

# The Gospel Trumpeter

JUSTIFICATION

SANCTIFICATION

UNITY & TRUTH

"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

SOUNDING FORTH THE SEVENTH AND LAST TRUMPET

Vol. 38 November 2008 No. 11



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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PRAYER: If you need prayer, please phone or write:

Roger Decker, Pastor  
83 Decrow Ave.  
Newark, OH 43055

Email: [pastor@church-of-god-online.com](mailto:pastor@church-of-god-online.com)  
Phone: 740-344-2543 or 1-888-730-0461  
Fax: 740-344-4737  
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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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# Guest Editorial

*"Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without  
wavering; (for he is faithful that promised.)"*

*Hebrews 10:23*

## HOLD TIGHTLY TO FAITH

Surely we are living in perilous times that are full of uncertainty and turmoil. Satan is diligently working to discourage, confuse, and destroy as many souls as he possibly can. In almost any direction one might look, there seems to be surmounting problems, troubles, heartaches, and strife. Nation is rising against nation, creating tension, disagreement, and discord on every side.

Although the worldly picture may look dark and dismal, and the economic situation is becoming more frightening every day, let us be assured that God is still in control. It may seem as though situations are getting out of hand, but God in Heaven still sets the bounds of all things, and nothing can go any further than He allows. With sin and ungodliness on the upsurge, many hearts are failing for fear of things that are coming on the earth. Too often ones look on the circumstances instead of looking to and trusting in God. Because of this lack of faith, many people turn back from following the Lord. This world as well as the church is in a shaking time. It is time for the saints to get a tighter grip on God's unchanging Hand. This is not the time to give up the battle or quit in the race.

The words of the Prophet Joel proclaim, "The Lord will be the hope of his people" (Joel 3:16). The Lord has never lost a battle and He will never be defeated. It is the responsibility of each saint to draw up close to Christ. What encouragement He brings to the hearts and minds of His trusting children! Dear one, there may be many things in life that are beyond our human control, things that we may not be able to physically do anything about, but God is still

the Master of this universe. He is the only One who can calm the storms of life. He still has the power to calm the troubled sea. One old song says, "Sometimes God calms the storm, and sometimes He calms me." We must not allow our hearts to be overly troubled about things that are going on around us. This will only bring restlessness to our hearts and rob us of our peace with Christ. Dwelling too long on problems and troubles can also mar the hope we have in Him. David said in Psalm 42:5, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God." Now, as never before, we need to hold fast our connection with the Lord and refuse to be moved by things that are going on around us.

The secret to having overcoming victory lies in each of us staying true to God, living obediently to His Word and will, trusting Him regardless of how things look or the way circumstances are going. An old song says, "Hold to God's unchanging hand." Doing so assures one of never falling. Child of God, you must keep your confidence securely fixed in the Savior. Only He can see you through this troubled world victoriously. Men may fail and fall in the battle and nations may be defeated by oppression, but there is victory in Jesus! Keeping your faith fixed in Him who is invisible is important. Psalm 91:7 lets us know, "A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it will not come nigh thee." Why will it not come to you? Because you have a tight grip on God's hand. You are dwelling in the secret place of the Most High. Being in Christ is the only safe haven for the soul of man. When you hold fast to

[continued on page 27]



# When Humility Is Gone

*Brother Roger L. Decker*

## **Selective Obedience**

Many times when people get saved, they seem to think that will be the end of all life's struggles. God delivers them out of sin, and they are so thankful and so happy, but soon they find that life is a daily struggle and the battles are many. You can read of many people throughout God's Word who struggled. Some made it through those struggles, while others fell by the wayside. Let me remind you that flesh cannot overcome flesh. You cannot win this race in the flesh. There is no victory when individuals try to overcome their struggles in the flesh. We have example after example in the Word of God, in the Old Testament as well as the New.

In the Old Testament you can read of King Saul. The Bible says he was little in his own sight at one time. In other words, he did not

have much confidence in himself. He could not understand why the Lord would talk to him, and especially anoint him to be king over Israel. However, as time went on, King Saul had selective obedience. He obeyed some commands, but others he disobeyed. When the Lord first chose him to be king, he was very humble. The Word of God lets us know that Saul wanted the Lord to help him every step of the way.

Today many start the way King Saul did. They start by humbling themselves at an altar of prayer. They confess how needy they are, and they are very sorrowful for all the things they have done in disobedience to the Lord. They are very sorry that they have hurt the Lord.

In 1 Samuel, Chapter 8, we read that Samuel was getting old. Samuel had two sons, but they did not walk in the way of Samuel. The Bible says they turned after lucre: they took

bribes and perverted judgment. They were interested only in making money, so they accepted bribes and did not judge cases honestly. Then the elders rose up against Samuel and said they wanted a king, and they were very demanding about it. They wanted to be as other nations and have a king to rule over them. In reality, they did not want to hear the Prophets and the priests speak for God any longer.

This displeased Samuel greatly. So he pleaded with them and told them all that a king would do. Samuel let them know that when they got in trouble and wanted God to help them, He would not hear their cry. Samuel pleaded with the people not to go the route of having a king rule over them, but his pleading was to no avail. Therefore, the Lord told Samuel to hearken to their voices. The Lord told Samuel that the people had not rejected him, but

they had rejected the Lord. First Samuel 8:7 says, "And the LORD said unto Samuel, Harken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them."

Dear one, the problems that some people have in serving the Lord did not begin with their confession at an altar of prayer, but rather it was when God began to reign over them that they had a problem. Many times people go to an altar of prayer, and they are sincere at the time, but that is not all there is to living for God. They have a walk to walk, and they must allow God to reign in their lives. Some people go so far, but they run into something down the highway, just as King Saul did, and they have selective obedience: "Well, I'll serve God, but He can't expect me to do that." Look at Saul's walk during his tour of duty.

Today many people do not want the Lord to rule over them. Many say they cannot serve God because of this person or that person. All right, then why do they not go on living for God when they are away from this person or that person? The fact is, they do not want the Lord to rule over them.

