Job 7:9,10.
  - 2. We are of few days; life is as a flower and a shadow, Job 14:1,2.
  - 3. Life is like grass, Psalm 90:5,6.
  - 4. Life is a vapor, James 4:13,14.
  - 5. Life may depart quickly, Ecclesiastes 9:12.
  - 6. Since life is so brief and frail we should:
    - a. Prepare by becoming Christians
    - b. Live a decent, clean, honest life
    - c. Render service and worship to God while we have today
- B. Death is certain: “What man is he that liveth and shall not see death?”
  - 1. Man is unable to prevent death, Ecclesiastes 8:8.
  - 2. Death is an appointment, Hebrews 9:27.
  - 3. All men must die, 1 Corinthians 15:22.
  - 4. We are brought to death, Job 30:23.
- C. The judgment is sure.
  - 1. All must appear before the Judgment, 2 Corinthians 5:10.
  - 2. The Judgment is as sure as life and death, Hebrews 9:27.
  - 3. Romans 14:12; Revelation 20:12

### **Conclusion**

- A. The above three warnings should be heeded by the living.
- B. Comfort comes from God, Acts 20:32.



**E. Claude Gardner is President-Emeritus of Freed-Hardeman University in Henderson, Tennessee, USA.**

# The Judgment of God

Stan Mitchell

## Introduction

- A. Read Ecclesiastes 12:13,14.
  - 1. God is real and has revealed His will to man.
  - 2. Man will be held responsible for what he does or fails to do.
  - 3. His actions as well his intentions are open to God and will someday be revealed and judged.

## I. Body

- A. Will there be a judgment (Matthew 25:31,32; Hebrews 9:27; 2 Peter 2:9; 3:7; 1 John 4:17)?
- B. Will we be judged according to privilege (Matthew 11:22; Mark 6:1; Luke 12:48; John 9:41; 15:22)?
- C. Will we be judged according to our works (Psalm 62:12; Jeremiah 17:10; Matthew 16:27; 2 Corinthians 5:10; 1 Peter 1:17; Revelation 20:12; 22:12)?
- D. Who will be judged (Genesis 18:25; Psalm 58:11; 96:13; Ecclesiastes 3:17; 12:13,14; Hebrews 12:23)?

## Conclusion

- A. God will judge us through His Son Jesus (Matthew 25:37; John 5:22; Acts 10:42; 17:31; Romans 2:16; 14:10; 2 Timothy 4:1).
- B. Will God's grace save the disobedient (Ephesians 2:8-10; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; 1 Peter 4:17,18)? †

Stan Mitchell teaches in the Bible Department at Freed-Hardeman University in Henderson, Tennessee, USA.

## Sermon Starter: John 3 Is a “Must Read” Chapter of the Bible.

Mark N. Posey

There are four prominent “musts” in John 3. The sinner’s must is “*you must be born again*” (John 3:3). The Savior’s must is “*so must the Son of Man be lifted up*” (John 3:14). The Sovereign’s must is “*He must increase*” (John 3:30). The servant’s must is “*I must decrease*” (John 3:30). †

# Who Am I in the Life of Peter?

Rebecca Rushmore

Can you identify me? Read each clue and think carefully. When you are sure of my identity, look up the passages of Scripture following each clue to verify the facts from God's Word. Give yourself 10 points for each one you identified correctly.

1. I am the brother of Peter (John 1:40).
2. I am the father of Peter (John 21:16).
3. We were fishing partners with Peter and his brother (Luke 5:10).
4. I was the first Gentile Peter preached to and converted (Acts 10).
5. I wanted to buy miraculous power from Peter and John (Acts 8:14-24).
6. Peter raised me from the dead (Acts 9:36-41).
7. I advised the counsel to leave Peter and the apostles alone (Acts 5:16-41).
8. I was so surprised to hear Peter that I didn't open the door for him (Acts 12:1-17).
9. Peter cut off my ear when I was attending the arrest of Jesus (John 18:10).
10. We lied to Peter and God about selling some property (Acts 5:1-10).



