

"For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?"

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This monthly religious journal is published for the benefit of the Church of God universally. It is our supreme purpose to reach the world for Christ through the printed page. Our burden is to reveal the truth of God's Word to all mankind, to expose sin and error, to war against apostasy, and to eradicate the longstanding traditions of men that have no biblical foundations.

Brother Roger L. Decker Editor
Workers Too Numerous to Mention

THE CHURCH OF GOD BELIEVES IN:

- A personal God (John 4:24)
- A divine Christ (John 1:1, 14)
- An infallibly inspired Bible (2 Tim. 3:16-17)
- Salvation from sin (Matt. 1:21)
- The new birth (John 3:3, 5-7)
- A holy life (Luke 1:73-75; Titus 2:12)
- Sanctification (1 Thess. 5:23)
- Unity of God's people (John 17:21, Eph. 4)
- Divine, physical healing (James 5:14-16)
- The ordinances (Matt. 28:19-20; John 13; 1 Cor. 11:23, 34)
- Eternal life (Matt. 25:46; Mark 9:43)
- The Trinity (1 John 5:7, 8)

**SOME SPIRITUAL FACTS
PERTAINING TO THE CHURCH**

- Jesus organized it (Matt. 16:18)
- On a good foundation (Eph. 2:20; 1 Cor. 3:11)
- Christ governs it (Eph. 1:22-23; Isa. 9:6)
- God admits members (1 Cor. 12:13-18)
- Sin puts you out of it (Rom. 11:22; Ex. 32:33)
- The saved only are members (John 15:2-6)
- Membership is offered to all (Rev. 22:17)
- Final rewards (Rev. 20:12-15; 21:3-4; 22:14)
- Bible name of the Church (Acts 20:28; Gal. 4:43; John 4:7:11)

We reserve the right to edit and/or decline any material for any reason. Not responsible for unsolicited articles or items.

CONTENTS

"Lord, Help Me" 3
 God's Word Is Settled 7
 Radio Log 12
 How to Overcome Disappointment 13
 Especially for Young People 14
 The High Cost of Living Wrong 16
 The Way of the Transgressor Versus
 the Way of the Righteous 19
 How I Learned to Pray for the Lost 23

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Guest Editorial

The Crown of Life

What Is the Crown?

Part 2 of 3

James 1:1-3,12 states: "James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting. My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.

Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him."

In the last article we found that the crown of life is received in this world, and more particularly, as James penned, when an individual is tried. In this article we want to look further at this crown and see what it actually is in reality.

When we consider what James called "the crown of life," we must remember that many times the Scriptures speak in figurative language. When he commenced this epistle, he was addressing "the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad." He was not speaking of the literal tribes of Israel. At this point in Jewish history they were so dispersed throughout the Roman empire that they were beyond recognition. When he mentioned the twelve tribes, he spoke in a figurative sense, just as John did in Revelation, Chapter 7.

In Revelation 7:4 when John got a vision, he said, "And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of

the children of Israel." The "hundred and forty and four thousand" is nothing more than a multiple of twelve. Twelve is a biblical number that represents perfection, or completeness. You can read in verses 5-8 that he sealed twelve thousand from each of the twelve tribes. Twelve times twelve equals one hundred forty-four. In enumerating these twelve tribes, he was not speaking of Old Israel, but he was showing that a complete transition had been made from the old economy to the new. The twelve tribes represented all of Old Israel, and those who were sealed in the spiritual sense by the Holy Spirit, who is the seal (see Ephesians 1:13), represent the New Testament church. A complete transition was made from Old Israel to New Israel, from the Law to the church. He used literal Israel in a figurative sense, denoting the entirety of the church.

In Revelation, Chapter 7, in the morning time, John saw the hundred and forty-four thousand. Then in Revelation, Chapter 14, in the evening time, he saw the Lamb standing on Mount Zion. He looked again, and with him were the hundred and forty-four thousand. What does that tell you? When the evening-time church came out, she was just as complete and perfect as the morning-time church had been.

Too many times when people think of a crown, their minds immediately think of a literal crown. Throughout the Scriptures, this word is used figuratively. In Revelation 3:11 Jesus said, "Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast [in the present tense], that no man take thy crown." John was writing in A.D. 96 to people who already had a crown.

Lamentations 5:16 says, "The crown is fallen from our head: woe unto us, that we have

[continued on page 25]

Psalm 40:10 I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart; I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation: I have not concealed thy lovingkindness and thy truth from the great congregation.

11 Withhold not thou thy tender mercies from me, O LORD: let thy lovingkindness and thy truth continually preserve me.

12 For innumerable evils have compassed me about: mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of mine head: therefore my heart faileth me.

13 Be pleased, O LORD, to deliver me: O LORD, make haste to help me.

Matthew 15:21 Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon.

22 And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.

23 But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us.

24 But he answered and said, I am

not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

25 Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me.

26 But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and cast it to dogs.

27 And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table.

28 Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.

"LORD, HELP ME"



Brother Roger L. Decker

Persistent Faith

We have a lesson before us about a woman of Canaan whose daughter was grievously vexed with a devil. The woman was an outcast as far as Israel was concerned, yet she pressed her way by faith to get to the One who was able to help her. When she asked for help, the Scripture says in verse 23 that Jesus answered her not a word. No doubt, she heard the disciples beseeching Jesus to send her away, but then she came and worshiped Him and said, "Lord, help me." The

Lord informed her that He was sent to the lost sheep of Israel.

Some things stand out about this woman that we want to consider. First of all, the woman was a Gentile, and the Scripture says she was a woman of Canaan. The Canaanites were enemies to the house of Israel. Although Jesus carefully admonished her that He was sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, that did not deter her. She was very persistent in her faith.

When she went to Jesus, she went to Him in love. Her child's

affliction was presented to Jesus as if it were her own. The love that was in her heart was a reflection of what God is and how God loves His children. It was a love that accepted the Lord's silence and His rebuke. It was love that gave her a glimpse of compassion and mercy behind the words that were spoken by Jesus.

The driving force within this woman that kept her near Jesus was love. She did not get discouraged and leave because He was silent and seemed to ignore her or because He rebuked her. Some people get offended so easily today. The

slightest word or happening or seemingly being ignored and they are ready to take it out on God. I have never understood why people would take it out on God and stop worshipping Him because they became offended. The more one's heart is full of love, the closer he or she is to God. First John 4:8 says, "He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love."

The woman also had faith, and Jesus recognized that. She started out calling Him the Son of David, but she ended up calling Him Lord. Faith caused her to worship Him, and faith caused her to be persistent. She had it settled that Jesus possessed the power to heal and the power to save. She did not go to Jesus to merely take a chance that He would hear her. She wanted help, and she came to Jesus because He was her only hope. If you are living in sin, Jesus Christ is your only hope. If your home is not in order as it ought to be or if you are in any kind of trouble, your only hope is Jesus Christ.

This Canaanite woman came to Jesus Christ because He was her only hope. She petitioned Him in earnest, and she would not take no for an answer. She came in humility, not arrogance. Her faith brought her from afar, and she came as a true worshiper.

The Promises of God

Jesus said in verse 26 of our Scripture lesson, "It is not meet [appropriate or proper] to take the children's bread, and cast it to dogs." In verse 27 she answered, "Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table." The children's bread consisted of the promises that God had for the Jews, who were the children of His kingdom.

Romans 3:1-2 states: "What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God." Speaking of the

Jew, or Israel of old, what were the oracles of God? They were the Word of God.

Romans 9:1-5 reads: "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen."

The children's bread consisted of the promises, or the oracles of God, that had been given to Israel of old. This sister was persistent in her request, because the driving force behind it was love. She did not get discouraged, and she did not walk away empty-handed. She let Jesus know that she was not asking for a bountiful supply. All she wanted was for her daughter to receive healing from some of the overflow of what Israel of old was to receive. She did not ask for all the blessing that was to come upon Israel.

The woman of Canaan knew that she was considered to be a dog (that is what the Gentiles were called), but she was satisfied with what a dog would receive. There was more power in the crumbs that she received than the blessings that Israel denied. This woman received more of the blessings from the overflow because she believed and had faith in God.

As we look at the Scripture text in Matthew, the words "Lord, help me" stand out. In essence, this Canaanite woman was saying, "Lord, please give me some of the deliverance that You have offered to Israel." Friend, that could be what you need to say. The Lord does not ask that you recite a long prayer to get help. Even a little child could say, "Lord, help me." Those words

spoken from the heart moved Jesus Christ to the place of no longer ignoring this woman and granting her petition; then He praised her. Her request was not fancy or detailed. She simply said, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil." He answered her not a word. His disciples said, "Send her away; for she crieth after us." In other words, they were saying, "She is just making a spectacle of herself; send her away." Nevertheless, that did not cause her to go away. She was there for help, and she was not leaving until she had secured it.

Acknowledging Your Need

Friend, you need to ask the Lord to help you. You may not be doing well in your soul or in your home. Perhaps wherever you go things do not work out for you. You might be afflicted, and you are not doing so well. If so, you need to ask the Lord to help you. If you are lukewarm, a sinner, a backslider, or a hypocrite, you need to come to Jesus Christ and let Him know that you need help. He is willing to help you if you will humble yourself in His presence. You must be honest about your condition, because God knows. Do not try to conceal your problem.

The woman in our Scripture text wanted mercy, so she brought the problem before Jesus. He already knew what the problem was, and He knew exactly what she was expecting Him to do. You should not try to hide your problem. One thing is sure, to receive help from the Lord, you have to tell Him the truth.

Psalm 32:1-5 reads: "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile. When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is

turned into the drought of summer. Selah. I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah."

