

# The Gospel Trumpeter

"So will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day." Eze. 34:12  
Jer. 32:39

"But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished." Rev. 10:7  
Mal. 2:13

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**SOUNDING FORTH THE SEVENTH AND LAST TRUMPET**

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Vol. 37 June 2007 No. 6



Church of God Tabernacle in Newark, Ohio

*"I was glad when they said unto me,  
Let us go into the house of the Lord."*

*Psalm 122:1*

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

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## 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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Print Shop Phone: 740-345-1312

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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, war against apostasy, and to eradicate the  
longstanding traditions of men that have no biblical  
foundations.

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Brother Roger L. Decker ..... Editor  
Workers Too Numerous to Mention

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### 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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Vol. 37 June 2007 No. 6

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# Guest Editorial

*"As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto  
them who are of the household of faith."*

*Galatians 6:10*

*"But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant,  
and was made in the likeness of men."*

*Philippians 2:7*

## BEING A SERVANT

Jesus Christ came into this world to save men and women from the destruction of sin and death. He gave Himself willingly, taking on the form of a humble servant to humanity. He gave Himself so freely to unworthy mankind, and He expects men and women to give of themselves to Him and to serve others in return. The Christian's life is a life of giving as well as serving God and others. Serving Christ through obedient living, heeding His words, and following His example is very important.

In 1 Peter 2:21 Peter wrote, ". . . because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps." Providing a life of service and giving to God and others is a Christian's duty. Unfortunately, we live in a world where men and women think mainly of themselves and do as they please, never finding time to consider the needs of anyone else. Their lives are so wrapped up with self and what self wants that they fail to see the soul that desperately needs help and attention. This is contrary to Jesus' teaching and example. He was not concerned about His own comforts. His life was spent helping and serving the needs of mankind. The Bible tells us that the poor and needy will always be around, thus giving the child of God an opportunity to demonstrate the love of Christ. Great blessings are bestowed upon those who help men and women who are unable to help themselves. Sacrificing one's own desires helps to eliminate self-centeredness and covetousness. Sharing and giving builds strong Christian character and reaps deep satisfaction.

In Matthew, Chapter 20, you can read that a mother who had two sons came to Jesus and wanted them to sit on each side of Him. This dear mother did not truly realize what she was asking. She was thinking of greatness and prestige for her two sons and not of the cost required to be paid for such positions. Jesus stated that "whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:26-28). Many would like to be great and recognized as highly spiritual in society, but are they unwilling to follow the guidelines that lead to such heights of success?

Serving others can often be thankless and can go unrecognized by the great majority. However, that which is done in secret and to the glory of God never goes unrewarded. There is One who never misses a thing; He sees every act of kindness given, and every mercy shown. He hears the words of comfort you offer to a hurting heart. We are to serve and give willingly, not to receive in return or to be seen of men. Jesus instructed, "Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. . . . But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: That thine alms may be in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly" (Matthew 6:1, 3-4).

*[continued on page 11]*

*Zechariah 9:9 Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.*

*10 And I will cut off the chariot*

*from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off: and he shall speak peace unto the heathen: and his dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth.*

*11 As for thee also, by the blood of*

*thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water.*

*12 Turn you to the strong hold, ye prisoners of hope: even to day do I declare that I will render double unto thee.*

# Prisoners of Hope



*Brother Roger L. Decker*

## **We have a Hope**

We have before us a prophecy by the minor Prophet Zechariah concerning the coming of Jesus Christ in His First Advent. He said to Israel of old, ". . . thy King cometh unto thee. . . ." In other words, He was a King before He came. I want you to focus your thoughts on verse 12, where the Prophet said, "Turn you to the strong hold, ye prisoners of hope: even to day do I declare that I will render double unto thee."

The word *hope* means "something to look forward to." If you have hope, you have something to look forward to. It is something

expected, anticipated, and cherished, or desired. One song says, "We have a hope." We are expecting something.

In our Scripture text the word *hope* is used with the word *prisoner*. How strange to be a prisoner with hope! Again, what did Zechariah say? "Turn you to the strong hold, ye prisoners of hope: even to day do I declare that I will render double unto thee [or I will bless thee double]."

As you know, a prisoner is a captive. A captive is one who is held against his will, or one who is held in custody, confined in a jail, a prison, or a penitentiary. If you were

to enter a large penitentiary, you would see prisoners who have different degrees of sentencing. If you were to walk about that prison, you would see prisoners who were called "short-timers" because they have just a short time remaining on their sentences. Those prisoners may seem happier than the rest of the prisoners. Hope for the others becomes dimmer. Though some prisoners are sentenced to life, there is a small ray of hope that they might be paroled later. If you were to visit Death Row, you would see ones without hope. The review board has denied them parole, and for some, all appeals have been denied. They

are no longer anxious to see the hours and the days pass as the one who is a short-timer. The hours and the days approach quickly to the final moment when all hope has been denied. There is no rejoicing going on in that cell. There are no shouts of joy as the day approaches.

The Prophet told Israel they were "prisoners of hope." What is a prisoner of hope, as spoken of in our Scripture text? Those who are bound in the prison house of sin are prisoners of hope. All sin blinds and destroys your reasoning power. Sin will confuse your mind. You will not see things the way you used to see them. In sin right is not right and wrong is not wrong. Sin will confuse your mind about what is right. Also, sin is blinding and it destroys your will and your desire to do right. It will wear you out.

John 8:31-34 reads: "Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, 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. They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin." Sin leaves a terrible path of destruction, just as a tornado when it goes through an area and destroys everything in its path.

### **Sin Causes Separation**

In Romans 6:12-13 the Apostle Paul wrote: "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God." Sin is the end result of lust.

Three kinds of lust are mentioned in the Bible: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the lust of the pride of life. Sin deprives

a person of good morals. It is a robber, and it destroys happy homes. Sin causes separation and heartache, and it causes financial ruin. It destroys children's lives and causes family fights. Sometimes it causes a brother and a sister to be at odds with each other.

There are no big I's or little you's in the Church of God. God's people are one body, one family, one church. Young people should not have cliques. Young person, you should love all the young people. In God's eyes you all are on the same level. Cliques are hurtful; it is hurtful when people are shut out from doing things with others. Many times this happens because sin has gotten in. Oftentimes a spirit of sin is working to separate young people. Young person, you are only young once. You should enjoy it while you are young. Do not be in a hurry to get married. You need to enjoy being a young person and enjoy being able to talk to one another.

Sin divides and separates. Every young person is important. Some may not be as popular as others, but each one is just as important to God. May God help the young people to reach out and make other young people feel wanted and needed, because they are.

Sin robs a man of moral strength to stand against that which he knows is wrong. Sin and rebellion put Samson in a prison house. He was a man whom God used as an example of the great strength that He can give an individual, physical strength as well as spiritual strength. Sin deprived him of what God had for him.

### **The Blinding Power of Sin**

Judges 16:21 says, "But the Philistines took him, and put out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza, and bound him with fetters of brass; and he did grind in the prison house." What was the first thing that sin did to Samson? It destroyed his vision. The lust of the eyes got

Samson in trouble. The Philistines wanted to make sure Samson no longer could be effective against them. Child of God, the only way you can be effective in the world among sinners is to have spiritual insight, to really have a vision. If you lose that, you can no longer be effective.

When you are living in sin, you cannot see the direction of God as you ought. Some people who are making moves have been blinded by sin. In sin you cannot understand the things of God as you ought. Just as the Philistines put out Samson's eyes and led him around, sin will lead you from one sin to another. Sin will make a mockery of you and embarrass you.

The Philistines led Samson to Gaza where he had shown his great strength. That was the place where he met the harlot Delilah and embarrassed the Philistines by mocking them and pretending that if they would do this or that, he would become as another man. He fooled with them and made it a game.

Samson was brought into humiliation by the enemy and bound with fetters of brass. What are fetters of brass? Well, if you saw fetters of brass today, you would call them handcuffs. The Philistines wanted to make sure that Samson's hands were not free. What else did Samson's sin do to him? It caused him to grind in the prison house. If you study that, you will find that grinding in the prison house was the lowest form of labor known in that day, and it was used for slaves or captives.

Samson went from being a judge to being a slave, all because of sin. That is a perfect picture of some of the lowest, vilest depths of sin that a man or a woman can be involved in when they disobey God. You may say, "If I were to get away from God, I would never do certain things." You do not know what you might do. If you are a sinner, one thing you will do: you will do whatever Satan says. You are either obeying God or obeying Satan. There is no gray area

concerning this.

Unless a person truly repents of sin, do not think that he can stop sinning. Satan will dare you to try that which you know is wrong and then blind you when you do it. Sin will tempt you to take part in that which leads to sin and then condemn you when you do. Satan will try to convince you that it really does not matter if you give in to temptation, because everybody is doing it. No, everyone is not doing it. Sin will also try to convince you that you cannot help yourself. Maybe you cannot, but God can help you.

### **The Deceivableness of Unrighteousness**

There are many prisoners of hope today. Saints, we were once prisoners of hope. That is what the Bible says. Before we heard the Gospel, we were prisoners of sin. We were Gentiles in the flesh. Paul said in Ephesians 2:11-13: "Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made without hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world [that is a terrible place to be—without God in the world]: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ." Thanks be to God! We were far off without hope, strangers to the covenants of promise, with nothing to look forward to in the future and not knowing our end. Now in Christ Jesus we are brought nigh to God.

Second Thessalonians 2:7-12 reads: "For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with

the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

This is a very strong and fearful passage of Scripture. What was the condition of the people? Satan had deceived them, but they did not perish because of the deception. No, they were deceived because they loved not the Truth. Deception will not overtake you as long as you love the Truth.

Again, verse 10 reads: "And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved." You can be saved from all deception, all deceivableness of Satan, as long as you love the Truth. Those people came under a strong delusion so that they would believe a lie and be damned. Now, that would be terrible to die believing a lie and then stand before Truth personified. Apostates are willful rejecters of Jesus Christ and His Holy Spirit.

### **Turn to the Stronghold**

Our Scripture text does not talk about prisoners who had no hope; it speaks of "prisoners of hope." The Prophet Zechariah was talking about Israel of old. Those prisoners of hope were told to turn to the stronghold. The minor Prophet Nahum 1:7-8 wrote: "The LORD is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him. But with an overrunning flood he will make an utter end of the place thereof, and darkness shall pursue his enemies." The stronghold is where God's people take refuge.

The Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 10:13, "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able." God will not take you beyond what you can bear. When you are hemmed in on every side, Jesus Christ becomes your way of escape; He is your stronghold. He is the hope of all nations. Zechariah 9:9-10 states: "Behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly . . . and he shall speak peace unto the heathen. . . ." Christ has given hope to all people. All sinners have hope.

Ephesians 2:14-16 says: "For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby."

Revelation 5:9-10 states: "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth."

Joel 3:16, "The LORD also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the LORD will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel." We all were prisoners of hope at one time. Some people were living in deeper sin than others. Some were in vile sin, and others were raised with good morals. Some were bound with evil spirits, and others were bound with lust.

### **Who Are the Prisoners of Hope?**

Isaiah 61:1 reads, "The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to

preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound."

In Isaiah 42:5-8 we read: "Thus saith God the LORD, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein: I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house. I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images."

