

# THE BIBLE TEACHER

*Pleading for the Restoration of Pure New Testament Christianity*

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## EDITORIAL

### ***What Does The Bible Teach?***

**"Do not call anyone on earth your father for one is your Father, He who is in heaven"**

We all have our physical fathers, and the Bible teaches to "Honor your father and mother." (Exodus 20:12; Ephesians 6:2). In the passage above, however, at Matthew 23:9, Christ taught that we should not call anyone "father" in the spiritual sense, because, spiritually speaking, we have only one Father, our God, our Father in heaven.

Yet, how often we hear people calling others, who may be religious preachers or teachers, etc., as "Father." In the religious world it is not uncommon to hear people calling themselves as "Father," "Reverend," "Padri," and "Pastor." Why do they do so? Because they love special titles to elevate themselves above others; they are looking for special respect and honor from the people in general. Contrarily, Christ taught, "For whoever exalts himself will be abased, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." (Luke 14:11). One of the greatest things that we learn from the person of Christ is the humility. He was so humble that even when someone called Him "Good Teacher," He replied by saying, "Why do you call me Good? No one is Good but one, that is, God." (Mark 10:17, 18). Christ was never called by titles

such as, Father, Pastor, Reverend or Padri, and neither were His disciples, His apostles. Even though the Word who was in the beginning with God, was God, who became Christ, in assuming the human flesh He had emptied himself, He came on earth in the likeness of men and in the form of a servant. (John 1:1 & 2; Philippians 2:6 & 7). He Himself desisted and chose not to equate Himself with the Father in heaven. Therefore He taught, not to call anyone on earth Father, because there is only one Father, spiritually speaking, He who is in heaven.

But what about calling men Reverend? Only once in the old King James version of the Bible the word reverend appears, and that too in Psalm 111:9, where the writer in speaking of God wrote "Holy and reverend is His name." Let me now state that passage from the New King James version: "He has sent redemption to His people; He has commanded His covenant forever: Holy and awesome is His name." Awesome means expressive of awe, being fearfully reverence. Again Christ taught, "And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." (Matthew 10:28). Only God's name is awesome; Only He is reverend. Similarly the word Padri or Padre also means father. But what about calling men Pastor?

In the Bible's New Testament elder or presbyter or bishop or overseer or pastor are used interchangeably. (Acts 20:17 & 28; 1 Peter 5:1-3). Thus a pastor, according to the New Testament, in the church, is also an overseer, a bishop, a presbyter or an elder. Not everybody who preaches or teaches in a congregation could be an elder or pastor. Because, there are certain, specific, qualifications, according to the Bible, which a person, who desires to be an elder, must possess. Regarding this, the apostle Paul wrote to Timothy, and said, "This is a faithful saying: if a man desires a position of a bishop, he desires a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behaviour, hospitable, able to teach; not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous; one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?); not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same

condemnation as devil. Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil." (1 Timothy 3:1-7). Again, the inspired of the Holy Spirit of God, said, "For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you—if a man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination. For a bishop must be blameless, as a steward of God, not self willed, not quick tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but hospitable, a lover of what is good, sober-minded, just, holy, self controlled, holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict." (Titus 1:5-9).

In view of the above teaching of the Bible a pastor, or bishop or elder must be a matured person, one who is sound in the faith of the Bible; sound in the doctrine of Christ; morally upright; a person who is married and has children who are old enough to be faithful Christians and are faithful Christians. This evidently necessitates that he must not be a young man but an older person, not only in age, but also in faith. Now why such a stipulation? Notice, God's word says, "For if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?" A pastor or bishop or elder is an overseer or a shepherd in the church of the Lord. Its a mighty responsible job. If you have a factory with several workers or an office, and you are looking for a manager or administrator, you would certainly not want somebody who is inexperienced!

Likewise God want that the overseers in His church should be the men of experience of good report. A sound Christian man, with a faithful Christian wife, who has brought up children in the training and admonition of the Lord in such a way that they too have become faithful Christians by obeying the gospel of the Lord, should be appointed as pastor or elder or bishop with others such qualified men in a congregation of the Lord's church, to oversee and shepherd the church. (1 Peter 5:1-3). Thus, it is a work to be done and not a title or a designation to be worn.

# **Why I Believe In God**

**J.C. CHOATE**

Why would I believe in God? Why would anyone believe in Him? Is there a God? How do we know that He exists? Don't the intellectuals of the world deny that there is a creator? Aren't we living in the time of enlightenment? Hasn't evolution been proven and accepted? Aren't scientists in agreement that creation and life, as we know it, began with a big bang?