In these verses is a picture of one who got his sin removed and the steps he took. The writer mentioned at least four evils: transgression, sin, iniquity, and guile. To *transgress* means "to pass over a boundary." To *sin* is to miss the mark. *Iniquity* is that which is distorted, and *guile* means "fraud and deceit." All the evils that the Psalmist mentioned must pass away. The Psalmist said that when he kept silent, his bones waxed old through his roaring all the day long. In other words, he was saying, "Before I humbled myself and confessed my sin, my soul was in the deepest of despair. I had no peace." When he kept silent, he was not yet willing to confess his sin. When he kept it to himself, his bones waxed old through his roaring all the day long. In these verses we find that he chose to hide his sin rather than to confess it.

When he said, "My bones waxed old," he simply meant that his strength failed and was decaying. He was weak. Sin was eating him up, yet he would not confess it. He would not bring it to God, so he kept silent. By his actions, he was saying, "I will hide my sin"; but when he hid it, his strength was depleted. He said that he roared all the day long. His soul was in anguish and distress.

Psalm 22:1-2 states: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent." The words "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" are the words that Jesus spoke on the Cross, which you can read in Matthew 27:46. It was the cry of an individual in the midst of suffering.

Coming Clean

In Psalm 32:4 the Psalmist said, "For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer." The hand of God was heavy upon him. How did the Psalmist get free from the heavy hand of God? He had to break the silence and come clean. That is all that is the matter with some people today. They need to take the steps that David took. They need to break the silence and come clean.

What did David do? He finally acknowledged his sin. He said in verse 5, "I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." He broke the silence and confessed his sin. When confession is made thoroughly from the heart, one ceases to cover his iniquity. It is then that he can enjoy the forgiveness of God upon his soul.

Friend, until you do that, you will wear yourself out. If you esteem iniquity in your heart, the Lord will not hear you. If you have sin in your heart that you do not want to give up, then there is no need to partially confess your sins before Jesus Christ. When you confess, you must confess all and be cleansed from all your sins. You must bring it all before God and empty it out. Again, David said, "I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah."

Friend, when you come clean, it is then that the Lord will cleanse your soul. The words "Lord, help me" are simple words, but those words moved Jesus Christ; those words touched Heaven's throne. No matter what your need is, how far you have fallen, or how weak you might feel, you can ask the Lord to help you.

The Canaanite woman in our

Scripture lesson was not about to leave until she had touched the heart of Jesus. She had love for her daughter, and her daughter was vexed with a devil. She was not about to go down the highway until she got what she came for. She did not have all the promises that Israel had. She probably did not even understand many of the promises. The words "Lord, help me" did not have to come from an educated heart or from one who had sat under the Word of God day in and day out. Those words came from a burdened heart, a soul that wanted satisfaction.

Dear one, God knows what your problem is. If you will come to Him and say, "Lord, help me," you will find Him ready to deliver you. The woman in our lesson had so little when it came to the promises, yet she gained so much. Israel had so much and gained so little. Regardless of what your need is, He can supply it. You cannot get along fine when things in your life need to be straightened out. Won't you ask the Lord to help you? He is the only One who can help you and satisfy your need.

Come to Christ Believing

Notice that in verse 28 of our Scripture text in Matthew, Chapter 15, that Jesus answered the woman, "O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt." The latter part of that verse states, "And her daughter was made whole from that very hour." There was no long conversation with Jesus Christ required in order for her to receive help, but she was not about to budge until something happened.

Friend, if you want help, you must be persistent in your faith, and you must come to Jesus Christ believing; then you must stay there until you receive help. The Lord is not pleased with your having an up-and-down experience. Dear one, there is no need for it.

Someone may say, "I don't understand all the promises and

the many things of God." Well, can you take some of the overflow or some of the crumbs and believe? The "crumbs" did more for that Canaanite woman than all the help that Israel received. Whatever your need is, bring it to Jesus Christ. Do not put it off until another time. The time to receive help is when you hear His voice.

Jesus' final words to that woman before He departed were, "O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt." If you ask the Lord to help you, He will. He will not cast you out or throw you away. I will guarantee you that when you speak the words "Lord, help me" from the heart, you will

get His attention. He will be right there to help you. Now would be a good time to heed the message. Then you can walk on with victory in your life and say, "I am going to live for God regardless of what others do." If you will honor God, He will honor you. You may go through some hard places, but God will turn those situations around.

If you have a need, you need to take hold of the promises of God and do what is right. Someone may say, "Well, my companion is not saved." You must leave him or her with God and make sure that you are saved and living right; make sure that you are faithful. If he or she wants to walk out on you for

servicing God, you need to remember that no one is worth going to hell for. You have only one soul, and the Lover of your soul is Jesus Christ. He will never forsake you; He will be right there for you, even if your mother and father forsake you.

You do not have to pray fancy words. You can simply say, "Lord, I have a problem in my soul; please help me," and He will do it. Again, Jesus told the woman, "Great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt." Friend, it will be unto you just the way you want it.

(Cassette C-4680E)

**I f you would not fall into sin, keep away
from the brink of temptation.**

Drifting Away From Jesus

*Drifting away from Jesus,
Far from his gentle fold,
Wrecked on the waves of sorrow,
Out in the night so cold.*

*Drifting away from Jesus,
Day after day I glide,
Swiftly the billows bear me
Over the surging tide.*

*Drifting away from Jesus,
Helpless and tossed with care,
Soon I shall land forever
Somewhere, I know not where.*

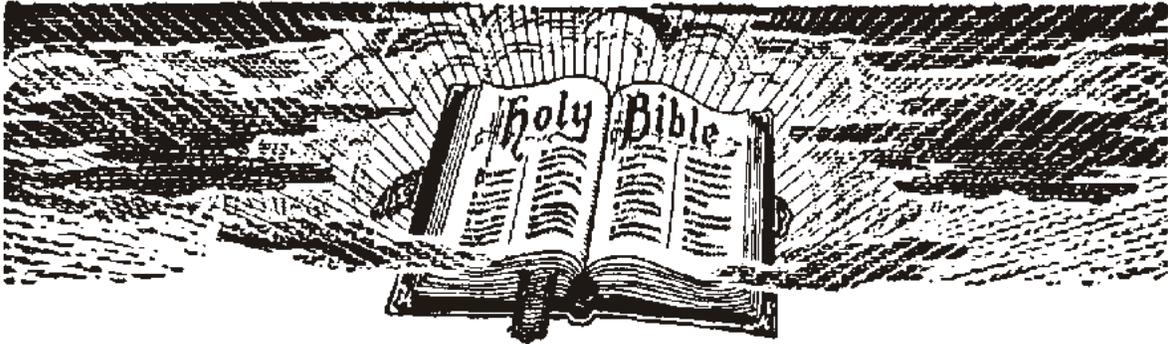
*Oh, am I lost forever?
Lost amid fiendish din?
Oh, can there be no lifeboat
On the dark ocean of sin?*

*Drifting away from Jesus,
Far from his courts of love—
Oh, do you see! a lifeboat
Sails from the ports above!*

*Over the bounding billows,
Jesus, my Savior sends
Help to my storm-tossed spirit,
Praise to the Friend of friends!*

D. O. Teasley

Psalm 119:89 For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven.



God's Word Is Settled

Brother C. H. Dickerson

God's Word Is Final

No one can change God's Word or change His Spirit. God's Word is forever settled in Heaven, where man cannot change or alter it in any way. We must do as God says in order to please Him. We are living in a day of ease. We can push buttons on machines to wash and dry our clothes and to wash and dry our dishes. This is a push-button age. Technology is ever changing, but God's Word never changes. His way is strait and narrow; therefore, it is not popular with the world.

God's Word lets us know that those who are doers of the Word are justified. Today many people want to please their own fleshly desires, and because of this, men have translated the Bible to suit themselves. In Matthew 11:25 Jesus let us know that God has hidden the

Truth from the wise and the prudent. Many modern translations of the Bible have changed the true meaning of the Word. For instance, the wording of the Revised Standard Version kills the power of the Word and the effects of the blood of our Savior Jesus Christ. Man-made religious organizations have their own earthly headquarters and rules by which they govern their people. Nevertheless, God's Word was before the foundation of the world, and it will stand when all else fails.

As Jesus began the Sermon on the Mount, He said in Matthew 5:17-20: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so [when God declared His law before the foundation of the world, He set a standard by which He governs His people; He said that anyone who tries, in any way, to break the least of His commandments will be called the least], he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven."

The religion of the scribes and the Pharisees was only an outward work. Jesus said we must exceed that by having an inward work, a heart change. After the heart has

been changed, the outward work will be manifested. The inward work of the heart will produce greater works than what the scribes and the Pharisees produced. In no way can you enter into the Kingdom of Heaven without something more than what people can see outwardly.

When you get a new heart, it will show on the outside. People will feel it and see it. That is entirely different from anything the world or men could ever offer. Men may offer a form of religion, but God has something greater than that for you. When you get salvation on the inside, you will lift up Jesus Christ, witness to others, edify the church, and love the brethren.

Some have tried to change the Word of God, but God's Word is settled. Jesus proclaimed twice that you must be born again, yet false teachers have tried to change that to include church-joining and merely living better. Nevertheless, God's Word is final and can never be changed. Again, our Scripture text states, "For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven." It cannot be changed in any way, shape, or form.

I want you to realize that God has never changed His mind concerning His Word. He has called a true ministry, those to whom He can speak and declare what He wants them to deliver to the people. He has not called those who think too highly of themselves. Jesus told the ministry that He called at that time that He was sending them forth as sheep among wolves (Matthew 10:16). He sent them out to preach the Word. They were not to add to or take anything away from it, and they were not to make any apologies for it.

My friend, if you will be obedient to God's Word and do not try to change it in any way, He will pour out a blessing upon your soul that you cannot contain. Today many people do not want to do things God's way, and they are heading for destruction. God is still talking to His ministry and sending

them out to try to awaken people. One day you are going to stand before the judgment bar of God. If you hope to make Heaven your home, you must do what God tells you to do. You must look the way God's people look, act right, and have God's Spirit within your heart. If you do not have God's Spirit, you need to heed the message and be awakened spiritually, because that is the only way you can make it to Heaven.

