

**Regular scheduled services:**

Sunday:

10:00 AM

11:00 AM

6:00 PM

Wednesday:

7:30 PM

**Everyone Welcome To Attend.**

**Chapman Highway church of Christ**

7604 Chapman Hwy.

Knoxville, TN. 37920

865-573-6638

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Not Just for New Year's

By Gene Taylor

Usually as one year ends and another is about to begin, people reflect on their lives, especially considering   
the accomplishments and failures of the past year. Then they make resolutions for the coming year which,   
most of the time, are promptly forgotten and broken.

Such self-examination is necessary for the Christian, not only at that time of the year, but every day. He   
must take stock of himself in relation to his service and accomplishments for the Lord and the growth and   
maturity in his character. He must ask, "Am I doing all I can to insure my growth, stabilization and   
maturation as a child of God? Am I lending my abilities to the congregation to help it grow and prosper both   
physically and spiritually?"

If he finds himself lacking in these things, he needs to resolve to do better and to do more for the Lord in the   
future. And such a resolution must not be abandoned but he must persistently and devotedly retain it in his   
heart. The apostle Paul possessed this attitude. It is what allowed him to be successful as a disciple of the   
Lord. He said, " ... but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those   
things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil.   
3:13-14).

As Christians, we must also be looking forward. We should not dwell upon or worry about past failures.   
Neither should we sit back and rest upon or gloat over past accomplishments. The child of God never   
reaches a point where he does not need to continue to grow. He never reaches a point in his service to   
Christ where he has done enough. Diligence in both these areas must always be given to make "our calling   
and election sure" (2 Pet. 1: 1 0-11 ).

The following are some questions that all of us need to ask ourselves to see if we are what we should be in   
the sight of God or if we need to change our attitudes.

Do I study the Bible diligently? Bible classes and sermons do not supply all the needs of the Christian do   
grow as he should. Personal, diligent study on his part is essential if he is to gain the knowledge of God's   
word necessary to function and mature as he should.

- Am I present at every service that I am able to attend? Attendance is usually a barometer of faithfulness.   
Each must ask, "Are worship assemblies important to me or do I let just anything or anyone keep me from   
them?" The assemblies are important enough for Christ to be there (Matt. 18:20), what could be more   
important to you?

Can I be counted on to support the efforts of this church? Am I concerned about my brethren and my   
relationship with them? Each Christian needs to be actively involved in the work of the church in any way he   
can. No one is to be passive and depend upon others to do the work. If one possesses a proper love for the   
Lord and his brethren, he will want to working and doing his part. He will also seek to be aware of his   
brethren who need his help materially, emotionally and spiritually and do what he can to meet those needs.

>>>

**Volume 7 January 4 2015 #1**

>>> Am I really concerned about saving the   
lost? God's desire is that all should be saved (1   
Tim. 2:4). His desire is so strong that He sent   
His Son to earth to save all who believe and   
obey Him (John 3:16; Heb. 5:8-9). The Christian   
is to have that same desire. If he does, he will   
do what he can personally to take the gospel to   
the lost.

Do you see some things in which you may be   
lacking? If so, resolve to change and set things   
in order, then, "press on."

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The Good Life!

"Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say,   
rejoice!" (Phil. 4:4) "Do not sorrow, for the joy of   
the LORD is your strength." (Neh. 8: 1 0)

**Simple Rules for Happy Living:**

1. Count your blessinqs, not your troubles.

2. Live one day at a time.

3. Learn to say "I love you" to those dear to you.

4. Be a giver, not a receiver.

5. Look for good in everyone.

6. Pray often.

7. Do a good deed every day.

8. Put first things first.

9. Fill your mind with good things.

10. Laugh and cry with others

11. Make happiness a habit.

12. Let Christ rule in your heart and life.

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**KIDS**

**COLUMN**



Taking Advantage of   
Opportunities

"Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is   
the day of salvation." (2 Cor. 6:2)

The story is told of a young man who wished to   
marry the farmer's beautiful daughter. He went to   
the farmer to ask his permission. The farmer looked   
him over and responded, "Son, go stand out in that   
field and I'm going to release three bulls, one at a   
time. If you can catch the tail of anyone of the   
three bulls, you can marry my daughter."

The young man stood in the pasture awaiting the   
first bull. The barn door opened and out ran the   
biggest, meanest-looking bull he had ever seen. He   
decided that one of the next bulls had to be a better   
choice than this one, so he ran over to the side and   
let the bull pass through the pasture out the back   
gate.

The barn door opened again. Unbelievable! He had   
never seen anything so big and fierce in his life. It   
stood - pawing the ground, grunting, slinging   
slobber - as it eyed him. Whatever the next bull was   
like, it had to be a better choice than this one. He   
ran to the fence and let the bull pass through the   
pasture, out the back gate.

The door opened a third time. A smile came across   
his face. This was the weakest, scrawniest little bull   
he had ever seen. This one was his bull. As the bull   
came running by, he positioned himself just right and jumped at just the exact moment. He grabbed; but,   
the bull had no tail!

The lesson from the above story is that we must take advantage of opportunities when they are available   
to us. This is especially true in the spiritual realm. Let us avail ourselves of the present time and opportunity   
because it may soon be gone forever.

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Glorify JesusG



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Where Will I Be In Another Year?

By Greg Gwin

With the beginning of a calendar year there is always a tendency to look back - and to look forward.   
Evaluations are made in regards to our financial status, our career pursuits, and other important matters.   
Surely it is appropriate to evaluate our spiritual welfare.

Ask yourself this simple question:

If I keep doing what I am presently doing, where will I be in another year?

Will I be a stronger Christian because I am doing things that will help me grow in Christ (2 Pet. 3: 18)? Or,   
will I be weaker as a result of continuing to ignore the most important things in life?

Will I be a better Bible student? Will my knowledge of the Word have increased through regular and   
consistent study? Or, will I still be only wishing that I knew my Bible better?

Will I have brought any lost soul to the Lord through a   
committed effort to teach others? Will I have invited   
folks to visit the assemblies, or encouraged them to   
have a private Bible study? Or, will I only be giving   
lip-service to the whole notion of personal work?

Will I improve in my ability to react to life's   
provocations in a godly and controlled manner?

Will I be displaying more of the "divine nature"

(2 Pet. 1:4) as I deal with people and problems?

Or, willi still be easily provoked and often fail as

trials and temptations are placed before me?

Will I have broken that "bad habit" that has nagged   
me for so long? Or, will I still be offering lame   
excuses and trying to convince myself that "I can't"?

Will my example be stronger? Will others begin to   
recognize dependability in me? Will I be constantly   
striving to do all I can as a disciple (1 Cor. 15:58)?   
Or, will I be counted as only a "lukewarm" Christian   
(Rev. 3: 15-17)?

If I keep doing what I'm presently doing, where   
will I be in another year? Or, more to the point,   
where will I be in eternity? Think

**Volume 7 January 11 2015 #2**



Is God The Author

Of Confusion?

By Leslie G. Thomas

Let us suppose that an evangelist comes to our   
community to conduct a religious meeting and   
proceeds as follows:

At the first service, he preaches that salvation is   
by faith only; but at the next he contends that it   
is by faith exercised in obedience to the gospel,   
rather than by faith alone.

At the third service he tells people that they   
ought to baptize their babies; but at the fourth   
service, he says that penitent believers are the   
only scriptural subjects for baptism.

At the fifth service, he preaches once in grace,   
always in grace, but at the sixth, he tells the   
people it is possible for them to fall from grace,   
that some have fallen, and that the Bible tells   
them how to keep from falling.

At the seventh service he teaches it is all right to   
have human creeds; but at the eighth he   
declares that we should take the Bible as our   
only guide in religion.

No thoughtful person would continue to listen to   
one preacher preaching like that, but the   
majority of people are perfectly willing for eight   
different preachers to preach these conflicting   
ideas. They say that if one man should preach   
that way, he would contradict himself and be   
inconsistent. But what kind of God do they   
suppose we have if He endorses all these   
conflicting doctrines and has sent out these   
preachers to present them?

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**KIDS**

**COLUMN**



Think About It

By S. Kilpatrick

Watch your thoughts; They become words.

Watch your words; They become actions.

Watch your actions; They become habits.

Watch your habits; They become character.

Watch your character; It becomes your destiny.

What starts out as a simple thought may ultimately   
determine our destiny, even our eternal destiny.

The writer of the above statement must have heard   
or read the words of Solomon found in Proverbs   
23:47, "As a man thinks in his heart, so is he."

Our thoughts reflect the person we really are. If we   
have thoughts which are hateful, they will manifest   
themselves as words-actions-habits. If, however,   
we fill our hearts with positive things, can anything   
but good actions result?

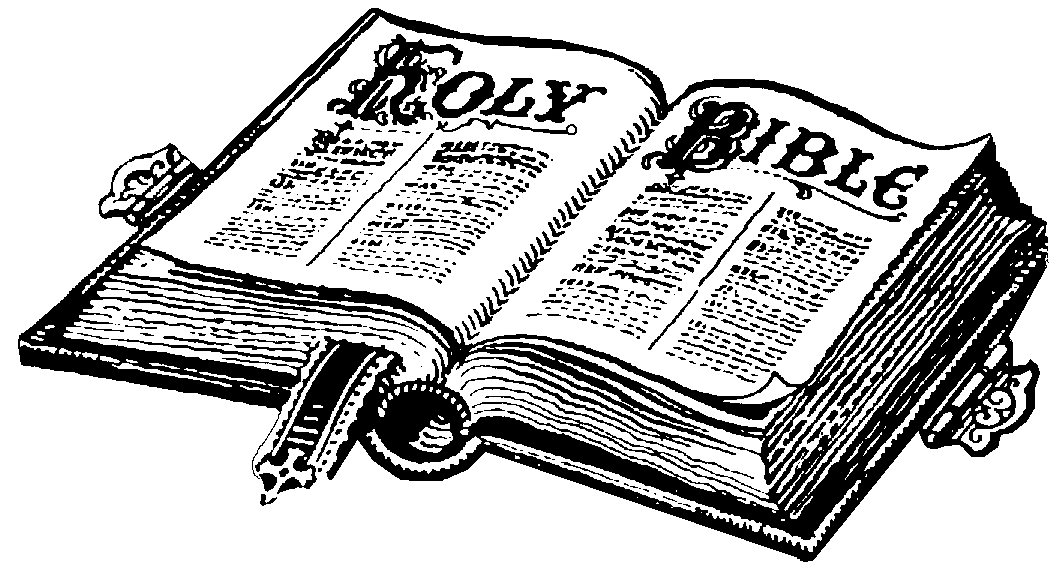
Paul summed it up rightly when he wrote in   
Philippians 4:8, "Finally brothers, whatever is true,   
whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is   
pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable, if   
anything is excellent or praiseworthy; think about   
such things."

Think about "these things," if we occupy our time on   
thoughts concerning "these things," it cannot help   
but result in an eternal destiny with God the Father.   
WE ARE WHAT WE THINK!

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Glorify JesusG



DO YOU STUDY YOUR BIBLE?

According to the 2014 "The State of the Bible" report by Barna Group and   
American Bible Society, a majority of U.S. adults (81 %) said they consider   
themselves highly, moderately or somewhat knowledgeable about the Bible.   
Yet less than half (43%) were able to name the first five books of the Bible ...   
only half knew that John the Baptist was not one of the 12 apostles. Although   
most people own a Bible, just a little over a third (37%) of Americans read the   
Bible once a week or more. Over a quarter (26%) of Americans never read   
the Bible. - via The Christian Post, *6/16/14*



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Correcting Misconceptions of Humility

By Sewell Hall

Once it is established that Jesus was the ultimate example of humility, several misconceptions are laid to rest.

Humility is not weakness.

Even the enemies of Jesus testified to His power. It was demonstrated over Satan, over nature, and over   
every force that opposed Him. Yet in the exercise of His power He was humble, acknowledging that the   
works He did were the works of His Father (John 5:19). Humble individuals who recognize their own   
weakness and allow the power of God to work in them are the only ones who are truly strong. The Lord said   
to Paul, "My strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Corinthians 12:9), causing Paul to respond, 'When I   
am weak, then I am strong" (2 Corinthians 12: 10).

Humility does not preclude leadership.

Jesus was "meek and lowly" (humble), but this did not prevent His exercising leadership. He is the great   
Shepherd of the flock, the King of kings and Lord of lords. Some individuals, citing humility as their reason,   
refuse to accept the responsibilities of leadership, especially as elders. The fact is that elders must be   
humble. They are to be sober-minded (1 Timothy 3:2), and this is defined in Romans 12:3 as not thinking   
more highly of oneself than one should. 1 Timothy 3:6 says that an elder should not be a novice, "lest being   
puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil." Rather than hindering leadership,   
humility defines the style of leadership that pleases God. Christ-like shepherds are not lords over those   
entrusted to them but examples to the flock (1 Peter 5:3).

Humility does not forbid rebuking sin.

Jesus was just as humble when He was driving out the money-changers from the temple in Matthew 21 and   
rebuking the Pharisees in chapter 23 as when He was blessing little children in chapter 19. In each case He   
was expressing in His words and actions the will of God, not His own. Humility will, however, affect our   
manner of dealing with sinners and those in error. "A servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to   
all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition" (2 Timothy 2:24-25). "Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in the spirit of   
gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted" (Galatians 6:1). Rebuking that is done from a spirit of self-righteousness and pride will never be effective in accomplishing God's purpose.

Humility is not inconsistent with personal initiative.

The church needs the input of every spiritually-minded Christian in planning and, executing its work. A song   
we sing says, "Take my intellect and use every power as Thou shalt choose". Yet some who have useful   
ideas fail to offer them, feeling that to do so would be inconsistent with humility. Of course, if one demands   
that his way be accepted and becomes angry if his suggestion is not taken, he does lack humility.

>>>

**Volume 7 January 18 2015 #3**

>>> Humility demands that "each esteem others   
better than himself' (Philippians 2:3), but it does   
not forbid our offering our wisdom on a subject   
for whatever it may be worth in the opinion of   
our brethren.

Humility does not require that we think of   
ourselves disdainfully, speak of ourselves   
disparagingly or grovel in the presence of   
others.

in us. May we bring ourselves to say truly, even   
as we sing: Lord, thy love at last has conquered:

None of self, and all of Thee.

This is what many people think of as humility.   
However, this is the opposite of humility. Such a   
person is thinking too much of himself, however   
negative his thinking may be. When one is   
constantly thinking: "How inferior I am, how   
worthless I am, how useless I am, how poorly I   
do compared to others" he is thinking of himself   
all the time. Pride is his problem; he is too proud   
to be comfortable among those whom he   
considers superior to himself. Humility is not the   
cause of such negative thinking; it is actually the   
solution - not thinking of self at all. A Christian   
can rejoice in the superiority of his brethren.   
Furthermore, he can hold up his head in the   
presence of all men, not because he himself is   
so worthy, but because he is a child of the God   
of heaven, redeemed by the precious blood of   
Jesus. Jesus did not grovel before any man, yet   
He was not lacking in humility when He said to a   
Roman governor, "You could have no power at   
all against Me unless it had been given you from   
above" (John 19: 11).

Conclusion:

True humility replaces self-seeking with seeking   
first the kingdom of God (Matthew 6:33), self-will   
with doing the will of God (Matthew 7:21), self-   
reliance with reliance upon God (2 Corinthians   
3:5), self-confidence with confidence in God (2   
Timothy 1: 12), and self-exaltation with exaltation   
by God (1 Corinthians 4:3-6). These were the   
qualities that made Jesus humble and the   
qualities He seeks in us. May we bring ourselves   
to say truly, even as we sing: Lord, thy love at   
last has conquered: None of self, and all of   
Thee.



**KIDS**

**COLUMN**



WHAT WILL MONEY BUY?

It will buy a bed, but not sleep.

It will buy a book, but not brains.

It will buy food, but not an appetite.

It will buy finery, but not beauty.

It will buy medicine, but not health.

It will buy a house, but not a home.

It will buy amusement, but not happiness.

It will buy preaching, but not the truth.

It will buy a Bible, but not salvation.

- (Author Unknown)

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**For the love of money is a root of   
all kinds of evil, for which some   
have strayed from the faith in their   
greediness, and pierced   
themselves through with many   
sorrows.**

**- I Timothy 6:10.**

[](http://images.google.com/imgres?imgurl=http://www.picturegrill.com/images/fruit%20vegies/red-apple-orchard.jpeg&imgrefurl=http://www.picturegrill.com/pages/vegetable-art.html&h=224&w=211&sz=19&hl=en&start=2&tbnid=ejX5E3cxZHGTZM:&tbnh=108&tbnw=102&prev=/images?q=red+Apple&svnum=10&hl=en&lr=&sa=X)

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Drawing Strength From The Courage Of Others

By Bill Hall

How thankful we should be for wonderful examples of courage that spur us on to greater strength in the Lord's service. Paul was just such an example: "And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear" (Phil. 1: 14). These brethren, formerly timid and reticent, were drawing strength from the courage of Paul.

Other examples abound. Stephen's plea, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge," surely had for its source of strength the forgiving spirit of the Lord (Acts 7:60). The Thessalonian church found a source of strength in the example of the churches in Judea (1 Thess. 2:14). The Philippian church, a model of courage and conviction, could no doubt trace much of its strength back to the wonderful example of patience and equanimity demonstrated by Paul and Silas while in their midst. The Hebrew Christians were admonished to "remember them that had the rule over you, men that spake unto you the word of God; and considering the issue of their life, imitate their faith" (Heb. 13:7).

Christians of this generation are similarly drawing strength from the courage of others. Young men who refuse to miss services of the church to play on a ball team; young women who refuse to be seen in public in scanty attire; businessmen who would lose their jobs rather than compromise their convictions; women who continue to adorn   
themselves in "meek and quiet spirits" whatever the sophisticated world thinks or says of them; sick people who bear their afflictions with patience and faith; elderly people who continue to attend worship when they are hardly able to go anywhere else; dying people who demonstrate how Christians ought to die; all are sources of strength and courage for others as they face similar circumstances. These all share a common spirit with the great characters of the Bible: they see in their temptations, trials, afflictions, and persecutions a special opportunity to be like Christ, to demonstrate their fidelity to Him, and to provide a source of strength for those who might be weak and wavering around them. They seize the opportunity and stand, and all of us are stronger because   
of them. Of these courageous people this world truly is not worthy. Are we, however, to be always on the receiving end of the strength of others? As we draw strength from the courage of others, we must in turn become sources of strength and courage. Others look to us. In the words of Charles Wesley, each of us has a   
"charge to keep," and "God to glorify," a present age to *serve.*

EXAMPLE

**Volume 7 January 25 2015 #4**

Not a Hoof Left Behind

By Robert Turner

Exodus 7-12 records the efforts of God through   
Moses to persuade the Pharaoh of Egypt to   
release the children of Israel from bondage. As   
that bondage is often used to typify sin, and   
Satan's hold on us, a better understanding of   
that ancient struggle could assist us today.

Pharaohs heart was stubborn, and the plagues   
of blood, frogs and lice did not move him, but   
when the flies came Pharaoh offered his first   
compromise. "Go ye, sacrifice to your god in the   
land - do it here, no need to leave this land.   
When Moses refused such a suicidal attempt,   
Pharaoh offered his second compromise. "Go,   
only ye shall not go very far away: entreat for   
me". God removed the plague of flies, only to   
have Pharaoh harden his heart and refuse to let   
the people go. So, the cattle murrain, boils, and   
hail came, and the threat of locusts. Then came   
the third effort at compromise. "Go now ye that   
are men," leaving your women, children, and the   
flocks behind. Neither Pharaoh nor Satan let go   
without a struggle, but Moses stood firm, so the   
locusts came; and after that the darkness. Now   
Pharaoh tries one more compromise. "Go ye,   
serve Jehovah; only let your flocks and your   
herds be stayed." Take all to serve God, except   
your material possessions. Perhaps he knew   
their hearts would remain with the possessions   
- or perhaps he sought to deprive them of that   
which they would need to successfully carry out   
their new venture. Whatever: we are doomed to   
failure if we think we can serve God acceptably   
while leaving anything we control in Satan's   
hands.

But Moses accepted no compromise. "NOT A   
HOOF SHALL BE LEFT BEHIND!'

We must live in the world, but our citizenship is   
elsewhere. In making the transfer of allegiance,   
when we determined to give up the world and   
give ourselves to the Lord, we should then have   
determined that "Not a hoof shall be left behind."   
We should know that Satan will do all possible   
to convince us that we can serve God "in Egypt"   
or "just a little way out" or compromising for the   
sake of family or possessions. It won't work that   
way. Give Satan a hoof, and he will take leg,   
loin, chuck roast and all.



**KIDS**

**COLUMN**



Why God Matters

By Steven F. Deaton

Does God matter? Some behave as though He   
does not; living their own way. They curse, drink,   
gossip, lie, cheat, steal, or commit fornication. To   
them, God does not matter. However, logic and the   
Bible, teach that God does matter.

God matters because He is the Creator. He made   
all things through His Son (Gen. 1: 1; In. 1: 1-3; Col. 1: 16, 17). Being the Creator, He is superior to the creature, man (Gen. 1 :26, 27). He gave man life, breath, and all things (Acts 17:25). He is not only the giver of life, but the sustainer as well (Heb. 1 :2; Acts 14: 17). He matters.

God matters because He is the Judge. God is the   
giver of the law of Christ (In. 16:7-15). All men will   
stand before God and be judged by Jesus Christ   
according to His law (2 Cor. 5: 1 0; In. 5:22; 12:48).   
Hence, God matters.

God matters because He is God. The very nature   
of God demands the conclusion that He is relevant.   
God is the Almighty (Gen. 17: 1). He knows all   
things and with Him all things are possible (Psa.   
139:7-12; Heb. 4:13; Mk. 14:36). He is self-existent   
and eternal (Ex. 3: 14; Psa. 90:2). The President of   
the United States matters because He is the   
president. The CEO of a company matters to   
people in the company because he is the CEO. The   
God of the universe matters because He is God.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

13 Let us hear the conclusion of the whole   
matter: Fear God and keep His   
commandments, For this is man's all.   
14 For God will bring every work into   
judgment, Including every secret thing,   
Whether good or evil.

- Ecclesiastes 12 :13-14.

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CAN YOU BE TRUSTED?

By Steve Klein

Trust. It is a vital part of every positive human relationship. Think of the problems that come when nations   
cannot trust each another, or when suspicion and doubt clouds the relationship between parents and   
children, husbands and wives, citizens and governments, or bosses and employees. How many wars,   
separations, divorces, revolutions and strikes could be attributed primarily to a lack of trust? Surely we could   
fill the world's oceans with the tears of bitterness and pain that have streamed from the eyes of people who   
could not trust each other.

"Well, yes," you say, "Lack of trust ruins a lot of good relationships, but the solution is simple; we should all   
just decide to trust each other!" Really? Do you think the United States should just go ahead and trust the   
governments of Korea and Iran with all the nuclear weapons they want? Should citizens whose government   
has been oppressive and murderously violent continually trust their government to do the right thing?   
Should the boss give the combination of the safe to the employee

who has been caught stealing? I think you see the problem. Trust

is not something that can or should be extended to people who have   
shown themselves to be unworthy of it. Most of the time there is a

reason for a lack of trust.

The Bible shows clearly that those who break trust are responsible   
for causing the pain and problems that a lack of trust brings.   
Trust-breakers often want to place the blame on others and seek

pity for themselves. But frankly, it is hard to feel sorry for the teenager   
who complains "My parents don't trust me" after his parents have   
found drugs in his room, or an unpaid speeding ticket in the mail,

or a beer can in the floorboard. Those who have been untrustworthy   
need to bear their own reproach, face the consequences of their   
own actions and (if they wish to be accepted by God and trusted   
again by their fellowmen) repent and take appropriate steps toward   
rebuilding trust.

Here are some things that those who have broken trust must face up to

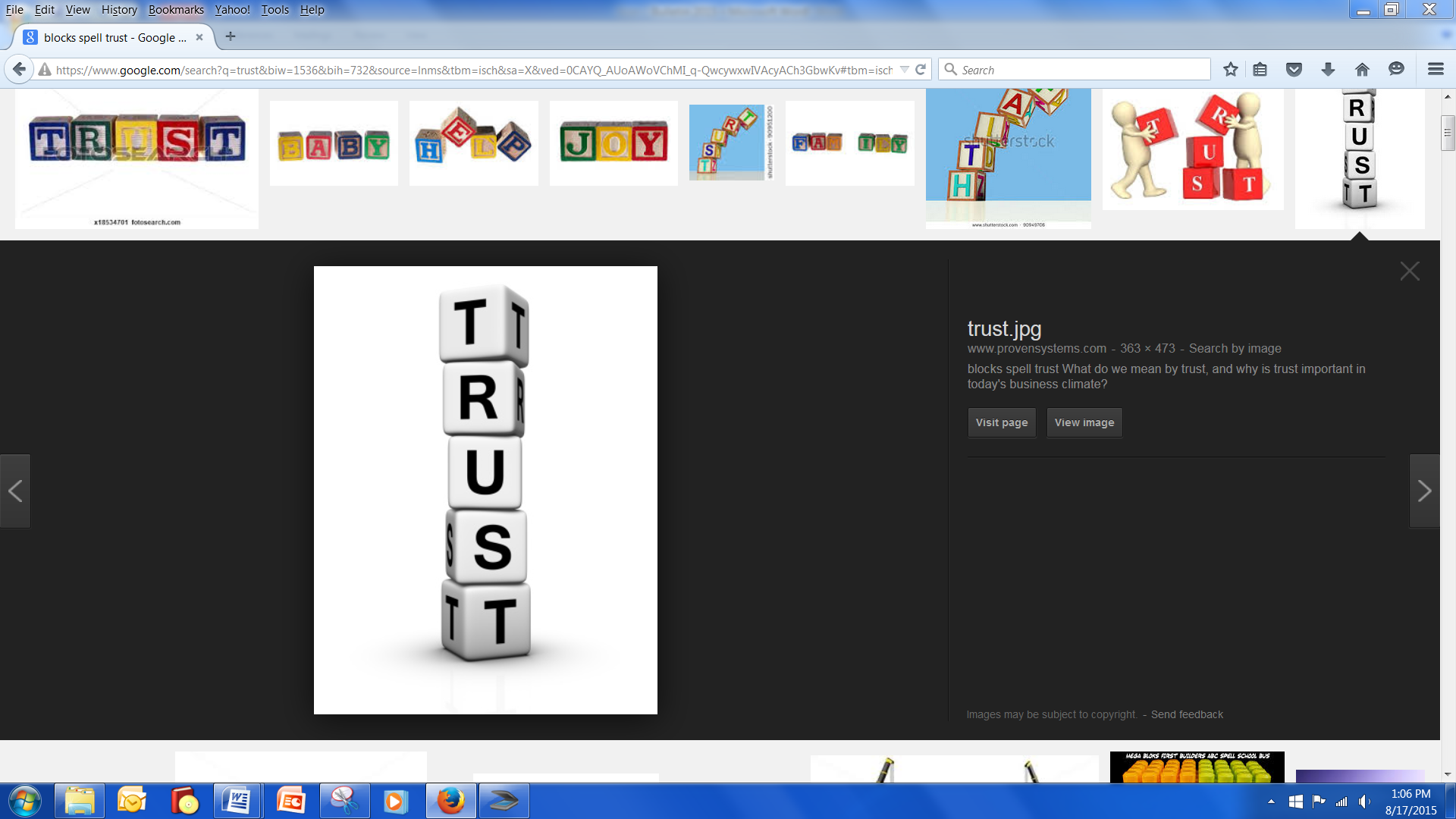
- They've caused pain for others. It hurts to count on someone

who can't be counted on! *"Confidence in an unfaithful man in time*

of *trouble is like* a *bad tooth and* a *foot out* of *joint'* (Proverbs 25: 19).

>>>

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>>> They have created their own problems.   
*"The righteousness* of *the upright will deliver   
them, But the unfaithful will be caught by their   
lusf'* (Proverbs 11 :6). *"Good understanding   
gains favor, But the way* of *the unfaithful* is *hard"* (Proverbs 13: 15). *"He who walks with integrity walks securely, But he who perverls his ways will become known"* (Proverbs 10:9).

- Their lack of faithfulness and fidelity is   
disgusting to righteous people. *"I look on the   
faithless with loathing, for they do not obey your   
word'* (Psalm 119:158, NIV).

- People have good reason not to trust them in   
other areas. Unfaithfulness in one area indicates   
a tendency to be unfaithful in other areas. In   
Luke 16:10, Jesus said, *"He who is faithful in   
what is least is faithful also in much; and he who   
is unjust in what is least is unjust also in   
much"* (see also Jeremiah 9:1-5).

- They must commit themselves to rebuilding   
trust by making full confession of their   
unfaithfulness, seeking forgiveness and   
changing their behavior. Rebuilding trust takes a   
lot of effort on the part of the one who has been   
unfaithful. When one who has behaved in an   
untrustworthy way attempts to hide part or all of   
what he has done, or minimizes it in any way, it   
becomes very difficult to renew trust.

Look at what God instructed Israel to do to   
rebuild their relationship with Him after they had   
been unfaithful. *"But if they confess their iniquity   
and the iniquity* of *their fathers, with their   
unfaithfulness in which they were unfaithful to   
Me, and that they also have walked contrary   
to Me* . . . *if their uncircumcised hearls are   
humbled, and they accept their guilt;* (42) *then I   
will remember My covenant with Jacob, and My   
covenant with Isaac and My covenant with   
Abraham I will remember; I will remember the   
land'* (Leviticus 26:40-42). The restoration of   
Israel to a good relationship with God depended   
on her willingness to humbly acknowledge her   
guilt.

Trust is such a precious thing. If you have it in   
the vital relationships of your life, do everything   
you can to maintain it. Be faithful. Be true. Be   
honest. If you've been unfaithful, untrue, or   
dishonest, do all within your power to restore the   
trust. You'll be glad you did.



**KIDS**

**COLUMN**



"Everyone Else Is Doing It"

By David McPherson

Sometimes people attempt to justify their sinful   
conduct on the basis of "well everyone else is doing   
it." If "everyone else" is dressing immodestly, what   
are we going to do? If "everyone else" is going to a   
"must see" R-rated movie, what are we going to   
do? If "everyone else" is lying, stealing, or cheating   
what are we going to do?

In the days of King Nebuchadnezzar, "everyone   
else" was bowing down and worshiping his golden   
image (see Dan. 3:1-7). But what did Shadrach,   
Meshach, and Abed-Nego do? They said "let it be   
known to you, 0 king, that we do not serve your   
gods ... " (Dan. 3: 18). These men loved the Lord   
and courageously served him regardless of what   
everyone else was doing.

May we too have the courage to be different.   
Brethren, "do not be conformed to this world, but be   
transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you   
may prove what is that good and acceptable and   
perfect will of God" (Rom. 12:2). God's children are   
not to follow in the sins of others, but are to lead   
others out of darkness and into the light.

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**THINK ABOUT IT!**

A recent survey researchers looked closely at the   
role of social media in teen substance use and   
found 75% of those surveyed said seeing pictures   
of teens partying with alcohol or marijuana on   
social networking sites such as Facebook   
encourages them to party similarly ... This is a   
new kind of potent peer pressure - digital peer   
pressure. It moves beyond a child's friends and the   
kids they hang out with. It invades the home and a   
child's bedroom via the Internet.

*- via* CBS *News*

*Exodus* 23:2 *"Thou shalt not follow* a *multitude to   
do evil. .. "*

[](http://images.google.com/imgres?imgurl=http://www.picturegrill.com/images/fruit%20vegies/red-apple-orchard.jpeg&imgrefurl=http://www.picturegrill.com/pages/vegetable-art.html&h=224&w=211&sz=19&hl=en&start=2&tbnid=ejX5E3cxZHGTZM:&tbnh=108&tbnw=102&prev=/images?q=red+Apple&svnum=10&hl=en&lr=&sa=X)

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"LET THE REDEEMED OF THE LORD SAY SO"

By Carroll R. Sutton

In Psa. 107:2 the Psalmist said: *"Let the redeemed of the Lord* say so ... " In the following verses he points   
out some of the reasons for this.

Who Are The Redeemed?: -- In the immediate context of this verse we learn that the Israelites (fleshly) of   
old were the redeemed.

In the first century (and today) God's children, spiritual Israel, the elect, Christians are the redeemed of the   
Lord. (See Rom. 2:28,29; Gal. 6:16). Jesus Christ came and died to redeem us (Gal. 4:4-6; Ti. 2:14). Paul   
said that *"Christ hath redeemed* us *from the curse of the law'* (Gal. 3:13).

By What Are We Redeemed?: -

1. Not with corruptible things. Peter said: *"Forasmuch* as ye *know that* ye *were not redeemed with   
 corruptible things,* as *silver and gold ... "* (1 Pet. 1 :18).

2. With the blood of Christ! *"But with the precious blood of Christ,* as *of* a *lamb without blemish and   
 without spof'* (1 Pet. 1 :19; Also see Eph. 1 :7; Col. 1 :14; Heb. 9:12).

How And Where Are We Redeemed?: -

1. We are redeemed in Christ. (Read Eph. 1 :7; Col. 1 :14; Gal. 3:8).

2. How do we get into Christ? We are baptized into Christ. (Read Rom. 6:3,4; Gal. 3:26,27).

3. In view of the preceding facts, we must be baptized into Christ in order to be redeemed by His blood!

The Redeemed Must Say So! -- Since we are the redeemed of the Lord we must tell others! Here are some   
reasons we must say so:

A. Jesus said: *"Ye are the salt of the earth ... Ye are the light of the world ... Let your light* so *shine before   
men, that they may* see *you good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven"* (Matt. 5:14-16). Also   
read 1 Tim. 4:12; Ti. 2:7,8. NOTE: We are to demonstrate by our lives (attitudes and actions) that we are   
truly following Jesus Christ who died to redeem us from our sins. We should be examples of true disciples   
of the Lord that others may be influenced to follow Him.

B. The apostles could not keep silent. They had to speak! In Acts 4:20 Peter and John declared: *"For* we   
*cannot but speak the things* we *have seen and heard."* That same attitude should characterize every   
Christian!

C. The early disciples who were scattered abroad taught others! Read Acts 8:1-5. Vss. 4,5 says: *"Therefore   
they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the Word. Then Philip went down to the city of   
Samaria, and preached Christ unto them."* NOTE: We should follow the example of those early disciples.

D. We must open our mouths and speak! Acts 4:31 says: *" ... and they spake the Word of God with* >>>

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>>> *boldness."* Acts 16:32 says: *"And they   
spake unto him the Word* of *the Lord, and to all   
that were in his house."* 2 Cor. 4: 13 says: " ... we *also believe, and therefore speak."* Paul said: *"And the things that thou hast heard* of *me ... the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."* (2 Tim. 2:2). Also see Eph.6:20.

Have you been redeemed from your sins by the   
blood of Jesus Christ? Do you understand how   
you were redeemed? Are you willing to tell   
others who and how and where you were   
redeemed?

*"Let the redeemed* of *the Lord say so."*

*\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*

IMPROVE YOUR LIFE

By Frank Himmel

1. Turn off the TV and read your Bible. The   
Psalmist said of the blessed man, *"His delight is   
in the law* of *the Lord, and in His law he   
meditates day and night'* (Ps. 1 :2).

2. Hang up the phone and pray. I never cease to   
be amazed at how much time some people   
spend on their cell phones. Is all that talking   
necessary or profitable? *"Pray without ceasing"*(1 Thess. 5: 1 7). *"The effective prayer* of a   
*righteous man can accomplish much"* (Jas. 5:16).

3. Get up out of bed an hour earlier and come to   
Bible study on Sunday. *"As the door turns on its   
hinges,* so *does the sluggard on his bed"* (Prov.   
26:14).