It is true that if you listen to the world, the unbelieving world, you and I will conclude that there is no God, no eternal creator. But with the minds that we have, and the logic of common men, how could we ever come to such a conclusion? As the Psalmist said, "The fool has said in his heart there is no God." (Psalm 14:1).

I don't know about you, but after all is said and done, after all of the arguments have been made to convince me that I should not believe in God, I am still not convinced. Instead, I believe more than ever that there is a God, that there is an eternal creator? How could I say that? How could I not say it? I often wonder how all of these people who supposedly are so smart can so brazenly deny that God exists and then put forth a feeble attempt to explain otherwise how the world and life came into existence? I count such people blind, ignorant, and having closed their minds to reality.

There are many reasons why I believe in God. I believe in Him because of creation itself. Creation means a creator and that means God. It is just that simple. Those who offer other explanations don't even come close. We are simply told that "In the beginning God created the heaven and earth." (Genesis 1:1). Now that makes sense.

I believe in God because of man and his intelligence, his ability to think and to reason. Those who try to explain this by the theory of evolution, leave many questions unanswered. First of all, it is but a theory and a theory is not fact. To try to pass off evolution on man as fact is dishonest. The theory of evolution is simply man's explanation but that doesn't mean that it is so by any means. But if man did evolve from an animal, and that animal from some organism, why hasn't that process continued

to operate? Why shouldn't we be seeing man in these different stages of development? I will tell you why, and that is simply that man did not come from some lower form of life, but he was created by God—given a physical form but also was created in the image or likeness of God, that is, he was given a soul, and the ability to think and to reason—he was given an eternal soul. (Genesis 1:26:27; Genesis 2:7).

I believe in God because of the law of nature that he set into motion in the beginning and it has continued to function flawlessly ever since. There is the Sun to rule the day and the moon to rule the night. There are the seasons that operate without fail year after year. The temperature is not too hot or too cold. The law of reproduction makes it possible for the human race to continue and to be fed. It is a beautiful system and one that could only have come and be sustained by a higher power.

I believe in God because the Bible confirms this. It tells me that God has always existed and that he will live forever, that he is Spirit, all powerful, all knowing, all seeing, all hearing. These facts have never been successfully denied.

I believe in God because he has provided for our physical needs and he sent his Son, Jesus Christ, into this world to die for our sins that we might be saved and have the hope of eternal life. He has therefore made it possible for us to be saved from our sins and to live with him for all eternity.

Even if there is no God, I am better off by far for believing in Him. My life is made better for trying to live a better life. I am made happier and have more to look forward to because of my faith in Him. But if he does exist, I have everything to gain. If I believe enough in him to obey him, to worship him, and to serve him, then I am assured of not only having his blessings in this world, but far above that, I have his promise that I will go to heaven to live forevermore in his presence and with all others who have obeyed him. But what about those who did not believe in his existence? Not only have they been plagued with the consequences of sin in this world but they will be eventually cast into hell to live in torment with the devil and his angels for all eternity. What a price to pay for unbelief!

But why are there so many unbelievers in the world? Why are all kind of theories offered to try to explain creation? Why is God left completely out of the picture by so many scientists,

intellectuals, and so many others. Well, they don't want to admit that there is someone smarter than they are, that there is someone who can do things they can't do. Neither do all of these unbelievers want to be responsible for their actions, for their sins. They don't like to think of a judgment where they will be held accountable for the way they have lived, that they will have to spend eternity in hell for their sins. Of course, there are other reasons, but none of them are sound and sensible.

If we are wise we will acknowledge the one who made us, who created us. We have all to gain and nothing to lose by so doing. And whether we believe in Him or not, he is there and will always be there. Yes, I believe in God. How can I help but believe in Him? Nothing better is being offered. Do you believe in God? I pray that you do, and that you will. (Hebrews 11:6).

*Especially For Women*

## **God's Rules In Response To The Fall**

**BETTY BURTON CHOATE**

From the creation God had intended man to be the head of his household. Yet, because of the transgression led by woman, new restrictions and laws were made.

After Eve and Adam had eaten of the forbidden fruit, they realized that they had sinned and, for the first time, they felt fear of God.

*"And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. Then the Lord God called to Adam and said to him, 'Where are you?'*

*"So he said, 'I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself.'*

*"And He said, 'Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?'*

*"Then the man said, 'The woman whom You gave to be with*

*me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate.'*

*"And the Lord God said to the woman, 'What is this that you have done?'*

In this sad story of temptation, Eve took over the leadership in the family, and Adam allowed her to do so. But when God came on the scene, did He follow the changes they had made in their roles?

No. God called to Adam. Did God know that the sin had been committed? and did He know *who* had led in the transgression? Of course He did, for God knows all things. But God had made Adam *the head of the family*, with the *responsibility* for its proper leadership, and so He called Adam to answer for what had been done. We need to learn from this first instance of disregard of God's order *that God Himself does not and will not change His system*, no matter what man does.

