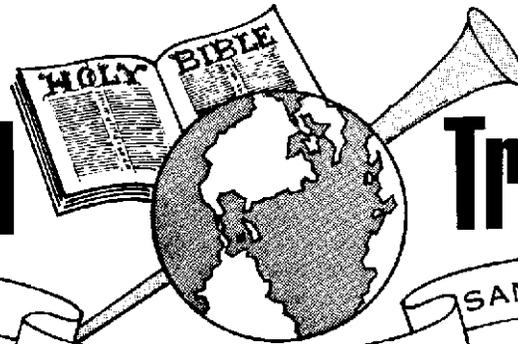


# The Gospel



# Trumpeter

JUSTIFICATION

SANCTIFICATION

"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. 38 May 2008 No. 5



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*

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

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

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

**THE CHURCH OF GOD BELIEVES IN:**

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

**SOME SPIRITUAL FACTS**

**PERTAINING TO THE CHURCH**

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

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items.

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**Vol. 38 May 2008 No. 5**

# Guest Editorial

"And they journeyed from mount Hor by the way of the Red sea,  
to compass the land Edom; and the soul of the people was much  
discouraged because of the way. And the people spake against God,  
and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt  
to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any  
water; and our soul loatheth this light bread."

Numbers 21:4-5

## MURMURING AND COMPLAINING

Time after time the children of Israel encountered hardships, trials, and problems along their journey of life. The Lord always proved Himself faithful in meeting every need that arose among them. He miraculously brought deliverance from the awful hand of oppression and bondage that they suffered in Egypt. When facing the Red Sea, He gloriously made a way for them to cross over when there was no other possible way of escaping the Egyptian army. Absolute defeat surely seemed to be their destiny. When they were in the wilderness, God provided manna for the people to eat and supplied water for them to drink. Each time an impossible situation confronted the people, they would invariably look on the hopelessness of the situation instead of trusting in God. Because help was not readily available as they desired, often they murmured and complained against God and against Moses.

Israel's distrust and unbelief led to unmerited accusations toward the Lord and His purpose. The people repeatedly blamed God for bringing them out of Egypt to die in the wilderness. One would think that Israel would have been thankful after seeing the many miracles the Lord had performed. Witnessing God's mighty working power in their midst should have inspired their faith to trust Him in a greater way. However, unbelief

blinded their eyes and caused them to doubt as they encountered each negative condition.

The Lord had no intention of destroying the people in the wilderness. He had good things in store for them just ahead. The promise of inheriting a good land filled with milk and honey had been given to Abraham. God had a reason for leading the Israelites in the way that He had led them. The trials that befell them were to be used as a vehicle to prove the people. God wanted to know what was in their hearts and if they would truly appreciate His marvelous works and serve Him. In Deuteronomy 8:2 we read, "And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldst keep his commandments, or no."

Many things can be said regarding the trials that Israel faced and the numerous times they murmured against God and His way of leading them. Further on in Numbers, Chapter 21, we find that the Lord was greatly displeased with Israel's actions and complaints. His anger was kindled to the place where He sent fiery serpents into the camp to bite the offenders. Sorry to say, their sin of murmuring and complaining caused many to die.

*[continued on page 13]*

*Isaiah 1:21 How is the faithful city become an harlot! it was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers.*

*22 Thy silver is become dross, thy wine mixed with water:*

*23 Thy princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves: every one loveth gifts, and followeth after rewards: they judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them.*

*24 Therefore saith the Lord, the LORD of hosts, the mighty One of Israel, Ah, I will ease me of mine adversaries,*

*and avenge me of mine enemies:*

*25 And I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin:*

*26 And I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning: afterward thou shalt be called, The city of righteousness, the faithful city.*

*27 Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness.*

*28 And the destruction of the transgressors and of the sinners shall be*

*together, and they that forsake the LORD shall be consumed.*

*29 For they shall be ashamed of the oaks which ye have desired, and ye shall be confounded for the gardens that ye have chosen.*

*30 For ye shall be as an oak whose leaf fadeth, and as a garden that hath no water.*

*31 And the strong shall be as tow, and the maker of it as a spark, and they shall both burn together, and none shall quench them.*

# When Faithfulness Departs



*Brother Roger L. Decker*

## **A Two-Edged Sword**

The Prophet Isaiah exclaimed in verse 21 of our Scripture text, "How is the faithful city become an harlot!" Those words were an expression of grief, or lamentation. He knew that God was willing to forgive and bless His people with the good of the land.

Isaiah 1:19-20 states: "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it." In other

words, it was a two-edged sword. If they would be willing and obedient, God said He would bless them, give them the good of the land, and He would be their God, and they would be His people. On the other hand, if they refused and rebelled, He said they would be devoured with the sword.

In Isaiah 1:18 the cry of the Prophet Isaiah was, "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." This is what

God will do for people who will repent, put away the evil of their doings and cease to do evil. This is what God desires people to do yet today. Friend, God wants you to put away the evil of your doings and cease to do evil. If only you would listen and heed the words of the Prophet, you could enjoy life.

God wants His people to enjoy life, and He wants His approval to rest upon them. Too many people view the church as something drab. They see people running around looking downcast. Sometimes people have a tendency to tell their

problems more than they do their blessings. Therefore, others get a wrong impression of the church. Contrary to what some people may think, the Christian life is not drab, sad, or filled with heartaches and sorrows. Yes, we have adversities that come against us, just as the world does, but they do not come upon us because of sin. Often they come upon us to test us and to try us so that we can show our love to God.

Sometimes people think that every time trials come upon them, they must have done something wrong. Have you read about Job? The Bible says that he was a righteous man. He was perfect and one who eschewed evil. Job truly loved God; nevertheless, he lost everything he had materially as well as his family. Moreover, he was smitten with boils from the crown of his head to the soles of his feet. What was Job's expression? He said in Job 1:21, "The LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD." This was written for our admonition. It was written to let us know that regardless of the test or the trial, if we will stay close to Jesus Christ, we can come through with victory.

One attribute of the morning-time church was their praise to God. You can read in Acts 2:46-47 about how the saints went from house to house, breaking bread and praising God. Verse 46 says, "And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart." They expressed true praise from the heart.

God wants people to repent, to put away the evil of their doings, and to cease to do evil. God wants you to let His approval rest upon your life, but the Word of God is a two-edged sword: it carries blessings for obedience and judgment for disobedience. The same sword, or the same Word of God, that will bless people for obedience will bring judgment on the disobedient.

## The Diluting of Judgment

The Prophet Isaiah got very specific when he spoke of "the faithful city." Jerusalem was known as the faithful city. He portrayed Jerusalem as the image of a wife who was once faithful to her husband, a devoted and attached partner. Jerusalem was once devoted to the Lord in the days of old. It was the seat of the pure worship of God, the place where His praise was celebrated and where His people came to offer sincere devotion to God. However, at the time of Isaiah's writing, the Lord, through the Prophet Isaiah, called her a "harlot," which was a long way from being the faithful city. Why did he call her a harlot? She had proven to be false, treacherous, and unfaithful. God requires faithfulness.

The Prophet Jeremiah said in Jeremiah 13:27, "I have seen thine adulteries, and thy neighings, the lewdness of thy whoredom, and thine abominations on the hills in the fields. Woe unto thee, O Jerusalem! wilt thou not be made clean? when shall it once be?" In other words, God, through the Prophet Jeremiah, asked: "How long are you going to be unclean, Jerusalem? Don't you want to get cleaned up? Don't you want to put away the evil of your doings?"

Jerusalem had been full of judgment. The city was well known for justice and righteousness. The Prophet Isaiah said that righteousness had lodged there. Jerusalem was once the home of justice, where one could find protection and safety. However, righteousness was no longer in the midst, and her silver became dross. Silver and gold are precious metals of great worth. What was he saying? The great men had deteriorated and were only fit to be cast away and marked worthless. Proverbs 10:20 says, "The tongue of the just is as choice silver: the heart of the wicked is little worth." Another translation says, "The tongue of the righteous is choice silver, but the heart of the

wicked is of little value."

In verse 22 of our Scripture text Isaiah wrote, ". . . thy wine mixed with water." What does wine mixed with water portray? It gives a picture of the diluting of judgment. Oh, how judgment is diluted today! This watering is not referring to the water of life or the water of the Word, but rather the watering down of the Word with human doctrines, human theologies, and human ideas. In many places that call themselves the Church of God, you cannot hear a judgment message. The people will not hold still for it. They call those places "the people's church." Certainly such places are not God's church. Right in congregations where the people once loved God fervently, the people will no longer stand for judgment and Truth.

They will not stand when it comes to righteousness, dressing modestly, acting right, and being right. All they preach about is the love of Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, that sword is two-edged: there is love as well as judgment. Zion is not redeemed with love; Zion is redeemed with judgment.

People who used to stand for Truth take those same Scriptures and distort them by taking them out of context and teaching doctrines contrary to what they once stood for. Some take the Scriptures that teach holiness and put another slant on them. For example, they take Romans, Chapter 7, and try to apply it to Paul's life after his conversion. They need to read the Word of God more thoroughly. In Romans, Chapter 7, Paul was speaking to those who knew the Law of when he was a Pharisee, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews.

Paul was not speaking of his experience after he was converted. You can read of his experience after his conversion in Chapter 8. Verse 1 reads, "There is therefore now [present tense] no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Under the Law, Paul lived under condemnation. He wanted to

do good, but he could not do it. He desired to do good, he willed to do good, but he found something in him stronger than his desire, stronger than his will, and it was sin.

Many people do not want to hear judgment preaching, but thank God, Zion wants to hear it. What was going on in the faithful city? Rebellion, bribery, lack of judgment, and a lack of love. On the other hand, some people can take judgment preaching and put judgment on everyone else, but they have no love to back it up. Love is still the bond that holds people together. It is still the bond of perfectness.

### **Rebellion Is as the Sin of Witchcraft**

Rebellion is a terrible sin that God will visit. It is sad when rebellion gets into people's hearts. They rebel against divine authority, against their parents, and even against the laws of the land. First Samuel 15:23 says, "For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. [In God's eyes rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft. If you have a rebellious child who is telling you to shut up all the time, as far as God is concerned, that child has the same spirit that a witch has.] Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king." Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft. Throughout the Word of God, God would not allow a witch to live. Whenever a king took over, one sign that he was following God was that he destroyed all enchantments and he got rid of all charmers.

Today there are many charmers around. They will charm you with their good personalities and smooth words. Oh, they do not have a sign out in front of their houses. You must have discernment to discern them. Just as those who practice witchcraft are under a bad spirit, so are the rebellious.

Have you ever talked to some-

one who was rebellious? That person can say, "Oh, I see," yet he does not hear you. Such a person is under the influence of another spirit. One who is rebellious will nod his head and say, "Yes, you are right, brother. You surely are right," but what you say to them goes in one ear and out the other.

