

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

THE GOSPEL TRUMPETER
USPS #871620

Periodicals postage paid at the post office in Newark, Ohio 43055.
POSTMAN, send form 3579 to the printer:

THE GOSPEL TRUMPETER
675 N. Cedar Street
Newark, Ohio 43055

This periodical carries no subscription price; however, it is partially maintained through the gifts and offerings of its readers, with the balance of the expenses being paid by the local congregation.

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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. 1:13; John 17:11)

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CONTENTS

The Holy Spirit 3
The Righteousness of God 8
Holy Living 13
Especially for Young People 14
"He That Hath an Ear" 16
The Way to Life 23
Revival Announcements 27

Website: www.godsacres.org

Vol. 34 May 2004 No. 5

Guest Editorial

The Bond of Perfectness

We want to consider a very familiar Scripture passage. In Colossians 3:14 we find recorded, "And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness."

The truths incorporated within this verse are predicated on the truths previously mentioned. Too many times this verse is isolated from the surrounding context and made to espouse teachings which are foreign to its divine intent. As we examine this verse in view of the surrounding context, it is evident that this bond is the culmination of the graces mentioned in verses 10-13.

In viewing the principle phrase of this sacred recording, the writer alludes to the bond of perfectness. It is apparent that the bond is not perfectness or perfection in and of itself, but rather it is the *bond* of perfectness. Many times this verse is quoted in relation to fellowship. In truth, when we speak of fellowship, one must first be perfect before the bond will work as intended.

When verses 10-14 are read in continuity, it becomes clear that the bond of perfectness is the incorporation of the aforementioned graces into the life of the child of God. Without these graces truly being appropriated into the life of a saint, the bond will not operate properly.

The original word for bond in the Greek is **sundesmos**, which means, "that which binds together, joint bond, a joint tie, i.e. ligament, uniting principal, central band, bond." We can clearly see that the bond is the joiner or the adhesive, but even the

best bond must have material suitable for bonding. One article might have the bond adhere to it perfectly, but if the object to which one is trying to adhere is not suitable material, one may endeavor all he pleases, but there will be no union. To effect a union, the unsuitable object must undergo a radical change and become compatible to the bond.

This portrays the position of men devoid of God, for God is love (see 1 John 4:8). When the heart is devoid of God, it is devoid of compatibility to that bond. We must first become perfect through an experience of salvation before the bond will apply. This is the reason that many do not hold fast to their experience with Christ. There is nothing wrong with that One to which they would be bonded; they are just the wrong material. Their living, their conduct, and their spirits are not of a nature that is compatible to the bond.

Our Scripture text says to "put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness." Divine love is not a love that can join anything and everything together; it is conditional. God is love, and God is jealous (see Exodus 34:14); thus, true divine love is very jealous and very exacting. It requires divinity in its adherents. Notice that his audience is exclusive in our Scripture text. It consists of only those who "have put on the new man," the elect of God. In other words, they have gained an initial experience of salvation, and they are being admonished to put on the various divine attributes or graces mentioned.

Putting on these divine graces is the perfection that our Scripture text addresses. The word "perfectness" in verse 14 is the only time this English word is used in the Bible. The original Greek word is **teleiotes**, which means "completeness, or to

[continued on page 27]

Acts 1:1 The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach,

2 Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen:

3 To whom also he showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:

4 And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me.

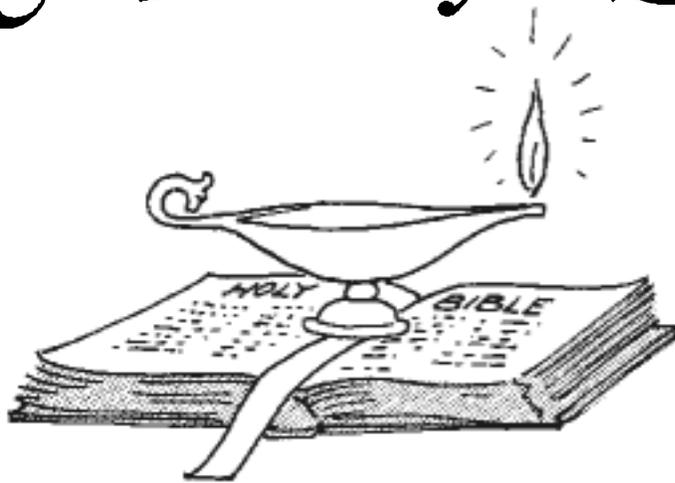
5 For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

6 When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?

7 And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.

8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

The Holy Spirit



Brother Roger L. Decker

Events That Took Place in the Morning Church

The Acts of the Apostles is said to have been written by the Apostle Luke, who was a traveling companion with the Apostle Paul. The Book of Acts is said by some to be the most important Book in the Bible, and I agree with that. Without the Book of Acts we would have little knowledge of the history of the morning church. Apart from Paul, there are limited accounts given of the other Apostles.

Throughout the Book of Acts, we read about the acts of Jesus Christ working through men who were filled with the Holy Ghost.

Again, verses 1-2 read: "The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen." In reality, the Acts of the Apostles is also about the acts of Jesus Christ.

Very little is known about Luke. He wrote the Gospel According to Saint Luke, but only three Scriptures mention his name in the Bible. We read in Paul's letter to the Colossians that Luke was called the physician. In Colossians 4:14 Paul wrote, "Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you." Verse 24 of

the Book of Philemon says, "Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, my fellowlabourers." In 2 Timothy 4:11 Paul wrote, "Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry." Luke was considered to be a physician, and he was one of Paul's loyal friends and traveling companions and a very valued helper. Luke was the only Gentile writer in the New Testament.

Both the Gospel According to Saint Luke and the Book of Acts were addressed to a man named Theophilus, which means "a friend of God." We read in Luke, Chapter 1, that Luke addressed the same man. Verses 1-4 state: "Forasmuch

as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word; It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed." Luke called him "most excellent Theophilus." That phrase means "your excellency," and it indicates that he was a man of prominent position. It is recorded that he had a prominent position in the Roman army. Whoever he was, it is certain that he was a friend of God and a friend of Luke's.

In the Book of Acts you can read of many events that took place in the church: you can read of the church at Jerusalem, the preaching of Peter, the spread of Christianity, the martyrdom of Steven, the preaching of the Gospel at Samaria, the conversion of Saul to Paul, the church at Antioch, the receiving of the Gentiles, the spread of the church into Asia Minor, the extension of the church into Europe, the arrival of Paul in Rome, and his imprisonment there. These are some of the highlights.

The Great Need of Having the Holy Spirit

We want to study about the Holy Spirit. I want you to notice one thing at the start of the Acts of the Apostles: Jesus instructed them not to move without Him. He had a reason for saying that. You cannot do anything without the Holy Spirit. Jesus emphasized that. He told the disciples not to go to Judea or Samaria. He did not want them to try to stand against the Orthodox Jews without the promise of the Father.

Without the Holy Spirit man is incapable of living a life that is

pleasing to God or of showing Christ to a lost and dying world. God had given a promise through the Old Testament Prophets. He was going to pour out His Spirit upon all flesh. Peter, standing up with the eleven, spoke the first Gospel message of the church, and he took his text from one of the minor prophets. Joel 2:28 says, "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions." Why did Peter preach from the Old Testament? The New Testament had not yet been written.

Isaiah wrote the same thing in Isaiah 44:1-4: "Yet now hear, O Jacob my servant; and Israel, whom I have chosen: Thus saith the LORD that made thee, and formed thee from the womb, which will help thee; Fear not, O Jacob, my servant; and thou, Jesurun [this is another word for Israel], whom I have chosen. For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring: And they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses."

When Peter stood up and spoke, he was filled with the Holy Spirit. He did not speak smooth things so the Jews would not be offended, but he spoke "thus saith the Lord." The Holy Spirit speaks in accordance with His Word. He is not always speaking through individuals who profess to be members of a church. When the Holy Spirit is speaking through an individual, that which He speaks is understandable, powerful, and uncompromising. The Holy Spirit will not change His mind because of your attitude. If you are confused, it is not because the Holy Spirit is talking to you.

When Peter stood up and spoke on the Day of Pentecost, he did not back away from the message of Truth. No doubt, he was facing

some of the same Jews who stood in Pilate's judgment hall at the sentencing of Jesus Christ, but this day was different. This was the day when the prophecy of the Prophet Joel was fulfilled. Joel wrote, "I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh." The Holy Spirit got people's attention on that day. Before the Day of Pentecost, Peter was run off by a little maid, and you will be, too, without the Holy Spirit. You will run at the first sign of trouble. The first time anyone speaks up to you or offends you, you will be gone.

The Apostles were not filled with the Holy Spirit until the Day of Pentecost. How did they stay together? Jesus kept them together. The truth of the matter is, He is still the One who keeps people together. There is a great need of the Holy Spirit. You can read in Acts, Chapter 2, about the birth of the church and all those who were added, and they went from house to house breaking bread; they stayed together. The only time they got separated was due to persecution, and God sent it to spread Christianity so the church would grow. Though they went from city to city, they remained in unity. Why? The Holy Spirit makes one people.

The disciples were not merely told that they *should* wait, but they were *commanded* to wait. Three things were going to happen to those who were filled with the Spirit of God. Jesus said in Acts 1:8, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

"Ye Shall Receive Power"

Jesus said they would receive power. The first thing that happens when you are filled with the Spirit of God is that you receive power. When you are born again, you receive power. You may ask, "How

much power?" You will receive enough power to have victory over sin. You might not have much knowledge of Jesus Christ, but the Holy Spirit will bear witness with your spirit that you are a child of God. Romans 8:16 states, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." The Holy Spirit gives you the power to stand in the time of temptation. If you yield to temptation, that is sin. Being tempted is not sin, but yielding to temptation is sin.

Without Christ you are weak. Before the Day of Pentecost, the disciples were weak, and they lacked understanding. They thought the kingdom was going to be restored, a literal kingdom. They wondered if it was going to happen before Christ's ascension. They asked Him, in so many words, "Are you going to restore the kingdom at this time?" In Acts 1:7-8 Jesus said: "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

After you receive power, then what happens? You become a witness. You want to tell others about what God has done for you. Now, you may not know any Scriptures, but you can tell what happened to you. When you receive power to become a witness, you are ready to witness and willing to go wherever He sends you. What did the Prophet Isaiah say? "Here am I; send me" (Isaiah 6:8).