The Tragedy of Listening to a False Prophet

First Kings 13:1-32 tells about a man of God whom the Lord sent to Bethel, a city full of false worship. In verse 9 we read, "For so was it charged me by the word of the LORD, saying, Eat no bread, nor drink water, nor turn again by the same way that thou camest." God gave His prophet specific orders when He sent him out. He told him not to eat of their bread and not to drink of their water, because their bread and their water were false. He also instructed him not to return the same way he came. You may ask, "Why did God say that?" I do not know, but whenever God says something, He has a reason. The man of God went down to Bethel and delivered the message, but afterwards he listened to a false prophet.

After he had delivered the message and started back another way, the sons of an old prophet saw him and told their father. The old prophet inquired of his sons, "Which way did he go?" Verses 14-18 read: "And went after the man of God, and found him sitting under an oak: and he said unto him, Art thou the man of God that camest from Judah? And he said, I am. Then he said unto him, Come home with me, and eat bread. And he said, I may not return with thee, nor go in with thee: neither will I eat bread nor drink water with thee in this place: For it was said to me by the word of the LORD, Thou shalt eat

no bread nor drink water there, nor turn again to go by the way that thou camest. He said unto him, I am a prophet also as thou art; and an angel spake unto me by the word of the LORD, saying, Bring him back with thee into thine house, that he may eat bread and drink water. But he lied unto him."

Today many ministers claim to be prophets of God, but God has not called them or sent them out. Often they tell people that God has given them greater light. Friend, light comes from God. If you are a child of God, the Holy Spirit will witness to your heart when something is truth. The Scripture tells us that the old prophet lied to the man of God, and the results of his believing the old prophet were tragic.

Verses 20-24 read: "And it came to pass, as they sat at the table, that the word of the LORD came unto the prophet that brought him back: And he cried unto the man of God that came from Judah, saying, Thus saith the LORD, Forasmuch as thou hast disobeyed the mouth of the LORD, and hast not kept the commandment which the LORD thy God commanded thee, But camest back, and hast eaten bread and drunk water in the place, of the which the LORD did say to thee, Eat no bread, and drink no water; thy carcase shall not come unto the sepulchre of thy fathers.

"And it came to pass, after he had eaten bread, and after he had drunk, that he saddled for him the ass, to wit, for the prophet whom he had brought back. And when he was gone, a lion met him by the way, and slew him: and his carcase was cast in the way, and the ass stood by it, the lion also stood by the carcase." The man's disobedience turned into disaster: he was destroyed because he failed to obey God. This is an example of someone who listened to and followed a false prophet. That brings spiritual destruction. Had he departed God's way, everything would have worked out all right, but he listened to someone who

tried to change God's way, so God dealt with him severely because of his own disobedience.

Beware of Ungodly Counsel

When God calls a pastor, He makes him the overseer of a congregation. Acts 20:28 instructs pastors to take heed to themselves. The first thing God wants a pastor to do when He gives him a message is to apply it to himself. Many times (I believe all true pastors would tell you the same thing) when God gives me a message, I have gotten down on my knees and said, "God, I need help along this line." Then He says, "When you have measured to the message, then you can stand before the people and feed the Church of God, which Christ has purchased with His own blood." God will help and strengthen us.

Until pastors measure to the message, they have no business standing before the people. As a pastor, you need to take heed to yourself. When God calls a man of God to oversee a congregation, He holds him accountable for that congregation. Also, when God places him there, no one else has any business trying to counsel those people. Pastor, if your people are true saints of God, they will not call anyone else for counsel; that is wrong. Sometimes people think God has appointed them to be mighty counselors. Too many people try to counsel others, and they think they are doing a great work.

The old prophet in Bethel did not care what happened to that man of God, so he lied and gave him false counsel. This caused the man of God to go against what God had already told him to do; then he ended up being killed by a lion. No one has any business counseling people from another man of God's congregation. God sets things in divine order, and we must do things God's way. His Word is forever settled in Heaven, and He will not change it to please anyone.

One reason there are so many catastrophes is that people have failed to stay within their bounds. Some try to oversee people in other congregations instead of letting pastors take care of their own people. They meddle in the affairs of others.

The man of God in our lesson believed a man who was not a proven prophet. He did not even know the old prophet, yet he believed him. The reason he believed that false prophet was that he wanted to do the opposite of what God had told him to do. Friend, you need to be careful that you do not listen to the wrong person.

God sent His man down to Bethel, knowing that a false prophet lived there. He was to deliver a certain message and then leave. Although he might have become hungry, he was told not to eat of their bread because it was contaminated (Jesus also told His disciples not to eat the Pharisees' bread).

When the old false prophet went after the man of God and caught up with him, in essence, he said, "God has given me a later revelation. You are to come back with me and eat our bread (symbolic of false doctrine) and drink our water (a type of false spirit)." After the man of God turned back and partook of their bread and water, they mocked him. They said he ought to have listened to what God had told him. The same thing is going on today when people do as they please rather than obey God.

God sets overseers in every congregation of the Church of God. If you are in a congregation where you do not have a pastor, you need to do some serious praying that God will send you a godly pastor or seriously consider moving to where you can get your soul fed.

Saint of God, you could believe a lie if you are not careful. As a pastor, no one knows the people in my congregation better than I do.

Likewise, I do not know the people in another pastor's congregation better than he does. Sometimes married couples come to me for counseling. If any one of them comes and tells me something, it may sound as though the other person is horrible, but when both of them come together, then I can understand the situation. That is what happens when someone tries to counsel another pastor's people. That person does not get the whole story; therefore, that person may give wrong counsel, and he will be held accountable.

Do You Love the Truth?

God's way is rigid and strict, and He has no tolerance for wrongdoing. It is either obedience or disobedience. God gives us all the grace we need to follow the road map that He has given. If you should err or make a mistake, God's grace will be right there to help you to get back on the right road. Serving God is not an easy way, but it is the best way. Do you think Paul and the other Apostles had an easy way? Do you think Christ had an easy way? I believe they each had a difficult way.

If you follow God, people will criticize you and tell lies about you, but the best way is to serve God. I would not trade this way for any other way. This is the greatest life. Why? Because the child of God is free. Also, he has peace, happiness, and divine promises. The world cannot give you good health, promise you healing, save your soul, or set you free from the life of sin.

The Apostle Paul warned in 2 Thessalonians 2:10, "And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved." Friend, if you ever love the Truth, you must get God in your soul. If you are going to love the people of God and love God's way, you must have God's Spirit on the inside. How can

you get God's Spirit within you? You must be in complete submission to Him, in your mind, your soul, and your body.

God's people love the Truth. The Word cannot be preached too straight for them. They shout and praise God for it. Why? They have a love of the Truth because they know what Truth has done for them. When people fail to love the Truth, God will send them a strong delusion (or a deception) so that they might believe a lie. Sometimes people make a profession, yet they dress in an ungodly manner or possess a wrong spirit. They think they are doing God a favor, but they are deceived and heading straight for hell. Your having a love for Truth is more important than anything in this world.

God's eternal Truth never changes; it is always the same. God has given us the Truth, and it will lead us to walk the same way. When you measure to the truth that God has revealed to you, He will lead you into more truth. As you walk in the light, you will become more and more holy, right to the end. God is sifting His people and making them more like Him. No one has the authority to change God's Word.

Take God's Word Above Man's Word

In our Scripture lesson the man of God listened to what God said, but when a stranger came along, one whom he had never seen before (the only testimony he had was, "I am an old prophet, and God sent me down here to tell you something"), the man of God turned away from what God had instructed him to do. Friend, if God has a different message for you, He will tell you.

When the man of God whom God sent down to Bethel listened to a complete stranger, who told him to do just the opposite of what God had told him to do, that was unbelief working, and it was

inexcusable. Friend, if you heed the words of someone who says something that is an absolute turn around from what God said, that is inexcusable. God said, "Ye must be born again," but man says to do your best. The Word says to be holy as He is holy, but man says that you cannot help but sin. You would be wise to take God's Word.

You *can* keep from sinning, because Jesus died on the Cross, not only to forgive sin but also to save us *from* sin and to give us power to live above sin. To say that man cannot live above sin is a lie, because God said in Matthew 1:21 that He came to save His people *from* their sins. You do not have to sin. You can be forgiven, and the Lord can give you the grace and the power to live a holy life.

The old covenant incident in our Scripture lesson carried a punishment, and we can expect even greater punishment if we get on the wrong track by listening to someone we should not listen to. Why? Because we have the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Paul wrote in Galatians 1:8-9 to the church in Galatia: "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."

The Gospel of Christ is a solid Gospel that will save you and change you. It separates the sheep from the goats. It will separate you from sin and set you on the right track. If someone comes along and says it does not matter whom you associate with or fellowship, you ought to beware, because that is another Gospel. The Gospel will save you, separate you, and make you holy. Also, it will cause you to love the Truth and the brethren.

Paul said if anyone comes around and preaches any other gospel, let him be accursed. If you have listened to any other gospel,

you had better get it out of your head, because it is not God's Gospel. There may be a more pleasing way to the flesh than God's way, but it is an accursed way. The flesh likes to do things the easy way, but God's way is not an easy way. He said it is settled, and it will never change.

I appreciate all that God has done for me. I appreciate my health, and I appreciate that I can still preach the Truth. I am thankful that I can walk with God. It is not hard to give tithes and offerings, because God has been so good to me. He lifted me up out of sin, turned my life around, placed me on the strait and narrow way, and gave me something to live for and something to die for. Oh, how I praise Him for these things. What a great God we serve! I would never turn back to the life of sin. Nothing in the world is that attractive to me. It does not matter how much money you have, how large a house you own, or how luxurious your automobile is, nothing is worth turning back to the world.

"Give the More Earnest Heed"

Jesus said not to reject His way. In John 12:46-50 He said: "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness [or live in sin]. And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. [Thank God, Jesus died on the Cross to save us from a devil's hell. We need to praise Him and not be so quiet about it. Church, we ought to praise God for what He has done. He took our place and suffered so that we would not have to suffer.] He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words [we must let His words become part of us and put them into action], hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment,

what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting. . . ." If you obey His commandment, you will enjoy life everlasting; but if not, you will suffer eternal torments.