### **Saul's Humility**

This is the description of Saul. In 1 Samuel 9:20-21 Samuel, speaking to Saul, said: "And as for thine asses that were lost three days ago, set not thy mind on them; for they are found. And on whom is all the desire of Israel? Is it not on thee, and on all thy father's house? And Saul answered and said, Am not I a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel? and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? wherefore then speakest thou so to me?" In other words, Saul was saying, "Why are you talking to me this way? My family is the least of all the families. I am from the smallest tribe of Benjamin."

Another translation says, "Don't

worry about the asses that were lost three days ago; they have been found. Israel now wants you and all your father's family. Saul answered, But I am from the tribe of Benjamin; it is the smallest tribe in Israel, and my family group is the smallest in the tribe of Benjamin. Why do you say Israel wants me?" Notice the humility that came forth from within Saul. Saul knew that what he was up against was an impossible task without the Lord as his helper.

Today many start the same way. They will testify (and I believe they really mean it at the time), "Why did God, of all the people in the world, choose me?" Dear one, we all are frail and needy creatures. May God help us to stay humble before Him. May God help us not to get puffed up within ourselves as if we are something. In the flesh it will not take much to cause you to fall flat on your face.

Look at how Saul started. God moved upon him in a special way. There was no doubt that God's anointing was upon him, and he won battle after battle. However, along with those victories came a swelling of pride. He was losing his humility. The Psalmist said in Psalm 40:17, "But I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon me: thou art my help and my deliverer; make no tarrying, O my God." In Psalm 70:5 we read, "But I am poor and needy: make haste unto me, O God: thou art my help and my deliverer; O LORD, make no tarrying."

Saul was on his way. God was his God, and it looked as though everything Saul did for a while was right. He started right. The high priest was Samuel, and Saul was listening to him. Saul wanted Samuel's blessing on everything. God was sending word through Samuel, and Saul was having victory after victory. However, the journey was not over for Saul. A test of loyalty and a test of faithfulness was coming his way.

You have to keep in mind that Samuel did not want Israel to be

governed by a king, and he let his displeasure be known to Israel. He went through a whole discourse of what all a king would do. He despised the thought that Israel would even ask for a king to rule over them. He showed his displeasure when he addressed the people as he did. At the same time, he was willing to submit to the will of the people as long as God allowed it, but he was not about to do so until God said, "Go ahead and anoint a king."

Something happened to Saul along the way. He was no longer needy, as he once had been, and he was getting very independent. The burden of my heart is that when people start serving God, they need to stay as humble as they were at an altar of prayer. I am speaking of remaining in a condition where you feel your need of God every day.

### **Saul's Test of Faith and Obedience**

First Samuel 13:6-14 reads: "When the men of Israel saw that they were in a strait, (for the people were distressed,) then the people did hide themselves in caves, and in thickets, and in rocks, and in high places, and in pits. And some of the Hebrews went over Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. As for Saul, he was yet in Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling. And he tarried seven days, according to the set time that Samuel had appointed: but Samuel came not to Gilgal; and the people were scattered from him. And Saul said, Bring hither a burnt offering to me [here he was overstepping; he was not supposed to even touch a burnt offering, let alone offer it], and peace offerings. And he offered the burnt offering.

"And it came to pass, that as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel came; and Saul went out to meet him, that he might salute him. And Samuel said, What hast thou done? And Saul said, Because I saw that the people [I want you to notice

that in every one of Saul's transgressions, he put all the blame for his transgressions on the people] were scattered from me, and that thou camest not within the days appointed, and that the Philistines gathered themselves together at Michmash; Therefore said I, The Philistines will come down now upon me to Gilgal, and I have not made supplication unto the LORD: I forced myself therefore, and offered a burnt offering.

"And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the LORD thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the LORD have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever. But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the LORD hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept that which the LORD commanded thee."

In this transgression it seems that this trial for Saul was one of faith and obedience. Saul failed in this trial. Verse 1 of that chapter lets us know that he had been king for two years, and he was not used to being defeated. So he was getting ready to go into a battle, and the men were trembling; moreover, Saul himself was afraid. Therefore, he stepped into the high priest's position and offered a burnt offering and a peace offering. He assumed a position that he was definitely forbidden by God to perform. Samuel rebuked him, but Saul did not seem to show any signs of humility or repentance. Samuel gave him an open rebuke and let him know that God had planned to use him to establish His kingdom, but not after his disobedience. You would have thought that Saul would have broken down and humbled himself, but he did not do that.

I repeat, when Saul overstepped, he always blamed the people. Saul lost his ability to lead. The Spirit of God was not on Saul as it was in the beginning. This was the reason that Saul was shaking in his boots when

Goliath came out. All Israel was behind him, which was the same position they were in when Saul offered the burnt offering. They were trembling behind Saul. If Saul had been where he needed to be, those men would have had confidence.

After this disobedience, Saul kept pressing onward. He lost the heart of one who was humble, of one who was poor and needy. The move that Saul made called for repentance, but he failed to repent. Then God was disappointed with him, and Samuel was upset; yet Saul pressed on as if he was ignoring the words that Samuel had spoken. We do not read that Saul ever broke down and wept over his disobedience and asked Samuel to pray with him. No, he pressed on over the top of it, knowing that God was displeased and knowing that Samuel was a mouthpiece for God.

#### **Saul's Test of Loyalty**

The Lord gave Saul another test of loyalty. First Samuel 15:1-13 states: "Samuel also said unto Saul, The LORD sent me to anoint thee to be king over his people, over Israel: now therefore hearken thou unto the voice of the words of the LORD [in other words, Samuel was saying, 'The Lord anointed you to be king; now it is time for you to start obeying the Word of God']. Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt. Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.

"And Saul gathered the people together, and numbered them in Telaim, two hundred thousand footmen, and ten thousand men of Judah. And Saul came to a city of Amalek, and laid wait in the valley. And Saul said unto the Kenites, Go, depart, get you down from among the Amalekites, lest I destroy you

with them: for ye showed kindness to all the children of Israel, when they came up out of Egypt. So the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites. And Saul smote the Amalekites from Havilah until thou comest to Shur, that is over against Egypt.

"And he took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them: but every thing that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly.