No doubt, God would like to lay His hand on some others in the church to fill the positions of evangelists, teachers, and pastors. When God looks for individuals, He does not look for those who have all the schooling or those who always give eloquent speeches. He looks for vessels who are willing to be cleansed and used by the hand of

the Lord. They might not even have full command of the English language, but God can help them. When Moses was called, he told the Lord that he was slow of speech, so God took care of that and gave him Aaron. God can equip those who are willing to consecrate their lives to Him.

The Passover

Acts 2:1-2 says: "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting." You will notice that the King James version says "the day of Pentecost was fully come." Today some translations read, "the church of Pentecost," and they call themselves the Pentecostal Church.

Most Bible students know what Pentecost was. It has also been termed "the feast of weeks." It was celebrated fifty days after the Passover. Christ is our Passover. First Corinthians 5:7 says, "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us." God gave old Israel the Passover, that they should keep commemorating their miraculous deliverance from Egyptian bondage.

Church, we were not literally in Egyptian bondage, but we were in spiritual bondage. The Passover was a type that pointed to the Antitype, Jesus Christ under the New Covenant. Exodus 12:5 reads, "Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats." God provided a lamb for literal Israel, and today we have the Lamb of God. John 1:29 says, "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

First Peter 1:18-19 states: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye

were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." You can read in Exodus 12:5-10 that they were told to eat all the lamb. Jesus let us know in John 6:53 that we are to eat His flesh and drink His blood. He said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you."

There is no Pentecostal Church in the Word of God. You can read of the Day of Pentecost, a day that the church no longer commemorates, because Christ is our Passover. Someone may say, "Those words are offensive." It would be much better to be offended now for the Truth than to wait until the Judgment.

The Effect of the Holy Spirit

The effect of the Holy Spirit is not speaking in tongues, but the effect of the Holy Spirit is power, power to have victory over sin. God puts first things first. For example, you could not drive an automobile down the highway unless you put some fuel in the tank. No matter how nice the automobile is, without fuel it cannot run. You must put first things first.

The first thing Christ's disciples received on the Day of Pentecost was power, power to live right. Oh, what a lack of power there is today! The Holy Spirit can give you power to live right, power to witness, power to overcome temptation, and power to stand for that which is right. Just going to church will not save you. All those things were present when Peter stood up on the Day of Pentecost.

Before a church was ever recognized, power had to come first. Some people do not have enough power to testify about Jesus Christ, and they are not even standing before a mob of Orthodox Jews.

Peter stood up against a hostile group of people. They were the same group of people who stoned Steven, yet Steven stood with power. Today some are afraid to stand for Jesus Christ. They are afraid that someone will question them or embarrass them. They never would have made it in the morning-time church. The morning church was assembled together by one Spirit, and they had all things common.

Today some people will not stand for anything, yet they fall for everything. What actually happened on the Day of Pentecost? As they were sitting in a house, Acts 2:2 tells us, "And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting."

Someone may say, "They got the gift of tongues." Why was the gift of languages given on the Day of Pentecost? It was needed that particular day to preach the Gospel. God wants all people to hear the Gospel. Acts 2:14 states, "But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words."

An Opportunity to Hear the Gospel

Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and what did he say? Verses 22-23 tell us: "Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." To whom was Peter speaking? He was addressing those who were guilty.

The gift of languages was used to edify. The word *edify* means "to build up." That gift was used to

start the Christian church. It was necessary for God to pour out that gift of the Spirit first, for gathered together on that special day were Jews from different localities. We read in Acts 2:5-6: "And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language." When Peter spoke (he was a Galilean), God translated that language so every man could hear him in his own language. No man was standing around to interpret. The Holy Spirit did the interpreting.

During the birth of the church, there were different dialects, or languages, approximately every twenty miles. Those who have traveled to foreign countries know that this is true yet today. People from many localities were gathered together in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost. Verses 7-8 read: "And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans [the language was understandable]? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?" That is exactly what God wants to happen, but the devil will do anything he can to keep you from hearing the Gospel. It is serious when the Gospel is going forth. It is a time of vast importance in the eyes of God.

God knew that a crowd would be gathered on the Day of Pentecost, and He wanted to make sure every man heard and understood exactly what the Apostles were speaking. I have read that approximately one hundred thousand people gathered together on that day. Not everyone there accepted the Gospel, but they all had an opportunity to believe the Gospel. Friend, God is giving you the same opportunity. Why? Because someday you will stand at the Judgment, and you will not be able to say that God did not give you an opportunity to be saved. On

the Day of Pentecost the majority did not get saved, but they could have gotten saved. Likewise, not everyone gets saved today. Some go to church merely to say they have been to church.

The gift of tongues was manifested three times in the Book of Acts: at Pentecost (Chapter 2), at Cornelius' house (Chapter 10), and when the twelve Samaritans met at Ephesus (Chapter 19). It was to the Jew first. John 1:11 states, "He came unto his own, and his own received him not." Christ came to the Jew first, then to the Gentiles, and then to the Samaritans. In every instance in the Word of God, the gift of tongues was understandable, whether they were praising God or the Gospel was being preached. In every instance in the Word of God, there was no interpreter.

How Is Your Witness?

Jesus said they would receive power. Nowhere did He say, "Tarry and wait for the Holy Ghost and the promise of the Father, and you will receive a sign." He said they would receive power and be witnesses. They were not just witnesses with their mouths but with their lives. That is one of the greatest witnesses lacking today. People are sick of hearing about religion. The power is in the life. Can others see Jesus manifested in your life?

How is your witness among the world? They want to hear more than your talk. They want to see you pay your bills. You may hand them tracts, but they would rather have you hand them the money you owe. You need to let your life be a testimony by paying your debts first. The husband should not stay home and let the wife support the family. He may get laid off or become disabled, but there should be something within him that causes him to be anxious to get back to work.

Can others see Jesus in your life? Some people are powerless when it comes to living for God. A little

maid could run them off, just as one ran Peter off. It could be because they are not what they profess to be. If that is so, that will clip their power. Jesus let us know there are some things that the Holy Spirit would do for us when He comes. In John 16:12-14 Jesus said: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you."

The Holy Spirit is also the Spirit of Truth. The work of the Spirit is to reveal the things of God to man. The revelation of Truth is progressive. Jesus knew there were many things that He could not tell His disciples at that time. Why? They would not understand.

In the Old Testament the way to preserve the purity of the children of God was to destroy the enemy, but that is not so in the New Testament dispensation. In the New Testament dispensation the way to preserve purity is to convert the enemy. The Holy Spirit helps you to stand in the time of temptation. Child of God, you do not have to give in every time the tempter comes around. If you have anything at all, the devil wants it. You may

say, "It bothers me when the tempter comes around." Well, it should bother you worse if he did not come around.

John Wesley used to ride horseback as he traveled to preach the Gospel, and one time he had not been persecuted for a while. In the past he had been stoned, called names, and cast out of places; so he pulled his horse to a stop, got off, knelt down to pray, and asked God to check his life. He inquired, "What's wrong in my life, Lord? I have not received any persecution." God answered his prayer quickly, and a stone went whistling above his head. He just thanked the Lord and got back on his horse and continued his journey.

If you give in to temptation, dear one, you commit sin. The only way to get rid of sin is to repent. When are you going to repent? Once when I visited someone in the hospital who was near death, I asked her, "Are you saved?"

She said, "Well, I don't know." She said that she was confused about some things.

I said, "Well, there is one thing that you are not confused about, and that is God Himself. You know that if you would repent, God would forgive you. And you do know you have to turn from sin. Don't worry about anything else. You need to concentrate on getting saved. You can still make it through

the Judgment as long as you are born again. Do what you know to do first, and God will show you anything else you need to know."

Through the power of the Holy Spirit, you can live a holy life. You can be free from sin and free from the power of sin. Do you have that power in your life? If not, you can have. Some people are not going to prosper until they settle down and start serving God. They are going to bounce all over the place until they settle down and do the first things first.

Do you have power in your life? You can have power to witness to the saving power of Jesus Christ. He can give you power to witness, and He can also give you power to stand and give God praise.

Won't you be willing and obedient to the call of God? He will not hurt you. If you are truly sick of sin and truly want help, God will be there to help you. God will do all He can to coach you to come to Him, but you have to make the choice. It is high time that you denounce the works of the flesh and come to Jesus Christ with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. You will find that He will be waiting with His arms wide open. He is ready to forgive you.

(Cassette C-4962E)

A man may go to Heaven without health, without wealth, without fame, without a great name, without learning, without culture, without friends, without ten thousand other things; but he can never go to Heaven without Christ!

Romans 10:1 Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.

2 For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.

3 For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.

The Righteousness of God



Brother Ula Bland

God Will Abundantly Pardon

In my travels I have found that many people are church members and have attended church for years. Some sing, some preach, and others testify, yet they have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God. Nevertheless, that is one thing we all must do. No matter how good something looks, if it is wrong, it is wrong. Wrong can never be turned into right. When you have been taught what is right, you ought to submit yourself to the righteousness of God. That is the only

thing that will take you to Glory.

In our Scripture text Paul said he wanted Israel to be saved. He did not say that his heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel was that they might become church members. He wanted them to be saved from all their sins. Friend, do you know beyond a shadow of doubt that you are saved from all your sins? Are you free from all wrong attitudes and everything contrary to God's way? Isaiah 55:7 states, "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."

God does not partially save a person. Do you know what He does? He saves individuals from *all* sin, and it does not take Him all day to do it. You may be living in vile sin, lying, cheating, stealing, or showing a terrible attitude; but you can become a child of God instantly. That never ceases to amaze me.

In 1 Timothy 2:4 Paul wrote, "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." After you get saved, you

need a pastor to teach you what is right. Paul wrote in Romans 10:14-15a: ". . . and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent?" Many have gone out, but God has not sent them. Those whom God has sent will speak the words of God without favor. I thank God for His Word.

Paul had a great burden on his heart for his people. In Romans 9:3 he said, "For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh." He wanted them to be saved. When you have that kind of burden for souls, people will get saved.

The best thing that ever happened to me was when God saved me. No matter how much money you might have or how many stocks and bonds you might have, there is nothing like salvation. Salvation brings deliverance from sin. Hebrews 2:3 says, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation . . . ?" Jesus Christ brought this salvation to where we could receive it. I thank God for salvation and for Jesus. You know, the first Adam messed up, so God sent the second Adam (Jesus Christ) to straighten us out. In other words, God gave Adam eternal life, but when he messed up, God gave man another chance.

Accept His Righteousness

The Bible tells us that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, but God did not leave us in sin. He sent His Son to deliver us. His Son loved us so much that death could not stop Him. Jesus Christ is our High Priest. Hebrews 4:15 reads, "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." As saints of God, we can "come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (verse 16).