The Apostle Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 2:24-26: "And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will." God uses men of God to preach the Gospel to bring good news, to open the prison house of sin.

In our Scripture text the Prophet Zechariah told the prisoners of hope to turn to the stronghold. Who are the prisoners of hope? They include backsliders, careless unbelievers of the Gospel, the unrepentant, and vile sinners. Why is there hope? Why are they called "prisoners of hope"? We have a great Savior, Jesus Christ, and He is still the mediator between God and man; in other words, He is still the "go-between." There is hope because Jesus Christ still tarries. He is still on His throne of mercy, and as long as He is, there is hope.

Also, there is hope because you are still alive. You should thank God that you are still alive if you are

living in sin. There is hope because God has given you an opportunity to yield to Him. There is hope because the Holy Spirit still troubles your soul, and He would not trouble you if there were no hope for you. When He troubles you, He is letting you know there is hope. There is hope because your reason and your conscience tell you there is hope. Both of them tell you, "You should do what is right and yield to God." There is hope because of the Gospel, the Good News.

### **"Turn Ye From Your Evil Ways"**

You may ask the questions: "What does God want me to do? What does God require of me?" The Bible says that He requires you to turn to the stronghold. There are some things you need to do. Second Kings 17:13 says, "Yet the LORD testified against Israel, and against Judah, by all the prophets, and by all the seers, saying, Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments and my statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets."

Zechariah 1:3-4 reads: "Therefore say thou unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Turn ye unto me, saith the LORD of hosts, and I will turn unto you, saith the LORD of hosts. Be ye not as your fathers, unto whom the former prophets have cried, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Turn ye now from your evil ways, and from your evil doings: but they did not hear, nor hearken unto me, saith the LORD." If you do not turn to the Lord, you will have no hope.

You need to remember the Lord. He has been good to you. What you tell God, you need to follow up. When God comes to your rescue and you make vows to Him, you want to make sure that you keep your word, because there will come a time when you will need Him again. It might be a hard place, a trial, or a temptation.

What was the Prophet Zechariah saying? He was saying, in so many words, "Turn to the stronghold; turn to the One who is strong enough to keep you out of sin; turn to the One who is strong enough to hold you from day to day, you prisoners of hope." I thank God there is hope. If you have a need in your soul, you need to turn to the stronghold. God will be there for you. What did He say through the prophet in the Book of Zechariah? He said that He would render double to you. In other words, He will bless you in a special way. There was a time when God was going to come to Israel of old, and He rewarded them throughout the Old Testament. Whenever they obeyed God, He was a real God to them.

How was God going to render double to them? He was going to do so through Jesus Christ. He does the same for every prisoner of hope yet today. You can have forgiveness and cleansing from sin. He is saying to you: "I will deliver you from sin, and I am going to bless you. I have broken down the middle wall of partition which was between you and the law and commandments, and I will make one new man." That was what He did when He built the Church of the Living God.

When one comes to Jesus Christ, he no longer comes as a Jew, a Gentile, a Greek, or a Scythian. No, when one comes to Jesus Christ, he comes as a sinner, and when he walks away, he walks away as one new man. God places him in the body with other new creatures in Christ Jesus.

If you have a need, then you should do as the Scripture says and turn to the stronghold. Not all of Israel accepted Jesus Christ, and terrible destruction came upon them in the literal destruction of Jerusalem. You need to turn to the stronghold today. Won't you turn to Jesus Christ while you have the opportunity?

Genesis 4:1 And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the LORD.

2 And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.

3 And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD.

4 And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering:

5 But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.

6 And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance

fallen?

7 If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.

8 And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.

9 And the LORD said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?

Genesis 6:3 And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.

5 And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every

imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

6 And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.

11 The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence.

12 And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.

13 And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth.

Genesis 6:8 But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.

# Domestic Violence



*Brother Calvin Foster*

## Having Rules of Conduct

This world is filled with violence and war. I thank God that I live in America. I would not want to live in countries where they suffer so much violence. In this message I want to focus on domestic violence. There is violence in our land on every hand. We live in a violent society. The word *violence* means "destructive action, an act or instance of violent behavior or action; showing or having a great emotional

force; a violent emotional force such as hate; abuse or unjust use of power."

First John 2:9-11 states: "He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes."

Darkness was upon Cain when he killed his brother Abel. When we love one another, we are walking in the light. A violent act of hatred is having or showing a great emotional force of hate or jealousy. This will cause one to hate another. One may even kill his brother or sister. This is happening in our world today.

I thank God for rules of conduct. When you have children and you are raising a family, an instruction book did not come with the children. The best book in the world to

instruct a parent in how to raise children is the Bible. Many of us have made mistakes and feel that we could have done better, but we did the best we could with the knowledge and the understanding that we had.

We recognize that rules and laws are very important in the violent society in which we live. There was a time when people did not lock their cars or the doors to their houses, but now we do because we are living in a violent society, and we need to be careful and watchful. Without rules and laws this world would be in chaos. I would not want to drive my car around town if there were no stop signs and traffic lights, because it would be dangerous.

In the home we need to abide by rules because we are living together as family members. You should not invade one another's space. It is not good for children and family members to go into one another's rooms and borrow their belongings without permission. You would not use someone else's toothbrush, would you?

Having rules in the workplace is also very important. Everyone must work together and do his or her job. The church also has rules. We must take care of church property and have respect for one another. In business we need rules, fairness, and honesty. Without rules and laws the world would be in a worse mess than it is now. In relationships we need to show love and respect and use good manners. Being polite is important as we deal with one another and when families get together and talk to one another.

We need to watch what we say. Should you find out that a family member is having another child, you should not say, "Do you mean to tell me that she is pregnant again?" So what if she is pregnant again? You do not have to buy the diapers or the formula. We need rules of etiquette that govern politeness as we deal with one another. Children at school must obey rules. Young person, your purpose

in going to school is to get an education.

### **Judgments of Matters Pertaining to This Life**

Hebrews 13:4 tells us that, "Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge." You should not live with someone of the opposite sex unless you are married to that person. Sleeping together when you are not married to that individual is a sin before Almighty God. Young man, if you love that young lady so much, then you ought to marry her. You need to get a license and do it respectfully. As Christians, we are to be examples to the children and the families around us. Moreover, we are going to be judged by God one day.

In 1 Corinthians 6:1-7 the Apostle Paul wrote to the church at Corinth: "Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints? Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?"

"If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church. I speak to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you? no, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren? But brother goeth to law with brother, and that before unbelievers. Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? Why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?"

Going to law with one another is the spirit of hatred. Should a brother cross another brother or should they have a misunderstanding, then the spirit of hatred will rise up and say, "I'm going to sue you! I'm going to

get you for what you did to me!" Paul said to let the least in the church settle the matter. Why would you go to the law when you are brothers in Christ? You need to settle the matter and work out the problem.

We are living in such a hostile world that people are suing others at the drop of a hat, so to speak. Some people who claim to be Christians are suing one another. We read in Proverbs 15:3, "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good." God sees you at home, at work, at school, and at church. He sees all the secret things that you do. You cannot hide anything from God. He sees how you live. You cannot play church and get by with God. You may fool people, but you cannot fool Him.

### **The Influence of the Home**

God is concerned about the family today in this modern society and in a world so filled with violence. Malachi 4:5-6 reads: "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse."

The reference in some Bibles lists Matthew 11:4 and Matthew 17:11-13, showing you that this Elijah who was to come was none other than John the Baptist. He was to come in the spirit and in the power of Elijah. What would he do as he preached the Gospel? He was to help get families straightened out and turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the hearts of the children to the fathers. Why do families need to get straightened out? Because so many families have strayed from God.

Men are leaving their children. There is one way you can tell that a man has been truly born again. He might have children scattered here, there, and everywhere; however, one thing that will come to his mind

when he gets born again is that he has to own up to it and find out about the welfare of his children. Some men want to hide or run. They do not want to get a job and pay child support. They want to get paid undercover so the authorities will not find out about it. I am thankful to God today that the law is on their trail. They may run from state to state, but they cannot hide. Too many men are running off and leaving their families, but when a man gets saved, he wants to be with his family.

Psalm 128:1-6 reads: "Blessed is every one that feareth the LORD; that walketh in his ways. For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands: happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee. Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house: thy children like olive plants round about thy table. Behold, that thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the LORD. The LORD shall bless thee out of Zion: and thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem all the days of thy life. Yea, thou shalt see thy children's children, and peace upon Israel."

This Scripture brings to mind how God has blessed me with a faithful wife, and He has let me live to see two of my children get saved. Now that I am a grandfather, I have to start looking out for my grandchildren. Those little children are as olive plants. They are going to grow up to be big like olive trees. They are looking to us and learning from us. As a parent, God is holding you responsible for what you do in your home and for what you allow to go on in your home. No child can escape the influence of the home.

Again, Psalm 128:5-6 reads: "The LORD shall bless thee out of Zion: and. . . thou shalt see thy children's children, and peace upon Israel." It is blessed for the saints to see their children saved and to see their grandchildren get saved. Then the family training starts all over for you as the grandparent in many ways.

## Understanding Adolescents

Parent, you need to understand your teenage boys and girls. In the medical dictionary a teenage boy is called an adolescent boy. In boys puberty commonly occurs between thirteen and sixteen years of age. At that time a boy's voice changes and assumes a deeper tone. His body grows rapidly, and his shoulders develop. Sometimes he grows several inches in stature in a short time. He is also likely to exhibit a bigger appetite than his father's.

Natural changes in the body occur in adolescence, and telling youngsters about these changes is advisable before they occur. The adolescent boy begins to notice girls. Parent, you need to talk to your children and educate them so they can understand the natural changes happening inside the body and deal with it.

As a rule, the adolescent girl enters puberty between eleven and thirteen years of age. Adolescence is usually accompanied by a variety of emotional problems. The child has grown to physical adulthood and wants to be treated as an adult. He wants to make his own decisions.

Realizing that adolescence has always been a rebellious stage of life is helpful. The young man looks grown, but he is not. Parent, you are not his friend; you are his parent. He is still a boy, and your daughter is still a girl. You may tell them to sit down and obey you, and they may sit down, but they still may be standing on the inside. You should not be ignorant and ignore these things. As a parent, you need to watch your children and be careful with them. Sometimes you need to search their room, because they tend to get into trouble. You need to get involved with their lives.

## Family Violence

Family violence is rampant in our society: physical abuse, slapping, hitting, burning, rape or incest, emotional abuse, threatening,

insults, and harassment. Family violence is a widespread crime in our society. People appear to be happy on the outside, but behind closed doors, many homes are filled with misery and woe.

Family violence often goes unreported. Many people witness family violence and fail to report it, thinking it is none of their business, but it is, because we pay to keep these people in jail. Many children who suffer or witness family violence abuse their brothers and sisters as they grow up.

Later, they abuse their own families. That is one thing that God made me aware of early in the rearing of my children. If I saw a fight break out between them, I was right there, because I was determined that no fighting was going to take place in our home. An abusive person may experience legal problems, jail fines, work problems, and loss of jobs.

Today there is widespread incest. Incest is fornication between parent and child, uncle and niece, aunt and nephew, and brother and sister who have at least one parent in common. I know of a man who had to have his own father put in jail for abusing his grandchild. This is happening today, and we should not close our eyes to it. God wants us to be aware of these things. Many children are being abused and hurt. Parent, you need to be careful of your children going to or having sleepovers.