4. Cut down your credit card purchases and   
give. Give to the poor. Increase your   
contribution at church. *"One who is gracious to* a   
*poor man lends to the Lord, and He will repay   
him for his good deed'* (Prov. 19:17). *"It is more   
blessed to give than to receive"* (Acts 20:35).

5. Change the conversation from sports,   
weather, and politics to spiritual things. Do that   
at home. *"These words, which I* am   
*commanding you today, shall be on your heart.   
You shall teach them diligently to your sons and   
shall talk* of *them when you sit in your house   
and when you walk by the way and when you lie   
down and when you rise up"* (Deut. 6:6-7). Do   
that at work, too. *"He who wins souls is wise"*(Prov. 11 :30).



**KIDS**

**COLUMN**



FAITH

"But someone will say, 'You have faith, and I have   
works.' Show me your faith without your works, and   
I will show you my faith by my works." (James 2:18)

In 1893, engineer George Ferris built a machine   
that bears his name--the Ferris wheel. When it was   
finished, he invited a newspaper reporter to   
accompany him and his wife for the inaugural ride.   
 It was a windy July day, so a   
 stiff breeze struck the wheel   
 with great force as it slowly   
 began its rotation. Despite the   
 wind, the wheel turned   
 flawlessly. After one revolution,   
 Ferris called for the machine to   
 be stopped so that he, his wife,   
 and the reporter could step out.   
 In braving that one revolution   
 on the windblown Ferris wheel,   
 each occupant demonstrated   
 genuine faith. Mr. Ferris began   
 with the scientific knowledge   
 that the machine would work   
 and that it would be safe. Mrs.   
Ferris and the reporter believed the machine would   
work on the basis of what the inventor had said. But   
only after the ride could it be said of all three that   
they had personal, experiential faith.

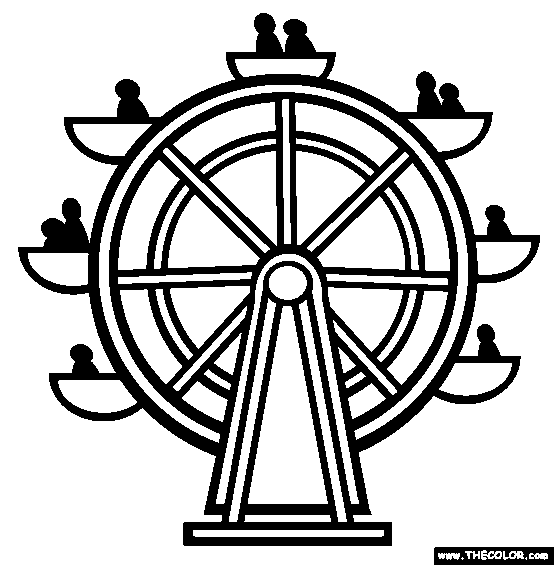
- (Author Unknown)

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5 Trust in the LORD with all your   
heart, And lean not on your own   
understanding;

6 In all your ways acknowledge Him,   
And He shall direct your paths.

- Proverbs 3:5-6.



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No One Can Take Your Place

(Story: Ask the Funeral Home)

By Ben May

A lawyer phoned the governor's mansion shortly after midnight. ·"1 need to talk to the governor -- it's an   
emergency!" exclaimed the lawyer.

After some cajoling, the governor's assistant agreed to wake him up. "So, what is it that's so important that it   
can't wait until morning?" grumbled the governor.

"Judge Pierson just died, and I want to take his place," begged the attorney. "Well, it's OK with me if it's OK with the funeral home," replied the governor.

As an aside, timing is everything, isn't it? If you are wanting someone to do something for you then you   
need to use a little wisdom in knowing how and when to ask. The wise man said, "To everything there is a   
season, a time for every purpose under heaven." (Eccl3:1)

After the children of Israel made a golden calf to worship, claiming it was the god who brought them out of   
Egypt, Moses asked God to either forgive their sin or blot him out of the "book which you have written."   
(Exodus 32:32) The Lord was not at all interested in Moses' offer because it would not be in keeping with   
His nature. God responded, "Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of My book." (Exodus   
32:33) Each one of us will individually stand before God to give an account for the life we have lived. No   
one can stand in for us nor can we ride in on the coat tails of anyone else. "For we must all appear before   
the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body,   
whether good or evil." (2 Corinthians 5: 1 0)

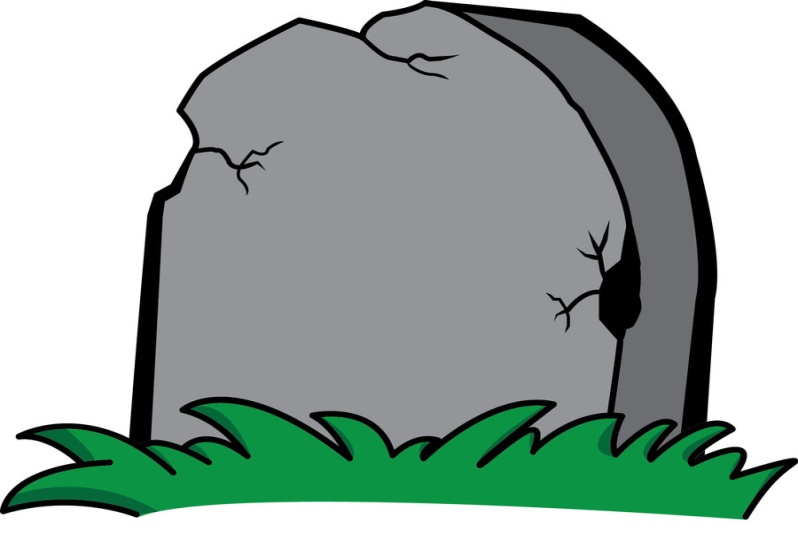
And then finally, we each must live our own lives and face our own deaths. It is true that our lives do   
overlap, that "no man is an island," and we have influence over others. But ultimately we each must make   
our own decisions and face the consequences, whether good or bad. The Bible calls that "reaping and   
sowing." We will each "reap what we sow." (Galatians 6:7,8) That same passage says that "each one will   
bear his own load." (vs 5) Or as Paul said in Romans 14:4, "To his own master he stands or falls." But   
always remember, that just as you must live your own life,   
you must face your own death. No one can answer for   
you. We will all die. We will all be judged. That is certain.   
(Heb 9:27) Jesus died so that the outcome of our   
judgment can be, "well done good and faithful servant. ..   
enter into the joy of your Lord." (Matt 25:23) The

choice is yours and yours alone. No one can live

life for you nor take your place at death.

Have a great week!

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Application Is Needed

By David McPherson

Throughout the world there are those who can   
quote Scripture, correctly answer Bible Trivia   
questions, and accurately teach the Word of   
God. While commendable, these alone do not   
suffice. To truly please God and faithfully serve   
Him, application is needed.

From the epistle of James we learn the urgent   
need of exercising the will of God. James   
writes: "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and   
superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with   
meekness the engrafted word, which is able to   
save your souls. But be ye doers of the word,   
and not hearers only, deceiving your own   
selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and   
not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his   
natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth   
himself, and goeth his way, and straightway   
forgetteth what manner of man he was. But   
whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and   
continueth therein, he being not a forgetful   
hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be   
blessed in his deed" (Jas. 1 :21-25).

Are you a doer? Do you continue in the "perfect   
law of liberty"? Too many (even in the church)   
are content to "preach" but not practice the truth.   
And yet Jesus clearly taught that a failure to do   
the will of God, will keep one out of heaven (Mt.   
7:21). When it comes to truth, knowledge alone   
won't cut it. Application is needed.

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Glorify Jesus

"We do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus   
the Lord ... " (2 Cor. 4:5)

Two guest speakers were asked to speak to a   
student body regarding Abraham Lincoln. After   
the first speech, the unanimous consensus of   
the student body was, "Our speaker was a great   
speaker." After the second speech, the   
consensus was, "Abraham Lincoln was a great   
man." We ask, 'Which one did his job?"

Let us not exalt or glorify ourselves in our   
preaching, but the Lord Jesus Christ.



**KIDS**

**COLUMN**



NOT MINE TO GIVE

By Bryan Matthew Dockens

Working at Albertsons as a teenager, my job was to   
bag the customer's groceries, then walk her out,   
and load the purchases into her car. On one   
occasion, as I emptied the cart, I noticed an unpaid-   
for baggy of sprouts beneath the purchases,   
previously overlooked by the customer, the   
checker, and myself. I'm sure it was a mistake; I   
don't think she meant to conceal them. However,   
when I brought them to her attention, she   
reluctantly asked if she could keep them since it   
had not been intentional and it was such a low value item. If they had belonged to me, I would gladly have given the sprouts to this lady, but they   
were not mine to give.

Teaching the gospel, I am often engaged by students with inquiries about friends, family, and various loved ones who are or were such   
upstanding persons, but never obeyed the simple gospel as revealed on the pages of God's Word. Won't these decent fellows be saved, too? I   
wish I could say so; I really do, but that is not mine to give.

Christ Jesus is "the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him" (Hebrews 5:9). As salvation's   
"author", Jesus is its writer and originator. None other may claim authority over salvation, but Him. And that salvation which He offers, He provides to the obedient, specifically - none others. "The gift of   
God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord"   
(Romans 6:23). Eternal life may not be given by   
any other. It is God's gift to give, not man's.

Trust no preacher who would give God's gift of   
salvation to those to whom God did not give it.

[](http://images.google.com/imgres?imgurl=http://www.picturegrill.com/images/fruit%20vegies/red-apple-orchard.jpeg&imgrefurl=http://www.picturegrill.com/pages/vegetable-art.html&h=224&w=211&sz=19&hl=en&start=2&tbnid=ejX5E3cxZHGTZM:&tbnh=108&tbnw=102&prev=/images?q=red+Apple&svnum=10&hl=en&lr=&sa=X)

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Five Smooth Stones of Parenting

By Sewell Hall

In Goliath, David faced what seemed an indomitable foe. David's goal was not so much to kill the giant as to   
protect the children and honor of God. He took five smooth stones from the brook to achieve his purpose.

In the pervasive humanism of our society, parents face what appears to be an equally unconquerable giant   
who is determined to destroy their children. They have five stones with which to protect them.

*Purpose*

"A child left to himself brings shame to his mother" (Proverbs 29:15). Consequently, Wisdom says, "Train   
up a child in the way he should qo ... " (Proverbs 22:6). This requires first determining "the way he should   
go," then pointing the child in that direction. For Christians one direction supersedes all others: eternal life in   
heaven via Christlikeness on earth. Scores of agencies with different goals challenge us for control of our   
children. My father used to say, "I will not let the schools take my children away from me." Today there are   
many additional threats: TV, internet, video games, ipods, scouts, sports, neighbors, etc. These must be   
constantly monitored and controlled.

Parents of good children are often told, "You are just lucky." No, good children are not the product of luck,   
but of purpose-relentlessly, sacrificially and pro-actively pursued.

*Training*

"Bring them up in the training ... of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4). Training a plant requires knowing where you   
want it to go and then patiently bending it, pruning it, and perhaps even tying it. Training an animal involves   
knowing what you want it to do, using force at first, then patiently guiding, correcting, and finally rewarding   
and punishing. In both instances, training means establishing authority and maintaining control. Training   
children begins with example and sometime physical force, then guidance, correction, and eventually   
reward and punishment when the child understands what is expected. Above all, it means establishing the   
parents' authority and letting the child know who is in control. This must begin very early. Once willful   
rebellion is tolerated, a wrong direction is established and the necessary "bending, pruning, and tying"   
become all the more difficult. The mother of John and Charles Wesley described good discipline as   
"shaping the will without breaking the spirit." This agrees with the Spirit's counsel: "Do not provoke your   
children to wrath, but bring them up ... " (Ephesians 6:4).

*Instruction*

"Bring them up in the ... admonition (instruction - NASB) of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4). Unlike plants and   
animals children can be admonished and instructed. This, also, parents must do. The very intellect that   
enables children to be instructed also enables them to exercise their free will as they grow older. Parental   
control constantly diminishes, and unless God's control is established, their lives will be out of control. God's   
control is established by teaching them the scriptures. Long after Timothy was beyond the control of mother >>>

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>>> and grandmother, their faith dwelt in him (II   
Timothy 1 :5). How was this accomplished?   
Paul reminded Timothy, "From childhood you   
have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able   
to make you wise for salvation through faith that   
is in Christ Jesus" (II Timothy 3:15). Faith in   
older children is the result of early instruction in   
righteousness. Parents should take advantage   
of the classes offered by the church, but this is   
not enough-they must teach their children   
personally. A mother once told me of   
overhearing her husband saying to their young   
infant in the crib, "Let me tell you about Jesus."   
Not surprisingly, that young infant is now a godly   
young teenager.

*Affection*

Training and instruction must be administered   
with love-a love that "suffers long and is kind,"   
that "does not behave rudely," and above all,   
"does not seek its own" (I Corinthians 13:4-5).   
Children will forgive many mistakes if they can   
always be sure of their parents' love. "Love will   
cover a multitude of sins" (I Peter 4:8). Affection   
without firmness is disastrous, but equally   
disastrous is firmness without affection.

*Prayer*

David did not attribute his defeat of Goliath to   
the stone, to his sling or to his skill. "The battle,"   
he said, "is the Lord's" (I Samuel 17:47). So it is   
with the training of our children. God is   
concerned with the outcome and we are   
servants whom He has entrusted with our little   
ones. We must pray daily for the wisdom that He   
has promised to supply (James 1 :5) and for His   
providence to overrule our inevitable mistakes.   
And when our children have become what we   
hoped for, we have no ground for boasting, only   
for the humble exclamation, "to God be the   
glory!"

David succeeded, using only one stone; parents   
will need all five.

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**KIDS**

**COLUMN**



Sober Minded in Every   
Sense of the Term

By David Diestelkamp

Researchers at the University of California San   
Diego reviewed 14 years of accident data and   
found that "A blood alcohol concentration of just   
0.01 percent was associated with risky behaviors   
such as speeding." Lead researcher, David P.   
Phillips, Ph.D. says, "For a 180 pound person, that   
translates to one glass of wine or a bottle of beer."

Even some people of the world are beginning to   
admit that for the person who doesn't want to make   
bad decisions that lead to "risky behaviors," even   
one drink is too much. As Christians, we have been   
taught by God's grace that, "\*denying ungodliness   
and worldly lusts, we should live soberly,   
righteously, and godly in the present age\*" (Titus   
1 : 11-12). We are committed to making decisions   
that are pleasing to God in all things and we   
therefore reject anything that clouds thinking or   
encourages risky behavior.

The world wants us to be wise drivers. After even   
one drink we are not fit to drive home. Impaired   
thinking will not get us to an eternal home of glory   
either. Be wise. "\*Wine is a mocker, strong drink is   
a brawler, and whoever is led astray by it is not   
wise\*" (Proverbs 20: 1 ).

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Glorify JesusG



16 Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and our God and   
Father, who has loved us and given us everlasting consolation   
and good hope by grace,

17 comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word   
and work.

- II Thessalonians 2:16-17.



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What Does Legalism Mean?

By Warren E. Berkley

Currently, "legalism" is a popular subject. But just exactly what is meant by "legalism"? We often are made   
to wonder if all those who firmly preach anti-legalism are agreed as to the meaning of legalism?

Let us consider three possible meanings of the term in question. By so doing, we can determine the   
scripturalness or unscripturalness of each legalism:

(1) Does legalism mean strict adherence to God's law? If this is the meaning of the term, it represents a   
scriptural principle. Jesus told His disciples: "What things soever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in   
heaven ... " (Matt. 16:19 and 18:18). To this end the "Spirit of truth" came to guide them unto all the truth   
(John 16: 13). In this sense Jesus and His ambassadors were legalists. But where does this place the anti-   
legalists? It puts them in direct opposition to the authority of Christ. Furthermore, this meaning of legalism   
renders the anti-legalist a double-minded man. He refuses to accept the idea that anything is bound in   
religion - with one major exception, anti-legalism! He reminds us of the skeptic who says that the only   
possible truth is the truth that there can be no possible truth! (?) So if the doctrine of legalism is defined as   
"strict adherence to God's law," it is scripturally sound. Let modern thinkers (?) say what they will, it is still   
God's will that, "This is the end of the matter: all hath been heard: fear God and keep his commandments;   
for this is the whole duty of man" (Eccl. 12: 13).

(2) If legalism is the disposition to make laws where God has made none, it is unscriptural. Consistent with   
the statement of Jesus cited above (Matt. 16: 19 and 18: 18), it is unscriptural to bind law when such has not been bound in heaven (and thus recorded in the New Testament). In this case, all who believe in and   
submit to the supreme authority of God's word are anti-legalists! That is to say, we are opposed to making   
and binding laws not bound in heaven. This type of legalism is a form of unbelief in that it assumes that   
God's laws do not go far enough.

(3) If legalism is depending on works of merit in order to be saved, legalism is unscriptural. This meaning of   
legalism is closely connected to the second, but not entirely the same. One might depend on added law for   
salvation (as with circumcision in Acts 15 and the Galatian letter), or one might regard the New Testament   
as a book of rules which one must keep perfectly in order to earn salvation. In both cases this type of   
legalism is firmly denied in the New Testament. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of   
yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8, 9). See also Acts 15;   
Gal. 2: 16 and 3:21; and Rom. 8:3.

At this point many become confused. Realizing that we are saved by "the free gift of God" (Rom. 6:23), it is   
assumed that any conditions would nullify grace. Thus the assumed principle: any free gift is received apart   
from any effort. This is both unreasonable and unscriptural. Think about it the next time you submit an   
application or agree to a 'trial offer' in order to receive a 'free' gift. You have not earned that gift but have   
merely availed yourself of a favor. So it is when we obey the gospel.

>>>

**Volume 7 March 1 2015 #9**

>>> Again, those who believe what God's word   
sets forth on the matter of grace, are anti-legalist   
in this third sense. We object to the idea that   
man can earn his salvation. Such a doctrine   
makes void the cross of our Lord. However, at   
the same time we must affirm that God's grace   
is received by man's obedience. Thus Peter   
wrote: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in   
obeying the truth ... " (1 Pet. 1 :22).

The subject of 'legalism' needs our careful   
investigation. We need to be as precise as   
possible when we employ terms that might have   
varied meanings. As in all things, tell us exactly   
what you mean, then we can search the   
Scriptures to see if these things are so. Will the   
real anti-legalists please stand up-and tell us   
what you mean?

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Why The Conscience?

By William V. Beasley

For years we have opposed the false standard   
of those who say, "Just let your conscience be   
your guide!" We have pointed out that Saul of   
Tarsus (Paul) "lived before God in all good   
conscience" (Acts 23: 1) while he was "breathing   
threatening and slaughter against the disciples   
of the Lord" (Acts 9: 1). We read verse like Jer.   
10:23 to show that man cannot guide himself.   
We turn to 2 John 9 and show the word of God   
is the proper standard for our lives. We do all of   
these things but to no avail. Men still cry "just let   
your conscience be your guide."

Interestingly, letting one's conscience be one's   
guide would in many cases be an improvement.   
This is true because most men do not live as   
good as they know to live. They steal, lie, and   
cheat - even when they 'know better.'

In fact, even many Christians would be improved   
if they "just let your Biblically educated   
conscience be your guide." They know they   
should be giving liberally (2 Cor. 9:6), studying   
more (2 Tim. 2: 15), telling others the good news   
(Mark 16: 15; Acts 8:4; 2 Tim. 2:2), joining with   
the saints every time they assemble (Heb.   
10:25), etc., Yes, "just let your conscience be   
your guide" would be an improvement for many   
folks.



**KIDS**

**COLUMN**



Camouflage

By Greg Gwin

We are all familiar with camouflage, or 'camo' as   
we like to call it. We most commonly see it when   
hunters are preparing to hit the field in search of   
game. But this special clothing was originally   
perfected by the military. The main idea, of course,   
is to blend in with your surroundings so that you are   
not so easily detected by the enemy. More   
recently, since our army has been fighting wars in   
the desert, the patterns have been modified to help   
hide soldiers in that environment. There are even   
special camo types for arctic or snowy conditions.

This effort to disguise oneself to avoid detection by   
enemies is a good thing in the armies of men. But   
a problem arises when soldiers in God's army (2   
Timothy 2:3) try to do the same. Remember,   
'camo' is designed to make one 'blend in' to the   
surroundings. But, Christian soldiers should make   
no effort to do so. Unfortunately, many do. We see   
too many who want to talk, dress, and act like the   
worldly folks around them. They want to go to the   
same places and do the same things. In short, they   
want to hide their real identity and avoid detection   
as true disciples.

Why would a Christian do this? Jesus targeted the   
problem when He said: "Whosoever therefore shall   
be ashamed of me and of my words in this   
adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall   
the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in   
the glory of his Father with the holy angels" (Mark   
8:38). Sadly many are "ashamed" to show their   
attachment to the cause of Christ. The outcome for   
them, as Jesus warned, will be eternal loss.

May we all develop the unwavering devotion of the   
apostle Paul, who boldly said: "I am not ashamed of   
the gospel of Christ" (Romans 1: 16). May we, like   
him, be able to say in the end: "I have fought a   
good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept   
the faith" (2 Timothy 4:7).

[](http://images.google.com/imgres?imgurl=http://www.picturegrill.com/images/fruit%20vegies/red-apple-orchard.jpeg&imgrefurl=http://www.picturegrill.com/pages/vegetable-art.html&h=224&w=211&sz=19&hl=en&start=2&tbnid=ejX5E3cxZHGTZM:&tbnh=108&tbnw=102&prev=/images?q=red+Apple&svnum=10&hl=en&lr=&sa=X)

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A Richly Blessed Family

By Bill Hall

"Pity the Smith family. Poor things, they have to keep the preacher every time the church plans a meeting. And Christians are always stopping in at their place. And they are about the only people in the church that ever invite people in af­ter services. I just wouldn't put up with it myself. ..."

Spare your pity! The Smiths are a richly blessed family. Oh, occasionally they entertain some ungrateful scoundrel, but the blessings of hos­pitality far outweigh the problems.

The Bible speaks of some wonder­fully blessed people along these lines. For instance, we do not pity Mary and Martha for "having" to have Jesus in their home; we pity those who, not wanting Jesus, were deprived of this blessing. We do not pity Mary the mother of John Mark, in whose home *"many were gathered together praying;"* we pity those homes where Christians never assemble for Bible study and prayer. We do not pity Philemon who was to prepare Paul a lodging; we would love to have Paul as a guest in our home. Christians need to learn the joy and blessings which come to those who are hospitable.

"We are hospitable," someone says; "we often have friends from church in our home for get togethers and par­ties." That's fine! We encourage this! But Bible hospitality goes be­yond having friends in for an evening which is at least partially for our own selfish enjoyment. "I *was a stranger, and ye took me in,"* Jesus will say in the judgment **(Matt. 25:35).** Gaius was commended for helping "brethren" and "strangers" who were traveling for the Lord's name's sake, and was told by John, "whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well" **(3 John 5-7)**. Further, the Bible teaches that we become partakers in evil deeds of false teachers when we receive them into our houses **(2 John 9-11).** But does this not infer that we become partakers in the good deeds of faithful teachers when we show them hospitality?

A Christian will want to make friends with other Christians, and consequently will plan enjoyable evenings with close friends in his home. But the hospitable Christian will also use his home for conducting Bible classes, entertaining visiting preachers and other workers for the Lord, getting acquainted with newcomers in the church, comforting the be­reaved and troubled, and for every good work.

Our homes are blessings from the Lord. We must not use them selfishly, but rather to His glory. The result will be an occasional scratch on a chair, or a stain on the carpet, or a chipped glass — really a small price to pay, though, for the warmth that comes to the home from new friends, good influences, rich Bible discussions, participation in the Lord's work, and the satisfaction of knowing that one is pleasing God and preparing himself for eternity. No, it's not the Smiths whom we pity; it's those who do not know the joy of hospitality.

**Volume 7 March 8 2015 #10**

Sound Speech or Sound Silence? 

By Connie W. Adams

The book of Titus is a divine treatise on the subject of ``sound doctrine.'' Sound doctrine is to be employed in exhorting and convincing the gainsayers **(Titus 1:9).** The word ``sound'' means literally, ``in good health'' or ``wholesome.'' In reference to teaching it means free from any admixture of error. The design of ``sound doctrine'' is that the taught be ``sound in faith'' (**Tit. 1:13 and 2:1,2)**. The fruit of ``sound doctrine'' is living ``soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world'' **(Tit. 2:12)**. The vocabulary of ``sound doctrine'' is ``sound speech that cannot be condemned'' **(Tit. 2:8)**. To employ ``sound speech'' is to speak ``as the oracles of God'' **(1 Pet. 4:11)**. Doctrines that are sound can be expressed in language which is scripturally correct.  It is when men have doctrines to uphold which are unsound that they must invent unsound terms with which to discuss these doctrines. Every religious movement has been characterized by its own peculiar vocabulary.  A return to the faith and practice of the early church was, and is, impossible without a return to the language of the Scriptures in discussing religious topics.

But the writer would like to point out that the word of God requires sound speech, not silence. Whatever is included in the term ``sound doctrine'' is to be spoken, not silently contained within. Within the church of our Lord there are a number of practices in some quarters which are contrary to ``sound doctrine''; practices which relate to the organization and divine mission assigned the church. There are some preachers who, in private conversation, talk pretty sound, but do not have the courage to speak publicly what they profess in private to believe. Such are greatly in error, for they suppose they shall be approved because of their sound silence. Brethren, if you have any convictions concerning ``sound doctrine'' then speak up, exercising the vocabulary of sound doctrine -- sound speech! A ``sound  man'' ought to feel no hesitation in declaring himself openly  on anything which concerns the whole counsel of God.''



**KIDS**

**COLUMN**



Continue patiently and steadily

"...Let us run with patience the race that is set before us..." (Heb. 12:1)

The setting was a cold January morning in a little town in Wisconsin, on the southern shore of Lake Superior. It happened to be the Saturday when they had their annual dog sled derby on the ice. A one-mile course had been staked out by sticking little fir trees in the ice. The whole course was easily visible because of the steep slope of the shore. It was a youngsters' meet and the contenders ranged all the way from large boys with several dogs and big sleds to one little fellow who didn't seem over five with a little sled and one small dog. They took off at the signal and the little fellow with his one dog was quickly outdistanced--he was hardly in the race. All went well with the rest until, about halfway around, the team that was second started to pass the team then in the lead. They came too close and the dogs got in a fight. As each team came up the dogs joined the fight. None seemed to be able to steer clear of it. Soon, from our position about a half mile away, there was just one big black seething mass of kids and sleds and dogs. None but the little fellow with his one dog managed to stay clear, and was the only one to finish the race. As I reflect on the many vexing problems and the stresses of our times that complicate their solutions, this simple scene from long ago comes vividly to mind, and I draw the obvious moral: No matter how difficult the challenge or how impossible or hopeless the task may seem, if you are reasonably sure of your course, just keep on going! (James S. Hewett, **Illustrations Unlimited**, Tyndale House Publishers, 1988, p. 159)

Let us continue patiently and steadily in our course toward eternal life.

[](http://images.google.com/imgres?imgurl=http://www.picturegrill.com/images/fruit%20vegies/red-apple-orchard.jpeg&imgrefurl=http://www.picturegrill.com/pages/vegetable-art.html&h=224&w=211&sz=19&hl=en&start=2&tbnid=ejX5E3cxZHGTZM:&tbnh=108&tbnw=102&prev=/images?q=red+Apple&svnum=10&hl=en&lr=&sa=X)

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WHY DO "CHURCHES OF CHRIST" DIFFER SO WIDELY?

By Sewell Hall

A sign reading "Church of Christ" in front of a building tells you very little these days. Most any doctrine or   
practice may be found inside. This is frustrating to many people.

Outsiders make fun of the situation, saying, "You preach unity but you are the most divided people we   
know." They may add, "This just proves you are not the true church." This last statement shows a total   
misunderstanding of what the true church is, but it is a misunderstanding shared by far too many "members   
of the church."

How Can We Explain It?

First, many churches that claim to be churches of Christ are not "of Christ" at all. Any church can claim that   
designation, but only one that truly recognizes Christ as its head is justified in using it. There is no   
denominational accrediting board that can certify a church as a true church of Christ -- the Lord Himself is   
the judge of that.

In addition, there are churches, claiming to be churches of Christ, that intend to follow Jesus but have   
widely differing ideas of what that involves. Some, like the Sadducees, "are mistaken, not knowing the   
Scriptures nor the power of God" (Matthew 22:29). Others know the Scriptures but construe them loosely,   
rejecting only those things that are forbidden. Still others believe that only those things clearly authorized   
are to be practiced; but even among these there may be differences as to what is authorized. When such   
congregations are truly autonomous, it is inevitable that there will be noticeable differences.

Such Differences Are Not New!

Differences existed among churches established by the apostles even while the New Testament was still   
being written. The *"seven churches of Asia"* (Revelation 2 and 3) provide good examples.

A visitor in Ephesus would have found an old established church that was doing everything right but with a   
lack of love (Revelation 2:4). Moving on to Smyrna, he would find a rather poor little group that had a bad   
reputation among the Jews in town (Revelation 2:9). Visiting the church in Pergamum, he might well hear a   
teacher defending idolatry, approving the eating of meat sacrificed to them (Revelation 2:14). And if that   
was not shocking enough, going on to Thyatira he might meet a woman in the church who claimed to be a   
prophetess and was actually teaching and seducing the men to commit fornication (Revelation 2:20).

If the traveler expressed concern about what he had found thus far, he might well be told that he would find   
things better in Sardis where there was a church widely known as a really lively church. But on arriving   
there, he would be disappointed to find that, as far as doing what God wanted them to do, they really were   
dead (Revelation 3: 1-2). Moving on to Philadelphia, he would find a church made up of good people, but   
relatively small and with *"little strength"* (Revelation 3:8). Finally, in Laodicea, visiting the church he might be   
met by greeters at the door offering him a brochure and telling him how rich and self-sufficient the church   
was; but on closer inspection he would find that they really were spiritually *"wretched, miserable, poor, blind*

*and naked'* (Revelation 3: 17). At least, that's what the Lord found. >>>

>>> >>>

**Volume 7 March 15 2015 #11**

>>> Were all of these churches right because   
they would claim to be "of Christ"? No! Two of   
them were threatened with total rejection by the   
Lord (Revelation 2:5; 3:16) and three others   
were warned of dire consequences if they did   
not repent. Did the remaining congregations comprise the "one true church?" NO! The one true church is not composed of congregations but of faithful individuals saved by the Lord (Acts 2:47). In spite of the false teaching and immorality in some of the churches there were still some who had *"not defiled their garments."* The faithful remnant in these and other churches made up -- and make up -- the "one true church."

What All Churches Must Do!

In John's epistles, written about the same time,   
we see echoes of the same problems. He   
speaks of those who questioned both the divinity   
and humanity of Jesus (doctrine of the   
Nicolaitans?); of those claiming they could sin   
without guilt and of some who hated their   
brethren. There had even been divisions which   
John explains by saying, *"They went out from us   
because they were not* of *us"* (I John 2: 19).

John stated the solution. Approximately ten   
times in I and II John he speaks of *"the   
beginning."* Most often that expression seems to   
refer to the beginning of the church on   
Pentecost under the direction of the apostles of   
Jesus (see I John 2:24). After warning of false   
teachers (I John 4: 1) he provides the standard   
by which they are to be tested. As an apostle he   
writes: *"We are* of *God. He who knows God   
hears us; he who is not* of *God does not hear   
us.* By *this* we *know the spirit* of *truth and the   
spirit* of *error'* (I John 4:6).

We cannot be responsible for every church in   
the world that calls itself a church of Christ. Our   
responsibility as congregations is to go back to   
be the church as it was in "the beginning" and to   
the apostles doctrine in which that church   
continued steadfastly (Acts 2:42). As individuals   
we must make sure that we are a part of the   
faithful remnant that makes up the "one true   
church."

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Join our study on the book of Acts:

Sunday 10:00 AM   
Wednesday 7:30 PM



**KIDS**

**COLUMN**



Count Your Many Blessings!

"Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say,   
rejoice!" (Phil. 4:4) "Do not sorrow, for the joy of the   
LORD is your strength." (Neh. 8: 1 0)

Simple Rules for Happy Living:

1. Count your blessings, not your troubles.

2. Live one day at a time.

3. Learn to say "I love you" to those dear to you.

4. Be a giver, not a receiver.

5. Look for good in everyone.

6. Pray often.

7. Do a good deed every day.

8. Put first things first.

9. Fill your mind with good things.

10. Laugh and cry with others.

11. Make happiness a habit.

12. Let Christ rule in your heart and life.

- (Author Unknown)

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Think about it!

9 Rejoice, 0 young man, in your youth, And let your   
heart cheer you in the days of your youth; Walk in   
the ways of your heart, And in the sight of your   
eyes; But know that for all these God will bring you   
into judgment.

10 Therefore remove sorrow from your heart, And   
put away evil from your flesh, For childhood and   
youth are vanity.

1 Remember now your Creator in the days of your   
youth, Before the difficult days come, And the years   
draw near when you say, "I have no pleasure in   
them":

- Ecclesiastes 11 :9-12:1.

[](http://images.google.com/imgres?imgurl=http://www.picturegrill.com/images/fruit%20vegies/red-apple-orchard.jpeg&imgrefurl=http://www.picturegrill.com/pages/vegetable-art.html&h=224&w=211&sz=19&hl=en&start=2&tbnid=ejX5E3cxZHGTZM:&tbnh=108&tbnw=102&prev=/images?q=red+Apple&svnum=10&hl=en&lr=&sa=X)

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"EVERYTHING I HAVE IS FOR SALE ... "

By Mike Johnson

A number of years ago a friend of mine had a classic automobile. He really took care of that car. Every so often, he would have it painted and would keep it polished to a showroom shine. He took good care of it mechanically. Any work needed, from rebuilding the motor to rebuilding the transmission, was done. People admired his car. Sometimes someone would ask if the car was for sale, and he would reply, "Everything that I have is for sale ... for the right price."

If we think about it, that statement would be true for most of us with almost anything that we own. If   
someone were to ask me if our two cars (both having over 1 00,000 miles on them) were for sale, I would   
say that they were not. But, if the person said he would give me $100,000 for the two cars, my answer   
would change. I would say, 'Where do I sign?"

But, we do possess something that is more valuable than any earthly possession. It has so much value that   
it is worth more than all of the wealth in the world. That possession is our soul, and we should never "sell"   
it.

Note what Jesus said in Matthew 16:24-27: *"Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after   
me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it:   
and whosoever will lose his life for* my *sake shall find it. For what is* a *man profited, if he shall gain the   
whole WOrld, and lose his own soul? or what shall* a *man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son* of *man   
shall come in the glory* of *his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his   
works."*

It would be impossible for people to gain the entire world with all of its riches, honors, and pleasures. By   
earthly standards, they would be considered wealthy with far less. But, even if one could possess the entire   
world, their soul would still be worth more.

Consider two questions. For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?   
The answer is he would not be profited anything. If a person loses his soul, he will dwell eternally in hell   
instead of heaven. Next, what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? The answer should be "nothing."   
Eternal life (heaven) is so valuable a person should do whatever God requires to obtain it, and once it is   
obtained, he should not give it up for anything, not even for all of the wealth on earth.

The apostle Paul had obtained high status in the Jewish religion, but he was willing to give this up, and   
anything else, for Christ. He pointed out in Philippians 3:7-8, *"But what things were gain to me, those I   
counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and* / *count all things but loss for the excellency* of *the know/edge* of   
*Christ Jesus* my *Lord: for whom* / *have suffered the loss* of *all things, and do count them but dung, that /   
may win Christ."* In Galatians 2:20, he said, "/ am *crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but   
Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith* of *the Son* of *God, who loved   
me, and gave himself for me."*

**Volume 7 March 22 2015 #12**

Be Careful, You're   
Bending That Twig

By Leslie Diestelkamp

We are all aware of the old proverb that says:

"As a twig is bent, so will it grow." And when we   
seriously consider this, we know it is true. But it   
is so easy to forget this lesson. For parents,   
Solomon expressed the same principle when he   
said, "Train up a child in the way that he should   
go and when he is old he will not depart from it."   
(Proverbs 22:6).