The spirit of rebellion needs to be gotten out when one is a child. The shootings and the murders going on in the schools are a result of rebellion. Many children are used to having their own way, so they rise up against authority. They are not used to being told no. When they are told no, they want to destroy and hurt because they want to retaliate. God forbid that a child would tell his parents to shut up. I would not have even dared to say such words when I was growing up. Some parents today have no backbone to stand against rebellion.

As young people get into the teenage years and start dating, some show their rebellion. If they do not get their own way in dating, they get angry and huffy; then that rebellion carries over into married life. Next, they experience problems in the home, all because of rebellion.

As a parent, you can usually handle a young child. You are bigger, stronger, and tougher. You ought to be able to spank that child. I am not talking about child abuse. God forbids that, but just because a child squalls a little is no sign that you are abusing him. When I was disciplined as a child, I squalled before I was ever spanked. I wanted to make sure that my father knew I was squalling.

One great responsibility of being a parent is to recognize and remove a rebellious spirit from a little child. Now, I said a little child because when that son or daughter becomes a teenager, do not think you are going to start bending them then. Too many parents wait too long to take care of rebellion. They pamper the child when he is little, and when he becomes a teenager, then they try to bend him. That will

not work. I have read that today children even sue their own parents. What a world we have now!

### **The War Between Good and Evil**

The Prophet Isaiah said in verse 23 of our Scripture text, "Thy princes are rebellious." The Scripture lets us know that those who were to execute judgment were rebellious themselves. Their leadership never learned to submit. They loved gifts and rewards for perverting judgment. There was no judgment in the midst of the faithful city, and Jerusalem fell to the lowest ebb of sin, rebelling against the commandments of God. It is a terrible sin to have rebellion in your heart.

There is a great lesson in these verses of our Scripture text. That which happened to literal Jerusalem can also happen to spiritual Jerusalem. The Church of God is the New Testament Jerusalem, and the Church of God is also the bride. The Bible lets us know in Revelation 21:2, "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem [which is made up of new creatures under a new covenant, with new sacrifices], coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." The new Jerusalem's beginning was with God; just as when you are born again, it starts with God. You are born from above, and you become a new creature in Jesus Christ. If you will cling to God, you will remain a new creature and become newer and newer.

The Church of God came from God and was given by God to her husband, Jesus Christ, just as in the beginning when God brought the woman to the man. That is how marriages should be yet today. God ought to be involved. Too many people leave God out of it, and when they leave God out, they are walking contrary to the Scriptures.

There has always been a war between good and evil. Revelation portrays the false church as a woman. A true Church of God may be on one corner, but rest assured,

there will be something false right around it to come against the Truth. Our strength lies in the fact that we are children of God. Just because you are a member of God's church and you are established in your experience, do not think that the devil is going to leave you alone because you are so saturated with Truth that you know every move that the devil makes. You only know the devil's moves as God shows you, no matter how spiritual you are or how spiritual you think you are. Do not think that because you have been around for a while and you are walking in the light that you can take on the devil. You are not smart enough to whip the devil; you have to take him to the One who is stronger than the strong man.

### **Zion Is Redeemed With Judgment**

In our Scripture lesson we read of people who went the downward path toward destruction very rapidly. This is not just something that happened in Isaiah's day. This is something that is happening today. Some people came to the Truth years ago, and God really blessed them, cleaned up their lives, and made them new creatures. Sad to say, they changed paths, and now they are on the downward road to destruction.

Others may be heading down that same road if they do not turn around quickly. God is trying to lead spiritual Jerusalem away from making the wrong choices, away from going down the wrong path, just as He did for Jerusalem of old. God lays out the way before you every day. Evil is out there, and you have a choice. If you are going to serve God, you have to choose Him. God is not going to make you serve Him. You must serve Him because you love Him.

The Prophet said in Isaiah 1:25, "And I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin." What was He going to do? He was offering deliverance. He said, "I am go-

ing to clean you up by taking away all your impurities." Then after God has cleaned you up, He will do some restoring. He said in verse 26 of our Scripture text, "And I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning: afterward thou shalt be called, The city of righteousness, the faithful city."

Oh, how God holds faithfulness at a high premium! He wants His people to be faithful. As in the days of Moses and as in the days of Joshua, there will be no perverting of justice. What was God going to use to bring a people back to righteousness? Verse 27 tells us, "Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness."

It is difficult today for some people to hold still long enough for judgment to be poured out. Once you begin to fall away, your only hope of deliverance is by judgment preaching. You will be redeemed, or brought back, by judgment. God will put judgment on that sin to show you it is wrong. Zion will be redeemed with judgment.

### **Real Salvation Brings Inward and Outward Changes**

God still places the members in the body as it pleases Him. He said He will restore the judges and the counsellors. Zion will be delivered with judgment. No matter how strait the pastor or the evangelist preaches, some people still hold on to worldliness. They say, "Nobody is going to tell me how to dress" or "Nobody is going to tell me what I can put on and what I cannot put on." As long as it is modest, you will not have a problem; but when it becomes immodest, you have a problem.

The Bible still requires that His people wear modest apparel. Your clothes should not be too tight, too low, or too short. They should not reveal the form of your body. Tight tops and blouses are immodest, as well as short blouses that show the

stomach when you raise your arms; that applies to women and men. Sometimes when I see someone's stomach uncovered, I am ashamed for that person. There are some things that even nature teaches you. All you need is a good mirror in your house to know how bad some things look. You ought to look in a mirror before you walk out the door.

Some wear skirts that are too tight. Modest skirts and dresses *cover* the knees, whether you are standing or sitting. When you sit down, you should sit modestly. Do you want to know why many young women cannot sit down right? They are used to wearing slacks or shorts and sitting anyway they want to sit. Then when they put on something godly, they do not know how to sit. Some culottes look more like shorts; they are immodest.

Mothers ought to teach their children to dress modestly when they are little, and then when they get a little older, they will still be modest. If you want to be spiritual, you must dress right. God is not going to make you dress right, but if you are a child of God, you want to dress modestly.

When speaking of salvation, the Apostle Paul, said in 2 Corinthians 7:11, ". . . yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea what zeal [to do right; to do everything that pleases God]. . . ." In real salvation you have tremendous zeal and tremendous desire to please God. Your entertainment will not be the same. You will be a new creature. Old things pass away, and all things become new. One who is spiritual desires to be in the house of God. You do not have to beg that person to come to church. You do not have to plead with that individual to go to Sunday school. If you are not used to going to Sunday school, you need to change some things, and that is one of them. You want everything God has for you. If you owe someone money, you ought to clear up every bill that you owe and maybe even walked away from.

If you owe a debt, even if you cannot pay it right away, you ought to be man or woman enough to acknowledge it.

### **God Knows All About You**

Too many people have perverted their judgment concerning what is right and wrong. With some people nothing is absolute anymore. You need judgment preaching. God said He would restore the judgments and the counsellors. In other words, you will no longer do what is right in your own eyes. God said He would restore someone to judge the situation and restore counsellors to direct them in the right path. When He does that, Zion will be redeemed. They will know the right path, and they will have judgment poured out on things.

These judges that God spoke of in our Scripture text would not compromise, and they could not be bought off. They would preach the Truth and love men's souls at the same time. God tells in His Word what is going to happen to the sinners. Isaiah 1:28 says, "And the destruction of the transgressors and of the sinners shall be together, and they that forsake the LORD shall be consumed." To be *consumed* is "to grow weak." When you grow weak, you are going to fail. Those who turn from the Lord grow weak, and failure is right out ahead.

You may be prospering well in this stage of your life, but if you have things in your heart that ought not to be there, do not think for one minute that God has forgotten. Do not think that because He does not execute judgment speedily, He is not going to execute it. You see, God is not like a human being. You can tell someone something, and that person may forget it, but God does not forget. He does not have any memory lapses. God remembers everything. For example, if you were more than a thousand years old, and you said something a thousand years ago, God would remember it as if you said it yesterday. You

are dealing with God, not another individual.

God knows everything about you. He knows your moods, your actions, and your thoughts. He knows how you act when you get up in the morning, He knows how you act throughout the day, and He knows how you act on the job. He knows whether or not you enjoy listening to smutty jokes. That is not something that you can cover and say, "Oh, God didn't see that." The walls of your home cannot keep out the eyes of God. He can see through plaster, brick and mortar, or any other kind of material. God sees all. God is a Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in Truth.

### **God Rewards the Faithful**

We read in Nehemiah 7:1-2: "Now it came to pass, when the wall was built, and I had set up the doors, and the porters and the singers and the Levites were appointed, That I gave my brother Hanani, and Hananiah the ruler of the palace, charge over Jerusalem: for he was a faithful man, and feared God above many."

Jesus gave this parable in Luke 19:12-19: "He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come. But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us.

"And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds. And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities. And

the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds. And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities."

As you can see from these verses of Scripture, God rewards faithfulness. Look at how the reward multiplied. What did he have? In verse 18 He said, "And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds." What did he give him? He gave the servant five cities. The first man said, "Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds." Because he was faithful over little, he was given authority over ten cities. God loves faithfulness, and He rewards it.

The church, the new Jerusalem, needs faithful men and women, those who allow judgment to redeem them from the dross. Why? God wants His people to shine like a city set on a hill. Child of God, He does not want you to hide your light under a bushel, so to speak; He wants you to let your light shine to a lost and dying world.

Dear one, have you ceased to be faithful? Are you becoming less faithful? Are the things of God not much of a thrill to you any more? Is it almost all you can do to get to the house of God? If you are not thrilled when you are in the house of God, you are not thrilled with salvation when you are out in the world. Do not think that you can drag in to the house of God and then run out in the world and praise God. One thing that turned me toward God was when I saw a person who was happy with salvation. I did not hear anything about belonging to a church. All I saw was that the brother had joy in his heart, and that was what I was looking for.

Has faithfulness begun to depart from your life? Can God count on you to be faithful as He once did? Was there a time when just the slightest nudge from God would move you, but now God cannot get your attention? It takes more and more to get you to be alert. If you have a need, won't you mind the Lord?

*(Compact Disc TR-170E)*

John 9:1 And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth.

2 And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?

3 Jesus answered, Neither hath this

man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.

4 I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.

5 As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.

6 When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay,

7 And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.

## A Look at Life From God's Point of View



### Brother Esau Brooks

#### God Gave Man the Ability to Choose

This might sound strange in a world where nearly everyone seems to be going after sin, but God did not make us for sin. The Word of God informs us in Isaiah 53:6, "All we like sheep have gone astray [man in sin is astray, and the Prophet Isaiah told us how man got in this shape]; we have turned every one to his own way." When God started the human family on this earth, He started it the way He intended it to be.

Some people may say, "Had God not intended us to sin, He

would not have made sin." However, He did not make sin. By one man's sin, sin entered the world. If you go back and study the history of the Word of God concerning man, you will find that God gave man the right to exercise the ability to choose. God has angels in Heaven who do His bidding unquestionably, but He chose to make another order of creation, an order that could freely choose to serve Him.

Of all the trees in the garden, God made one specific tree that He told man not to eat of so that man would have a choice. God could have just as easily said, "Do not touch any of the fruit in this gar-

den," but He did not. God told man that of all the trees in the garden, he could freely eat, except for the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the midst of the garden, but that was the very tree from which man ate.