Violence is a learned behavior. Those who are violent have witnessed and suffered it as children. Often the abuser craves power. He wants to gain control over the family, be the boss, or feel important. Others who are violent use alcohol or drugs. Proverbs 20:1 says, "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise." Many people have been deceived by taking drugs and drinking alcohol; then they take out their frustrations on their families.

Many abusers have mental problems that have not been

addressed. This happens everywhere, and it crosses all economical boundaries and social classes of people. Domestic violence occurs in many families through child abuse, mistreatment, and neglect. Some family members blame children for their money problems and take out their frustrations on them.

Young person, if you are growing up in a godly home where you have a mother and a father present, you are so blessed. Child abuse is especially tragic because children trust adults to keep them safe. Many fathers come home and whip, abuse, and put scars on their children. Domestic violence is often repeated. Though the abuser may promise not to do it again, in many cases that person does not stop, and the problem gets worse.

Women are abused more than men. Many people abuse the elderly. They mistreat their own parents, a grandparent, or another family member by physical abuse, by neglect, by isolation, by verbal abuse, and by over medicating them. Sometimes they fail to provide medication and take the elderly person's money. They are going to reap what they sow.

Many elderly people do not want to report the abuse because they are dependent on the abuser. If they are at home, they do not want to go to a nursing home, so they put up with it. Friend, there will be a day of reckoning for you if you are guilty of abuse.

Proverbs 20:29 says, "The glory of young men is their strength: and the beauty of old men is the grey head." A grey head is beautiful because it shows that a father went through some things and did some things right in life.

Does your husband or your boyfriend constantly ignore your feelings? Does he ridicule women? Some men have a bad attitude toward women, and some men hate women and call them bad names. Young lady, does your husband or your boyfriend ridicule or insult you for most of your beliefs? Does he

imply that you are stupid? If so, you need to be careful. An old adage says, "The way a boy treats his mother is how he will treat his wife." A boy who loves his mother treats his mother with respect.

No matter how you allow your affections to go out for someone, love should not hurt. I have been married for more than thirty years, and I have never hit or punched my wife. I grew up in a broken home, and I witnessed violence. I saw how my father treated my mother, and as I grew older and went out on the streets, I began to abuse my girlfriends. Then one day God gave me a new heart when He saved my soul.

Some people think that women like to be pushed and beat around, but women do not like that. Most women who put up with abuse have been involved with alcohol and drugs. A person can look in the front section of a phone directory or in the yellow pages under children's social service organizations or crises intervention centers to seek help. Also, there is a Domestic Violence Hotline where you can get help for children. We are living in a violent time.

### **How Is Your Family Life?**

Father, Mother, you need to ask yourself these questions: How much time do I spend with my family? Do I find myself trying to be something for everyone else? If you are a mother, you need to learn that when your son gets married, he may not be able to take you shopping as much as he used to because he will have a wife. The Bible lets you know that the relationship between a husband and a wife is the closest of all human relationships. The Bible tells us that the husband and the wife become one flesh. Husband, are you too tired in the evenings to enjoy spending time with your family? At home, do you find yourself unable to stop thinking about work? One thing I have always enjoyed about my job is that when I clock out, I do not worry about that place until the next day

when I clock in.

You need to think about your family. Working on projects and hobbies with your children is good. You should volunteer to help them with their activities, to eat dinner together, to pray together, and to get involved with their schooling. I found that when I got involved with my daughter's school, her grades began to get better. If a teacher had a problem or wanted anything, I was right there.

First Peter 3:7 tells us that a husband ought to honor and respect his wife as the weaker vessel. Ephesians 5:25 tells us that a husband ought to love his wife as Christ loved the church. Ephesians 5:28 lets you know that the husband ought to regard his wife as himself. A husband is supposed to nourish and cherish his wife.

I am concerned about the violent time in which we are living. Second Timothy 3:1-5 states: "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous [people who are covetous have violent spirits, and it is a selfish spirit], boasters, proud, blasphemers [they do not care anything about the church, and they will break in and steal things], disobedient to parents, [Many adolescents do not care what their parents think or say. You will get yourself in trouble with God, young person, if you disobey your parents. According to the Bible, you are going to cut your days short.] unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away."

How many times in this world do men smile in your face as if they were your friends and then speak against you and go behind your back and work against you? They are traitors. We ought to pray for one another, church.

Ecclesiastes 11:9 reads, "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment."

Ecclesiastes 12:13-14: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."

God will bring everything we do into judgment. No one can do wrong and get by. Perhaps you have done wrong and have gotten by for many years, and it may look as though God is not paying attention, but sooner or later, God's judgment will fall on you. He will bring every work into judgment. The way of transgressors is hard.

### **Sin Is a Destroyer**

I can remember my mother reading Ephesians 6:1 to me many times, even when I was in the world and acting mean and being hard-headed. She often read this Scripture to me even though I kept running off and was disobedient. Saint, you should not stop reading the Bible to your children, and you should read it to them often. Do not try to use psychology on them. You need to read the Bible to them; keep the Scriptures before them. You should quote the Bible to your children and tell them what God said will happen. They may act as if they do not want to hear it, but they will never get away from it. God will bring it back to them.

Ephesians 6:1-3: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth." Young person, you should give your heart to the Lord and stay with Him

throughout your life. He will open doors for you, He will bless you, and goodness and mercy will follow you all the days of your life.

I want you to read some facts about domestic violence. A former United States General, C. Everett Koop, found battering to be the single largest cause of injury to women in the United States between the ages of fifteen and forty-four. One out of every four women has been beaten by her partner. In America every seventeen seconds a woman is beaten by an intimate partner. It is common for abuse to start when a woman becomes pregnant, a time when she is most vulnerable. Every five years domestic violence kills as many women as the total number of Americans who died in the Vietnam War. Those so-called men are beating and hitting women.

Love should not hurt! I want to encourage pastors to be careful not to take sides when they deal with such situations. Sometimes those fellows have Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde personalities, and they can fool you.

Friend, you do not have to let sin destroy you. Jesus Christ died for your sins. What can you do to be saved? What can you do to be delivered from the power of sin? Sin will take you further than you want to go, it will cost you more than you want to pay, and it will keep you longer than you want to stay. Men of God, let us arise and show the world what it is to be a real man, to love the wife, and to be faithful to her. The sign of a great lover is that he can stay faithful to one woman for thirty, forty, or fifty years.

Friend, God is concerned about you and your family. If you have been having problems along this line, won't you seek the Lord wholeheartedly?

[Guest Editorial—continued from page 2]

There are many ways to give and serve our fellowman. The greatest way to serve and give is to live the Gospel every day everywhere consistently. You can speak words of admonition to the lost and unruly as the Lord directs. You should share God's love and mercy with everyone possible. Serving is using the gifts and the talents that God has given into your trust. Repairing a brother's or sister's automobile can preach the Gospel without ever saying a word. Visiting and taking food into the home of a sick person shows God's love and concern to the needy. Inspired words of comfort to a saddened heart reveals that the Lord is touched with the feelings of man's grief. There is a very great need for giving and serving. Are you doing all you can?

Serving others is serving Christ. God will judge all people according to their attitudes toward others. Someday all mankind will be gathered before the judgment bar of God. He will judge each individual according to the deeds that he or she performed in this life. God will place those who pleased Him on His right hand, and those who displeased Him will be placed on His left hand. The Lord will commend the faithful for the life of service rendered. Those on His right hand will hear Him say: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? . . . And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matthew 25:34-37, 40). Those who are on His left hand will be condemned for refusing to walk as He commanded and cast from His presence forever.

# My Personal Testimony

## My Life's Story

*Brother Chris Wakefield*

When you tell someone about a story, the best place to start is in the beginning. I was born in 1974 in Houston, Texas, and my parents were married for only a short time after I was born. My father left my mother, and it was a sad situation. He was a degenerate gambler and a drunk and not much of a man at all. He left my mother, my older sister (whom my mother had from a previous marriage), and me with very little. We moved to Arkansas for a short time to live with my grandparents while my mother tried to figure out some things. Those are my very first memories as a child.

I remember that often my mother came and talked to us, and many times my father told me that he was coming back to get the family back together. He said he wanted everything to be as it was, but each time he said he would come back, he never showed up. As a very small boy, those things caused much pain and heartache. You know, children can see what is going on around them. As parents, we ought to be very careful of our actions, our attitudes, and what we say and do, because our little children are watching.

As time went on, my mother met another man and decided to marry him. He had roots in Portland, Oregon, so we traveled to Portland. I remember getting into the moving truck and saying goodbye to my daddy. I did not know the things that he had done, and I really looked up to him. I really loved him, and I wanted to be with him so very much. As a child, you want your parents to stay together.

We arrived in Portland, Oregon, in 1979. We moved to Portland for a short time before my stepfather got a job near Canby, Oregon, at the Community College, and we found a home in Canby. I thought the worst thing in the world was to be pulled away from being close to my daddy; yet God had His hand in all of that, because of all the places where we could have settled, we ended up in Canby, Oregon, near a thriving Church of God congregation. I did not come to know the Lord until much later, and much happened in between, but that was the start of God having His hand upon my life.

After we got settled in the small community of Canby, my mother decided that it would be good to go to church. However, my stepfather was not much interested in attending any church. He thought he did not need spiritual things in his life, so he told my mother to find a place. My mother shopped around for a church, as most people do in the world. They do not know how to get saved, so they look until they find a place where they feel comfortable. She found a Methodist Church where they made everyone feel comfortable, so we began to attend there. (They want people to feel that everything is fine and that they need no changes in their lives.) I thought that if a person were to put effort into something, serving God would be good. I had no idea how to do that, but in my heart I wanted to know how to serve Him. I believe that God saw the desire of my heart.

Jeremiah 29:13 says, "And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye

shall search for me with all your heart." As a six-, seven-, or eight-year-old boy, I did not know very much about the things of God, but I wanted to be a Christian. I started to busy myself in the activities at the Methodist Church.

When I got a little older, I really started to enjoy going to church, and I got involved in the youth group at the Methodist Church, but I was not saved. No instruction whatsoever was given there about being born again. I had never even heard that one had to be born again to serve the Lord. How sad it is that hungering souls in the world do not know about salvation! The very first and foremost basic principle to be a child of God is that we must be born again.

I remember specifically when I was an eighth grader that every night as I went to bed, I said this exact same prayer: "Dear Jesus, I thank You for this day. Please forgive me for all the sins that I committed today. Help me through the night, and get me to tomorrow." I thought that no matter what, I had to sin every day, so every day I wanted to do my best and ask God for forgiveness.

Later, I became involved in a youth group from a Foursquare Church for a short time. As I look back on that now, I really thank God that He was merciful to me, because that is a false Pentecostal movement. False religion is such a dark, dreary place. If you grew up in the Church of God and have been privileged to know the Truth, you should be so thankful that the devil never had a chance to cloud your mind with false religion, because it is a scary place, my friend. It is very scary that people get so wrapped up in so much darkness.

After that Foursquare Church experience, it put a really bad taste in my mouth for religion. I tried to keep going to the Methodist Church for a while and tried to keep doing my best, but I kept thinking, "All these people are professing something, but I just don't see anything."