See answer on inside back cover

**My Score:** \_\_\_\_\_

# Where Am I in the Life of Peter?

Rebecca Rushmore

Can you identify me? Read each clue and think carefully. When you are sure of my identity, look up the passages of Scripture following each clue to verify the facts from God's Word. Give yourself 10 points for each one you identified correctly.

1. What was the hometown of Peter (John 1:44)?
2. Where was I when Jesus called me to follow Him (Matthew 4:18)?
3. Where did I confess that Jesus was God's Son (Matthew 16:13-20)?
4. Where did I preach my first recorded gospel sermon (Acts 2)?
5. Where was I when I had a vision of clean and unclean animals (Acts 10:5-16)?
6. Where did I preach to the first Gentile converts (Acts 10)?
7. Where was my home when Jesus healed my mother-in-law (Matthew 8:5-15)?
8. Where was I when I cut off someone's ear (John 18:10; Mark 14:32-47)?
9. Where did I heal a man of palsy who had been confined to bed for eight years (Acts 9:32-35)?
10. Where did Paul confront me for not eating with the Gentiles when Jews were present (Galatians 2:11-12)?



See answer on inside back cover

**My Score:** \_\_\_\_\_

## GUYANA, SOUTH AMERICA BY THE NUMBERS

Louis Rushmore

The Co-operative Republic of Guyana is a small country of 83,000 square miles, about the size of the State of Idaho. The nation rests on the northeast shoulder of South America on the coast of the Atlantic Ocean. It is bordered on the northwest by Venezuela, on the east by Suriname, and on the south and southwest by Brazil.

About 75% of Guyana is shrouded by dense rainforest. A coastal band of 16 miles in width on the Atlantic coast is home to 90% of the approximately 750,000 people who reside in Guyana. Most of the balance of the population lives along the many rivers that thread throughout the country, the chief rivers being the Demerara, Berbice, Courantyne, and Essequibo. Still others sparsely

populate remote areas far inland. Hillier land beneath much of the rainforest is punctuated with mountains, too; the highest peak rises over 9,300 feet.

Descendants of indentured servants from India form the largest segment of the population. Descendants of African slaves comprise the second largest ethnicity, and indigenous people dubbed the Amerindians make up the third largest segment of the

population in Guyana. Smaller numbers of several other races also live in Guyana.

Subsequently, the religious complexion of Guyana is 57.4% Protestant (claims Christianity), 28.4% Hindu, 7.2% Muslim and 8.6% other or none. There are about 100 congregations of the Lord's church in Guyana with a greater concentration of churches and members in cities lying along

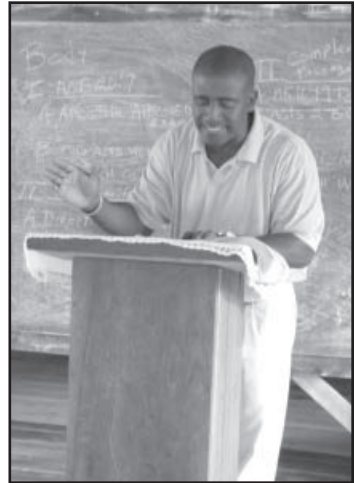




## FROM THE HEART OF...

the coast, especially in or close to Georgetown. However, Christians assemble throughout the nation, even in remote areas that seldom see an automobile or truck, and which typically are approached by small plane, boat or on foot.

Great numbers of American Christians frequent Guyana annually, concentrating on specific areas or slices of the population for evangelistic outreach efforts. For two years now, Bonnie and I have partnered with Nigel Milo from Linden, Guyana to work primarily with Christians and with churches of Christ across the entire nation. Each year, we augment our team with academically qualified and experienced Guyanese brothers to present seminars within reach of every member of the church in the country. This past February, Nigel Milo, Michael Hooper (both Guyanese Christians) and I edified brothers and sisters with nine seminars from one end of the coast to the other as well as from border to border and parts in between. As a part of our effort, we also provided a modest library of religious books to every Gospel preacher in Guyana.