"Then came the word of the LORD unto Samuel, saying, It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king: for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments. And it grieved Samuel; and he cried unto the LORD all night. And when Samuel rose early to meet Saul in the morning, it was told Samuel, saying, Saul came to Carmel, and, behold, he set him up a place, and is gone about, and passed on, and gone down to Gilgal. And Samuel came to Saul: and Saul said unto him, Blessed be thou of the LORD: I have performed the commandment of the LORD."

If you start disobeying God, another spirit is going to come upon you, and you will think that you are doing God's will, but you are disobeying. Notice that Saul said, "I have performed the commandment of the LORD."

Verses 14-19 continue: "And Samuel said, What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear? [Who was the leader? Who was supposed to insist that the commandment of the Lord was followed? It was King Saul! Who did Saul say spared them? He blamed the people. Remember, verse 9 reads, 'But Saul and the people spared Agag.'] And Saul said, They have brought them from the

Amalekites: for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed.

"Then Samuel said unto Saul, Stay, and I will tell thee what the LORD hath said to me this night. And he said unto him, Say on. And Samuel said, When thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel, and the LORD anointed thee king over Israel? And the LORD sent thee on a journey, and said, Go and utterly destroy the sinners the Amalekites, and fight against them until they be consumed. Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the LORD, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst evil in the sight of the LORD?"

Once again, Saul disobeyed the commandment that he was given. You read in verse 3 that Saul was told to destroy all and spare not. Again, King Saul was rebuked by Samuel, letting him know that the Lord was displeased over his actions. The Lord even repented, or was sorry, that He had set Saul up as king. Then the Lord revealed to Samuel in the night Saul's true condition and the reason for Saul's actions. This is what happens to many people when they start out serving God and only last about a short time. This was Saul's dilemma. When Saul was little in his own sight, before he was elevated to royal dignity, he did not believe that he was able to perform such a task. After great military success, he was filled with arrogance, and he ruled in open defiance of the conditions upon which God had appointed him to the office.

Here we see a confident Saul and an angry God, but God wins every time. Saul could do just about anything he wanted to do. He had ruled for two years, and he knew his way around the kingdom well. When he was anointed king, he stood head and shoulders above everyone else, and he was a great warrior. When Saul threw a javelin

at David, the only reason he missed him was that God moved David out of the way. It was not because Saul was a bad aim.

### Partial Obedience

When you were little in your own sight, you did not have any confidence in yourself. You felt that you were not even up to the task, and you thought, "Why did God choose me?" Now, after you have been on your feet for a while, you have selective obedience. In other words, you obey what you want to obey, and those things that you do not want to obey, you disregard. Oh, you may do them partially, but when God tells you to destroy something in your life, He does not mean for you to spare it. He means exactly what He says in His Word.

When God sees that something is not conducive to living as a Christian, lays His hand upon it in your life, and tells you, "You need to get rid of it," you need to be obedient. You should not tarry and think it over all the time and keep rolling it around in your mind. You should quit thinking about people who have not done that but appear to be getting along with God. You ought to do what God tells *you* to do. Do not be selective in your obedience. You should be fully obedient. This is where many people get in trouble.

Why did Samuel take Saul back to the time when God had called him? Samuel took him back to the time when Saul thought, "Why is God even talking to me? I am the least among the people, and my family is the least of all the tribes. What does God want to do with me?" This is what God showed Samuel in the night, and in essence, this is what Samuel spoke to Saul: "When you were little, not in everyone else's sight, but in your own sight, were you not made the head of the tribes of Israel, and the Lord anointed you king over Israel? What an elevation God gave you. You thought you were nothing, and God put you right up on the throne to

rule over Israel, but you have lost that humility."

Many people know exactly what God requires of them, but they want to do things their own way. Then when they do it their own way, they put the blame on others. People know what they are supposed to do, but they choose to handle it their own way. For example, when a new convert starts to serve the Lord, he is very dependent upon the Lord for all things. He prays over everything, because he wants to make sure that he does not displease God. No doubt, you started the same way.

Saul got puffed up when he lost his humility. He got so puffed up that he stepped into the high priest's position and offered the burnt offering, and then he turned around and blamed the people. People do that yet today. They overstep and get into trouble, and then they blame others. Friend, when you go to the Judgment, you are going to go as an individual, not on the family plan. You will not be able to go to the Judgment and point your finger at anyone else. Your name must be in the Book of Life. Is *your* record clear?

Saul had been given explicit commands. He was told to destroy all the Amalekites and all that pertained to them, but again he disobeyed and blamed the people. Again, verse 9 reads, "But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them: but every thing that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly."

### Can You Stand the Test?

Second Chronicles 7:12-14 reads: "And the LORD appeared to Solomon by night, and said unto him, I have heard thy prayer, and have chosen this place to myself for an house of sacrifice. If I shut up heaven that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people; If my people, which are called by my

name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

We know that the rain falls on the just and the unjust, but there is a time when our faith and our loyalty to God will be tested. Also, there is a time when God wants to humble His people. Deuteronomy 8:1-2 says: "All the commandments which I command thee this day shall ye observe to do, that ye may live, and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the LORD swore unto your fathers. 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 wouldest keep his commandments, or no."

You do not really know what you have until the test comes. Everyone is going to be tested and tried. God is going to test His people. Abraham was tested concerning his son Isaac. Jesus was tested after He was baptized. Paul was tested by his own people. It is during the tests that many people depart from the Lord. When you are first saved, it almost seems as if God holds the devil off for a while. Everything seems to work out well. You are saved and on your way to Glory, and then suddenly something happens. A trial comes to test your loyalty, and your confidence and faith in God.

Your test might start out as a little trial. God knows what to allow to come your way. If you have trouble along a certain line, God might test you along that line. If you have been a habitual smoker, God may allow the temptation to smoke to come on you really strong just to see what you will do. Will you reach for that cigarette? Will you go to a store and buy a pack of cigarettes or will you say no?