New rules and punishments were spoken to the serpent, to the woman, and to the man as consequences of their sin, but of particular interest to us in our study of the role of woman are the words spoken to Eve: *"I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; in pain you shall bring forth children; and your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you"* (Genesis 3:16).

Sorrow and pain were brought into the world because of sin, and woman, as the more sensitive and emotional half of humanity, was to bear the greater burden in these areas. Her conception of children was increased, as was the pain of childbearing. In addition, she was placed under a greater subjection to her husband's authority, as her "desire was to be toward her husband," and he was to "rule" over her.

In I Peter 3:1-7, we read further instructions, given to wives and to husbands who were Christians: *"Likewise you wives, be in subjection to your own husbands . . . Do not let your beauty be that outward adorning of arranging the hair, or wearing of gold or of putting on fine apparel; but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible ornament of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God. For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror."*

*"likewise you husbands, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered."*

These verses tell us that God's order of authority, making man the head of the household and the leader responsible for the welfare of his family, did not end with the coming of Christ and the beginning of His new law. *Christian* women, too, are commanded to be under subjection to their husbands, while their husbands are to lead them with an attitude of love and understanding.

But someone will ask, "Suppose a woman is more intelligent than her husband, or suppose she is the better leader of the two. Should she not, in these cases, take the leadership?"

Realizing the order of authority God has fixed for the family should cause men and women to be very careful in their choice of mates. If a strong woman finds herself married to a weak man, part of her responsibility as "an help meet," "a helper comparable to man," would be to encourage her husband in the leadership role rather than to further weaken him by taking over his responsibilities.

But the wording in these verses shows us *that this matter of authority is not simply a decision left to the husband and wife*. Rather, we are reminded that a gentle and quiet spirit in a woman *"is very precious in the sight of God,"* and that the proper relationship between a man and his wife will ensure that their *"prayers may not be hindered."* The husband/wife relationship is not merely between themselves; rather, their relationship with God, Himself, is affected by their obedience to Him in their relationship with each other. We cannot set aside God's law on any matter and be pleasing to Him.

A concluding and clear statement concerning this order of authority, as established by God, is found in I Corinthians 11:3 where Paul said, *"But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God."*



# ***The Joy Of Service***

**WELDON LANGFIELD**

The world measures the worth of a man by the number of employees and assistants serving him. Christ values a man by how much he serves others. He said, "Whosoever would become great among you shall be your minister" (Matthew 20:26). Deep joy comes to him who is willing to serve his fellows. Of the Son of God, who ministered to humanity through his crucifixion, it is written, "Who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising shame, and hath sat down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:2). What joys come to him who devotedly serves God and others?

1. The Joy of Using One's Talents. One of the most discouraging conditions a person can face is under-employment—having a job at which he cannot fully use his talents. Studies show that eighty per cent of the American work force is less than enthusiastic about their occupations because of under-employment. What percentage Christians suffer from spiritual stagnation simply because they have settled for under-employment in the Lord's work?

An abiding satisfaction comes to him who seriously endeavors to identify, develop, and use his talents in God's kingdom. In the parable of the talents, Christ permanently connected joy and the use of abilities. Two faithful servants who wisely used that which was entrusted to them were told by their Lord, "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord" (Matthew 25:23). The satisfaction which comes with trying to be the best we can be is also available in the here-and-now as one determines to expand his life to the maximum, and live "the abundant life" (John 10:10).

2. The Joy of Living in Harmony with the Universe. Jesus summed up the necessity and value of his death by pointing to a common natural phenomenon: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone; but if it die it beareth much fruit" (John 12:24). While Eastern mystics have advanced contemplation and the worship of non-human life as means by which one can 'harmonize' with the universe, Christ cites sacrifice as the key to that harmony. Truly, the entire universe is centered around the principle of

sacrifice. The earth provides, through plant life, food for animals, which in turn provide nourishment for man. The sun, by giving its heat and light, provides energy and warmth necessary to living things. Parents must contribute a sizable amount of time, energy, and money in order to rear a family, and thus perpetuate the human race.

When one expands himself for Christ, he adds a dimension of deep joy to his life. Burying oneself in the soil of sacrifice brings a special sense of contentment, for one has truly harmonized his life with the universe.

3. The Joy of Imitating Christ. When one serves in God's cause fully, his life is enriched by an undercurrent of deep satisfaction stemming from the knowledge that he is an imitator of the Son of God. Christ urged all to follow his example of making great sacrifices for the sake of righteousness and goodness. He said, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (Matthew 16:24). Following in the footsteps of God's Son filled Paul's life with purposefulness and gladness. The apostle wrote, "But far be it from me to glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Galatians 6:14). For all Christians, from the time of Paul to the present, a deep sense of joy accompanies service to God.