Paul said in Titus 2:11-12: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." No matter how much sin is in the world, we can still live free from sin through Christ Jesus. Isn't that wonderful?

You can walk uprightly. That is the reason the Psalmist said in Psalm 1:1, "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly." You do not have to listen to the counsel of ungodly people if you have the Word of God and a pastor who preaches the Truth. There are so many different kinds of religion, and they tell you to go to the church of your choice. Nevertheless, God has only one church and only one way to get into that church. Jesus said in John 14:6, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." You must come by Jesus Christ.

You should gladly submit to Jesus Christ, because He is God's righteousness. The righteousness you gain as a child of God is not your righteousness; it is the righteousness of God. I thank God for that righteousness!

In our Scripture text Paul said that he bore Israel record that they had the zeal of God, but it was zeal without the proper knowledge. God said in Hosea 4:6, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." Many preachers are afraid to tell people there is only one church. The Bible lets us know there is only one foundation and only one church. Jesus said in Matthew 16:18, "Upon this rock I will build my church [He did not say He would build His churches; He said 'my church']; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Satan cannot overthrow it.

God has a people, and He always will have a people. When Christ splits the blue sky, God will still have a people. He is coming back after a church without spot or

wrinkle or any such thing.

I do not know about you, but I want to go with Him when He comes. If you accept His righteousness and live according to the Scriptures, you can go with Him. Friend, if you are living in sin, if you have unconfessed sin in your life when He comes, you cannot go with Him. On the other hand, if you will do what God says to do, you will not miss Heaven.

I thank God for His Word and for the provision that He has made for mankind. God's commandments are not grievous. He will never tell you to do anything that you cannot do. Whenever He tells you to do something, He does not leave you alone. He sends His Holy Spirit with His Word to help you. Hell will be hot for those who refuse to do God's will.

Walk Not in the Counsel of the Ungodly

Again, in verses 2-3 of our Scripture text Paul said: "For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." Many people do not want to go the way God wants them to go, so they fix themselves another way. Jesus said He is the Door, and if you come in any other way, you are a thief and a robber. A thief does not come for anything but to steal, to kill, and to destroy. Jesus said in John 10:10, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." Saints of God have more abundant life. I do not believe that people can really get saved and be sorry they got saved. If they are sorry, they did not really get salvation; they got something else.

The Bible says to pray for those who spitefully use you. By God's grace, you must submit yourself to the Word of God. Paul said in

Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Is anything too hard for God? No! God is righteous, and He loves righteousness, because the righteousness is of Him. Consider Lot, who was living down in Sodom. According to 2 Peter 2:7-8, those wicked people vexed his righteous soul with their filthy communication. When God sent the angel down to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, the angel said, in essence, "We cannot do anything until we get Lot out of there."

Abraham had been interceding for the city where his nephew Lot dwelt. First, Abraham pleaded with the Lord to spare that city if He could find fifty righteous people there, and the Lord said He would not destroy it for the sake of fifty righteous. Finally, to make a long story short, He came on down to ten. God could not even find ten righteous people in Sodom. In Genesis 18:23 Abraham asked the question, "Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?" No, God will not destroy the righteous with the wicked. He looks down and smiles on the righteous, because if you are righteous, that is His righteousness.

David said in Psalm 1:1-6: "Blessed [happy] is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, [A lot of ungodly counsel is going on, counseling against pastors and the church. God said you are blessed if you do not take in ungodly counsel] nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night [the righteous man does not allow any foolishness to come in; he meditates on God's Word day and night].

"And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. Therefore the ungodly shall

not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous. . . ."

"Walk Not After the Flesh"

Second Timothy 2:19a states, "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his." When I quote that Scripture, I always say that parents know their children. If you know much about chickens, you know that a hen knows her little biddies, and they know her cluck, no matter how many other hens are in the yard. In John 10:27-28 Jesus said: "My sheep hear my voice [this is one way that you can tell whether a person is saved], and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand."

Those who teach eternal security use that Scripture to teach that once a person is saved, he cannot be lost. They forget that Jesus said His sheep follow Him. You need to remember that as long as you follow Jesus, you will not be lost. Some teach that one is saved from his sins, past, present, and future. Dear one, that is ungodly counsel. God will save you from your past sins; then if you should commit sin, you would have to repent of that sin. When people do not know the Truth, someone could tell them something wrong, and they would not know any better. People who know the Truth do not have to take in what just anyone says, because they know what is right and what is wrong. I thank God for His Word.

The Word of God has stood through the ages. Jesus said in John 8:31-32: "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." No matter how the Truth may cut you, you need to hold onto it, because the Truth is the one thing that can make you free.

I thank God for His saving power. God can save to the uttermost. If you are not saved, God can save you. The Apostle Paul said it is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. That is His business. The church's business is to live holy and to show the world that they can live free from sin. Sin has no power over the church.

Paul said in Romans 8:1-4,7: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. . . . Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." The carnal mind is not subject to God's law, and it is enmity against God.

I thank God there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. Someone may say, "I am in Christ Jesus and have no condemnation, and I can do anything I want to do." No, you cannot. The Scripture says to "walk not after the flesh." The Word and the Holy Spirit make that plain.

Hebrews 4:12 says, "For the word of God is quick [that means it is alive], and powerful [the Word of God is the most powerful thing in the world], and sharper [not as sharp, but sharper] than any twoedged sword [no matter how that sword may glitter or how sharp it may be, the Word of God is sharper than any two-edged sword; it goes where no physician can go], piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discern-er of the thoughts and intents of the

heart."

Jeremiah 17:9 says, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" God knows the thoughts and intents of your heart. He knows what you are doing now, and He knows what you want to do.

Have You Passed From Death Unto Life?

Again, Hebrews 2:3 reads, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation. . . ?" If you do not have salvation, do not stop until you get it. You will not know what salvation is until you get it; it is unexplainable. Isaiah 55:6 says, "Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near." When the Word of God is near to your heart, you can accept it and be saved, and then you can walk on rejoicing. Isn't that wonderful? This is the kind of provision that God has made for mankind. He did not leave the world in sin. He knew that man was going to sin, so He made provision so that everyone who wants to be saved can be saved. No matter how poor you are or how illiterate you are, you can be saved.

Salvation is for the whole world. Jesus Christ brought it down to mankind. Before I was saved, I did not know that salvation could make such drastic changes in people's lives. He can take away the old sinful desires, those things that you crave and think you cannot live without. Who would not serve a God like that? I thank God for His saving power and for the love that He has for mankind.

God's affection has gone out to mankind. He cares so much about man that He made man in His own image and after His own likeness. Even though God made so many beautiful species of animals, He could not rest until He made man. God made man holy. Adam was a holy man when God made him. God wants every child of God to be like Him, and there is no sin in Him.

Those who are born again do not commit sin.

If you have not stopped practicing sin, you have not been born again. People should not think that just because they are Church of God that they can do whatever they want to do. Some people may attend the church services, but they are not *in* the church. You cannot be in the church and commit sin. First John 3:8 states, "He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil."

As the body of Christ, we are to destroy the works of the devil. We should not stir up the devil. If people would submit to God's righteousness, there would not be any division or speaking against one another; that is not of God. People should not attempt to bring God that low. The Psalmist declared in Psalm 133:1, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" God's people should not speak against one another or backbite. We are to love one another. Christ is coming back after a pure church. It is time to cut out all foolishness. Romans 13:11 warns that "it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed."

John said that we know we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren. If you truly love the brethren, you will not talk about them, you will not put them down, and you will not want anyone else to talk about them or to put them down. John knew that he had passed from death unto life because he loved the brethren. He did not talk about them. Paul once rebuked Peter, but Peter still loved him.

The day is coming when we all must stand before a holy and a just God to give an account of the deeds done in the body, whether they are good or evil. Friend, you cannot sneak into Heaven. The Bible tells us that Enoch walked with God,

and one day he was not because God took him. God translated him so that he would not see death. Before his translation, he had this testimony, that he pleased God. Saint, before you get to Heaven, you must have the testimony that you have pleased God. Some people say they love God and call themselves the Church of God, but their actions speak otherwise. You cannot try to bring God that low. God's Word and salvation cause us to love one another.

He That Covers His Sins Will Not Prosper

Galatians 6:1 says, "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one [he did not say to talk about such a one; it takes someone who is spiritual to restore such a one] in the spirit of meekness; [Why in the spirit of meekness?] considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." Ephesians 4:3 teaches, "Endeavouring [or putting forth great effort] to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

Isaiah 26:3 reads, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee." You cannot make it to Heaven with wrong attitudes or by sowing discord among brethren. Dear one, nothing is worth losing your soul over.

Jesus asked in Mark 8:37, "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Your soul will spend eternity somewhere. Each of us is on the way to the good place or to the bad place: it is either Heaven or hell. What would it profit you if you should gain the whole world and lose your soul? God cares more for your soul than for all the material things in the world. Ezekiel 18:20a states, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die."

You must submit yourself to God's righteousness, not your own righteousness. As Paul said in Philippians 3:9, ". . . not having mine own righteousness, which is of

the law. . . ." You must have the righteousness of Jesus Christ. At the last Paul said in 2 Timothy 4:7-8: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, . . . and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." I believe saints of God want to go to Heaven. They want to go where God is. Friend, you cannot go where God is if you have been walking in the counsel of the ungodly. There is much ungodly counsel going around. You should not let anyone lead you to speak against your pastor or anyone else. You ought to let that person know that you do not see it that way. You have that right. There are times when you have to take a stand.

Should someone try to persuade you to do something wrong, you need to ask the questions: "Is this the righteousness of God? Would

God be pleased with my doing this?" If you have done something and later found that it was not the righteousness of God, you need to repent of that and turn from it. You need to ask God to help you not to do it again. The Bible says that whoever covers his sin will not prosper, but if he confesses and forsakes it, God has promised to have mercy upon him. What God has promised, He is able to fulfill. Hebrews 6:18 tells us that it is impossible for God to lie.

I thank God for Jesus. He does not just save you and forget about you. When He paid the price for salvation, He went back to Glory and is seated at the right hand of God. Now He makes intercession for us. Friend, this lets you know that you can make it. You do not have to sin anymore. You do not have to lie, curse, swear, or steal anymore. God can save you to the uttermost. He can do abundantly

above what you can think or ask. It is wonderful to serve God! Saint, the Lord did not have to save you. Paul said in Ephesians 2:8-10: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works. . . ."

Sometimes I ask the question, "What more could God have done for us?" God loved us and wanted us saved so much that He gave His only begotten Son. The Son wanted us saved so much that He was willing to give up His life so that each of us might have a right to the tree of life. Friend, you ought to love the Lord with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength for all that He has done.