In Luke, Chapter 16, the rich man asked Abraham to send Lazarus to warn his five brothers about hell. Abraham said if they would not hear Moses and the prophets, they would not be persuaded though one rose from the dead. God has called people from various walks of life who seemed incapable of preaching, but He anointed them and gave them a marvelous ability to preach the Gospel. God's desire is for all men to be saved, to enter into the Kingdom of God, and to make Heaven their home.

Hebrews 2:1-3 states: "Therefore we ought [in other words, we are duty bound] to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, [Friend, you can sit right under the Gospel as it is being preached and yet lose your soul if you do not give earnest heed to what is being preached. Too many times other things are more important to people than the Word of God is.] lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him."

Second Corinthians 3:5-11 reads: "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God; Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold

the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away: How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious?"

"For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious." The Law was glorious, but we have something more glorious today. They were in bondage under the Law, but we are free through the blood of Jesus. He whom the Son of Man makes free is free indeed.

"Let No Man Deceive You by Any Means"

We live in a deceptive age. Satan has been loosed for a season to go out and deceive the whole world. He works through man-made organizations to deceive people into thinking that as long as they have their names on a church book, they can live like the devil and go to the dances, wear shorts, halter tops, and bikinis. Satan wants them to adorn themselves with worldly adornments and yet believe they can still make Heaven their home. Friend, that is false, because God has a standard that tells us how to dress, how to act, and where to go. We have a responsibility to do what the Word says.

The man of God in our Scripture lesson made a fatal error in failing to do as God said. He believed a lie. Today too many people are believing lies. They are following men rather than following the Spirit of God. Second Corinthians 5:16 says to know no man after the flesh. We need to know God and follow the Spirit of God. We must be determined to stand for God, even if we have to stand alone.

Today the world is full of false prophets who have gone out. The

Roman heresy exalted itself above all that was godly. Second Thessalonians 2:3-4 says: "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." No man can exalt himself as God and act pious without being exposed.

The Bible lets us know that this man of sin would be exposed, and he has been exposed. He is the Pope of Rome, and Roman Catholicism allows ungodly living as long as the people go to a priest and confess the wrongs they have done. No man can forgive sin. Only One can forgive sin, and that is God.

We cannot overlook the finality of God's Word. Jesus said in John 12:48, "The word that I have spoken . . . shall judge him in the last day." False teachers are inserting their own ideas, "Making the word of God of none effect" (Mark 7:13). It is our responsibility to turn a deaf ear to all false doctrines. Romans 3:4 says to "let God be true, but every man a liar." Hebrews 12:25a states, "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh."

Shun Ungodliness

Paul said in Hebrews 12:14-17: "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled [one man can become troubled over some issue and form a group of dissenters, and thus defile many; that was what Paul was talking about here]; Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterward, when he would

have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears."

In verses 22-23,26 Paul continued: "But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect. . . . Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven."

God is shaking every man-made organization to awaken honest hearts and bring them to Truth, and He is also shaking the church. God is shaking troublemakers out of the church so the church can move forward. God's

people are clean and holy. We must do what God requires of us and shun the ungodly principles of this old world. Men have many philosophies that we must guard against.

In Colossians 2:8 Paul wrote, "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." In verses 20-21 he stated: "Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, Touch not; taste not; handle not." Adam and Eve disobeyed God and were driven from the Garden of Eden. In the church we are in a spiritual paradise. We have everything we need to make us happy. My friend, God will take care of us. When burdens, troubles, or sicknesses

arise, He is always right there to help. I thank God for that. It is worth it to sell out completely to God.

I have had two or three heart attacks, and one was so severe that I thought I was going to die. I told my wife, "I probably won't see you in the morning," but God moved on the scene and gave me a divine touch and raised me up. God is the only One who could do that. I want to serve Him to the very end.

If you are straddling the fence, so to speak, and do not really know which way to go, you ought to go God's way. He will set you free, and you will be free indeed. You do not have to be in bondage to any man. You can be free to serve God. That is the way He ordained it.

(Cassette C-3865M)

Do you spend more time reading the newspaper than you do reading the Bible?

Radio Log



LOCATION	STATION	DAY	TIME
Wellston, Ohio	WAJB-FM 92.5	Thursday	8:05 a.m.-8:35 a.m.
North Little Rock, Arkansas	KMTL-AM 760	Saturday	2:00 p.m.-2:30 p.m.
Newark, Ohio	WCLT-AM 1430	Sunday	7:15 a.m.-8:00 a.m.
Anderson, Indiana	WQME-FM 98.7	Sunday	8:00 a.m.-8:30 a.m.

Tune in to the radio station nearest you to hear an inspiring message from the Word of God. If you enjoy the broadcast, let us hear from you!

How to Overcome Disappointment

You have been disappointed, haven't you? Of course you have, again and again. Does it hurt very much when things do not go as you have planned and hoped? Does it seem as if you "just can't stand it"? Some people can bear disappointment; they seem to have learned the secret of taking off the keen edge so that it does not hurt so much. Have you learned that secret yet? I fancy I hear someone say, "Oh! I wish I knew the secret." There is more than one part to the secret. You may learn it if you will; you may get where you can bear disappointment and keep sweet all the time.

Many people prepare themselves to be disappointed; they arrange things so that they are certain to be disappointed. They set their heart so fully upon the thing they wish to have or do, whatever it may be, that they make no provision whatever, except to carry out their plans exactly as they have devised them. They do not provide for any contingencies that may arise. Their plans fill their whole horizon. They can see nothing else; they can think of nothing else; they want it just that way and no other way. Thus, they prepare themselves to suffer keen disappointment should anything happen different from what they expect. This is what puts the sting in disappointment. Always make provision in your plans for whatever may happen. Always make promises to yourself with the proviso, "If nothing prevents." If you are going on a journey, say, "If I am well" or "If this or that does not prevent." Keep the thought in your mind that something may prevent, and do not get it too much settled as a fact that you will do what you have planned. Take into consideration that you are a servant, not the master; do not forget to put in, "If the Lord wills."

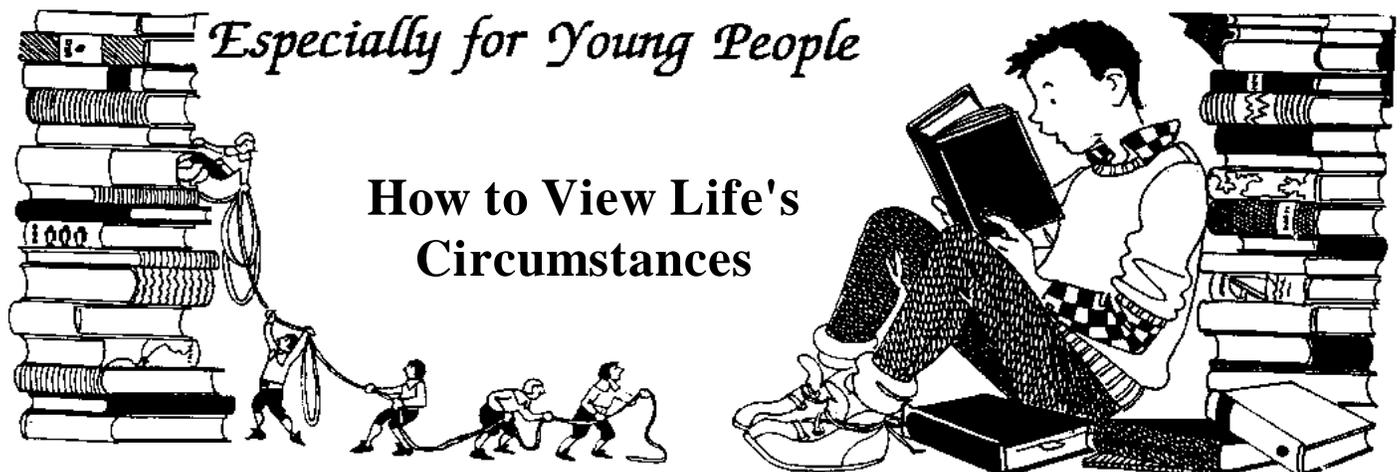
If disappointment comes, it may be necessary for us to repress our feelings of dissatisfaction. If we begin pitying ourselves and saying, "Oh, it is too bad! It is just too bad!" we shall only feel the hurt more keenly; and the more we cultivate the habit of self-pity, the more power it exercises over us. Some people have so yielded to the power of self-pity that whole days are darkened by little trifling disappointments that they ought to throw off in a few minutes. Nine tenths of the suffering that comes from disappointment has its root in self-pity.

You have better qualities in you; use them. When you are disappointed, take hold of yourself and say, "Here, you cannot afford to be miserable all day because of this." Repress those feelings of self-pity, lift up your head, get your eyes on something else, and begin making new plans. Your old plans are like a broken dish and you cannot use them any longer. All your fretting and brooding over them will not make them work out right. Take a new start, and smile whether you feel like it or not. You may have other things to enjoy; do not let this one spoil them all. Refuse to think about your unpleasant feelings; resolutely shut the door against them. God will help you if you try.

Another thing to learn is to submit the will and desires to God. When our plans fail, we must submit to circumstances, whether we want to or not. If we rebel, that will not change the circumstances, but it will change our feelings. The more we rebel, the more we shall suffer. The way to get rid of the suffering is to get rid of the rebellion. We must submit; therefore, why not do it gracefully? Many times we cannot change circumstances, no matter how much we dislike them. Resentment will not hurt circumstances, but it will hurt us. We need to learn the lesson of submission without rebellion—submission to circumstances and to God.