When laboring sacrificially in God's kingdom, we may be tempted to self-centeredly focus on the time and energy we are expending for the sake of Christ. Such thinking can lead to weariness, and ultimately to discouragement. God never intended for work on his behalf to be a source of continual heaviness; rather it is designed to produce delight. When, with strong, unwavering faith we give of ourselves, we will suddenly discover that we are following more fully Paul's admonition: "Rejoice in the Lord always: again I will say, rejoice!" (Philippians 4:4).

## *When Men Disappoint US*

**JOE E. GALLOWAY**

All of us are discouraged at times by the actions of others. It is difficult to bear when someone who is a very good, close friend has let us down. Or, it may be that someone in the church

whom we have highly regarded for his teaching, leadership ability, or his seemingly exemplary life is found to be morally corrupt. Sometimes such a respected person may even begin teaching error and completely turn his back on the Lord and his church. Our disappointment in such brethren may cause us to want to quit trying. At such times we need to consider a number of things:

(1) Others in the church have had similar disappointments in men. When the apostle Paul was facing death as a prisoner in Rome he wrote: "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia" (II Timothy 4:10). He then wrote: "At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me" (II Timothy 4:16). Yet this great apostle, although disappointed, continued steadfastly faithful to God.

(2) there are still many good, faithful Christian men and women who have not yielded to the pressures and temptations of this world. Many are still morally and doctrinally pure! Luke had stayed with Paul when the others forsook him (II Timothy 4:10). There were many others who were faithfully working, often under similar persecution, in other parts of the world, and who had not defiled themselves by yielding to temptations. So, when some influential member is found to have been leading a double life we need to remember that there are still many who are not hypocrites, but are genuine Christians!

(3) The Lord has not—and will not!—let us down! After telling of the brethren who had disappointed him. Paul wrote: "Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me . . . and the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom" (II Timothy 4:17-18). Even if everyone in the church were to become corrupt (and that is far from being the case) the Lord will still stand with us, and will eternally bless us if we continue to stand for truth and right.

(4) We need to continue to pray for the one who had disappointed us, along with other good brethren—and the Lord. Concerning those who had forsaken Paul, he wrote, "I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge" (II Timothy 4:16). May be the sinning brother can be brought to repentance and will be able to again regain his useful place in the Lord's work. We should work and pray to that end! Peter was a disappointment to our

Lord when he cursed and swore that he had never known him. Yet, a few weeks later he had so repented that we have all been thrilled with his courageous stand for the Lord's truth in the face of persecution (Acts 4:19-20; 5:27-29). Few brethren have committed moral actions more extreme than the adultery, deception, and murder in which David engaged. Yet David was restored to a place of honor in God's service! Perhaps we can help restore our brother who has been overtaken in a fault (Galatians 6:1).

(5) Our faith must stand in God, not in any man (I Corinthians 2:5; I Peter 1:21). The apostle Paul warned, "Let no man glory in men" (I Corinthians 3:21), and "not to think of men above that which is written" (I Corinthians 4:16). When we put too much confidence in men we are setting ourselves up for disappointment. Even the best of men make mistakes. A candid appraisal of self should show us the fickleness of human beings. God is constant, being unchangeable in his holiness, goodness, and truth. Only God is worthy of our complete and unwavering confidence and trust!

Let each try to be a good example in every aspect of life (I Timothy 4:12). Let us encourage others to live as they should, and (in the proper spirit) try to help them recover when they stumble. Then let us completely trust and follow our Lord who is unchangingly faithful (Hebrews 13:8; II Timothy 2:13).

## ***Parents—God's Special Tutors***

### **LEVI SIDES**

"Train up a child in the way he should go . . ." (Proverbs 22:6).

When the first child was born Eve exclaimed, "I have gotten a manchild with the help of the Lord" (Genesis 4:1). When God placed the first baby into the arms of Adam and Eve he was giving this child a special set of tutors.

Though parents do not have any experience, and may not have any special education, they will be the most significant force in the child's life. It has been estimated that from the time a child is born until he graduates from high school, he is awake

one hundred five thousand hours.

The child spends nearly ten thousand hours in school from the time he starts in the first grade until he graduates from high school. If this child is taken or sent to Sunday School every week, he will spend about twenty-one hundred hours in Sunday School.

However, during his one hundred five thousand waking hours, parents have him under their direct influence and supervision for approximately ninety-three thousand hours.

If a child is lost, parents are more to blame than either school teachers or Bible School teachers, because the parents have so much longer time to influence him than these others.