I started to say: "This really isn't for me. I am not as interested as I thought I was." When I started high school, I stopped going to church altogether. My mom would ask me, "Are you going to come to church with me this Sunday morning?"

I would said, "No," and I would sit at home and watch football. I no longer had an interest in attending any kind of church.

As I got older, I had many friends, but I began to make friends with the wrong crowd. The group of guys with whom I kept company was a rough crowd, but we did not drink because we all were involved in sports. The rule was that if anyone got caught drinking, he could not play sports.

During this time, things had been very rough at home. My stepfather was very rough on my mother. He was an alcoholic, but my mother did not know that before she married him. He started to drink when we got to Oregon, and it was an ugly situation in the home. I remember one night specifically when my stepfather and I came home from a Little League game. My mother had attended a meeting with some friends from church, and they decided to get something to eat afterwards. I do not think my mother had done anything wrong, but I could tell that he was very agitated. I went downstairs in our house, because I knew to stay away from him when he got angry.

When I heard my mother come home, I was fearful because I had seen him get really rough with her. I went back upstairs, thinking that if I was in the way a little, nothing would happen to her. My mother was a little lady at the time, and my stepfather was a big, strong guy. When she walked into the room, he battered her that night. I tried to get in the way to say, "Stop!" but he pushed me aside, and he literally picked up my mother and threw her across the room against the wall. She landed in a little heap. I walked over to her and tried to hold her in my arms (I was about twelve years

of age then).

Sin is such an ugly thing; so many ugly things happen when people live in sin. My mother was a good lady, but she was never born again; so she was involved in situations such as this. I remember that a real hatred welled up within me toward that man. I lay in bed at night and tried to think of ways that we could get away, and I even tried to think of ways that I could kill him. It was awful, but I did not know anything different. I have some good memories of childhood, but most of my memories are of sad situations such as that.

Every summer my mother sent me to Texas to visit my father, from seven years of age on up. At the end of every summer, I flew back to Portland. As a young boy, those last two or three weeks that I spent in Texas each summer were so sad for me that I would cry myself to sleep every night because I did not want to leave my daddy. I did not know any of the things he had done to my mother, and my mother never told me. She did not want me to have any kind of hard feelings toward him.

I remember holding my daddy's hand and walking through the airport terminal to the plane, and then I watched him turn around and walk away as I sat on the plane. I would cry and cry and cry. Many times an older person would put an arm around me and say, "It's okay, it's okay, little boy, just let it out." I would cry for weeks after I got back to Oregon.

You see, a little boy needs a father. Being a man of God is so important for every father, because as fathers raise their children, they have a great responsibility. Each little soul looks up to his and her parents. I looked up to my father. I remember telling God, "If I am anything in life, please let me be a good daddy someday." I knew how horrible it was to be in a bad situation as a child.

When I was a freshman in high school, I was scraggly looking, and I

was a rough kid. I used to wear my hair long, I had an earring, and I always wore shorts. When I walked into a choir class, Brother David Stegmeier saw me in that class, and I could tell from the very first time he ever said anything to me that something was different about this man. Also, I could tell by the way he looked at me that he really loved me. So I would always try to find out where he was. I had much admiration for him. I did not know that he was a preacher at the time. I had no idea that he was a pastor in the great Church of God.

As I went through high school, I did start to drink a little alcohol, but one thing a group of us said we would never do was use drugs. I was determined in my mind that I would never use drugs. I saw the people who did and thought they were all the biggest losers in the world. We thought drinking alcohol and chewing tobacco might be okay, so we did those things.

Throughout high school I was really a smart aleck. I did not study much, and I thought I did not need to study. I always received passing test scores, so I settled for average grades. I just went through the motions.

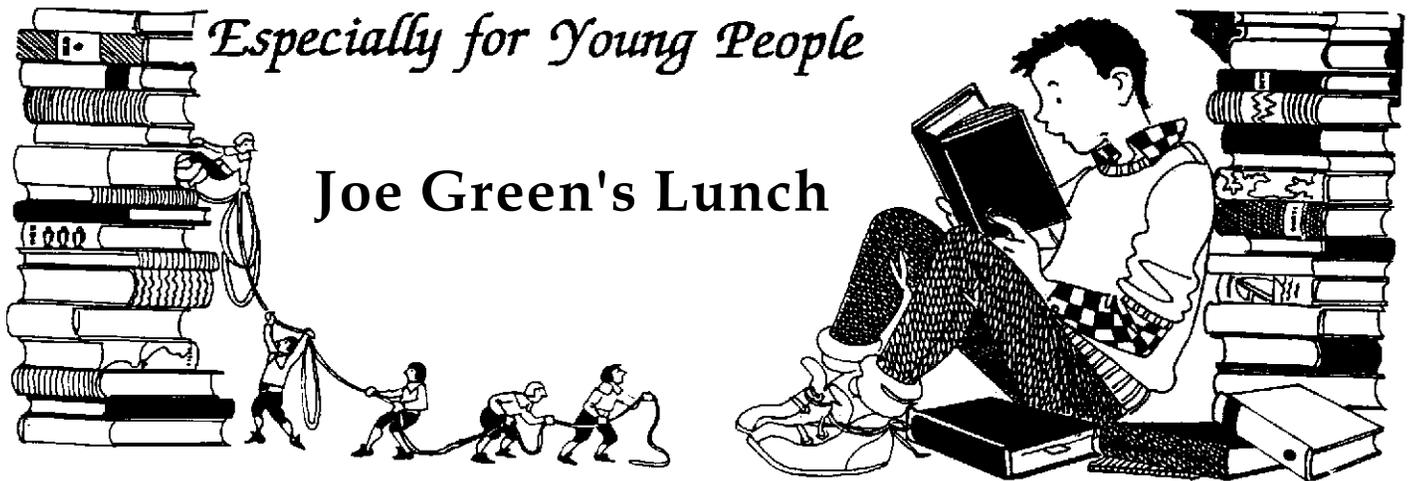
During my junior year in high school, a young man who did not even attend the Church of God congregation invited me to the services. His father was the minister of another church in Canby. He told me, "You ought to go to Mr. Stegmeier's church."

I said: "I have no interest. I don't want to go to church. I don't care." He knew I liked Mr. Stegmeier and that I was a good friend of Mr. Stegmeier's daughter Korine. She was in all my choir classes. I told him, "I like Korine, and I like Mr. Stegmeier, but you can take church and do whatever you want with it." It seemed completely useless to me.

He said, "No, no, I really think you should go."

I replied, "No, I am not going to go."

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It was a little past noon, and a merry group of boys were seated on the grass under the trees that shaded the academy playgrounds. A little later they would be scattered in every direction at their play, but first they must attend to the contents of the well-filled pails and baskets of lunch.

"I should like to know," said Howard Colby, "why Joe Green never comes out here to eat his dinner with the rest of us. He always sneaks off somewhere until we get through."

"Guess he brings so many goodies he is afraid we will rob him," said another.

"Pooh!" said Will Brown, throwing himself back upon the grass; "more likely he doesn't bring anything at all. I heard my father say the family is badly pinched since Mr. Green was killed. Mother said she didn't pity them, for folks had no business to be poor and proud."

"Well," said Sam Merrill, "I know that Mary Green asked my mother to let her have some sewing to do; but then, folks do that sometimes who aren't poor."

"And Joe is wearing patched pants," said Howard Colby.

"I tell you what, boys," said Will Brown, "let's watch tomorrow to see what the fellow does bring. You know he is always in his seat by the time the first bell rings, and we can get a peep into his basket before roll call."

The boys agreed to this, all but

Ned Collins, who had sat quietly eating his dinner. He had taken no part in the conversation. Now he simply remarked, as he brushed the crumbs from his lap: "I can't see what fun there will be in that, and it looks mean and sneaking to me. I'm sure it's none of your business what Joe brings for dinner or where he goes to eat it."

"You're always nicey nice, Ned Collins," said Will Brown contemptuously.

Ned could not bear to be laughed at. His eyes flashed for a minute, and then he sprang up, shouting: "Hurrah, boys, for football!" In five minutes the whole playground was in an uproar of fun and frolic.

The next morning at the first stroke of the bell a half dozen roguish faces peeped into the classroom. Sure enough there was Joe Green, busily plying his pencil over the problems of the algebra lesson. It was but the work of an instant to hurry into the cloakroom, and soon the whole group were pressing around Will Brown, as he held the mysterious basket in his hand. Among them, in spite of the remonstrance of yesterday, was Ned Collins.

"It's big enough to hold a day's rations for a regiment," said Harry Forbes, as Will pulled out a nice white napkin. Next came a whole newspaper—a large one, too; and then, in the bottom of the basket, was one cold potato. That was all.

Will held it up with a comical grimace, and the boys laughed loudly.

"See here," said Howard, "let's throw it away, and fill the basket with coal. It will be such fun to see him open it!"

The boys agreed, and the basket was soon filled, and the napkin placed carefully on the top. Before the bell rang, they were on their way to class.

Ned Collins was the last one to leave the room. No sooner did the last head disappear, than, quick as a flash, he emptied the coal into the box again, replaced the paper, and half filled the basket, large as it was, with the contents of the bright tin pail that Aunt Sally delighted to store with dainties for his dinner. Ned was in his seat almost as soon as the rest, and all through the forenoon he looked and felt as guilty as the others, as he saw the sly looks and winks they exchanged. Noon came, and there was the usual rush to the cloakroom for dinner baskets; but instead of going out to the yard, the boys lingered about the door and the hall. Straight by them marched Ned Collins, his pail under his arm.

"Hello, Ned!" said Sam Merrill. "Where are you going now?"

"Home," said Ned, laughing. "I saw Aunt Sally making some extra goodies to eat this morning, and they can't cheat me out of my share."

"Ask me to go, too," shouted Howard Colby. At that moment the

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*Deuteronomy 6:7 And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.*

# Having a Solid Christian Home



*Brother E. David Stegmeier*

## **The Need for Strong Christian Homes**

I was raised in a home where my father was not a Christian. My father had a religion, but it was a dead religion. He embraced the teachings of the Reformed Church of America, which is much like the Lutheran Church. My mother was seeking something real. When I was five years of age, we moved to the state of Montana to a very small community nestled in the Rocky Mountains. There were three churches in that area: a Roman Catholic Church, a Methodist Church, and the Church of God.

My parents always attended church every Sunday. There was no Reformed Church in town, so first

we went to the Methodist Church, and it was very dead. There were no children, and we had quite a large family. Mother asked the pastor where the children were, and he said: "Our children don't come to church in the summer because it's vacation time. We don't have anything for them, so they stay home or whatever." As we left, I remember my mother saying, "Well, we won't be back."

That evening we went to the Church of God, and it was a new and different experience. It was a very lively church, a very wonderful congregation. They were "lively stones," as Peter said. Since there was some life in their services, my mother thoroughly enjoyed the services there. We had purchased a

farm, and we went to our farm that night after church. My parents discussed the service with us.

I can remember my mother saying, "That is where I am going to worship."

My father said, "I'm not!"