Nigel Milo



Michael Hooper

Brethren Nigel Milo and Michael Hooper are the only two televangelists serving the churches of Christ in Guyana. Their respective programs cover the coast but do not overlap each other. Plans are underway for the ***Third Annual Mobile National Guyana Seminar*** in 2014. Edifying brethren is part of the divine formula resulting in a spiritual harvest (1 Corinthians 3:6; Ephesians 4:12).

Guyana is the only English-speaking country in South America, though the citizenry speaks several other languages also (e.g., Hindi, Urdu, tribal dialects of indigenous people). Guyana has close ties, especially economically with the USA. Guyanese television shows and manufactured goods available in the coun-

## FROM THE HEART OF...

try typically originate in the United States. Generally, people throughout the nation love America. Many Guyanese have migrated to urban areas in the USA.

Unfortunately, Guyana is one of the poorest countries in the world. Of course, there are a lot of nations that might vie for that undesirable distinction. However, like people in many developing nations who lack material prosperity, Guyanese are reachable with religion and interested in Christianity. It is the responsibility of the Lord's people, though, to make sure that Guyana is saturated with the pure Gospel of Jesus Christ – both involving evangelistic outreach and for the spiritual maturing of the churches of Christ there.



The Republic of Guyana is small enough to be saturated with the Gospel of Christ more easily than can many other locations throughout the world. The Lord's church in Guyana is few enough in number that without too much difficulty foreign Christians such as from America can make a real, lasting difference in the spiritual maturity of those congregations within our lifetime. Since English is the language used throughout the country, even though it may be the secondary language of the Amerindians and others, again American Christians are positioned favorably to make a more immediate impact on the Guyanese population with the Gospel – non-Christians as well as Christians – than in countries that are unfamiliar with English. I am excited about mission work at home and abroad, but I am especially interested in planting and watering the seed of the kingdom in Guyana. Please remember to pray for Christians in this country, too.

## Origin of churches of Christ in Guyana

**Michael Hooper**

### **Earliest evidence**

Unfortunately, no early written records concerning the first ever known congregation in Guyana are available to me. Nevertheless, I collected evidence from both Christian and non-Christian witnesses. I have been researching the matter for some time, but have not written about it as I have now. Fortunately, many of

## FROM THE HEART OF...

the witnesses are still living. Their recollections of the past are related to events that they consider noteworthy, and the dates regarding the church's early life in Guyana are estimated upon that basis. From my perspective, churches of Christ have been in Guyana for as long as I can remember.

The Christian Church (church of Christ instrumental) is known to be in Guyana before churches of Christ. Someone suggested that the church of Christ was present in Guyana in the late 1930s, but there are some doubts about whether it was the Christian Church or the scriptural church of Christ, since both were wearing the same appellation in Guyana.

Brother Troxley Norville, a preacher and one of the earliest members of the church in Guyana, and who also did extensive research on this subject, stated [during the 2008 Caribbean Lectureship] that persons were baptized into the church from as early as in the 1960s through the efforts of some African American brethren. To arrive at my conclusion with regards to the date of the church's origin in Guyana, it is appropriate for me to begin from the congregation where I started as a Christian.

### **Springlands Church**

What can be established beyond doubt is that scriptural churches of Christ were very much present in Guyana [in the county of Berbice] during the early 70s, during which time my grandfather (Joseph Lewis), along with many others, was baptized into the body of Christ. My mother (Shirley Hooper) was baptized in 1973. She cannot forget that year since one of my siblings was born then. That was at Springlands church of Christ at Springlands, Corriverton, Berbice. That location is by the Corentyne River, which borders Guyana and her eastern continental neighbour, Suriname.

The original members there include brother William Pantlitz and family, brother Joseph Lewis [my grandfather] and family, brother James Flatts and family, brother Sydney Browne and family, brother Fitz Obrian and family, and brother James Forrester and family. Additional original members include sister Shiela Harper, sister Louisa Hunte [well known as Mama Lou] and family, brother Banes and family, brother Egbert Phillips and family [including his late mother], sister Carmen Matthews and family—just to name a few.