Husband, God might give you a test along the line of running around with the fellows. If you are married, you need to be with your wife. God

allows these things to test your loyalty, your faith, and your confidence in God. He wants you to cry out to Him, expressing that you are poor and needy. He wants you to cry out and say, "Lord, help me." What you do is up to you. You may breathe a little prayer, "Lord, deliver me from this," but that is not always earnest enough. If you go and buy the cigarettes, you have selective obedience. That is what Saul had. Saul knew that God was displeased with the Amalekites, and he knew exactly what Samuel told him. Therefore, he knew that God would be displeased if he failed to destroy all that was vile, but Saul would only go so far in his obedience to God.

When people come to God, they love to have Him work out problems in their marriage, get them a job, or work it out so they can get their car fixed. They love it when they have a dollar or two in their pockets to spend. How faithful are you if your marriage is in shambles? How about when you are unemployed? How about when you have no transportation? How about when you are broke? Are you still going to serve God? What is your reaction when the Word of God goes forth and uncovers that you are dressing immodestly? Instead of lining up with the message, do you look at someone else and say to yourself, "It looks like others are getting by with it." No one is getting away with wrong.

### **Selling Out to God Completely**

When the standard of God's Word is preached, does it offend you? Jesus Christ offended people with His message. There were people whom even Jesus Christ could not pastor. John 6:65-68 reads: "And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him [you cannot read that He ran down the road after them either]. Then said Jesus unto

the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life."

Many of Jesus' disciples turned back and walked no more with Him. There is a song entitled "It's Not an Easy Road." It is not always an easy road, but it is the best road. It is called the highway of holiness. We are going to have hard places, heartaches, offenses, and severe trials. Nevertheless, God cares and loves us, and He is doing His very best to make sure that we make it into Heaven, all safe and sound.

With all that love and care, some people are still going to turn away. Many start out as Saul did, and then when the test comes, they lean to their own understanding, just as Saul did. He leaned to his own understanding and lost his life, his kingdom, and his family. It did not have to be that way, but he failed to remain little in his own sight. Many people start out well, but when the test comes, what do they say? They say, "I'll see you later," and then they are gone. Ten people may come to an altar of prayer, but only one out of that ten may continue to come, even though that one has to struggle. The others, as soon as the test comes, like the people that Jesus offended, turn away and walk no more with Him.

You cannot do wrong and get by. If you do wrong, just because God does not move on your wrong speedily does not mean that He has forgotten it. God is very patient. Some people have need of patience and long-suffering with people. You have to allow God to work with people in their capacity. People do not always see things the way others see them.

God is very patient when it comes to repentance. He desires that one would repent and cover his sin right away in the blood of Jesus Christ. The Lord really loves you. He thinks more of you than anyone else does. He loves you so much that He gave the best that Heaven had to die in your stead: Jesus Christ. He

took every one of your sins and nailed them to the Cross. He, who did no sin, bore the sins of us all.

When you come to Jesus Christ, come and unpack all your bags, so to speak, and leave them at the altar. Do not come halfway, saying: "I'll try this and see if it works. If it doesn't, I'll choose something else." Nothing else works like salvation. When you come to Jesus Christ, you need to sell out to Him completely

and give your all to Him. Then when His Word goes forth and ruffles your feathers, so to speak, do not be like a setting hen and take off through the yard. You ought to measure up and walk with God.

Had Saul stayed in the same humble position that he was in when he was anointed king, the story would be much different and would have had a different outcome. How is it with you? Since

you have gotten saved, or since you have received help, are you still on the highway of holiness or have you run into something that has caused you to detour? God wants to help you. He loves you. It is up to you to do whatever you know you ought to do.

*(Compact Disc TR-321E)*

## *The Great Physician*

*I know a wonder "Doctor,"  
And I know He'll make me well.  
Full of health and vim and vigor,  
And His wares He does not sell.*

*All you've got to do is ask Him,  
And He'll give you strength and  
health;  
And a fee He does not charge you,  
For He has the greatest wealth.*

*What you have to do is seek Him,  
And you'll find Him close at hand;  
Just believe that He will heal you—  
That's the one thing He'll demand.*

*If you'll do just what He tells you,  
You will soon be well again,  
And you'll want to sing His praises  
When you're free from aches and  
pain.*

*I know you're going to ask me  
If I'll tell this Doctor's name—  
He's the great and true Physician,  
And He has a worldwide fame.*



*He's the same that healed the leper;  
He's the man of Galilee!  
He's the Master and Physician,  
And of health He holds the key.*

*Let us go to Doctor Jesus,  
With a faithful heart and true—  
Never doubting, never fearing,  
And that day we'll never rue.*

*When we seek the Great Physician,  
Who has power from above:  
He'll heal us mind and body,  
With the healing balm of love.*

*Selected*

Mark 5:1 And they came over unto the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes.

2 And when he was come out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit,

3 Who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, not with chains:

4 Because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any man tame him.

5 And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones.

6 But when he saw Jesus afar off, he

ran and worshipped him,

7 And cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not.

8 For he said unto him, Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit.

# Let Not Iniquity Have Dominion Over Me



*Brother Garrett Haylock*

## **Take Heed to the Word**

The Psalmist wrote in Psalm 119:133, "Order my steps in thy word: and let not any iniquity have dominion over me." Many times people seem to be selective about sin and want to categorize it and say: "This sin isn't so bad; that one is worse." However, the Psalmist said, "Let not any iniquity have dominion over me." For something to have dominion over you is to say that it has supreme authority over you. Sin is a terrible thing to have rule in one's life.

God is able to take nothing and make something beautiful of it. He can take a marred vessel and make it anew. I am very grateful that God is still in the business of saving souls. Matthew 1:21 tells us that as the angel made the proclamation of Jesus' birth he said, "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shall call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins." The Psalmist did not want to let any iniquity have dominion over him. He did not want even one little sin in his life. All iniquity has the potential of having dominion over a person's

life.

Many times people feel that they can handle sin, or control sin; however, there is only one remedy for sin, and that is our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. He came to destroy the works of the devil, and He wants to give you complete deliverance.