For the next twenty years, our home was anything but a beautiful situation. Every Sunday morning, practically every Sunday night, and every Wednesday night, my father really worked my mother over, sometimes physically, but usually verbally. Sometimes he locked her up, and I would plead and plead with my father to let her go until he finally did. I saw some very sad things growing up because of religion, but my mother stood firmly for Truth. If you are the only one serv-

ing the Lord in your family, you need to stay right in there! God will reward your faithfulness.

I knew the Church of God had something; I was convinced. My father worked on me continuously, but I knew the Church of God had what I needed in life. I wanted that, and I went with my mother every service. There is a real need for strong, solid Christian homes.

The subject of the home is something that is very dear to me. I believe the father is the most important person in the home. Fathers have a tremendous responsibility. A father is the head of the home, and he needs to be a strong leader. Also, he needs to be very strong spiritually.

Sometimes some very sad things happen out in the world. One father about whom I read shook his little child so hard that he killed him in a fit of anger. I heard about another father who killed several of his children, threw them in a lake, and then killed his wife. Many sad things are going on in homes today.

### **Serve the Lord in Your Youth**

As I was studying, I read a story about a man by the name of Aaron Burr. Have you ever heard of him? He was once the Vice President of the United States in early American history. He became involved in some questionable things, and he challenged Alexander Hamilton to a duel. He killed Alexander Hamilton, and he got a very bad reputation.

Years earlier, when he was a young man, a revival swept through the University of Princeton in New Jersey, and Aaron Burr was a student attending that university. He decided to become a Christian, so he went to the president of the university and asked him what he thought about his becoming a Christian.

The president replied, "Burr, if I were you, I would wait until the excitement of the revival has subsided, and then I would think it over carefully."

Aaron Burr bowed his head for

a moment and then said, "I think that's what I'll do." Never again in the history of the life of Aaron Burr do we read that he ever sought Christ.

Children are very impressionable. Statistics show that most people who serve the Lord begin serving Him in their youth. I read an article, which stated: "Over the land, many young people are seeking real religion. They are actually sick and tired of dead, worthless religion. They want something real."

A young man who attended a theological seminary to be a minister came to our services, and he was just ecstatic. He said, "Wow! You preach the Gospel like I've never heard in my life. That's the way it ought to be preached!" He attended a large church, and he told the leaders in that congregation, "I went to church where the women dress modestly and the preacher speaks plainly from the Bible. That's where I'd like to go."

They said, "That's the way we used to be."

We are living in the Laodicean age, a day of lukewarmness, indifference, and complacency. You may think no one cares, but I, for one, care about the souls of the lost.

Most Christians are converted when they are young. We should invest time, money, and effort in our children's souls. I have a real problem with parents getting involved in too many secular activities outside the home. As a parent, you need to spend time with your children. When Samuel first heard the voice of God, he was young (see 1 Samuel 3:1-10). Solomon wrote in Proverbs 22:6, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it."

Proverbs 29:15 says, "The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame." Some women get really upset when they are told that a woman's first responsibility is in the home, but that is what the Bible teaches. When I was a child and came home from school, my mother

was always there. She was a busy mother, and she did not have time to run here and there. Juvenile delinquency is, in essence, parental delinquency.

### **Fear God and Teach Your Children Diligently**

Deuteronomy 6:1-2 reads: "Now these are the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments, which the LORD your God commanded to teach you, that ye might do them in the land whither ye go to possess it: That thou mightest fear the LORD thy God, [When I was a child, I was taught to have a healthy, wholesome, reverential fear of God. Along with that, I was taught to fear and respect the man of God. I never heard my mother challenge the man of God or speak disrespectfully of Him. She revered the man of God.] to keep all his statutes and his commandments, which I command thee, thou, and thy son, and thy son's son, all the days of thy life; and that thy days may be prolonged."

If you want to have a good, long, fulfilling life of enjoyment, then you must serve God. The modern expression is, "Give it all you've got." You must put everything you have into the service of God. You should not think about the things you can get by with doing. You ought to do all you can for God.

Verses 3-4 continue: "Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do it; that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily, as the LORD God of thy fathers hath promised thee, in the land that floweth with milk and honey. Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD."

Parent, if you will be excited about going to church, your children will be excited about it. If you sleep in church, your children will feel that the services are not important. Your attitude is catching. The home is the first classroom the children have.

Verses 5-7 read: "And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine

heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart. And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." As a parent, you can use little things to teach your children lessons. When God answers prayer and supplies a financial need, you ought to gather in your children and thank God. He blesses often throughout the day, if you will take time to notice and bring it to the attention of your children. We are serving the Living God.

Verses 8-9 state: "And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates."

Again, our Scripture text states, "And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." What shall you teach them? First of all, you ought to teach your children respect for God, for the man of God, for the house of God, and for the people of God. I like to see people sit up and pay attention in the church services.

Second, you should teach your children kindness and respect for one another, for their father, and for their mother. Third, you should teach them obedience to laws—the law of God and the laws of the land. There ought to be some laws and requirements in the home and in the house of worship. They ought to have a sensible, conservative, godly philosophy of life. As a parent, you should be everything you want your children to be. They will follow in your footsteps. Throughout their lives, they will remain, largely, a product of the home in which they were reared. You may change them

some, but they are going to carry some baggage that they have obtained from the home. Only with the help of God can parents change a life; it takes God. Ezekiel 16:44 says, "Behold, every one that useth proverbs shall use this proverb against thee, saying, As is the mother, so is her daughter." As parents, we each are influencing our children.

### **Secrets of Having a Happy Home**

I like to briefly touch on some secrets of having a happy home. First, love needs to permeate the home. Someone once said, "A home where Christ dwells and rules is a home where love is the law." An older man once said that if he had to do over again, he would show love toward his wife in a greater way. That is good. I had to learn some of those things. I am a full-blooded German, and when I went to college to become a teacher, I had to take psychology classes. In one class the professor said that the Germans were the least emotional, and they are very cold-hearted when it comes to demonstrating and showing love. So I had to work on that! We all have some things to work on.

Second, having forgiveness and maintaining an attitude and a spirit of forgiveness is essential. Once after I preached on the home, a man said to me: "I have never asked my wife to forgive me. I think it is demeaning to a man." That is not so. Ephesians 4:26 says, "Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath." I like to counsel young couples before they get married, and one thing I tell them is this: there will be problems, but when you have a problem, you need to take care of it right away. You should not stew about it and go to bed with it still on your chest. You need to ask forgiveness and grant forgiveness. Husband, sometimes you will have to ask your wife to forgive you.

Third, by your actions and your words as a parent, you ought to impress upon your children that

spiritual things must take precedence over literal things. You should show them by your actions, your words, and your choices that you are determined to seek spiritual things rather than literal or material things.

Jesus said in Matthew 6:33, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." We never sat down with our children and discussed whether or not we were going to church. We just did it, and our children have grown up knowing that they are to be in church every service. Even now that they are grown, if they are not there on time, we check to see why they are late. Luke 12:15 states that "a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." Literal things are not nearly as important as spiritual things.

The fourth secret to having a happy home is sharing common interests. I have a real problem with fathers going one way and mothers going another. God makes a godly woman happy being a mother, and she loves being a homemaker. Her first responsibility is to her husband, and then to her children, to take care of their needs. However, a father is primarily responsible for the direction the home is going. As I said earlier in this message, "Like mother, like daughter," I believe we say, "Like father, like son."

### **The Iniquity of Eli's House**

I want to speak briefly about three Old Testament fathers. One is Eli, and I believe that Eli was a good, godly man. I want you to think about some of his good points. Eli loved children. I do not believe he acted in any way that would have caused a child to be afraid of him, because Samuel felt free to go to Eli when God was dealing with him. Eli was humble in the sense that when God began to call Samuel, Eli did not raise up and work against Samuel. He was free from

any kind of animosity.

Although Eli had several good qualities, he had some poor qualities. First of all, he lacked discernment. He was the spiritual leader in Israel, yet when Hannah came to pray, he did not discern her need; he thought she was drunk. On the contrary, she was praying earnestly. Eli said: "How long wilt thou be drunken? Put away thy wine from thee. And Hannah answered and said, No, my lord, I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit" (1 Samuel 1:14-15). Eli did not have the discernment that he really should have had. Fathers need to have discernment, some spiritual perception.

Secondly, Eli was too passive about things he knew were wrong. First Samuel 3:13 reads, "For I have told him [God was speaking of Eli] that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth." As a father, if you know something wrong is going on, you ought to correct it. The Bible says in Ecclesiastes 8:11, "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." A child needs to be corrected early in life. You should not allow a bad habit to continue.

Sometimes I have had to call in the young people in my congregation and say, "I cannot follow you around. I'm too busy teaching, raising my family, and pastoring; however, when I hear about something, it is my responsibility to do something immediately. If you are going to work in the house of worship and labor for God, then you need to live the life of a Christian. As your pastor, if I were out in the community doing things that I ought not to be doing, should I be standing behind the sacred desk? No! I expect the same of you, because we are workers together."

I repeat, Eli was too passive, as the Lord let us know in 1 Samuel 3:13-14: "For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because

his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not. And therefore I have sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever."

I read something that I thought was very beautiful: "Be satisfied with what you have, but not with what you are." God is still working on us. I want to be a better husband, a better father, and a better pastor. I am working on these areas of my life continually. I have been pastoring for many years, but I am still working to be a better pastor. Working for God is exciting! I have no desire to retire. Living for God is wonderful! One old preacher once said, "You don't *retire*, you *refire*."

### Keep the Way of the Lord

The next father in the Bible that I want you to consider is King David. David made some mistakes, and he paid dearly for them. To me, one of the saddest Scriptures in the Bible is 2 Samuel 18:33. David requested that his men spare Absalom's life, his son who was leading an insurrection against him. When David heard that Absalom had been killed, he retired to an upper chamber and as he was going there, he said, "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

In Genesis 18:19, speaking of Abraham, God said, "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him." If you are a father, can that be said of you? Do you command your children and your household after God, to keep the way of the Lord and to do justice and judgment, that the Lord may bring upon us that which He has spoken of us?

As I was studying, I thought of a song that we often sing, which says, "As is the sowing, so is the reaping."

Nothing is more important to me in life than the souls of my children and grandchildren. I believe in the Church of God, and I do not want them to go to church anywhere else. The Church of God has the Truth; it is the pillar and ground of the Truth. I want my children and my grandchildren to be raised in the Church of God the same way I was raised. It is a wonderful heritage! How is your home? We all have room for improvement. We need to pray and support one another. May God bless you! If you have a need, won't you allow the Lord to meet that need?

(Cassette C-5368E)



*Walk a little plainer, Daddy  
Said a little child, so frail.  
I'm following in your footsteps  
And don't want to fail.*

*Sometimes your steps are very plain,  
Sometimes hard to see.  
So walk a little plainer, Daddy,  
For you are leading me.*

*I know that once you walked  
This way, many years ago,  
And what you did along the way  
I'd really like to know.*

*For sometimes I am tempted  
And don't know what to do;  
So walk a little plainer, Daddy,  
For I must follow you.*

*Someday when I've grown up,  
You are like I want to be;  
Then I will know a little child  
Who will want to follow me.*

*So walk a little plainer, Daddy,  
For I am following you.*

Mark 8:1 In those days the multitude being very great, and having nothing to eat, Jesus called his disciples unto him, and saith unto them,

2 I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat:

3 And if I send them away fasting to their own houses, they will faint by the way: for divers of them came from far.

4 And his disciples answered him, From whence can a man satisfy these men with bread here in the wilderness?

5 And he asked them, How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven.

6 And he commanded the people to sit down on the ground: and he took the seven loaves, and gave thanks, and brake, and gave to his disciples to set before them; and they did set them before the people.