Parents, remember, you are bending that twig.   
One way or the other, to the right or to the left,   
for better or for worse, you are determining the   
course of life which that child will take. Be   
careful, lest you bend it in the wrong way!

Paul commanded parents to "Bring them up in   
the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph.   
6:4). This includes:

1) Train your children in morality--in clean   
thoughts, words, and deeds. 'Wild oats"   
(corruption) that is practiced in childhood and   
adolescence cannot be productive of purity later.   
If you complacently watch their immodesty in   
childhood, you can expect to see impurity in   
adulthood.

2) Train them in honesty. It is still the best policy!   
Help them to regard truth and fidelity as   
precious qualities. Show them, by word and by   
example that half-truth is only a lie and that a   
man's word should be as good as his bond.

3) Train then to respect authority, always - the   
policeman, the teacher, the parent, and the   
Lord. If they do not learn to respect the first   
three, they will hardly respect the Lord either.

Your children deserve the best you can give   
them. They did not ask to be born, and their   
destiny is not really theirs alone, but in your   
strong or weak will. And the best you can give   
them is not just measured in education, culture,   
financial security, etc., but in character which   
you produce in them.

Yes, you are bending that twig. Be sure you   
bend it right.



**KIDS**

**COLUMN**



Where Do You Want To Go?

By Rick Duggin

One of the major thoroughfares in our city is named   
Broad Street. It is a very popular place to be during   
rush hour. Not only does it take people to the   
places they desire to go, but also gives them plenty   
of room in which to travel. A narrow one-lane path   
would never do.

The Lord also spoke of a broad way. It is wide   
enough to accommodate as many as desire it. Its   
spacious lanes welcome as much baggage as we   
wish to take. It is the most popular way to travel. It   
requires nothing from us. We can live it up on this   
street without fear of cross-examination.

The only drawback is its destination. "For wide is   
the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to   
destruction, and many there be which go in thereat"   
(Mt. 7: 13).

Fortunately, there is an alternative to this deceptive   
street: The strait and narrow path. This is a more   
difficult way to travel. Some effort is required just to   
enter this road. The way is narrow, requiring its   
travelers to be constantly on guard lest they fall. It   
is not a very popular way to journey. Few people   
even find this road. This is not because they are   
unwelcome, but because they are unwilling to pay   
its toll.

The advantage to this way is its destination."  
 Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way,   
which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it"   
(Mt. 7: 14) . Will your road take you where you want   
to go?

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So then faith cometh by   
hearing, and hearing by the   
word of God. - Romans 10:17.

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A Jealous God

By Jim Jonas

The Old Testament scriptures speak several times of God's "jealousy." The Theological Wordbook of the   
Old Testament says this family of words "expresses a very strong emotion whereby some quality or   
possession of the object is desired by the subject. ... It may prove helpful to think of 'zeal' as the original   
sense from which derived the notions 'zeal for another's property' = 'envy' and 'zeal for one's own property'   
'jealousy'" (Vol. 2, p. 802).

When applied to God, the idea is that God is "jealous" for what rightfully belongs to Him. In explaining the   
first and second commandments (no other gods or images), God says, "For I, the Lord your God, am a   
jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generations of those   
who hate Me" (Ex. 20:5). God is the only true Supreme Being and as such deserves all reverence, glory and honor. It is a travesty against His nature and existence to have men invent gods with their own hearts and hands and offer to them what God alone deserves.

God promises to display Himself accordingly to Israel: "Behold, I make a covenant. Before all your people I   
will do marvels such as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation; and all the people among   
whom you are shall see the work of the Lord. For it is an awesome thing that I will do with you" (Ex. 34: 1 0).   
Then He warns the people: "for you shall worship no other god, for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a   
jealous God" (34: 14).

The Old Testament depicts God as a husband and Israel as His bride. He is the one who nurtured Israel   
from birth to adult nationhood. He was the source of all blessings, and Israel freely entered into covenant   
promises to be loyal and faithful to God. Thus, when they forsook Him and went after idols, God considered   
their behavior as adultery, and He responded in a way that might be expected from a jealous husband: "And   
I will judge you as women who break wedlock or shed blood are judged; I will bring blood upon you in fury   
and jealousy" (Ezek. 16:38).

The divine rationale for the creation of man is a desire for fellowship and to share His goodness with   
cognizant, responsible beings. There is no justification within ourselves for our existence; God unilaterally   
decided to create us to satisfy His own purposes. When men thus reject that purpose and think they can   
justify their existence on other grounds, they are rejecting the very source of life itself.

God is true; all others are products of rebellion and selfishness. This He will not tolerate. In this respect,   
God is the one holding all the cards; we may decide either to live by His rules or forfeit our right to live at all.   
There is no third choice. But the jealousy of God works for us as well. If we are faithful to Him, He will jealousy defend us, protect us and provide for our needs. Of those who had humbled and plundered Israel God says, "Surely I have spoken in My burning jealousy against the rest of the nations .... Therefore prophesy concerning the land of Israel, and say to the mountains, the hills, the rivers, and the valleys, 'Thus says the Lord God: "Behold, I have spoken in My jealousy and My fury, because you have born the shame of the nations'"'' (Ezek. 36:5-6). Our God is not to be trifled with.

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Conclusion Jumping

By Jimmy Tuten

Some time ago, there was a faithful dog which was a constant companion of a small child. One day both dog and child disappeared. A diligent search by parents, friends, and neighbors proved to be fruitless. The child could not be found.

After several hours the dog returned home, but was covered with blood. Naturally, the father jumped to the conclusion that the dog had become vicious and killed the child. The dog must be destroyed, so he got his gun and killed the dog.

A little later, the child was found in the woods unharmed. Nearby was the body of a panther that the dog had killed in his struggle to protect the child.

So often we are guilty of conclusion jumping. We take action, or at least express our opinion before considering all the facts. The result is usually unpleasant and at times irreparable damage is done.

Solomon showed the foolishness of jumping to conclusions when he said, "He that answereth (Heb. returneth a word) a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame to him" (Prov. 18:13). Not only do we have this problem with "Matters," but in dealing with people as well. On this Jesus said, "Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth"

A man who will not hear all the facts before drawing conclusions has a “clinker” in his thinker; it is almost impossible to squeeze the truth into his mind. The most difficult thing to open is a closed mind. Too, have you ever noticed how extremely difficult it is for a person to keep his mind open and his mouth shut at the same time? How wonderful an open mind is when it is matched with a closed mouth. But that's another subject. My point is this, don't waste a human mind by refusing to fulfil its hunger for education with facts, all the facts. When you give people a piece of your mind, then, and only then do they know the kind of mind you have.

So, be careful about what you think, say, and do. You might be guilty of shooting a dog that ought to be praised.



**KIDS**

**COLUMN**



To Show Your Dad!

(Let him read this)

" ... As you know how we exhorted, and comforted,   
and charged everyone of you, as a father does his   
own children ... " (1 Thess. 2:11)

Several years ago, my second son, Steve, tried out   
for the high school football team. One day he   
walked into my office and proclaimed with great   
excitement, "Dad, I made the team!" I turned and   
said, "Yeah, but are you starting?" Steve walked   
away crushed. At the time, Steve was a junior in   
high school, and I just assumed that he would   
make the team. I was so preoccupied that I didn't   
take the time to understand what was important to   
Steve. As fathers, we need to take time to find out   
what's important to our children and then make   
those things our priority and focus. (From Phillip H.   
Porter, Jr.)

Likewise, as did the apostle Paul, we need to   
consider the needs and interests of our fellow   
Christians, and not be preoccupied with ourselves.

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**Do you show Christ in your life?**

Let your light so shine before men, that **they may   
see your good works** and glorify your Father   
in heaven. - Matthew 5:16

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MORE IMPORTANT THAN THIS ... ?

By Carey Scott

Some things are more important than other things, yet we often do not treat them as being important.   
Everybody goes through life with their own set of priorities and think that their world is more important than   
someone else's. Often, we place value upon the wrong things.

One might think that the championship game is the most important thing in the world, but for some there are   
other things on their minds. Some may be sitting at the bedside of a loved one who is breathing their last   
breaths. Some may be involved in the birth of a child. Some may be working to provide for their family. Not   
to mention the billions of people who could care less about a game because they are hungry and poor and   
destitute.

There are times when we think something is important, yet other things prove to be more important. A   
person might think himself important and cannot leave work because things would suffer without him. Yet if   
his child is in an auto accident, he should leave immediately and go to the hospital to meet his child there.   
At that moment, the child needs the most important person in the world next to them; their daddy.

No matter what you think is important, there is always something more important. That is, until you get to   
the most important thing of all. Nobody can trump Jesus Christ our Savior and our relationship with Him.   
Being a faithful Christian is the most important thing you can do with your life. Sure, we cannot shirk our   
parental and spousal duties here. We cannot shirk our duty to provide for our families. It is foolish if we do   
not plan for the latter stages of our lives. But all of that will be wasted and useless if you are not a faithful   
Christian.

We make plans for our future and have great expectations for the future, then find we have a health   
problem and we may not make it to old age. What do we do then? It might be wise to get your affairs in   
order and all the legal documents prepared. But it would be best to evaluate your relationship with God.   
Take care of that first, and then worry about the rest.

We think that good friends are very important people in our lives, and they really should be. But if your   
friend is not helping you to be a faithful Christian, they are causing you harm. The first thing you should do   
is to introduce them to Jesus Christ and offer them the salvation that comes through Him. If they are not   
interested, hopefully you will see that they are not that important for you to have in your life. You need to   
find other faithful Christians who will encourage and motivate you to do the really important things in life. When all is said and done and you are standing there before God on judgment day you will realize that it is   
too late to try to figure out what is really important.

If you do not make it to heaven, you will have an eternity to figure out what was really important. You might   
consider that you should have, but you will be sorry you did not do those important things while you had the   
opportunity. Figure out what is really important before it is too late.

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NO PLACE TO STOP!

By Greg Gwin

For a long time we have been warning about the dangers of departing from a strict observance of the pattern set forth in the Scriptures. It has been pointed out that once any departure is allowed, there then becomes no stopping place. If one innovation is tolerated, soon many more will follow it. After a time, any similarity to true New Testament Christianity will be lost.

Some folks have ridiculed our warnings. They have said that we are being “too picky” when we insist on “book, chapter, and verse”. They think we are hindering the cause of Christ when we teach others to “speak where the Bible speaks, and remain silent where the Bible is silent”.

If you have any doubts about the dangers we have been discussing, then take a look at these frightening quotations:

“Currently there is some controversy among Churches of Christ regarding immersion. Many of us cannot deny that there are many devout Christians who are unimmersed.” (Gary Holloway, Bible Professor, Lipscomb University, **Wineskins Magazine**, 4/06)

“We accept all believers in Christ, no matter what their religious heritage . . . we have chosen to emphasize what we have in common with other Christian groups rather than debate our differences . . . if they choose not to be immersed, we welcome them on the journey as part of this family . . . And, so, for those who have never been baptized, we welcome the opportunity to study with you about the beauty and significance of baptism, yet we will also welcome you.  We will encourage all believers – all believers in Jesus Christ – to join us our journey with God.”  (Mike Williams, Bible teacher, Lipscomb University, from sermon at Fourth Ave. Church of Christ, Franklin, TN, 3/15/06)

Can’t you see it? This is what happens when we fail to carefully follow Bible authority. God has given us a plain pattern to follow. Let’s make sure that “*whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus*” (Col. 3:17).



**KIDS**

**COLUMN**



Do unto others

"But if you do not do so, then take note, you have sinned against the LORD; and be sure your sin will find you out." (Num. 32:23)

A wealthy widower deeded all his property to an only son and his wife on the condition that he would be allowed to live in the country with them for the rest of his life. After a few years, when the inheritance had been spent, the daughter-in-law got tired of having the elderly gentleman around and told her husband he would have to leave. The son agreed and broke the news to his father. A short time later he and the feeble old man walked down the dusty road to a state- supported home for senior citizens. Being very unsteady on his feet, the father finally asked if he could rest for a few moments on a sawed-off stump to regain his strength for the last mile of the journey. As he sat there, he suddenly put his head in his hands and began to sob. The son, pricked in his conscience, tried to make excuses. Finally his dad controlled himself enough to say, "I'm not crying so much because I'm going to this lonely home for the poor and unfortunate. I'm weeping because of my own sins. Forty years ago, I walked down this road with my father and brought him to the very same place. I am now seeing the results of the evil deeds I have sown!"

Let us do to others as we would have them do to us.

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Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path. - Palm 119:105

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God Save the Family

By Dee Bowman

The moral climate in our country has deteriorated steadily since the 1950's.  The change from Father Knows Best to MTV  is astounding.

I’m not one to flaunt the “good old days.” Our memories tend to tolerate only the good stuff anyhow; and we often don’t remember what was not good at all.  Modern technology, communication, and medical advancements have made “the good old days” not so good by comparison. But the moral standards of that day make the “good ole todays” not so good, either.

The reasons for our modern immoral morass are complex and not easily understood.  Just what happens is open for speculation by those who know more about culture, environment, psychology, and societal differentiations than do I.  But one thing I know: the failure of the family unit has contributed more to the moral depletion in this country than any other single factor.

The family is the beginning place for society.  If the family fails, so does society.  And I fear for the failure of the family unit.  Now, don’t take that statement lightly. To whatever extent the family is diluted, to that same extent society suffers.  It’s scary, folks–scary how the families of this day bear so little resemblance to the pattern first instigated by God.

For instance, the most basic part of the family unit is understood in two terms: headship and helpmeet.  The Bible teaches that the husband is the spiritual mentor of the family (Eph. 5:22-25; I Cor. 11:1-3).  That fact is fundamental.  Furthermore, it is necessary to the proper function of the family.  The wife is to submit to and honor her husband (Eph. 5:22; I Tim. 2: 9-15), and provide for him such help as will make his obligations easier. And children are to honor and obey their parents (Eph. 6:1-2).  In all three cases, the failure to honor these commitments, all three of which were instituted by God, brings about ill-defined roles, poorly defined obligations and, as a result, an unsettled family.

Love is the mucilage, the glue if you please, that holds the whole fabric of marriage together.  Now, I know you already know that.  But I’m not talking about some sentimental attachment, or some erotic linkage.  I’m not talking about emotional feelings, either.  I’m talking about the kind of love that makes a hard day–one where things go wrong–easier to bear.  I’m  talking about one where a fuss disrupts the family, one where somebody in the family gets out of line, and love– real love– is required to solve the problem (see I Cor. 13).  I’m talking about headship and helpmeet in regard to such matters, one where scripturally defined roles are used to solve the problems.  That’s real love–love for truth as well as love for one another.

Communication is the lifeline of a good family.  It’s necessary that wives and husbands learn–yes, I said learn–to talk to one another.  Not only that, it’s necessary that wives and husbands learn to listen to one another.  That’s the root of all communication–transmission and reception.  When one or the other is impeded, there is a problem.  I’m not a good counselor, but I have done enough of it through the years to >>>

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>>> know that a lack of sound communication skills, coupled with too much pride–is the cause of nearly every marital difficulty with which I have had to wrestle.  And the simple fact is that talking when it’s time to talk and listening when it’s time to listen would solve nearly every marriage problem you can name.

And listen carefully. Families don’t function well when God is left out.  There’s a void in the various relationships where God is not present. Please be clear about this: love is not love when truth is left out of it.  True love has truth as its base, verity as its energy, and when those are not present, look out, because  things are about to unravel.  It may not be a bombastic explosion, but unravel they will.  One day you’ll wake up and there’s no bond left in the relationship, no cement to hold it together.  Why?  Somebody–perhaps both somebodies, or perhaps even every somebody in the family–either darted off, or gradually drifted away from the truth of God that should characterize a good family. The father didn’t do his job, the mother left the home, the kids got out of their place, and so it fragmented the family and distorted everyone’s role in it. You can’t have a good family that is not based on truth and righteousness.  It won’t work.

Like I said, I don’t know all the answers necessary to ward off our headlong plunge into moral decadence.  But I can read the Bible.  I know what it says about families and how they are to function. And all the psychologists, sociologists, and human behavioral specialists, combined, are not going to solve the problems in our culture today until they return to the original pattern, the one ordained and commanded by the Creator–God Almighty.

Can you tell I’m serious about this?

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**KIDS**

**COLUMN**



“Just As I Am”

By Frank Himmel

The song Just As I Am is a commonly used invitation song. The idea in the song is that we cannot make ourselves right with God on our own; apart from Jesus’ blood we have no hope. That is precisely the New Testament picture (Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 3:5; etc.).

I fear, however, that some folks have an erroneous idea about Jesus saving us “just as we are.” They seem to think that He saves us without any change in our conduct. That is opposite to the New Testament picture.

Jesus’ charge to the apostles was “that repentance for forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all the nations” (Luke 24:47). Forgiveness is extended to those willing to abandon sinful conduct, not to those who insist on continuing in it.

Paul wrote to the Corinthian Christians, “Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you…” (1 Cor. 6:9-10). He did not say such are some of you, but such were. They changed their conduct in connection with being washed, sanctified, and justified (v. 11).

“Just as I am,” if referring to our own helplessness, is a comforting sentiment. But to suggest it means salvation without repentance is to hold out false hope. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Glorify JesusG



"As "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." (Gen. 1:1) "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork. Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night reveals knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard." (Psalm 19:1-3)

"To say that a well-precisioned, mathematically created universe just happened, is about as credible as saying Webster's Unabridged Dictionary was accidentally published because of an explosion in a printing factory, or that a Boeing 747 was assembled when a tornado swept through a junk yard." (From Frank Pollard)



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The Convertibles - The Nonconvertibles

By Bill Hall

There are people in this world who are convertible to Christ; others who are nonconvertible. Jesus was not able to convert everyone, nor were the apostles, and, in fact, the Bible clearly teaches that while many will be saved (Heb. 2:10), the majority will be lost (Mt. 7:13, 14).

There are major differences between the convertibles of this world and the nonconvertibles. The nonconvertibles consider the message of the cross foolishness. They see no need for a Savior, a cross, blood, atonement, or a message of salvation. As one young man said after hearing the message of the cross, "I'm sorry; it makes no sense to me."

The nonconvertibles have hearts closed to the gospel. The convertibles have hearts open to the gospel. They are willing to listen, to consider the evidences, to reason.

The nonconvertibles glory in human wisdom. They are impressed with the intellectuals of the day who take on airs of superiority and infallibility.

The convertibles bow in humble submission to God's wisdom. They recognize that in Christ "are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. 2:3). They withstand those who would rob them "through philosophy and empty deceit" (Col. 2:8). They believe anything God says and are willing to obey anything He tells them to do. They see the foolishness of injecting their own subjective thinking into anything clearly taught in God's word. For them, a "Thus says the Lord" is the end of all controversy. Just show them the scripture.

The key to converting the convertibles is not so much in our approach or study material we use. The key is in hearts that are open to the gospel. Nearly any approach will work if it includes the teaching necessary to bring them to Christ.

On the other hand, there is no approach that will convert the nonconvertibles. If they refuse to open their hearts to the word, they cannot be brought to faith, for "faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). They would not "be persuaded though one rise from the dead" (Luke 16:31). There are just some people who cannot be converted. Any attempt will be futile. They reject the only means by which one can be drawn to the Lord, the lifted up Son of God (John 12:32).

Can the nonconvertibles change their hearts and join the ranks of the convertibles? Yes! Can we contribute to their change of heart? Yes! We think of a friend in north Florida, who for years had refused the gospel, but opened his heart as he neared death, sought the assistance of his grandsons who were gospel preachers, obeyed the gospel, and requested visitors to read the scriptures to him for the remainder of his life. What changed his heart? No doubt a combination of things: the godly conduct of his wife, children, and grandchildren, the sermons he had heard through the years, his longing for something better as he neared the end. Who opened his heart? The Lord did (Acts 16:14), no doubt using this combination of influences as tools. But the point is this: Our friend never joined the ranks of the convertibles until he had a heart open to the gospeL All attempts to convert him before that time had been futile. >>>

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>>> Meanwhile, a failure to recognize that these two classes of people exist can lead to danger. Is it possible that some have softened their stance concerning divorce and remarriage and even the necessity of baptism because Bible teaching on these subjects gets in the way of "converting" the lost? It is possible that some have lost their faith in the power of the gospel and have turned to their own schemes and gimmicks in their effort to "convert" the nonconvertibles? Jesus once saw many of His disciple go back and walk with Him no more. He turned to His disciples and asked, "Do you also want to go away?" Peter spoke for the group, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life" **(John 6:68)**. Many today will not walk with the Lord. Those who will are those who see that He, and He alone, has the words of eternal life.

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**KIDS**

**COLUMN**



Why I Pray

By Warren Berkley

I pray because I believe God listens. “Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us” (1 John 5:14).

I pray because God has told me that He cares and is able to help. “Casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you” (1 Pet. 5:7; see also Luke 12:6-7; Heb. 4:16).

I pray because I lack wisdom. “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him as of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him” (James 1:5).

I pray because my Savior said I ought to pray. “Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart” (Luke 18:1).

I pray because I’m thankful for all the good things God has given. “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God” (Phil. 4:6; see also Col. 4:2; 1 Thess. 5:16-18).

I pray because I need pardon. “My little children, these things I write to you, that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous” (1 John 2:1; see also Acts 8:22; Ps. 51:1-9).

I pray because I adore and love my Father. “In this manner, therefore, pray: ‘Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name’” (Matt. 6:9).

I pray because I’ve read so many accounts of people who prayed to God with great results. “Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit” (James 5:17-18). “The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much” (James 5:16).

I pray because of Paul’s exhortation. “Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior” (1 Tim. 2:1-3).

I pray because I believe God has the ability to grant even more than I’m able to think and ask. “For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height; to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen” (Eph. 3:14-21).

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“In Modest Apparel”

By Greg Gwin

“In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety . . .” (1 Timothy 2:9).  In studying this verse, and considering its truth as it applies to daily living, we encourage you to look at the meaning or these key words:

ADORN: “to put in order, arrange, make ready . . . this orderliness must not extend merely to the relationship of the various articles of wearing apparel to one another, but also to the relationship of that apparel to her Christian character and testimony. In other words, the apparel must be congruous with, fitting to, and consistent with what she is, a child of God." (Wuest).

MODEST: “orderly, well arranged, decent" (Vine)

SHAMEFACEDNESS: “a sense of shame" (Vine) . . . "respectful timidity . . . as the feeling of an unfortunate (one) in the presence of those from whom he seeks aid, (or) of a younger toward an older . . . a blend of modesty and humility" (Wuest).

SOBRIETY: “it is that habitual inner self-government, with its constant rein on all the passions and desires, which would hinder the temptation to these from arising . . ." (Trench).

With these definitions understood, we wonder how some Christians can attempt to justify swimming suits and short shorts (and these on women or men), split skirts, low cut dresses, etc.  If such are right, then they are always right, regardless if one be an elder, deacon, preacher, or the wife or child of one of these.  If they are right, then they are always right, whether one is in Florida or Maine, among close friends or total strangers. Consistency demands that these conclusions follow. Are any of us willing to accept such consequences?  Decisions about the clothes we wear must be made in view of judgment and eternity. Think!

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An Abiding Principle

By Benjamin Franklin

We have now a plain work-simply the work of the Lord and no other. We have nothing to preach but the gospel, nothing to believe but the truth of God, nothing to do but the will of God, and nothing to hope for only what is promised in the word of God. Our work is not new and untried, but old, well tried, and nothing can stand before us. We have truth and righteousness to maintain - sin and the world to oppose. We can make no change only at our peril - no departure without losing all. We started simply to be the people of God, and to give ourselves unreservedly to the Lord. We cannot turn away.

**Volume 7 April 26 2015 #17**



A Needed Warning

By James Hahn

There is a constant need to teach our children and others His word. In doing so, we will not forget and they will know what we believe and WHY we believe it.

When I first began preaching 55 years ago there was much division among brethren over church support of human institutions and churches promoting the social gospel. Much teaching was done encouraging respect for Bible authority. Much of this teaching fell upon deaf ears and many brethren left the pattern found in God’s word. As time went on there was less and less teaching among those who had stood against this departure from truth. As a result, I am convinced there are many today in what have been labeled “non-institutional” churches that have no idea why it is wrong for churches to support human institutions or even what the social gospel is.

In fact, we are hearing some say that the division over these issues was “much ado about nothing” and it should never have taken place.  I agree that it should never have taken place. The false teachings and practices should never have been introduced, but once they were it was necessary for lovers of God and truth to stand and emphasize the need for adhering to that which is authorized by God. So much of the preaching that is being done today is little more than emotional “pep-talks” and could be preached in any denominational church without receiving any opposition. We must get back to preaching the need to respect the authority of God’s word. “If any man speak, let him as the oracles of God” (1 Peter 4:11).

The fact that truth was taught and adhered to in the past does not remove the need for continued teaching of that truth to the present generation. A failure to do so will result in a forgetting of God and His will. Yes, the warning God gave to Israel is much needed today.

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Your example does matter!



**KIDS**

**COLUMN**



You Can!

"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand." (John 10:27-28)

Charles F. Kettering, the noted scientist and inventor, believed the easiest way to overcome defeat was to ignore completely the possibility of failure. Once he was developing this theme in an address delivered at Denison University, Granville, Ohio. He told how he had once given a tough assignment to a young research worker at the General Motors laboratory. Just to see how he would react to a difficult problem, Mr. Kettering forbade him to examine notes on the subject that were filed in the library. These notes were written by expert research men and contained statistics to prove that the assignment was impossible. The young research worker did not know this, of course, so he went to work with confidence that he would succeed. He did succeed, too. He didn't know it couldn't be done--so he did it. (From **Good Business**)

If we ignore the teachings of men, and confidently follow Jesus Christ, we will succeed in obtaining eternal life.

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"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. - Matthew 5:16

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Heaven, And Why I Want To Go There

The subject of heaven should be near and dear to the heart of every Christian. All my life I have heard people sing, preach and talk about this place called heaven. They even pray about going there after they die. When songs like “Beyond the sunset,” “An empty Mansion,” “How beautiful heaven must be” and many others, are sung people are expressing a desire to go to the place where we long to spend eternity.

Yet, in spite of all of the talking and singing about heaven, and people expressing their desire to go there when they die, most people really don’t know much about heaven. Many people think of heaven as some vague, obscure place far, far away, a place they have never seen. They think it would be nice to go there, but since they know little about it, they don’t get overly excited about making the proper preparation to get there. This is true even among many members of the Lord’s church.

This lackadaisical attitude in preparing for heaven is seen in the way many Christians treat the public worship service. They think that professing a belief in God, getting baptized, showing up for services every Sunday (unless hindered by relatives, job, vacation, etc.), not to get involved in the work, but to take the Lord’s Supper visibly, but not heart-felt **1.Cor.11:28-29**, putting a little something in the collection basket, then enduring a sermon (which is usually too long for them) is fulfilling their obligation to God. When the services are over they leave the building feeling they have completed their worship to God until the next Sunday. They have occupied the pews, gone through a form of worship, feeling they have done their duty, not recognizing what a great privilege it is to be able to worship and honor God. Yet, they think doing this has prepared them to go to heaven after they die. But preparing for heaven takes more than mere form.

Thinking that maybe if people knew more about heaven, it might motivate them to put forth more effort in getting ready to go there. Recently I preached some sermons on heaven and now I am writing about the subject. When was the last time you heard a sermon on heaven. That is one reason I am writing this article, and some following, on why I believe there is a place called heaven and why I want to go there?

Why believe in such a place called heaven? One reason is that there is an innate desire in humans for something better than this world. God created this world as a beautiful place, starting with the Garden of Eden. *“Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good”* **Gen.1:31**. He made it for man to enjoy **Ps.104; Eccl.3:10-11**. Yet man messed it up by allowing sin to enter into the world. As a result the world became filled with sickness, pain, sorrow, death which we have to endure as we live here in this world. Sin is everywhere **Rom.3:9-18, 23**. As a result we look for a better place where we can find the satisfaction not found in this world **Ps.17:15; 55:6**.

This desire for a better place in the hereafter has been a universal longing for all civilizations, past and present. The ancients wrote and taught about a nirvana, a paradise, a happy hunting ground. The Egyptians even built their pyramids for the dead and placed provisions in them for the hereafter. This desire still exists today. When we sing the song “Home of the soul” we are singing about heaven. It causes our hearts to soar, as we sing of the place where we want to spend eternity.  We know in our hearts that this world does not offer us the lasting satisfaction and rest the soul longs for.   >>>

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>>> Justice requires such a place. Things certainly are not right here on earth, since the wicked seem to prosper while the saints suffer for doing right. This creates a longing for a place that will set things right. Heaven promises such a place. Note **2.Thes.1:6-7**.  *“Since it is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you, and to give you who are troubled* (saints being *‘persecuted for righteousness’ sake’* **Matt.5:10**–t.t.) *rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels.”*

It is abundantly clear that things will not continue as they presently are on this earth. *“For here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come”* **Heb.13:14**. That is the city

Abraham by faith looked for, *“For*

*he waited for the city which has*

*foundations, whose builder and*

*maker is God”* **Heb.11:10***.* Peter

tells us that one day this earth

will be no more **2.Pet.3:10-11**.

So, after this world is destroyed

where will we go? We will

certainly go someplace.

In a previous lesson about

**Lk.19:16-31**, we learned that we

will be going to one of two places

in hades (the waiting place of

departed spirits). The majority will go into torment, then at the judgment into hell to suffer eternal punishment **Matt.7:13-14**. The people of God, Christians, go into Abraham’s bosom (paradise) to wait for the judgment, then into heaven for eternity **Matt.25:46**. But each one determines to which place one goes while living here on earth. We sing the song, “Only a step,” and truly there is only a step, a heartbeat, between us and the eternal home of the soul. “Death and decay, and passing away are written upon the wings of time, and timely things.” Even though I don’t know everything about heaven, I can talk about some things the Bible does reveal about it. Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people.

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Better is a dry morsel with quietness, Than a house full of feasting with strife.

-Proverbs 17:1



**KIDS**

**COLUMN**



President James A. Garfield

James A. Garfield, twentieth President of the United States, resigned as an elder of the church of Christ in 1881 to take office.  It is reported on that occasion he said, “I resign the highest office in the land to become President of the United States.”

Thirty years earlier at age 19, he was planning to take a riverboat trip with friends.  He recalled, “But two days before we intended to leave, I injured my foot while chopping wood.  It was only a small cut, but the blue dye in the homemade socks I wore poisoned the wound, and I was compelled to stay at home.  While my friends were on their journey, a powerful preacher came to our town to hold revival meetings.  I was invited, and since I didn’t have anything else to do, I decided to attend.  The message touched me deeply, and as a result, I surrendered my heart to the Lord and was baptized into his kingdom.”

Eight years later in 1853, he began preaching.  He ended his first sermon saying, “Jesus will come again, not as the babe in helplessness …but as King of kings and Lord of lords.”  It was reported that attention to his sermons was intense and the stillness most profound.  He baptized people into Christ, married people, spoke at funerals.  He preached ~ primarily well-received revivals ~ until he entered Congress in 1863.

The first week after his inauguration as President of the United States, a member of his cabinet insisted on an urgent meeting at 10:00 Sunday morning to handle a threatened national crisis.  Garfield refused to attend because he had a more important appointment.  The cabinet member demanded to know what it was.  The president replied, “I will be as frank as you are.  My engagement is with the Lord to meet Him in His house at His table at 10:00 tomorrow, and I shall be there.”



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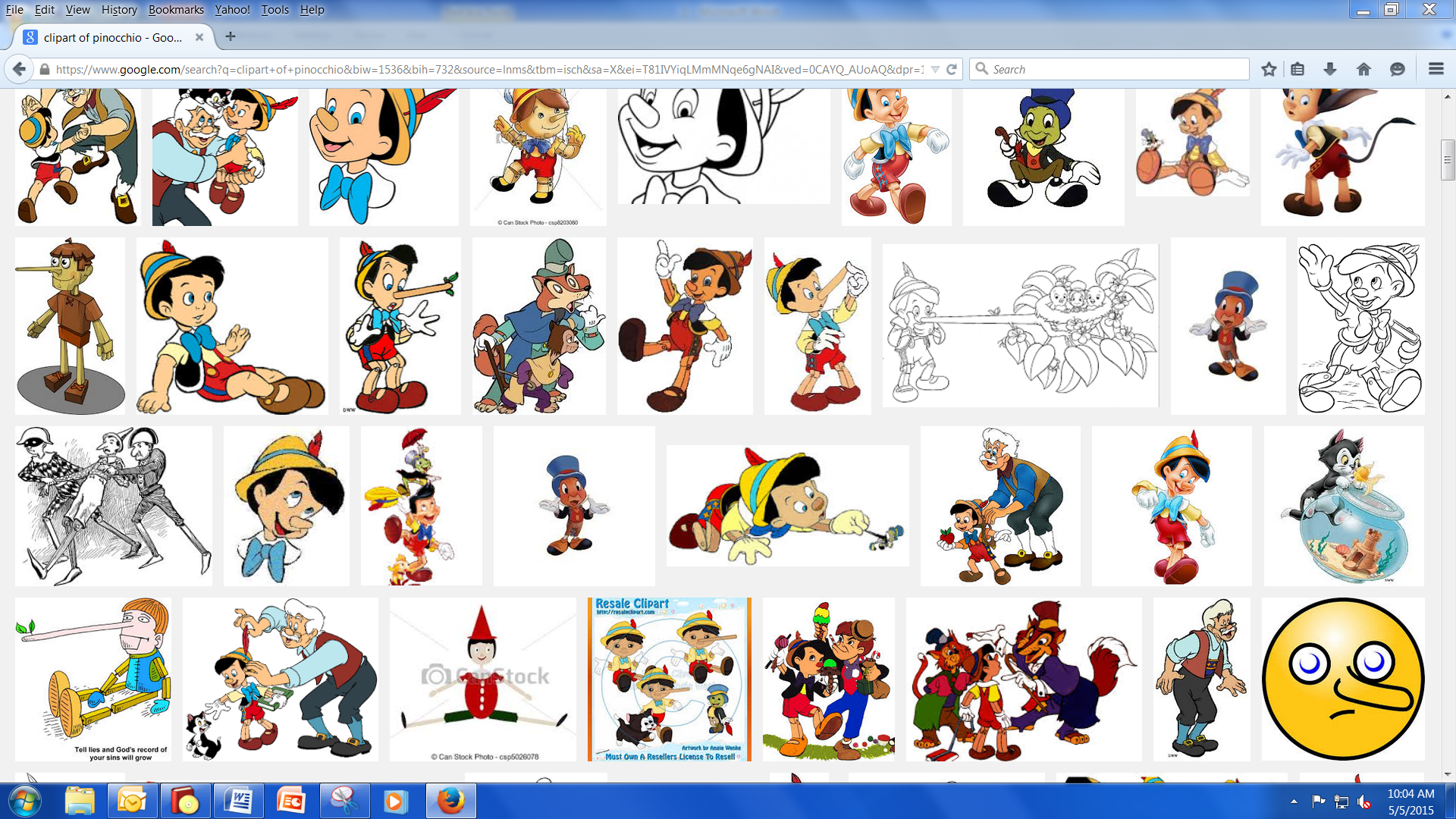
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**Simple Honesty**

**By Dee Bowman**

Honesty. A time-honored word. A concept of righteousness. A forgotten requirement among far too many people. It is replaced in our day by convenience, just enough truth to get by. My dad said, about one fellow in town, ``He'd lie for a check when he could get cash for telling the truth!'' How sad.