You may think that you can go as far as you want with sin and then quit whenever you wish, but you cannot do that. Thinking so lightly of sin is deceiving. Proverbs 14:9 states, "Fools make a mock at sin." Sin is very destructive, and it will take full control of your life. You

may ask, "How does one make a mock at sin?" One makes a mock at sin by making sin a laughing matter and by taking sin lightly.

The devil has always been successful in causing people to think they are so much greater and so much more intelligent than those who are in the gutters. Friend, Jesus Christ is the only One who can handle sin in an individual's life. If you hold onto sin, it will become a domineering power in your life. Jesus is the only hope for lost humanity. He can break the power of sin in your life, but you must come to Him in true repentance.

Again, the Psalmist said in Psalm 119:133, "Order my steps in thy word." Psalm 119:9 says, "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word." If you really want to have a successful life, then you need to ask God to order your steps. You must follow the Word of God, and your life will be a success.

You should not listen to the devil or others about how much fun they are having while living in sin. If they were honest, they would be asking you to pray for them, because they are in big trouble. I am sure that everyone, to some degree, thought that they were in control of the sin in their lives until the day they tried to quit.

### **It Pays to Serve Jesus**

Psalm 119:11 says, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." Ecclesiastes 12:1 reads, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them." Sin will take you down to the degree that you cannot pursue a career anymore. I am so grateful that God will keep me even after I grow old. In Psalm 37:25 David said, "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging

bread." Sin will rob you of your energy and your youthfulness, and after it is done, it will leave you there, just waiting to be dropped into hell as you breathe your last breath. That is not so with God.

Jesus will always be with you, if you will do your part. The Psalmist feared any sin having dominion over him. He felt the only way that sin could be avoided was to have all his steps ordered by the Word of God, and it is still true today. Despite how popular sinful pleasure may appear, it will dominate human lives. That is what you must guard against.

Sin will rule your life and then ruin it. It will enslave you and make you a servant of sin. A servant is one who does not have liberty. A servant of sin only has as much liberty as his master, the devil, will grant. Slaves cannot do what they want to do. Jesus said, in so many words, "Which of you having a servant, when he comes in from the field, would serve him?" No, you would sit down and expect him to serve you. The servant is to serve his master. Sin makes you a servant and takes away authority from you and empowers itself if you fool around with it.

Sin will hold you captive. Jesus said in John 8:34, "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin." I can tell you from experience that sin is very enticing and adventurous, but long before you realize that you have problems, every time you pillow your head, you will say that you should never have gone that far. Then when you are in trouble, you will realize that you are a captive to sin by your own choice.

Iniquity has the power to dominate you. If you give it a little time, you will see there is nothing friendly about it. Being a servant of sin means that you have lost control of your life. When your life is out of control, the only way you are going to receive help is to acknowledge your need. I have been told that Alcoholics Anonymous and other such programs refuse to render as-

sistance until the alcoholic acknowledges that he has a drinking problem. If your vessel is marred, you need to come to the Potter's house. Jesus can destroy the sin that is running rampant in your life. Jesus is the only One who can cleanse you and give you a new life in Him.

### **Being Overpowered by Sin**

When I read the Scripture text about the man with the unclean spirit, I thought that was an ugly situation. It says that when Jesus went to the other side of the sea and got out of the ship, "immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit." It is not normal for a man to be living among the tombs. That is where we carry the dead and leave them.

Sin will mess you up so much that society will not want to have anything to do with you. Sin will take full control of you, but through patience and comfort of the Scripture, you can have hope. The devil does not have to dominate your life if you will open your heart and life to the Lord. The devil does not care that your mother and father are saved; he is out to destroy your life. Young person, your parents want you to be saved and to obey the Gospel, not because they want to rob you of fun. They want you to find lasting pleasure. Psalm 16:11 tells us that "at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore."

You need Jesus in your life. My wife has been saved since she was twelve years of age, and I got saved when I was twenty-one years of age. Those are the years when people say, "I'm going to live it up now, because I'm not going to be young forever." I wish that I had gotten saved when I was twelve, and then I would have more saintly years behind me. Nevertheless, I am glad that the time came when I could look back and say, "I thank You, Lord, that I have given You more years than I have given the devil." The Lord is able to save you in your

youth and keep you. My wife went through high school as a Christian. Praise the Lord! I am grateful that we can truly give our lives to the Lord and He can take control of us. However, just as God can take control of your life from your youth, the devil can also take full control of you and lead you in a different direction.

The man in our Scripture lesson was dwelling among the tombs, and no man could bind him, not even with chains. He was beyond the help of man. They thought if they could bind him with chains, they could keep him out of the tombs and keep him from the things his iniquities had drawn him into, but they could not. Verses 4-5 of our Scripture lesson state that he had been "often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any man tame him. And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones." Certainly this behavior was not normal. Being overpowered by sin is very terrible.

### **Sin Is Destructive**

The Apostle James wrote in James 1:15, "Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." Sin, or iniquity, is an ugly thing in the final stage. Sometimes tears of joy fill my heart as I think that the Lord reached way down for me. I was not worthy of His mercy, but He has given me the power to live free from sin. God did not leave me with one sin to have dominion over me. He saved me from *all* my sins. The freedom that I am experiencing is in Jesus Christ.

Sin will take you further than you want to go. I remember saying to myself that I would not do certain things. I thought I could draw a line in the sand, as it were, and declare that I would never step over that line. Alas, one day I found myself

stepping over it just once, and then I would draw another line. I meant to step back, but I was unable to do so because sin took me further and further. Dear one, you may draw one line today and draw another line tomorrow. There is no backing up with sin. Every day, sin will get worse and worse. Iniquity will destroy you.

The Scripture text does not tell us what nature of sinful activity took him to the tombs. It simply says that he had an unclean spirit. What do you think is making people get involved in drug abuse? What causes them to roll up their sleeves and shoot drugs into their veins? It is the devil. I read an article that stated when the drug pushers want to introduce drugs to a new area, they flood the area with free drugs.

One time after I was saved I saw cocaine for the first time. A guy offered me a matchbox full of it. He was giving it away in matchboxes. He said to me, "Try this. Do you want a thrill?" I replied, "I've got a thrill. Thanks, but no thanks. I don't know about that thrill, but I know about Jesus Christ. I know what God has done in my life, and I'm not about to experiment."