Some of those mentioned have passed on. Fortunately more than enough of them are still living and still have the capacity to remember the past. Please bear in mind that those mentioned were church members at Springlands since the early 1970s. Those are brethren with whom I also shook hands. Therefore, the statement on “Guyana Mission” site, saying “No churches of Christ were known to

## FROM THE HEART OF...

exist in Guyana prior to 1980”, is inaccurate, and it should be changed.

### **How Springlands Church Started**

The Springlands church has an interesting beginning. Brother William Pantlitz (Springlands’ first preacher and who passed on in 1981 at age 77) was a minister of the Christian Catholic Church at Springlands just before he was converted by some African American brothers from California [including brother Boyking] and a couple of brothers from the Kildonan congregation [brothers Henry London and Bernard Blackman]. The Kildonan congregation is also in Berbice, Guyana.

Brother Pantlitz, then, tried to convert the whole Christian Catholic congregation. The majority were converted (including my grandfather). However, that did not go down well with especially some aged women and a couple of men who chose to remain Christian Catholics.



It is also important to note that for some time, the church of Christ was fellowshiping at the Christian Catholic building until given a formal notice by the ‘heads’ of that church to leave. According to my mother [a reliable eyewitness], when they left that building, they took with them their fair share of church benches. I have the last two surviving benches in my possession. The others were destroyed when Springlands got their new building. Those two benches are probably as old as I am or even older [I will be 44, Lord willing, October 2013]. I understand that conversion was not much of a challenge because Christian Catholics at the time worshipped without instruments. By the way, Christian Catholics were not similar to

Roman Catholics. Their worship was similar to churches of Christ.

Mr. Baichoo [who is now in his eighties and who remained with the Christian Catholic Church at the time and was upset about Pantlitz’s conversion] informed me that after the “church of Christ people” left the Christian Catholic building, a new “reverend” was ordained at Springlands Christian Catholic Church in August 1973, replacing Pantlitz. During the 1990s, the Springlands Christian Catholic Church changed its name and became a Pentecostal church. That prompted Baichoo to leave, and he is now a Presbyterian.

## FROM THE HEART OF...

In addition to Mr. Baichoo's evidence with regard to the date of Pantlitz's replacement at the Christian Catholic Church, another aged friend of mine, Mr. John Williams [known as uncle Edmond, a 77 year-old Seventh Day Adventist elder] said that Mr. Pollard [who replaced Pantlitz at the Christian Catholic Church] was preaching at a Christian Catholic Church at #36 Village Corentyne during 1968 [uncle Edmond remembers that year because Pollard performed his wedding ceremony then], but left for Springlands Christian Catholic Church to be ordained "not long after 1968".

Such also verifies that "not long after 1968", Brother Pantlitz and others left the Christian Catholic Church and became members of the church of Christ. The #36 Christian Catholic Church no longer exists, and the building now houses #36 Primary and Nursery school.

For a while, brother Pantlitz was working to convert the whole Christian Catholic congregation [according to my mother and others], and it was about a year and a half after the brethren left the Christian Catholic building that my mother was baptized. Her baptism was in 1973. She further said that when her brother Lloyd Lewis [my uncle] died in July of 1971, everyone there were still Christian Catholics.

Those pieces of evidence help to date the church at Springlands to early 1972. My mother said that she was baptized in 1973 while my grandfather and others were baptized some time earlier. I began my Christian life at Springlands where I was baptized in 1983. As stated before, that congregation existed for as long as I can remember.

After William Pantlitz's passing in 1981, his youngest son, Daniel served as evangelist. Brother Daniel Pantlitz migrated from Guyana [and still preaches] and brother Egbert Phillip began preaching at Springlands from September of 1983. Springlands' present preacher is brother Abraham Philips. Brothers Abraham and Egbert are not blood relatives, and their last names have variant spelling.

### **Kildonan Church**

During the early 70s, there was another congregation located at Kildonan village, Corentyne coast, Berbice. That is approximately 25 miles from Springlands.

The first preacher at Kildonan was brother Henry London. He was initially with his younger brother David London in the Christian Church at Philippi, Corentyne, Berbice. Interestingly, Henry was the organist in that church while David was the preacher. My mother recalled that brother Henry played the organ at the Christian Church during 1969 at her cousin's wedding. So, he was not with the church of Christ at the time.