Dishonesty is far too widespread in our age. Cheating, they tell me, is an almost common occurrence in many of today's schools, both in the lower grades and at graduate levels. Lying is viewed among political aspirants as acceptable conduct, just as long as you get elected.  Many employers suffer substantial losses because of employees who steal from the company; rather than do much about it, they merely build it into the profit factor. How sad.

Dishonesty is used mostly because it is convenient. It is not always easy to tell the truth. In fact sometimes, it is downright hard.  But to do less is to incur the disfavor of God, to erode spiritual character, and to make life a little more difficult for whatever is involved in the lie, whether it’s telling or its reception.

Out-right lying is done only infrequently. It is usually used as a last resort. But the more subtle forms of untruth are used at random and constitute the large majority of this disrespect for integrity.  These forms include such things as misrepresentation, innuendo, half-truths, plagiarism, misquotation, exaggeration, flattery, and perhaps the most subtle of all untruths, excuses.

Half-truths are one of the most effective of the Devil's devices.  He has always used them with great effectiveness. It was a half-truth that got Eve into trouble. It seems to me that almost all sin is involved in some way or the other in half-truths. They offer the best of both worlds  --enough ``truth'' to salve the conscience, but mixed with an excuse so as to allow you to do what you want. Actually, half-truths are not truths at all--not even half. They are merely error dressed up like truth.

Truth and honesty relate to all areas of life, even the smallest matters.  It is just important that you tell the truth about little things as about big things. Honesty must prevail in areas of the insignificant just as it does in areas of the important. To lie about small matters continually is a dangerous business--a very bad habit--one bound to cause pain and heartache eventually. There is no place where integrity does not fit, where it is acceptable to appeal to what is not so.  And the notion that situations--no matter their size--alter truth nips at the very heart of righteousness. Situations have nothing at all to do with what is right or wrong.

Truth and honesty are products of the heart **(Luke 8:15)**. From that seat, they must radiate into every area of life--the home, the family, the community, the church **(Rom. 12:17; 2 Cor. 8:21)**. >>>

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>>> The husband-wife relationship is dependent on trust for its survival.  I verily believe that dealing treacherously with truth is behind every divorce I ever heard about. Trust and truth are kin; one cannot exist without the other. And trust is what makes happy marriages.

Most of the problems encountered in the family have to do with someone's mishandling of truth. There just cannot be peace and harmony in the family when there is untruth. On the other hand, peace will reign admirably when the scepter of truth is at her right hand.

Politics have gotten a bad name. Not all politicians are bad. But crooked politicians are just that--crooked.

And it would literally shock some of us if we knew how truth is poorly managed when brethren have problems. Preachers have been known to mis-quote, mis-apply, leave false impressions, all in the name of ``exposing'' some brother with whom they disagree.

Honesty is the badge of the Christian. It is necessary for his own personal peace **(Heb. 13:18)**. It has a profound effect on those who are in his sphere of influence **(Col. 3:9)**. For the follower of Christ, honesty is not just the best policy, it is the only policy.

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No Greater Love  
By Gerald Cowan

No one has known a greater love  
Than God’s great love for you.  
No love has been more constant and  
No love has been more true.  
It’s always for your good, not His,      
And lasts a lifetime through.

God gave His only Son to bring  
Salvation to your soul,  
Repair the damage done by sin  
And make your spirit whole.  
Then how do we repay God’s gift?  
By giving Him control.

He knows the way we ought to take  
And clearly marks the road  
That we must walk to be with Him  
Who shares our heavy load  
And makes a place in heav’n for us –  
The spirit’s true abode.

Satan’s lies may sound so good he’s  
Able to deceive us.  
We speak God’s truth and pray that  
Sinners will believe us.  
God’s love and mercy, giv’n in Christ  
Allows Him to receive us.



**KIDS**

**COLUMN**



**A Little Story About a Lot of People**

By Robert F. Turner

As Joe entered the store, John was leaving. Joe spoke pleasantly, but John looked the other way, and pretended not to hear. John thought, "I guess that will show him his place." Joe thought, "Poor John, seems so distracted these days. He must be worried about something."

As John walked toward the bank, Joe started across the street. John turned about abruptly, and went into the drug store instead. He thought, "I'll not do business in the same building with that Joe." Joe thought, "I believe John is ill. He did look a bit pale."

So Joe skipped the bank, and started into the drug store. John saw him coming, and feeling trapped, he turned his head stiffly to one side, pushed his nose high into the air, and walked out to his car. He thought, "This will burn him to a crisp."

But as John fumbled for the door handle, Joe sprang forward and opened the car for him. "Sorry to learn you have that crick in your neck," he said. "I'll be happy to drive you home if you wish."

That night John rolled and tumbled fitfully. He even felt sick:

JOE SLEPT WELL, THANK YOU.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

By humility and the fear of the LORD Are riches and honor and life. - Proverbs 22:4

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COOKING LESSON

By W. Frank Walton

Suppose you wanted to bake some biscuits, but you didn't know how. Don't worry, the South Carolina chef is in!

Recipe for Biscuits:  
1. Do not use these ingredients: oatmeal, cake mix, grits, chili powder, jalapeno peppers, mashed potatoes or any house construction materials.  
2. Do not drop the dough on the floor.  
3. Do not knead the dough for eight hours.  
4. Do not heat the oven to 700 degrees F.  
5. Do not leave town or forget the biscuits are in the oven.

It might sound silly, but all the above instructions are vitally important that they not be done to have edible biscuits. But all you know is what not to do. This cook failed to tell you what to do with practical, step-by-step instructions.

**Biblical Balance**

This "flaky" parable does have a practical application. The same principle applies to following God's "recipe" of godly living. "*Let him who means to love life and see good days…turn away from evil and do good*" (1 Pet. 3:10,11, NASB). Faithful disciples follow the divine, balanced life of not sinning while being very busy doing good (Rom. 12:9). It is a flawed recipe of righteousness to busy ourselves just knowing what not to do. Christians are God's transformed agents of positive change in an evil world as the salt of the earth and the light of the world. "*For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them*" (Eph. 2:10).

Sometimes it's easy for us to be satisfied with a surrogate standard of soundness to "punch our ticket" to heaven. A church is often called "sound" merely by what it opposes, not in what it actively does. It's a temptation for us to sit back, rehash the things we're not supposed to do and point out what's wrong with everyone else. Yes, we must never neglect hating and opposing sin, false doctrine and worldliness (2 Cor. 7:1; Jude 23; Eph. 5:11; 1 Jn. 4:1). But this alone is not the sum and substance of Christianity. Are we so completely disgusted with sinners and false religions that we're not moved by Christ-like compassion to save the lost? Do we delight in reciting the arguments showing why they're all going to burn in hell? Do we rationalize our laziness and lack of faith in the gospel's power by saying, "Oh, they're lost and they know it. Why bother?" What are we really trying to accomplish as Christians?

David Lipscomb, who was no soft compromiser, wrote "The Practice of Truth" in the Gospel Advocate, November 28, 1907:

"There is great danger that we let opposition to the sects and to error usurp the place of fidelity to God and the practice of truth. It is easier to fight error than it is to practice truth. It is more in harmony with our fleshly nature to fight error and errorists than to subdue the flesh and obey God. So we often substitute that for this. Much of our zeal is for party dogmas rather than for practice of the truth ... >>>

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>>>This party zeal becomes a substitute for love of truth and the practice of godliness. Many preachers seem to think that the way to convert the world is to expose religious error. Hence the preaching to the world is chiefly opposition to the sects. If all the sects were destroyed, it might be easier to convert the world, but the work of converting the world would still have to be done."

**Truth Unbalanced Is Error**

Jesus teaches us a valuable lesson in Matthew 12:43-45. When evil is cast out, good must fill man's heart and actions, or evil will again overtake him. "An idle mind is the Devil's workshop." We cannot be holy just by sterilizing ourselves from evil and doing nothing to avoid contamination. We have confused a spiritual separation with a physical separation from the world. We are to be in the world, but not of the world. It's difficult to motivate saints to fruitful living by the reverse of an idea. "*What must I do to be saved?*" becomes "What must I not do to avoid being lost?'

This is basically "thou shalt not" religion. Seed is wasted if stored in the barn (Jn. 12:24). Salt is worthless remaining in the salt shaker, and a covered light is no light at all. We have a heavenly mandate to go into all the world and turn it upside down for Jesus Christ!

The scribes and Pharisees were meticulously religious. But Jesus condemns them as "*blind guides," "fools,"*

*"hypocrites*," and "*serpents*" because of their practical failures, inconsistencies, and blindness to the truth of God and their true spiritual condition. “…*Do not do according to their deeds to be noticed by men.…Even so you too outwardly appear righteous to men, but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness*" (Matt. 23:3, 5, 28). It is incredible that a church could be "sound" mainly if it theoretically opposes instrumental music, institutionalism, Calvinism, denominationalism and church sponsored recreation; yet, this "sound" church can constantly fuss and fight, the eldership shows little leadership, personal evangelism is rare, hospitality and brotherly love are almost extinct, gossiping and cliques abound, worship is spiritless, and tens of thousands of dollars of Jesus' money is hoarded in the bank in case of a recession. This hypothetical church is "so sound in the truth that it's sound asleep." Some of these symptoms infect too many churches. We can nod our heads in agreement to the truth in the sermon, but forget to walk in the truth when we leave. We don't believe we're saved by "faith only"; we just act like it sometimes.

**Follow the Lord Fully**

Let's be honest with ourselves to follow God's recipe of spiritual success as a total way of life (2 Pet. 1:3). It is good to specifically identify what we should not do. But let's also be more specific in eagerly finding ways to obey. We often generalize obedience by just repeating, "Obey God; live right; keep the commands." These are true but too vague by themselves without a practical plan to implement them.

God's inspired instructions strike a beautiful balance in such practical passages as Matthew 5-7; Romans 12:1-21; 13:7-14; Galatians 5:13-6:10; Ephesians 4-6; Colossians 3-4:6; 1 Thessalonians 5; the book of James, etc. Let's study and visualize the vast applications of these challenging passages. Also, meditation upon the life of Christ isn't just the milk of the Word; it's the meat too! He lived the greatest life ever known. He set the awe-inspiring example of what we can become. It is a life-long pursuit to have "*the mind of Christ*" in every daily situation, so we must continually behold His glory in the Gospels to have His life reproduced in ours. This will help us think holy thoughts and develop godly, action-oriented attitudes. Honestly evaluating our progress is also essential.

Let's learn how to set helpful spiritual goals (1 Cor. 9:24-27). For example, we could set daily goals of systematic Bible study; fervent, believing prayer; meditation upon heaven and Jesus' life, and developing right attitudes while eliminating sin from our lives. We could set weekly goals of attending all the worship services, visiting or calling the sick or spiritually weak, and reading a gospel paper or bulletin. We could set monthly goals of talking to someone about Christ, setting up a Bible study, inviting someone to services, and practicing hospitality. We can set annual goals of trying to convert one person to Christ, having a singing for saints in the home or writing a letter to the editor of a newspaper protesting the evils of pornography or abortion. These are some suggestions.

Let us bear fruit by looking for opportunities to express our faith and love by serving God and others. We all can do something. Let it be said of us, "*They have followed the Lord fully*" (Num. 32:12).

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Do You Know One?

By Huey Hartsell

1. A brother who does not believe in caring for the sick? I do not. But there are many brethren who rightly oppose the churches of Christ building and/or contributing to a hospital. There is no scriptural authority for them to do so.

2. A brother who does not believe in congregational cooperation? I do not. But there are scores of brethren who properly reject the sponsoring church type of cooperation. There is no divine authority for one church becoming the agency through which other churches function.  The examples of cooperation in the New Testament were always concurrent action and never joint action.

3. A brother who does not believe in preaching the gospel?  I do not. But there is a host of brethren who refuse to support any human missionary society. Elders of a church cannot scripturally assume a work and oversight that Christ did not assign them. When an eldership assumes the oversight of a brotherhood work and its treasury, as in the sponsoring church arrangement, they form a society in the eldership and act without divine authority.

4. A brother who believes that Christians have no responsibility toward any needy person unless he is a Christian? I do not. But there are multitudes of brethren who rightly object to the church treasury being depleted by a program of general benevolence for which there is no New Testament authority.

5. A brother who does not believe in caring for orphans? I do not. But there are many brethren who properly oppose church support of human benevolent societies, all of which came into existence during the past century.

6. A brother who does not believe in Christians enjoying clean recreation? I do not. But there are thousands of brethren who correctly protest the misuse of funds, contributed into the church treasury for the furtherance of the gospel, to provide for social and recreational activities. There is no Bible authority for the church undertaking such programs.

7. A brother who does not believe in Christians having a good education? I do not. But there are scores of brethren who justly oppose the colleges soliciting and receiving contributions from the churches.

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If you are visiting with us we want

you to know we are glad you are here!

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A Matter of Choice

By Morris D. Norman

God made man a free moral agent. We are creatures of choice. We have the right and the power to choose day to day activities. This power of choice is expressed in the Bible over and over. Both Moses (Deut. 30:19) and Joshua (24:15) put choices before Israel. But the choices they followed had consequences. They would likely make the choice that suited their own desires at the time, that would best serve their interests. But the choice would set in order chains of events that would not be to their liking.

Today we choose each day the kind of life we want to live, the rule of ethics to govern us, the people we wish to associate with. We usually do this out of selfish concern. But when we do, we also set in order chains of events that bring about end products that we may not like. The social drinker does not choose to be an alcoholic, to lose his job, family and friends, nor to have a damaged liver, but all too often that is what he gets. The criminal does not choose to go to jail when he robs or kills, but that's where he winds up.

When the prodigal son left home to enjoy spending his inheritance, he did not intend to end up in the hog pen, starving and friendless, but it was inevitable with that choice he made. Lot chose to pitch his tent toward Sodom because of the personal advantages it held for him and his family. He did not intend to choose to end up on a mountain having sons born by acts of incest with his own daughters. He did not intend to lose his wife and all his possessions in the destruction of Sodom. But all this he did, because "he pitched his tent toward Sodom" (Gen. 13:12).



**KIDS**

**COLUMN**



Can We See The Bible Alike?

By Johnny Polk

Moses said we could (Deut. 29:29). David said we could (Ps. 119:104). John said we could (Jn. 20:30,31). Jesus prayed that we might (Jn. 17:20). All of these spokesmen for God have declared that through study of the Scriptures we are enabled to see them alike.

There are some things that HINDER a clear understanding of the Bible:

- Relatives (Matt. 19:29; 10:34-37)

- Pride (Prov. 14:12; 16:18; Rev. 3:17-18)

- Majority opinion (Ex. 23:2; Matt. 7:13-14,21)

- False doctrines (Matt. 13:14-15; 2 Thess. 2:9-12)

- Satan (2 Cor. 4:3-4)

If we will accept only the word of God (1 Pet. 4:11), we would not only see the Bible alike, but understand and practice it alike (1 Cor. 1:10).

Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth, Before the difficult days come, And the years draw near when you say, "I have no pleasure in them"

- Ecclesiastes 12:1.

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We do not intend to lose our children when we become too deeply involved in economic and social affairs to love, train and mature them, but that's the end product of the choice. We do not intend to have delinquent, rebellious children when we chose not to discipline them, to teach them respect for God, parents and others.

No one chooses divorce from the beginning, it is a hard, heart rending experience. But that's the end product of *self-centered neglect*. We all want happy occasions with exciting mates but in our day to day choices we ourselves are not contributing to that end. We blame others when we are at fault. We made choices long ago that resulted in the end product. We like to sow but we don't like to reap.



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Goats Among Sheep

By Al Diestelkamp

The judgment scene depicted by Jesus has Him separating sheep from goats and inviting the sheep into the eternal kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world (Matt. 25:31-34). Then He explains why the sheep in His flock were invited and the goats were not.

From this we should not be surprised when there are those who portray themselves as part of the flock of God while not fully submitting to the Good Shepherd.

In exhorting elders, Peter described local churches as “the flock of God which is among you” (1 Pet. 5:2). If there are “goats” among the Chief Shepherd’s flock, there no doubt will be “goats” in local churches.

I’m not an expert on farm animals, but some research has taught me that while there are some similarities between sheep and goats there are also some significant differences. To the casual observer, some goats look like sheep and are often in the same pasture, but they behave quite differently.

A shepherd will guide the sheep to “green pastures” and the goats will tag along, but they are willing to eat just about any trash they find along the way. Sheep have a reputation for being submissive and willing to be led, while goats are more independent and sometimes have to be driven. Goats tend to be more stubborn and occasionally combative. To the casual observer, goats may even seem more playful, making the sheep appear somewhat boring.

Of course, when it comes to “sheep” and “goats” in the church, the Lord has no problem distinguishing between them; but the task is a bit more difficult for shepherds in a local flock. Unlike the animal version, the distinction cannot be determined by appearance.

Jesus warns about other intruders whom he describes as “ravenous wolves” dressed “in sheep’s clothing” (Matt. 7:15). (That’s another animal!) It’s by their fruits we can identify them (v.16). It’s not that easy to identify the “goats” among us, especially if we see them doing many “works” (cp. Matt. 7:22).

The goat-like church member often has that independent attitude which is resistant to correction or conformity. If things aren’t to his liking, he is likely to find another local flock where his independence is tolerated. Because of his independent nature, he is liable just to slip away quietly and resist any effort to bring him back into the fold. In some cases, he may even find a whole flock of goats who pride themselves in their non-conformity, even to the point of extending fellowship to some wolves.

The “goats” among the sheep will swallow the doctrines of “wolves” who give lip-service to the authority of the scriptures but find ways of interpreting them to fit their own views of “fairness.” They discount an increasing number of scriptures as not being applicable today by claiming that they were written based on the cultural norms of the first century.

In case you think that I am just being paranoid, let me give you an example of teaching that is being endorsed by some among us. There is a movement among some of our brethren which is being promoted by popular authors and internet bloggers. One such blogger who claims to be an elder in a local church in Alabama has written a 205-page book dedicated to refuting what he calls “legalism” >>>

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>>> which denies women the right to serve as preachers and elders. Imagine that! A book of that length attempting to explain away what the Holy Spirit clearly said is “shameful” **(1 Cor. 14:34-35)** and one of the inspired qualifications of an elder **(1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:6)**. Of course, it doesn’t stop with a single issue. The so-called “progressive movement” is anxious to open the floodgates to many more digressions from God’s word. Hopefully “sheep” will not be moved by such attempts, but I fear for “goats” who may be attracted to such trash.

In the physical world, no matter how much it tries, a goat cannot be transformed into a sheep; but in the spiritual realm, it is possible. It requires being “transformed by the renewing of the mind” **(Rom. 12:2)** and being “clothed with humility” **(1 Pet. 5:5)**. For proud Americans this does not come without effort, for we love our “rights”— almost to a fault. The founding fathers of our nation issued a “Declaration of Independence” that must not be applied to our spiritual lives. When it comes to following the Good Shepherd, we need to issue a “Declaration of Dependence.”

The Chief Shepherd sent the Holy Spirit to guide us into all truth, including how we ought to conduct ourselves in the church **(1 Tim. 3:15)**. This includes obeying and submitting to those who lead us in our local congregations **(Heb. 13:17)**. To do this, we must act like sheep—not like goats.

I have to wonder if one of the reasons more good men don’t “desire the office of a bishop” **(1 Tim. 3:1)** is that they see the flock among them acting more like goats than sheep and can’t imagine being able to shepherd those who have not demonstrated a willingness to submit to their leadership. However, even if my suspicion is correct, it’s not an excuse for failing to “set in order the things that are lacking” **(Tit. 1:5)**.

Perhaps we would all do well to heed the message in the lyrics of a children’s song: “I don’t want to be a goat…nope! ’Cause a goat ain’t got no hope!”

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**KIDS**

**COLUMN**



Death - Falling asleep

"And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.' Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, 'Lord, do not charge them with this sin.' And when he had said this, he fell asleep." (Acts 7:59-60)

The above verse says that when Stephen was stoned, he "fell asleep." Our English word "cemetery" comes from this same Greek word which means "the sleeping of the dead." To label "death" as "falling asleep" is a wholesome thought about death rather than the usual harshness men associate with it. Psalm 116:15 says, "Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of His saints." Rev. 14:13 says, "Write: 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.' 'Yes,' says the Spirit, 'that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them.'"

There have been many unjust killings since the beginning of the world, as was Stephen's. The thing, however, that made Stephen great was not that he was unjustly murdered, but that he died in the Lord. Let us proclaim along with the prophet of old: "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my end be like his!" (Num. 23:10)

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Let Your Words be Few

By David Smelser

For generations, parents have attempted to comfort emotionally wounded children with some version of the saying, “Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never hurt me.” That platitude must ring as hollow to the speaker it as it sounded to me when I was a child. We recognize that words have power – in many ways, much more power than sticks or stones. We sing songs warning against letting “angry words . . . unbridled slip.” Paul urges us in **Colossians 4:6** to “let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt.” Perhaps most ominously, Jesus warns that our careless words reveal the condition and nature of our heart; thus, “On the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak, for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned” **(Matt. 12:36f)**. We generally recognize (though too often fail to modulate) the powerful effect our speech has on our interpersonal relationships and that God holds us accountable for our interactions with each other.

However, we ought to guard our words just as much – if not more – when speaking of spiritual matters directly. In **Ecclesiastes 5**, the Preacher admonishes his readers, “Guard your steps when you go to the house of God. To draw near to listen is better than to offer the sacrifice of fools, for they do not know that they are doing evil. Be not rash with your mouth, nor let your heart be hasty to utter a word before God, for God is in heaven and you are on earth. Therefore let your words be few. . . . When you vow a vow to God, do not delay paying it, for he has no pleasure in fools. Pay what you vow. It is better that you should not vow than that you should vow and not pay. Let not your mouth lead you into sin, and do not say before the messenger that it was a mistake. Why should God be angry at your voice and destroy the work of your hands?”

This passage is a warning to anyone who wishes to come before God to worship. The Preacher first calls us to guard our steps, or to be careful when approaching God. This is reminiscent of Paul’s exhortation for each worshipper to “examine himself” **(1 Cor. 11:28)**. Second, we are warned that it is better to listen than to speak foolishly or hastily. When we come to worship God, have we taken time to listen to what he says before we presume to speak to him or for him? When we come together to sing, are we sure that we are admonishing one another with the “words of Christ” **(Col. 3:16)**, or are we using concepts that are of our own invention? (That is not to say we must only sing what is in red letters in our Bibles. All of Scripture is God’s Word and therefore Christ’s. We must make sure that the thoughts and concepts in our songs are taken from that Word and not from elsewhere.) And when we instruct each other in God’s word either in leading a class or by making comments, have we first spent enough time truly studying the Scripture, knowing that “we who teach will be judged with greater strictness” **(James 3:1)**? “To draw near to listen is better than to offer the sacrifice of fools.” Third, **Ecclesiastes 5** warns us that God takes our vows and commitments to him very seriously. We ought to think very carefully before making commitments like, “All to Jesus I surrender,” or “For Thee, all the follies of sin I resign.” These are bold, though proper, vows. When we sing them, God expects us to keep them.

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>>> Our words have great power. But the point of the Preacher’s words in **Ecclesiastes 5** is not to discourage us from ever worshipping or approaching God. The result of guarding our feet, listening before speaking, and taking our vows seriously is a proper reverence for God, more effective edification of the saints, and a more powerful commitment to our Christian walk. And although we are sometimes faithless and our failures in our words and commitments lead us to a godly fear, God does not remain unapproachable; God, whose words never fail, has given us a faithful, obedient High Priest, the Word, and has promised us access to the throne of grace **(Heb. 4:16)**. Therefore, “Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful” **(Heb. 10:23).**

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Trust In God

"Because the sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." (Eccl. 8:11)

"Every 22 seconds someone in the USA is beaten, stabbed, shot, robbed, raped or killed. Nearly 2 million a year become violent-crime victims. But after doctors patch the wounded or give up on the dead, after the police file their reports, after the media and public tire of yet another tragic story, survivors and their families and friends find their lives ravaged by pain and fear. "You go crazy," says Genelle Reilley, 55, a Laguna Beach, Calif., homemaker whose 23-year-old daughter was stabbed to death in 1986. "We will never be really happy again." (From Robert Davis, USA TODAY, 11-26-93, p. 8A)

In this cruel, evil world of our's, let us wholly trust in our God. He has the answer for every problem from the cradle to the grave. The next verses which follow Eccl. 8:11 say, "Though a sinner does evil a hundred times, and his days are prolonged, yet I surely know that it will be well with those who fear God, who fear before Him. But it will not be well with the wicked; nor will he prolong his days, which are as a shadow, because he does not fear before God." (Eccl. 8:12-13)



**KIDS**

**COLUMN**



Improve Your Life

By Frank Himmel

1. Turn off the TV and read your Bible. The Psalmist said of the blessed man, "His delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night" (Ps. 1:2).

2. Hang up the phone and pray. I never cease to be amazed at how much time some people spend on their cell phones. Is all that talking necessary or profitable? "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5:1 7). "The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much" (Jas. 5:16).

3. Get up out of bed an hour earlier and come to Bible study on Sunday. "As the door turns on its hinges, so does the sluggard on his bed" (Prov. 26:14).

4. Cut down your credit card purchases and give. Give to the poor. Increase your contribution at church. "One who is gracious to a poor man lends to the Lord, and He will repay him for his good deed"   
(Prov. 19:17). "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).

5. Change the conversation from sports, weather, and politics to spiritual things. Do that at home. "These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up” (Deut. 6:6-7). Do that at work, too. "He who wins souls is wise" (Prov. 11:30).

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The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, But fools despise wisdom and instruction.

- Proverbs 1:7

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Pearls in Proverbs: Glorying in Glory

By Irvin Himmel

It is not good to eat much honey: so for men to search their own glory is not glory (Prov. 25:27).

Honey

A highly nutritious food, honey was often found in ancient times in trees, in holes in the ground, in crevices between rocks, and other places where wild bees might choose to build combs. Samson once slew a young lion, later to return and find bees and honey in the carcase. The honey in the carcase of the lion became the subject of a riddle: "Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness" (Judg. 14:5-18).

Jonathan once found wild honey in a forest and his eyes brightened when he ate some of it (1 Sam. 14:25-30). Honey was among the food items brought to David and his men at Mahanaim in the days of Absalom's rebellion (2 Sam. 17:27-29). Wild honey was a basic part of the diet of John the Baptist (Matt. 3:4). But because honey is so rich and sweet, it cannot be eaten in large amounts. While it is recommended for food in Proverbs 24:13, there is a warning about eating too much of it in Proverbs 25:16. "Hast thou found honey? eat so much as is sufficient for thee, lest thou be filled therewith, and vomit it."

Some good things can be bad if indulged in to excess. Happy is the person who avoids overdoing. Just as too much honey can be nauseous, many things can be carried to harmful extremes. Know when to stop. Just as it is not good to eat much honey, there is no glory in one's searching out his own glory. The Amplified Bible gives Proverbs 25:27 as follows: "It is not good to eat much honey, so for men to seek glory, their own glory, causes suffering and is not glory."

(1) Some people fish for praise. Sometimes the real object in one's bragging on another is to solicit a return compliment. He baits the conversational hook with praise, hoping to catch compliments for the feeding of his ego. Sometimes one belittles himself to invite contradiction. He would be furious if someone else said about him what he says about himself. He fully expects to be corrected and told how wonderful he really is!

(2) Some engage in self-centered conversation. They seem to enjoy singing their own praises. But even if one is not praising himself, the habit of talking mainly about one's own self can become offensive to others and appear as egotism.

(3) Preachers are sometimes glory-seekers. And I do not refer now to eternal glory! The example of Paul commends itself to every gospel preacher. "Nor of men sought we glory," said the apostle (1 Thess. 2:6). Preachers seeking the praise of men are a sorry lot. "When Christ is to be exalted, the preacher must be willing to be unnoticed" (G. Barlow).

(4) Some allow the love of human glory to keep them from believing on Jesus. The Lord said to unbelieving Jews on one occasion: "I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive. How can ye believe, which receive honor one of another, >>>

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>>> and seek not the honor that cometh from God only?" (John 5:43,44) As Adam Clarke sums it up, "The grand obstacle to the salvation of the scribes and Pharisees was their pride, vanity, and self-love. They lived on each other's praise... This is the ruin of millions. They would be religious, if religion and worldly honor were connected."

(5) Some allow the love of praise to keep them from confessing Christ. "Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God" (John 12:42, 43). The Pharisees knew what they were doing when they made it a rule that anyone who confessed Jesus as the Messiah would be excommunicated. Some of the chief rulers believed on him, but they dared not confess him. They did not wish to be kicked out of the synagogue because they were more concerned about the praise of men than the praise of God. What a tragedy!

The person who seeks his own glory is little deserving of honor. Self-praise stinks! Self-praise is a poor recommendation. The individual who blows his own trumpet and seeks glory for himself is obnoxious. His attitude is the opposite of the spirit of humility taught by the Master.

There is no glory in one's seeking his own glory, that is, one is not to be praised for seeking honor from others. True honor from the Lord comes to the lowly in spirit. "And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted" (Matt. 23:12).

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**COLUMN**



Is It Narrow Minded?

By Jere Frost

I don’t know about you, but I get a little weary of hearing the word “narrow” used as a slur against preachers who adhere to the Bible in their preaching.  Sure they are “narrow,” but so are factory workers, surgeons, druggists, and teachers.

The factory worker is so “narrow” that he uses micrometers and measures to the thousandth of an inch the bores and pistons of engines, electronic components and balancing wheels in timepieces.

The surgeon is so “narrow” that he insists on ultra-technical laboratory analysis and meticulously sterilized instruments of special design.  Why is he so “picky narrow” that he makes his assistants wear cloths over their faces?

The druggist is so “narrow” that he just has to have a prescription before he will let you have certain drugs.  He says he has to be “narrow” because government regulations are narrow, and even thinks it is for your good!

As you think about it, it’s a blessing that somebody is “narrow-minded.”  And however much we need to be narrow about vital material matters, we must be infinitely more careful and exact about spiritual laws.  God will not be mocked!

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Alcohol problems affect almost 33 million adults in the United States according to a new government survey that suggests rates have increased in recent years.  About 14% of adults were current or recent problem drinkers, and 30% — almost 69 million — had been at some point in their lives.  Nearly 40% of adults surveyed said they had engaged in binge drinking — downing at least five drinks in a day at least once in the past year, up from 31% in a 2002 survey.

- via The Associated Press, 6/3/15

Proverbs 23:29-30  “Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes?  They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine.”



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Making Difficult Decisions

By Steve Klein

Daily life presses us to make decisions.  Many are fairly inconsequential, but some have far-reaching ramifications for ourselves and our loved ones.  Choices regarding employment, marriage and a place of residence will greatly impact the story of one's life.  The local church to which a Christian joins himself may, over the course of a life time, be the difference between making it to heaven's rest or falling short of it (cf. Hebrews 4:1).  Just think of the spiritual peril one would have put himself in by deciding to become a member of the church at Laodicea and allowing himself to be influenced by their attitudes (cf. Revelation 3:14-19).  Other significant life decisions may relate to choosing friends, disciplining children, and participating in civic or social activities.

Such decisions are important.  The thoughtful, mature Christian will see the significance of these decisions, but he will not allow the difficulty involved in making them to detract from the joy he has in Christ.  I have observed (and the Bible reveals) that there are three practical steps successful Christians regularly take when faced with difficult decisions.

#1 They Pray - God is ready and willing to hear the requests of His children (1 John 5:14-15).  The apostles relied on Him in making the difficult decision regarding who would replace Judas (Acts 1:24).  No matter what hard decision confronts us today, we may still, "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" (Philippians 4:6-7).

#2 They Consider the best and worst scenarios - When faced with the choice of living or dying, the apostle Paul recognized that either scenario was good and would please him.  To live on was needful for others and would mean increased fruit for his labor, but to "depart and be with Christ" would be "far better" (Philippians 1:23).  Sometimes in life the "worst that could happen" is something we could tolerate if our attitude is right.  If we, like Paul, believe that the most important outcome of any decision is how it affects our relationship with Christ and His cause, then we will realize that all the alternative outcomes of some decisions are acceptable.

#3 They Determine Pro’s and Con’s Based on Scripture! - God's word is "a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (Psalm 119:105).  It is the most practical tool there is for making life's decisions.  In it God has provided for the Christian "all things that pertain to life and godliness" (2 Peter 1:3).  While a few decisions Christians may face are not specifically addressed in scripture, many are!  Those that are not specifically addressed are often addressed in principle.  The wise decision-making Christian will take all of the truth that applies to his situation and use it to make his decision.  He will not make a decision based on what feels good to him or what he likes best.  Rather, he will rely upon God's word to make the determination.  Specifically, before a decision is made, he will have considered (1) whether or not any option he could choose would hinder his obedience to Christ and (2) whether or not any option he could choose would adversely affect the spiritual condition of others.  Even a choice which would not lead oneself into sin may be "a stumbling block to those who are weak" (1 Corinthians 8:9, 13). Sadly, there are not a few Christians who fail miserably at making difficult decisions precisely because they do not follow these steps.  >>>

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>>> Often it happens that these individuals will seek advice from others for making tough decisions.  When you ask them, "Have you prayed about it?" the answer is, "No, I didn't think about doing that!"  Ask them, "Have you considered what God's word says about it?" and you might hear, "Oh, I didn't even know the Bible said anything about it!"

Proverbs 3:5-6 instructs us to "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths."  The wisdom of an all-knowing God is at our disposal to help us make difficult decisions.  We must trust in Him and avail ourselves of it.

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American Immortality

By Al Diestelkamp

If we can believe the opinion polls which have dominated the news in recent days, the vast majority of Americans have become apathetic toward the problems of immorality. Behavior which was once recognized as immoral has come to be viewed as acceptable.

It is our belief that God, as our Creator, has the right to declare something to be right or wrong. When He does so, it is our responsibility to honor His word on the matter. God has not remained silent on the subject of sexuality. Listen to what His word says: ``Marriage is honorable among all, the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge'' (Heb. 13:4).

Americans once listened to God on this subject. Since the so-called ``sexual revolution'' the conscience of America has been seared to such an extent that when we dare to point out God's condemnation of sexual immorality we are ridiculed as prudish, judgmental or suffering from some form of phobia.



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**COLUMN**



Mud-sitting

"Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others." (Phil. 2:3-4)

A farmer was out plowing his field one spring morning. The spring thaw had just occurred and there were many muddy valleys in the field. Through one particularly wet place his tractor became stuck in the mud. The harder he tried, the deeper he became stuck. Finally, he walked over to his neighbor's to ask for help. The neighbor came over and looked at the situation. He shook his head, and then said, "It doesn't look good, but I tell you what. I'll give it a try pulling you out. But if we don't get it out, I'll come sit in the mud with ya!"

Although we may not all be farmers, we do experience getting "stuck in the mud" from time to time. And chances are we probably know someone who is stuck right now. Have you tried "mud-sitting" with a friend? It may be the best thing you can do! (From **Bible Illustrator**)

Paul said, "...With all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love..." (Eph. 4:1-2)

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There is no doubt that God has greatly blessed our nation, but it would be a mistake for America to take those blessings for granted.  The Old Testament is filled with examples of God blessing nations as long as they furthered the cause of righteousness, but later bringing down those same nations when they persisted in wickedness.

God ordained governments for our good (Rom 13:1-7) and said our leaders are ``sent by Him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good'' (1 Pet. 2:13-14). Our government is developing a pattern of doing just the opposite-praising evil and punishing those who do good. God has a warning about this too: ``Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil...'' (Isa. 5:20).

America has been famous for its pride. The time has come for America to be ashamed! ``Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a shame to any people'' (Prov. 14:34).



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The Indwelling of the Spirit

By Bill Hall

Few people would question the fact that the Holy Spirit in some way dwells within the Christian. Paul wrote to the saints in Corinth: "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you..." (I Cor. 6:19). He further wrote, "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Romans 8:9). There is considerable disagreement, however, as to how the Spirit dwells within a Christian. It is not our aim in this short article to deal with that issue, but we do want to suggest three facts that must be remembered as one studies the question.