(Cassette C-5049M)

MY PRAYER

Teach me, Lord, to keep sweet and gentle in all the events of life, in disappointments, in thoughtlessness of others, in the insincerity of those I trusted, in the unfaithfulness of those on whom I relied.

Help me to put myself aside, to think of the happiness of others, to hide my little pains and heartaches, so that I may be the only one to suffer from them.

Teach me to profit by the suffering that comes to me. Help me to use it that it may mellow me, not harden or embitter me; that it may make me broad in my forgiveness, kindly, sympathetic, and helpful.

Holy Living



"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world" (Titus 2:11-12). We are to live righteously and godly, not in the world to come only, but in "this present world," the world that now is. There is both a negative and a positive side to holy living. Ungodliness and worldly lusts need to be carefully avoided. "Watch" was the command of Christ. "Abstain from all appearance of evil" was the exhortation of the Apostle. "O man of God, flee these things" was the warning to Timothy. "Abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul," stated Peter. There can be no positive holy living if the negative is not in active living force.

The Christian life is destructive as well as constructive. Jesus came to set up the Kingdom of Heaven and to destroy the works of the devil. Life that does not destroy ungodliness, worldliness, and sin is not holy life.

Holy living is the need of the world today, not just moral, cultured, refined lives, but lives in which there is God and holiness. You must carry holy principles into the world if you want to bless mankind to the greatest possible extent.

The question was recently asked, "Is it possible to live holy in this exceedingly sinful world?" To this very hour, the prayer of Jesus is heard in Heaven: "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil" (John 17:15).

A company of tourists was sight-seeing in a coal mine. Amidst the black dust, there grew a beautiful white flower. "How can a flower keep such pearly whiteness amidst such black dust?" was asked by the party. The guide took a handful of dust and

threw it on the flower. The dust rolled off, leaving the whiteness unstained. Then a tourist threw handfuls of dust, but the little flower smiled in its snowy whiteness. It had a coating of white enamel to which the black dust would not adhere. God will clothe His people with a robe of such whiteness that the evil world cannot soil.

In some parts of our country is a curious spider known as the diving spider. It is capable of forming a bubble about itself in which, like a diving bell, it sinks to the bottom of the lake or stream. For hours it will live below, breathing the air of the world above. When it returns to the surface, it is perfectly dry, not the slightest moisture having penetrated the atmosphere in which it lived. The child of God, through prayer and holy thought, surrounds himself with a heavenly atmosphere, and while living here below, he breathes the atmosphere of a world above.

There is power in the Gospel of Christ to keep the soul in heavenly victory. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation . . ." (Romans 1:16). "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Psalm 119:11).

A company, discussing how to create a great interest in their movement among the people, said, "We have our artistic music, our programs, our picture slides, our pageants, and our social gatherings, but these all seem to fail to hold the young people. What shall we do next?" An old brother, one who had not yet forgotten the "old paths" answered, "Please allow me to suggest that you try preaching the Gospel of Christ."

Holy living extends to all life's details, no acts so small but should bear the stamp of holiness. All our

words and deeds would be Christianized. As he who hath called us is holy, so we should be holy in all manner of conversation (see 1 Peter 1:15).

There should be no adulteration of the sugar, no placing the finest potatoes on top of the barrel, no material in the building but such as the contract calls for, no neglected work, the yardstick should be thirty-six inches, and the scales give sixteen ounces to each pound. There should be no exaggerations, no saying five or six when you know it is four, no endeavoring to make things appear a little better or a little more than they are.

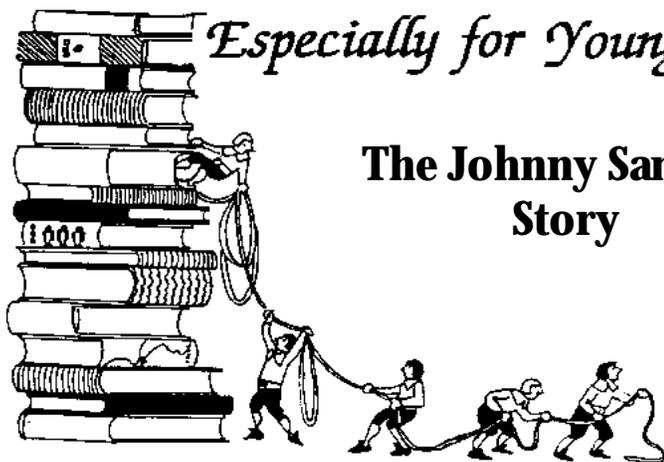
Holy living extends to all our words. Ephesians 4:29 states, "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers." Ephesians 5:4 warns against filthiness, foolish talking, and jesting, for these things are not consistent with holy living. There is talk among professors of holiness that is lacking in seriousness and sobriety.

Holy living includes our dress. Women are exhorted to dress in a way that becomes those professing holiness (see 1 Timothy 2:10). It is possible to dress in a way that is unbecoming to women who profess to be godly. To know that this is being done, one only has to go into many congregations of professed holiness people. If you would take young people from some of their holiness gatherings and place them beside a company gathered from the theater, too often there is but little distinguishable difference in their general appearance. That is a shame!

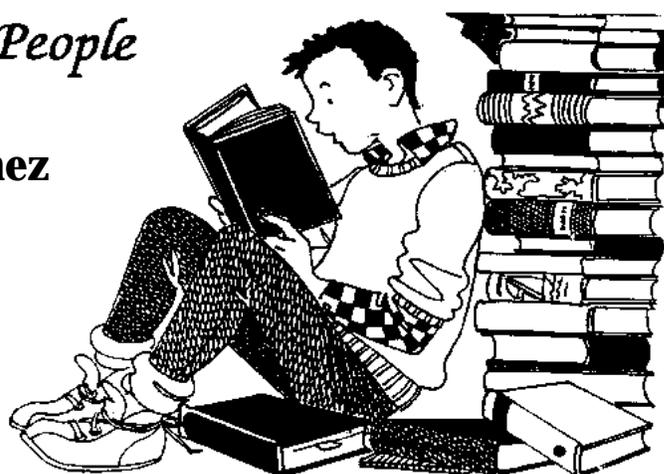
Holy living includes consideration of others. Holy people do not do all they feel free to do lest it may be a cause of stumbling to some weak brother.

[continued on page 27]

Especially for Young People



The Johnny Sanchez Story



Johnny had been through withdrawal before, but this time it was different. For two weeks his life had been a tight ball of pain and sickness. His body was gripped by both fever and chills, and he could not keep anything on his stomach. His nerves were screaming and abdominal cramps kept him doubled up. Hallucinations dogged him, floating before him by day and tormenting him by night. This time nothing helped. This time the agony of withdrawal was going to last forever.

Johnny Sanchez first heard of Jesus Christ in a Sunday school in Los Angeles. He remembers, because Sunday school meant a bread line, and his family needed that bread. Years of hopelessness and addiction followed before he again came into contact with Christ Jesus. They were years of prison, pushing, more prison, and more kicking. It was a vicious life.

John, half-Spanish and half-Yuma Indian, was one of ten children. His mother was divorced when he was small, and the children grew up to go their separate ways.

He was born in Los Angeles where he lived in a small hovel with his family. His mother scraped and planned for every penny, but there was never enough. Johnny began attending Sunday school along with the other members of his family to get the free loaf of bread. He heard that "Jesus is love," and though it lingered somewhere in his subconscious, he did not really

understand what it meant.

He quit school when he was in junior high, and at thirteen began smoking marijuana. There was no special reason for it, except that all the kids were doing it. He did not plan on becoming an addict, yet the desire for stronger drugs and new experiences mounted within him. He was reaching out for something, never dreaming it was for Someone.

When Johnny was fourteen, he was sent to a reform school for boys, for incorrigibility. All his teenage years were spent using drugs and hiding from the police. At seventeen Johnny began the unusual habit of smoking heroin. The procedure was simple. He just removed bits of tobacco from cigarettes and replaced them with heroin, pressing the white powder tightly into the tobacco. The effects of smoking heroin were as great as those from smack, and for a time satisfied his cravings.

Constantly running from the law, Johnny finally broke into mainlining as a result of cutting and preparing heroin at home. There was heavy pushing in Los Angeles, and he was both pushing and preparing heroin for the pushers who worked for him.

It was not an easy matter for Johnny to stay clear of the law. Soon he was arrested for possession of drugs and sent to the state reformatory. Later he was arrested for taking stolen merchandise across the state line and landed in the federal reformatory. Another time he was sent to San Quentin. In prison

he was forced to go through withdrawal "cold turkey." He had no joy, no peace, and no hope. Hooked and kicking, this was his life.

Prison did one thing for John Sanchez. While his rebellious nature was confined behind bars, he turned to books. He read everything, including writings about Madame Guyon, psychology, Buddhism, and other religious books. Little did he know the worth this reading education would be to him later on. Out of prison he stayed clean for three years. He still took pills and occasionally smoked marijuana, but he only fixed now and then.

After Johnny left prison, he met and fell in love with Georgina, a Cocopah Indian. She became his common law wife, and they had two. Then Johnny was back on the needle and pushing hard. He was sick almost all the time and felt that he had no hope of ever being free from drugs. They were living in Arizona, and the trip into Old Mexico for fresh stuff was so easy that he made many such trips.

John had never allowed Georgina to try drugs, though she helped him push and knew the tricks. They knew how to live and how to look nice in public, and when it was necessary, they went into stores and shoplifted what they needed.

Something happened one day that changed the course of their lives. Georgina became a Christian. Her sister invited her to a revival, and she opened her heart and

received Jesus Christ as her Savior. Her life was changed, and she began to attend meetings regularly.

Georgina pleaded with Johnny to give up drugs, but though he saw her transformed life, the tangle of his own seemed too hopeless. Besides, he was not interested in religion. He could not change. A man like Johnny Sanchez never changed.

He was mainlining heavily, and life was grueling. Once he was forced to Los Angeles to hide from the police. He worked there for a short time and then made his way back home. It had been seventeen terrible years since he had become addicted.

Pushing, trying to support both his family and his habit, Johnny made another trip into Mexico to get a load of fresh stuff. In one way, he was glad to have a reason to leave home. Georgina was talking too much about Christ and what it meant to know Him as Lord and Savior. Also, her pastor was always trying to see him, and Johnny was avoiding him as much as possible. He did not want religion!

On the return trip from Mexico on a Saturday night, he planned to stay in a hotel overnight. He had just fixed. The stuff was fresh and good. His buddy was going upstairs to fix, and Johnny started up the stairs after him. That is all he remembers. He had taken an overdose without realizing it.