Satan started talking to the woman and caught her interest. She ate of the forbidden fruit, and then she gave it to her husband who partook of it; that is where sin started. Despite all the warnings recorded in the Word of God, man still seems bent on going his own way. In your own strength, you are going to fail just as others have failed. Sin will finish you, so there is no reason for you to go the way that

so many people are going. They are disregarding the Gospel, disregarding God, ignoring their God-given responsibility, and plunging deeper and deeper into sin. In the end those who go the way of sin are going to be the losers.

One songwriter wrote, *"I've tried the road of sin and found, its prospects all deceive."* Sinner friend, you, too, are going to find this to be true. You are letting the devil obsess you with the idea that you are smart enough to be the only one who will slip through. That is spiritual ignorance! You cannot slip through. Romans 6:23 declares that "the wages of sin is death." James 1:15 tells us that "sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." This has happened to many people down through the ages of time, and it is about to happen to you.

The songwriter went on to say, *"I've proved the Lord, and joys abound, More than I could believe."* I am persuaded that many people think that serving God is just another facet of life, but it is not. Serving God *is* life; that is the real thing, and the quicker you submit to Him, the better off you will be. You may inquire, "If that is true, why have so many people who started living for God turned back?" They have not gone back as a result of salvation, but rather, they have gone back for the same reason that sin got started in the very beginning; they chose to do so.

### **God Has But One Way**

Hebrews 2:2-4 declares: "For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?" There is no escape for

anyone who neglects so great salvation. I am praying that God will speak to your heart as He has never spoken before, that you will stop halting between two opinions, and that you will take your stand on the Lord's side. That would be the greatest thing you could ever do in your life, and it would be the most blessed time of your existence.

In our Scripture text I want you to notice how specific Jesus was. He told the blind man to "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam." Jesus specified the particular place where he had to go and wash. This principle stands the same today. You cannot be saved just any old way you please. God has but one finely prescribed way by which you can be saved.

You can let the devil deceive you if you want to, as Adam and Eve did in the garden. The devil will promise you everything, but he never delivers. Jesus said in John 8:44 that the devil is a liar. He was a liar from the beginning. Some people listen to the devil's lies and preach that the devil was once in Heaven. They say that he had a prominent position and got jealous and started a rebellion in Heaven. That is not in the Bible. That is the religious trash that false prophets are feeding people, and it will damn people's souls. If you listen to it, it will ruin your chance of making Heaven your home.

Every Scripture that those false prophets have used to support and build up that argument has been misconstrued. Peter said in 2 Peter 3:16 that they wrest the Scriptures to their own destruction. The devil never was and never will be in Heaven. Heaven is a devil-proof place. The devil is only in this world doing his work. Had it not been for a devil, we would not know how wicked sin is.

In our Scripture text Jesus told the blind man to go and wash, but He did not promise him that anything was going to happen. In verse 7 you can read that He simply said, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam." The blind man went his way and

washed and came seeing. What is standing in the way of your receiving something from God? *You* will not move. You are waiting for it to come to you when all the coming has already been done.

In John 10:10 Jesus said, "I am come that they might have life." In verse 9 He said, "I am the door." He has already come, but some are still sitting around and waiting for Him to make a special trip to them. They are going to end up being disappointed. Jesus is not going to do that kind of coming to someone just to build up that person's ego. Religions in the world today can be bent in any direction. They can be reviewed and regarded from any point of view, but I am not concerned about those religions. I am concerned about the true religion. God has only one way to get you to Heaven, and you must take that one way if you want to go.

### **The Sons of God**

False religion presents many arguments in our day. Someone once said to me, "Well, you are conservative, and we are liberal."

I said: "Now, just a minute! Are you talking about salvation? Are you talking about the work of God?"

He said, "Yeah!"

I had not been any more surprised than I was then, to see how people categorize this. There is no such thing as conservatism or liberalism when it comes to the Word of God. There is only one work of God, and that does not make you a conservative or a liberal, but a child of God.

In 1 John 3:1 John said, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." The Scripture does not say that we should be called conservatives or liberals. People are walking around here with all these foreign names and brands of religion and talking about going to Heaven, but they are going to get turned aside when that time comes.

Those brands and names are unknown and unheard of up in the glory world. Not one person who makes it to Heaven will be there as a result of being a conservative. Anyone who makes it will be there as a result of being born again and being a child of God. If you scoop up all the rubbish that is being spread across the world to deceive the minds of the simple, you will end up being deceived, rejected, and turned aside.

God's people are called sons of God, and that is all God has. In verse 2 John said, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." You cannot see Him as He is in the mess of sin, so that mess has to be cleaned out of your life.

The very same order that the man in our Scripture text received from the Lord is the same order that the Lord gives everyone who is in the mess of sin: "Go and wash!" However, it will not be in the "pool of Siloam" or any other pool—the Baptist pool, the Methodist pool, the Presbyterian pool, or the Episcopalian pool. If you are going to be washed, you must be washed in the blood of Jesus.

One songwriter penned, "*What can wash away my sins?*" Will going to church wash them away? No! Will signing a card wash them away? No! Will joining a church wash them away? No! Will becoming confirmed to a religion or a religious belief wash them away? No! The songwriter went on to write, "*Nothing but the blood of Jesus.*"

### Measuring to the Rule

Jesus specified to the blind man in our Scripture lesson what he had to do in order for his sight to be restored and for the works of God to be manifested in him. It is very much the same way now. In Acts 17:30 Paul said to the Athenians, "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now com-

mandeth all men every where to repent." Many people are running around joining the churches of their choice, signing cards, and shaking preachers' hands, and the Word of God has nothing to say about any of those things. Those are men's imposed ideas and devil-inspired ideologies. God's command to the sinner is to repent. In Luke 13:3 Jesus said, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." We must be the sons of God, and we are to be like Him.

Many people are making the same mistake that a little fellow made sometime back. One day after he had been playing, he ran to tell his father, "Daddy, I'm six feet tall."

His daddy said, "You are?"  
"Yes!"

His daddy asked: "How did you come by that notion? Who told you so?"

He said, "I measured myself."  
"You did?"  
"Yeah!"

His daddy asked, "Where did you get the ruler?"

The boy said, "I made it."

If you make up your own rules when it comes to serving God, there is no telling what you will come up with. This is where the trouble lies: people are measuring themselves by their own rules. They make their own rules and measure themselves accordingly, and then they go about proclaiming that they are this and that. However, you do not have to make any rules. The rule has already been made. All you have to do is measure to the rule. In Philippians 3:16 Paul said, "Let us walk by the same rule."

In our Scripture text we are presented with an occurrence that took place in the ministry of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. As we read earlier, Jesus met a man who was born blind. His disciples became curious about that development in the man's life, so they queried, "Master, who did sin?" They felt that his condition must have been a result of the curse of sin, or the works of sin. No doubt, they

were shocked when Jesus made plain that there was a purpose for that development, just as there is a purpose for your reading this message.

### The Divine Providence of God

God had a purpose, or a plan, in mind when a friend of mine invited me to a prayer meeting one Monday morning many years ago. When he asked me to go with him, I said: "Come on! You don't really mean that!"

He said, "Yes, let's go!"

I said, "No, I'm not going."

He said: "Come on, man. Let's go up there among those Church of God people. You're going to have some fun."

I thought: "Oh! That's different. If he is talking about fun, that is where I want to be." So I said, "Okay." I got ready to go, and we started off. When we arrived in front of the building, they were singing, rejoicing, clapping their hands, and praising the Lord.

I stood there and listened for a while.

My friend said, "Let's go in there."

I said, "Why are we going in there?"

He said, "Let's go in."

I said, "No, I can hear right where I am."

My friend kept trying to persuade me, so finally, just to get him to leave me alone, I said: "Okay. Let's go in, but I'm going to sit on the very first pew I reach." We got inside that building, and I sat on the first bench next to the door. As the saints continued to shout and sing, my friend pointed at this one and that one, and we would laugh. After a while, I was beginning to like it, until someone in the congregation said, "Let us pray." Well, I thought this would soon pass. I did not even bother to kneel, but I stooped between the two benches.

Someone started to pray, and I had never heard prayer like that before! I do not even think I have

heard a prayer like that since. Before I knew it, I was shaking all over, like a green leaf over a fire. That was not all that happened to me. Tears began to flow down my face. Now that was something! I reached for my handkerchief and started to wipe away my tears, but they kept coming! I got embarrassed, a big boy out in the public crying like a baby, making a sissy of himself. I could not afford to let my friend see me, so I put my hand over my face. Soon I opened my fingers and looked at him to see what shape he was in, and I saw that he was wiping away tears too. So I moved my hand away from my face, took my handkerchief, and wiped my face; then he took out his handkerchief and wiped his face. I wiped, and he wiped, and we just stood there looking at each other. Neither of us understood what was happening. By that time, someone said "Amen."

### **The Most Glorious Day of My Life**

We stood up, but there was a change in us. We were no longer laughing, giggling, or being funny. No doubt, those brethren saw that change, and they started an altar call. We were the only two sinners in the building, as far as we knew. The moment the altar call started, I said to my friend: "Let's go on down to the altar. I mean, why hold up? It is us they are after. Let's go." From the moment they began to sing, I knew they meant for us to come to the altar.

When I said, "Let's go!" he said, "You go!" We went back and forth like that for a while, and they must have seen that, because a brother walked off the platform and came directly to where we were standing. All I can remember is that he said, "Young men, don't you want to . . ." and I made a break. I was going as fast as I could to get to the altar to pray, but before I knelt, I remembered my friend. After all, he was responsible for all that was happen-

ing to me, so I wanted to know where he was. When I looked back, I saw that he was coming faster than I was going, so I moved to one side. He hit the altar, and then I hit it behind him. Praise the Lord! That was the most glorious day of my life!

I got saved the very first time I was convicted of my sins. I do not know anything about sitting through a meeting and resisting conviction. I marvel that people can do that. Many years have passed since that day, and I am still rejoicing in my salvation. I walked away from that place, and I did not really get saved because I did not know what salvation was. They prayed for me, and I could feel a hand on my head. After they prayed, one brother said, "Do you believe that the Lord has saved you?"

I said, "No." Honestly, I did not, and I was not going to get up and tell them that I felt what I knew I did not feel.

He said, "Well, kneel down here, and let us pray for you again." I knelt down, and they prayed for me again. Soon he said: "Do you believe? Are you saved?"

"No."

He said: "We believe that you are saved. Get up and tell it."

I said, "No." I knew what I needed. I knew that I had something that I did not need, and I knew that I needed something that I did not have.

I left that place and went home, I opened the door to my room, and laid prostrate on the floor. I started to pray, and sometime around two o'clock in the morning, Heaven heard my cry, and God came on the scene and saved me. When I stood up and began to walk around, it did not feel as if I was even walking on the floor. I felt as though I was walking on the air. I looked down many times to see if I was really standing on the floor. I do not want you to feel that salvation has to be that way for you, but I do want you to know that salvation is just as real today as it was when God saved me.