(1) The age of miracles is past. The only people in the gospel age who ever performed miracles were those who either received the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4; 10:44-46) or received spiritual gifts through the laying on of the apos­tles' hands (Acts 8:5-23; 19:1-7). No one receives either of these to­day. The purpose of the miracles was to reveal and confirm truth (I Cor. 2:7-13; Mark 16:19,20). Since all truth has been revealed (John 16:13) there is no further need for mira­cles. One's conclusion, therefore, concerning the indwelling of the Spirit must be compatible with this fact.

(2) The Christian is led by the Spirit through the scriptures, the word of God (Psa. 119:105; II Tim. 3: 16,17; Eph. 3:3,4). He does not have some inner voice, separate from the scriptures, that somehow guides him into infallible conclusions in rela­tion   to   truth and   right.     Nor is there anything in the scriptures that suggests that God's providence some­how works through the indwelling of the Spirit. Consequently, one makes a serious mistake if he interprets his feelings or subjective thinking as some kind of message provided by the indwelling Spirit.

(3) Statements concerning the in­dwelling of the Spirit were not placed in the scriptures as problems to be wrestled with. They were placed there for one's assurance and consolation. A Christian sustains a very close fellowship with deity — so close that it can be said that he dwells in deity and deity dwells in him. In persecution, trials, tempta­tions, and death his recognition of this close relationship sustains him and helps him to become triumphant in Christ. The apostles never felt the need to explain how this indwelling takes place. Pentecostalism and oth­er misconceptions concerning the Holy Spirit

force the Christian of this generation to be concerned with this problem. If,

however, statements concerning the indwelling of the Spirit become

primarily to him a problem to be wrestled with; if his obsession with the

"how" of the Spir­it's indwelling blinds him to the "fact" of that indwelling,

he makes a serious mistake and may fail to find the joy and consolation

that should be gained through the Lord's promise.

Differences will continue to ex­ist, but a constant remembrance of these

three facts should protect any one of us from dangerous conclusions in

relation to this question.

**Volume 7 June 28 2015 #26**



Did You Know?...  

By Roger Shouse

That the apostles never used food, games or social activities to draw a crowd so they could preach to them?

Yet in many churches today, even some calling themselves "Church of Christ," the social programs are so extensive that a social director or a "youth minister" must be hired to oversee the social planning.

Although schools existed in the first century, and the apostle Paul even taught in one for 2 years (Acts 19:9,10), no churches ever supported them financially?

Yet in many churches today, even some calling themselves "Church of Christ," the financial supporting of "Christian schools" or "Colleges" is a regular part of the budget.

That the apostle Paul illustrated many of his epistles with analogies from sporting events (1 Cor. 9:24,25). Yet no church sponsored or had sporting teams?

Yet in many churches today, even some calling themselves "Church of Christ," the sporting activities are so much a part of the work that full scale gyms have been built.

If these things mentioned above were not a part of the early church and we do not find them in the Bible, WHY are churches doing them today?  And who gave them the RIGHT to do it? These things ought not to be!  "And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Col. 3:17).

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**COLUMN**



Hell and Judgment

"He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS." (Rev. 19:13-16)

The idea of hell and judgment are nowhere to be found in Betty Eadie's bestseller, **Embraced By The Light,** which was on the N.Y. Times bestseller list for more than 40 weeks, including 5 weeks as #1. Eadie allegedly died after undergoing a hysterectomy, and returned five hours later with the secrets of heaven revealed by Jesus. Eadie says that while she was in heaven with Jesus, He "never wanted to do or say anything that would offend me." Thus, her book demotes Jesus to nothing more than the role of a happy tour guide, not the King of kings and Lord of Lords who rules with a rod or iron. It is sad to think that multitudes enjoy reading such nonsense.

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Every Part Counts

He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much." (Luke 16:10)

From an experience of her childhood, Mrs. Floyd Crook recalls how a great truth was impressed upon her with special meaning. She writes, "I came home from school one day crying because

I had been given only a small part in the children's program, while my playmate got

the leading role. After drying my tears, my mother took off her watch and put it in my

hand. 'What do you see?' she asked. 'A gold case, a face, and two hands,'

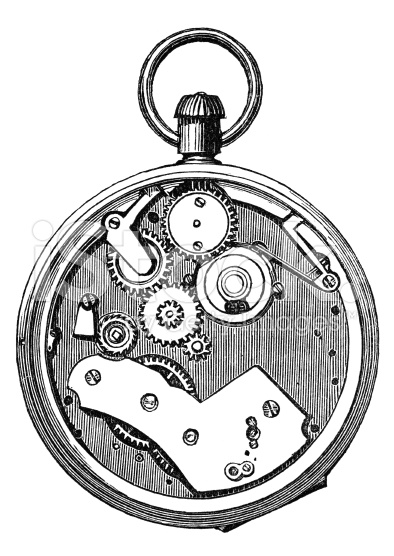
I replied. Opening the back, she repeated the question. I told her I saw many

tiny wheels. 'This watch would be useless,' she said, 'without every part -

even the ones you can hardly see.' That object lesson has helped me

all through life to see the importance of the small duties we're asked

to perform."





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Too Little Too Late

By Mark White

Why is it we get interested in the right things when it’s just too late?

A young couple marries, but take one another for granted. He abuses his position as husband, and she resists everything he says or does. Years pass with such neglect, abuse, and mistreatment They end up in a divorce court. In the process of working out a settlement, the husband decides he wishes to repent and reconcile with his wife. Why now? Where was this penitent disposition when it would have saved the marriage? She may resist his offer, deciding that it's no use trying anymore. For her, it’s a case of “too little, too late.”

A foolish and immature son becomes estranged from his parents. He never calls, never visits, never shares his life with them. The parents agonize, but there is little they can do to have a relationship with a child who wants nothing to do with them. Years pass. Age takes its toll on the parents. One day the son receives a call. His mother is dead. He attends the funeral, weeps loudly and uncontrollably — but for what? The opportunity to love his mother and develop a relationship with her is gone forever. He may now see his immaturity, his selfishness, his ungodly character. He may repent and do better in the future, even caring for his widowed and aged father. But as far as his mother is concerned, it’s “too little, too late.”

A man lives an immoral and profligate life. He has no time for spiritual things, and has never made preparation for eternity. God is in none of his thoughts. He disdains the “holy Joes” that do their best to serve God. The day of judgment comes, and he knows it is “too late.” He never prepared himself to meet God. Now he confesses Christ (as all will do, Phil. 2:11) but it is too late. Why didn’t he do it in life when he had time and opportunity? He now receives the consequences of choices he made, and his penitent spirit is just a little bit “too little, too late.”

Perhaps some personal offense was never corrected and the person to whom you needed to apologize has since died. It to late to right a past wrong under such circumstances Does not have to be a “forever failure”? No! Pray to God for His forgiveness, and make whatever restitution you can for the wrong you committed. As long as the world stands and life is in your body, it is never too late to do the right thing, whether that is little or much.

As a youth, serious mistakes may have been made and sins committed which have followed you into adulthood. Don't let the past keep you from repentance immediately. God will accept you, even now. “Today” is the day of salvation (Heb. 3:15). Let's use it before it is “too little, too late.”

**Volume 7 July 5 2015 #27**



Song Selection

By Erin Percell

Song leaders face a difficult challenge in selecting songs for worship services.  There are the ‘old standards’ that have been known and loved for many years and there are the newer songs preferred by many of our young people.  What I favor is variety among scriptural songs.

When we sing only a few songs over and over again, they can become stale, and it is easy for us to simply mouth the words without thinking about them. So I try to make sure that the congregation where I am a member gets to use a variety of songs. Since several other song leaders are more comfortable with songs they have known for a long time, it's often my job to introduce some that are newer or less familiar. But one of my goals is enough variety that our minds remain occupied with the objective of worship, not overly confused by a wave of new & unknown things, and not lulled to sleep by endless repetition of a few familiar hymns.

Of the newer generation of songs, there are some that I will not lead because they seem to be written for their performance value rather than for edification. I am aware of a song in which the four vocal parts are singing four different sets of words at the same time, and it seems to me that this cannot lead to us edifying one another any more than (in the 1st Century) having four different prophets speaking at the same time rather than in turn (1 Cor. 14:29-30). I am aware of another song where the first verse is intended to be sung only by a few people, and those who sing soprano are invited to join only in the 4th verse, and I won't lead that one, either, because I don't think it's right for most of the audience to be sitting idle while 3 verses go by. I also think that the newer generation of songs tends to be more ‘emotional’. What I mean is that they seem to be written to express more awe than praise - to emphasize our own reaction to God, and that tends to lead many of them to focus more on us than on God. That's not always a bad thing in small doses, but a



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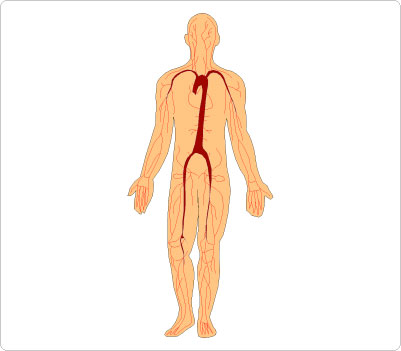
We are fearfully and wonderfully made

"I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, And that my soul knows very well. My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, And skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth." (Psalm 139:14-15)

The body's entire structure, from head to foot, is a miracle of precision engineering and production. No matter what portion of the human body is considered, one cannot but be impressed with what a marvelous mechanism each member is. The major organs alone--and there are 10 of them--perform such unique feats of electric conduction that it would take a big book to explain each one adequately. In the fraction of a second that it takes you to read one word on this page, the marrow in your bones produces over 100,000 red blood cells. (From Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations)

Truly, we are fearfully and wonderfully made by an awesome Creator. To say that it all just happened by chance is sheer nonsense.

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couple of songs are written with so much ‘mush’ that I literally cannot understand what they are expressing. If I don't understand the message, I don't lead the song.

Our objective is to worship. Scriptural content is the first goal, and the second is an atmosphere where the focus is worship. Too little variety and too much novelty are both distracting, as I said above.  Furthermore, a song should be within the vocal capabilities of the people in the audience, or it will fall flat and disrupt the mood.



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The Lord Looks on the Heart

By Irven Lee

"For the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart" (1 Sam. 16:7). In speaking of Christ it was said, "He needeth not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man" (John 2:25). There are some soul searching questions one might consider because God is not mocked. He knows our thoughts and motives, and He judges according to what He sees inside.

It is better that man not be left to handle this matter of trying to settle the question as to each man's destiny. He would make many mistakes. Two older men were talking about whether it was best to withdraw from a certain man. They did not agree as to the guilt of the man in question. One said, "I would hate for one who was considered a member in good standing with this church to die and go to hell." The other said, "I would hate for one who dies and goes to heaven to be one from whom we had just withdrawn." Men should be very careful in obeying the command to withdraw from the disorderly (2 Thess. 3:6; Rom. 16:17, 18). Patience, love, and wisdom should be there to help us when we seek to use righteous judgment (John 7:24).

The hypocritical Pharisees and the unbelieving Sadducees did condemn the Christ and many saints to harsh persecution and death. When Stephen and other such people were condemned, their eternal destiny was not endangered. Heaven's court is the supreme court and makes the final decisions. In our generation many of the supporters of institutionalism and church support of recreation have considered those who walked in the safe way to be unworthy of fellowship. I am glad that these bitter digressive preachers are not the ones to determine our final destiny.

For what will Christ, the great Judge, be looking when He separates the sheep from the goats? He will be looking for genuine love for God and men. The two greatest commandments are evidently very important \* He will look for the love that will bring about obedience (read John 14:15, 21, 23; 1 John 2:4; 5:3). He will also look for the love that will properly regulate man's behavior to his fellow man (Rom. 13:10; James 2). A little touch of emotionalism will not suffice as a substitute for loving obedience.

The Judge will be looking for those who hunger and thirst after righteousness. (Mt. 5:6; 1 Pt. 2:2; 2 Tim. 2:15, 16; Heb. 5: 12-14.) People perish through lack of knowledge. We speak as the oracles of God and we walk by faith. It is very important for us to be able to discern between good and evil. We are to be able to give a reason for the hope within us. We are to be apt to teach and to stop the mouths of gainsayers. Is the lack of knowledge and the lack of desire to learn about the greatest dangers facing us now? It is a noble spirit that searches the Scriptures daily to see what is true.

The Judge looks for those who grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord. We never learn all there is to know, but we can grow in this precious knowledge. We are to go on unto perfection. We are to press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling (2 Pet. 3:18; Heb. 6: 1; Phil. 3:14).

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>>> All men everywhere are commanded to repent. If we ever decide that we have graduated with the class that knows everything and has added all the faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love that can be added we are unprepared for judgment. We all will need to find mercy even when we have done our best.

That man who works out his salvation with fear and trembling and gives diligence to make his calling and election sure is the best man I can picture in my mind. That devout person who is in his Father's kingdom contending for the faith needs to study and press on toward perfection, confessing his sins and his need of mercy along the way. This servant will make it to heaven, but only by grace. Christ died that people like this may enter in through the gate into the city. Now, at this time, if we truly set our affections on things above we may lay hold of the hope set before us.

The Philippian jailer and his family were babes in Christ the morning after they were baptized as penitent believers, but their sins had been washed away. If they lived for years but never walked in newness of life they would surely be lost. The Lord handles the final judgment as one who knows what is in man and He knows His Father's will. Each will be judged fairly according to the deeds done in his body.

A first grade pupil at school may have high marks on his report card even though his big brother knows more than he does. The graduate student should know much more than that one in the first grade. The assignments given the graduate student will be much more difficult than that which is expected of the beginner. "For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more" (Luke 12:48).

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Let’s Talk About ‘ME’!

By Greg Gwin

An old joke tells of a fella who had a blind date with a young lady.  He spent the whole evening talking about himself.  Finally, near the end of the date, he said: “I’ve talked about myself enough.  Now you talk about me.”  Ouch!  That’s the first and last date for that guy!

Unfortunately, that joke is played out too literally in these days.  Seems folks have lost the skill of common and courteous conversation.  So often people spend most of their time talking about themselves, their families, their activities and interests, etc.  Have you noticed how seldom certain individuals ask about you, your work, or your family?

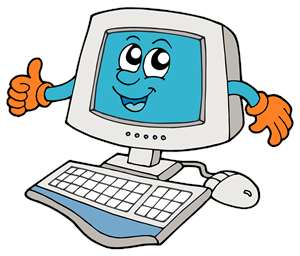
This self-centeredness has been encouraged and promoted on the pages of social media.  Facebook and similar sites are overrun with people talking about themselves; posting flattering pictures of themselves; telling about their own achievements and those of their children and relatives.  There is a new narcissism that exceeds anything ever seen before.

God’s Word warns that a person is “not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think” (Romans 12:3).  We are urged to “consider one another” (Hebrews 10:24), and to do things that will “edify one another” (1 Thessalonians 5:11).  We should “look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others” (Philippians 2:4).  Paul’s example was of one who was “not looking for praise from men, not from you or anyone else” (1 Thessalonians 2:6).

Personal pride and selfish arrogance have no place in the heart of a Christian.  Let’s be careful not to follow the current trend of ‘self-ism’.  Think!

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God Is Love

By Kent E. Heaton, Sr.

The definition of love can best be understood not by its meaning in words but the outpouring of action.  In that action, love is best defined by the person giving it than the one receiving it.  This action says more about the person than it does the meaning of love.  “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.  For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.”  (John 3:16,17)

The love of God is understood by His action of giving His only begotten Son to become flesh and live among wicked men.  In sending the Christ to the earth, God was sending Him to a world overcome by sin and iniquity.  His pure Son was being placed in an environment of hatred, fleshly lust, war, ungodliness, envy and every dark shadow of sin that Satan could muster.  In giving His Son, God expressed His love for the whole of mankind.  This giving was not based upon the merits of man’s righteousness.  “But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.” (Titus 3:4-7)

The love of God is mercy; the love of God is grace; the love of God is justification of man through obedience; the love of God is eternal life.  God’s love is an expression of kindness to undeserving people who in the hours of extreme hatred put to death an innocent man.  Not only was Jesus innocent but He was innocent before God with no sin.  The words of God’s love echoed throughout the eternal dwelling places and the four-corners of a dying planet “with a loud voice, saying, “Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?” which is translated, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” (Mark 15:34)

Hanging cruelly between the world He left and the world He created, the Son of God bore the love of God to mankind.  He became the offering of sin; He became the atonement of separation; He became “the way, the truth and the light.”  (John 14:6)  In this moment, salvation was established through the abundance of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, God’s Son.  The love of God is known and affirmed by this death.  The greatest love was offered in the greatest degree by the greatest thought manifested through the greatest gift with the greatest invitation of the greatest hope in everlasting assurance of the greatest reward.

“He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”  (1 John 4:8-10)  To know God is to know His love.  Our love is because of God’s love for us and by His gift of the Christ, we have the blessed assurance of eternal life.

Jesus said, “If you love Me, keep My commandments ... But why do you call Me `Lord, Lord,’ and do not do the things which I say?”  (John 14:15; Luke 6:46)  Love is not just words but actions of obedience.  “You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.”  (James 2:24)  God so loved the world - do you so love God?  Express your love in obedience to the truth.

**Volume 7 July 19 2015 #29**

The Procrastinating Servant

By Jack Williams

14 years old - “I’ve just become a Christian, I don’t know enough and I’m still too young to be involved in the work of the church.”

16 years old - “l’ve just got my driver’s license. I have to work to take care of my driving expenses. And of course this is the time in my life when I am very busy with friends, and you wouldn’t believe all the school activities I have!  I’ll get involved a little later.”

18 years old - “I just graduated from high school! Now I need a little time for myself before I enter the ‘real world.’  I’ll have more time for the work of the church later.”

20 years old - “I never knew college took so much time! When I get out and on my own I’ll have time for church work then.”

22 years old - “Boy, did you have any idea how hard it was to get started in the work place? It takes all my energy to get my career on line. And on top of that I just got married... I have to spend time to mold my new family life, too. In a couple of years I’ll be ready to really dig into the work of the church.”

24 years old - “Children! I never believed my parents when they told me how much time and money it took to raise them. I sure don’t have time for the work of the church now ... but when my kids get older I’ll be able to do my share of the work then.”

36 years old - “It seems the older the kids get the more they are involved in! Home from work, then to the school functions, then sports ... I’ll be glad when the kids get older so I can really be involved in the work of the church.”

46 years old - “I’ve never had so much fun! Grandchildren! I should have had them first (Ha!). I can’t deprive them ... when they get older I’ll be able to really be involved in the church.”

56 years old - “I’m on my last push at work now. I’ve got to really bear down for a few years now so I can be ready for retirement. And of course we have our place at the lake we’re fixing up. In a few years I’ll be able to quit the ‘rat race’ and really get involved in the church.”

66 years old - “Retirement at last! I’ve worked hard so many years and now I can enjoy the fruit of my efforts. It’s time now for the young ones here at church to carry on and let us ‘veterans’ rest a little.”

Instead of such a person as described above, isn’t it great to see people who can use their abilities in God’s service NOW?  Which are YOU?



**KIDS**

**COLUMN**



God’s Image

By Shane Williams

Marcus Terentius Varro (118 - 27 BC) is described as “Rome’s greatest scholar.” He wrote more than 400 books on many subjects. Among his writings is this statement. “They who first introduced images of the gods removed fear and added error.”

This thoughtful statement helps us understand even more why Moses reminded Israel at Sinai of God’s form. Deut. 4:14, “You saw no form when the Lord spoke to you at Horeb out of the midst of the fire.”  It also highlights the reason behind God’s command prohibiting any physical depictions of Him. Vs. 16, “lest  you act corruptly and make for yourselves a carved image in the form of any figure.”  Exodus 20:4, “You shall not make for yourselves any carved image or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above or that is in earth beneath or that is in the water under the earth.”

We cannot love and serve the Lord in an acceptable manner unless we have an accurate understanding of His character.  Any physical portrayal, however, whether with pictures, symbols, or statues, distorts our awareness of His true character and lessens a healthy respect for His awesome holiness and power.  If we knew what God really looked like, we would inevitably make an image and seek to understand him through that image, instead of through what is revealed in His Word.

If Rome’s greatest worldly scholar could see the dangers of misrepresenting their false gods, how much more should we who have God’s Word, which makes us complete for every good work, understand the danger.

Our desire must be to have a proper respect for God and to grow in our knowledge of Him. We are made in the image of God, let us not make Him in our image.

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Perils to the Soul

By Rick Duggin

Have you noticed the growing fascination that some have with other people’s perils? They pay good money to watch stunt drivers jump a string of cars, or a tightrope walker make his way across a tiny rope 200 feet above the pavement. We marvel when someone unnecessarily puts himself at risk.

The greatest risk of all is the danger that threatens our soul. Paul warned that perilous times would bring dangers that threaten to undo us (2 Tim. 3-4). These perils include:

1. Ignorance of God's Word. Some will “creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth” (3:6-7). Those who do not know God's word are fair game for religious racketeers.

2. Doctrines of Men. “Now as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the faith” (3:8). The Egyptian magicians resisted Moses by imitating his works. Satan is the great imitator. What God does, he counterfeits, forcing us to distinguish between truth and error.

3. Prejudice. “But they will progress no further, for their folly will be manifest to all, as theirs also was” (3:9). One who judges before he knows the facts is prejudiced. Some students searched the Scriptures and rejected the truth, while the Bereans searched the same passages and received the truth (read John 5:39; Acts 17:11). How can the same act (studying the Bible) produce such different results? The first group was prejudiced; the other, honest.

4. Desire to Please Men. Paul warns Timothy that God will judge him (2 Tim 4:1), and therefore he must continue to tell people what they need to hear, whether they like it or not (vs. 2). One of Timothy's greatest problems would be the "itching ears" of those who demand something besides truth (3-4).

Covet correction and don't let these perils steal your soul!

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Thinking About HELL

"And I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after He has killed, has power to cast into hell; yes, I say to you, fear Him!" (Luke 12:4-5)

Some people seem to take comfort in the fact that they will not be the only ones in hell. They somehow think that hell will be more tolerable because there will be a great crowd there. What foolish reasoning! Let us heed the warning of Jesus and avoid hell at all cost.

**Volume 7 July 26 2015 #30**



When Church Is Boring

By Frank Himmel

What do you do when you find that church is boring? It’s time for a change! Now the question is, change what?

Many folks think the answer is to change the church. I just read an article about a new church created for men only, men who find church boring. Discarding more traditional environments, they meet in a gymnasium one Saturday evening a month. A rock band provides entertainment. The preacher speaks in front of the scoreboard, with the clock running. He guarantees to have them out in one hour! This sort of innovation is not unusual. Many religious leaders hail it as a positive development, a way to reach out to those who otherwise would have no interest in church.

Some might not go that far, yet they still insist on change. Contemporary music, drama, and short sermons that are little more than pep talks are the order of the day. Clapping and cheering have replaced old fashioned amens. Celebration and praise are the buzzwords, with the world’s calendar dictating the subject celebrated.

Malachi lived at a time when people found “church” boring. Speaking of Israel’s worship, God said through the Prophet, “You also say, ‘My, how tiresome it is!’ And you disdainfully sniff at it” (Mal. 1: 13).

God proposed two changes to these who turned up their noses at His worship. One was to just stay home. “Oh that there were one among you who would shut the gates, that you might not uselessly kindle fire on My altar! I am not pleased with you” (v. 10). The better solution, the change He preferred, was to repent. “‘If you do not listen, and if you do not take it to heart to give honor to My name,’ says the Lord of hosts, ‘then I will send the curse upon you’” (2:2). Notice what God did not approve: changing the structure or activities of worship to accommodate individual tastes.

The preacher can work to make his sermons more interesting, the song leader can try to select more meaningful hymns, and the one who leads in prayer can give more thought to what he says. However, when worship as God directed is boring, the main change that is needed is in the heart of the worshiper.



**KIDS**

**COLUMN**



Painting Possums

By Greg Gwin

Several years ago we knew a man with the unusual hobby of trapping possums. No, he didn't eat them. He painted them! That's right - he would catch these critters in a box trap, and then he painted them with fluorescent paint and released them. Sounds weird, doesn't it? But this fella had a ball with his "off the wall" hobby. And imagine the folks in the small town where he lived! What would you think if you saw a bright orange possum rummaging through your garbage? And if you came in late one night, it probably would not be wise to tell your family that you saw a "hot pink" possum crossing the street - they'd have good cause to wonder about you! One thing about those possums though - there's was no mistaking it when you saw one of them.

It would be nice if religious false teachers could be marked in a similar way. Wouldn't it be something if everyone who taught a false doctrine or practiced religious error suddenly sprouted orange hair? It sure would look funny when some religious groups met together for worship. It would look something like a convention of "punk rockers"!  These days, almost everyone would be sporting some unnatural hair color.

It will never happen though. False teachers don't stand out that plainly in a crowd. Paul warned of "deceitful workers disguising themselves as servants of righteousness" (2 Cor. 11:13-15). We must be on our guard: "Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (1 Jn. 4:1). We can see them clearly by comparing their teachings to the plain word of God.

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Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life. - Proverbs 4:23.

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IGNORING SIN

By Mike Johnson

A very common statement made by many people today is, "I just don't let it bother me."  In many areas, we would all be better off taking this approach.  With sin, however, this is a very dangerous approach.  Many people are very complacent regarding their sin, and instead of seeking a remedy for them, sin is simply ignored.

The ignoring, or dismissing, of sin by people is probably one of the most common improper reactions toward sin, but it is not the correct way to deal with sin.  A person, for example, who has some terminal disease may choose to push thoughts of the disease out of his mind, but this does not make the disease go away.  The same is true with regard to sin.  We may choose to ignore or dismiss it, but this does not change its consequence.

We will notice some examples of certain people in the Bible who ignored their sins.  Perhaps we can learn from their folly and not follow the same course of action.

ASA - Asa, a king of Judah, serves as an Old Testament example of a person who simply ignored his sin.  His story is recorded in II Chronicles 16.  Here we learn that  the king of Israel began to build the city of Ramah to serve as a fortification against Jerusalem and the nation of Judah.  Asa got Syria to attack Israel in order to nullify the threat against them.  The plan worked, and the attack accomplished its purpose.

The above plan might seem acceptable.  However, there was a problem with it as Asa did not rely on God in dealing with this difficulty.  He was rebuked by Hanani, a seer, who said, " . . .Because you have relied on the king of Syria, and have not relied on the Lord your God, therefore the army of the king of Syria has escaped from your hand.*”* (v. 7).  Hanani further noted (v. 9) that God had helped them in the past, and that God's eyes, "run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him."

We are told that Asa was later afflicted with a disease, and even then he would not seek God but *sought only the physicians*.

UZZIAH - Uzziah, also of the Old Testament and a king of Judah, serves as another example of a person who ignored his sin.  Uzziah effectively ruled Judah for many years and was a righteous man (II Chron. 26).  God caused him to prosper, but eventually he developed pride.  We are told (v. 16) that his heart was *lifted up to his destruction*.  He sinned by trying to invade the function of the priest, perhaps wanting to be both a priest and king.  He was rebuked by Azariah, a priest.  Would Uzziah react differently than Asa and repent?  Again, the answer is NO!  He simply got mad choosing to ignore his sin.  While in the midst of this confrontation, Uzziah was afflicted with leprosy by God, and he remained a leper until he died (vs. 19-20).

FELIX - In Acts 24, we are told about Paul preaching to a ruler named Felix.  Paul reasoned with Felix of “righteousness,” “temperance,” and of the “judgment to come” (v. 25).  This caused Felix to tremble.  He was affected by what Paul had said, but he did not do anything about it.  Instead, he responded, “*Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.”*  Felix chose to do nothing >>> >>>

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>>> his sins choosing instead to ignore them.  As far as we know, Felix never found a convenient season to obey God.

THE ATHENIANS - Consider the Athenians, the last example, whose story is recorded in Acts 17.  Here we see that Paul preached on Mars Hill in Athens.  Athens was a city that was greatly involved in idolatry, and Paul tried to get these people to understand about the true God.  He told them about the God who made the world, and pointed out He is the Lord of heaven and earth, and is not worshiped with men’s hands (vs. 24-26).  In verse 31, Paul spoke to them about the resurrection.  When they heard his message, they were not willing to repent of their sins.  Instead (v. 32), “*some mocked: and others said, we will hear thee again of this matter*."

CONCLUSION - Many people today are like Asa, Uzziah, Felix, and the Athenians as they ignore their sins.  These people in the Bible did not escape responsibility for their sins by ignoring them and neither can we.  Ignoring sin is an alternative man has, but it will cause him to be lost eternally.  Instead of ignoring sin, a non-Christian must believe (Jn. 3:16), repent (Acts 2:38), confess Christ (Rom. 10:10), and be baptized (Acts 2:38, Mk. 16:16).  The Christian who sins must repent, pray, and confess his sins (Acts 8:22, I Jn. 1:8-10).

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**KIDS**

**COLUMN**



“AND I THOUGHT I WAS A LIAR”

*“Therefore, putting away lying, ‘Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor,’ for we are members of one another.” (Eph. 4:25)*

*A little boy visited his aunt, who reprimanded him for telling a lie. “Do you know,” she warned, “what happens to little boys who tell lies?” “No, what, Auntie?” the little boy asked. “Well,” she said, “there is a man up in the moon, a little green man with just one eye, who sweeps down in the middle of the night and flies away to the moon with little boys who tell lies and makes them pickup sticks all the rest of their lives. Now you won’t tell lies any more, will you, for it’s awfully, awfully naughty?” The little boy pondered in his heart, “And, I thought I was a liar!”*

*Let us always speak the truth. “...All liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.” (Rev. 21:8)*

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Attitude Is Everything

By Jason Malham

“*But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them*.” (Acts 16:25)

There is nothing that has a greater impact on our lives than our own attitude.  Consider Paul and Silas.  They had undergone at Philippi what could only be described as spiteful treatment.  (1Thess. 2:2) They were manhandled by men who dragged them to the city authorities. They were afforded no trial -- no benefit of the doubt. They were stripped naked and beaten with rods.  They were bruised and humiliated.  They were thrown into prison as though they were outlaws and heavily guarded as though they were the vilest of them. (Acts 16:19-24)

Their feet were fastened in stocks which history teaches were long wooden beams that kept the prisoner’s legs spread apart insuring that they remained immobile.  At midnight, when most were found sleeping, Paul and Silas were trying to find courage and strength.  While most others were dreaming, they were aching and bleeding.

Yet even the most brutal abuse could not drive them to despair.  They were “praying and singing hymns to God”.  Even the most savage treatment could not smother their desire to praise God.  Why?  Paul and Silas had outstanding attitudes.  That’s why.

Be advised that without proper attitude nothing good can be accomplished in our lives.  Without a godly disposition, every spiritual molehill will seem an insurmountable mountain.  Without an attitude that looks unto Jesus, we will be weighed down and beset.  (Heb.12:1-2)

But if ours is an attitude that recognizes Jesus Christ as a constant, powerful force in our lives, we can do all things through Him.  (Phil. 4:13)  There will never be an affliction so oppressive as to shake our faith or quench our zeal if we have an appropriate attitude.  Attitude is everything.

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FELLOWSHIP

By Bill Hall

What about fellowship? Doesn't the Bible teach that the church is to have fellowship? Indeed!

The Bible does teach that the church is to have fellowship. But what a lot of people have overlooked is the fact that the word "fellowship" in the Scriptures has to do with spiritual activities. I have before me a photocopy out of a book that I have which contains every Scripture that uses the Greek word for fellowship. An interesting thing about this is — not one time does it have reference to social fellowship. What does the word fellowship mean? It is defined as “sharing, communion, and participation in, joining together."

Another usage of "fellowship" in modern times is social fellowship. This is where we smell the doughnuts and coffee. Friday night a bunch of us got together and had some elk stew, and I tell you it was all right. We had a good time together. We socialized together. We shared in the eating of elk stew and a few other things that some of the people brought. Are you aware that the Bible never uses the word “fellowship" in reference to such social activities?

Still another use of "fellowship" has to do with spiritual things. Every time, every time the word is used in regards to the church's activity, it is always this. And to my knowledge, there is not one Scripture in the Bible that uses the term "fellowship" in regard to eating elk stew, or whatever socializing we do together. Not one Scripture that uses the word "fellowship" like that. Fellowship has everything to do with our sharing together in spiritual things.

What has happened to us, brethren, when every time we hear the word "fellowship" we immediately think in terms of fun and games and eating and drinking together? What has happened to us that we see that, every time we see the word “ ellowship," when it is never used in the Bible that way?

No, you cannot find the authority for a local church, as a part of its program of work, planning and providing materials for social activities in the word “fellowship" in the Bible, because it doesn't use the word "fellowship" in that way.

May I make this point? The local church were you are a member has a fellowship hall. Let me say that again. The local church where you are a member has a fellowship hall. When you are assembled together with the other members share together in worshiping God and studying God's word, you are in it! We must learn that this is the kind of fellowship that the Bible talks about.

Is there a place for social activities? Indeed. But let me provide for hospitality. Let me provide for social events. And if others want to join with me in that, that's fine. But let not the church be charged or burdened (cf. 1 Tim. 5:16) with providing for social activities, so the church can do the things God has told His church to do. It's just that simple. And nowhere in the Scriptures is there anything to indicate that the church is to provide materially and plan for social activities. That is the issue. That is where the truth lies.

**Volume 7 August 9 2015 #32**

IRONY

By Bryan Matthew Dockens

Irony, according to the American Heritage Dictionary, is "The use of words to express something different from and often opposite to their literal meaning". Consider the following examples.

"Please Drink Responsibly." Out of context, this statement might be suggesting that consumers should exercise reasonable precautions with ordinarily harmless beverages. For instance, a cup of steaming hot coffee should be handled in such a way as to avoid spilling it on one's lap. However, every television viewer recognizes these words from advertisements promoting alcoholic beverages. That's ironic because there is no responsible way to consume an alcoholic beverage. The consumption of alcohol leads directly to drunkenness, which is explicitly and repeatedly forbidden in scripture (Romans 13:13; 1 Corinthians 6:10; Galatians 5:21). Intoxication is doubly sinful in that it prevents self-control, a necessary quality in every Christian (Galatians 5:23; 2 Peter 1:6). There’s nothing responsible about drinking alcohol.

"Please Play Responsibly." This phrase might be used to warn a pitcher not to bean the batter. Instead, these words come from advertisements promoting lotteries in those states where such is legal. The lottery is a form of gambling which involves the drawing of lots for a prize. There is no such thing as responsible gambling because gambling is covetous (Ephesians 5:3; Hebrews 13:5), and violates the principle of legitimate gain (Ephesians 4:28; 2 Thessalonians 3:10-12).

"Practice Safe Sex." To a Christian, this means that sexual intercourse is reserved for marriage and marriage alone. Sadly though, safe sex to the world means taking precautions – even while engaging in sex with various partners – to make sure you don't contract STDs and HIV. The only safe sex that has ever existed is intercourse with one's own husband or wife (Proverbs 5:18-19; 1 Corinthians 7:1-5; Hebrews 13:4). All sexual relationships outside marriage are immoral (1 Corinthians 6:18; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8), and are unsafe because they incur the wrath of God (1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Ephesians 5:5; Revelation 21:8).



**KIDS**

**COLUMN**



"Fear God"

"Because the sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." (Eccl. 8:11)

"Every 22 seconds someone in the USA is beaten, stabbed, shot, robbed, raped or killed. Nearly 2 million a year become violent-crime victims. But after doctors patch the wounded or give up on the dead, after the police file their reports, after the media and public tire of yet another tragic story, survivors and their families and friends find their lives ravaged by pain and fear. "You go crazy," says Genelle Reilley, 55, a Laguna Beach, Calif., homemaker whose 23-year-old daughter was stabbed to death in 1986. "We will never be really happy again." (From Robert Davis, USA TODAY, 11-26-93, p. 8A)

In this cruel, evil world of our's, let us wholly trust in our God. He has the answer for every problem from the cradle to the grave. The next verses which follow Eccl. 8:11 say, "Though a sinner does evil a hundred times, and his days are prolonged, yet I surely know that it will be well with those who fear God, who fear before Him. But it will not be well with the wicked; nor will he prolong his days, which are as a shadow, because he does not fear before God." (Eccl. 8:12-13).