He did not wake up until Monday morning. When he opened his eyes, he saw Georgina and Brother Jake by his bed. The doctors had said he could not possibly live, but the pastor had held on to God for Johnny's life. That shook Johnny, but even then he did not turn to God. He decided to withdraw from heroin, but in withdrawing he turned to a drug that could be bought over the drug counter.

Sick, driven, and helpless, Johnny was plunged into a time of extreme withdrawal. For days he lay doubled up with pain, too ill to move. The mucous membranes in his eyes and nose poured.

Apprehension and irritability gripped him, and he was seized by both fever and chills. Perspiration streamed from his body.

Jake begged John to go to Teen Challenge, and finally, in desperation, he agreed and entered the center in the summer of 1967. Though the worst of the withdrawal was already over, the men would gather around him and read the Bible aloud and pray. Somehow they were always there when the sickness hit.

Here Johnny gave his life to Jesus Christ and experienced the power of the new birth. Not only was he born again, but he was totally delivered from any further withdrawal. He was not, however, fully delivered from temptation, and there were days when he sat on the front porch and fingered the crisp ten-dollar bill in his pocket.

There was a drugstore just down the street where Johnny could buy the over-the-counter drug. Even though the drug had caused him so much stomach pain, the temptation to go back to it was great. He could have gone back, but he never did.

The freer he got, the more he longed to see others set free also. Salvation became very real to him, and 2 Corinthians 5:17 was wonderfully true! He was in Christ, and his life had been changed—*transformed!* He began taking part in street meetings, chapel services, and testimony meetings. It was three months before Johnny went to see his wife. She and the children needed him, but Johnny still needed the stability of the center. One morning they chose a promise from the little box of Scripture verses Georgina had on the table, claiming it for their present situation. It was Psalm 37:3: "Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed." Before going to bed that night, they pulled out another promise, and it was the same one. The next morning they chose another little card, and again it was the same verse. It was more than a

year before Johnny and his wife could stay together again.

Johnny was made a counselor at the center, and then miraculously he was appointed supervisor and given a three-room apartment. Georgina Papel became Mrs. Johnny Sanchez, and she and the two children moved there.

The real test of Johnny's conversion came in the summer when the center's director was hospitalized with heart spasms. There was no one to take over the center but Johnny. The demands of the work, the counseling, the pressures of buying, selling, getting chapel speakers, and the thousand other decisions, brought extreme pressure. The signs of strain began to show, even though Johnny was standing solidly in God.

It was at this time that God permitted the next test. An old shooting buddy came by the center to see Johnny. He had heroin. The man offered it to John to help him through this trying time. The thought of accepting it appealed to him, but the actual desire for it was gone. God's power had truly set him free.

God has opened many doors of service to Johnny since that time. He has ministered to addicts, spoken in public schools all over the state, and worked in all types of services to present Jesus Christ and His power to save and to deliver. John has preached in many churches and has held revivals all over the state.

"It doesn't matter how long a person has been an addict, the power of God is available and workable to anyone who will receive it." Johnny Sanchez knows whereof he speaks.

Selected

It is right to be content with what you have, but never with what you are.

Revelation 2:1 Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;

2 I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found

them liars:

3 And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.

4 Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.

5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy

candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

6 But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate.

7 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

"He That Hath an Ear"



Brother E. David Stegmeier

"Hear What the Spirit Saith"

God wants each of us to recognize His voice, to hear Him, and to respond in a positive way. Not everyone has an ear to hear. Verse 2 of our Scripture lesson states, "I know thy works." God knows everything. He sees down into the innermost recesses of your heart, and He knows your thoughts afar off. I have preached to some in my congregation for many years, so I can pretty well tell what they are thinking by the expressions on their

faces. Oftentimes parents can discern the expressions of their children. However, there is One who knows all things, and that is God. He knows what you are thinking, and you are responsible if you allow those thoughts to permeate your mind.

Child of God, you must realize how insidious the devil is and how he would like to trick you and deter you in some way; therefore, you should be very careful of what your mind thinks upon. You must stop the enemy in the secret chambers of

your mind.

Jesus said in verses 2-3 of our Scripture text: "I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted." These are beautiful qualities, but Jesus went on to say in verses 4-7: "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left

thy first love. [Saint, you should love Jesus more today than you ever have. The things of God should be dearer to you than they ever have been.] Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

"But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." Child of God, you must overcome many things in this Christian race. The enemy works on the flesh, but you have to overcome the flesh. In all these messages to the seven churches of Asia, God has an extremely important word of warning, admonishing people to repent. Some messages encouraged the church to stand true and to be faithful. One church got a complete message of commendation, words of approval and words of praise. The main focus of this message is, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

Love One Another

Jesus, speaking of the life of John the Baptist, said in Matthew 11:1-6: "And it came to pass, when Jesus had made an end of commanding his twelve disciples, he departed thence to teach and to preach in their cities. Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, And said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another? Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, [Jesus Christ is still the same. Once a Church of Christ minister said to me, 'Christ does not heal today.' I will take the Word of God.]

and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me."

Blessed is whosoever shall not be moved to oppose or turn against Christ. Many people who once were on Christ's side have turned against Him. I am of the persuasion that when you turn against a man of God, you are turning against God. If you do something to a brother or a sister, no matter how prominent a position you hold in the congregation, you are turning against God. It is just that close.

If you do not love your brother whom you see, how can you love God? If you really love a brother or a sister, you will show it by your actions or by your deeds. That is just the way the Bible puts it. If there is love in your heart, you cannot pass by another's need. You must minister to that need. There is something within the child of God that will cause him to do what he can.

John the Revelator was the only Apostle who did not die a violent death. They say when he was elderly, the saints of God carried him into the midst, and he would utter one phrase, "Children, love one another." That is the cause that he would bring repeatedly. We each need to let brotherly love continue. We are not to compete with one another. We are to work together to further the cause of Christ, and what a high and noble cause! There is no greater. As David of old said, "Is there not a cause?" There is, and we are workers together. May God help us all to work together. We have a song in our hymnal entitled "We Need Each Other, Brethren!" It reads:

*In a world filled with violence and
hatred,
Ev'rywhere, wars and turmoil we see;
God's people face daily this struggle;
Only love will keep us free.*

*Oh, how sad to see some of our
brethren,
As they strive for earth's pleasure and
gold;
Become selfish and strive with each
other;
Love and kindness has quickly grown
cold.*

*Lord, give us true warmth and
affection;
When one fails, help us to rescue his
soul;
"He's not heavy, for he is my
brother,"
Let us cry as we carry his load.*

*Dear Saints, let us vow to each other:
"I will help, I will comfort and pray;
I will stand by your side and defend
you
In this battle you're facing today."*

*We need each other, brethren!
For only love will carry us through;
Let us stand by each other, brethren;
Take courage, be faithful and true.*

There are very profound messages in Church of God hymns. No other hymns are as instructive and as powerful as the Church of God hymns; they are tremendous. People from the sectarian world have come to our services and said, "Your hymns are awesome." That is because God inspired godly men and women to pen these hymns.

How Sensitive Are Your Spiritual Ears?

Matthew 11:7-15 says: "And as they departed, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind? But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? behold, they that wear soft clothing are in kings' houses. But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet. For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before

thee.

"Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come [if you will receive it]. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

We need to be very keen to the Spirit's voice. The implication of Christ is that some do not have an ear to hear. They do not want to hear for various reasons: some refuse to hear, and some are stiff necked, stubborn, or rebellious. God wants our attention. How sensitive are your spiritual ears? If I should speak a little too quickly to my wife, something smites me. If I discipline my children too harshly or not enough, something speaks to me inside. That still, small voice Elijah heard was the voice of God speaking through his conscience.

Friend, you can train your conscience to be keener or you can ignore your conscience until it does not speak anymore. Can you hear the voice of God? Do you have ears to hear? Most people today are spiritually deaf. There is not one of my five senses that I would want to do without. The Bible speaks about seeing, hearing, and tasting. The Psalmist wrote in Psalm 34:8, "O taste and see that the LORD is good." Many people do not have the ability to hear the voice of God.

Have you ever heard the expression: "She has an ear for music"? Music is a very important part of the church. Some people just sit silently when the church is singing and rejoicing. I believe if you can make a noise, you ought to open your mouth and make a joyful noise. I like to see people sing. We sing to glorify God. Martin Luther said, "Next to the preaching of the

Gospel, nothing has blessed the hearts of men more than music." God's people love to sing. People have been brought under conviction because of singing. We are instructed and enlightened through songs. I thank God that we can sing and hear the instruments.

Called to Further the Cause of God

Psalm 87:1-3 states: "His foundation is in the holy mountains [that is where you will find Christ; that is where you will find Truth, and that is where holiness is preached]. The LORD loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob. Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God. Selah." The word *Selah* means "just think about it." Think of all the glorious things that are said about the church and the things that remain to be said about her. The church is the most beautiful institution in the world.

Verses 4-6 read: "I will make mention of Rahab and Babylon to them that know me: behold Philistia, and Tyre, with Ethiopia; this man was born there. And of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her: and the highest himself shall establish her. The LORD shall count, when he writeth up the people, that this man was born there. Selah." Everyone who is born again is a member of this glorious institution.

Verse 7 says, "As well the singers as the players on instruments shall be there [in the English language, *shall be* is a future tense verb, so this is a prophetic writing about the church]: all my springs are in thee." Psalm 33:3 says, ". . . play skilfully with a loud noise." The instrument players shall be in Zion as well as the singers. Some people have keener ears than others for music. I want to have a very keen ear when it comes to hearing and discerning the voice of God. You develop that through obedience, by hearing and obeying.

In the Scriptural passages that

we read, the main concern is not about the secular things of life; the concern is the spiritual realm. You may be a truck driver, a school teacher, a tax preparer, or a factory worker, but these are all secondary vocations. In Ephesians 4:1 Paul said, ". . . walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called." You are called to be a child of God. You are called to further the cause of God; that is your first and primary responsibility. God's desire is that everyone hears and obeys.

Peter wrote in 2 Peter that it is God's will that everyone be saved. God wants everyone to be saved. Peter wrote in 2 Peter 3:9, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." God wants all people to be saved. Saint, that is the reason you should not pass up opportunities to speak to souls about Christ. You ought to take advantage of every opportunity. When I travel, I take a few copies of *The Gospel Trumpeter* and some tracts with me. You need to be aware of every opportunity to speak a word for God.