Fathers and mothers have the awesome responsibility of building character into the child. There are four building blocks which both parents need to use in developing their children as God wants:

1. Parental Love. Children need to be touched, cuddled, held, kissed, etc., so that they will grow up knowing love. Paul told the older women to teach the younger ones how to love their children (Titus 2:4).

2. Parental Discipline. Love is no substitute for discipline. The greatest social disaster of this century is the belief that abundant love makes discipline unnecessary. (See Proverbs 3:11-12; 13:24; 19:18).

3. Parental Instruction. At the beginning a child is unable to distinguish between the voice of God and the word of parents. The child is fortunate when the parental voice is synonymous with God.

4. Parental Example. The most often-asked question is, "Should I force this child to go to church?" The answer is, Yes. Other habits that are needed, at times have to be forced. That which makes a child rebel is not being forced to go to church; but rather, it is seeing parents at home who are hypocritical. When that which the parents enforce is not consistent with their example, their children will grow up hating the church. In II Timothy 1:5 Paul knew the kind of man Timothy was because he knew the example of his mother and grandmother.

May God give us parents who realize their responsibility as special tutors. Your children's souls will be influenced by how well you perform as a parent.

# **Lovers Of Pleasure**

**G.F. RAINES**

All people need some recreation. But inordinate love of pleasure is sinful, although, apparently, most people in all nations love pleasure excessively.

Paul says (in I Thessalonians 5:22) that there are some pleasures which we must abstain from completely. Other forms of pleasure are wrong only when they are indulged in intemperately. Walking, gardening, and reading good books are some of the best quiet forms of recreation.

H.G.J. Adam has well said: "Pleasure must first have the warrant, that it is without sin; then the measure, that it is without excess."

Paul says that some people are "lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God" (II Timothy 3:1-5).

According to Parade magazine (February 14, 1965), "Ten years ago most people spent 4 hours and 46 minutes in front of the little box (the television). Today that figure has jumped to 5 hours and 25 minutes a day, or 1,977 hours a year."

No wonder we do not have enough time to abound in the work of the Lord! Please read John 15:8; I Corinthians 15:58; Galatians 6:9, 10; Ephesians 5:14-16; Colossians 1:10; Titus 2:14.

Solomon observed that, "He that loveth pleasure shall be a poor man: he that loveth wine and oil shall not be rich" (Proverbs 21:17).

Those who inordinately indulge in pleasure "live after the flesh," and are "dead" while they live (I Timothy 5:6).

"For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (Romans 8:13).

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Galatians 6:7-9).

"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are

above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth" (Colossians 3:1-2).

## ***Galatians: Chapter 5***

**GARY C. HAMPTON**

*Verse 1.* The American Standard Version has, "For freedom did Christ set us free: stand fast therefore, and be not entangled again in a yoke of bondage." Christ came to set men free from the yoke of bondage they had known under the law. Paul pleads with the Galatians not to go back into that bondage.

*Verse 2.* Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, was about to make a clear pronouncement on this most important issue. Circumcision, if it were looked to as a source of salvation, would nullify the sacrifice of Christ, because the individual was looking to the law of Moses for saving power.

*Verse 3.* Circumcision was a symbol of submission to the covenant God had with Israel. When one was circumcized, he was yielding to the whole law and agreeing to observe all its commands. No wonder Paul was so emphatic in the previous verse.

*Verse 4.* By turning to the law of Moses as a source of salvation, they nullified Christ's sacrifice and the grace by which it was bestowed (Titus 2:11-12). Thus, one has fallen from grace, and is lost because he is without it.

*Verse 5.* The sword of the Spirit is the word of God (Ephesians 6:17). The Spirit uses that sword to prick us in our hearts and move us to obedience (Acts 2:37). Then, we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit and are enabled, by that gift, to wait for the rewards of righteousness, which come by the faith, not by the law of Moses.

*Verse 6.* God does not show special favor, in the Christian age, on circumcized Jew, nor on uncircumcized Gentile. Instead, he favors a faith that is motivated by love to work. Paul three times speaks of neither "circumcision nor uncircumcision." In Galatians 6:15 he says all that matters is "a new creature," which comes about when one gets into Christ through baptism (II Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 3:26-27; Romans 6:3-4). In I

Corinthians 7:19, he says both of those states came about in keeping God's commandments, which emphasizes that it is the doing of God's will that matters. Of course, here Paul emphasizes the way to please God is through a working faith (John 4:15; Hebrews 11:6).

*Verse 7.* The word "hinder" comes from a Greek word which suggests the breaking up of a road. They had been running the Christian life; but some enemy had torn up the road, and had stopped them from faithfully obeying the truth.