Evidently, it was not long after that time Henry left the Christian Church, being convinced by brother Boyking [an African American Gospel preacher from

## FROM THE HEART OF...

California] that praising God with instrumental music is unscriptural. However, David remained with Christian Church. Both Henry and David have passed on.

It can be easily reasoned that the Kildonan church of Christ started before the Springlands church of Christ since brother Henry London [first preacher of Kildonan] had something to do with brother Pantlitz's conversion at Springlands. Also, it can be reasoned that brother London was converted not long after 1969, if not in 1969.

The African American brothers involved in the starting of the Kildonan and Springlands congregations include brothers Lochart, Boyking, and Doris [brethren who came after were Grover Wilson, Trinny Miles and many others].

Some early members of the Kildonan congregation were brother Henry London, brother Bernard Blackman, brother Ramphal, brother Burnett, brother Baggot, and sister Doris Hazel. The majority of those mentioned have passed on. Kildonan's present preacher is brother Vernon White.

I will not dispute that persons were baptized into Christ prior to the existence of the Springlands and Kildonan churches. However, the two churches of Christ known to be the oldest in Guyana are Kildonan and Springlands. With all of the above evidence, I date the origin of churches of Christ in Guyana somewhere between 1968 and 1970.

The foregoing was a short history of the origin of churches of Christ in Guyana. "The Guyana story" which we find online should be regarded as a well written sequel to this article since it deals with the rapid expansion of the church in Guyana during the 1980s and 1990s through the intervention of World Bible School.

### **Something I learned**

While interviewing sister Norma Browne [one of the original Springlands members] during my research for this article, she revealed to me a prayer brother Pantlitz made for me while I was an infant. It goes like this, "Lord, I dedicate this child back to you, fashion him, mold him and make him one of your ambassadors." Sister Browne said that those words keep ringing in her ears each time she sees me on TV preaching the Word. Even though that sounds like baby christening, I felt





## FROM THE HEART OF...

overwhelmed by what was intended by those words. (My mother also told me that I once distracted the whole church by saying, “Look he is here” when brother Pantlitz asked while preaching, “Where is Jesus now?” I also recalled peeping directly into the light of the projector while we were having a Jule Miller film show. I recall receiving ‘sharp’ reproofs for doing so.) †



Kishore Eduardo  
2012 Seminar Co-Speaker



Bicycles are often the mode of transportation.



A gathering of Christians.



Many of the “roads” in Guyana  
are actually rivers.





# How Do You Measure Up?

Deuteronomy 8:10-14

When you have eaten and are full, then you shall bless the Lord your God for the good land which He has given you.

Beware that you do not forget the Lord your God by not keeping His commandments, His judgments, and His statutes which I command you today, lest—when you have eaten and are full, and have built beautiful houses and dwell in them; and when your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and your gold are multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied; when your heart is lifted up, and you forget the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage....

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**Gospel Gazette Online** is a monthly Gospel magazine on the

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## What Can You Do to Help Spread the Word?

- \* For just a moment, put yourself in a village in Africa, or even in a large city in India, or in the jungles of South America. You are an immortal soul, living in a perishing body. How will you knowledgeably prepare for the judgment and eternity that awaits us all?
- \* Does the church of Christ exist in your community, so that you can hear the Gospel preached? For most people in the world, the answer is “No”.
- \* Is there a source for buying Bibles in your community? Though the Bible has been translated into most languages, villages seldom have bookstores. For most people in the world, the answer is “No”.
- \* If you have found the Truth and are a Christian, is there a bookstore from which you can order additional study materials? For most people in the world, the answer is “No”.

So you are born into an unbelieving home, you live according to the religion of your parents, you grow old, and you die, thrust into eternity to meet the God you never knew. What unspeakable tragedy! The scenario is LIFE for the majority of the people of the world.