Hearing the Voice of God

God speaks in many ways to get man's attention. The Bible says one way that He speaks is through creation. We read in Psalm 19:1, "The heavens declare [my center reference says 'tell about'] the glory of God. . . ." The heavens tell about the glory of God. The world that God created is absolutely beautiful. Some say that we are ignorant and uneducated because we believe in God. I think people who do not believe in God are absolutely ignorant. People who are truly godly and educated know there is a God and know that He is still in control. He will have the final word.

Solomon said in Ecclesiastes 3:7 that there is "a time to keep silence, and a time to speak." Sometimes you might have to be still while

someone carries on and lets you have it, but I like to remind people that God will have the final word. You see, you may think you have put someone down and put that person in his or her place, but God is going to have the final word!

The latter part of Psalm 19:1 states, ". . . and the firmament showeth his handiwork." Some people are very artistic. Others can do woodworking, and we admire their handiwork. When I see a beautiful sunset, often I say, "God, that is awesome." The cloud formations in the sky and the sunrise are beautiful. We need to admire the handiwork of God; He is speaking to us. When our children were born, I could not help but cry as I admired the awesome creative work of God. Jeremiah said the Lord knew him before he was even created. God creates beautiful children; they are His handiwork. I am against the experiments they are doing with the unborn. They are playing with the work of God.

God speaks through nature. God is speaking to humanity every day. Psalm 19:2-4 says: "Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. Their line [or witness] is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world." We each need to listen.

God also speaks through circumstances. Do you have an ear to hear? Sometimes God speaks through an illness. During such times, you need to look to God and ask, "What is the lesson that I should learn in this?" As I have gone through severe battles, I have often said, "Lord, help me to learn the lesson. Please, I don't want to repeat this lesson; it is so grievous, Lord."

God often speaks through accidents or death. He is attempting to get people's attention. God speaks through His Word and by His Spirit, and He speaks through His people.

To Which Voice Are You Listening?

The devil speaks and God speaks, so we need to learn to discern the difference. God never speaks contrary to the principles of the Bible. I had quite an experience when I was just a young minister. One day a woman came to church who had been playing around in Pentecostalism. She came to the altar that day, and as we were praying with her, she fell on the floor backwards. After taking her to a back room, about five of us ministers commenced to pray for her, the devil would speak through her.

This dear lady was a professor at a university. She told us her story. When she was just a young girl, two young Pentecostal women came to where she was working and commenced to speak to her. She told them, "I don't know if I believe what you are saying." They said, "Well, just let us pray with you." That was a mistake! You should never allow anyone to lay his or her hands on you except a man of God whom you know is living a holy life. She allowed those women to pray for her, and she became demon possessed. She had been demon possessed for thirty-five years, and she had learned to live with it. She said, "I do certain things in my body to keep it submissive so that I can live a normal life." Her family said that she was relatively good, but they said she was very cold and unemotional.

We commenced to pray for her, and she said that the devil would tell her that he was not going to come out, so we continued to pray. The devil said, "I am going to kill you in the process," and we continued to pray. She was kneeling in front of a chair, and suddenly she turned over on that chair and her mouth opened like a crocodile's mouth. Out of her mouth came the loudest, blood-curdling scream that I have ever heard; then she flopped over to the floor limply. One of the

ministers asked her, "Now do you want to get saved?" and she said, "Yes."

The next service she testified and said, "I feel that I have just come out of a deep freeze. I have just been thawed out by the warmth of the Holy Spirit." Her husband said, "I have a new wife!" Friend, you need to be *very* careful of those with whom you counsel and allow to pray for you.

For various reasons many people are not hearing the voice of God. Many are just too busy with secular pursuits, but Jesus said, "Seek first the kingdom of God." First, before you do anything else, you must seek the Kingdom of God. Too many people are just too busy. Others are not wholehearted. We sing a song about wholehearted service. If you are not wholehearted about serving the Lord, you are not going to hear His voice. Some have continually ignored the voice of God until they have become insensitive to His voice.

We have gone to a passion play that tells of the life of Christ. One of the darkest scenes is when Judas comes out. Judas was entertaining the devil. (Many people entertain the devil. They listen to the voice of the devil speak words against a man of God, the people of God, and the Word of God; but it does not stop there.) Eventually Satan entered into Judas and took control of Him. In the play Judas walks out on a dark stage, gets a rope, ties it around his neck, and hangs himself.

This lesson is extremely serious. What does it teach? The one you have to be most concerned about is the person you look at in the mirror. Child of God, the devil would love to ensnare you. If you are in the ministry, you need to remember that you have human tendencies and human desires. The devil wants to destroy you. Therefore, you need to be very careful of the voice to which you are listening.

Being Sensitive to God's Voice

I thought of little Samuel as I was studying. He had to learn to distinguish between the voice of Eli and the voice of God. The Bible lets us know that God called Samuel four times, and at first he thought that it was the voice of Eli. First Samuel 3:7 says, "Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD." He had to learn how to distinguish between the Lord's voice and Eli's voice. You learn to do this as you grow in the Lord. It is extremely important that you hear the voice of God.

Another reason that people do not hear the voice of God is that they are walking too far from Him, so they cannot hear. He speaks, but they do not hear Him. You need to walk closely to Him. I like what Samuel said, and it is good admonition for each of us: "Then Samuel answered, Speak; for thy servant heareth" (1 Samuel 3:10). The Psalmist penned in Psalm 85:8, "I will hear what God the LORD will speak: for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints: but let them not turn again to folly [or to sin]." He will speak peace. The Psalmist said, "I will hear what God the LORD will speak."

Do you have a problem with hoping that a minister will not preach on a certain portion of the Bible? If you do not hear all, then you are guilty of it all. Some women say, "Oh, one thing I have a real problem with is that I can't go along with that long, uncut hair on a woman. I just can't see that." The reason could be that they are not obeying and that they are not sensitive to the voice of God. If you really want to hear the voice of God, you must be extremely sensitive to His commands.

Others are insensitive to the voice of God because they say, "Oh, I know I have a restitution to make, but I don't think I'll deal with it. After all, it happened twenty years ago." It could be God speaking to you. I still preach on making restitution. That is a part of the

work of salvation. Billy Graham, Oral Roberts, and other television ministers do not preach restitution; nevertheless, it is still part of the Gospel.

You may ask, "How do you know that those ministers do not teach making restitution?" A prisoner who murdered three people wrote to Billy Graham and asked him what he should do about an unsolved and unconfessed crime in his past life. Billy Graham said, "You need to forget it; it is under the blood." The Bible does not teach that kind of gospel. If you have done something wrong in your past life, you ought to take care of it, even if it costs you something. The Bible says to dig deep, and that is part of digging deep. Habakkuk 2:1 says, "I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me." You need to be in the right position to hear.

Psalm 46:10 says, "Be still, and know that I am God." Sometimes God speaks very, very softly. When Elijah fled from Queen Jezebel, he began to entertain a feeling of self-pity. Have you ever witnessed someone who had self-pity? Has it ever knocked on your door? It has mine. It is not good to entertain a spirit of self-pity. When Elijah was entertaining a spirit of self-pity, along came a big wind and rent the rocks, and then an earthquake shook everything. Next, along came a big fire, but God was not in any of that. Soon a still, small voice spoke to Elijah, and it was the voice of God.

Let the Holy Spirit Point the Way

When I am making very important decisions, I like to be alone with God. Some people confer with this person and that person, and they become confused. One time an individual who had been in the ministry for years asked me, "What should I do?" I said, "You need to go to God and ask Him what you should do." We should not be in confusion. We

should know what the will of God is. God said to Elijah in 1 Kings 19:18, "Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal." In an old hymnal, *Hymns and Spiritual Songs*, one song reads:

*God has sent the Holy Spirit
To our hearts an honored guest,
To deliver us from evil,
And to bring us peace and rest.
He has come to work within us
Heaven's purposes so blest:
He wants His way in thee.*

*Let the Spirit do the planning,
Point the way thy feet shall go;
Greater than thine own his wisdom,
He the will of God doth know;
Better, wiser than thy choosing
Is the way that he will show:
He wants his way in thee.*

*He doth sometimes work in silence,
When thou dost not know at all;
He doth sometimes speak so softly
Thou must listen for his call.
But if thou wilt trust him fully,
He will be thine all in all:
He wants His way in thee.*

*All thyself to him surrender,
As he pleases let him do;
In the paths he leadeth, follow,
Whether they be old or new.
When the task seems hard before thee,
He with power will endue:
He wants his way in thee.*

*Yield unto the Holy Spirit,
Let Him have His way with thee;
Be thou ready to obey him,
He leads to victory.*

The man who wrote the song that begins, "I would love to tell you what I think of Jesus" was a traveling evangelist who had preached for many years. After a weary journey, he was anxious to get home to see his lovely wife, but he was greeted with a note that said, "Honey, I don't want this kind of a life anymore. I am gone." He was brokenhearted and despondent for years, and finally he regained him-

self and went back into the ministry and wrote that song. Friend, Jesus can take care of every void in your life. He is concerned about you.

"Having Itching Ears"

As I said earlier, the Spirit of God will never speak contrary to the law of God. The Prophet Isaiah gave some wonderful admonition in Isaiah 8:20, which reads, "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." You need to compare everything you hear with the principles in the Word of God. Proverbs 23:12 says, "Apply thine heart unto instruction, and thine ears to the words of knowledge."

The Bible lets us know that some people have "itching ears." The Apostle Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 4:1-5: "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry."

We are living in the day when people would rather hear fables (that which is false) than the old-fashioned Gospel. Why is that? Their ears are dirty. They listen to ungodly stories and negative things against the church and the man of God. They have filthy, itching ears.

The Bible says some are like the deaf adder. We read in Psalm 58:3-5: "The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies. Their

poison is like the poison of a serpent: they are like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear; Which will not hearken to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely."

Most serpents can be charmed by music or other means, but the deaf adder is very wise. It positions its head near the ground so that one ear is near the ground, and then it puts its tail against the other ear. It refuses to be charmed so that it can do a deadly work. Psalm 140:3 reads, "They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent; adders' poison is under their lips. Selah." That is the way some people are, and they refuse to listen.

I can always tell when people are uncomfortable when I preach, because they decide to do their daily readings. They open their Bible, and they read religiously because they do not want to hear what I have to say. We need to be ready to hear everything God has for us to hear. We have sung a chorus in the past that says, "*Listening, listening to the voice of Jesus. As He speaks to me, I will obey. Walking, walking, every step with Jesus Keeps my feet in the narrow way.*"

The Importance of Listening to God

I can think of a few incidents in my life where God spoke to me in a strong, serious way. Let me give you an example. I grew up in Montana, and I had a very dear friend there. Both of our families had come out of the Anderson movement in 1955, but he had backslidden. He and his wife had two small children, but he began to chase after other women, so they divorced. In the spring of 1970, God definitely told me to drive back to Montana and speak to my friend about his soul.