*Verse 8.* This work-stoppage did not come from God. The false teachers were not his agents.

*Verse 9.* While it may have been only a few who were following this course back into bondage, Paul warns that a small amount of leaven will leaven the whole lump if it is not purged (I Corinthians 5:6).

*Verse 10.* Paul had confidence in the Galatian brethren and knew they would see the danger of the leaven of false teaching, and would purge it. The false teacher, or teachers, would have to bear their judgment against him, as well as being severed from Christ, and fallen from grace (see verse 4).

*Verse 11.* Evidently, some thought Paul was charged with preaching the necessity of circumcized. While the false teachers might have misconstrued his actions in this way, the Jews did not. Instead, they continued to persecute him. If Paul had gone back to the teaching of the necessity of circumcision, or being a Jew, the cross of Christ would have become of no effect in his preaching; and it would have been removed as a stumbling-block from the path of the Jews (I Corinthians 1:18-25).

*Verse 12.* Paul wishes the false teachers were not only circumcized, but also amputated from the body of the Lord.

*Verse 13.* Just because the Galatians were free from the law of Moses, he did not want them to think they were freed to do wicked things. Instead, Christians should be motivated by love for others (Matthew 7:12; John 13:34-35). When people are so motivated, they cannot abuse their liberty for fear of the damage it would bring to one they loved.

*Verse 14.* The law of love, which is the law of Christ, is summed up in this verse. Jesus had considered this law to be second only to the love for God with all one's heart, soul, mind and strength (Mark 12:29-31).



*Verse 15.* If they refused to follow the law of love, and instead followed a hateful course toward one another, they should know such biting and devouring would eventually result in their consuming one another. When a negative spirit is allowed to run wild, it will eventually kill all the good a church has been doing and leave it to suffocate on its own critical breath.

*Verse 16.* To avoid the tragic end already described, Paul urges the Galatian brethren to follow the teaching of the Holy Spirit. There are two different desires within man, which are represented by the spirit versus the flesh (Romans 7:22-23). Fleshly desires must be controlled if we are to please God (Genesis 6:5-6; Proverbs 6:16-19, especially verse 18; Romans 1:21; II Corinthians 10:5).

*Verse 17.* Evil imaginations are in continual conflict with our desires to follow God's will. When they are in control, we will not do the good we would like to do.

*Verse 18.* When man was under the law, he was subject to sin because of yielding to fleshly desire. There was no sacrifice capable of taking away sin, thus man was under the penalty of death. Now, if a man will let the Spirit through the word direct his actions, he is not subject to that law nor under its penalty (Romans 8:1-14).

*Verses 19-21.* It is obvious when one is following the ways of the flesh, because of the things he does. The word "adultery" occurs in several passages (John 8:3; Matthew 15:19; Mark 7:21) and describes unlawful relations with another's mate. "Fornication" includes all illicit sexual relations, some of which are described in Romans 1:26-27 and I Corinthians 5:1. "Uncleanness" encompasses the impurity of wildly extravagant and lustful living. Thayer defines the word translated "lasciviousness" as, "unbridled lust, excess, licentiousness, lasciviousness, wantonness, outrageousness, shamelessness, insolence." All of these words describe a complete lack of restraint. The worship of false gods, or anything other than the true God, would be "idolatry." "Witchcraft" was usually practiced with idolatry and involved magical arts used to deceive people (Acts 8:9-11). "Hatred" often leads to "variance," which is contention or wrangling; and "emulations" are jealous rivalries. "Wrath" suggests impulsive outbursts of anger. Those who would use even low means to set themselves in a higher position are users

of "strife." Division or dissension would be described as "seditions." These would be caused by differences in opinion or aim, in other words, "heresies." Naturally, division into parties genders ill feelings which may linger on, looking for revenge; and this is called "envyings." Such might, sadly, lead to "murders." Intoxication, or "drunknesses" leads to "revellings," or wild displays at extended drinking parties. People involved in the sins listed, as well as others of a similar nature, will not enter heaven's gate.