The Lord is our Master. It is right for Him to order our lives as He sees best. Sometimes it is He who changes our plans for His own purpose; and when He does this, the outcome is always better than the thing of our own choosing. If we rebel, we are rebelling against God, and right there lies the danger. If we are so determined to have our own way that we do not willingly submit to God's way, He may have to let us suffer. But when we submit and commit our ways to Him, then we shall have the consolation and comfort of His Holy Spirit. If we will learn just to change a single letter in disappointment, and spell it with an "h" instead of a "d," it will help take the sting out. Try it once. That is what we have: His appointment. Now, does not that make it quite different?

Selected



The events of life are not left to blind chance, but all come to us under the government and the direction of a good and gracious God. To see the hand of God in every circumstance of life is the only correct view of life for the follower of the Lord.

Open your Bible to John 12:24-29. There you will read that God spoke in an audible voice to Jesus. Some of those who heard it said that it thundered, and others said it was an angel's voice. There is a vast difference between thunder and the voice of an angel. There is also a vast difference in the way people accept the circumstances of life. Some hear nothing but thunder, while others hear an angel's voice.

A mother had two bright, lovely little girls who were very dear to her. One afternoon both of these girls were brought home from the river where they had drowned. As the mother looked calmly into the faces of her silent dead, she said, "I see God wants all my heart, and He shall have it." Even in such circumstances as that, she heard an angel's voice. There is an angel voice in every circumstance of life. Dear Lord Jesus, help us to listen for it!

The Blessed God

In the Apostle's words, as recorded in 1 Timothy 1:11, God is spoken of as "the blessed God." As we read these words, we need to meditate upon them. In what does

the blessedness of God consist? We concluded that whatever would make God a blessed God, the same would make man a blessed man.

Blessedness has a somewhat similar meaning to happiness, only it is a deeper and richer word. It means the fullest joy, the deepest and highest felicity, the purest ecstasy, the richest and fullest contentment that can be experienced. Such is the blessedness of God, but in what way does God find such blessedness? God is not made happy in the way that most men seek for happiness. Dear young person, this is a lesson you need to learn.

I feel incapable of telling you as I would like how you can be the most and truest blessed and happy. Oh, how my heart sickens as I see how men are trying to find happiness. This world is seeking after pleasure. The highest pleasure they know is the gratification of some physical sense. They are seeking for physical thrills. These are mean in comparison to the pleasures of God.

Dear young person, go not into the ways of the world to find true pleasure. True happiness is not to be found in those things that please the palate, that delight the eye, that charm the ears, that play upon the feelings, that gratify the physical passions. Alas, how many are bartering away their highest happiness and truest joy for some sensual enjoyment! O God, save our young people from the allurements

of fleshly pleasures. The whole life of many a young man and woman has been wrecked and ruined by a momentary gratification of the flesh.

Jesus has taught us that the deepest and purest joys come through sacrifice and suffering. The joy of giving is purer and higher than the joy of receiving. How few have tasted this. The love of God is of such a nature that it finds its highest happiness in suffering for the object loved. Oh, the blessedness of pouring out our lives for those we love! Those who are the most capable of suffering find holiest delights.

Multitudes of what many religious professors call "innocent amusements" serve only to dull the sensibilities of the soul to higher and finer joys. Have a care of those things the world is calling innocent and educational. Beware lest they rob your soul of its sensitiveness to the touch of pity and sympathy for souls in the guilt of sin. Beware lest these sensual pleasures relieve your heart of its capability of being burdened for lost, wrecked, and ruined men. It is not in the *feast*, but in the *fast* that we come in touch with the pure joy of the Lord.

It is in the agony of prayer that we experience the blessedness of God. It is in travail of soul that we taste of the joy of pain. It is in bearing the cross that we approach nearest to the felicity of Heaven. It is in suffering love and sympathetic sorrow that the soul tastes of

highest and holiest rapture. The blessedness of God does not consist in forgetting the sorrows of men, but in feeling them. Christ is not blessed in saving Himself, but in saving others.

There are some sufferings of Christ yet left behind for you and me to fill up. We fill them up by laboring, sacrificing, sympathizing, and agonizing in prayer that we might bring souls lost in sin to the light and love of Jesus. Those who have the spirit of the Cross, who are workers with Christ in the great mystery of suffering, have found the secret of the blessedness of God. Jesus said, "These words have I spoken unto you that My joy might remain in you." The joy of Christ in the life is the highest happiness of man. Dear reader, I implore you to seek for the highest joys and seek them in the way they are to be found.

Reaching for Light

In the maternal world all plants reach toward the light. House plants grow toward the window. There is something in the heart of man that reaches up for something more than he can find in the world. It is Christ, the light of the world, that the soul's true life is thirsting for.

The bulb of a waterlily lies in the mud at the bottom of the pond. There is a hidden life in the heart of that bulb that cries for something higher. In its groans and struggles it begins to rise. A young life springs out and begins rising, nor ceases to rise, until it flowers in all the beauty of a waterlily at the surface of the water. It then has met all that its life was craving.

So there is in the heart of man something that craves for a certain flowering. There is a life of beauty to which it longs to rise. If you will but give heed to the cry of this life in the soul and give it freedom, it will climb upward until it blooms in the full beauty of the life of Jesus. God has given a certain kind of life

to every creature that we call its source or its standard, or type. All life struggles to rise to its own source. The life in the apple seed struggles to rise to a matured apple tree. There is in the heart of every

one a cry for the life of Christ. Christ is the true source of the soul's life, and that life can never be satisfied until it rises and blooms in the fullness and beauty of that life.

C. E. Orr

For Sale

Owner: Many a Christian

One Closet—designed for prayer, never used.

One Bible—like new, seldom used; bargain.

One Cross—nearly new, I cannot bear it and keep up with the worldly crowd with whom I run.

One Talent—New, except for being slightly shopworn; has been laid up for years.

One Suit of Armor—six pieces in all. For the original description, see Ephesians 6:13-17. All six pieces in fine condition, never dented, not a scratch. However, it needs polishing badly.

One Badly Used Testimony—the only thing for sale in poor condition. Buyer may be able to put it back into a respectable state of repair with some effort.

One (Lost) Opportunity—if found, will be included. However, no hope is held out at this time, as the owner believes it to be gone forever.

Reason for Selling—owner is being called home.

Proverbs 13:9 The light of the righteous rejoiceth: but the lamp of the wicked shall be put out.

10 Only by pride cometh contention: but with the well advised is wisdom.

11 Wealth gotten by vanity shall be diminished: but he that gathereth by

labour shall increase.

12 Hope deferred maketh the heart sick: but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life.

13 Whoso despiseth the word shall be destroyed: but he that feareth the commandment shall be rewarded.

14 The law of the wise is a fountain

of life, to depart from the snares of death.

15 Good understanding giveth favour: but the way of transgressors is hard.

16 Every prudent man dealeth with knowledge: but a fool layeth open his folly.

THE HIGH COST OF LIVING WRONG



Brother Esau Brooks

"With All Thy Getting Get Understanding"

Although Solomon lived in the days of types and shadows, in the days before Christ, God enabled him to understand some divine truths and to leave us a legacy of very sobering words. Solomon failed, but he failed because he lost his vision. The same devil that deceived Solomon is working to deceive you. That is the reason you need to keep your eyes on Jesus and keep your heart open to Him.

There is a cost to living wrong, and there is a cost to living right. We brought nothing into this world,

and we cannot take anything out but salvation in our souls. Everything else will have to be left behind. We can see the folly in people trying to conquer the world. So many others have tried, but the world has conquered them. Serving God is real, friend.

Notice that Solomon said in verse 15 of our Scripture text that "Good understanding giveth favour. . . ." In Proverbs 4:7 the wise man said, ". . . with all thy getting get understanding." As a generation today, we are much in need of trying to understand why we are doing what we are doing. You need to know whether you are a

Christian, and if you are a Christian, you need to know why. If you are a sinner, a church member, or a hypocrite, why are you? The latter part of verse 15 says that "the way of transgressors is hard." Some people have said it is hard to live right, but that is not true. I have discovered that what makes it hard is when you try to live right, yet you are living wrong.

When God saves a person, He works on him from his heart out. Salvation is not an experience that works in, but it works out. That is the reason Paul told the Philippian church in Philippians 2:12 to work out their own salvation with fear

and trembling. When the wise man spoke of transgressors, he was talking about sinners. Sin is the transgression of God's Word. If you are a churchgoer with a mere profession, you are not obeying God's Word; you are transgressing His Word. If your life is miserable, that is the reason for it.

We encounter many things in this life, but the grace of God is as sufficient today as it was when God told Paul, "My grace is sufficient." In other words, God was saying, "Paul, you need to get your eyes off that situation and continue to serve Me." I believe that the reason many people are not serving God is due to their failure to see God's way for their lives.

The Hidden Mystery of Sin

The wise man presented a profound thought for our most serious consideration. He called upon us to consider the hidden mystery of sin. In too many cases, especially today, the way of sin is regarded too lightly. Many people have rejected salvation and do not really know why. Perhaps you are resisting because you see others resisting or because you lack understanding. Friend, you need to look into this matter more seriously.

The way of the transgressor is hard. The word *hard* can be interpreted to mean "unprofitable," or not good for you. Being a sinner is not good for you, and being a mere church member is bad for you as well. The only way worth living is God's way. Many people who have been around the church have not yet adopted God's way. Sin is being regarded too lightly. Sin is expensive, and it will cost you. The quicker you get rid of it, the better it will be for you.

Do you want joy, real joy, wonderful joy? Then you must let Jesus come into your heart. I am glad that I did not wait until I had to walk with a cane to tell people they ought to live right. I started telling people when I was a

stripling. I have not experienced living for the devil as many people have. God got hold of my life and saved me when I was but a youth, and the salvation He gave me back then is still working today. With all that is going on today, I have never regretted living for God. I have always been busily engaged in trying to get others to live for the Lord.