### **What Life Consists Of**

Jesus told His disciples that the blind man's condition was not caused by sin. He explained that it had happened expressly for the works of God to be manifested in that man's life. God is waiting to have His work manifested in your life also. Sinner friend, look at what you are depriving yourself of. You may think that it is fun to live in sin, but it is only for a season. I tried it. I did not come into this world as a Christian. I spent a few years in sin, but I thank God that He did not let me stay there long enough to get into such depths as others have gone. I have fewer regrets today as a result of that; nonetheless, I had my bout with sin. I know what it is to be a sinner, and I know what it is to be a Christian. I want to tell you, in the name of the Lord, you are making the mistake of your life if you reject Christ and refuse to let Him into your heart and life.

Jesus made this declaration in verse 4 of our Scripture text: "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work." Jesus was being called on here by His disciples to give a definition to life.

Every one of us has our own personal view concerning life. If you look at life only from your own point of view, you are allowing the enemy to deceive your soul, because he has caused you to look at life from the wrong point of view. You can never see life from the right point of view as long as your spiritual vision is being distorted by sin and the devil. Therefore, I invite you to look at life from God's point of view.

When the disciples asked Jesus, "Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?" they were, in reality, calling upon Jesus to give a definition of life. That was the reason Jesus did not enter into any particulars about that man. He did not tell them that it was caused by a lack of protein or carbohydrates or anything else. He did

not explain to them the physiological side of that man's life at all. He could have given them the minute details of exactly what had transpired in the embryo when, as a baby, he came forth lacking vision. Instead, He went directly to what life consists of. In essence, He said: "This happened so that the works of God might be made manifest in him. I am come, and I must work the works of Him that sent me."

Jesus explained to them that He must work the works of His Father who sent Him while it was day, because the night was coming when no man could work. By Jesus' expression, He presented life from three points of view, or the main stages of life. First, He presented the obligation and the responsibility of life when He said in verse 4 of our Scripture lesson, "I must work the works of him that sent me. . . ." Second, He presented the uncertainty of life when He said, ". . . while it is day. . . ." Third, He presented the solemn ending of life when He said, ". . . the night cometh, when no man can work."

### **Your Obligation and Your Responsibility**

I would like to invite you to consider this, *not* from the standpoint of the theologians or the university graduates, but from the standpoint of the highest authority there is: Jesus Christ. Again, He was declaring that life consists of three parts: first, your obligation and your responsibility; second, the fact that your life is very limited and uncertain; and third, the fact that there is a solemn ending of life sometime out ahead. *The night is coming!*

You are not always going to be in the day. Since the night is coming, it is time to do something about it. Jesus also said that when the night comes, no man can work. At death, what you have left undone will be undone, as far as you are concerned.

You may ask, "You don't believe there is going to be another chance?" How can I believe that and yet

believe the Bible? God is not offering man another chance to receive the gift of salvation after death. Paul, writing to the Corinthians in 2 Corinthians 6:1, said, "We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain." Paul begged them, and they were making the same blunder that many people are making today. Their blunder was in letting the grace freely flow without it affecting them. In so many words, he said, "I beg of you, brethren, as a worker together with God, not to receive the grace of God in vain, or without purpose or advantage."

Dear one, look at the mercies that have been poured on you in hearing or reading the Gospel. What advantage has it been to you? Your life is just as unimpressed, unmolested, and unmoved by God as it has ever been. Sadly, you are worse off than you were because you are developing a greater state of hardness in your life by failing to be moved by the Gospel.

I invite you to look at the responsibility and the obligation of life. Jesus made it quite clear that we all have an obligation in this life. I see this in the words, "I *must* work." The word "must" implies an obligation. Therefore, we must conclude that life is more than sitting around and striving to get as much as you can in your possession. Life consists of more than that.

Many people are passing life with time, sitting down on God, and that is bad. Others are spending time grasping all they can in this life, not thinking or realizing that there is a work to be done. You have to work! Salvation does not consist of getting saved and just sailing off to Heaven. We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.

### **Doing the Work of Him Who Sent You**

We are not saved by works, but we cannot be saved without works. Therefore, we need to wake

up! Many people are waiting until their last breaths are about to go out of their bodies before they begin to cry, "Our Father which art in heaven . . ." or "The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want." If you are counting on escaping hell and enjoying the bliss and the happiness of Heaven, God's Word to you is, "You must work the work of Him that sent you here."

You can read in John 17:4 that when Jesus came to the end of His life, He prayed that intercessory prayer, part of which reads, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." In Acts, Chapter 21, what was the Apostle Paul concerned about when the brethren began to cry all around him? He said the things that were awaiting him did not move him. He was concerned about finishing his ministry. When he got to the end, he wrote to Timothy and, in essence, said: "I am now ready, because I have finished my course" (2 Timothy 4:6-7).

Have you started your course yet? If not, what are you waiting for? You may say, "I'm a sinner, and a sinner can't work for God." You are correct! Where your trouble lies is that you have no business being a sinner. You are not a sinner because you *have* to be a sinner. You are a sinner because you have *chosen* to be a sinner. Had you listened to God the first time He spoke to you, you would have been a child of God by now. You are a sinner because you have resisted all the overtures of God's mercy. You have turned away from all of God's pleadings, so you cannot plead that because you are a sinner, you cannot work for God. A work is waiting for you, but you must be saved to do that work. What kind of work is it? The work of Him who sent you into this life.

People like to think that life began in man. Had life begun in man, then when someone comes to the end of life, man would be able to put life back into that person. When you are about to die, Papa cannot come and say, "My child, I can't bear to see you die; get up." God used

human instrumentalities to bring each of us into this world, but we were sent here by our Heavenly Father. That is how we all came about being here. What were we sent here to do? Was it to have a good time and enjoy sin? No! We were sent here to do a work for God. It is time for you to wake up to that realization.

Jesus had His work cut out for Him, and so do we. This life is a more serious time of our existence than to be spent on a playground. This life here on earth is the most solemn part of our existence. It is the period of our existence when we are setting in motion influences that will never die. Therefore, the matter of working for God is *not* an option and it is *not* a choice; it is a *must*. If you want to make sure that you have no regrets when you come to the end of life's journey, you must apply yourself to this responsibility.

### The Night Is Coming

I want you to read a Scripture that will give you an idea of what Jesus was talking about. John 6:26-29 states: "Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed. Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent."

You must labor for the kind of work that you were sent here to do. How much of your time is being spent in this work? How much of your work is for God? You must work, and you must do it while it is day.

Notice that Jesus likened life to just two periods of time: day and night, which is a time of activity and

a time for rest. This is very serious. This is comparable to our physical days: there are short days and long nights, or long days and short nights. You do not know which will be yours: a long life or a short life. You may be one whose sun will go down while it is yet noon, which means you will have a short day and a long night. The work that you have to do must be done in that short period of time called day.

Some people have long lives, and others have short lives. A day is only the short period between sunrise and sunset. What you are going to do for God, you must do between life and death. Only God knows how close you are to death. After death, you will not have another chance. Hebrews 9:27 states, "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment."

The solemn end of life is when the night comes. Jesus likened the end of life to being a time when no man can work. This shows us how urgent it is for us to look after this matter. Death will not bring another chance. It is going to bring us to the Judgment, and this is what makes life so important. Once it is gone, you cannot recall it. At any time you can die, and you will not have another chance to do or undo any of the harms you have done while living in this short period of your existence.

When the rich man in Luke, Chapter 16, cried out to Abraham to send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water to cool his tongue, Abraham's reply was, "Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented" (verse 25). I repeat, this life is the most important part of your existence. God has a work for you to do, and it is time for you to get busy, because your day may be short, and you might have a long night of rest. So, I beg of you, in Christ's stead, to be reconciled to God. God bless you.

(Cassette C-2077E)

[Guest Editorial—continued from p. 2]

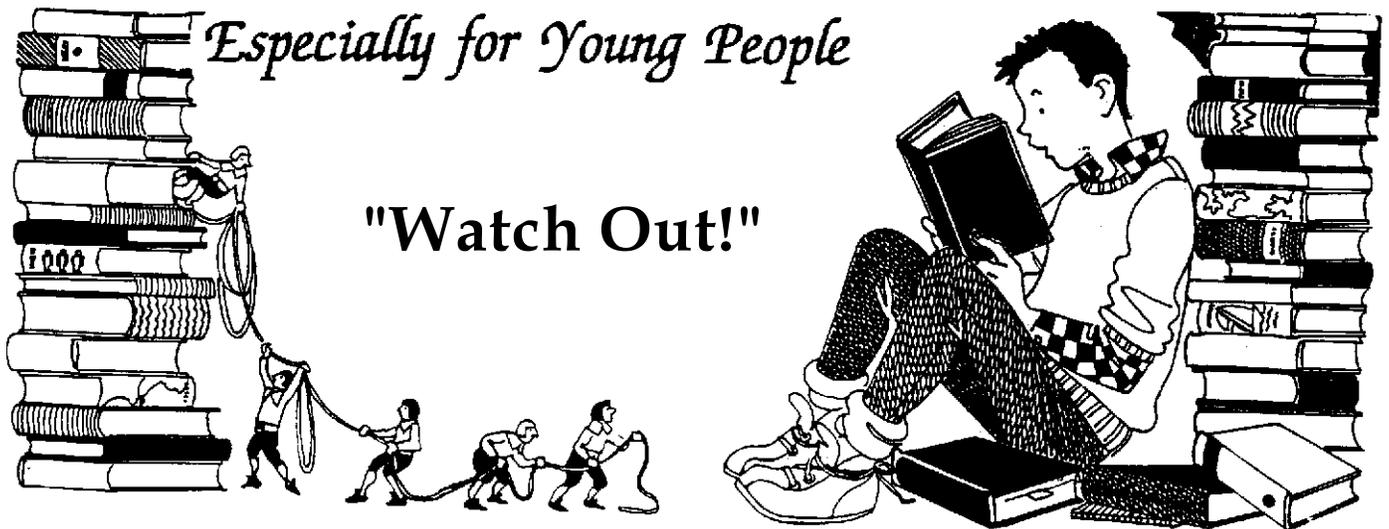
When the people realized their actions created such anger in God, they repented and begged Him for mercy. Thank God, He turned from His fierce anger and showed undeserved mercy to them.

History has a way of repeating itself, and conditions have certainly never changed through the ages. As Israel irreverently voiced their objections against God and His chosen leaders in their day, we find it the same today as multitudes repeat the same actions in this age. God does not approve of this behavior, and He will not tolerate ones questioning His way, His commandment, or His authority indefinitely. Trials, problems, irritations, and frustrations come to all, but each person must be careful never to allow a spirit of murmuring and complaining to overrule. The misfortunes that come into life are never sent to destroy or to drive a man or a woman away from God. Instead, their purpose is to draw each individual closer to the Lord.