Some of my friends did not have Jesus, and they thought they might as well try it. Some of them are dead today, and some of them have a drug dependency. It has become their master, and they have become slaves to it. They steal from their mothers, sell their children's food, and sell their children's clothes to get drugs, but the habit does not start that way. It starts at parties and with friends saying, "Let's try this one time." Young person, you should not even think about trying drugs. They are dangerous, and they will destroy your life. Drugs will take full control of your life and destroy you. Again, the Psalmist said, "Let not any iniquity have dominion over me."

In 2 Peter 2:19 Peter, speaking about false prophets and false teachers, said, "While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the

servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage." No matter what kind of iniquity you are overcome by, you will be brought into bondage by it. You need to steer clear of sin and go to Jesus. You should ask Him to help you so that you never come under the power of it. The only way to do that is to remember your Creator in your youth.

The devil is bidding high for your precious soul. He would like to destroy you. Young person, you may be sheltered by your mother and father in your home right now, but the devil is still after you, and he wants to destroy you. You may feel that your parents are killjoys. I said the same thing about my mother. Now I thank God for my good Christian mother. After I had been saved for a little while, many times tears filled my eyes and I said, "Mama, I'm so glad that you had the grit to keep me as long as you did." She kept the pressure on me so much that by the time I reached eighteen years of age, I said, "Yes! Now I can go out and really see what this sin is all about," but I was scared. I would go only so far before I could hear my mother's voice with her words of exhortation and counsel. Finally, one day when I heard the Gospel again, thank God, I made room in my heart for Jesus. He saved my soul. I thank God for Jesus!

### **Held With the Cords of Sin**

Proverbs 5:22 says, "His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins." Sin has a cord that binds you. You may think that you can control sin, but before you realize it, you will become so bound that you cannot possibly break free. You need the stronger Man to come and bind that old devil, break those cords, and give you the victory. Jesus can do that.

To illustrate the binding effects of a seemingly harmless thing, one time in our youth group we did a

little demonstration. We took a big, strapping young man who weighed about 230 pounds and told him that we could tie him up with a ball of thread and he would not be able to break loose, and he laughed. A smaller boy went around him many times. I started to tell a story while the little boy was going around him with the thread. Soon he said, "Brother Garrett, I can see the end of the ball."

I said, "Okay, that should be enough." Then I said, "Okay, young man, break loose from that thread." He tried and tried, but he could not break free. We had to get a pair of scissors and cut him loose.

You may think that you are in control because now you can smoke one cigarette and then put it down, but the time may come when you will feel such a dependency upon them that you keep a pack in your pocket; yet you think you are still in control. That little three inch stick has taken dominion over you.

Likewise, your first drink of alcohol may seem adventurous. All your friends may say, "Go for it, boy! It's not so bad." Some people brag that they do not drink water, but they drink beer instead. The day will come when they will wish they could give it up.

I know of a man whom the doctor admonished to give up alcoholic beverages or they would kill him. After a stay in the hospital, they told him on his way out, "Remember, you can't even have one more drink."

He said, "Okay, Doc," and he left. Right across the street from his house was a bar, and that same day he went there and had a drink. Soon the ambulance came and took him to the hospital where he was pronounced dead upon his arrival. Why could he not resist that drink? It had taken control of him. That is how iniquity will reward you.

Oh, you may think that you are in control. You may look upon others and see them drinking and laughing, and looking as though they are having so much fun.

However, if you were to see them in an unguarded moment and could read their thoughts, no doubt their thoughts would reveal to you how much they regret the way they have taken. They might be saying, "Why did I ever get started with this anyway?"

You may be flirting with sin, or iniquity, because it does not seem to be so bad to you, but it has the potential to take full control of your life. Psalm 40:12 reads, ". . . mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of mine head: therefore my heart faileth me."

### **Sin Will Take You Further Than You Want to Go**

In Mark 5:9 Jesus asked the man in our Scripture lesson, "What is thy name?" He answered, "My name is Legion: for we are many." You see, one iniquity adds to another. It wants more company. You may start with one vice, but in time you might have many. That is the way sin works. Again, the Psalmist said, "Let not any iniquity have dominion over me."

The Scripture text reads in verses 6-7: "But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him, And cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not." The devil knows that he is no match for Jesus. One songwriter rightly penned, "*When Jesus comes, the tempter's power is broken. When Jesus comes, your tears are wiped away.*" Jesus can give you relief.

The man in our Scripture lesson needed Jesus, and he ran to Him and fell down before Him. No matter what iniquity is rampant in your life, you need the Savior to command it to come out. You need your iniquities forgiven and your sins covered by the blood. Romans 4:7 states, "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered." You might have

many fine assets in this life, but you are not blessed until your iniquities are forgiven and your sins covered.

After Christ told the devils to go into the swine, they fled violently down a deep precipice into the sea and drowned. Those who fed the swine fled and told people in the city and in the country, and they came out to see what had happened. The Bible says that when they came, they saw Jesus, and they saw the man who had been possessed of the devil clothed and in his right mind, and they were afraid. All things change when Jesus comes to stay.

Mark 5:16-19 tells us: "And they that saw it told them how it befell to him that was possessed with the devil, and also concerning the swine. And they began to pray him to depart out of their coasts. And when he was come into the ship, he that had been possessed with the devil prayed him that he might be with him. Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee." With all that had happened to that young man, he had a home with friends waiting to see him. Jesus wanted him to go and tell them what the Lord had done for him.

Iniquity has driven many people from their homes. They rebel against the authority of the home. Many times sin causes young people to get into all sorts of trouble. I read some statistics about prostitution, which revealed that people who are introduced to prostitution are runaways. They ran away from home, from parents who were striving to lead them in the right path. After they leave, they have no money and no friends. It was shocking to learn there are almost half as many male prostitutes as there are female prostitutes. That is very alarming!

Dear one, what may start off as a thrill will take you further than you want to go. When those young people left home, had they known they were going to end up in that

condition, maybe they would have had second thoughts, but the devil pushed them on. With one iniquity comes many others. Iniquity will destroy you. Jesus can clean up your life, and then you can go home and tell what great things the Lord has done for you.