7 And they had a few small fishes: and he blessed, and commanded to set

them also before them.

8 So they did eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken meat that was left seven baskets.

9 And they that had eaten were about four thousand: and he sent them away.

10 And straightway he entered into a ship with his disciples, and came into the parts of Dalmanutha.

11 And the Pharisees came forth, and began to question with him, seeking of him a sign from heaven, tempting him.

12 And he sighed deeply in his spirit, and saith, Why doth this generation seek after a sign? verily I say unto you, There shall no sign be given unto this generation.

13 And he left them, and entering into the ship again departed to the other side.

14 Now the disciples had forgotten to take bread, neither had they in the ship with them more than one loaf.

15 And he charged them, saying, Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod.

16 And they reasoned among themselves, saying, It is because we have no bread.

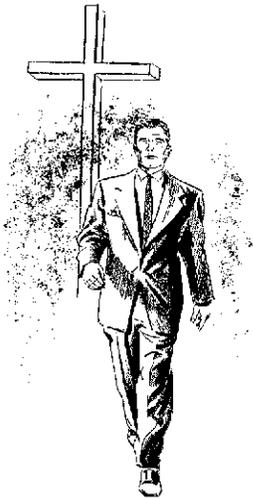
17 And when Jesus knew it, he saith unto them, Why reason ye, because ye have no bread? perceive ye not yet, neither understand? have ye your heart yet hardened?

18 Having eyes, see ye not? and having ears, hear ye not? and do ye not remember?

19 When I brake the five loaves among five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? They say unto him, Twelve.

20 And when the seven among four thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? And they said, Seven.

21 And he said unto them, How is it that ye do not understand?



# Lest We Forget What the Lord Hath Done

Brother Irwin Seshier

## Do You Have a New Heart?

The day in which we are living has become an ungrateful, unholy, and unthankful age. I am thankful that the Lord has blessed His people down through the ages, although many people still murmur and complain. The saints of God do not want to be in that number of murmurers

and complainers. There will always be people who murmur and complain, but that should not hinder the Church of God. If you are standing for the Truth and walking in the light of God's Word, you will move forward with God.

I am so thankful that one day God picked me up from the life of sin. He picked me up out of a

horrible pit. I thank God that I do not have to walk that way any longer. God has given me a new heart. Only the Lord knows where I would be now had I not turned my life over to Him. Child of God, you do not know where you would be either had you not turned your life over to Jesus Christ. He reached down in mercy and in love and brought you

out of the horrible pit of sin. God knew when He spoke to my heart that if I did not heed the warning, I might have been cast aside and might never have heard Him speak to me again. Friend, if the Lord speaks to your heart, you need to hearken to His call. You never know when His Spirit might cease to strive with you.

Child of God, do not forget the goodness of God. You need to remember that pit from which He plucked you. I am concerned that people are not thankful enough. You may say you are thankful, but does your life show that you are truly thankful for what God has done? Are you thankful for how He keeps you, directs you, and shows you what you need to do? Jesus Christ had compassion for your never-dying soul. You have a soul that will never die. Your body will go back to the dust of the ground one of these days, but you have a soul that will live eternally. What you do in this life determines where you spend eternity. It is not so important how many things you have accomplished in this life, how many college degrees you have, or how many institutions of higher learning you have attended. The important question is, Is your heart right with God?

We should always be made aware that we are nothing without God. Do not think that you are something. When a person gets puffed up with a proud spirit, he or she is ready for a fall. Man cannot live a holy life by himself; that is not God's plan. We all need God. It takes the Holy Spirit to lead and direct the worship services. I like it that way. You will not see any programs being handed out in the true Church of God. The Holy Spirit does not need to be directed; He should be in control.

The problem in some places that call themselves the church is that they have gotten away from letting the Holy Spirit lead and rule. You are not immune to that. It could happen to anyone. The Holy Spirit should be in control. We need to

allow the Holy Spirit to direct the congregation and the pastor. We need to keep our hands off.

The Lord has a work for each of us to do. We should not forget this. When Jesus so miraculously saved us, He did not want us to sit by the highway of life and try to coast into Heaven. Matthew 9:37-38 reads: "Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few: Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest."

Those verses of Scripture let us know that we must do something. The people out in the world are lost and dying, and they are heading toward hell. What are you going to do, child of God? Are you going to let them know there is something better in life? There is a better way to live. If you are truly a child of God and people are around you very long, they will know that something is different about you.

I read a quote once that stated, "God's ultimate goal for your life here on this earth is not comfort but character development." God wants you to grow spiritually and become more Christlike. If you are a part of the Kingdom of God, you are a part of the family of God. Jesus Christ did what He needed to do to get people to Him, and we must do the very same thing He did. We must have a Christlike spirit and not do things without the leading of Jesus Christ in our lives.

One reason that many people are so weak spiritually is that they have not grown up spiritually. It is time to grow up. Too many people wear their feelings on their sleeves, so to speak, and they whine about this and that. Friend, you are not going to make Heaven your home if you whine constantly.

### **Becoming Critical of Others**

Some people complain that the song service is too long, that the same songs are being sung repeatedly, that the same minister is

speaking, or that the same ones are praying and testifying. Well, why do they not get involved? Then it would not be the same people all the time. Some people sit on the sidelines and find fault and tear others apart. Friend, the enemy of your soul wants to cause you to become critical of others. We live in a time when people are so critical.

Child of God, do not forget that you, too, can become critical if you fall short of the grace of God. If you allow the Spirit of God to leave your life, you will start picking at the faults of others. The enemy of your soul will cause you to find fault with others to get your eyes off your own condition. You will focus on those whom the enemy wants you to.

Jesus had to put up with much criticism in His day. He did not escape it. Matthew 12:1-8 reads: "At that time Jesus went on the sabbath day through the corn; and his disciples were an hungered, and began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat. But when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto him, Behold, thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the sabbath day.

"But he said unto them, Have ye not read what David did, when he was an hungered, and they that were with him; How he entered into the house of God, and did eat the showbread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests? Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are blameless?

"But I say unto you, That in this place is one greater than the temple. But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless. For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day."

When you claim to be a child of God, people are going to become stirred against you. You should not think, "I'll keep to myself; I won't let anyone know that I'm a child of

God." Friend, if you truly get saved, you will want to tell everyone. When I got saved, the Lord changed me completely. I did not want to keep it to myself. I wanted people to know what had happened to me. You should want to do the same.

Do you remember how you felt when you first got saved? You could not keep quiet about what the Lord did for you. Some people want new converts to settle down and keep quiet. This is the quietest world in which you are ever going to live. It is time to get excited about what you have down in your heart. You cannot get excited if the Spirit of God is not down in your heart. When you become a child of God, others can tell the difference.

This great salvation is something that cannot be concealed. When you got saved, no doubt, you thought everyone would want what you had, and you could not wait to tell others when you went to work the next day. However, they just wanted to carry on with whatever they were doing. Still, that did not deter you from living a life free from sin, though the enemy came around and said: "Look, they don't want to hear about it. They don't care about what you have." Even so, you continued to live right, because you thought about where the Lord brought you from and how He so graciously and miraculously saved your never-dying soul. How can you give up on God when He has done so much for you? You should not want to keep it quiet.

### **The Best Life to Live**

After you are saved, your walk is different. Your feet no longer take you down to the bar as before. You no longer keep company with your old friends, because you have new friends. God gives you a new family, the family of God. Also, your talk is different. God cleaned up your tongue. He gave you a new heart, a new tongue, a new mind, new feet, and new legs. Everything became new, because you are a new

creature! Your whole outlook on life is new. One day you were a sinner, but when you pillowed your head that night, you were a saint of God. You changed kingdoms quickly. That change came from God. Man cannot do that for you, but Jesus Christ can.

The Pharisees followed Jesus into the synagogue. We read in Matthew 12:9-13: "And when he was departed thence, he went into their synagogue: And, behold, there was a man which had his hand withered. And they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath days? that they might accuse him. And he said unto them, What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days. Then saith he to the man, Stretch forth thine hand. [Jesus did not allow the Pharisees to make Him back away. He did not care what they had to say; He was there for only one reason.] And he stretched it forth; and it was restored whole, like as the other."

Saint, the day you got saved, you did not care who was around you. You acknowledged your need. In order for you to get help in your soul, you must get your eyes off people. If you have a need, that is between you and God. On the Day of Judgment you will not answer to people. You will stand before God and answer to Him. That is where you receive help, not from the people who are sitting around you. It is one-on-one with God. Friend, if you claim to be a child of God and claim to live a life free from sin, some people will challenge your walk with God and try to pick you apart. Nevertheless, you ought to live pleasing to God.

I remember an example that Brother Roger Decker said happened after he got saved. At the time, he worked in a factory with people who knew what type of individual he was before he was con-

verted. The enemy said, "What if someone asks you about a Bible doctrine?" That is how the enemy works. Brother Emerson Wilson told him, "Just live the life before them." That still works today. People will soon realize that you are a new creature, because you do not do the things you once did. The things you once did, you hate, and now you pray and live a life pleasing to God. Living this Christian way is the best life. If there were no Heaven to gain, it would still be the best life to live. You can live a life free from sin and go to Heaven when your earthly life comes to an end.

### **How to Build a Successful Life**

Many people's lives are so messed up today. They are confused and living for themselves. People are living so far below their potential. God did not create them to live that way, but they are going against the mercies of God and living the way they want to live. The enemy has them so bound by sin. Many people have become involved in vile sins. Friend, if the enemy has you wrapped up in sin, he will soon cause you to become involved in more and more sin. He will not be satisfied until he has destroyed your life.

A child of God should be able to use the Word of God to show others the reason we live as we do. Many churches teach false doctrines, so it makes a difference when you use the Word of God to back up your answer. People have more respect for someone who takes them to the Scriptures in the Word of God.

Friend, you should not be afraid of the Bible. It is the Word of God. Remember, it was the Word of God that you heard to get saved. Bringing the Bible to the house of God seems to be difficult for some people. Of all the places where people should bring the Bible, it should be the house of God. If a student were to fail to take his textbooks to school, no doubt, he would have a very upset teacher. Just as a student

needs his textbook in class, a child of God needs his Bible in church.

Friend, you should not take the message the man of God is preaching for granted. When he is preaching, you need to follow along in the Word of God. People in many places think, "Well, I know that my pastor is telling me the truth." If that were true in every case, why are there so many different denominations and cults? You need to pray and follow along in the Word of God as a message is preached. Do not take a man's word for it.

Too many people are trusting in what men are telling them. On the Day of Judgment you will not be held accountable for what man has told you. You will be accountable for what God has told you through His Word.

When you purchase something that needs assembled, it comes with a manual. You need instructions. You may not want to assemble it merely by looking at a picture on the box. A manual tells exactly where each bolt and nut should go. When you follow the instructions in the owner's manual, you can properly assemble the item.