You may not always understand all the ways that God will lead you through life. However, you can be assured of this one thing: the Lord has your best interest in mind. Man's greatest challenge is to lean upon the Lord and simply trust Him in every situation and rest in His Divine Hand of providence. Sometimes God may allow death to come at what you consider to be an inopportune time. If you are not careful, you will question God's action. You can become irritated with the Lord for allowing this to happen. If you do not bring this feeling under control quickly, you may charge God foolishly. This action is unwise and unprofitable to you spiritually.

There are times in life when everything just seems to go sour. This breaks down or that goes wrong, and problems start to pile up on every side. Possibly the loss of a job comes at no fault of your own. The list of upsetting circumstances can go on and on, and no help seems

[continued on page 26]



The devil is our relentless and pitiless enemy. He is trying to draw all men down into the lowest pit of hell. From the cradle to the grave, he is watching every moment to try to trip you up one way or another.

Jesus, warning of perils and temptations in the end time of the world, said, "Take heed to yourselves." Also, He said, "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things . . . and to stand before the Son of man" (Luke 21:36).

No con man on earth can match the smoothness of Satan's suggestions. No criminal can plot crimes as cleverly. You must watch and pray, and only with God's help can you "stand against the wiles of the devil" (Ephesians 6:11). Pressure is increasing wherever we go in this world. Subtly wicked things are being interwoven with legitimate things. It is easy to accept a little here and there. Like a spider spinning up an insect in its web, you will be hopelessly entangled unless you are watchful.

Once people thought the nudist colonies were a joke. Now the general public has taken off one article of clothing after another, trimming off what is left here and there.

Once pornography seemed like a far distant menace. Now it is besieging many people's homes. It is infiltrating literature, television, the Internet, and advertising. One military base has even run pornographic movies on government equipment. A bit of exposure to pornography here, a bit there, and one can be enmeshed before he knows it.

Drugs are tolerated. Drinking is accepted even though the drinker is about to go out on the highway and kill himself and a few other people. There are many recipes and cookbooks that require a stock of liquors in the home in order to prepare those meals.

You can hardly read a newspaper or a magazine or listen to the radio without seeing or hearing an offensive word or scene. It is happening so subtly that most

people tend to ignore it, yet it is driving a wedge between many Christians and the Lord. Many people do not feel the need of prayer, of following God's Word, or of going to church regularly. They are slipping just little by little. Today many people just accept things that once people would have been shocked by.

God has not changed. His rules have not become permissive. The wages of sin are still death (Romans 6:23). Hebrews 2:1 tells us, "We ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip."

The Judgment is coming! The cup of God's wrath is filling. We read in Hebrews 10:31, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Oh, at any cost, you must make your calling and election sure (2 Peter 1:4). "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth" (Revelation 16:15).

Selected

### **Be Ready All the Time**

*"Be careful! Don't spend your time feasting and drinking. Or don't be too busy with worldly things. If you do that, you will not be able to think straight. And then that day might come when you are not ready. It will close like a trap on all people on the earth. So be ready all the time. Pray that you will be strong enough to escape all these things that will happen. And pray that you will be able to stand before the Son of Man."*

*Luke 21:36 (International Children's Bible)*

2 Timothy 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus,

2 To Timothy, my dearly beloved son: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

3 I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day;

4 Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled

with joy;

5 When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also.



# The Influence of a Mother

*Brother Paul Prinkey*

## **Influence Is Very Powerful**

You cannot stop your influence. You can have power only over the kind of influence that you exhibit. This is something that you need to be mindful of, because you are influencing people daily. Statistics prove that in a normal lifetime, each of us will influence or impact approximately one hundred sixty people. At different times I have thought to myself, "How many of those one hundred sixty people have I won to God?"

Your life is continually impacting other people's lives. People whom you do not even know are watching you. They notice how you are living. They see the way you

conduct yourself, and your influence on them is very powerful. For example, a young boy that someone brought to church was quite attentive. I did not realize how I was affecting this boy, but on the way home from church he told that person, "I want a suit jacket and a tie."

She asked, "What for?"

The boy said, "I want to dress just like Brother Paul."

Your influence is impacting people whom you do not know. People are talking about you to other people. It is said: "In the life of a person remains an endearing monument of human energy. The person dies and disappears, but that person's thoughts and acts survive." This is very true. I like what the

Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy. He called Timothy his son after the faith. He wanted to admonish Timothy and remind him of some things.

In verse 5 of our Scripture text Paul said, "When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, [Where did it begin?] which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and in thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also." It appears that Timothy's grandmother Lois was the first of this family to be converted, and then his mother Eunice. Both of their lives had an effect on Timothy to help him make the right choices. Timothy had a choice to make, just as we each have a choice to make. Each of us is

brought to a crossroad in life, a place where we must make a decision about which way we are going to go in life. The influence of someone around us helps us to make that decision.

As a mother, you give your children options. For example, sometimes when dinner is over, you might have an apple pie and a chocolate cake, so you ask them: "Which one would you like? Do you want a piece of chocolate cake or a piece of apple pie?" Both of them are good, but you allow them to make a choice.

As a mother, you provide your children with many options in life. The way you live your life and conduct yourself, the things you teach your children, and the way you guide them will help your children to make the right decisions in life. Your influence upon your children's lives will help them in the choices that they make. Your role in their lives is very important. The influence of a mother is so strong that when the children grow up and leave home, many of the decisions they make will be based on how they were raised.

No doubt, you remember when you were young. Do you remember your parents saying to you: "I don't think you should go there. I would stay away from that boy if I were you"? You might have resented that, and you probably did not want to hear it. Now that you have gotten married and have children, you may say something to your children and then you are reminded that you sound just like your mother. Why is that? One reason is that what she told you was right even though you did not like it and did not want to hear it. Let this be a reminder to you as a parent that you need to tell your children what is right whether they want to hear it or not. My parents told me many things that I did not like; nevertheless, they were right. I find myself teaching my children the same things that they taught me, not just because my dad or my mom told me, but because what they told

me was right. I repeat, influence is very important and powerful.

### **A Godly Mother's Influence**

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." Influence has a great bearing on training. Your child is watching what you are doing and listening to what you are saying, but your actions speak louder than your words. As a mother, you have a great responsibility upon you to train up your children. The Truth that you teach them is something that is not forgotten. God can bring it back to their remembrance.

I am sure that you are familiar with the story of Ruth and Naomi. Naomi's husband passed away, and then her two sons passed away. She made a decision to leave the land of Moab and go back to Israel and dwell with her own kindred. Her two daughters-in-law were grieved that she was leaving, and they wanted to go with her. Naomi tried to convince them that they should stay in their own country. One daughter-in-law decided to turn back, but Ruth was determined to go with Naomi.

Ruth 1:15-17 reads: "And she said, Behold, thy sister in law is gone back unto her people, and unto her gods: return thou after thy sister in law. And Ruth said, Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the LORD do so to me, and more also, if I ought but death part thee and me."

What a powerful speech Ruth gave! This was not just words that she put together; this was the language of her heart coming forth, revealing her anguish. Ruth wanted to go with Naomi and, in essence, said: "Do not try to talk me out of going with you and tell me that I should go back. I know my sister-in-

law has gone back, but I have already made up my mind that I am going with you. Where you go, I will go. Your God will be my God." Then Ruth brought it right down to death and said, "Where you die, I will die, and I will be buried there." Her mind was made up.

I would to God that every mother could have this kind of influence over her children, to cause them to want to follow after the true God, regardless of what others do. Ruth made up her mind that she was not going back with her sister-in-law to her own people and to their gods. In so many words, she said, "Thy God will be my God."

What caused Ruth to make that decision? The influence of a godly mother. Naomi had such a great impact on Ruth's life that Ruth had made up her mind to go with Naomi. It reminds me of how Joshua stood before the people and said, "Choose you this day whom ye will serve . . . but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD" (Joshua 24:15). Ruth made the decision to serve the God whom Naomi served.

### **A Mother's Attitude and Outlook**

The influence of a mother is great. The mother who can be truly proud of her children is not an indulgent mother. Instead, she is one who is firm but fair, whose love and affection for her family demand respect. She is willing to sacrifice only when the purpose is worth the sacrifice. She does not give them everything they want, but she is ever mindful of what they need. At times her children may think she is a hard mother, until they grow old enough to understand, and when that time comes, they will always remember her with deepest affection and utmost respect. Sometimes as a youth I thought my mother was hard about certain things.

My mother was not always very vocal, but when she spoke, her mind was made up and unchangeable. Her word was the unwritten law,

and we all understood that. Those who did not abide by it received the consequences. You may say, "I thought fathers laid down the law." They do, but the mother is one who enforces the rule because the father is not home all the time. Sometimes as a child, I lost sight of my father being the one who was the lawgiver because when I was not in school, my father was either working or in bed sleeping, because he worked different shifts. He was not always with us, but my mother was. Although I thought she seemed hard on me, it was always for my good. Mothers, let me encourage you about something. If you are too hard, you can loosen up; however, if you are too easy, you will have a difficult time tightening up.

An eight-year-old child wrote: "Mothers are the ladies that you live with if you are not an orphan. They are very useful, especially at night when you are sick. Mothers rock babies and girls every night, but boys have to pretend that they do not like it and only allow it when no one else is around. They make you wash your ears every day, and they can tell if you do not brush your teeth, even if you wet the toothbrush."

I do not know how my mother knew so much. Sometimes we children joked about our mother having eyes in the back of her head. Mothers are a very precious commodity. We lack true mothers today, and sad to say, in some cases we lack true mothers in the house of God. We need true, godly mothers. A mother's influence will be seen in the attitudes that her children convey.

As a mother, if you have a positive attitude, if you are an optimist, your children will have a positive attitude and will be optimistic. They will be more likely to look on the bright side of things rather than the dark side. If you have an attitude of being encouraging, of being successful, of perseverance, and of endurance, that same attitude will be shown in the atti-

tudes of your children. On the other hand, if you are a pessimist, always looking on the dark side and expecting the worst, that same attitude will be seen in your children. Your influence is powerful. To a certain extent, their qualities, their personalities, and their makeup is due to a mother's influence. A mother's influence can be seen in the ambitions that her children have.

### **Being a Proper Role Model**

I want you to read what Thomas Edison, the great inventor, said concerning his mother: "I did not have my mother long, but she cast over me an influence which has lasted all my life. The good effects of her early training, I could never lose. If it had not been for her appreciation and her faith in me at a critical time in my experience, I should never likely have become an inventor. I was always a careless boy with a mother of different mental caliber. I should have turned out badly, but her firmness, her sweetness, and her goodness were potent powers to keep me in the right path. My mother was the making of me, and the memory of her will always be a blessing to me."

It burdens my heart whenever I see Church of God daughters seeking worldly careers. They graduate from school and enter college; but sad to say, many young people have lost their experience with God by going away to college. It has proven to be detrimental to their Christian experience. I am not telling you not to go to college, but I am warning you that it can be very detrimental to a young person's experience with God. This is not something that I am guessing at. I have witnessed it. Young daughters go to college, get their degrees, and come out of college with certain plans and ambitions. I have not seen in the Word of God where God has ever advised young ladies to be career persons. The Bible does not back that up.