We left on a Friday evening after I was through teaching in Newark, Ohio. I had only about nine days to drive to Montana and find him and return. I drove to where the woman lived that he was

running with at that time and knocked on the door. He came to the door and did not respond; he acted somewhat indifferent. I said, "I want to talk to you."

We drove out into the country, and I said, "You know, you act a little strange. Why aren't you surprised to see me? I didn't tell you that I was coming." He said, "God told me that you were coming, but I didn't want to see you in this condition," and he broke down and cried. For the next four or five days, I stayed with him and pleaded with him about his soul. There were times when he would try to get away. He said, "I am bound; I can't get free."

On Friday I went back to Missoula, which was seventy-seven miles from where he was. On Saturday morning I said, "We need to return to Newark. I have to teach Monday morning." That morning before we left, as we had family worship, we read the story of Abraham's pleading with Lot. The Bible says the angels went into Sodom and took Lot by the hand and brought him out. So God spoke to me and told me to go back and speak to my friend one more time. (You see, family worship is very important.)

I said, "Lord, I have to teach Monday morning, and I cannot be late. He is seventy-seven miles northwest." God said, "Go back." I went back and found him feeding the cattle. I said, "I am not going to argue with you or deliberate a long time because I have to go, but God told me to come back and read a passage of Scripture to you." As I read that Scripture, he began to weep. He said, "God is dealing with me." He said, "You go back to Missoula, and I will come tomorrow on the train, and we will go back to Newark." True to his word, he was there, and we started back. It was one o'clock on Sunday afternoon, and I was to begin teaching at eight o'clock Monday morning, 2,500 miles away; so there was no way that I could have made it back in

time. On the way I called the principal to let him know that I was out of town and would not be able to make it back in time to work Monday and asked him to please get a substitute.

Tuesday morning we arrived home. I had not slept, but I got ready and went to school. I told my wife to call and see where Brother Emerson Wilson was and to see if there was a revival someplace. She got hold of Brother Wilson, and he said, "Yes, I am up at Medina holding a meeting at Brother Dickerson's." I told my wife, "Get ready, and as soon as I get home from school, we will head for Medina."

When I got home, my wife and I, our little boy, my mother, and my friend traveled to Medina. During the service, my friend came under heavy conviction, so he went to the altar and was gloriously saved. He went back to Montana. In June 1970 we accepted the pastorate in Oregon. We attended a meeting in the West, and I saw my friend there, so I asked him, "How have you been doing?"

He said, "Not well."

I said, "You need to be in a healthy congregation." (If people are isolated, they need to move to a healthy Church of God congregation.)

He said, "Brother Dave, I have everything I have looked for in life. My father left me with a huge ranch and all those white-faced cattle. I can't move."

I said, "What is more important, that ranch or your soul? I don't know why, but God is speaking to me, and you need to move now." I believe it was that August that he moved out to our congregation. He and his wife were reunited, and he said, "I have never been happier in my life." A year and a half later, at the age of thirty-seven, he died of a heart attack while sleeping in his bed. I went to his home, and as I helped the coroner carry him out, God brought to my mind Job 1:21, which says, "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither." You see, God has a reason when He speaks. We need to listen when God is speaking.

You need to discipline yourself to hear the voice of God. If God

chastises you in some way, listen and take care of it. Do not let it go on. You should be very, very sensitive when He speaks to correct you or encourage you. Whatever the Spirit of God is attempting to do, you ought to respond in a healthy way. As I mentioned earlier in the message, the Bible speaks of those who stopped their ears. Some have been disobedient to the voice of God.

What kind of an ear do you have? Do you have an ear to hear the voice of God? Are you hearing His voice? The Bible speaks of having pure religion. This is a religion where you have direct contact with God. Every one of us should go directly to the Head to receive divine direction. That way there is no confusion. God is not the author of confusion. Has God spoken to you along the line of some command or something that He wants you to do? Have you responded? If you have not, you need to ask Him to forgive you, and then do it.

(Cassette C-4704M)

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Wellston, Ohio	WJJB-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.
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Matthew 7:11 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?

12 Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.

13 Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way,

that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:

14 Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

15 Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

16 Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

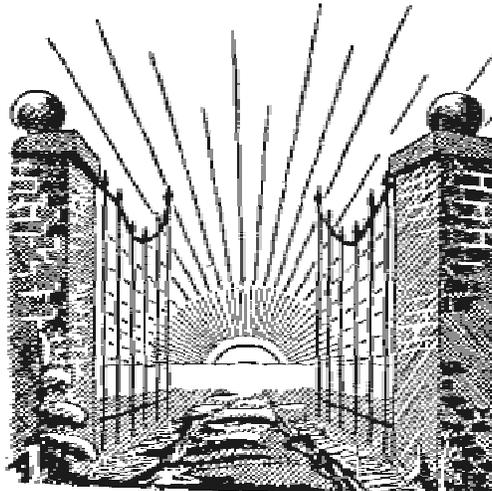
17 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

19 Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

20 Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

The Way to Life



Brother Esau Brooks

Finding the Way That Leads to Life

In this message we will be dealing with the thought of the way to life and the reason so few are finding it today. A person without God is not really living; he or she is merely existing. To really *live* is to know God. Jesus said in John 17:3, "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God..." According to Jesus, there is a way to life. If everyone who claims to be a Christian would truly live as the Bible says to live, our world would be in much better shape.

In verses 13-14 of our Scripture text Jesus said: "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

Let me assure you that the Author of those words knew what He was talking about when He drew the contrast between those who have entered the broad way and the wide gate and those who have entered the strait gate and the narrow way. He said that many would enter the wide gate and the

broad way, but that few would find the strait gate and the narrow way. Therefore, we need to take time to consider the way to life. We cannot afford the luxury of ignoring the fact that there is a way to life.

Belonging to a church or having a profession of religion is not enough. You may profess religion, join a church, or shake a preacher's hand and still end up in hell. By the way, hell still exists. Many have cast aside the thought of there being a hell. They hear so much talk of love, to the extent that some people reason that there is no place for hell. If the devil tells you there is no hell, you need to remember that he is

speaking from the very place that he says does not exist.

In Chapters 5, 6, and 7 of Matthew's Gospel, our Savior was outlining the way to life. That is what the Sermon on the Mount is all about. You need no other method of study than God's Word to discover this. You do not have to join every church in the world to find it. The way to life is graphically brought out in those three chapters. Matthew wrote in Matthew 5:1-3: "And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set [or settled], his disciples came unto him: And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Jesus was not directing sinners but His disciples in this way. They were the ones He was going to depend on to get the Gospel message out. In order for Jesus to teach people the Truth, it was necessary for the disciples to be taught first. Jesus could have sent them anywhere to be taught, and by doing so, teach them the way to life. Notice that Matthew said, "And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him: And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying, Blessed [this is the first step in the right direction in the way to life] are the poor in spirit."

It is blessed to be saved, but salvation does not come cheap. Today it is popular to hear people say, "Join the church of your choice." Well, you may do that, but that will not put you on the way to life. Joining a church will not get you into Heaven. If I believed that joining a church would get me into Heaven, I would join every one of them for fear that I would miss the right one. There is no more virtue in joining a church than in joining a lodge; you would not be any further ahead. The problem is that people hold on to such things in the hope of making it to Heaven. Just as there is no virtue in joining a lodge as far as

going to Heaven, there is no virtue in belonging to a denomination.

The First Step in Getting to Heaven

One thing I have not been able to figure out is how church people can go on in their different ways and talk about going to Heaven. What are they going to do there? According to the Bible, Heaven is a holy place filled with glory and grace, and sin can never enter there. I suppose the reason some people contend that the devil was once in Heaven is that would be their only hope of getting there, but they can forget that idea. The devil was never there, and he never will be. If you are planning to go to Heaven, you had better start lining up with the Word of God. Beloved, if you allow the devil to continue to deceive you, you are going to regret the life you are living today.

Jesus taught His followers, "Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven." If you are interested in making Heaven your home, you need to give heed to what Jesus said. The Kingdom of Heaven belongs to those who are poor in spirit. The word *spirit* is not spelled with a capital "s" in this verse, so we know He was not talking about a person. It is a common spirit, which means just having a spirit is not enough. We must have the Holy Spirit. In other words, Jesus was saying, "Blessed are you if you are poor in your spirit, the worldly spirit, and the devil's spirit."

The first step in getting to Heaven is having the right spirit. The reason many individuals are not making any progress toward Heaven is that their spirit is wrong. The spirit they are following and holding is wrong. They need to get rid of it. You cannot make it to Heaven with a religious spirit. You need to be awakened to how serious a matter it is to make it to Heaven.

The devil has caused things to be so watered down that it is

difficult for many people to tell the difference between those who are going to Heaven and those who are not. If people around religion were allowed to go to Heaven with the spirit they have, Heaven would be full of strife, disagreements, backbiting, and fussing. Any spirit that causes you to hate your brother is the wrong spirit. Any spirit that tells you that you cannot fellowship me or that I cannot fellowship you is wrong. You are blessed if you keep clear of that spirit.

The Narrow Way

I want you to notice that it was not until the latter part of the seventh chapter that Jesus began to talk about the way to life. That is where He introduced His subject. It was then that He said, "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat" (verse 13).

You may say, "I thought church was church." Let us get this clear once and for all. There is only one Bible church, and that is the Church of God. All others are merely religions. The words that Jesus used to prove this fact are found in Matthew 16:18, which states, "Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." What was He talking about? Any other way than the way that His church upholds will cause you to end up in hell. That was how narrow-minded Jesus was. He said, "I will build *my* church." I am glad that He has not renounced ownership of His church. Jesus has not delegated any authority or power to anyone to put this person or that person out of the church or to put certain individuals in the church. That is God's business!

On the Day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the disciples, Acts 2:47b tells us, "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." They did not join it back

then, and you cannot join it today. They did not become members by virtue of what someone said then, and you cannot become a member today by virtue of what someone says. God has men whom He has called to preach the Gospel to every creature. What is the Gospel? The Gospel is rich and consistent to point men and women to the way to life. That is what this is all about: finding the way to life. It is not getting a profession of religion or belonging to a church. The way to life is the way to Heaven.