Regardless of what you have fixed your eyes upon, if you get a vision from the Lord of His church, it will spoil you for anything else. Christian friend, do not let anyone upset your faith in God, and do not allow any influences to hinder you from serving God. You must keep your foot on the Rock. Too few people realize the price one must pay for every act of sin. Sinner friend, you will pay for every act of sin that you perform unless you seek the mercies of God and ask Him to wash you in His blood. God shall bring every work into judgment. Have you ever thought seriously along that line? Despite the many generations this world has seen, God has everything on record. Sin is the most expensive thing there is. Many hold on to sin, but you cannot afford that luxury. If you are holding on to sin, you are living above your means. You may ask, "Do you believe that everyone can live right?" Surely! If one can live wrong, why can he not live right? Everyone can be a Christian. If you can be a sinner, you can be a Christian.

Living Free From Sin

It is your privilege to live in the same world that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ came to. He suffered and proved to the devil that one does not have to be in Heaven to live right. You can live right in the midst of all the evil that is going on. One thing that bothers many people in nominal religion is how God's people, living in a sinful world, can thank God for saving and keeping them from sin.

I remember the time that I was confronted with the question, "How can a person live free from sin in the midst of a sinful, crooked, ungodly generation?" If God can keep a fish from becoming salty when it has lived in salt water all the days of its life, so that one has to put salt on it in order for it to taste right, then we can live free from sin in the midst of evil.

As long as we are in this flesh, we will never fully understand all there is to be understood regarding God. I have heard it said, "You may not know many things about this life and this world; but thank God, you can know that Jesus saves and He keeps." That is where religion fails man. A child of God can live in the world, with all that the devil has going on, and still be right.

Young person, you should not let anyone frighten you from turning your life over to God. You do not have to go back to the life of sin; you do not have to backslide. In my early years of serving the Lord, I could have given up and gone back into sin. Once the devil almost had me talked into turning back, but God touched me, and I thought, "If I let my salvation go, if I ever intend to get to Heaven, I will have to come right back and pick up where I let it go."

Too many people think they can let salvation go and pick up something else and yet be successful, but they never will. If you have ever been saved, you know what I am talking about. You must come right back to where you turned your back on God and get saved. Therefore, if you are saved, my advice to you is to stay saved. The devil is running loose, so you need to keep out of his way by the help of God.

Living a Life of Misery

You need to consider the life of the backslider and consider what he might have been had he remained true to the Lord. Look at where he is today because of giving himself

over to the devil and sin. He is living a life of misery, and sorrows beset his paths. Someone may ask, "Do you mean that if I become a Christian, I will not have sorrows?" You will have sorrows, but sorrows will not have you. God can keep you through the sore temptations.

Too few people realize the price they will pay for the fleeting moments of sinful pleasure. A life of sin is not totally full of pleasure. You cannot truthfully tell me that you enjoy being a sinner. At times you may think you do. I, too, used to think that before I was saved. I am so glad that God stuck with me and brought me out and that I did not end my life as a sinner.

When it comes to paying for sin, many people do not want to pay the full price. They want to dodge issues; that is what causes them to be miserable. If you choose to live in sin, you will have to pay the price for sin. One also pays a price for living right, but the rewards are far better. If you had a poor-paying job and you had an opportunity to get a better-paying job, no doubt, you would do it. In no other area of living do people act so foolishly as they do in sin. How many times have you rejected salvation? What good has it done you? You are no better off. You are not as far ahead as you would have been had you lived for God. Serving God really pays. It pays to serve Jesus.

Quite early in my ministry, as I was sitting in a barbershop, I began to talk to a young man about getting saved. He said to me, "Well, I don't believe everybody needs to be a Christian."

I said, "Well, do you believe that everyone was made to be a sinner?" He replied, "Well . . ."

I told him, "You were not made to be a sinner any more than you were made to fly in the air on your own like a bird."

This physical life is going to end one day, and we are going to meet the Lord. Friend, if you have not made your calling and election sure, it will be too late then. Sin is the

most cruel thing there is. You see, you do not pay for sin in terms of dollars and cents. Sin will cost you not only in terms of health and happiness but also in terms of missing Heaven. You cannot go to Heaven if you die lost. That is one reason it pays to be saved. False professors and false preachers have told people, "It doesn't matter, just as long as you are honest." Friend, you can be honest and still not be right with God. On the other hand, if you are right and honest, you will make it through.

Harden Not Your Heart

Sin is what has caused all the broken homes, the broken lives, and the broken hearts. Sin is the cause of every heartache and every bit of sorrow that the sinner experiences. People are doing all they can to control sin. For example, our legislators are creating laws to help control it, but it is just like using a bandage, because it does not reach the depth of the trouble.

Young person, you are doing yourself a disfavor if you have not turned your life over to God. Being a Christian is more than going to church and taking a Bible with you. To be a Christian is to be born again, to be born of water and of the Spirit. With all the effort that man is putting forth, it is not doing much good to help lives. We see brokenhearted mothers, broken-minded children, and homes torn beyond repair. As long as sin exists, we are going to have these conditions, but everyone who gets saved helps to cut down on these conditions.

How wonderful it would be if everyone were a Christian! Someone may say, "Well, I believe that I'm a Christian." Friend, you need to *know* that you are a Christian. You need to know that you have been delivered from the control of the wickedness of sin. Sin is costing more than all the wars that the world has ever seen, more than all the sicknesses we hear

about, and more than all the storms or natural disasters that we have ever experienced.

You need to consider what sin is about to do to you if you do not turn to the Lord. You may ignore this message and walk into a devil's hell forever, where the worm dies not and the fire is not quenched. I say again, it pays to serve God. Sin is eternal, and its effects are far reaching, to the damnation of your soul and body. That is the reason the wise man said that the way of living as a transgressor of God's Word is hard. All the hardness you have in your life is the result of sin.

Won't you turn your life over to God? You may say, "I'm not ready." It is not a matter of whether you are ready, but it is a matter of whether God is ready. The Prophet Isaiah said in Isaiah 55:6-7: "Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."

Young person, you need to turn to the Lord now. Going to church is good, but it is not good enough. You must be born again. Jesus said in John 3:3, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." If God is talking to your heart, you ought to yield to Him. You need to surrender your life to Him, because the Bible says: "To day if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your hearts, as in . . . the day of temptation in the wilderness" (Hebrews 3:7-8).

God wants to save you, and He is offering you a life far better than the one you are living in sin. He can deliver you from the habits of life and transform your life so that you will never have to go back to those things again. So, I say to you again, as the Prophet Isaiah said, "Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near." God bless you.

(Cassette C-5048E)

Proverbs 13:15 Good understanding giveth favour: but the way of transgressors is hard.

Psalms 23:6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

The Way of the Transgressor Versus the Way of the Righteous



Brother E. David Stegmeier

Guard Your Heart

God's people are the most contented people in the world. One old song I used to enjoy singing when I was just a boy in school says, "He is sifting out the hearts of men before His judgment seat." That is exactly what God is doing when men of God preach the Gospel. The Bible says in 1 Corinthians 10:11, "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." These things are object lessons to warn us against doing the same things. They

were written down so that we could learn from them in these last days as the world nears its end. We need to receive these warnings and be receptive to the admonition found in the Word of God.

Everything that was written in the Word of God happened as a type or it is typical of something that we are to apply to ourselves. We ought to get the lessons out of these things and incorporate them into our daily living. The history of the Jewish people was written down to warn us in this Gospel Day.

The Apostle Paul stated in 1 Corinthians 10:12, "Wherefore let

him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." Many others have fallen, and we are not infallible. Therefore, it behooves us to guard our hearts. If we guard and protect anything, it ought to be our hearts. No one can see what goes on in the secret chambers of the heart but God.

Solomon wrote in Proverbs 4:23, "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." Christian friend, you ought to be working on your heart to keep it clean, pure, and holy. You must weigh everything you think and meditate upon. Are your motives pure? Are your actions right in the

sight of God? Others may do a certain thing, but does God approve of it?

First Corinthians 10:12 in *The Living Bible* says, "So be careful if you are thinking, oh, I would never behave like that. Let this be a warning to you, for you, too, may fall into sin." We need to be very vigilant and very diligent about keeping our hearts. As I was studying for this message, I thought of the many people whom I have known since I was a little boy who once worshiped with me in the house of God. Where are they today? I can only infer from their actions that they have not heeded the warnings that they heard repeatedly.

Heed the Warnings

We each need to heed the warnings found in the Word. Hebrews 4:1-2 says: "Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, [Why did it not profit them? Because it was] not being mixed [or blended] with faith in them that heard it." I want to profit by going to the house of worship. Do you? I want to be more spiritual, and I want to walk closer to the Lord each day. I want to be more Christlike every day that I live.

Some people really did not believe the Word as they should have and put it into practice. We need to put the Truth into practice; we need to implement it in our lives. We ought to go to the house of worship in a serious frame of mind. We do not go to the house of worship for fun and games, to party, or for entertainment. We go to worship God and to hear from God.

Ezekiel 33:31 says, "And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as [or as if they were] my people, and

they hear thy words, but they will not do them: [Sometimes people put on the brakes and say, 'That is *your* idea, preacher.' Friend, if it is 'Thus saith the Lord,' if it is in the Book, we must obey it.] for with their mouth they show much love [in other words, they only pretend to love God], but their heart goeth after their covetousness." We are living in a day of covetousness.

If you talk to most people who claim to be Christians, their conversation usually centers on the things they possess. We are living in the day that the Bible speaks of in Ezekiel 33:32-33: "And, lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear thy words, but they do them not. And when this cometh to pass, (lo, it will come,) then shall they know that a prophet hath been among them." Too many do not heed the warnings. They do not take them as seriously as they really are.

When I was in the military and they would get us ready to go out on a certain endeavor, often they told us to be careful of stepping on land mines. There were no fun and games or joking; it was very serious. When I go to the house of worship, nothing is more serious to me. We each need to fear and search our hearts diligently as the Word of God goes forth so that God can help us, lest unbelief and carelessness rob us of the blessings that God has for us.