As a mother, you have a responsibility to teach your daughters

what they should be when they grow up, what they should desire, and what their ambitions ought to be. You need to encourage them, counsel them, and train them in the way they ought to go. Young men in the church need good wives. A young man needs to have a job and a career, and he needs a good wife to be supportive of him and to be a helpmeet to him in the home. Also, the world needs good role models in Church of God mothers. To whom can the world look for the proper role models and examples if it cannot find them in the church? My wife and I are not raising our daughters to be career persons. We are raising them to be good wives. Shame on you, young lady, if you do not know how to cook a meal.

Let me tell you about one stipulation my father-in-law required of his daughter before he would allow her to marry me. He required that she prepare a full course meal unassisted. How many young ladies today can prepare a full course meal? Every young lady ought to be able to cook. Some young ladies do not even know how to fry an egg. What are you raising your daughters to be? What are your desires for your children? What are their ambitions?

### **Guard Against Worldliness**

Sometimes a mother's influence can be seen in the friends that her children choose. What kinds of friends do your sons and daughters have? With whom do they associate? First Corinthians 15:33 says that "evil communications corrupt good manners." You can raise your child to be the most well behaved and polite child, but if you allow that child to associate with those who have bad manners, the goodness of your child will not rub off on the evil in the other child. The evil in the other child will rub off on your child. If in a group of ten children, nine of them have influenza, and you put the one healthy child in with those nine other children, those

nine other children will affect the well child.

My mother absolutely forbade me to associate with some boys in our neighborhood. She would not allow me to go to some of their houses. She said: "If they want to play ball with you, they can come to our home and play ball. We have a big yard." My mother loved me. I have seen some children associate with certain crowds, and I thought: "How did they ever get in with that crowd? They do not belong there. I know their parents."

Mothers have a responsibility to influence their children to have the right companions and good people with whom they associate. If you see your child associating with someone of whom you disapprove, you have the God-given right to step up to your child, take him by the arm, and lead him away and say, "You come with me."

If he asks why, you can reply, "I'll tell you later." When you can get him alone, then you can let him know that he does not belong with that person. I do not want my children to become corrupted and ruined.

A mother's influence can be seen in how her children dress. You must be careful, because the world is crowding in. Often children want to style themselves after the world, after students with whom they attend school, and their worldly friends. We must hold the Bible standard. The world is creeping in, and godliness is leaving some children.

Some young men like to show off their arms. They are full of pride. If they have strength, let them show it working in the field. Your son may lift weights and work out and wear tight shirts, but a godly mother will not permit her son to run around that way. My mother did not allow me to run around with sleeveless shirts. She taught me to keep my body covered and to save it for the one I love.

Mothers should teach their daughters that if they run around

showing any part of their bosom, they are showing their nakedness. That is worldliness, and it does not belong in the Church of God. Your influence will be seen in the way your children dress. Do they dress sloppy? My mother taught me to dress neatly. We did not have much money, but we took care of the clothes that we had. As a mother, you have a responsibility. Your children are representatives of you.

### **Discipline and Requiring Obedience**

In Proverbs 29:15 Solomon said that "a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame." You need to raise your children in the way that is right. A mother's influence will be seen in the discipline and the conduct of her child. How does your child behave himself or herself? I repeat, a mother's influence will have an impact on the child's behavior.

Whenever my mother and father were invited to people's homes, normally they had us sit down beside them; and that is where we stayed. We did not take off running through the house, up the stairs, into the kitchen, or outside. My parents required discipline. If we were allowed to leave our parent's side, it was because one of the children where we were visiting came and asked if we could go to their room or play baseball or something with them; then we would ask our parents if we could go.

I do not see parents doing that very much anymore. Where is the discipline today? Children still need it. The only way to have discipline in your home is to require it. As a parent, you must not make it an option. Too many parents make discipline an option, but it should not be. Obedience is a must, and discipline is a must.

Titus 2:3-5 reads: "The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; That

they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed." We have a great responsibility to show the world what the Church of God is. Shame on you if you are causing the Word of God to be blasphemed.

The Bible lets us know that the young women are to be instructed by the older women, the mothers of Israel. There is a need for instruction to be given from the older women to the younger. A pastor's wife is set up as an example. It is not always something that she desires, but it is necessary. We need mothers in Israel to teach the younger women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, and to be discreet. The word *discreet* means "to be careful of what one says or does; to keep silent or to preserve confidences when necessary." Young mother, you need to be discreet and careful about what you say and do.

Another good word Paul used is *chaste*, which means "pure, decent, and modest in nature and behavior." Your behavior has much to do with being a child of God. As a mother, your nature and your behavior have a great influence upon your children and upon how they behave and conduct themselves. The influence of a mother will have a direct effect on what kind of adults her children will become. Your daughter will develop into someone similar to you.

### **A Priceless Treasure**

One of my older sisters always complained that our mother was so strict when we were growing up. Our mother held the line, and my sisters did not touch their hair with the scissors, and they did not dress immodestly. They wore loose dresses, skirts, and blouses, and they were not made with see-through material. They dressed like young ladies of the Church of God, and

they conducted themselves as young ladies. My sister who spoke of how hard our mother was said in recent years, "You know, I thank God for how strict Mother raised us." Oh, it was hard then, and sometimes it seems that way to young people, but it was best, and my sister is thankful today.

Again, the influence of a mother has a direct effect on what kind of adults her children become. When the children are small, people may come around and say, "I can tell he is yours." They can tell by the physical appearance. However, I trust that as years go by, people can tell they belong to us by the way they conduct themselves, not just by the way they look. Parents whose children grow up to be godly have sweet fruit to partake of. Children have something to rejoice in and to be happy about if they have parents who have raised them in the ways of God.

If you have a godly mother, you have a priceless treasure. I lost my mother in 2006, and I think of her every day. I am very thankful for the godly mother that I had. I am thankful that I took time out of my busy schedule and made sacrifices to do things for my mother. It is not always easy to find the time to run over to Mom and Dad's house and visit. I have no regrets for any sacrifice of time or money that I spent helping my mother and my father.

If your mother is living today, you need to talk to her often, whether she is saved or unsaved. You need to let her know that you love her. No matter what she has done, she is still your mother. She gave you life, and she cared for you. She cared enough to bring you into this world. If you have a godly mother, you have much more to be thankful for. You should not fail to take time out to spend with her. It will be worth it. The time will come when you will reflect back on your mother's life and your life, and you do not want to have any regrets. You do not want to go through the

rest of your life sorrowful because you did not do everything that you could have or should have done for your parents.

### Seek God for Wisdom

Proverbs 31:27-31 describes a mother like this: "She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness. Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her. Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all. Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised. Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates." This is a good testimony of a mother.

As a mother, you should consider the seriousness of your influence. What kind of influence are you having on your children? How are you raising them? What do you want them to be? What are you instilling in them as children? It is very important, and I trust that God will help you to be the best mother possible.

If you are becoming a parent for the first time, you need to realize how serious it is, how little you know, and how much you need to know. You need to pray and ask God for the wisdom to raise your children. It takes much wisdom.

Sometimes it will grieve you because you messed up somewhere. If you have failed, make it right, go forward, and ask God for help. God will help you. James 1:5 tells us, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God . . . and it shall be given him." God will give you understanding and guidance. Also, you can go to a mother in Israel and ask her for good advice. She has been down that road, and she can help you to know some things that maybe you cannot see from where you are. It is not a shame to humble yourself and ask for advice and guidance. By doing so, you are not saying that you are not a good mother. You are

showing that you want to be a better mother, and any mother in Israel will help you as much as she can.

If the Spirit of God has spoken to your heart, you need to be honest with God and pray about it. Let God know what your heart's desire is. If you have failed, you need to tell God about your failings and ask Him to help you from this day forward.

(Compact Disc TR-076M)

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### My Mother's Bible

*This Book is all that's left me now,  
Tears will unbidden start;  
With faltering lip and throbbing brow  
I press it to my heart.  
For many generations past,  
Here is our family tree;  
My mother's hand this Bible clasped;  
She, dying, gave it to me.*

*Ah! well do I remember those  
Whose names these records bear,  
Who 'round the hearthstone used  
to close  
After the evening prayer,  
And speak of what these pages said,  
In tones my heart would thrill!  
Though they are with the silent dead,  
Here they are living still!*

*My father read this Holy Book  
To brothers, sisters, dear;  
How calm was my poor mother's look  
Who loved God's Word to hear.  
Her angel face—I see it yet!  
What thronging memories come!  
Again that little group is met  
Within the halls of home!*

*Thou truest friend man ever knew,  
Thy constancy I've tried;  
Where all were false I found  
thee true!*

*My counselor and guide.  
The mines of earth no treasure give  
That could this volume buy;  
In teaching me the way to live,  
It taught me how to die.*

Selected

Luke 16:1 And he said also unto his disciples, There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods.

2 And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward.

3 Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed.

4 I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.

5 So he called every one of his lord's

debtors unto him, and said unto the first, How much owest thou unto my lord?

6 And he said, An hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty.

7 Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, An hundred measures of wheat. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and write fourscore.

8 And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.

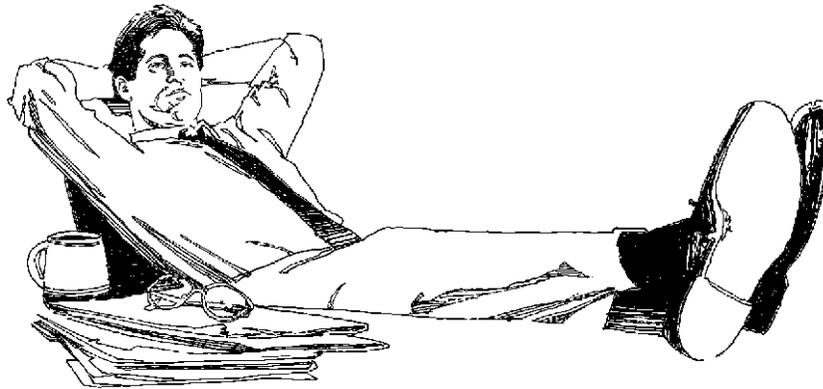
9 And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.

10 He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.

11 If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?

12 And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?

# The Unjust Steward



*Brother C. H. Dickerson*

## **The Time of Christ's Coming Is Getting Close**

I want you to especially consider verse 8 of this Scripture text, which says, "And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light." Life is most uncertain. We have no knowledge of exactly when the end of time is coming or when our individual lives

are going to end, but we do know that the end of time is coming soon.

God has given us many signs so that we can know beyond a shadow of doubt that the time of Christ's Second Coming is getting close. Jesus taught that in the last days men's hearts would fail them (Luke 21:26). He was not talking about people having heart attacks and lying down to die. He was saying that people would be serving God and rejoicing in the things of God,

and their hearts would fail them spiritually. In other words, He was saying they would lose heart and backslide and go back into sin or go back to Babylon.

In Revelation, Chapter 3, in the letter that Christ addressed to the Laodicean church, He spoke of their being lukewarm. Today we can see this condition. We can see men's hearts failing in the day and age in which we are living. Today some people have turned to Babylon and

have backslidden, and they are living far from God. Why? Their hearts have failed them. This shows us that we are very close to the end of time. This is a time when we ought to get down to business in serving God.