### The Power of Iniquity

Only God can break the power of iniquity and the sinful habits in your life. You may try to reform through rehabilitation centers, but statistics show that only 5 percent of the participants are successful. Most are repeats within one year. However, when Jesus Christ takes away your sins, He takes them away completely.

Second Corinthians 5:17 states, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." You cannot be saved and still hold on to sins of any kind. Jesus died to set you free.

You cannot please God and be unfaithful to your spouse. Sinner friend, it is time to awaken. Sin will destroy you. In Isaiah 59:1-2 the Prophet Isaiah said, "Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear."

Iniquity will push you to the place where you will reject the call of God time after time. He will be grieved, and He will stop striving with you. Then when you call upon Him, He will not hear you. That is the power of iniquity. The Psalmist asked the Lord not to let any iniquity have dominion over him. Notice that he did not single out certain sins to categorize them. He knew that all sin is destructive.

The Psalmist said in Psalm 38:4, "For mine iniquities are gone over mine head; as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me." What a desperate place to reach where your

iniquities are too heavy for you, but God will not hear! If you are on that road, you need to come to Father's house where there is help for you.

Ezekiel wrote in Ezekiel 18:30, "Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord GOD. Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin." Iniquity is out to ruin you. Won't you repent and tell God that you are sorry for taking the first step in the wrong direction?

Proverbs 1:24-28 tells you: "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they

shall not find me."

Your iniquities have separated you far from your God. Dear one, do not let iniquity have dominion over you. Jesus said in Matthew 11:28-30: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Jesus is able and willing to take full control of your life so that iniquity will no longer have dominion over you. He is your only hope.

One songwriter wrote these words: "Oft when I'm tempted to turn from the track, I think of my Savior and my mind wanders back, To the place where they nailed Him on Calvary's tree; And I hear a voice saying, I suffered for thee." Friend, Jesus died for you.

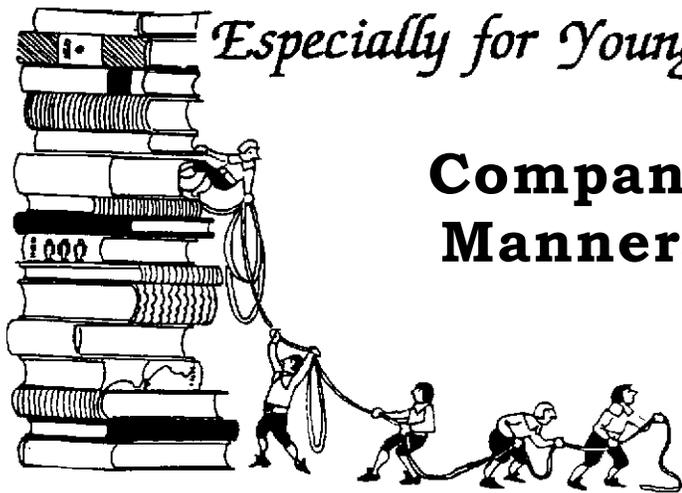
(Compact Disc TR-191M)

*When God does not immediately  
respond to the cries of His children,  
it is because He wants to accomplish some  
gracious purpose in their lives.*

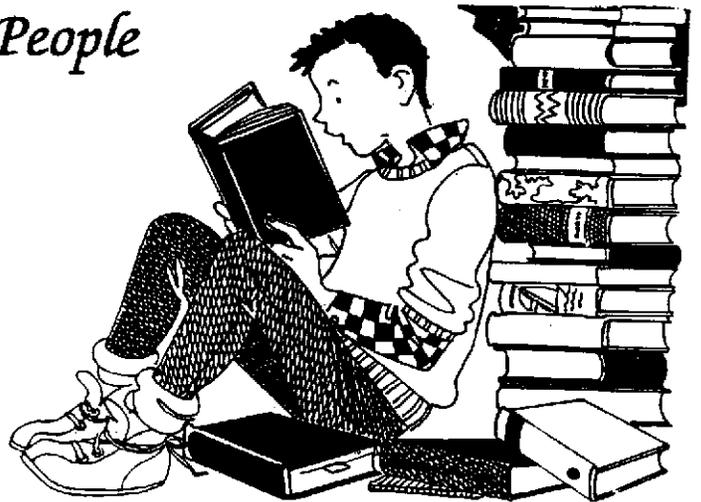
*If you are waiting for an answer for some  
heartfelt petition, don't become impatient.*

*Commit the matter into the hands of your loving  
Heavenly Father and trust His divine wisdom.*

*Especially for Young People*



## Company Manners



"Well," said Bessie, very emphatically, "I think Russel Morton is the best boy in our Sunday school class."

"Why so?" I asked, settling myself in the midst of the busy group gathered around in the firelight.

"I can tell," interrupted Wilfred, "Bessie likes Russ because he is so polite."

"I don't care, you may laugh," said frank little Bess; "that *is* the reason—at least, one of them. He's nice; he doesn't stomp his feet and hoot in the house, and he never teases me unkindly or laughs when I fall on the ice."

"Bessie wants company manners all the time," said Wilfred. And Bell added, "We should all act grown up, if we wanted to suit her."

Dauntless, Bessie made haste to retort. "Well, if growing up would make some folks more agreeable, it's a pity we can't hurry about it."

"Wilfred, what are company manners?" I questioned from the depths of my easy chair.

"Why—why—they're—it's *behaving*, you know, when folks are at home, at church, or a visiting."

"Company manners are good manners," said Horace.

"O yes," answered I, meditating on it. "I see; manners that are *too* good—for mamma—but just right for Mrs. Jones."

"That's it," cried Bess.

"But let us talk it over a bit.

Seriously, why should you be more polite to Mrs. Jones than to Mamma? Do you love her better?"

"O my! no indeed," chorused the voices.

"Well, then, I don't see why Mrs. Jones should have all that's agreeable. Why should the hats come off and the tones soften, and 'please,' and 'thank you,' and 'excuse me,' abound in her house and not in Mamma's."