In every age there have been many unprofitable listeners and hearers. We sometimes look back at the Old Testament and consider Achan, King Saul, and others, but we have such people right in our day. *The Living Bible* says in Hebrews 4:1, "Although God's promise still stands, His promise that all may enter His place of rest, we are to tremble with fear because some of you may be on the verge of failing to get there after all." This is wonderful news! Friend, the message that God wants to save you has been given just as it was to those who lived in times past, but

they did not mix it with faith.

The Consequences of Sin

In our Scripture text in Proverbs 13:15, Solomon stated that "the way of transgressors is hard." *The Living Bible* says, "The way of the transgressor is a rocky road, or he walks a rocky road." That is so very true. You are asking for great trouble if you violate any of God's divine statutes.

I considered Cain as I was studying. Cain was the first to commit murder. God warned Cain faithfully, just as He warns all mankind. Genesis 4:7a tells us that God said to Cain, "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door." Friend, if you do well, you will be accepted of God. If you do not do well, sin lies at the threshold of your heart. I have a strong fear on my heart that I please God. Therefore, I weigh the thoughts that I have, the words that I speak, and the actions that I commit. I want to be sure that they are acceptable in the sight of God.

Cain was admonished, warned, and advised by God, but he did not heed the warning. Verses 11-12 let us know that the judgments of God came down upon Cain, and this is what God said: "And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand; When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth." In verse 13 Cain replied, "My punishment is greater than I can bear."

The consequences of sin will come. They may be slow in coming, but it is inevitable that they will come. One who transgresses invites disaster. The life that he lives will be one of complete devastation. Someone may say, "A man may suffer without sinning, but he cannot sin without suffering." I am glad that God saved me from sin.

This is a wonderful way to live!

Another transgressor that you can read about in the Old Testament was King Saul. At one time he was useful in the hands of God. Saul had such potential. Many young men and women have attended the house of worship, but something tripped them up. When Saul was little in his own sight, God used him, but when he got lifted up with pride, God had to set him aside. His life was driven by anxiety, fear, and jealousy. Once in a tight place he sought the advice of the witch of Endor, and he ended his life in suicide. Suicide has become an epidemic across our land, especially among young people.

The Ill-Wanted Guest

Isaiah 57:20-21 says: "But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." Sin is an ill-wanted guest; it always sets your lodging on fire. Sin is a terrible thing.

I thought of the little boy who went to Sunday school. When he returned home, his father said, "What did the preacher preach on?"

He thought and thought, and then he said, "Well, he mentioned sin."

The father said, "What did he say about it?"

"I'm not sure, but I know this: he sure doesn't like it." Neither does God like sin.

In the New Testament you can read about Judas Iscariot. Years ago when our children were small, we used to attend the Passion Play in the Black Hills of South Dakota. To me the saddest scene in the entire play was when Judas was haunted by his guilty conscience. The stage got dark, and he began to run here and there, looking for safety and help, something to appease his guilty conscience, but he found nowhere to go for peace.

The Bible lets us know that

about the time Jesus was condemned to die, Judas, who betrayed Him, changed his mind and deeply regretted what he had done, but it was too late. It cost him his soul. Your soul should be your most prized possession, and you should guard it carefully. The devil can gain entrance to your soul through your mind, so you must be careful of what you think upon. The most expensive thing in the world is sin; it will cost you everything you have. If people truly realized the cost of sin, they would take a second thought about ever committing sin.

Going forward a little further in time, I thought of former President Richard Nixon. When he was found guilty, his words were these: "I have let the American people down. It is a burden that I shall bear for every day of the life that is left in me." I appreciate the privilege of living for God. It is a wonderful life. I do not want to trade it for anything. Nevertheless, the devil works on me practically every waking moment, so I have to watch him. The wife of a well-known television evangelist said, "For years I have been pretending that everything is all right. I cannot pretend anymore. I have been suffering with high blood pressure, anemia, asthma, and hyperventilation, all of which the doctors tell me are related to stress. I am lonely, and I am hurting."

Several years ago I read an article in an issue of *Christianity Today* about Jimmy Bakker. In the article I read that Jimmy Bakker said this: "The first months of prison were devastating. After being in a public ministry every day of my life, and then to be confined in a cell with everything gone, not only the material things but my friends and my reputation, and facing forty-five years, I wondered, 'Is God gone too?' I began to seek God, but I couldn't find Him. I even prayed what I call stupid prayers: 'God, wiggle a plant or something in my room.'"

He went to see a film, and this

film was about a wayward Pentecostal preacher. He said at the end of the film, the police came and got this man and put him in handcuffs. He said, "I began to sob in that theater. I didn't realize the pain that was still deep inside me. I tried not to cry, so it came out in loud bursts. My friends didn't know what to do. I guess I identified with the character at that point as I remembered the pain of being shackled and being taken away. To forgive myself is the hardest thing I have to do today. I am still struggling with my own forgiveness. The pain of my failure is hard for me to deal with." What a privilege it is to be free from sin's shackles, out of the hold of the devil!

The Way of the Transgressor Is Hard

Friend, you need to take the admonition and walk very circumspectly. I plead with God, "God, I need You to help me walk carefully through this world." We need God so much. Who can stand the lashing of a defiled, guilty conscience and the many sleepless nights? The deep aching void of the soul reminds the transgressor of his foolish choices.

When I go to bed at night, I have sweet sleep, because God has taken away the burden of sin. Many people wring their hands, toss on their beds, and cry out in agony, "O God, why did I do it?" The Bible says that "the wages of sin is death." You need to remember this concerning sin: its wages will never decrease. They are death to the soul and to the body. Dear one, you do not have to go through a lawsuit to collect its wages.

A certain senator had a history of illicit sexual relationships with young women. Because of that, in his campaign he had to bow out, and his words were: "This is the saddest day of my life."

We sing a beautiful song written by C. W. Naylor entitled "We Reap As We Sow." One verse

says, "As is the sowing, so is the reaping. Sinner, the seed you carelessly cast Bringeth a harvest, bitter with anguish, Sure will thy reaping be at the last."

I wonder sometimes if all who claim to be saints truly realized the cost of sin, would sinners realize it more? Do we really realize what a soul that goes to hell feels? I do not think so, but I think sometimes if we were more serious about this, others would feel it.

Dear one, if you do not want the fruits of sin, then you had better stay out of its orchard. I know where I am tempted, so I stay far away from avenues that lead in that direction. We all are tempted. The Bible tells us that every man is tempted. A transgressor often becomes an outcast from society, an object of shame and ridicule. Sin is the greatest of detectives: it will find you out. You may think that you have your sin hidden, but be sure your sin will find you out! It is inevitable.

Years ago a young married man and his wife got a wonderful experience of salvation, but he did not stay as close to the Lord as he should have. He became careless and indifferent, and he went out into sin. He got into drugs and lived a very terrible life of sin. Approximately twelve years later, he called my home and told me that he was very sick and requested that I come to his home. He said, "I have AIDS, and I have two weeks to live."

I drove to his home, and I could not believe how emaciated his body was; he was nothing but skin and bones. Once during the time I was there on my first visit, he screamed with pain. He said, "I have to get my medicine. I am in horrible pain." We prayed and prayed, but he said, "I just cannot believe that God is going to forgive me."

A few days later he called again and asked, "Brother Stegmeier, are you ready for a prayer meeting?"

I said, "Yes, I will be right there." I went again, and after a long

time, he broke through and got saved. This man had lost his home, his marriage, and his family because of sin. He called me many times to pray with him. I even went to the hospital with him where he received treatment. He lived only a very short time. Sin is a terrible thing. The way of the transgressor is hard. There is no way around it.

The Righteous Have Hope

In closing, I would like to contrast the way of the transgressor with the way of the righteous. Proverbs 14:32 reads, ". . . the righteous hath hope in his death." Friend, the devil is after you. Serving God is the best way to live. Sin does not pay. What a thief sin is! Isaiah wrote in Isaiah 3:10-11: "Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him: for they shall eat the fruit of their doings. Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him: for the reward of his hands shall be given him."

As I was studying, I also thought of Enoch. The Bible lets us know that he pleased God, so he did not have to pass through the experience of death. The Word of God is replete with men and women who served God. What a blessed life they had! Joseph is such a beautiful example of a godly young man. David said in Psalm 23:6, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever."

If you are looking back to the life of sin, that is a serious thing. The devil paints a beautiful picture, but

it is not that way. The fine-looking man who rode a horse smoking a cigarette in the Marlboro advertisement died of lung cancer.

When I was in a grocery store sometime back, a woman met me going down an aisle. I said, "I haven't seen you around for a long time."

She said, "No, I have been at my husband's bedside for months and months. He died of lung cancer. I would like to tell every young person that sin does not pay."

It is best to serve the Lord. Serving God is a wonderful way to live! I am having the time of my life! There are no better people in the world than the saints of God.

The first Christian martyr in the New Testament was Stephen. The Bible says that in his dying moments, he looked over into Heaven and saw Jesus. What a beautiful end! When you are tempted, young person, you need to remember that the way of the transgressor is hard; but for the righteous it will be well. We may go through difficult situations, but there is great victory ahead if we remain faithful. God has helped us. We have had victory all along the way, but I see greater victory as we near the end of time. I am encouraged.

Again, the Scripture tells us that the way of transgressors is hard, but the way of the righteous is good. It will be well with the righteous. If you are not serving the Lord, won't you turn to Him now, before it is too late?

(Cassette C-4026A)

"A talebearer revealeth secrets: but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter. Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety."

Proverbs 11:13-14

How I Learned to Pray for the Lost

We present here a remarkable testimony that we feel will prove to be of real help to many readers. The letter accompanying this testimony says in part: "This is the result of my search for the right way of praying for the unsaved. I have found it to produce amazing results in a very short time. It seemed that there was no possible chance for one's loved one to ever return to their faith, but after more than twenty years of fruitless praying and after only a few short weeks of this type of praying, I see them studying the Bible by the hour and attending every church service possible. Also, their whole attitude toward Christianity has changed, and all resistance seems gone. I have taken my place of authority in Christ and am using it against the enemy. Oh, it is real! I have not looked at myself to see if I were fit or not; I've just taken my place and have prayed for the quickening of the Holy Spirit."