*Verses 22-23.* There are many "works" of the flesh, but only one "fruit" of the Spirit, with nine different facets. This fruit would have to be produced by the seed of God's word (Luke 8:11). The Spirit speaks through the written word (II Samuel 23:2; Acts 1:16; Hebrews 3:7-11 quotes Psalm 95:7-11). Love, joy, and peace come out of our relationship with God. If one is a child of God, he will love (I John 4:7-8; Matthew 5:43-48). Joy is ours at the release from past sins, and should be a constant product of our being in Christ where we are constantly cleansed from our sins (Acts 8:39; 16:34; Philippians 4:4; 3:1; John 15:9-11). We have inward peace, no matter what the outward circumstances, because God is guarding our hearts (I John 5:4; Philippians 4:6-7; Romans 5:1; Isaiah 26:3). Long suffering, gentleness and goodness are things needed in our relationship with other men. God is Long suffering toward man because he does not want to see him lost (II Peter 3:9). We need to be like him as we deal with others, knowing we need the same to reach heaven (I Corinthians 13:4). The word translated "gentleness" here is translated "kindness" in II Corinthians 6:6. It describes a sweetness of demeanor that causes one to be a ready servant of others (I Corinthians 13:4; Ephesians 4:32; John 13:1-17). "Goodness" is shown in our treatment of others. It is the service that comes out of readiness to serve (Romans 15:14; Galatians 6:10). Faith, meekness, and temperance are things we need in ourselves. All Christians need a belief in God and his determination to reward those who diligently seek him (Matthew 10:22; Luke 9:62; Revelation 2:10). James Meadows, in *A Study of the Holy Spirit*, says the word "meekness is associated with lowliness (Ephesians 4:1-2), a quiet spirit (I Peter 3:4) and gentleness (Titus 3:2)." Self-control is the same as "temperance." We must exhibit self-control if we are to go to heaven (Philippians 2:1-8; I Corinthians 9:24-27; II Corinthians

10:5; Proverbs 16:32). Neither man, nor certainly God, has a law against these good works that are the "fruit" of the Spirit.

*Verse 24.* The Christian has crucified the flesh with its passions, and lives for Jesus because he is Jesus' possession (Romans 6:1-11; I Corinthians 6:19-20).

*Verse 25.* Christians are alive in God (I John 4:11-16). Since we are alive in God, we should also let God live in us (I Corinthians 3:16; Romans 8:11).

*Verse 26.* Christians recognize the things they do are done because of God's being in us, and by his power (John 5:19; Philippians 4:13); therefore they do not become involved in promoting self, nor provoke others to jealousy.

## ***The Wrongness Of Abortion***

**WELDON LANGFIELD**

Abortion is an increasing problem. Adolph Hitler, perhaps the most notorious villain in the world's history, killed Six million Jews. Several years ago, a noted preacher observed, "We'll soon owe Hitler an apology!" The time to apologize has passed!

Corinth has frequently been cited as demonstrating that the church is often greatly influenced by the world. This being true, we can expect a loosening of attitudes toward abortion within the Lord's church as its practice becomes even more accepted by our society. In fact, this doctrinal weakening is already occurring in some places. In one congregation a so-called "gospel preacher" has actually taken a "pro-choice" position both publicly and privately. As on all other topics, the only way to maintain the truth is to aggressively, and repeatedly, teach what the Bible reveals on the subject. Let us consider some reasons why abortion is sinful.

First, abortion is wrong because it involves contempt for human life. Man is the "crown of creation." That which is in the womb is destined to be in the image of God himself (Genesis 1:26). Only the most irreverent person would willingly terminate that life as a matter of convenience.

Second, abortion involves murder. Through the "Roe vs. Wade" decision, the United States Supreme Court "decided," in essence, that life begins at birth. Is God bound by that? Certainty

not! The same human tribunal has favored pornography, homosexuality, and evolution in several other decisions. That human tribunals ascertain heavenly truth is patently absurd.

The Bible plainly teaches that, at some time during pregnancy, the developing child possesses a soul. Of John the Baptist, the Bible says, "He shall be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb" (Luke 1:15). Certainly, to have had the Holy Spirit, John had the capacity to possess a human spirit. The humanness of the fetus is further illustrated in the fact that Jacob and Esau had personalities in the womb (Genesis 25:25-26). God's skill, power, and thoughts all go into the making of a human (Psalm 139:13-17). Can man destroy a developing child without guilt?

Third, abortion is wrong because it is a cold, wanton act. Women are divinely equipped both by physical and emotional attributes to carry children. Mothers who willfully destroy the fruit of their womb are certainly numbered among those who are "without natural affection" (Romans 1:31).

Fourth, abortion is wrong because it violates the "Golden Rule." Jesus said, "All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them" (Matthew 7:12). Which one of us would want his/her mother to have had an abortion? Those living by the law of Christ owe their developing offspring the same concern and protection.

Fifth, abortion is wrong because it frequently violates the conscience. Women, particularly those with strong conservative religious backgrounds, suffer from substantial guilt and stress following an abortion. This fact alone rules out abortion as a possibility for Christians. The Bible teaches plainly in I Timothy 1:19 that we are to maintain "a good conscience."

As tragic as it is that even some among us tolerate abortion, it should come as no surprise. The Corinthians congregation was infected with the licentiousness of that city (I Corinthians 6:15-20). The Laodiceans were influenced by the wealth of their environs (Revelations 3:15-18).