God placed the rainbow in the sky after the Flood as a covenant that He would never again destroy the earth by water (Genesis 9:13-15). He said the next time He will destroy the world by fire (2 Peter 3:7). Even with this knowledge, people are not making preparation for eternity.

One time we went to a garage sale, and a man was sitting there puffing on a cigarette and drinking a bottle of beer. He and others there were cursing and saying things that they should not have been saying. I spoke to him, and in the course of conversation asked where he worked. He said, "Oh, I'm a minister." Then he said his grandfather had been a preacher as well as someone else in his family. All at once he claimed to be a Christian. Oh, how spiritual he tried to appear! My friend, this is what we are facing in the religious world today.

When you get salvation, it does not matter whether you are alone or surrounded by others, the Bible standard is the same. You will live holy. You will not be puffing on a cigarette or using offensive language. You must be pure in the sight of God. God demands that you are pure in order to be His servant. He demands that the Word of God is preached and that you search your heart. You need to make sure that you straighten up if you get off course.

### **Eternity Is Just Ahead**

In verse 8 of our text of Scripture, the rich man commended the unjust steward, not because the steward was dishonest (God has never approved of dishonesty) or because he took advantage of his employer, but because he looked to the future and made plans for the future. God is still commending

people who make plans for the future. Why? None of us is going to live on this earth forever.

In this parable Jesus let us know that the office of stewardship was about to be taken from that man. He realized that his stewardship was just about gone, and he needed to do something to prevent that from happening. My friend, you can sit under the Gospel and let little things come into your heart and lose your soul in hell. God wants you to allow the Word to search your heart so that you can see where you stand.

Eternity is just ahead of every one of us. We are not like the animal that has no soul. There is no such thing as reincarnation, or the rebirth of the soul into another body. After you draw your last breath, you will either go to Heaven or hell. The Bible lets us know there is a great gulf fixed between the two places, and no one can go from one place to the other. Wherever you end up, either in Heaven or in hell, you will be there for all eternity. You need to realize this now, while you have time to choose.

I am determined, by the grace of God, that I am not going to miss Heaven. The Bible tells us there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth in hell (Matthew 13:50). No doubt, you have been around people who have gritted their teeth. It gets on your nerves terribly. During World War II, one night we were in combat and a group of German soldiers in a certain locality was sniping at soldiers and killing them. Our unit was sent in to destroy that pocket of German soldiers.

One particular day it had been warm and later it rained, so our clothes and all our things were wet. That night it turned so cold that our teeth were chattering. Finally, one man in our unit was able to drop off to sleep, but because he began to snore loudly, we had to awaken him. We did not know where the Germans might have been hiding; they could have been only five feet away. That was a miserable night. It is miserable when you are very tired

and someone keeps you awake through snoring or chattering teeth.

I relate this incident to let you know that as miserable as that time was, nothing could be compared to the torments of hell. The Word of God says that in hell there will be moaning, groaning, and gnashing of teeth. There will be torments and agonizing. My friend, it will be worth whatever it costs to make Heaven your home. It will be worth straightening up and walking with God. You need to make sure that you measure to God's eternal Truth, and then do not lose out. It will be worth it all to see Jesus.

You are here for only a short time, but your eternal destiny will be forever. Your destiny will not be determined by your wife, a preacher, or a Sunday school teacher. If you make Heaven your home, it will be your choice. If you make hell your eternal home, it will be because you chose to override what the preacher said and chose to override all the words of warning. You can never say it was someone else's fault. It will be simply because you did not heed God's Word. Your choosing in this lifetime is for all eternity. Someday your life on this earth will be over. Each of us has an appointment with death. Hebrews 9:27 says, "And as it is appointed unto men once to die. . . ." God has already written your name on the appointment calendar, and you are going to keep that appointment, because no one can get out of it. The actions of your life need to be based on eternal things and not on temporal things.

In Job 7:7 Job said, "O remember that my life is wind." That is just what your life is, and that is what my life is. The wind can disperse suddenly; likewise, your life can end instantly. Job said that after that happens, you will go to your long home where you will spend eternity. Once death comes to call, there will never be another opportunity to change your eternal destiny. It will be too late to apologize and make amends.

## Consider Your Future

In our Scripture text Jesus commended the steward for considering his future. In the latter part of verse 8 He said, "The children of this world are . . . wiser than the children of light." How true this is!

I remember when I was in the eighth grade, each student was given a paper to fill out to choose which of three courses of study he wanted to take in high school. The choices were general, business, or college preparation courses. We were to choose what career option we wanted in life. If one's goal was to become a dentist or a doctor, then that student would take courses to prepare for that profession.

Today many young people are careful to seek a job with security. Few people want just a day-to-day job, so they try to find a job with security. Some learn a trade and try to get a job that pays into a pension fund so that when they reach retirement age, they will have money to live on. They strive to save a few dollars in the bank and try to pay off their house in preparation for retirement.

Others buy investments and insurance plans to prepare for the future, materially speaking. However, when they come to the spiritual part of life, they put off getting saved. When the preacher preaches and uncovers their need, they put off salvation for some other time. They do not walk in the light they have received. Consequently, they do not see the power of God working in their lives.

If everyone who claims to be a child of God would walk in every bit of light that he knows and would maintain close contact with God, we could turn this world upside down. If only twelve people accomplished all that was done in Jesus' day, imagine what hundreds of people could do in our day. However, because people are not walking in the light, little things have entered their lives and hindered the work of God. They would not even consider

robbing a bank or doing other bad things, but they do not mind turning their tongues loose on someone. They do not mind finding fault with the preacher or criticizing the people of God. They fail to realize that kind of behavior will damn their souls as quickly as any other sin.

Many people put off getting saved, thinking they can do it at the last hour before their death. They want to live to please the flesh, but when they get injured or become ill and have to go to the hospital, they call for the preacher. Some play around with religion and keep company with people who call themselves preachers, but they have no power. Sometimes when individuals get sick, they call the preacher to come and pray for them. Often they want to get saved because they think they are going to die. They put off salvation, but God wants people to get saved early in life so that He can use them. He wants them to work for Him and to be lights in this world. The church is a city set on a hill so that others can look and see what it is to have salvation.

## Be Not Careless

Some people get saved and then fail to walk in the light. Some people are careless about church attendance. Hebrews 10:25 says, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." We need to be at the house of God at every opportunity to get help for ourselves and to encourage one another. The saints of God need encouragement, as well as the preacher. He does not enjoy preaching to empty seats. Your responsibility is to be in your home congregation whenever possible, not somewhere else.

The Bible speaks of exhorting one another, which means to encourage one another. Everyone needs encouragement: the song leader, the Sunday school teachers, the pastor, and everyone else. Visi-

tors coming in hungry for the Truth are looking for something. They do not want to see empty seats. They want to see people who are excited about salvation. They want to see people filled with the power of God. They are tired of dead religion that has nothing to offer. They want to go where people are excited about the preaching of God's eternal Word.

Again, Jesus said in verse 8 of our Scripture text that "the children of this world . . . are wiser than the children of light" because they made plans for the future. As the children of light, we must not be neglectful or become careless in working for God. We must not get careless in trying to win souls for the Lord. Some people have a selfish spirit. They do not consider their impact on others as long as they can do their own thing. Our first and foremost desire ought to be to please God. If there was ever a time when we needed to receive encouragement and to encourage others, it is today. The world does not encourage the Christian to press on. The devil does not give encouragement.

Some time ago a man came out of a Baptist church and began to attend our congregation. He was bound by the cigarette habit. As I preached one message, I said: "You can't be bound and free at the same time. You can't be bound with cigarettes and be free. God wants to set you free." That man knelt at the altar and laid his cigarettes on the altar and received the victory. If you love God as you ought, you will walk in the light, my friend.

## Stay on Full Alert

Many people do not care about their soul's destiny. The Word of God describes a people who were asleep; they were lukewarm. In other words, they were not carrying out the plan of salvation in a state of full alertness. Child of God, you need to be fully alert, because you may never see the end of another day. We are living in the last days of

time. Jesus said when you see the fig tree budding, you know that spring is close, and when you see men's hearts failing, you know the end is near. Are you seeing men's hearts failing? Their hearts are failing to keep the Truth they once knew and lived. They have walked away from God. Their hearts have failed them. They did not have the courage to stand up for God's eternal Truth. The Word of God lets you know that when life is over and the roll is called up yonder, only the true believers will enter Heaven. Matthew 7:14 reads, "Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." You can be one of the few if you so desire. It is entirely up to you.

The Prophet Isaiah said in Isaiah 58:1, "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression." The man of God is to let people know where they stand with God.

One time while I was in the army, we were put on full alert. We were to get ready to board a ship to go to Europe. During that time, we practiced what they called "dry runs." We had to pack everything and be ready to go. Then they would say: "This is just a dry run. Go back to camp. You are dismissed." So we went back and unpacked everything and put it back on the shelf. They did this several times, but one day, just as before, they said, "We are going to go." Several soldiers thought this was foolish, so they left their duffle bags with a lot of their papers and things, but this time the commander said, "Up, up," and we boarded the ship and left.

Another time at the Battle of the Bulge in Luxembourg, Germany, the snow was about one and a half feet deep. We dug trenches under it and were lying down in them. The commander said, "Be careful. Tonight we are on full alert." So we climbed into our sleeping bags with our shoes on, our rifles, our pistols and everything we needed. It was not

long until the alert came, and we were ready. Child of God, if you are not careful, you will not stay on full alert, and you will fail to do your best to win souls for God. As a result, you will not have the pay coming to you that you could have had. You need to stay on full alert all the time. This could be your last day on earth. Surely you are looking forward to tomorrow, next week, and next year, but you have no assurance of the future. Therefore, you need to do all you can. Day by day, you must work to awaken people, to show them the Truth and to show others what God expects. There is no time to let down.

### **Where Is Your Treasure?**

Many people are involved with worldliness and unrighteousness by their overaggressiveness in acquiring the world's goods. Some are not burning the bridges behind them. Whenever God shows you light on something, you need to walk in that light and burn that bridge behind you. Sometimes people get saved and see the light on things, yet they refuse to obey that light. Sometimes they hold things back just in case they decide to turn back, so they will not have to buy all those things again. My friend, you need to sell out to God completely. You can stay true to God if you really want to. If you are determined, God will give you the grace to endure whatever circumstances you are in. There is grace for you at school, at home, and at work. You need to burn the bridges behind you and get rid of whatever the Lord has shown you that you ought to get rid of. May the Lord help you to keep your sights on heavenly things and not on earthly attractions.

In Acts 4:32-34 we read: "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. And with great power gave the apostles witness of the

resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all. Neither was there any among them that lacked . . ."

The Bible tells us that those who had houses and lands sold them and laid the money at the Apostles' feet. They had an accumulation of goods because one time they were close to them, but when they received salvation, their love toward God was more precious to them than their possessions. I am not saying you should sell your house and your car, but I am saying that you need to have a deeper love for Christ. Your love for Him should far exceed your love for any material possessions that you have.