Believers everywhere are burdened for unsaved or backsliding loved ones. However, many are praying in a spirit of fear and worry instead of in faith.

This has caused the writer to seek for definite light on how to pray, on feeling the need of praying the right prayer, and also the need for a definite promise or word upon which to base her faith when praying for the unsaved. Praise God, He never fails to give such needed help!

Perhaps because the salvation of some looked to be an impossibility, the first Scripture that came to mind was Mark 10:27, which says, "With God all things are possible."

The next Scripture had occupied my attention sometime before but with new emphasis: "(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations [the margin reads 'reasonings'], and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:4-5).

This shows the mighty power of our spiritual weapons. We must pray that all this be accomplished in the ones for whom we pray; that is, that the works of the enemy be torn down.

Finally, I was given the solid basis for my prayer—the ground of redemption. In reality redemption was purchased for all mankind, so that we may say that each one is actually God's purchased possession although still held by the enemy. We must, through the prayer of faith, claim and take for God in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ that which is rightfully His. This can be done only on the ground of redemption. I do not mean to imply that because all persons have been purchased by God through redemption, they are thus

automatically saved. They must believe and accept the Gospel for themselves; this our intercession enables them to do.

To pray in the name of the Lord Jesus is to ask for or claim the things that the blood of Christ has secured. Each individual for whom prayer is made should be claimed by name, as God's purchased possession, in the name of the Lord Jesus on the ground of His shed blood.

We should claim the tearing down of all the works of Satan, such as false doctrine, unbelief, Communist teaching, hatred, etc., which the enemy might have built up in their thinking, and we should claim that their very thoughts shall be brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

In the authority of the name of the Lord Jesus, claim their deliverance from the power and persuasion of the evil one and from the love of the world and the lust of the flesh. Pray also for the quickening of their conscience and that God might grant them repentance and hearing ears and believing hearts as they hear or read the Word of God. Pray that God's will and purpose are accomplished in and through them.

Intercession must be persistent, not to persuade God, for redemption is of God, but because of the enemy. Our prayer and resistance are against the enemy, the awful powers and rulers of

darkness. It is our duty before God to fight for the souls for whom Christ died. Just as some preach to them the good news of their redemption, even so others must fight back the powers of darkness on their behalf.

Satan yields only what and when he must, and he renews his attacks in a subtle way; therefore, prayer must be persisted in, even long after definite results are seen. We must hold what is taken for God against the enemy until such time as that soul is firmly established in the faith.

We will find as we pray that the Holy Spirit gives leads. Always follow His leads. I was interceding for a soul recently and felt that my prayers were not making contact. It seemed that there was nothing there. Then the Holy Spirit inspired me to begin to draw them up to God in the name of the Lord Jesus. As I obeyed this leading, praying, "I draw them to You, God, in the name of the Lord Jesus," I felt my prayers gradually taking hold. It seemed that I was drawing that one from deep within the very camp of the enemy. Then I was able to proceed as usual, claiming every detail of that life for God, holding the blood against the enemy. This is true warfare in the spirit realm. I thank God that our spiritual weapons are mighty and that our authority in Christ is far above all authority of the rulers, the principalities, and the powers of darkness, so that the enemy is obliged to yield. But it takes faith, patience, and persistence.

Missionaries on foreign and home fields can resist the enemy in their districts, communities, and schools by holding the blood of Jesus against the powers of darkness, sin, and unbelief in the authority of the name of Jesus. In the name of the Lord Jesus, they can command that the enemy retreat.

I would like to point out that "it is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing" (John 6:63). Therefore, we must constantly seek

the quickening of the Holy Spirit in our own hearts, in our faith, in our prayer, and in our testimony. It is most important also that we keep ourselves and all that we have under the protection of the blood. The enemy will use every possible means to silence our intermission and block our advancement against him. We must not only understand our enemy, our authority in Christ, and how to use our spiritual weapons, but also how to wear the armor God has provided for our protection. Thus, equipped and protected, we need have no fear. But let us always remember that we of ourselves have no power and no authority outside of Christ.

Satan has succeeded in keeping many people in the dark about Christ's finished work on Calvary and Satan's defeat there. He has succeeded by deception in convincing the church that he is almost, if not quite, as powerful as God, when actually he has no power at all; that is, he has no legal standing, no rights, and no authority.

The devil knows that when the church fully realizes the utterness of his defeat and how to use the authority that has been delegated to her, his evil reign is over. Therefore, he seeks by every means possible to keep God's people in the dark, to prevent their knowing about and using the authority that is theirs.

"And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony" (Revelation 12:11). For many years I thought this word of testimony meant the testimony to others to the goodness of God, such as is customary in prayer and praise services, but the time came when the Spirit began to reveal that this testimony was a word spoken directly to Satan and his demon spirits and, in the name of Jesus and upon the basis of His shed blood, to command them in the first person. I was hesitant to accept this position since I had absolutely no precedent to follow.

I never heard, so far as I can

remember, anyone interpret this Scripture as speaking the word of command directly to Satan and his emissaries. Satan sought to frighten me from attempting such a thing.

He tried to tell me that something terrible would happen to me if I became so presumptuous as to speak directly to him, even in the name of Jesus of Nazareth and upon the basis of the shed blood of the Son of God.

When at last, in hesitation and trembling, I ventured to speak directly to him, calling him by name and commanding him (and his demons of depression, oppression, affliction, and bondage, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and upon the basis of His shed blood) to leave me and release me, I discovered immediate relief and release.

It was as though the demons of doubt and fear and bondage instantly melted away at the name of Jesus and the blood of the Lamb when the word of command was spoken directly to Satan and the demons he was using to oppress and blind.

"Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ" (2 Corinthians 2:14). "Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world" (1 John 4:4).

Selected

Our Hope

*Christ Jesus is our hope today,
Our present help in times of trial;
He will guide us safely through
The narrow road that leads to God.*

*Christ Jesus is our faith today,
The faith which leads us humbly on;
He will pardon our sins
If we follow on with Him.*

*Christ Jesus is the truth today,
A power which makes man free;
He will lead us to that goal
When we listen to His Word.*

Selected

sinned!" These Scriptures give a view of what the crown really is. Since sin removes the crown, then the crown is victory. The crown represents a victorious life, a life without sin. This is the reason James called it the crown of life, because the crown is life. This verse speaks of a people who once had a crown, but the writer said "the crown is fallen." Again, this is not literal, but it is a symbolic representation. The word *crown* is used figuratively throughout the Scriptures.

Proverbs 4:5-9 states: "Get wisdom, get understanding; forget it not; neither decline from the words of my mouth. Forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee: love her, and she shall keep thee. Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding. Exalt her, and she shall promote thee: she shall bring thee to honour, when thou dost embrace her. She shall give to thine head an ornament of grace: a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee." He was not speaking of a literal crown. He was speaking of the honor, the beauty, and the victory that wisdom brings to one's life.

Proverbs 12:4 says, "A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband." It would be foolish to attempt to give this verse a literal meaning. Proverbs 14:24 reads, "The crown of the wise is their riches [again, this is figurative]." Proverbs 16:31 says, "The hoary [or gray] head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness." In this verse gray hair is said to be a crown of glory, which is figurative. Proverbs 17:6 says, "Children's children are the crown of old men." Can you see how foolish it would be to try to give a literal understanding to these passages?

The Bible uses figurative expressions in the Old Testament and the New Testament. Revelation 4:10 speaks of "the four and twenty elders." They are a

picture of the ministry. Peter said in 1 Peter 5:1, "The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder." The elders are the ministry. In 2 Chronicles they had the twenty-four courses of the Levitical priesthood, showing a complete transition from the old Jewish economy to the New Testament economy.

Revelation 4:10 says, "The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne." Revelation 1:1 says this Book was signified, which means "revealed by signs." The word *sign*, according to *Webster's New World Dictionary*, means "a symbol." The Revelation is a symbolic account.

When the Scripture says they "cast their crowns before the throne," let us find out who the crowns are. The Apostle Paul wrote in Philippians 4:1, "Therefore, my brethren, dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown." Who is a minister's crown? Who is ever before his mind? It is his people, or his congregation. Any time a man of God has an opportunity, he takes his crown and casts it before the throne, or brings it to God. He brings the people's burdens and needs to God. He is continually casting that crown, or the people, before God. This is not a literal picture of throwing crowns around.

In 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20 Paul said: "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy." The people were his crown. This is the crown that the ministry casts before the throne of God, not literal crowns.

In 2 Timothy 4:8 the Apostle Paul wrote, "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord,

the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." The *Amplified Bible* renders it, "(As to what remains,) henceforth there is laid up for me the [victor's] crown of righteousness—for being right with God and doing right—which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me *and* recompense me on that [great] day; and not to me only but also to all those who have loved *and* yearned for *and* welcomed His appearing [His return]."

What was Paul teaching in that verse? This is no more a literal crown than the ones we read about in Proverbs. What is the crown of righteousness? The word *righteousness* means "right standing." A righteous person is one who has lived in a right position before God. Often when we pray about a revival or a camp meeting, we pray, "Lord, give us a crowning service." What do we mean? We are petitioning the Lord to cap the meeting with glory, victory, and power. When Paul talked about "the crown of righteousness," he was speaking of what crowns the righteous life. What is it? It is Heaven, our eternal reward, not literal crowns. The crown of righteousness crowns a righteous life.

What is at the end of a righteous life? He said it is "not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." When Jesus splits the clouds in His second advent, one who has been righteous, or lived right, will receive the crown of a righteous life, which is Heaven and eternal bliss. That is the capsheaf, or the crown, not something literal to rest upon one's brow.

I trust that you can clearly see what the crown is in reality. In the next article we will examine the question, "Who wears this crown?"

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