Jesus began the Sermon on the Mount by pointing out that the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to those who are poor in spirit, or in their own spirit. Before Jesus sent His disciples out into the world to represent His church, He first baptized them with His Spirit, or the Holy Ghost. Have you received the Holy Ghost since you believed? You do not need to tarry as the disciples were told to tarry in Luke 24:49. At that particular time, the Holy Spirit had not yet been given. Since the Holy Spirit has been given, you need to meet the conditions of God's Word to receive the Holy Ghost.

Many are taking the Bible out of context and pulling out certain verses and saying, "The Ephesians got baptized, hands were laid on them, and they spoke with tongues." Too many people have too much "tongue" with the one they have. In religion we do not need any more tongues. We need grace and power to control the one we have. When you are baptized by the Holy Ghost and with fire, it will put a bridle on your tongue. There are things that you will no longer say or talk about.

The Necessity of a Spiritual Transformation

Jesus said in Matthew 5:4-5: "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth." He was not speaking of

inheriting the world or He would have said so. He said "the earth." God made us of the dust of the earth; that is all we are. Someone may say, "You don't have much of an opinion of us." It is not a matter of what opinion I have, but it is a matter of what we truly are. Genesis 3:19 states, "For dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."

Jesus was still referring to the earth when He said, "Blessed are the meek [that does not sound like a spirit of strife or contention]." We must contend for the faith that was once delivered to the saints, but nothing else. Your religion or my religion would not amount to a hill of beans without faith. If you are going to "get religion," as some people say, you must get the pure and undefiled religion that will keep you unspotted from the world. Glory be to God! This is the way to life, friend. Many people have devised their own ways, their own terms, and their own means to make Heaven their home; nevertheless, that does not change the Word of God.

Matthew 5:6 says, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." You may say, "I thought that all I had to do was believe on the Lord Jesus to be saved." That is true; however, it does not say to believe and thou art saved, but rather "thou shalt be saved"; in other words, it is only as long as you go on believing and practicing that you are saved. You see, if you truly believe, you are going to act upon that belief. For example, if someone were to rush into your door and cry out, "Fire! Fire!" and you believed that person, you would move. You would not sit unconcerned and yet believe that the building was on fire. You would be prompted to move. When it comes to the meaning of words, we need to look a little further than many people are looking.

In Chapters 5, 6 and 7 of Matthew, Jesus brought out what is meant by the term "the way to life." The Scripture is what constitutes the

way. You may ask, "Do you mean I have to do all of that to be saved?" No, God will do the work in you. It will take more than making a trip to an altar of prayer or joining a church to get to Heaven. You must undergo a spiritual transformation.

Have you read what Jesus told Nicodemus? In John 3:2 Nicodemus said, "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. In verse 3 Jesus answered, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." This was as good as saying, "Let everything else go; you must be born again." Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of Heaven.

One may say, "I thought as long as I belonged to a church that I would be all right." I used to believe that too, but that is not enough. It takes a divine work upon you by God. Different terms are employed in defining salvation, yet after we have used up all those terms, we are still left in awe as far as really understanding the extent of this great mystery. Before you begin to think that your condition is hopeless, or before you begin to feel incapable of doing all that is needed to be saved, let me remind you that I did not say that you have to do this. God will do the work in you. When you meet the conditions of His Word, He will make you a new creature. Second Corinthians 5:17 tells us, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

Strive to Enter the Strait Gate

The Bible tells us in Matthew 18:3, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." Today a greater work is needed in people's lives. If the only thing you had to do to go to Heaven was (as many tell you) just believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved,

then we would not have much need for the Bible.

Again, Acts 16:31 says, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." This means that you are still on your way to getting it. You may ask, "Do you believe that a person gets saved by merely believing on the Lord Jesus Christ? No, a person does not get saved by just saying it, but by doing it. People can be saved today. What else would Jesus have come to this world to do? How is this done? If you intend to make it to Heaven, you must make sure that you find the way that leads to life.

Using Jesus' own words, we read in verse 13 of our Scripture text, "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat." The word *strait* does not have the same meaning as the word *straight*. There is a world of difference between the two words. The word *strait* means "narrow, restricted, closely fitting, strict, rigorous, distressful, difficult." On the other hand, the word *straight* means "free from curves, bends, or angles." The broad way could take in that definition, because the word "broad" simply means "open, full, marked by lack of restraint." To enter the "strait" gate requires much effort. In Luke 13:24 Jesus said, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able."

Friend, do not let the devil deceive you in believing that because you have religion, you are on your way to life. If you get salvation, you will have pure, undefiled religion before God the Father, and it will affect not only you but also others. The disciples had not been saved very long before they had turned the world upside down. Can you imagine that? This was not their testimony, but the world's testimony about them. It can still happen today.

People need to look into this matter of religion a little deeper.

Look at what Islam is doing to people today. They so brainwash individuals that they gladly submit to strapping explosives to their bodies to blow up themselves and others, all in the name of religion. Thank God, there is greater power in salvation! Though they cause people to be willing to be blown to bits, when a person receives salvation, he is on the road to love people and to draw people away from such things. The depth to which the devil has taken religion and what he has done to mankind is horrible.

Jesus said, "Enter ye in at the strait gate." You may ask, "Why must I be particular about the gate I enter?" Because there is another way, and it leads to destruction. It is called the broad way, and it accommodates everything and anything. Today religion has gotten to where it has lost its meaning to mankind. Jesus said in verse 14 of our Scripture text, "Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." Have you found the way to life, the way to be alive spiritually? This way will convert you into an example to others and show them how they can receive life.

Have You Been Delivered From Sin?

Dear one, Jesus is making a personal appeal to you to enter this way. He is using only one thought to arrest your attention along this line: "few there be that find it." This way is not a common way, and it is not found easily. He said only a few will find it. With all the hundreds of thousands of people who are alive, "few there be that find it." Jesus was asked in Luke 13:23-24: "Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them, Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able." It still stands that way today, friend.

I cannot understand why ones

do not make the move they ought to make. There is nothing better in this life than being a Christian. The devil is working and has confused many people. They look upon religion as meaningless, but salvation is the best thing there is in this world. I would not turn from serving God to do anything else with my life in this world. I have given up my life for this. As I think back on when the Lord saved me, I have not regretted one moment. I am not a Christian because I joined a church or because I shook a preacher's hand. I am a Christian because I have been born again. God came into my life and transformed me. From that point on, I have loved Him, and that love is growing stronger every day. It does not matter to me what others do or say; all that matters to me is what God says.

I am glad that I can enjoy this great salvation today. Salvation does not make you selfish, but sin is a selfish life. If everyone who claims to be a Christian had real salvation, what a world we would live in today! Drug use would not make an inroad into people's lives as it is if all church members were born again. The problem is that people are refusing to serve God.

If you have joined a church and you are relying on that to take you to Heaven, it is time for you to go God's way. I am sure that you will not find it disappointing. John 3:3 tells us, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Have you been born again? Have you been transformed? Have you truly been delivered from sin? If not, I invite you to do it now. You need not give up in despair or disappointment. Thank God, salvation works, and you can be saved. God bless you.

(Cassette C-5050E)

Some people seem willing to do anything to become a Christian except give up their sins.

[Guest Editorial—continued from page 2]

bring to an end by completing or perfecting." These graces that he admonishes us to put on is the perfection mentioned, and then charity is the bond that enables all these other virtues to operate properly and in a cohesive manner. Without the individual being holy and possessing these divine graces, there is not biblical material to bond.

Our unity and our fellowship are contingent on perfection (see 1 John 1:3-7). In this text divine attributes are likened to clothing, and charity is portrayed as that which holds each of these graces in proper place. In the most strict sense, this

does not speak of binding us to others, but of blending these graces together in our own hearts and lives. Then as these virtues work, we are spiritually complete and able to enjoy fellowship or unity.

God requires that all who would truly enjoy the unity He ordained not merely be professors but possessors. One may try to cover the impurities with a veneer of piety, but no fellowship will take place, because fellowship is divine. Before the bond can ever take place, the objects must be clean. Although we desire to give attention to the bond, let us take particular care to make certain that we have a genuine experience of salvation.

We each must first be perfect or complete or the bond will not hold, even though some may attempt to gloss over matters of impropriety to bond together, their best efforts are consigned to failure.

The question is, how is your perfection? Are the divine graces of God working in your life? Are you truly one with Christ? If not, the bond will not work. If you will get the perfection, then you can truly "put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness."

Brother Earl R. Borders

[Holy Living—continued from page 13]

Professor Dager would often take a long walk through the country, his large dog accompanying him. They had a very deep and wide ditch to cross. One day a small dog joined their company. Coming to the ditch, the professor leaped across, but the big dog would not jump. Instead, he ran up the ditch a quarter of a mile to where he could go down a path and then up the other side. His instinct seemed to teach him that if he would jump the ditch, the little dog would also try it, but fail. For this little dog's sake, he would not leap. We should carefully avoid causing any of God's little ones to stumble.

To live holy, we must be holy. Holiness of heart insures holiness in life. What is in the heart will break out in the life. A mother lost her only child, a little girl. She had but one photograph of the precious one, and this was somewhat faded and bleached. The mother was quite proficient in painting. Under her brush, the features of the sweet, coy child came to life in the picture. The photograph was laid carefully away for a few days. When taken out again, the eyes were dim and the face marred with the same ugly blotches.

The devoted mother wrought over it the second time, until the beauty was

restored. Again, it was laid away only for the same marring stains to appear again. There were some chemicals lurking in the paper on which the photograph was taken that were doing the mischief.

The analogy holds true in human life. By no act of skill or care can the exterior life be kept beautiful if there are pride, worldliness, or selfishness in the heart.

In our talking, dressing, desires, pleasures, and occupations, let there be sobriety, righteousness, and godliness. These three attributes are absolutely necessary to holy living.

Selected

Announcements

Kensett, AR
May 28-30

MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND FELLOWSHIP MEETING: The Church of God,
409 Southeast 2nd Street, Kensett, AR 72082
Service times: Friday 7:00 p.m.; Saturday Afternoon Dinner 4:00 p.m.; Evening Service 7:00 p.m.; Sunday School 10:00 a.m.; Sunday Morning Service 11:30 a.m. (Dinner served after service); Sunday Evening Service 5:30 p.m.
For further information contact: Pastor Calvin L. Foster
Telephone: (501) 742-3961

Newton, KS
May 28-31

REVIVAL: Community Church of God, 400 N. Meridian Street, Newton, KS 67114
Evangelist: Brother Earl R. Borders, Heath, OH
Service times: Friday & Saturday 7:00 p.m.; Sunday 10:30 a.m. & 7:00 p.m.;
Monday (Memorial Day) 10:30 a.m. & 2:30 p.m.
For further information contact: Brother Jerry or Sister Sandy Killfoil
Telephone: (316) 282-0104