In Luke 12:33-35 Jesus said: "Sell that ye have, and give alms [tithes and offerings]; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning." Jesus made it quite clear that where your treasure is, that is where your heart is. Worldly gains and treasures of this earth can control your heart. People today will pack up their belongings and leave a good spiritual congregation to go someplace where there is no Truth to feed their souls because they can make a little more money. God wants to have first place in your life. You ought to put God ahead of everything else. He will take care of you.

Jesus exhorted concerning this very thing in Matthew 6:19-21 when He said: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

The Apostle Paul instructed those having much earthly goods to use them with eternity in view. In

1 Timothy 6:17 he said, "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded . . . ." He said to charge those who have riches not to think too highly of themselves. There is nothing wrong with having money, but the attitude one takes toward it can be harmful. My friend, if you give money to the church, you should not try to tell the congregation or the pastor what to do with it.

### **Be Not Conformed to This World**

Paul, in writing to the church at Colosse, said in Colossians 3:1, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above . . . ." You must set your affections, or your love, on heavenly things which are above, where God is. In Romans 12:2 Paul said we should not be conformed to this world. Whenever the world comes out with new fads, the Christian should not follow in its footsteps. My friend, all the world has to do is to come out with a miniskirt or a maxiskirt, and if you are not careful, you will follow after the same thing. The Word of God says to dress in modest apparel.

This world and its goods are only temporal. All that you have belongs to God. You are a steward over those things, and you will have to give an account to God for what you do with them. God gives talents to each person, and you will be judged by how you use what He has given you. Some might have many talents, and others might have only one, but in the eyes of God, they all are equal. How you use your talent is entirely up to you, but you must give an account to God.

In Matthew 25:14-30 we read about the master who gave talents to his servants. Later, he asked one, "What did you do with the five talents that I gave you?" He said, "I earned five more." He asked another, "What did you do with the two talents that you were given?" He replied, "I earned two more." He asked another, "What did you do with the one?" He answered, "I went

and hid it." The master said to him, "You are a wicked and slothful servant." Then he took the talent from him and gave it to the one who had ten talents. God wants you to use whatever talent He has given you for His glory. If you are not careful, you will think your talent is inferior to those given to others, and then you will hold back and not use it. That is nothing but the devil talking to you. God gave you the talent, so you ought to use it. Not everyone can preach or lead the song service or be a Sunday school teacher, but you can sing with the congregation. You can raise your hand to encourage the preacher. You can pray for someone who is going through a hard trial. You have a responsibility, and you will have to give an account to God for how you use it.

God asked the earthly-minded person in Isaiah 22:16a, "What has thou here?" Friend, what do you have here that you think you can take with you when you leave this world? God continued in this verse to talk about one who had hewed out sepulchers on high and made a graven habitation for himself in a rock. My friend, you have no permanent place on this earth. There is nothing you can take with you when you die. You will go out the same way you came into this world. I am not saying that you ought to get rid of everything, but I am warning you not to put those things above the heavenly things. You must not put material things above God.

### **Keep God in His Rightful Place**

In Psalm 17:13-14 David said: "Arise, O LORD, disappoint him, cast him down: deliver my soul from the wicked, which is thy sword: From men which are thy hand, O LORD, from men of the world, which have their portion in this life, and whose belly thou fillest with thy hid treasure: they are full of children, and leave the rest of their substance to their babes." He was saying that you cannot take anything with you.

A man whom I once worked for

had a grocery business, and as far as I know, he never ate a good head of lettuce or a good banana. He went through the produce every day and picked out bananas that were half-rotten and the heads of lettuce that were half-rotten and took them home and ate the good part in order to save money. The man saved his money and purchased a large estate. He had two daughters, and when he passed away, his money was divided equally between the two daughters.

One morning the husband of one of those daughters turned on the gas stove while his wife was still sleeping in bed. He went on to college, and she was overcome by the gas fumes and died. He killed her to get her inheritance money. Did that grocer gain anything by eating half-rotten foods? No! It was just as the Psalmist said when he penned, ". . . and leave the rest of their substance to their babes."

There is no need to get excited about laying up a lot of material goods here, because you are going to die and leave them all behind. There is nothing wrong with gaining wealth as long as you keep God in His rightful place. If you give God what He deserves and a little more on top of that, He will keep blessing you. The more you give to Him, the more He will bless you. You cannot out give God. The reason many people are going broke financially is that they try to withhold what they have from God. You will not get by withholding anything from God.

James 4:14 reads, "Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." We are at the mercy of God. We do not know what is going to happen tomorrow. James asked the question, "For what is your life?" Only God knows what tomorrow holds. You have no assurance of life; it is most unsure.

Solomon wrote in Ecclesiastes 9:5 that "the living know that they shall die." We know we must die,

yet most people ignore this knowledge. Again, Paul stated in Hebrews 9:27, "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." Your appointment has already been made. You can make a dental appointment when a tooth is painful and throbbing, and if it quits hurting prior to your appointment, you can cancel the appointment. However, your appointment with death is appointed by God, and it cannot be canceled.

You are going to die sometime. You may hope to have another fifty or sixty years, but you do not know whether or not you will live that long. A few years ago a sixteen-year-old boy in our area was playing basketball, and he died of a heart attack on the basketball court. You have no assurance when you get in an automobile to go somewhere that you will arrive there alive. An earthquake or a terrorist's bomb could kill you suddenly. After you die, you will face the Judgment. If you are unsaved, you will hear God say, "Depart from me, you worker of iniquity." If you are truly saved, you will hear Him say, "Enter in, good and faithful servant." Only the good and faithful servants will enter Heaven. All others will be cast into hell.

### **Making Preparation for Eternity**

It would behoove you to prepare for eternity. Psalm 90:9-10 states: "For all our days are passed away in thy wrath: we spend our years as a tale that is told. The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away."

Saints of God ought to encourage others to serve God. In Luke 11:52 Jesus said, "Woe unto you, lawyers [the Greek says 'doctors of the law'; in other words, preachers]! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered." How were they

doing that? They would not accept God's eternal Truth. Today many people will not accept holiness, and they do their best to talk against it and hinder others from accepting the Truth.

I well remember attending a certain camp meeting many years ago. Three individuals there followed me around and tried to convince me that the message I heard there was false. They were trying to tear down the message of Truth. Finally, I told them, "I don't want to hear anymore about it; I am going to hear the message." You cannot oppose God's eternal Truth and get by. My friend, if you try to discourage someone from living godly, God will take you off the scene of action one of these days, because God hates those who sow discord.

Proverbs 6:12-19 reads: "A naughty person, a wicked man, walketh with a froward mouth [in other words, you must guard your mouth and not let it run like a trotting horse]. He winketh with his eyes, he speaketh with his feet, he teacheth with his fingers; Frowardness is in his heart, he deviseth mischief continually; he soweth discord. Therefore [because he soweth discord] shall his calamity come suddenly; suddenly shall he be broken without remedy.

"These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren." God hates all those other things, but if you sow discord, God hates *you*. Everything that God hates, He destroys.

God created this world and everything in it. He looked at all that He had created and said, "This is very good." All that God had created was so beautiful. Years passed by, and the people turned away from God. A few years later, God

spoke to Noah and told him to build an ark. God was sick of the sin, and He said He was going to destroy it all, and He did.

In the Old Testament you can read about Sodom and Gomorrah and the sin committed there. God hated it, and He rained fire and brimstone upon those cities. It is estimated that between two and three million people died. God destroys everything that He hates. Again, the Scripture says: "These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven . . . he that soweth discord among brethren" (Proverbs 6:16-19).

If you sow discord among brethren, God will destroy you. Friend, you are *not* getting by when you talk about someone and destroy others' confidence in that person. You are not getting by when you belittle someone else and make little remarks about that person. Sometimes you can damage someone's character, not by what you say, but by *how* you say something. For example, someone may say, "Isn't Brother So-and-So a good man?" You may say, "Well, I *guess* so." You have killed that person's confidence in Brother So-and-So. Although you did not say anything against him, from that time on, that person will doubt Brother So-and-So and watch him to find fault in him.

If you are guilty of that, you ought to seek repentance immediately, because you are heading for destruction. This is serious! God wants perfect unity. Jesus died on the Cross of Calvary and brought light to give us perfect unity in this seventh-seal age. When you destroy another person's influence by belittling that person, you are wrong. You need to get down on your knees and confess to God and ask forgiveness of the one you have wronged. God can fix anything that is not right if you ask. Are you guilty of sowing discord? If so, God is against you, and He will destroy you unless you repent. Nothing is worth the price of failing to make Heaven your home.

God has given us a standard to

measure to. Also, He has given us grace, His Spirit, and the power to measure to it. When you know the Truth, you are without excuse if you do not measure to the standard that God has given. The little things are destroying people's usefulness for

God. Song of Solomon 2:15 states, "Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes." Jesus made it quite clear that He was the vine in John 15:5. The little things that you

allow in your life will spoil your usefulness, and then God cannot use you.

(Cassette C-3023M)

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[Guest Editorial—continued from p. 13]  
to be in sight. God has a plan and a purpose in view for everything that comes into each individual's pathway. Whatever the dark cloud may be that comes to obscure your blue skies, you should never arrogantly question or charge the Lord foolishly. The Apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 12:7 referred to these misfortunes as "a thorn in the flesh." The Lord encouraged him in verse 9 with these words, "My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness."

Finally, the writer would like

to remind you that these undesirable situations are only channels through which God permits to come for the purpose of pruning, proving, and perfecting. If you willingly submit to these trials, they can work for and not against you, even though it may seem otherwise. Hebrews 10:36 tells us that we "have need of patience." It is extremely important to allow patience to do its perfect work. First Peter 5:10 tells us, "But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after ye have suffered a while, make you perfect,

stablish, strengthen, settle you."

Dear one, do not allow yourself to fall into the same condition old Israel did so many times as they murmured and complained against God and His plan. You can truly profit spiritually if you will ask God to help you to see the good in the trying circumstances of life. He wants all His children to grow and mature in spiritual things, and He will help each one in every phase of life.

Selected

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# Meeting Announcement

## KENSETT, AR

May 23  
May 24-25

**WEEKEND FELLOWSHIP MEETING:** Church of God, 409 Southeast 2<sup>nd</sup> St., Kensett, AR 72082  
Guest Speaker: Brother Ula C. Bland, Chicago, Illinois. Service time: 7:00 p.m.  
Evangelist: Brother Ron Hawkins, Port Republic, Maryland. Dinner will be served Saturday at 4:00 p.m. Saturday service time: 7:00 p.m. Sunday service times: Sunday school 10:00 a.m. and Sunday worship: 11:30 a.m. & 6:00 p.m. Lunch will be served after the Sunday morning service. For further information contact: Pastor Calvin L. Foster at telephone: 501-742-3006

*"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night."*

*Psalm 1:1-2*

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*We have special services for children, youth services, morning prayer services, inspirational singing, Holy Ghost preaching, divine healing, and fellowship with the saints.*

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