Child of God, the Bible is our manual of life, and by following His commands, you will know exactly how to build a successful life. You should not go on what others tell you. You should study and search the Word of God. Life is short, and eternity will be forever. No one will get a second chance; therefore, you need to get it right the first time. Hebrews 9:27 says, "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." You cannot read anything in the Bible about having a second chance. You have only one chance to live this life.

### **Seek the Lord First**

Friend, you should not allow the enemy to convince you that living for God is hard to do. He will say you cannot do this and that or you cannot go here and there. You need to realize that those "cannots" are

good for you. Those "cannots" will be turned into, "I do not want to do this or that." Often people do not understand that. All they can see are the things that a child of God cannot do. They do not realize that when a person gets saved, he does not want to do those things. His spirit has been changed, and he has a different outlook.

When you get saved, you change kingdoms. The enemy knows that, and he is going to work on you, but God will be there for you. Why? He cares for you. Child of God, you may think that you are the only one facing adversity, but that is not so. Everyone faces adverse conditions, discouragement, trials, and disappointments; however, you have something that the world does not have: you have Jesus Christ. You may groan a little and you might have to pray more fervently, but that comes with being a successful child of God.

Once I read a story about a kindergarten teacher who helped one of her students put on his boots. The student asked for help, and soon she could understand why. With her pulling and his pushing, the boots were still hard to put on. When the second boot was on, she almost cried when the little boy said, "Teacher, the boots are on the wrong feet." She looked, and surely they were. It was not any easier pulling off the boots than it was putting them on, yet she managed to remain calm as they worked together to remove the boots and put them on the right feet.

The student then announced, "These aren't my boots." Well, she bit her tongue rather than scream, "Why didn't you say so?" as she wanted to. Once again, she struggled to remove the ill-fitting boots.

He then said, "These are my brother's boots, but my mom made me wear them."

The teacher did not know whether to laugh or cry, so she mustered the grace to wrestle the boots on his feet again. She then said, "Now, where are your mit-

tens?"

He said, "I stuffed them in the toes of my boots." Now, you may laugh at that story, but people could avoid many problems if they would let the Lord direct them. They could save themselves much time if they would seek God first.

Sometimes people have made moves without seeking the Lord. If someone were to say, "I have an opportunity to get a better job in another location. Should I move?" My first question to that individual would be, "Is there a true Church of God nearby where you can get your soul fed?" If that person were to say no, then I would reply, "You ought to avoid making that move."

Friend, what is more important than your soul? One day the things of this old world will burn with a fervent heat. It is time to stop making excuses to God concerning why you will not go all the way with Him. God is tired of all the excuses. You need to think about this: He did not offer any excuse to avoid going to Calvary for you and me. He took the abuse, the beatings, the slapping, and the stripes on His back. Too many people are offering God excuses concerning why they will not follow Him.

### **"He That Keepeth the Law, Happy Is He"**

Sinner friend, what is keeping you from getting saved? The enemy of your soul wants you to procrastinate, or put off, your salvation. How dangerous to put off something so great and so valuable as salvation! You would not hesitate one moment if someone were to call you on the telephone and say, "I have a million dollar check for you, and I want you to come and get it." You would be in your vehicle as fast as you could to get that check. How much more important is salvation, yet you keep putting it off. Sinner friend, the enemy would love for you not to bow at an altar of prayer where you can receive help for your never-dying soul.

Proverbs 23:23 states, "Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding." If you are saved, to keep your experience fresh, you must love the Truth deeply. God has direction for your life. The Lord knows what is best for you. The point I want to make is this: you need to keep your eyes on Jesus, no matter what others do or say. Why is it important to keep your eyes on Jesus? Proverbs 29:18 tells us, "Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he." God's people are a happy people. They are not grouchy or grumpy. They do not backbite and criticize others. Friend, the enemy is working to take away your vision of Christ. Do not give in to the enemy or he will take away your vision.

If there was ever a time when the people of God needed to focus

on the things of God, it is right now. It is time to become more deeply rooted in the things of God, because the enemy wants to uproot you. Sinner friend, it is past time to do something about your soul's welfare. The enemy of your soul does not want you to do anything about your soul. How sad to be so close to making Heaven your home and then be lost in the end. No doubt, many people who have attended true Church of God congregations will end up in hell when they die because they failed to honor God.

Romans 10:9 lets you know where you can receive help: "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." Friend, are you living up to your potential, spiritually speaking? Just going to the house of God is not

living up to your potential. You have to get into the work of God. For example, walking through an elaborate gourmet kitchen could not make you an expert chef, just as walking through a garage could not make you an expert mechanic. By the same token, just going to the house of God and occupying a seat cannot make you a child of God. You must be born again.

Friend, this business of serving God is more serious than many people think. You need to ask the Lord to direct your life. If you need salvation, He will save you. If you need healing for the body, He will heal you. If you will draw closer to God, He will draw close to you. He is all you need, and He will meet your every need.

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## **REVIVAL**

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Summersville, WV 26651**

**July 6-8, 2007**

***Evangelist***

***Brother Samuel Oree, Jr  
Detroit, Michigan***

**Service Times: Friday 7:00 p.m. &  
Saturday & Sunday 10:30 a.m. & 6:00 p.m.**

**For further information contact:  
Pastor Earl R. Borders @ 304-872-4047**

**Visit our website at:  
[www.ChurchofGodSummersvilleWV.com](http://www.ChurchofGodSummersvilleWV.com)**

## **REVELATION SEMINAR**

**Brown Road Church of God**

**July 22-27, 2007**

**Service Times:**

**Sunday Evening at 6:00 p.m.  
& Monday-Friday at 7:00 p.m.**

***Brother Earl R. Borders will present lectures  
from the Book of Revelation each night.***

**This meeting will be held at the  
Brown Road Church of God**

**3201 Brown Road  
New Castle, Indiana 47362**

**For further information contact:  
Pastor Allen Polston @ 765-521-8284**

He urged me, "Listen, they like to sing." I was involved in music. I always had two or three choir classes a day. He said: "Just go and hear them sing. You don't have to listen to him preach or anything like that, but just go. Lots of young people attend there. You'll have a good time."

I said, "If I go one time, will you leave me alone?"

He said, "I'll leave you alone." So I went.

When we attended, it was a warm, spring evening, and I wore shorts. I had long hair, and I kept my earring in. I was not there five minutes before I felt like I was the worst person there. I looked around and could see all those godly people. I could see all those women beautifully dressed in a modest fashion, and I felt horrible! I wanted to sink down into the corner of that building and fade away to nothing, but I couldn't; I was there. Brother Stegmeier came up to me and gave me a big hug and said, "It's good to see you here!" I could tell that he really meant it. He made a dramatic difference in my life. He showed such attention to me, not because of what I looked like or because he heard me sing in the choir, but he had real concern and genuine love for my soul. Because of this, I started to seek him out even more. I went to his classroom during lunchtime. Often I went into the office the first thing in the morning and inquired, "Is Mr. Stegmeier here today?"

"Yes."

"When is his lunch period?"

"Such-and-such period."

Sometimes I showed up in his room and just sat there. Often I did not even know what to say, but I asked, "May I sit here?" I took my lunch in there. At times someone went with me. Sometimes his daughter went with me and found her dad and we just sat there. Sometimes I talked. I really loved to be around him.

I started to enjoy going to church a little at that point, because finally

I saw what I wanted to see for so long when I was a little boy: I saw people who meant business about serving God. You know, I might never become a preacher, but it may be my place to sit in the congregation as a witness. Someone might come in and all they need to see is people really meaning business about serving God, and that might speak volumes to them. It might say more than anyone could ever know.

Seeing others living the message can speak to people as much as the message does. It meant so much to me as I looked around at each one in the congregation and saw that they truly loved God. It was beautiful to me, and it was exciting. I learned that to be a Christian, one must be born again. I heard that in the first services I ever attended at the Church of God.

As I attended more services, I began to really enjoy them, so I started to attend almost every service. In the fall of my senior year, things were going great. I had many friends. I was one who wanted to associate with various groups of people, because I was involved in many extracurricular activities. I played sports, I loved to sing, and I was involved in the theatrical classes; therefore, I was a friend to the people in all those groups. I always felt bad for the students that others picked on, so I was a friend to them. I did not attach myself to only one group. Whenever the weekend came and others wanted to have a party, guess who they called?

"What are we doing this weekend? Where are we going to go? Where is the party going to be?" I would set up those things. I really enjoyed being around all my friends and going to parties and having a good time. I thought those things were the best things in the world. However, after I started going to church, I realized that all of that was not nearly as important as what I heard when I was in the church services. That fall I attended a revival meeting, and Brother Roger Decker was the evangelist, and I

really enjoyed that week.

Saturday night when he stood up to preach, I could tell from the first words that he spoke that the message was for me. It seemed as if everyone around me kind of faded, and I could see him, and he started to speak about warning lights. He said that when God speaks to you as a sinner, He will flash warning lights before you, and if you do not heed those warnings, you may get to the point where those lights just stop flashing altogether.

Brother Decker brought a beautiful message that night. I remember it so very well. As I listened to him, halfway through the message I wanted him to finish quickly so that I could go to the altar, because I knew that was the night I needed to be saved. When he stopped preaching and said amen after the prayer, the song of invitation had not even started, and I found myself at the altar. I asked Christ to be my Savior that night.

I thank God for Brother Decker. He holds a special place in my heart, because I felt that God gave him that message that night for no one else but me. That is just how the Spirit of God works. Nothing is more beautiful in life to me than when you see the Spirit of God working through God's people. I did what God wanted me to do, and I pressed forward and gave my life to Christ.

When I got up from the altar that night, everything was clearer. The grass was greener, the sky was bluer, and everything seemed as if it was going to be great. I was so excited. I started very well with the Lord. Things were wonderful! Brother Stegmeier gave me a Bible soon after that, and I really appreciated it. I read that Bible faithfully. I wanted to be the best child of God that I could be, and I wanted God to use me in whatever way He saw fit. I wanted to be a genuine Christian.

I did very well through my senior year. I told all my friends goodbye, but told them: "I am still your friend, but don't call me for parties anymore, and don't expect

me to come along with you when you go to those places. Don't expect me to do those things that you want to do or to listen to the music you want to listen to, because I am done with all of it." They knew that I meant it, because I had stopped doing all those things. It did not take time for me to stop; I stopped doing those things the night I got saved.

I want to back up a little, because this is an important part of my testimony. Before I had gotten saved, the very first time that I was ever in the Stegmeier's home, I felt love bouncing off the walls. That was one of the most attractive things I had ever seen, because I had a very difficult home life. The love that I felt from that family was one thing that really drew me into the church. I was very close to Brother Stegmeier and his family.

At the close of my senior year, all my friends went on a senior trip. I had saved my money for that trip, because we had planned it during our junior year of high school. However, I no longer wanted to do the things I used to do. So while they went on the senior trip to Mexico, where they could drink and party, I attended the Spring Camp Meeting at God's Acres for the first time, and I loved it so very much. I have such fond memories of the first camp meeting that I attended. I made some great friends, and some of them traveled to Oregon and stayed with me during the camp meetings in Oregon.