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5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding;

6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.

- Proverbs 3:5-6.

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Rearing Unselfish Children

By Sewell Hall

In the teacher’s manual which accompanies her excellent course of study, Born of a Woman, Dene Ward has the following observation: “We have raised too many spoiled, self-centered young people who think that they are the only ones who matter in any family decision and who expect their parents to willingly give up everything for them with no thought of themselves, much less of the Lord and His people.… We have let our permissive, rights-oriented society determine our philosophy.”

Recently, a ladies’ Bible class, studying this material, addressed the question:

“How can we rear children that are not selfish and self-centered?” The following

thoughts were suggested:

First, example. Selfish parents cannot hope to rear unselfish children. However,

parents whose idea of providing a good example is to give in constantly to

their children’s wishes or preferences will produce the very selfishness they

want to avoid. Better to let children see parents being unselfish with one another and planning unselfishly to serve those in need outside the family. And the effect of such an example will be greatly increased when the unselfishness is practiced cheerfully and when it is seen to bring genuine happiness.

Unselfish people outside the family can also be useful examples. Point out such people to children and commend them. Children are imitators and they will imitate those they are led to admire.

Involve children in family decisions. Discuss an increase in contribution or a gift to some victim of disaster with them. Allow them to go along when parents are going to help someone in need. All of this enables them to feel that they are personally involved, and they begin to taste the satisfaction of unselfish service.

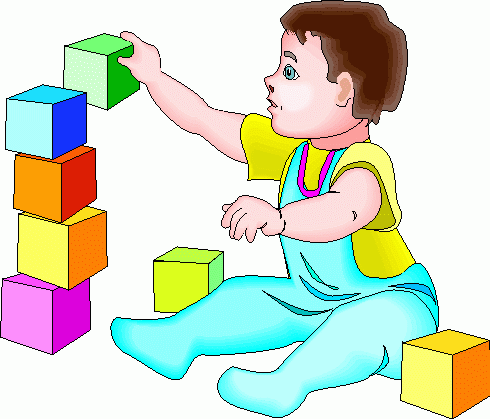
Taken a step further, parents may help children to look for ways that they can actually help others personally. A toy given to children who have none, something helpful done for an aged or invalid person, even a card sent to someone who is sick can begin to form a pattern of unselfishness. It is better not to tell them what to do. Just help them see the need and let them determine their own response. Though it may not be what you would do, let them carry through on their own decision and then praise them for their generosity.

To learn the unselfish use of money, children need some money to use. They need to give something of their own, rather than something that has been given to them. The best way for them to have money is to earn it—the way it must be obtained throughout life. Once they have money, they can be taught to divide it up—some for the Lord, some for things they need, some for savings and some for pleasure.

At the same time, to be unselfish, children must learn that there are some things that they must do for which there is no pay: such as cleaning their own rooms or helping with the family dishes or mowing the family grass. Children who have not learned to share family responsibilities are poor candidates for successful marriage.

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>>> By all means, Christian parents must provide what public schools are not providing—Bible teaching regarding unselfishness. A group of children whom I recently taught knew many scriptures regarding heaven, the church, salvation, and other Bible subjects; but not one knew the words of Jesus demanding that disciples deny themselves and take up their crosses. Surely nothing in the teaching and example of Jesus is more emphasized than unselfishness. And nothing is more contrary to the accepted wisdom of our modern day. Public schools, the press, psychologists, counselors (both professional and non-professional), as a rule, are teaching selfishness—the right to do what you want, to set your own course in life without concern for others. Unless our children are taught otherwise, they will surely accept this philosophy.

Regardless, however, of our example, teaching, efforts to involve them, encouragement of initiative and positive reinforcement, children will still require some parental control if they are to avoid selfishness. They only learn unselfishness by giving in and allowing others to have their way. Accomplishing this may be awkward for unselfish parents, but there is a way. Fathers can require that children be unselfish with their mothers, and mothers can demand that children be unselfish with their fathers. Both can demand unselfishness among siblings and playmates. Selfishness will surface at times, but it must never be accepted.

Such teaching and control must be practiced when children are still teachable and controllable. We must not wait too long. Otherwise, we will wake up sooner than we expect to find ourselves with the kind of self-centered and selfish children so graphically described in Dene Ward’s book and so tragically common in modern America.

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A little Bible trivia:

Who was it who said, *"... is there any taste in the white of an egg?"*

a. Abraham c. Job

b. David d. Barnabas



**KIDS**

**COLUMN**



MUSIC WE LISTEN TO:

IT REVEALS AND AFFECTS

By Bill Crews

The music we listen to, the music we enjoy, the music we sing does two things:

(1) It reveals our taste, our appetite, what we are interested in, what appeals to us, and, therefore, the kind of person we are.

(2) It exerts an influence upon us, playing a role in molding our thoughts, attitudes, conduct and character, and, therefore, the kind of person we are becoming. And that’s rather powerful!

The most important part of music (purely instrumental excepted) is the lyrics, the words, and the lyrics of much of most kinds of music are becoming worse with every new generation. So suggestive, so vulgar, so obscene, so crude, so violent, so tasteless are the lyrics of many songs that they have to be edited before being printed in the magazines sold to the public. If you want the full text, you have to buy the albums, many of which come with complete printed sets of the lyrics, or listen closely as the songs are played on the radio stations.

God help us for what, to a large extent, music has become.

As parents, we need to know what our children are listening to, and as adults we need to be concerned about what we are listening to.

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For as he thinks in his heart, so is he. "Eat and drink!" he says to you, But his heart is not with you. - Proverbs 23:7.

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The Christian and Conscience

By Edward O. Bragwell, Sr.

The scriptures speak of the conscience 28 to 31 times, depending on the translation. Different word authorities put the definition in different words, but the definition of Dictionary.com pretty well states the idea expressed by most definitions:

“The inner sense of what is right or wrong in one’s conduct or motives, impelling one toward right action.”  
It seems to be a sense of “ought” and “ought not;” or “right” and “wrong” that God made an integral part of the human psyche that is needed to push one in the direction of what he believes to be right.

The conscience is a great moral and spiritual navigator, but an awfully poor map. The advice often given, “Let your conscience by your guide,” is not the best advice. The best advice is, “search the Scriptures daily to see if the things are so,” and then conscientiously follow the “things that are so.” (Acts 17:11). Saul of Tarsus was able to persecute Christians with a good conscience (Acts 23:1), because he verily thought that it was the thing he ought to do (Acts 26:9). The conscience can only react to what one THINKS to be right or wrong.

Though one cannot blindly follow his conscience, he still must always follow it. But, you say, that contradicts what you have just said. No, it is just that one must make sure that which the conscience feeds on is the objective truth revealed in the Scriptures and not his own subjective views or that of some other person. Even after one has intelligently determined the truth from the Scriptures, he still needs a sensitive conscience to push him in the direction revealed in the Scriptures and to pull him back when he errs from that direction.

For this reason the Scriptures seems to go out their way to keep the conscience tender and responsive under all circumstances. We are warned against violating our consciences and not to try to influence others to violate theirs (Rom. 14 and 1 Cor. 8). It is important that the conscience be not seared or dulled (1 Tim. 4:2). This is likely what happened to those who Peter said, “cannot cease from sin.” (2 Pet. 2:14). The conscience must be kept tender. Continually overriding it hardens it. That is why that even in doubtful things we must not override our doubts. To do so is sin. (Rom. 14:23). Not only must we not override our doubts, we must not say or do things that would put others in a position, in order to please us, that they would have to override their conscientious doubts. Love for our brethren demands this. So, we must both protect our consciences and that of our brothers and sisters in Christ. It might be that further study of the word of God might settle those doubts and our love for others would suggest such study. But as long as a brother’s doubt persists, even if I have no doubts about the matter at hand, love for my brother demands that I help him keep a good conscience.

Now, we are not speaking of those things that Scriptures and conscience say that must be done. In those things one must do them regardless of the effect it has on others. But, we are talking about that area of things that one has the LIBERTY to do (authorized liberties), but does not have the OBLIGATION to do. It is something that one may do or not do and still have a good conscience toward God – while at the same time a dear brother cannot do and is grieved at our doing it. Should not love override our freedom in such cases.

“Let brotherly love continue.” (Hebrews 13:1)

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Bible Classes

What Can I Do?

By Bob Dickey

Perhaps not all of us can teach a class, but there are a number of ways in which we can help those who do teach and make our Bible classes of greater profit. Here is a list of some things you can do:

BRING YOUR CHILDREN (Don't just send them). With things the way they are in the world today, your children need all the help they can get — especially spiritual help. There is no better place for them than the Bible classes.

BRING/ENCOURAGE OTHERS TO ATTEND. Use your half-empty automobile to bring others (children or adults) to our Bible studies. We cannot expect others to come unless we first invite and encourage them. Remember, we have classes for all ages.

PARENTS, HELP YOUR CHILDREN WITH THEIR BIBLE LESSONS. No doubt you are concerned about whether your children complete their school homework assignments. Are you as concerned about their Bible lessons? Do you know what they are studying? Do you ever discuss the Bible with them? Encourage your child to prepare the lesson if one has been assigned.

PARENTS, ASK YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER HOW HE/SHE IS DOING IN THE CLASS. Perhaps there are some things you could do to help. Are you as concerned about your children's spiritual progress as you are his/her secular education?



**KIDS**

**COLUMN**



Seeking God with all our being

"But 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." (Heb. 11:6)

A tight rope was stretched across Niagra Falls. A crowd had gathered and a man pulled a unicycle out of a box and said, "Ladies and Gentlemen, may I have your attention! Let me see a show of hands: how many of you believe that I can ride across the Falls on this unicycle and safely reach the other side?" The crowd, eager to see the feat, raise their hands and respond enthusiastically, "We do! We do!" The man replies, "Wait! That's not all! Another show of hands: how many of you believe I can ride safely across while balancing someone on my shoulders?" The crowd wave their hands and shout, "We do! We do!" The man says, "Great! Now, one more question: which one of you volunteer to be the one on my shoulders?" There was great silence as the hands quickly dropped.

If we truly believed that God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him, we would be diligently seeking Him. Let us seek Him with all our being.

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OFFER A FEW WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT TO YOUR TEACHER (or to the teacher of your child). By so doing, you will not only let teachers know that you care, but will bolster their confidence and inspire them to greater efforts.

STUDY, STUDY, STUDY! You can attend every class that meets, but unless you study (preferably, both before and after) it will be of little benefit. There are too many who let the teacher do all of the studying. Do you suppose that might be one reason why there are not more who are able to teach?

PARTICIPATE IN THE CLASS DISCUSSIONS. When you study your lesson and become enthusiastic about it you will find it difficult not to participate. Participation is a sure sign that the learning process is in motion.

VOLUNTEER TO TEACH. Good teachers for Bible classes are always in demand. Let someone know if you desire to be of help.

PRAY FOR THE TEACHERS AND THE RECEPTION OF THE LESSONS.

ATTEND EVERY BIBLE STUDY. These periods of study will make both you and the congregation stronger. We all need to continue to grow in the grace and the knowledge of the Lord ([2 Pet. 3:18](http://collegevue.us11.list-manage.com/track/click?u=533bf999e6af33624ca006fa5&id=f7d690e6ce&e=296d068ea9)). Can you think of a better or more important way to spend an hour? Above all, don't let their labor be in vain. Do all that you can as a student of the Word and as a servant of the Lord.



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A Tale of a Sheep

By Fanning Yater Tant

It happened in Parrish, Alabama, about fifty years ago. J. D. Tant, Christian, was in the midst of a debate with with Claude Casey, Primitive Baptist. Tant was pleading with Casey, with whom he had a number of debates during his lifetime, to give up his Primitive Baptist doctrine, and accept the simple gospel of Christ. Tant was convinced that Casey knew the truth, but was being held back from obedience by the influence of his brethren, and by the fear that he would be isolated from his long-time associates if he obeyed the truth.

"Claude," said Tant, "why don't you come out from this foolishness you have been preaching, and obey the gospel of Christ? You know the truth, and you ought to obey it. Now, you need not fear that your brethren will turn against you. They won't. They will follow fully in your steps; they have followed you blindly into error, and they will follow you without question if you will become a Christian. They remind me very much of the old farmer who had a ram in his flock that was terrible to butt. He would just go around butting things all the time. Every time the farmer got into the pen with his sheep, this old ram would lower his head, make a run for him, and butt him over.

Finally, the farmer got tired of this antic of the old ram, and decided to put a stop to it. So one day he maneuvered the ram out to the edge of a high cliff, and got himself in the position he was usually in when the ram got one of his butting urges on. Sure enough, the ram lowered his head and made a wild charge. Just in time the farmer jumped aside, and the butting ram went hurtling over the cliff. And immediately every sheep in the farmer's herd made a wild dash for the cliff and followed right behind the ram. The farmer tried frantically to stop them, grabbing for them in desperation as they rushed past him headed for the cliff. Finally, the last sheep had disappeared over the edge — and all the farmer had was a fistful of wool in one hand and a sheep's tail in the other!

"Now, Claude, your people will follow you, just like the sheep followed the old ram — so why don't you obey the gospel and lead this whole flock to Christ?"

This interesting incident from a long dead past was related to us recently by Brother Asa M. Plyler, in whose home we were visiting during a gospel meeting at Valley View congregation. Brother Myer had heard the discussion when he was but a lad.

It all becomes poignantly real to us today when we see the blind and unquestioning faith many of our own brethren place in the men whom they regard as "some-whets" in the church. We heard Robert Jones say one time that if the elders of the big Texas church where he preached (Wichita Falls at the time) were to make an announcement some Sunday that they had carefully and prayerfully studied the matter of baptism, had talked it over with various brethren at Abilene Christian College, had gotten the opinion of a number of leading preachers among us, and they had all agreed that we had been making too much "fuss" over immersion as baptism, and that in the future it was the decision of the elders to leave the matter "optional" with each person as to whether he wanted to be immersed or sprinkled — if such an announcement were to be made, with appropriate expressions of concern for "holding firmly to the truth," ***nine-tenths*** of the time members of that congregation would "go along" with it, raising no disturbance or objection whatever! They would take the position that "if the elders, the brethren at Abilene, and the preachers" all agreed on this course, then that would be good enough for them!

And all any faithful preacher who opposed such would have to show for his labors would be a "sheep's tail and a handful of wool" when the ruckus settled down.

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The Pressure to Conform

By Doy Moyer

For all the talk in today’s culture about being your own person and expressing yourself freely, there is tremendous pressure to conform. Culture doesn’t want you to freely express yourself when it goes against worldly agendas. Be a free thinker, but you better accept gay marriage. Don’t be a lemming; think for yourself, but know that if you don’t think the way we tell you to, then you will be labeled a bigot, homophobe, a hater, or worse, a “Christian.”

This cultural pressure reminds me of the way the Romans allowed for freedom of religion. “You are free to practice your religion, but if you dare to interrupt our way of life, you will pay the price.” The Pax Romana (Roman Peace) was based on forced conformity — as long as you did exactly what they told you, they’ll leave you alone. Get out of step, and they will punish severely.

Christians should not be surprised (cf. 1 Pet. 4), so we need to see our way clear to at least three responses:

1. Do not conform to the world (Rom. 12:1-2). This will come with a price, but we must take up the cross to follow the Lord (Luke 9:23). The world will slander. The world will insult. The world will persecute. None of that should deter us from doing what is right. We must be more concerned with holiness than worldly acceptance.

2. Step up with the gospel (Rom. 1:16-17). The temptation is to make all of this a political response. We want to answer by political means, perhaps thinking that if we can “get the right person in office,” then our problems will be alleviated. This, however, will never be what fixes the problem of the world. Politics will always give us the ups and downs, and will never result in the salvation of souls. We need the gospel. Focus on that.

3. Step up with prayer. God’s desire is that all will come to a knowledge of the truth, so we need to pray to this end (1 Tim. 2:1-4). We also need to pray for boldness that God will use us to proclaim His message, and that we may lead lives that will point the way to Christ (cf. Col. 4:2-5).

Let’s bring the offer of God’s grace full force into this world. Let’s let our lights shine. Let’s be the salt God has called us to be (Matt. 5:13-16).



**KIDS**

**COLUMN**



"I Just Got Out of the Habit" 

By Jim R. Everett

A habit is ``a thing done often and hence, usually done easily...a tendency to perform a certain action or behave in a certain way; usual way of doing; as, he does it out of habit'' (Webster's Unabridged Dictionary, p. 815). Folks sometimes speak of ``going to church'' as a good habit. And, when asked by others about their negligence, they respond: ``I guess I just got out of the habit.'' Assembling together as God directs is surely good and it should be done easily.  I can understand how habitual assembling with the saints becomes a regular course of one's life and, for those who do so regularly, it becomes a matter of ease and routine. However, it should not be done ``out of habit.''

When assembly time approaches, there should never be a question in the minds of the members about whether or not they should be there.  It should be a foregone conclusion and commitment in every one's mind that every Christian should be at every assembly in order to worship God. It never enters their mind to do otherwise. That can be classified as ``habit,'' in the accepted definition but it is not done ``out of habit.''

Nothing should be more important to us than worshiping God (Matthew 4:10; Hebrews 10:25). The desire to worship makes it easy to prepare for assembling, because that is what we plan to do. I do not understand why some folks have a hard time arranging their affairs in order to assemble with fellow Christians. Neither do I understand why some never get to Bible classes or assembly worship on time. After all, they are always present and on time for the movies or recreational activities they plan. It may be that they conceive of worship as a good habit, but like eating liver and spinach, is not very enjoyable.

True worship springs from faith and love -- not ease.

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Speaking the Truth in Love ...

By Edward O. Bragwell, Sr.

Inevitably, through the years, when we have spoken plainly about certain sins and indicated that any guilty listeners needed to take heed and straighten up their lives or face the terrible consequences of sin, someone would find the need to remind me that we needed to “speak the truth IN LOVE.” (Cf. Eph 4:15).

What they don’t seem to get is that we are trying to do just that. They don’t understand that the “in love” part refers more to the motive than the manner of speaking. Some situations call for gentleness of speech (Gal. 6:1), others call for sharpness of speech (2 Cor. 13:10; Tit. 1:13; cf. Matt. 23), but whether gentle or sharp, it must be in love.

When one needs an exhortation it should be given in love of his spiritual development and soul’s salvation. The same should motivate us to sharply rebuke with needed. Also, the same should motivate a gentle word of encouragement. It is all be done because we love God and love the ones to whom we speak any part of the gospel. Even when speaking to a rebellious brother fails to bring him to repentance and we have to apply the instructions to withdraw from him, we still must do it “in love.”

I would hope that if I should leave the truth either in preaching or practice that someone would have enough love for me to try to wake me up with as much sharpness needed to bring me around. How much love are we showing one, slipping deeper and deeper into sin, by whispering “sweet nothings” in his ear as he continues his downward spiral? If we love him we are going to try whatever scriptural approach it takes (rebuke or exhortation) to bring him to his senses and help him get on the right track. Because our audiences are generally made up both of those needing the gentle approach and those who need the sharp approach, we should strive to balance our approaches, but whatever the approach it must be “in love” to please God.

By the way, pointing out a scripture that says that a specific kind of sinner (drunkard, thief, or homosexual) cannot inherit the kingdom of God is not HATE speech but rather LOVE speech, because we want these people to be saved. They cannot be saved while still in their sins. If we hated them, we would leave them alone to die in their sins. Expressing hatred and disgust for these sins does not mean we hate those guilty. We want to get them to the point where it can be said, “such WERE some of you” and not have to be saying, “such ARE some of you.” (See 1 Cor. 6:9-11).

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The Proof is in the Doing

By Simon Harris

In [Matthew 21:28-32](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matthew%2021.28-32) Jesus tells a parable about a man who had two sons. He came to the first one and said, “Son, go, work today in my vineyard." The son told his father he would not go, but afterwards he regretted saying that and went to work. The father went to the second son and also told him to go work in the vineyard. This son said, “I go, sir,” but he did not go. Jesus then asked His audience, “Which of the two did the will of his father?” >>>

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>>> This seems like such a simple question that it doesn’t even need to be asked, but with this question Jesus is teaching an important lesson that we often fail to apply to our own lives. Jesus is reminding us that the proof of our love, faith, and reverence for God is in the doing, not the saying. How many times is this lesson taught throughout the pages of the New Testament?

-    “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. **You will know them by their fruits**. Do men gather grapes from thorn bushes or figs from thistles?” ([Mt 7:15](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Mt%207.15),[16](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Mt%207.16)).

-    “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” ([Mt 7:21](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Mt%207.21)).

-    “But be **doers** of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves” ([James 1:22](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/James%201.22)).

-    “What does it profit, my brethren, if someone **says** he has faith but **does not have works**? Can faith save him?” ([James 2:14](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/James%202.14)).

-    “My little children, let us not love in **word** or in **tongue**, but in **deed** and in **truth**” ([1 John 3:18](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%203.18)).

Every one of these verses is well known to us, but do they express a principle by which we live?

Do we claim to love Jesus, but yet fail to keep His commandments? Do we profess to love one another while refusing to actually do good to one another? Do we just give lip service to Paul’s command to give preference to one another ([Romans 12:10](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Romans%2012.10))? When we examine ourselves do we do more than just acknowledge our weakness, or do we set about to affect change in our lives?

The point is this; make up your mind, today, to stop talking about what you **need to do** and get busying **doing it**! Pick just one thing you know you **need to be doing** and just **do it**. Maybe you **need** to be more hospitable; **invite** someone over. Maybe you **need** to be a better father; **sit down** and **talk** to you children. Maybe you **need** to study more; **open** your Bible and **study**.

They say the road to hell is paved with good intentions. The reason this statement is true is because God doesn’t accept lip service; He only accepts true service from the heart. Don’t allow the guilt of past failures to keep you on the road of good intentions. Simply decide today that you’re going to travel the road of good works, for it is the road that leads to forgiveness, mercy, and eternal life.



**KIDS**

**COLUMN**



‘End-Time’ Predictions

By Greg Gwin

Remember Edgar Whisenant? Probably not, but he was the retired NASA engineer who became famous (or infamous) by making predictions about the second coming of Christ. His first guess was September 12, 1988. He became an instant celebrity when he wrote a book explaining his reasons why the event would absolutely, positively, no-doubt-about-it occur on that particular date. He was featured in magazines and newspapers throughout the world. His book sold hundreds of thousands of copies.  But, as you obviously know, September 12, 1988 came and went like any other day.

Whisenant went back to his drawing board. What could have gone wrong? Finally he announced that he had discovered his error. He had made the simple mistake of forgetting to allow for an extra year between 1 BC and 1 AD. And so he began to assure everyone that the second coming was certain to be on September 1, 1989

But, of course, this second prediction also failed. But, never fear, Whisenant made more calculations. News reports quoted him as saying he was "96 percent" certain the second coming would still occur sometime in 1989 - and if not in 1989, then definitely in 1990 or, at least, in 1991, or 1992, or 1993. "No way it’s going past 1993," he said with the utmost resolve.

Men like Whisenant are nothing new. End-time date setters go all the way back to the first century (2 Thess. 2:1-3). We wonder if folks will ever wise-up and take Jesus at His word: "Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only" (Matt. 24:36).

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Genesis 1: Literal Days or Long Ages?

By Greg Gwin

The ‘Day/Age’ Theory argues that each of the days in Genesis 1 were actually long ages of time.  This, of course, is an attempt to harmonize Biblical teaching of a young earth with the false claims of some scientists who claim our earth and universe are billions of years old.  Here are some simple affirmative arguments to prove that the days of creation in Genesis 1 were literal 24 hour days rather than long ages of time:

1) God defined His own terms in Genesis 1:5. "And God called the light Day and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day." A period of light followed by a period of darkness constituted a day. Unless someone wants to argue that it stayed light for long periods and then stayed dark for long periods (which, of course, poses huge difficulties), we will have to stand upon this clear statement and conclude that the days really were literal 24 hour days. Furthermore, Genesis 1:14-18 mentions the sun and moon and stars, and says they were made to be "for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years." If we are to believe that the days were actually long ages of time, then what were the seasons and years?

2) Romans 1:20 says, "Since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities - his eternal power and divine nature - have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made" (NIV). This verse claims that someone has been here to see and understand God's power ever since the creation of the world. This poses no problem to those of us who believe that man was created within the same actual week that everything else was created. But, those who want to believe that each day represents a long "age" have a problem. If man was created eons after the other elements of creation were formed, then this makes no sense. This line of reasoning is confirmed by Jesus' own statement in Mark 10:6. "From the beginning of the creation God made them male and female." The day/age theory places man at the end of millions or billions of years of geologic time. It light of these verses, it cannot be true.

3) If the days were actually long "ages", then we have the wrong chronological order of events. For instance, plants were created on day three, but insects were not created until day five or six. But many plants depend on insects for cross-pollination, etc. How did plants survive for long "ages" without their needed counterparts in the insect world? Other similar problems of chronological order exist that strongly argue against the day/age theory.

We know that this day/age theory is commonly held by many who teach the false doctrine of theistic evolution. It is not true, and is actually an unnecessary attempt to compromise the truths taught in the Bible with the unproven claims of some scientists. They teach that we live in an ancient universe, while in actuality we live in a relatively young universe that was created in six literal days by our omnipotent God.

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Thank you for being here today. Please come back!

**Volume 7 September 13 2015 #37**

**Two Men Disagree With the Preacher**

**By Bill Hall**

Two men disagree with the preacher. They have both been taught that they are not just to "swallow" everything the preacher says; that they are to think for themselves. They are to be commended, therefore, for their careful evaluation of what is taught.

The key words with the first man, however, are, "It seems to me." All teaching is judged according to his own thinking, as to whether or not it makes sense to him.

The key words with the second man are, "What does God say about it?" He desires truth and knows that truth can only be found in God's word (John 17:17). If he disagrees with the preacher, he does so because he is convinced the preacher has misused a passage of scripture or has failed to consider a scripture that might affect his conclusion. He comes with an open Bible and an open mind, prepared to defend his position or to yield if he sees that it is indefensible.

The first man exalts self. He places too much confidence in his own thinking. He may do so unconsciously, but in reality he makes his own intellect and experience his god. His thinking is reflected in the words of Naaman, "Behold, I thought," words that would have taken Naaman to a leper's grave had it not been for the admonition of his servants (2 Kings 5:1-14).



**KIDS**

**COLUMN**



A Flawed Comparison

By Doy Moyer

Trying to compare drinking alcohol and other "bad habits" just doesn't work, unless we are actually talking about drugs that significantly alter sobriety and the ability to make sound judgments. There are plenty of those types of drugs, but comparing drinking to eating donuts is ludicrous.

We aren't just talking here about

long-term health. We are talking

about the immediate effects that

destroy one's ability to think.

If eating donuts does that to

you, then by all means quit

eating them. But I have yet

to meet the person who

destroyed a family or

killed someone in a car

wreck over losing one's

mind on donuts. If that

kind of comparison is

the justification for

drinking today, then

sell it elsewhere.

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The second man exalts God. His confidence is in what God says in the scriptures. He recognizes that his own intellect and experience fade into nothingness when placed in the brightness of the light of truth. A "thus saith the Lord" ends all controversy with him. His thinking is reflected in that of the Bereans who "were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they... searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so " (Acts 17:11).

Unless the first man changes his attitude he is hopeless.

He is susceptible to all manner of false ideas. He cannot come to know God and His truth through his own wisdom (1 Corinthians 1:21). He must throw his own wisdom, intellect, and experience aside; he must become poor in spirit, meek before God, mourning, hungering and thirsting for righteousness; he must bow in submission to the Lord and to His word. He must say with Paul, "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has become His counselor?'" (Romans 11:33-34).

The second man is a blessed and fortunate man in-deed, for he will learn the truth that will make him free (John 8:32). Unfortunately, he is a rare man in the twentieth century. But he does exist—and he can exist even in the man who is presently reading this article. What a challenge to each of us! After all, it is one thing to disagree with a preacher, but quite another thing to disagree with Almighty God!



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NOTHING TO LIVE FOR

By David Watts

A Somebody once said, "Many people have everything to live with and nothing to live for." How true that is.

Many wealthy people live hollow, meaningless lives. They have more than enough possessions to make life comfortable, but they have little purpose in life to make it meaningful. It takes decades before some people eventually realize that life lived for mere self-indulgence is ultimately an empty life. A time can come, however, when even the shiniest new car, or the biggest house, or the flashiest jewelry, can't mask the hollowness of a life without high purpose.

The Bible doesn't condemn all wealth, and new cars and nice houses are not wrong. But lasting satisfaction doesn't come from mere things or self-indulgence. On the other hand, people with little to live with may have much to live for. For example, Jesus' apostles were not wealthy (Acts 3:6), but their lives had real purpose.

The Scriptures assure us that God can bring purpose into our lives, too. He can give us something to live for that is missing from the lives of people whose lives are hollow and without purpose. It has been said that “a man who has not lost himself in a cause bigger than himself, has missed one of life’s mountaintop experience that can last the rest of your life”. -- it can ultimately take you to be with God.

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Consequences to our actions

"He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit

than he who takes a city." (Prov. 16:32)

"A wrathful man stirs up strife, but he who is slow

to anger allays contention." (Prov. 15:18)

There was a little boy with a bad temper. His father gave him a bag of nails and told him that every time he lost his temper, to hammer a nail in the back fence. The first day, the boy had driven 37 nails into the fence. Then, it gradually dwindled down. He discovered it was easier to hold his temper than to drive those nails into the fence. Finally, the day came when the boy didn't lose his temper at all. He told his father about it and the father suggested that the boy now pull out one nail for each day that he was able to hold his temper. The days passed and the young boy was finally able to tell his father that all the nails were gone. The father took his son by the hand and led him to the fence. He said, "You have done well, my son, but look at the holes in the fence. The fence will never be the same. When you say and do things in anger, you leave scars just like as in this fence." (Author Unknown)

**Volume 7 September 20 2015 #38**



A Restoration Highlight 

By Hugh Fulford

According to the biography "J. D. Tant—Texas Preacher" by his son, Fanning Yater Tant, J. D. Tant and Ben M. Bogard engaged in eight debates with each other during the course of their careers. Their last one was near Greenwood, Arkansas in the fall of 1937. Among the propositions discussed was one that had to do with whether or not baptism of a penitent believer is for (in order to) the remission of sins and therefore essential to salvation. Tant affirmed the essentiality of baptism for the remission of sins; Bogard denied it.

Early in the debate Bogard took up the entirety of one of his thirty minute speeches trying to show that when the apostle Peter said, "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 3:21), all that Peter intended to convey was the notion that baptism is just a "picture" of salvation from sin. Arguing that Noah and his family were saved from the flood by faith only and then pictured their salvation in the waters of the flood, Bogard argued that the sinner is saved by faith only and then pictures his salvation by being baptized.

When Tant arose for his next speech, he replied, "My good friends, remember that baptism is just a 'picture.' Ben Bogard says it is . . . and that makes it so. Now, Ben says baptism is a 'picture.' That does not help Baptist doctrine at all; for it was Jesus Christ himself who said in Mark 16:16, 'He that believeth and gets his picture taken shall be saved.' And when those wicked people on Pentecost asked Peter and the rest of the apostles what they had to do, Peter replied, 'Repent ye, and get your picture taken, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.' And when Ananias came to Saul of Tarsus there in Damascus, he said unto him as recorded in Acts 22:16, 'And now why tarriest thou? Arise and get your picture taken, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.' So you can see, Ben, you, too, will have to get your picture taken or you can never be saved!" ("J. D. Tant--Texas Preacher," p. 467). (The above is excerpted from "Hugh's News & Views" of April 22, 2014).



**KIDS**

**COLUMN**



Injured By A Friend!

By Greg Gwin

As Christians, we must expect to be persecuted and ridiculed by those of this world. Jesus said: "And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake" (Luke 21:17). This is not surprising - it was the very treatment that Jesus Himself received. "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you" (John 15:18). Paul wrote: "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Timothy 3:12).

The harsh treatment of the world is always hard to endure, but what is worse is when the mistreatment comes from those who claim to love us. Too often we are assailed by those closest to us - our own brethren.

David spoke of the terrible hurt he experienced from a friend. "For it was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it.- neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me; then I would have hid myself from him: but it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company" (Psalms 55:12-14).

Have you been hurt by someone close to you? Have you been betrayed by a brother in Christ? Have you been wronged by those who should have loved you and treated you with kindness and affection? Don't imagine that you are the first to be misused in this way. What you have experienced has been common to God's faithful people throughout the ages.

How shall we deal with this sort of painful "wound?" In the same context quoted above, David gives the answer. "As for me, I will call upon God, and the Lord shall save me. Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice" (Psalms 55:16-17).

In the most difficult of times, continue to trust in God and serve him faithfully. Even when betrayed by a friend, maintain your confidence in Him. Remember, "your labor is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 15:58).

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**Young Lady, Marry a Christian**

**By Bill Hall**

Before any young lady marries a non-Christian, she should consider the following problems which so often face the Christian in a mixed marriage.

1. Problems in attending services. She should ask herself, "What will I do when my husband some Lord's day drives away in the car at 9:15, leaving me with no transportation to the service?" "What will I do when my husband announces that his company is moving us to some distant community where no church of the Lord meets?" The husband may not be as co‑operative as the young lady thought he would be.

2. Problems in giving. The young lady recognizes that if they are to reap bountifully, they must sow bountifully. She loves the Lord and His work, and wants to give liberally in support of it. Her husband, however, does not share her convictions and interest. He feels that a dollar is plenty to give.

3. Problems in training children. Yes, some have succeeded in bringing up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord without the help of their companions. Eunice succeeded with Timothy. Other good women have succeeded. But the influence of a father is great, and many are the women who have not been able to overcome this influence to see their children become Christians.

4. Problems in overcoming the influence of one's companion. Marrying with the hopes of reforming one's companion is a dangerous thing. Often the companion is lifted to a higher standard, but seldom to the standard of a Christian. Instead, as the non ‑Christian's standards are raised, the Christian's standards are lowered, so that the two meet somewhere in between. The young lady should realize that the man whom she marries will be the greatest earthly influence on her life, and she should ask herself, "Will this man help me to go to heaven?"

5. Emotional problems. The problems faced in life are great, but the emotional problems faced in death may be greater. Recently a godly woman, having just received word of her husband's death in an automobile accident, cried, "Why couldn't it have been me or one of the children, for my husband was not ready to die?"

The young person reading this is probably thinking, however, that she will convert her husband. She may be able to do so, but statistics show that her chances really are not very good. For every one who has been successful in converting her husband, there are several who not only failed in converting their husbands, but were influenced by them to return to the mire of sin and to enter the ranks of the unfaithful. No, the risk is too great. The only safe course is for Christians to marry Christians.

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But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. - Matthew 6:33.

**Volume 7 September 27 2015 #39**

Dealing With The Unrepentant

By Greg Gwin

Are you discouraged because you can’t get someone to change? Maybe you’ve worked long and hard to teach someone what they should do to be saved, but they simply won’t accept it. It’s clear to you and to them that there are things amiss in their life, but they just won’t commit to do what is right. Or, it might be some erring brother in the church. You have struggled to convince him that he has sinned and needs to repent, but he steadfastly refuses to admit his sin and turn back to God. Surely, these are discouraging situations.

When we face these difficult scenarios, it should help us to remember that others before us have faced the same woes. In fact, when we ‘hit a wall’ while trying to convert the lost or restore the erring, we are joining the good company of God’s faithful servants through the ages. Their words certainly strike a familiar chord:

“The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts” (Psalms 10:4).

“... they have refused to receive correction: they have made their faces harder than a rock; they have refused to return” (Jeremiah 5:3).

“Yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which the Lord of hosts hath sent ...” (Zechariah 7:12).

“Ye stiffnecked and uncircum­cised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye” (Acts 7:51).

“But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God” (Romans 2:5).

So, you see, your frustrations at being unable to change the ways of unrepentant folks is not new. Others have endured the same things. The key thing is for us to stay committed to our task of faithfully serving God. “. . . be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (I Corinthians 15:58)



**KIDS**

**COLUMN**



QUIT TRYING TO “JUST BE YOURSELF”

Bryan Matthew Dockens

“Just be yourself” has become the reflexive advice of this generation.  Offered as relief from social anxiety, it’s what people are told heading into job interviews, first dates, and every potentially awkward situation imaginable.  It is poor counsel, indeed, to “just be yourself”.

The apostle urged those who would listen, “Imitate me” (1st Corinthians 4:16).  Lest we think Paul was an egomaniac, consider the basis of that instruction: “Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ” (11:1).  The goal is to be Christ-like.  Striving toward that end, each disciple should observe and emulate the heroes set forth in Scripture.  “Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern” (Philippians 3:17).

Self should be cast aside in favor a new image.  “Put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in righteousness and true holiness” (Ephesians 4:22-24).

Obedience to the gospel requires not merely subjugation of oneself, but absolute surrender of self.  Jesus’ invitation is: “Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me” (Mark 8:34).  Paul concluded, “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me” (Galatians 2:20).

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Design Demands a Designer

**(Psalm 19)**

By Mike Johnson

Psalm 19:1-4 says,  "The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork. Day unto day utters speech, And night unto night reveals knowledge. There is no speech nor language Where their voice is not heard. Their line has gone out through all the earth, And their words to the end of the world. In them He has set a tabernacle for the sun."

Have you ever gone out at night and looked at the stars, the sun, and the moon?  Clearly, there is a design there and design demands a designer.  We all understand this concept.  Consider the automobile you drive and the house where you live.  These did not come into existence by accident.  Obviously, someone designed and built them. The same concept applies to our solar system, plant life, and the human body.  Obviously, a designer was involved.

Consider the following story about Sir Isaac Newton's model.

The story is told that he had an atheistic friend who did not believe in God. Sir Isaac devised a plan to try to convince his friend that God did exist and had created the Universe. One day, he went to a carpentry shop and asked the owner to make a model of our solar system. This model was to be to scale, intricately painted, and designed to resemble, as closely as possible, the actual solar system.

Several weeks later, Sir Isaac picked up the model, paid for it, and placed it in the center of a table in his house. Sometime later, his atheist friend came over for a visit. When the friend arrived at Dr. Newton’s house, the model of the solar system caught his eye, and he asked Sir Isaac if he could inspect the model more closely. Of course, that was fine with Sir Isaac. As the atheist inspected the model, he stood in awe of the fine craftsmanship and beauty of the various pieces. After some time, the atheistic friend asked Dr. Newton who had crafted this wonderful model of the solar system. Sir Isaac promptly replied that no one had made the model; it just appeared on his table by accident. Confused, the friend repeated the question, and yet Newton stubbornly clung to his answer that the model had just appeared, as it were, “out of thin air.” Finally, the friend became upset, and it was at that point that Sir Isaac explained the purpose of his answer. If he could not convince his friend that this crude replica of the solar system had "just happened by accident," how could the friend believe that the real solar system, with all its complexity and design, could have appeared just by time and chance? (Kyle Butt, MA, "*Design Demands A Designer*"  *The Apologetics Press*, [www.apologeticspress.org](http://www.apologeticspress.org) Aug. 20, 2015.)

The staunchest atheist should be able to understand the concept of design demanding a designer when it comes to Newton's model. Recognizing this concept should cause one to understand that the universe was designed by someone.  It should further be concluded that the designer of all of this must be powerful beyond imagination and knowledgeable beyond belief, and this powerful Creator must be divine. The heavens do declare the glory of God!  Hebrews 3:4 says, "For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God."

**Volume 7 October 4 2015 #40**

THE REAL TEST

By Phillip Mullins

It is always easier to walk with the crowd, to agree when everyone else is agreeing, to go with the flow. However, it is how we stand when we have to stand in opposition that is often the real test of our faith in God.

"*Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil*" (Ephesians 6:11). To be a true Christian means to oppose evil. To stand with Christ often means to stand against people and ideas that are set against Him. While a Christian is to be patient and loving, he or she is not to be passive. A Christian is a soldier in a war.

Christ displayed such a character. While He was meek and gentle, He could also be aggressive and bold: “*I tell you, no: but unless you repent you will all likewise perish*" (Luke 13:3). "*For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men*..." (Mark 7:8). "*Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves*” (Matthew 23:15).

It was not that Jesus was trying to be offensive, but in standing for what was right it was necessary for Him to oppose certain beliefs, teachings, and even people. It was necessary to tell people what they needed to hear rather than what they wanted to hear.

Some religious people who claim to follow Christ are not willing to oppose anything or anybody. They believe the way of Christ dictates a totally positive approach where one never challenges any belief or practice, even if it is in clear opposition to the way of Christ.

How much do you believe in God? How much do you trust the Bible as God's word? How convinced are you that Jesus is God's Son? How committed are you to the Bible's standard of righteousness? If you are truly faithful to God and firm in your devotion to His will, then you must stand against whatever opposes these things.

It is easy to speak up for Christ when others are doing the same. The real test, though, comes when we must speak for Him when others are speaking against Him or His word. "*For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind*" (2 Timothy 1:7).



**KIDS**

**COLUMN**



Bearing Fruit

"I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit." (John 15:1-2)

"In pruning a vine, two principles are generally observed: first, all dead wood must be ruthlessly removed; and second, the live wood must be cut back drastically. Dead wood harbors insects and disease and may cause the vine to rot, to say nothing of being unproductive and unsightly. Live wood must be trimmed back in order to prevent such heavy growth that the life of the vine goes into the wood rather than into fruit. The vineyards in the early spring look like a collection of barren, bleeding stumps; but in the fall they are filled with luxuriant purple grapes. As the farmer wields the pruning knife on his vines, so God cuts dead wood out from among His saints, and often cuts back the living wood so far that His method seems cruel. Nevertheless, from those who have suffered the most there often comes the greatest fruitfulness." (From **The Gospel of Belief** by Merrill C. Tenney, p. 227-228)

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"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." (Phil. 4:6-7).

How To Forfeit Peace:

1. Resent God's ways.

2. Worry as much as possible.

3. Pray only about things you can't manage by yourself.

4. Refuse to accept what God gives.

5. Look for peace elsewhere than in Him.

6. Try to rule your own life.

7. Doubt God's word.

8. Carry all you cares.

- (From Lists to Live By, p. 204)

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**Daddy's Bible**

Grady L. Duncan

Daddy has left us, his life's work is done.

Only one thing leaving, to me, his son.

It is his old Bible, all tattered and torn.

Each page is wrinkled, soiled or worn.

Its condition, atrocious, but not from abuse.

It happened through time, with frequent use.

From cover to cover, each page was read.

You can tell he loved it, by the life he led.

Many words are circled, verses underlined.

In the margins, other thoughts you will find.

Much time in reading, and study was spent,

Learning what was written, and just what it meant.

No greater treasure, could  I possess.

Than that old Bible. I am so blessed.

Its condition has gone, from bad to worse,

As I've considered each note and underlined verse.

It now holds a place among precious things,

Not for its beauty, but for the memories it brings.

Every Daddy should follow his example and leave,

A worn out Bible, to which his son can cleave.

No greater blessing, could a man bestow,

Than a knowledge of a Savior, who loves us so.

Now that I know Him, and His promises, won.

What more can I say, but, "THANKS DAD" --With love, Your Son?

**Volume 7 October 11 2015 #41**



**How Men Act When**

**They Repent**

**By Steve Klein**

In Matthew 12:41, Jesus said, "The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah is here." According to Jesus, the men of Nineveh repented at the preaching of Jonah.

You remember the story, don't you? God had commanded Jonah, "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against it; for their wickedness has come up before Me" (Jonah 1:2). Now Nineveh was not only a city filled with wickedness, it was also the capital of the Assyrians, hated enemies of the Israelites. Jonah didn't want to go. He fled from God's presence. However, after being given some quality time in the belly of a fish to reflect and pray, Jonah decided to obey God.  Jonah walked through the city proclaiming the judgment of the Lord upon these pagan people: "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" (Jonah 3:4).

The people of Nineveh repented. They "proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest to the least of them" (Jonah 3:5). When word came to the king of Nineveh, "he arose from his throne and laid aside his robe, covered himself with sackcloth and sat in ashes." He decreed that "neither man nor beast, herd nor flock" were to eat or drink and that "every one" was to "turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hand" (Jonah 3:7-8).



**KIDS**

**COLUMN**



They Say He Is a Liar

By Robert Turner

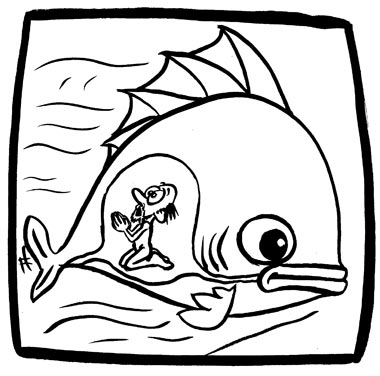
My friend had an "experience"--"better felt than told"--he "got" something. Some people tell my friend he has allowed his imagination to deceive him; that he had no feeling, no experience. Some even accuse him of faking the whole story. This makes my friend very unhappy. He doesn't like to be called a liar. He says, "I know what I feel."

Now I believe my friend. I know him to be an honest man. If he tells me he "felt something" I will not deny this. But sometimes I try to check his unwarranted conclusions concerning the meaning of these feelings. My friend assumes that because he "had a feeling" his sins are forgiven. Why could not this just as well mean his sins were multiplied??

God alone can forgive sins; and His Word states the truth concerning such matters as these (John. 17:17). When my friend says he knows his sins are forgiven because he "felt something" I must remind him that the Bible allows no such evidence. It even warns us that feelings can be deceptive (2 Thess. 2:10-12).

Christ is the author of eternal salvation unto all them who obey Him (Heb. 5:9). And Christ teaches us to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THIS?

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We really need to learn this lesson from the men of Nineveh. We need to learn how to act when we repent.  Repentance isn't just saying "excuse me," "my bad," or "forgive me," and then going on with our lives as if nothing happened.  Repentance should produce real change in our actions.  We are to "bear fruits worthy of repentance" (Matthew 3:8). I am afraid that too many of us think that our repentance should go unnoticed. We are incognito repenters!  And while God hardly asks us to don sackcloth and ashes today, He does ask us to "do works befitting repentance" (Acts 26:20).

Let's resolve to turn away from sin in our lives, and make sure that we behave in such a way that folks can tell that's what we've done!



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Good Relationships Among Brethren

By R.J. Evans

The Scripture provides much information concerning good relationships among those who are children of God.  There are many positive teachings concerning how to get along -- especially all the commands to love one another.  There are a number of warnings against gossip, tale bearing, backbiting, slander, and sowing discord among brethren.  The book of Proverbs is filled with wise instruction concerning relationships with others.

In the church, many problems have occurred because someone failed to abide by the teachings of God's Word.  Brethren are told to put "away lying, each speaking truth with a neighbor, for we are members of one another" (Eph. 4:25); we are warned against causing "dissensions, contentions and heresies" (Gal. 5:20); those who are factious, causing "divisions and offenses" are to be marked (Rom. 16:17); a divisive person is to be rejected "after the first and second admonition" (Titus 3:10); also, there are warnings against being "idle, wandering from house to house, not only idle but also gossips and busybodies, saying things which they ought not" (1 Tim. 5:13).

But what about those occasions when we believe someone has sinned against us?  Are we told what to do? Are we supposed to go around telling everyone, except the person himself, that he has sinned against us?  Indeed, the Bible does give clear instructions on what to do in this situation -- see Matthew 18:15-17.  Notice the very first step: "Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone.  If he hears you, you have gained your brother" (V. 15).  How many do this?  It seems to be so much easier to go to someone else first, and gain a sympathetic ear, rather than following what the Bible teaches.  Quite often, those who operate like this, have not even been sinned against.  It's often pettiness, hurt feelings, jealousy, an "ax to grind," etc., and not actually a sin, to begin with.  Also, the other person may be totally unaware of any wrong they  might have done.  The passage goes on and gives further instructions: "But if he will not hear you, take with you one or two more, that 'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.' And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church.  But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector" (Vv. 16-17).

Years ago, when living in another state, we had a sister move from across the city and place membership with the congregation where I preached.  We'll call her "sister Smith."  Before she identified with us, the preacher where she had been attending told me that she had many admirable qualities, but to be careful, because she occasionally had a tendency to "stir things up."  Well, after she had been with us for several months, I was in my study one day and the phone rang.  It was sister Smith.  After the usual greetings, she then proceeded to start telling me how she had been "wronged" by a particular couple in the congregation.  I'll just refer to them as the "Jones."  They were fine Christians, very faithful and diligent in the Lord's work. >>>

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>>> They had been with us a number of years.  As soon as I realized what she was attempting to do, I stopped her.  I told her that I should not be a party to what she was beginning to tell me about this couple. This brother had his own business, so I gave her his office phone number and suggested she call him immediately and set up an appointment with him and his wife.  Sister Smith immediately became somewhat "rattled" and started backing away from what she was about to tell me.  From that point on, with my insisting that she contact this couple, the conversation ended rather quickly.  At the next service of the church, I asked sister Smith if she had contacted the Jones couple about her complaints.  Essentially, what she proceeded to tell me was that after giving it some more thought, she realized that it was all a big misunderstanding on her part and she had no problem with this couple.  Never again did another incident like that one ever come up involving sister Smith.

That's interesting, isn't it?  How many problems could be solved if Christians were willing to simply follow Bible instructions concerning establishing and maintaining good relationships among brethren. Some make a practice of dropping little "bomb shells" about someone, but immediately follow it up by saying -- "But I don't know anything about it," "But I'm not getting involved," or "Oops, I shouldn't have said that." Such subtle actions, in reality, already have them involved. They are simply "stirring things up"!  They have already done their damage.  Those who conduct themselves in such a manner, destroy what credibility they may have had by their "behind the back" actions.  Please note, concerning the seven things that God hates, what is listed in Proverbs 6:19: "A false witness who speaks lies, And one who sows discord among brethren."

When dealing with such deeds as just mentioned, the information that might have been revealed should be dealt with in a similar manner as  having received an  anonymous letter -- dispose of it in the proverbial "File 13"!



**KIDS**

**COLUMN**



Reading your Bible

A recent Barna survey found that one-fourth of U.S. adults (26%) say they never read the Bible, 12% read it less than once a year, and 10% read it only once or twice a year, not including times when they are at a church service or church event. On the other hand, thirteen percent say they read the Bible daily. Another 13% spend time in scripture several times per week, 8% read it once a week, 7% read the Bible once a month, and 9% read it three to four times a year. Therefore, 50% of adults read the Bible less than three to four times per year.

*- via American Bible Society*

*Hosea 4:6  “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge”*

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Sacrificing Ourselves to Reach the Lost

By Grady Huggins

“I will most gladly spend and be expended for your souls” (2 Cor 12:15).  How much of ourselves are we willing to invest in the saving of souls? How much time, energy, and resources are we willing to sacrifice that the lost may hear the gospel? Paul the Apostle stopped at nothing to reach the world with the good news of Jesus Christ. He was willing to live in poverty and discomfort, suffer persecution and disgrace, and put his life in constant peril to ensure the spiritual wellbeing of those around him (2 Cor 11:23-29).

What sacrifices are we making to reach the lost around us? Are we willing to surrender our recreation or relaxation time to study the Bible with our neighbors? Are we willing to let our own personal goals and dreams take a back seat to the work of the Lord in our lives? Are we willing to exceed the limits of our comfort zone to speak to our friends or even strangers about Christ?

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The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, But fools despise wisdom and instruction.

- Proverbs 1:7.



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THE LIFECYCLE OF A CHURCH

By W. Frank Walton

"*So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria enjoyed peace, being built up; and going on in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it continued to increase*" (Acts 9:31). Luke describes the church in Palestine as experiencing dynamic growth. In general, they had their spiritual priorities in place, with a reverent attitude toward the Lord and reliance on the promises and guidance given by the Holy Spirit. God's people doing God's work in God's way will reap God's blessing. How many of us are bearing "*much fruit*" (John 15:5) to the Lord's honor and glory?

In a local church, as in our individual lives, we often pass through different stages in our spiritual development. The church at Thyatira was improving, though plagued with false teaching (Revelation 2:19). The church at Sardis was past its prime (Rev. 3:1-3). The church at Corinth has some good points and spiritual talent (1 Cor. 1:4-7; 11:2; 2 Cor. 8:7), yet they were plagued church problems due to carnality (1 Cor. 3:1-3) and a failure to follow through on their promises (2 Cor. 8:7, 10-11; 9:2-5).

Paul teaches that the ideal path of a church is ever onward and upward: "*Be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain*" (1 Cor. 15:58). A vibrant life-cycle in the church comes from the renewal of firm commitment to the Lord and to the spiritual mission to which we have been called. The Lord's soul-saving work is the most important work in the world. It deserves and demands our best effort, both individually and collectively.

Those who study organizations of people have observed that most organizations go through 3 stages in its life-cycle: (1) risk-taking stage, (2) caretaking stage, (3) undertaking stage. Let's see how this might apply to the life-cycle of a church.

1. Risk-Taking Stage. A new or small congregation often struggles. Yet, everyone must pull their own weight to not pull others down. Members are willing by faith to take risks to advance the cause of Christ, or as Jesus put it, to "*launch out into the deep*" (Luke 5:4). The adventure of faith means commitment to work hard and sacrifice to build up the local church in doing the Lord's work.

Such characterized the church at Philippi in zealously supporting gospel preaching (Phil. 4:15-16). The Lord's church in Rome was widely known for their active, aggressive and encouraging faith (Romans 1:8,12). The churches of Macedonia were materially poor but rich in dedication and sacrifice that even the apostle Paul marveled (2 Cor. 8:1-5).

In this stage of growth, members gladly volunteer their involvement. Members are active and aggressive in evangelism and inviting others to church, like the newly planted church at Thessalonica (1 Thess. 1:8). Launching out in this daring faith means a church has the willingness to face the possibility of failure, problems, rejection or difficulty in doing the Lord's work. The Thessalonian church had this bold devotion for Jesus, because of their idealist, vibrant spiritual traits: active faith, loving service, and steadfast hope in the Lord's second coming (1 Thess. 1:3). This is why the gospel grew and was glorified among them (2 Thess. 3:1).

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>>> 2. Caretaking Stage. The church at Laodicea thought they had "arrived." They smugly thought that we "*have need of nothing*" (Rev. 3:17). Yet the Lord evaluated them accurately, "*You are lukewarm*" (Rev. 3:16a). His sobering warning of "*repent*!" (Rev. 3:19) or else would apply to all churches today who are smug and self-satisfied. Lukewarm churches that are content to putter along make the Lord sick!: "*I will spit* (or vomit) *you out of my mouth*" (Rev.3:16b). The caretaking church loses it vision of ever expanding growth, thereby missing its sense of mission and spiritual urgency.

After a church has grown, it is easy to drift into a "comfort zone." A nice building is built. They hire a good preacher who will do their work for them. There's usually enough members now that things that have to be done will eventually get done. Maintaining the status quo becomes a rut. This church seeks to "hold its own." Members become weary of work and sacrifice. Religion becomes more of convenience instead of conviction. Is the church where you attend satisfied with the "status quo" and "holding your own."?

3. Undertaker Stage. If a church remains in the caretaker stage long enough, it will soon be ready for the undertaker. The Lord said of Sardis, "*You are dead*" They were existing on their past reputation: "*You have a name that you are alive*" (Rev. 3:1). This rut has become "a grave with both ends knocked out." Someone at such a church may say, "The church here is at peace." This means someone needs to come preach their funeral so they can "rest in peace." There's not enough life to cause a stir about anything, either good nor bad. A church in the undertaker stage lives in the past. Or, they may think they're a good church because they have much potential that one of these days could be developed, if they really put their mind to it. Also, they think they are a sound church mainly because they have good intentions and theoretically stand for the truth on all the important issues.

As a member of a local church, how do YOU fit into that church's life-cycle? Make sure that you help the local church to renew itself by the Word of Christ in following Christ. Then by "*speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him*" (Eph. 4:15).



**KIDS**

**COLUMN**



Following Jesus

"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand." (John 10:27-28)

Charles F. Kettering, the noted scientist and inventor, believed the easiest way to overcome defeat was to ignore completely the possibility of failure. Once he was developing this theme in an address delivered at Denison University, Granville, Ohio. He told how he had once given a tough assignment to a young research worker at the General Motors laboratory. Just to see how he would react to a difficult problem, Mr. Kettering forbade him to examine notes on the subject that were filed in the library. These notes were written by expert research men and contained statistics to prove that the assignment was impossible. The young research worker did not know this, of course, so he went to work with confidence that he would succeed. He did succeed, too. He didn't know it couldn't be done--so he did it. (From **Good Business**)

If we ignore the teachings of men, and confidently follow Jesus Christ, we will succeed in obtaining eternal life.

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BIG Bible Question?

David killed a great giant named Goliath. Do you know how tall Goliath was?

a. 6 feet 6 inches tall?

b. 7 feet 7 inches tall?

c. 9 feet 9 inches tall?



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THE RESULT OF NEGLECT

By Carey Scott

We have a lot of things around here that are broken down pieces of junk. We have lots of houses that are in need of being torn down because they really do present a hazard to the community. A house that is not lived in will break down and collapse upon itself in a few years, whereas a house that is lived in will last a long time. What we see is the result of neglect.

We drive around and see the results of neglect everywhere. If you neglect your garden, weeds will take over. If you neglect your homework, your grades will go down, and you may have to repeat the same courses because of your neglect. I'm sure we all realize what happens when a child is neglected. Most of them are in prison right now. What if you neglect to change the oil for vehicle maintenance? Sooner than later your car will cease working as it should.

Neglect can be very costly. Putting off seeing a doctor can have bad results for your health. Replacing a car engine is very expensive. Not taking care of your house can cause big time expenses. Neglecting your duties can cause you to lose your job.

We see these things in the material/physical world. We understand how things operate in real life. We consider anyone a fool to neglect something that requires maintenance. Yet somehow, this world seems to get along by neglecting the most important thing of all. So let us consider our soul and the result of neglect.

If you neglect the truth, you will lose your soul. If you neglect bible study, you become a breeding ground for the devil's lies, and you will fall for anything whether it is truth or not. If you neglect going to church on a regular basis, you are just what Satan is looking for to recruit into his service. Even if you find yourself going to church every time the doors are open, you can still neglect the church or the message in your own life. If you think about other things when you should be concentrating upon worship or listening to the lesson; you are still guilty of neglect if the service or the message does not move you.

You can tell your children to go to church, but if you do not go, you teach them a lesson that church is not important enough for you to go, so why should they?

You can let the world raise your children. Sure, there are some shows that teach lessons about getting along with others. However, if you do not teaching them about God and His ways, and that His ways are right; you are raising a future atheist.

If you neglect your soul, how can you have a positive effect upon others? How can you let your light shine if you are always hiding it? Such behavior does no good for anyone around you. Jesus tells us in Matthew 5:16 to let our light shine so that others can see our good works and glorify God who is in heaven. So if we fail to do God's word, and we fail to set a good example, what will be the result? We should not have to say it, but you will lose your soul.

We already know that there is too much neglect in the important things of life.  Let us change ourselves to not neglect the important things.

**Volume 7 November 1 2015 #44**

Most Of The Time

By Tony Lalli

One day a preacher was talking to a man who was supposed to be a Christian. The man told the preacher that he went to church services "most of the time" and seemed to think this put him in good relationship with God.

I personally know of many people who fall into that same category. They "go to church" every now and then and expect that to fulfill their religious responsibilities and consider themselves faithful to God. But think about a few things that we might put into that same perspective and then see what conclusions we might draw.

- What if a husband was faithful to his wife or a wife faithful to her husband most of the time?

- What if your car started most of the time?

- What if your heart beat most of the time?

- What if you received your paycheck most of the time?

- What if your water heater worked most of the time?

What are your conclusions about these things? Would that husband or wife be considered faithful? Would you be satisfied with that car? Would you worry about your heart? Would you conclude that these represent examples of being faithful?

I know I may sound like a preacher when I make this next statement but I hope you will consider it. If we wouldn't place those questions I gave as examples of being faithful, then why should one think he could please God by being "faithful" only part of the time?

Jesus calls for commitment. (Matthew 16.24) Christianity is not just part time or even most of the time. (Luke 9.23) He asks us to count the cost and follow Him. (Luke 14.26-33) He said that if we put our hand to the plow we are not to look back (Luke 9.62). Let us be faithful in assembling to worship with the saints.



**KIDS**

**COLUMN**



DUCK CHURCH

One fine Sunday morning, the ducks gathered for duck church. They waddled into their duck pews, sang from their duck song books, and listened to their duck preacher.

The duck preacher said, "Ducks, you don't have to waddle. You have wings like eagles. You can fly! Fly, ducks, fly! The ducks all said, "Amen, Amen!" Then, when the service was over, the ducks got up and waddled home.

New Testament Application: "But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was." (James 1:22-24)

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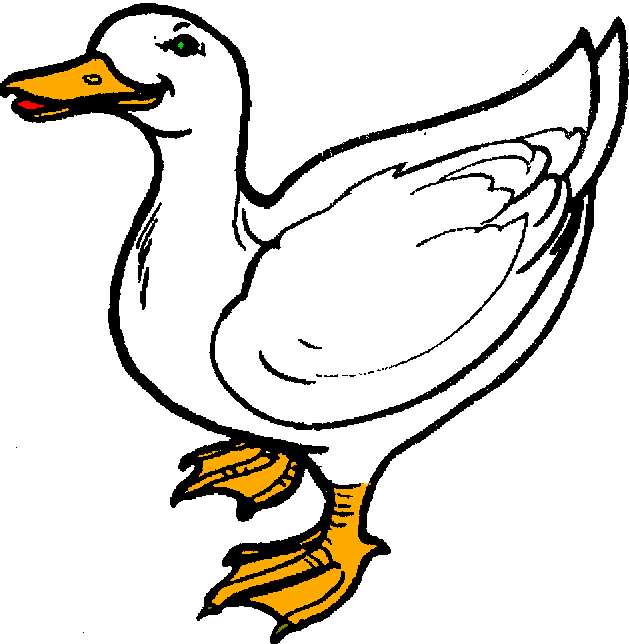
Jesus seen in you

"And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness." (Rom. 8:10)

A boy while flying a kite was so successful that the kite went out of sight. He stood in the field with a cord in his hand that bent upwards into the sky. Someone asked him how he knew the kite was there, and he let them put their hand on the string. They could feel the pull of the unseen kite. Similarly, although the world cannot visibly see Christ in us, they can recognize His invisible power in every phase of our lives. They are forced to admit that we, as Christians, have something which they do not possess.

Let us truly have Christ, the hope of glory, within us.





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Proper Attitude Toward God's Word

By Gene Taylor

"Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper." (Psalm 1:1-3)

According to the above text, one who delights in the law of the Lord is "blessed." It is his primary focus. He meditates on it day and night. It is a source of refreshment and life to him. He becomes as a tree that is planted by a river because the word of God makes his life fruitful and productive.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus describes him as a person who will "hunger and thirst for righteousness" (Matthew 5:6). He considers receiving and giving instruction in God's word as one of his greatest blessings. Learning and/or teaching the law of God is an activity he eagerly anticipates and thoroughly enjoys. Therefore, he values those times when his fellow-saints assemble for study and worship -- knowing he will be with people who, like him, respect and adore the word of God.

**Nehemiah 8:1-8 Is An Example of Proper Attitude Toward the Word of God:**

After their return from Babylonian captivity, the people of Judah set about to restore worship to God in Jerusalem. In Nehemiah 8, they asked Ezra the scribe to read the law of God to them. He assembled all the people, opened the book of the law before them, and then read distinctly from it to make sure the assembled crowd understood its message. The people, when beckoned, willingly assembled. They stood when the book of the law was opened -- a show of reverence. Standing from daybreak to midday, they praised God for His word and then fell on their faces worshiping Him.

Whether proclaiming the word or receiving instruction from it, we should have the same willingness to assemble, the same reverence and respect, and the same praise for our God.

**Acts 10:33 Is Another Example:**

Having summoned Peter to preach the message of God to him and his family, Cornelius told him of their willingness to hear him preach the gospel of Christ. Cornelius' attitude --- a model for all -- caused him to:

·   Send for one knowledgeable in God's word.

·   Assemble his family to hear what Peter would proclaim.

·   Realize that God was present and that everything was being said and done before Him.

·   Be ready to hear all things God had commanded.

**What We Must Be and Do:**

If we are going to have the proper attitude toward the word of God, therefore, we must:

·   Have good and honest hearts (Luke 8:15).

·   Allow the word of God to "prick" our hearts (Acts 2:37).

·   Gladly receive the word (Acts 2:40).

·   Be discerning hearers (Acts 17:11).

·   Be eager hearers (Matthew 5:6; Acts 10:33).

·   Desire to hear and know all of the word (Acts 10:33).

·   Desire only the word of God (Matthew 15:9).

What is your attitude toward the word of God? What should it be? Make sure it is what the Lord would have it to be.

**Volume 7 November 8 2015 #45**

Are We Looking for Questions or Answers?

By Doy Moyer

My co-worker made an observation in a lesson on doubt that is worth further exploring. The idea is that there is a difference between the one who is constantly seeking questions and the one who is seeking answers. The following is not intended to be a list of hard rules with no exceptions. Rather, these are observations I have found to be fairly typical in my own experiences:

1 - The question-seeker is rarely satisfied with any answers, but continually asks unanswerable questions.

The answer-seeker has questions, too, but is able to recognize legitimate answers and is happy to find them.

2 - The question-seeker’s follow up is to the effect of, “Yeah, but what about…?”   
The answer-seeker’s follow up is to the effect of, “Now let me understand how to apply this.”

3 - The question-seeker mistakes a search for questions with a humble search for truth.   
The answer-seeker finds truth through humble acceptance of legitimate answers.

4 - The question-seeker looks for clever ways to ask the questions so as to stump others.   
The answer-seeker looks for clarity, not to stump anyone, but to lead to solid conclusions.   
5 - The question-seeker sees the questions as an end in themselves since no answers suffice.   
The answer-seeker sees the questions as a means to find real answers.

6 - The question-seeker uses the lack of answers as a reason to raise doubts.   
The answer-seeker uses the lack of answers as a way keep seeking and finally trust in the One who does have the answers.

7 - The question-seeker asks questions without learning much from them.   
The answer-seeker asks questions to foster learning.

8 - The question-seeker uses unanswered questions to suspend judgment upon God and Christ.   
The answer-seeker suspends judgment on an unanswered question, but can still trust God.

The reader will probably be able to think of more contrasts, but the question I need to ask myself is simple: am I a question-seeker or an answer-seeker?



**KIDS**

**COLUMN**



Obedience is Necessary

**By Donnie V. Rader**

Just a casual reading of the Scriptures will reveal that God expects obedience to his will. Consider a few simple texts.

“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” (Matt. 7:21).

“But why do you call Me “Lord, Lord,” and do not do the things which I say” (Luke 6:46)?

“Though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him” (Heb. 5:8-9).

Those who heard the gospel in the first century were told to “Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out” (Acts 3:19) even though the sin they committed was done “in ignorance” (v. 17).

We must conclude that there will be honest and sincere people who will be lost. If such is the case, it behooves us to carefully study God’s word and live accordingly.

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Intentions Won't Get It!

By Dee Bowman

Some of the proverbial expressions not found in the Bible are nonetheless true. Truth will always plumb with all other truth; it cannot contradict itself. Take the expression “the road to hell is paved with good intentions.” That’s not found in the Scriptures, but it’s nonetheless true. Nobody really wants to go to hell; and everybody I know of intends to do something to preclude making that trip. But when? Ah, that’s the question.

Intention without follow-through is profitless. No matter how firm

they are, they are still just intentions and serve no useful purpose

until they are actuated.

Intentions won’t get it.

“I intend to be more diligent.” When? Right away?

Diligence is necessary to progress in spiritual living. You can’t sit around and become spiritual. Furthermore, diligence doesn’t come by some process of osmosis–just because you are in close proximity to a Bible or to those who believe it and are involved in it. Diligence is personal–a personal, willful action. You decide to be diligent.

In 2 Timothy 2:15, Paul says, “Give diligence to present yourself approved to God.” The English word translated diligence is from a Latin word which means to give earnest persistence to a matter. The Greek word for diligence means both an earnest zeal and a burning haste to get a matter done. You can’t sit around and be diligent. Peter tells us something about diligence when he uses that same term when to conclude what we call The Christian Graces: “Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure” (2 Peter 1:10). He had begun with that same admonition: “But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith...” virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness and love. You don’t add those things up in your mind and you’re through; it’s a life-long pursuit, one requiring consistent diligence to make sure the calling of God. It all begins with the decision to get on with the project. You have to develop a serious conviction as well as a pressing urgency to continually add all these graces as you go along.

Intentions won’t get it.

“I intend to get involved.” When? Soon?

And what’s wrong with starting today? You are involved only when you actually participate, when you become a part, when you make an effort to be dedicated to whatever the project. Paul speaks of such participation in Romans 12: “For as we have many members in one body, but all members do not have the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.” We’re individuals who are melded together in our common worship of the Father, in our common desire to grow up in Him, in our common desire to bring others to Him. We’re together, and being together takes work – patience – understanding. And it takes time. It doesn’t just happen, either. It’s planned action. Intentions don’t work, folks. >>>

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>>> Intentions won’t get it.

“I intend to tell somebody about Jesus.” When? Today?

I seriously doubt that anybody is going to heaven alone. You will likely go with someone and you will likely take someone with you. Just as somebody loved you enough to tell you about the Lord and His salvation, it’s up to you to love somebody enough to pass it on. But that takes more than mere intentions. You have to get past the fear, get past the timidity, and get on with the mission assigned. You have to run the risk, even it means losing a friend or making a family member angry.

Intentions won’t get it.

And you don’t have to be a Bible scholar to teach the word. All you need is a note pad and a knowledge of the Scriptures broad enough to tell someone what you did to be saved. Following the great commission in Matthew 28:18, Jesus said, “...teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you.” Please note what He has just commanded– “Go therefore and teach all nations.” Maybe you intend to do it but just don’t have the ability. That’s possible. Then help someone else do it. Be a part. One thing is certain: the message needs to be told, and intentions won’t get it done.

When it’s all said and done, and you stand before the bar of God in judgment, can you say to the Lord, with a clear conscience, “Lord, I intended to”?

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Bible Quiz!

Jesus was born in what city?

* Jerusalem
* Bethlehem
* Nazarath
* Jericho



**KIDS**

**COLUMN**



A NOTE FOR THE PREACHER

By Bob Pulliam

I found your note on the door the other day. I just imagine that you came by to see why we were not at the services last Sunday. Well, I feel that I should explain so there will be no misunderstanding. You know that one thing we will never do is miss church without some kind of a real good reason.

Last week was the birthday of the sister of my wife's sister-in-law (by her first marriage). We never miss attending any birthday in either of our families. So we just had to be out of town. We left here in time to go to worship over there, but they had early services at 10:30. Is it scriptural to have them earlier? Well, anyway, we did not get to go that morning. We planned to return early enough to make the evening services, but the children raised such a ruckus that we stayed until 7:00 PM. The services started over there at 7:30, but we had to leave in order to keep from staying out too late with the kids.

Preacher, it would do you good to be out on the road on Sunday morning sometimes. It would give you some idea as to how careless the world is about worshiping Christ. Many of the people we passed had boats behind their cars. Now you know they could at least have gone to services first. Think of all the money they spent for motors, boats, and supplies. I wonder if they ever thought of giving some of that money to the work of the Lord?