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## ANSWERS TO PUZZLES

### *Verse Search* (page 34)

1. No. We must pay our debts at the time agreed, but Paul is primarily discussing the command to love in this section.
2. If we love, we will always obey the law.
3. Law of Moses.
4. We will treat them as we would want to be treated.
5. Jesus (Mark 12:31).
6. Doing no harm to one's neighbor is exactly what the Old Testament commandments envisioned.
7. John was referring to personal relations between Christians. Paul was comparing the Christian walk with the requirements of the Law, which only forbade outward actions.
8. Now.
9. Sin.
10. By doing away with the works of darkness and following the commandments of God.
11. Live everyday as God would want.
12. Revelry is excessive, uninhibited partying, usually accompanied by excessive drinking.
13. Yes.
14. No.

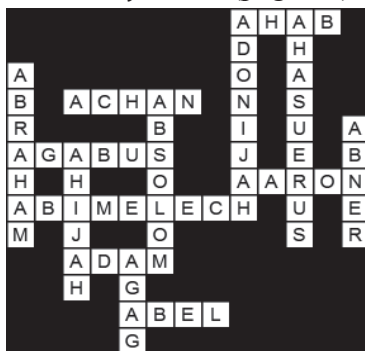
#### **Who Am I?** (page 98)

**Answer:** 1. Andrew; 2. Jonas; 3. James and John; 4. Cornelius; 5. Simon; 6. Dorcas; 7. Gamaliel; 8. Rhoda; 9. Malchus; 10. Ananias and Sapphira

#### **Where Am I?** (page 99)

**Answer:** 1. Bethsaida; 2. Sea of Galilee; 3. Caesarea Philippi; 4. Jerusalem; 5. Joppa; 6. Caesarea; 7. Capernaum; 8. Gethsemane; 9. Lydda; 10. Antioch

### *Bible Find* (page 92)



**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:**



**Government:** Republic  
**President:** Donald Ramotar  
**Prime Minister:** Samuel Hinds

## Secular Facts:

**Location:** Bounded on the north by the Atlantic, on the east by Venezuela, on the south by Brazil, and on the east by Suriname.

**Land Mass:** 83,000 square miles, about the size of Idaho. **Topography:** coastal plain, hills and mountains ranging up to 9,219 feet.

**Climate:** Tropical.

**Population:** 739,903.

**Major Cities:** Georgetown, capital

**Language:** The only English-speaking country in S.A. Amerindian, Creole, Hindustani, and Urdu are also spoken.

**Ethnic Groups:** East Indian 43.5%; African 30.2%; Interracial 16.7%; Amerindian 9.1%; other .5%.

**Literacy:** 99%.

**Religions:** 57.4% claim Christian; 28.4% Hindu; 7.2% Muslim; 8.6% other.

**Economy:** **Agriculture:** sugarcane, rice, edible oils; beef, pork, poultry; shrimp, fish. **Exports:** sugar, gold, bauxite, alumina, rice, shrimp, molasses, rum, timber. **Export Partners:** Canada 29%, US 28.6%, UK 4.9%, Trinidad and Tobago 4.3%, Jamaica 4.3%, Netherlands 4%.

**Currency:** Guyanese Dollar 204.45 per USD

## The Church:

**Congregations:** There are about 102 congregations, approximately 5,000 members, with 90 preachers, and three preacher training schools.

The congregations are scattered throughout the entire country of Guyana, members of each of the three major ethnic groups (i.e., East Indians, Africans and the indigenous Amerindians) embracing true, New Testament Christianity. The nation's population as well as the churches of Christ are in greater number along the narrow coastal strip of land parallel to the Atlantic Ocean. Likewise, a greater concentration of preachers reside and work for the Lord mostly in the same coastal area.

Dozens of American brethren descend on Guyana annually in various outreach and evangelistic programs, each of them concentrating on a particular segment of the country or its population. In addition, World Evangelism Team members Louis and Bonnie Rushmore conduct annual nationwide mobile seminars throughout Guyana. They concentrate on watering the seed of the kingdom (1 Corinthians 3:6) and "equipping the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ" (Ephesians 4:12).

Guyana is the only English speaking country in South America, and it is a small country, well within the capability of being impacted significantly in our lifetime with the Gospel of Christ. (LR)