Things were going along fine until I reached a point where I started to get a little discouraged. A couple of things had happened, and I felt that I really was not progressing as a Christian. The devil likes to use discouragement more than anything else to hinder God's people. Just a little discouragement can open the door to a flood of other things. After I got discouraged in my walk with the Lord, bitterness sprang up within me; then I began to distance myself from the church, and I backslid. I began to miss a service now and then. The job where

I was working at the time had always given me Sundays off, but I told them, "If you need me to work a Sunday, I will work." I used that as an excuse. Brother Stegmeier would ask me, "Chris, where were you this morning?"

"Well, I had to work," I replied. The truth was, I did not *have* to work, but I *chose* to work. I started to distance myself further and further until staying home Sundays or skipping the Wednesday evening services was very easy for me.

After awhile, I started to run around with some of the worst people I had ever been around in my life. I began to do things that I told myself I would never do, and it was very serious. I started to use drugs. At first, I thought it was nothing serious, maybe just a little marijuana here and there. Then, suddenly, I found myself doing other things, and I felt that I was trapped.

I remember waking up many times not knowing how I had even gotten home. One night I started to drive home from being out with my friends, and I awoke behind the wheel of my car stopped on a very dangerous highway. I did not know how long I had been sitting there. I do not know if it was seconds, minutes, or longer. Someone could have come around the corner and crashed into my car, and I would have been gone. I went through many similar circumstances. I fell, and I fell hard. Possibly, you have heard the old saying, "Sin will take you further than you want to go, and it will keep you longer than you want to stay."

I did not want to do any of those things. Even as I was doing them, I remember asking myself, "Chris, what are you doing? Why are you doing all these things that you said you would never do?" You see, I had been privileged to know the Truth, and I turned my back on it. I believe God let me go, and I was in a very low place. Many guys with whom I was keeping company were selling drugs, and I did favors for them, things for which I could have gotten

thrown into jail. It was ugly; I became one of the worst people I have ever known.

All the while, I had the good things of God right there for me, and I had just walked away. I started to get very depressed. A dark cloud seemed to follow me around wherever I went. Several times things happened to me that I thought were bad luck at the time, but as I look back, I realize that those things happened because of the choices I had made. The horrible spots I had gotten myself into were because of my own doing.

As I look back now, I can see that I was trying to find something to take the place that God once held in my heart. I turned to drugs, alcohol, and anything else that I could possibly do to fill the void left when I turned my back on God. Try as I would to fill that hole, it got deeper and deeper. You can throw anything you want in to fill that empty place, but the more you try to fill it, the deeper it gets.

I tried to accumulate things that I thought would be fun. I had a job at the time where I was making very good money, and I would spend it freely. I was living by myself, and I thought I would just fill myself with fun things to do. Soon, however, I started to feel extremely low.

One night when I was riding with a friend, he wrecked right in front of some police officers. We had been drinking and something happened. I do not know what it was, but instead of taking us to jail, that police officer said: "I have a call that I have to go to. You all are very lucky." The person with whom I was riding crashed his car right around the corner from the officer's house. I had gotten slightly injured, but not seriously.

The next day, I was so very sick, and I said to myself: "This is it. I am done. I don't want any part of this anymore." However, I was not ready to get back to God. I thought, "There isn't anything worth living for anymore." I decided that it was over for me. I failed as a Christian. I felt like

a failure because I was failing in everything. My job was not going well, and it just seemed as if I was one of those losers that I looked at as a young person. Well, that is exactly what I was, because I had nothing in my life worth living for; so I decided that I was going to take my life, and I was very serious about it.

As all these things happened, I never distanced myself too far from the people of God. From time to time, I attended a service for a few minutes. Sometimes I arrived halfway through a service. Other times I drove by the home of Brother and Sister Stegmeier just to say hello. I was still friendly with many of their children.

Sometimes a saint in the congregation would place a note or a card in my mailbox or on my car. They really carried a burden for me. I learned later that the young people always requested prayer for me. They said that not a Sunday school service went by but what those young people prayed for me. I had no idea of that, but I think it was one reason that God spared my life.

I decided to take my life, but first I wanted to finish some things within myself and say a few things. So I decided that I would not do it immediately, but I was determined that my life was over. I wanted to go and speak to a boss who had been really good to me, and I wanted to go by the Stegmeier's home one last time, because I still really loved Brother Stegmeier. He was as a father in my life. He had taken me in as a young man, and he always put his arms around me when he saw that I was hurting. He was always there for me, and he treated me as one of his own sons. I really loved Sister Stegmeier too. She was always so good to me.

The time when I wanted to end my life was getting closer. I had planned how I would do it and where I wanted to do it. I stopped by the Stegmeier's home one afternoon. I went in and sat in the living room, and I started to talk to the children who were there. Whenever

I stopped by, all the children who were in the home at the time came and spoke to me. This time they all came out, and I acted as though everything was fine. I talked to them for a little while, and soon Sister Stegmeier, who was teaching a piano lesson, came walking out to speak to me. As she was walking toward me, I could see tears streaming down her face. I thought, "Oh, I hope she doesn't come and talk to me."

Sure enough, she came right to me and grabbed my hand, pulled me up from the chair, put her arms around me, and said: "Chris, I really love you. We miss you so much. You were such an important part of this family." I really started to cry, and she said: "Chris, don't stay away. Turn back to God." She was very serious.

I felt that I had to get out of that room, so I turned away, went to my car, and drove home. I sat there and cried and cried and cried. I thought, "What possessed her to come out and talk to me today of all days?" Well, I can tell you that it was the mercy of God that spoke to her and said, "Go say something to that young man." I can honestly tell you that I would not be alive right now had Sister Stegmeier not spoken to me on that particular day.

When I went home, I said, "God, I'm sorry. Would You please work with me one more time?" I wanted so very much to give up all that I was doing, but it felt like a dark cloud was following me around and that I could not get away from it. I started to attend the services again, and I started to pray, "God, would You help me?" but I did not ask for forgiveness. I had sunk so far into the depths of sin that I did not know whether God would even forgive me.

One morning when I went to a service, Brother Stegmeier preached a message that really spoke to my heart. He spoke of living a holy life and of giving your all to God, and God spoke to me that morning. As the song of invitation started, I could

feel the pull of the Holy Spirit urging me to go to the altar: "Go down there; go get right," yet I stood there. I felt as if my legs weighed a thousand pounds, and I did not want to move.

I was really weeping, and I looked around at different ones in the congregation that morning and saw that they were looking at me. I thought: "What am I doing? Look at these people who love me and who have carried a burden for me. I am not just letting myself down, but I am letting down God and these people." So I thought, "I am not going to be a failure anymore," and I went to the altar and asked God to forgive me and to come back into my life so that I could be saved again.

As I was kneeling at the altar and praying, pouring my heart out to God and asking for forgiveness, every young person in that congregation came to the altar and prayed with me. When I stood up and turned around, twenty-five young people were standing right there. Each of them had tears streaming down their faces, and each of them was smiling. All the young brethren in the congregation were waiting to give me a hug and to say, "Welcome home." All the sisters shook my hand and said: "We missed you. We appreciate you. We are glad you are back."

I am so very thankful that God was merciful to me, a sinner. I had seen so many hard things, and I had done so many bad things. Do you remember the Scripture that you read in Jeremiah 29:13? "And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart." I honestly believe that as a very young boy that the desire that I had deep within my heart to serve God was answered. I believe that He heard me and had something for me.

Today I can say that I am still saved. I cannot tell you that I have not had struggles. I have had times when I have had to go to the altar and pray. Our pastor tells us: "Don't

be a stranger to the altar. If you have a need, you ought to find yourself there." I am not too proud to kneel at the altar when I hear something in a message and God says that I need to work on something. I will find my way there and ask God to help me. I want to be the best child of God I can be.

God has so richly blessed me, more than I deserve. I am so very thankful that God has given me all the things that I really desired as a young man. He gave me a wonderful companion. I believe that I have the best wife that I could have ever had for me. God had her for me. I have three happy, healthy, beautiful children that I love and cherish so very much. However, more than anything in my life—more than the love that I have for my pastor and father-in-law, Brother Stegmeier, who has always been like a father to me, more than the love that I have for my wife and my children, more than my good job and the home that I have—I have a real love in my heart for God, for salvation, and for Truth.

It took a real God-called pastor for me to see that there was something worth living for. In my heart today, I have something worth living for. We have so much to be thankful for! If you are unsaved, you have so much to live for too. You see, God can take a life that has been wrecked by sin and turn it into something beautiful.

There is nothing in me that is good, not a thing. I am not a beautiful person, but with Christ in my life, I can show His beauties. I am so thankful that I have the opportunity to do so, because I could have been lost in a devil's hell. Looking back on those things, I am determined to keep myself in the center of God's will. I know that I cannot do it on my own. When I backslid, that was exactly what I tried to do. I thought: "I don't need the church. I will just be a Christian on my own." Well, I cannot do it on my own. I need God, I need His people, and I thank God so very much for everything He has done for me.

One last Scripture that I want you to read is Psalm 119:9-16:

"Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word. With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments. Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee. Blessed art thou, O LORD: teach me thy statutes. With my lips have I declared all the judgments of thy mouth. I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, as much as in all riches. I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways. I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word." I especially love verse 10, which says, "With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments."

Dear one, if you really search and seek God with all your heart, He will reveal Himself so that you will have the very best that life has to offer. I do not want for anything in life, not one thing, and that is because Christ has filled the void that once existed.

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*[Especially for Young People—continued from page 14]*  
boys spied Joe Green carrying his basket into the schoolroom.

"I should think he'd suspect something," whispered Will Brown, "that coal must be awful heavy."

Joe disappeared into the schoolroom, and the curious eyes that peeped through the crack of the door were soon rewarded by seeing him open his basket.

"Hope his dinner won't lie hard on his stomach," whispered Howard Colby. But apparently Joe only wished to get his paper to read, for he took it by the corner, and pulled; but it stuck fast. He looked in with surprise, and then took out, in a sort of bewildered way, a couple of Aunt Sally's fat sandwiches, one of the delicious round pies he had so often seen in Ned's hands, a bottle of milk, and some nuts and raisins. It was a dinner fit for a king, so Joe thought,

and so did the boys as they peeped from their hiding place. But Joe did not offer to taste it; he only sat there and looked at it. Then he laid his head on his desk; and Freddy Wilson, one of the smaller of the boys, whispered, "I guess he's praying," so they all stole away to the playground, without speaking a word.

"That's some of Ned Collin's work," said Will Brown, after a while. "It's just like him."

"I'm glad of it anyway," said Sam Merrill. "I've felt mean all forenoon. The Greens are not to blame for having only cold potatoes to eat, and I don't wonder Joe didn't want all us fellows to know it." Will Brown began to feel uncomfortable.

"Father says Mr. Green was a brave man," said Sam Merrill, "and that he wouldn't have been killed, if he hadn't thought of everyone else before himself."

"I tell you what," said good-natured Tom Granger, "I move that we give three cheers to Ned Collins."

The boys sprang to their feet, and, swinging their caps in the air, gave three hearty cheers for Ned Collins. Even Will Brown joined in the chorus, with a loud "hurrah."

Later that day, Sam Merrill explained the whole matter to Ned; but he only replied: "I've often heard Aunt Sally say it's poor fun that must be earned by hurting someone's feelings."

***"In the way of righteousness is life; and in the pathway thereof there is no death."***

***Proverbs 12:28***

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