Let us realize that the best defense against the sin of abortion, as with other transgressions, is to vigorously teach the word. No truth is learned by osmosis; rather "Belief cometh of hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17).

# **Bible Study**

**KEN TYLER**

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

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

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

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

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

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

# ***Are We Barren Fig Trees?***

**CLIFFORD DIXON**

In Luke 13:6-9 we read: "He spake also this parable; A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground? And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: And if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down." Lord was giving this parable to the Jews because they thought they were more righteous than others and needed no repentance. He shows them as being an unfruitful fig tree that was about to be destroyed. But the lesson doesn't end there. We need to ask the question, "Am I an unfruitful tree?"

1. This tree had been planted in a favored spot—the vineyard. We likewise have so many blessings going our way. We are favored with material blessings galore, and have the blessing of the fact that Christ has died for us, established his church to house the saved, gave us the Bible to guide us and opportunities to obey and serve the Lord. Any man now who is without God is especially without excuse because of all the blessings he has and opportunities he has of serving God.

2. The Lord expects man to bear fruit for him. The Jewish nation was not bearing fruit because they rejected Christ. If we reject Christ and the word of Christ, we also will be barren. Jesus said, "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing" (John 15:4-5). No matter how many good works one attempts outside of Jesus Christ, he will have no credit with God. One must get into Christ first; and to get into Christ he must be willing to listen to the words of Christ. "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?"

Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:1-4). When one does this, what is his new relationship? Look at verse 22 of Romans 6—"But now being made free from sin, and became servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life." To bear fruit for the Lord we are going to have to get "into" the Lord. Have you done this, neighbor?

3. Life is vain that does not bear fruit for the Lord. The Lord told the vine-dresser that he had come three years seeking fruit, and found none. Then he said, "Cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?" Man is the only creature of God's creation who is made in his image. That means that man has an eternal spirit within him, and also that God wants to have communion with him. God thus tells man in the scriptures how He wants man to live; and when man will not listen to God's instructions, his is a thwarted life that is unfruitful and vain.

Look at all the years and all the things that God did to give man salvation through the precious blood of Jesus Christ. Then look at all the people who turn their backs on Jesus and will not be cleansed in his blood. Solomon of old summed it up when he said: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: "Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man" (Ecclesiastes 12:13). The translators added the words "duty of" in this verse, and without them the verse would read that to fear God, and keep his commandments is "the whole of man."

John speaks of the fact that Jesus would not only give the baptism of the Holy spirit but also fire; then he explained that the "wheat" (representing the fruitful Christians) would be gathered into the garner, but the chaff (representing those who did not serve Christ) would be burned up (Matthew 3:12).

4. The vine-dressers represent the messengers of Christ who teach the word of God and encourage people to obey it. They are digging around the tree and fertilizing it to get it to be fruitful. This would represent the preaching of the word, which is to be done with reproving, rebuking, and exhorting with all long suffering and doctrine (II Timothy 4:2-3).

Plain preaching of the word disturbs people who love the practice of sin, or who do not know they are walking in wrong paths. On Pentecost day the preaching of Peter caused the

people to be pricked in their hearts, and to cry out to him and the rest of the apostles saying, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37).

Don't get excited if strong gospel preaching disturbs people, because it takes this to convert them. These messengers are also making intercessing for men who need to bear fruit for the Lord. "I exhort therefore, that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; . . . For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:1, 3, 4). Through their intercessions, time is often extended for the sinner to have opportunity to obey the Lord.

5. There is a limit to God's tolerance, as can be seen from Luke 13:8-9, where the plea for the fig tree is, that it be extended for another year: "And if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down." There will come a time when life can no longer be extended to the sinner, and he will have to go out to meet his Maker as an unfruitful tree. There will be a day when the Lord Jesus Christ will return; then it will be sad for all the unfruitful trees.

While the usual application of this parable is to unfaithful members of the church, we have seen in it such a good lesson to the sinner that we could not fail to give it. After all, he lives on earth, breathes the air God gives, and enjoys the blessings God gives here. His life touches others here; but how sad that he has no fruit for God because he has not rendered his life to the Lord.

Sinner friend, there is still time for you to do this, if you will act today!

### *He Lives Today*

He had no servants, yet they called Him Master.  
He had no medicines, yet they called Him Healer.  
He had no degrees, yet they called Him Teacher.  
He had no armies, yet kings feared Him.  
He had no toys, yet children loved Him.  
He had no home, yet disciples followed Him.  
He committed no crimes, yet he was crucified.  
He won no victories, yet he overcame the world.  
He was buried in a tomb, yet He lives today.

—Selected