Don't worry about us; I'm convinced that we should leave our contribution here at home. We gave the new members across the street

our $2.00 to put in for us. I hope that they see it pays to be a regular and liberal giver and attend the services regularly.

We will see you Sunday. Oops, I forgot! Deer season opens next week. But after that we will see you every Sunday.

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IS ISLAM COMPATIBLE WITH CHRISTIANITY?

Part #1

By Tommy Thornhill

The question in the title should concern every American, and even more so, all true Christians. Many seem to have their heads in the sand when it comes to the Islamic religion. Many otherwise sincere people, ignorant of the teachings of Islam, unthinkingly join with professed Muslims, seeking to persuade us to believe that Islam is really a religion of peace. They tell us that Islam simply wants to co-exist with other religions, not as an enemy, but a friend. They say the problems are being caused by a few radical terrorists who really do not represent true Islam. But, is this true?

It seems that as the religion of Islam gains a larger foothold in America, and their leaders (many of them radical) voice their intentions to eventually change American society into an Islam state under Sharia law, most people are not alarmed. They do not see the great danger lurking in the shadows. They may have changed their location but not their ideology. Islam is not just a religion to Muslims. It is a way of life, socially, secularly, politically as well as religiously. With this in mind I thought it good to write some articles showing that the religion of Islam is not compatible with true Christianity.

It is my conviction that we should really be aware of the religion of Islam, even if we are not being affected locally at this time. In case you don’t know it, today 1.5 billion Muslims (those who adhere to Islam) make up 22% of the world’s population. Even though they are still in the minority in America they are rapidly become more and more influential in our lives. For this reason I purpose to write some articles, showing that the religion of Islam is not compatible with true Christianity. In them I hope to reveal several differences between Islam and true Christianity.

As I begin to write on this subject I want my readers to understand I bear no animosity against Muslims as a people, or as individuals. I treat any of them I meet with respect, and expect them to do the same toward me. But I am greatly concerned about the danger Islam poses as a religion. It is a ‘false religion’ and it cannot scripturally co-exist with true Christianity. I intend to point out why, but first some observations.

Muslims would have us believe they are a tolerant people, desiring only to live in peace with their neighbors. And I believe a majority of them are peaceful and satisfied with that arrangement, until Islam gains the majority. Once the religion of Islam gains the majority it will be otherwise. Anyone who is observant, soon learns that wherever Islam has gained dominance, their “tolerance” suddenly becomes one of “intolerance” toward anyone who have a different faith than Islam. Just look what is happening in the Middle Eastern countries today.

Most of the focus of the main stream media news is centering, at this time, on the hoard of refugees fleeing the turbulent atrocities happening in their war-torn countries. They are seeking asylum to escape the fanatical Islamic groups who are destroying anything and anyone who opposes their form of religion, which is both secular and spiritual. While the refugees seek relief and protection from the turmoil, they are at the same time bringing their religion of Islam with them. They are flooding into nearby countries by the thousands, welcome or not. Actions of past eras show what will happen. Once in the country they will settle

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>>> down, but will not assimilate into the country’s society. Instead they will colonize and begin trying to force the host country’s society to conform to their Muslim way of life. Even though we here in America have not yet experienced the great influx the European countries are now dealing with, we may soon be doing so. We can see the things described above happening in some parts of America at the present time.

Muslim immigrants have come into America, wanting to be given a place to live so they can enjoy the benefits. But, instead of assimilating into the society around them, they demand society change its practices to conform to theirs. They don’t just want freedom to practice their secular type religion they expect everyone else to practice it also. While the majority of Muslims are not fanatical, they are like sheep. They can be easily stirred up and led by radical, intolerant leaders into doing things that are wicked.

Regardless of what some think, Islam is not a religion to be ignored. We should not underestimate its growing power. It advances by the use of force and fear, not by persuasion as Christianity does. A fellow gospel preacher, Ney Rieber, after years of research wrote a book entitled “**A Resource For The Study Of Islam**.” Rieber reported at the time: “There are about a billion Muslims in the world. There are 50 Muslim majority countries in the world: 21 in Asia, 28 in Africa, and I in Europe. There are 13 other Muslim majority states/areas under occupation by different powers.” p.40. This was over 25 years ago. Today the numbers are much larger. The religious movement known as Islam started by a man calling himself the prophet Muhammad in Arabia ca. 622 AD with a handful of followers now numbers 1.5 billion Muslims (those who adhere to Islam) in the world. This is 22% of the world’s population. Wherever this religion has been established it is so deeply engrained in the lives of its members that it affects every aspect of their lives. While many in America seem to be aware of this religious movement and the part it is playing in the world community, they understand very little of the Muslim religion itself.

**(This study will be**

**continued in the next issue)**



**KIDS**

**COLUMN**



“He Often Refreshed Me”

By Frank Himmel

Paul, in recounting to Timothy his imprisonment in Rome, wrote, “The Lord grant mercy to the house of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains; but when he was in Rome, he eagerly searched for me and found me — the Lord grant to him to find mercy from the Lord on that day — and you well know what services he rendered at Ephesus” (2 Timothy 1:16-18).

What brought Onesiphorus to Rome is unknown.  Was he there on business? Was he a tourist? Whatever it was, Onesiphorus was not just focused on himself.  While in Rome, he made considerable effort to locate Paul, and he kept trying until he succeeded. (Someone less dedicated might have made a minimal effort and said, “Oh well, I tried!”) He came again and again.  These visits refreshed Paul, both the company itself as well as any needed provisions he may have received.

It is easy to get caught up in our own busy lives and fail to remember those who could use some encouragement. Stop. Take a moment to think about someone you could refresh. Then act. It likely won’t take you nearly as long or be as hard as it was for Onesiphorus. Be such that others can say of you, “He often refreshed me.”

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Bible Quiz!

Jesus was born in what city?

* Jerusalem
* Bethlehem
* Nazarath
* Jericho

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How did

you do?

Matthew 2:1





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IS ISLAM COMPATIBLE WITH CHRISTIANITY?

Part #2

By Tommy Thornhill

While Islam is not very prevalent in this area at this time it is a movement that is affecting other areas of America and it will eventually have an effect here. There is an old saying “to be forewarned is to be forearmed” which holds true only if people heed the warnings. That is why I am writing on the subject at this time.

Islam must not be ignored. We cannot underestimate its growing power. Even though Muslims are still in the minority in America they are rapidly becoming more and more influential in the everyday lives of Americans. As a result of their ever increasing power and influence there is a definite need for some basic teaching of the danger Islam poses to America’s freedom and democracy. But even more importantly to Christianity itself.

In order to show why we oppose Islam we need to understand what their system is all about. It is a religious system designed to control every aspect of a muslim’s life, legally, politically, economically, militarily, socially as well as religiously. In every country governed by Islam, the government is either dictatorial or autocratic, and to a great extent (if not completely) its people are governed by Sharia Law. The Islamic religious leaders (Imams and Mullahs) exercise great power over the people. Muslim children are taught only from the Koran (Arabic- Qur’am). There is little, if any, religious freedom. Non-Muslim schools and churches, when allowed to exist at all, are closely watched, and only non-muslims can attend. Any muslim caught associating with non-believers (infidels) is considered guilty of a crime punishable by death and may be killed. We have seen recent examples of this happening even here in America.

If you think the previous paragraph is an exaggeration, let me insert this quote from a radical muslim leader, showing Islam’s intolerance of any who do not adhere to their way of life. ”Before I was nine I had learned the basic canon of Arab life. It was me against my brother; me and my brother against our father; my family against my cousins and the clan; the clan against the tribe; the tribe against the world, and all of us against the infidel (non-Muslims – t.t.)”. – Leon Uris, ‘The Haj’. This is from Peter Hammond’s book, “Slavery, Terrorism and Islam, The Historical Roots and Contemporary Threat.” This is from a secondary source so I do not have the book at hand - t.t.

Why does Islam pose such a danger? The religion of Islam leaves no room for criticism. In countries where the Qur’am and Islam rule, any criticism of Islam is considered blasphemy and carries the death penalty. Muslims say they want to be accepted into American society, but when one learns the true objectives it can readily be seen to be very dangerous to both our form of government and Christianity.

One learns the truth of Islam from The Koran (Qur’am), the book they revere as their guide book. The Koran teaches that a muslim can lie to a “non-believer” if they think it helps Islam. It also teaches that any contact a muslim makes with a “non-believer” does not have to be honored. It further teaches that it is the duty of all

muslims to attempt to convert non-believers. After 3 attempts to convert them, if they won’t convert, it is the duty of all good muslims to kill the non-believer. >>>

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>>> There have been instances where more moderate muslims have tried to change these teaching of the Koran, but instead of being listened to, they were beheaded for their efforts.

Islam wants to become the universal religion. Its avowed aim is to convert all mankind to the worship of their god, Allah, as pictured in the Qur’am. They will do it peacefully by persuasion if possible, but if not, they are more than willing to use force to obtain their goal of universal domination.

Islam wants a universal Islamic state. Their avowed objective is to replace all forms of government that do not have the Qur’am as their primary constitution. Their aim is to dominate the entire planet. They will do this through peaceful means or through conflict. Past history, as well as the Qur’am reveals this. The present ferment and turmoil we see daily coming from the Mideast is a harbinger of their aim to rule the world. “Islam was born in bloodshed, nurtured on violence and matured in conquest. It thrives when militarily challenged.” Ney Reiber, “A Resource…” p.1.

The adherents of Islam believe that when world domination happens, they will have established a “Caliphate.” Then the prophet Mohamed will return and there will be 1000 years of peace. Doesn’t this sound a lot like the false premillennial doctrine of some false teachers who teach that Christ will return and set up an earthly kingdom. His throne will be established in Jerusalem where He will sit and reign on this earth for 1000 years.

Islam wants to govern all affairs in one’s day to day life by imposing their Sharia law on all people, politically and religiously. They want a society based upon Islamic morals since they view their culture as the perfect society.

In opposition, Christianity seeks to convert and govern people out of love, not force. Christians teach people the precepts and commandments of Jehovah through the Bible. The choice is then left for man to obey or disobey out of conviction, not force..

**(This study will be**

**continued in the next issue)**



**KIDS**

**COLUMN**



Is It A Contradiction?

By Frank Himmel

Years ago I was talking to some fellows who asserted the Bible is full of errors. When I asked them for an example, they cited the four accounts of the inscription on Jesus cross. John’s account says it read, “Jesus the Nazarene, the King of the Jews” (John 19:19). The others give slight variations, yet no two are identical (Matthew 27:37; Mark 15:26; Luke 23:38). Is that a contradiction?

Have you ever seen a sign that said, “Warning: shoplifters will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law”? If you asked multiple people who saw that sign what it said, you might get several technically different answers. One might cite it word-for-word, others might abbreviate it to varying extents, another might just paraphrase it.  Would you conclude that none had actually seen the sign or knew what it said? Of course not.  Then why treat the gospel writers that way?

The gospel writers are too often in a no-win situation with critics: if they say exactly the same thing they are accused of collusion, and if they differ they are charged with contradiction.

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**A troubeling Trend . . .** Americans are becoming less religious, judging by such markers as church attendance, prayer and belief in God, and the trend is more pronounced among young adults, according to a recent poll.  The share of U.S. adults who say they believe in God slipped to 89% in 2014 from 92% in 2007.  The proportion of Americans who say they are "absolutely certain" God exists fell even more, to 63% in 2014 from 71% in 2007.

The percentage of Americans who pray every day, attend religious services regularly and consider religion important in their lives are down by small, but statistically significant measures, the survey found.  The trend is most pronounced among young adults, with only half of those born from 1990 to 1996 absolutely certain of their belief in God.

- via Reuters News, 11/3/15

Psalms 14:1  “The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.”

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IS ISLAM COMPATIBLE WITH CHRISTIANITY?

Part #3

By Tommy Thornhill

Some view Islam as just a religious movement and have been led to believe that we worship the same God as the Muslims, only under a different name. Muslims call their god, Allah. In the Koran (Qur’am) he is the same God who made Adam, spared Noah in the flood, worshiped by Abraham, gave the Law through Moses and sent Jesus as the Messiah to the Jews. Because there seems to be some parallels between some of the characters in the Bible and the Muslim Koran (Arabic-Qur’am) people assume there is a parallel in theology. This is blatantly false, and this can be seen when examined with the light of divine truth, the Bible. The Allah of Islam is not the same as Jehovah God of the Old Testament Jews or the New Testament Christians.

Allah of the Koran is not Jehovah of the Bible. Some say Islam is a religion of peace, but this is not so. Islam means “submit,” not “peace.” Islam brings peace only to those who blindly submit to their system (religiously, economically, politically, socially, legally, militarily). To Christians, Islam means persecution, war and death. Muslims act the way they do because of the type god they are taught to follow. He is not the God we know.

Who is this Allah? From ca. 2000 BC the people of Arabia were polytheistic (many gods) and practiced moon worship. At least 400 years before Muhammad, Mecca in Arabia referred to their main deity as Hubal (a moon god). The crescent moon symbol appeared on every minaret. At least 400 years before Muhammad, the Arabs worshipped a variety of deities, but the one named “Hubal” (moon god) was considered the greatest of their gods. He was also referred by the generic name “al-ihah” (the god) later shortened to “Allah” before the time of Muhammad. When Muhammad began his work in 610 AD he dropped the name Hubal but retained the generic term “Allah.” He also retained all the pagan rituals of the Arabs, but redefined them in monotheistic (one god) terms. So, even though Islam claims their worship is monotheistic, their roots are from paganism and moon worship. Today on every mosque and flag in the Islam world the crescent moon is the central figure.

Allah is not Jehovah God revealed in the Bible. Regardless of what Muslims might say, Allah, the god of Islam is in no way comparable to the one true God that we worship as Christians. The Muslim concept of God is based on a misunderstanding of the Old Testament instead of the truth of the New Testament, which more fully explains God. Allah of Islam has a very different personality than Jehovah God revealed in the Bible.

Let’s note some differences. The Allah of Islam is an unknowable and impersonal being that does not relate to or interact with his creation in even a remotely personal way. In Islam, it is blasphemy to refer to Allah as father. To the Muslims calling God your father, is like saying Allah had sex with your mother. Yet, the Christian is taught to call Jehovah God as “our Father” Matt.6:9. Calling God our Father denotes the intimate relationship we maintain with God, as His children 1.Jn.3:1-2, 10; 5:2. Recognizing the Fatherhood of God demands filial or reciprocal love as commanded of his followers Matt.22:36-37. But to the Muslims Allah is an arbitrary, capricious god who acts without rhyme or reason. He is whimsical, unpredictable, >>>

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>>> governed by irrational impulses. He forgives and punishes as he chooses. There is no assurance that being a good Muslim will save them. Islam’s founder, Muhammad declares, “By Allah, though I am the apostle of Allah, yet I do not know what Allah will do to me.” (Hadith - a book of commentary on the Koran), considered by Muslims a sacred book just below the Koran in terms of holiness. From the Koran “To Allah belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth. Whether you show what is within yourselves or conceal it, Allah will bring you to account for it. Then he will forgive whom he wills and punish whom he wills, (my emphasis, t.t.) and Allah is over all things competent” (Sura 2:284). “Do you not know that Allah possesses the sovereignty of the heavens and the earth? He punishes whomever he wills, and is all powerful, how can any Muslim be sure of his fate before Allah? (Sura 5:40). (my emphasis t.t.). If the founder can’t be sure of his fate before Allah, who forgives whom he wills and punishes whom he wills, and yet is all powerful, how can any Muslim be sure of his fate before Allah?

Allah is certainly not the compassionate loving God we know. Jehovah does not act arbitrarily or capriciously. He is the God of love 1.Jn.4:8, 16; Jn.3:16. This is His nature. It is more than a statement, it is His essence. Think of the song we often sing, “The Love of God.” Our God is no respecter of persons Acts.10:34-35; Rom.2:4-11 and does not choose indiscriminately who will be saved or punished. He does not want anyone to be lost. He wants all to be saved, so He is longsuffering, giving us opportunity after opportunity to get right with Him 1.Tim.2:3-6; 2.Pet.3:9. His grace and mercy has been plainly revealed Tit.2:11 so He is not hard to find Acts 17:24-31. He sent His Son to die for us when we didn’t deserve it Rom.5:8. His love is universal, unlimited and boundless. Based on our obedience He has promised to save anyone who will obey His Son so they may avoid eternal punishment Heb.5:9; 2.Thes.1:7-9. Even though He does not will that anyone be lost and wants all to be saved, it our decision whether we choose to take advantage of His mercy and grace offered though His Son Jesus Christ. Do not believe the hype of the world that tells you otherwise. There is only one true Jehovah God and you can learn about Him in the Bible. He is NOT the Allah of the Koran.

**(This series to be continued)**



**KIDS**

**COLUMN**



They Hated Me First  

By Terry Benton

It was because people knew that Jesus was uncompromising with God's truth that they hated Him and worked for His death. Just before Jesus laid His life down for such sinners, He warned His apostles, "if you were of the world, the world will love its own." (John 15:19) but because you are not like them they will hate you. He reminded them that they needed to remember that "they hated Me first."

It is easy to want two masters, to please the world and think we have God's pleasure in us at the same time, but God says that one who makes himself a friend to the world becomes the enemy of God (James 4:4). We cannot love God and uphold His word, while trying to approve of those who trash His word.

Love for God separates us from the world of those with a self-centered lust-based outlook. The world follows a completely different standard than those who follow Christ. Don't expect the world who hated Jesus, the real one, to love you. We cannot do better than Jesus. We cannot stand for what Jesus stood for and expect the world to think well of us. Jesus told His disciples, "Woe to you when all men speak well of you." What fellowship does light have with darkness? Come out and be separate from the world. Christ will give you light!

(2 Cor.6:14 - 7:1). Do not be afraid or ashamed to be hated for Jesus' sake and for righteousness sake! In striving to be like the Master it is inevitable!

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Let no one despise your youth,

but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

- I Timothy 4:12.

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IS ISLAM COMPATIBLE WITH CHRISTIANITY?

Part #4

By Tommy Thornhill

When Muslims are confronted with the differences between Jehovah God of the Bible and their god, Allah, they say this is not so. They argue that the God of the Bible is the same god, Allah, of Islam. They try to prove it by misreading what the word of God actually teaches. They refer to Jesus, while hanging on the cross, crying out the words of Ps.22:1, “*Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? That is, My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me*” Matt.27:46. Some of the Jews thought He was calling out to Elijah, and the Muslims abuse the passage by saying Jesus was calling out to Allah.  The Jews were wrong and so are the Muslims. Matthew explains what Jesus actually said in the passage itself. He writes that the Hebrew words, “Eli, Eli,” in the Aramaic language are, “My God, My God …”

If that is not enough some Muslims use the flimsy argument that “Allah” is found in the word “Allelu-jah” (hallelujah). In reality the word “allelujah” means “praise Jehovah,” and certainly does not fit Islam’s concept of Allah, as a god to be feared, not be praised. In Islam, Allah is portrayed as an arbitrary, capricious god. A fierce, relentless Oriental despot, who has no love for mankind. One who is whimsical and unpredictable, who acts without rhyme or reason, governed by irrational impulses, forgiving and punishing as he chooses. This is certainly not a god to be praised, but one to be feared.

Having written the above things about the differences between Jehovah God and Allah of Islam, I want to point out one more false doctrine, perhaps the most prominent difference between Jehovah God and Allah.

According to the Islam holy book, The Koran, Surah 112:1-4, Allah is the only one who possesses deity. This strict form of monotheism (belief in one God), called the doctrine of tawhid, Surah 4:171, denies the idea of three individuals making up who we know as God. That is to say, to the Muslim, there is no God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. There is only God and He does not exists in three beings. To call Allah Father is blasphemous. To the muslim mind, to call God Father is like saying Allah had sex with your mother. The Muslim find It equally repulsive to call Jesus the Son of God Surah 119:88-92.

What does the Bible teach about Jehovah God? Is there only one God, or does He exist in three persons? The Bible teaches a triune God, sometimes referred to as the Trinity. The Muslim sees this as an impossibility, thinking 1+1+1=3. But, note I wrote, triune, not triplex. Triune is more like 1x1x1=1 as in Matt.28:19. The Bible describes this concept of a triune God, using the term, “Godhead,” or its equivalent in Acts 17:29; Rom.1:20; Col.2:9. The word “God” in the Bible is plural, and includes all three persons in the Godhead (hood), the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit. Note Gen.1:26; 3:22; Isa.6:8 where the plural “us” is used. W.E. Vines defines the word “God” as the divine essence of Godhood, the personality of God.

There certainly is a distinct relationship between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Each one is separate from the other. Yet all three are called God. We have God the Father Jn.20:17 who is distinct from Jesus the Son Jn.3:16; 8:16. Yet the Son is called God Jn.1:1; Heb.1:8 and He is separate from the Holy Spirit Jn.14:26; Acts 10:38. But the Holy Spirit is also called God Acts 5:3-4, yet distinct from the Father Jn.14:26; and the Son Acts10:38. All three exist as God, and possess all the qualities that make up >>>

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>>> God, yet each exists as a separate entity, one from the others while working together as one, not only in creation and purpose, but also in the salvation of mankind. This concept of God is repugnant to the Muslim mind, yet it is what the Bible teaches. The Bible doctrine of God is not compatible to Islam.

With the above in mind, let me press on to another tenant of Islam that makes in incompatible with Christianity. That is the deity of Christ. Muslims maintain they believe in Jesus Christ, but not as God’s final prophet. To them Muhammad was the last prophet sent by God and the greatest. In my way of thinking this is one of the most dangerous aspects of Islam. The deity of Christ is the foundation for the whole of Christianity. This is evidenced by what occurred when Jesus asked His disciples; “*Who do you say that I am?*” Peter answered for all by saying “*You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God*.” Jesus then replied, “*Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. And I 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*” Matt.16:15-18. We understand the rock to be the statement Peter made “*You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God*.”

Muslims know this is the foundation (bed rock) upon which Christianity rests so they attack the deity of Christ, not with a frontal attack, (a complete denial of Jesus Christ) but through compromise. They know it cannot be denied that Jesus lived, so they simply try to make Him into “a messenger” of God. They deny He possessed the nature of deity while on earth, and never made the claim to be “The Son Of God,” that He was simply “a servant and apostle of God” in the same sense as other prophets who lived before Him such as Moses. But none of them, Abraham, Moses, David, were as great as the prophet Muhammad. He is an “antichrist” as we shall see in the next lesson.

**(This series to**

**be continued)**



**KIDS**

**COLUMN**



Jesus is the Firstborn

By Frank Himmel

In Colossians 1:15, Jesus is called “the firstborn of all creation.” Does that mean, as some suggest, that Jesus was the first thing God created? Not at all.

The firstborn concept is rooted in ancient cultures in which the oldest son had a special place. It was a position of honor and privilege. The oldest son typically became the next family head.  He inherited his father’s position, such as becoming king in his father’s place (e.g., 2 Chronicles 21:3). Among the Hebrews, he received a double portion of material inheritance.

One who was not literally the first one born might nevertheless be put in that honored position. God did that for Israel. They were His firstborn son (Exodus 4:22) though they were by no means the oldest of nations. God did that for David as well (Psalm 89:27). David was the youngest of eight siblings and the second king of Israel, yet God honored him above all, especially by the place he was given in the Messianic lineage and covenant.

Jesus was no created being. He was I AM (John 8:58). He was God (John 1:1). In our text, Paul goes on to explain what the firstborn of creation means: “For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities — all things have been created through Him and for Him.” Jesus has the place of honor with reference to creation, not because He was the first thing created, but because He is the creator!

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"But seek first the kingdom

of God and His righteousness,

and all these things shall

be added to you.

- Matthew 6:33.

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IS ISLAM COMPATIBLE WITH CHRISTIANITY?

Part #5

By Tommy Thornhill

As pointed out in the previous issue, Muslims know they cannot deny that Jesus Christ lived. In fact Jesus Christ is mentioned nearly 100 times in the Koran. While admitting He lived, they deny His Deity. They seek to shape Him into simply one of the prophets and messengers of Allah, but not as great as the prophet Muhammad. The Koran (Qur’an) their holy book, teaches that Allah (the one they call god) inspired many of the Biblical prophets. Adam, the chosen of Allah shares the highest honor of a prophet with five others. Noah, the preacher of Allah, Abraham, the friend of Allah, Moses, the speaker of  Allah, Jesus, the word of Allah, and Muhammad, the apostle of Allah, who is venerated to the extent that he is referred to as “Savior of the world” and “Lord of the universe.” In fact, to Islam, Muhammad is “the seal of the prophets” - the final prophet, superior to all other prophets including Jesus. One Muslim writer, Sir Muhammad Iqbad, even wrote, “You can deny God, but you cannot deny the Prophet!”

But, when one takes the time to honestly compare the life and teachings of Muhammad (the founder of Islam) as recorded in history, their Koran and Hadith (a book they revere just behind the Koran) with the life and teachings of Jesus Christ (the founder of Christianity) found in the Bible, the only conclusion to be reached is that Muhammad as the founder of Islam is an “antichrist,” i.e., one who opposes Jesus Christ.

Note, I wrote, “an antichrist, not “the antichrist.” Read 1 Jn. 2:22; 4:3; 2 Jn. 7. Some think John was writing of one specific individual who was to come and establish himself as a great ruler who will ultimately lead the world into the battle of Armageddon, but this is a misinterpretation of what the Bible really says. Read carefully what the apostle John wrote, he said there would be many antichrists, not just one. Anyone, or any movement that denies the deity of Christ and His work on behalf of mankind, can be truthfully called an antichrist, and Islam certainly fits that category.

**Why is Islam an antichrist?**

The Islam religion claims to honor Jesus as a prophet. But what kind of honor can it be when they repeatedly deny His Deity? In Jesus’ advent into the world, He was said to be God, the Son of God Lk.1:35. Matt.1:23. He admitted to being God, the Son of God, equal with God the Father (not in authority, but in character and attributes)? Jn. 5:18; 10:30-31; 36; Lk. 22:70. He challenged the people of His day when they denied His Deity by asking, “*What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is He?*” Matt. 22:41-45.

But Islam teaches that Jesus, if He made such claims, would be a blasphemer (one who speaks evil of, or contemptuously defames or defiles God and other sacred things). So, instead they say He was simply confused when He claimed to be the Son of God. In fact it is considered a sin called Shirk – the association of another god with Allah, which will condemn any Muslin unless they repent Surah 5:72-73.

Now recall what the apostle John wrote. Anyone who denied Jesus’ claim to be Deity were liars, deceivers and antichrists 1 Jn. 2:22; 4:3; 2 Jn. 7. This includes Islam since they deny the basic fundamentals of the Gospel of Christ, the foundation of Christianity, Note that Paul wrote that the central theme of his preaching was “*Jesus Christ and Him crucified*” 1 Cor. 2:1-5; Eph. 2:20; 1 Cor. 3:10-11; Jn. 14:6. >>>

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>>> Each of the basic tenants taught in the Bible about Christ is denied by Islam. So how can they say they honor Christ when they say He was only one of many messengers from God and that He was confused when He claimed to be the Son of God? This is much the same doctrine taught by the JWs who deliberately added the adjective “a” in Jn. 1:1 making Him the first of created gods. See also Col. 1:16. “Firstborn” does not refer to Him being created (born to the Father), but refers to His preeminence and authority, Him being subject only to the Father 1 Cor. 15:27-28. In the last issue I pointed out that Jesus was part of the triune Godhead, not three different Gods, but One God (plural Elohim) in three persons, all acting as One. Acts 17:29; Rom. 1:20; Col. 2:9.  Jesus possesses all the attributes that make God, God. Jesus is referred to as God in Heb. 1:8. John declared Him to be God Jn. 1:1-4; 14. In His preexistence state with the Father He helped to create all things Jn. 1:1-4; Col. 1:15-16. As God the Son, He received and accepted worship Matt. 2: 11; 4:10; 14:33; Rev. 22:9. He died on the cross by the predetermined plan of God and shed His blood for our sins Acts 2:23; Matt. 26:28; Heb. 9:28. He will not return to win the world to Islam. He will come in judgment Acts 1:11; 2 Pet. 3:10-11.

Another point that can be made is contrasting how the Islamic religion is advanced and how Jesus taught His disciples to advance His kingdom. The nature of the kingdom of Islam is earthly, sensual and violent. Muslims advance their cause by the use of force and the sword. One is given the choice, either conform to Islam or die. This is seen at the present time in the Mid-Eastern countries, and as they invade other countries. Today they are known as a religion of war, violence and terrorism. But Jesus told His disciples to put up their swords and advance His cause by preaching the gospel. The disciples of Christ carried the gospel to the whole world in about 30-35 years, and turned the world upside down with just the word of God Acts 8:1-4; 17:6; Col. 1:5-6, 23.

**(This series to**

**be continued)**



**KIDS**

**COLUMN**



# Jehovah or Yahweh?

By Wayne Jackson

The term “Jehovah,” appears in the American Standard Version (1901) as well as in most modern versions. It derives from four Hebrew consonants, called the Tetragrammaton (a term that simply signifies a four-letter word). This expression is used by scholars for the four Hebrew letters, YHWH, that constitute a name for God, employed some 6,800 times in the Old Testament.

The name *Jehovah* is a hybrid term.  Vowels from the Hebrew word adonai  (meaning Lord) were imported into the four Hebrew consonants (YHWH).  Actually, the same procedure is employed in the construction of Yahweh.  Numerous scholars have noted that the original word’s exact pronunciation has been lost and the various spelling forms are speculations, e.g., “Jehovah, Yehovah, Jahweh, Yahweh”.  All of these forms are conjectural transliterations. There is no solid documentation to confirm the original vocalization of YHWH. Dogmatism, therefore, is without justification.  It is difficult to appreciate the rationale of caustic critics who virtually rail against the name Jehovah, when no one knows precisely how the original term was pronounced.

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Things to think about . . .

Nearly all Americans age 15 and over (96 percent) engaged in some sort of leisure activity.  Watching TV was the leisure activity that occupied the most time (2.8 hours per day), accounting for more than half of leisure time, on average, for those age 15 and over.

- via Bureau of Labor Statistics

Ephesians 5:15-16  *“See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise,  Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.”*

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IS ISLAM COMPATIBLE WITH CHRISTIANITY?

Part #6

By Tommy Thornhill

Islam is not compatible with Christianity in its very nature, the reason for its existence. The religion of Islam has been earthly, sensual and violent since its beginning ca.621 AD by Muhammad who had earlier claimed to have been visited by the angel Gabriel (Qur’am - Surah 96:1-5). In the Arab countries, from where he lived, first in Medina, then in Mecca, he established himself as a religious, political and military leader and began converting tribes and cities to the religion he started, by using the threat of war and conquest. During this time he assassinated several Arab leaders who opposed him.

Since the beginning of Islam, Muhammad’s followers have followed his path of using force to convert people to Islam. This has been their history. They invade a country, and as they gain a majority, the people in the country are given a choice, submit (convert) to Islam or suffer the consequences, which in many cases means death. This concept is borne out by the name “Islam,” which means “submission” to the will of Allah. A “Muslim” is “one who submits.” Islam’s goal is to physically bring the whole world into submission to their religion of Islam and their god, Allah. They seek to control every aspect of a person’s life. This is stated clearly in a book, Why I am not a Muslim, written by Ibn Warraq. He writes, “There may be moderate Muslims, but Islam itself is not moderate. There is no difference between Islam and Islam fundamentalism: at most there is a difference in degree, but not of kind…Islam fundamentalism has global aspirations: the submission of the entire world to the all-embracing Shari’a, Islamic Law, a Fascist system of dictates designed to control every single act of all individuals.” (I don’t have the page number, t.t.).

Muslims try to defend their concept of a physical kingdom established by warfare and conquest by saying Jesus was no different from Muhammad, pointing to a statement Jesus made in Matt. 10:34. “*Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth, I did not come to bring peace but a sword*.” Then they refer to the Medieval Crusades of the Dark Ages, ca.1000-1200 AD, and the later holy(?) wars between Protestants and Catholics during the Reformation period ca.1500-1600 AD. They then say, “See, Jesus’ followers used the sword in their conquests.”

In Matt.10:34 Jesus is not calling for a military Jihad (holy war). When one honestly reads the context, one sees that the sword in the passage is used in a figurative way to describe how Jesus’ teaching would divide families. Some would receive it while other would reject it. In fact, the one time a disciple tried to defend Jesus with a sword, Jesus rebuked him and told him to put the sword away Matt. 26:52.  What Jesus did teach was that when His followers were mistreated they were to turn the other cheek, not take up a sword Matt. 5:38-39. A few verses later He says they were to love their enemies, do good to them and pray for them, not hate and seek to retaliate against them 5:43-47. They were to let God take care of the vengeance in His time Rom. 12:18-19; Heb. 10:30.

While it cannot be denied that the Crusades and the Protestant/Catholic wars were fought in the name of Christ, they were fought without His authority or blessings. Read Matt. 7:21-23 you will see what Jesus thinks of those who do things in His name that He has not authorized. It is “*lawlessness*” (a work of iniquity). >>>

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>>> What the Crusaders and Reformers did by physical war and bloodshed was in direct opposition to what Jesus taught. It was acting without law (lawlessness) Jesus **NEVER** endorsed the use of physical weapons and warfare in spreading His kingdom.

Jesus rejected the use of carnal weapons to advance His cause, because the nature of His kingdom was not physical, but spiritual. As Jesus stood before Pilate He revealed the nature of His kingdom. “*My kingdom is not of this world, If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews, but now My kingdom is not from here*” Jn.18:36. His disciples knew the battle was spiritual “*For we do no wrestle against flesh and blood, but against…spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places*” Eph. 6:12. So the weapons used would not be carnal. “*For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God* …” 2 Cor.10:4. Their defensive armor was spiritual and their offensive weapon was “the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” Eph. 6:17.

The word of God was the only thing that could penetrate the heart of man as we see it doing on Pentecost Acts 2:36-37. Physical threats may cause a person to outwardly change his words or actions, but it cannot change the inner man of the heart. A physical weapon may touch, wound and even kill a person physically, but it cannot change what an individual really thinks. Only the word of God can do that Heb. 4:12. That is why Jesus said, “*Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both body and soul in hell*” Matt. 10:28.

So, following Jesus’ orders to carry the gospel to the whole world Mk. 16:15; Matt. 28:19; Acts 1:6-8, using only the word of God, they went out and turned the world upside down Acts 17:6. In ca. 30-35 years they had carried the gospel into the whole world Col. 1:5-6, 23. Think of that, they did it without using physical threats and force, nor maiming or beheading anyone.

**(This series to**

**be continued)**



**KIDS**

**COLUMN**



POOR MAN’S COUNTRY CLUB

By Greg Gwin

What are you looking for in a church? That’s a fair question, and more than a few studies have been done to try to determine the things that most often appeal to the average church-goer.

Surveys suggest that the majority of people are looking for social activities and recreational opportunities. They are attract­ed to religious groups that spon­sor parties, softball, volleyball, dinners and other occasions to enjoy food and good times.

We have pointed out that this sort of thing is not authorized in the Bible. Individuals may or­ganize such activities (1 Cor. 11:34), and we encourage them to do so. But such things are NOT the authorized work of the church.

Having said all that, let us comment about a disturbing trend in the Lord’s church. Many who would agree with the things previously stated have still been heard to complain about local congregations on the basis that there are not enough “social” things to do. If someone is not always having them over, or if they are not occupied with a wide variety of other “fun” activities, they are quick to voice their dissatisfaction. Our ques­tion to such folks is, “What are you looking for in a church?” — a church that emphasizes spiritual things, or one   where there’s lots to ‘do’ socially? – a God-ordained institution, or a poor man’s country club?  Think!

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As you think about all the goals for the new year. Is being more faithful to God on the list?

It should be #1!

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