"Oh! That's very different."

"And mamma knows we mean all right. Besides, you are not fair, cousin. We were talking about boys and girls and not grown up people."

Thus my little audience assailed me, and I was forced to a change of base.

"Well, about boys and girls, then. Can a boy not be just as happy, if, like our friend Russel, he is gentle to the little girls, doesn't pitch his little brother in the snow, and respects the rights of his cousins and intimate friends? It seems to me that politeness is just as suitable to the playground as the parlor."

"Oh, of course; if you'd have a fellow give up all fun," said Wilfred.

"My dear boy," said I, "that isn't what I want. Run, and jump, and shout as much as you please; skate, and slide, and snowball; but do it with politeness to other boys and girls, and I'll agree you will find just as much fun in it.

"You sometimes say that I think

more of Burke Holland than any of my friends. Can I help it? Though he is lively and sometimes frolicsome, he is a Christian and his manners are always good. You never see him act disobedient with his chair tipped back or his hat on in the house. He never pushes ahead of anyone to get out of the room first. If anyone is going out, he holds the door open for that person. If someone is weary, it is Burke who brings a glass of water, places a chair, hands a fan, or springs to pick up whatever someone has dropped, and all this without being told to do so or interfering with his own gaiety in the least.

"This attention is not only given to me as the guest or to Mrs. Jones when he visits her, but to Mamma, Aunt Jenny, and little sister, just as carefully; whether he is at home, at church, in school, or at play, there is always just so much guard against rudeness.

"His courtesy is not merely for special occasions, but it is like a well-fitting garment worn constantly. His manliness is genuine loving kindness. In fact, that is exactly what real politeness is; carefulness for others, and watchfulness over ourselves, lest our actions shall interfere with their comfort."

It is impossible for boys and girls to realize, until they have grown too old, how important it is to guard against contracting careless and awkward habits of speech and

manners. Some very unwisely think it is unnecessary to be so very particular about these things except when company is present. However, this is a grave mistake, for coarseness will betray itself in spite of the most watchful care. Moreover, boys and girls must always remember that our Heavenly Father hears all that we say and sees all that we do.

It is impossible to indulge in one

form of speech or have one set of manners at home and another at church or in the presence of others, because in moments of confusion or bashfulness, such as every young person feels sometimes who is sensitive and modest, the every day mode of expression will discover itself.

It is not, however, merely because refinements of speech and

grace of manners are pleasing to the Lord and to the senses that our young friends are recommended to cultivate and practice them. Outward refinement makes it more sweet and gentle and lovable, and these are qualities that attract and draw about the possessor a host of kind friends.

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## Prayer Turned Back Their Flood

Rain, rain, rain! Was there no end of it? For two days and two nights, the sky had poured forth its deluge on the drowning hills, and this, the morning of the third day, offered only a black sword in its teeth to aching eyes that strained wearily for a sign of truce.

The night had been livid with lightning flashes and thunderbolts. Sleep was impossible. Whimpering at each fresh crash of thunder, we three children had huddled together in Mother's big bed. She had watched beside us all night, fully dressed, a Bible opened on her knees. She only left us momentarily when muffled voices in the kitchen told her that Father and the ranch hands had come in for a cup of coffee. For them there had been no rest, a tale of bogged cattle, swelling streams, and soaked earth slides drove them wearily on.

Morning found us staring out the kitchen windows at the havoc night had wrought. Dimly through the curtain of rain, we could see the gashes of slides in the low hills opposite the house. Awful to behold, at our feet was a roaring, muddy torment! This was a far cry from the peaceful trickle that rippled lazily by in the summertime! The creek had become a menace of hurtling boulders, upturned trees, and fence tails, plunging madly downstream with a great crashing and rumbling, or splintering against the massive trunk of the giant eucalyptus, which still stood defiantly midstream.

As we watched and listened with a silent chill in our hearts, Father rode

up on his horse. He dismounted and surveyed the widening stream. As he watched, the footbridge, which led to the cattle corrals, was whisked away on the branch of a careening tree.

Father turned to enter the house and beckoned to Mother and whispered hurriedly; then he was gone again, but mother's face was pale as she turned to us.

"What's going to happen?" we clamored. She went to the closet, took out our coats and hers, and laid them on the bed. "Where are we going?" we wailed, as she opened a bag and placed some garments into it.

Mother explained there was nothing to fear yet. The creek was cutting in toward the house, but Father and the men were trying to turn the force of the rushing water away from the caving bank. In the meantime, we had to be prepared to leave quickly.

As we rushed back to the kitchen windows, we saw the men at work rolling boulders, driving poles, and laying crosspieces. The work was dangerous, for the current swept away more than it left. The waters sheared with giant force, and all effort seemed futile, because nothing would take permanent hold.

Then from the bedroom, Mother called. Standing by the window and looking at the sky, she spoke with soothing clarity in her voice: "Children, in this hour of need, there is One who can aid us, our Heavenly Father. In the past He has been very good to us. He has given us love, health, and much happiness. He has

given us good land, cattle, and a good home. We know it is not a loving Father's way to give and then snatch away. Let us pray to Him now with all our hearts, and He will help us."

Then she knelt on the bare floor, and we three children went down on our tiny knees beside her. We prayed, simply and fervently, believing with every part of our small beings that God was present and listening and compassionate. With the clear faith of childhood, we know that He saw our need, and now that we had asked, would grant our plea. After all, our own particular deliverance was but a small thing for so all-powerful a God.

And He did hear! The short silence that followed our "Amen" was broken by a great rending and crashing, followed by happy shouts from without. We ran to the windows.

There, its huge trunk flush against the bank and its great branches overlapping, lay the giant eucalyptus, which had been standing midstream. It had been uprooted and flung against the bank, where it wedged securely and was deflecting the course of the stream away from the house, and not a moment too soon! A short three feet of ground was all that remained between the house and the crumbling bank. "Praise God!" Mother repeated again and again, as she put away our coats. "We have seen a miracle!"

Selected

# The Secret of Spiritual Might



*Brother Richard Talbot*

## **Preparing for Spiritual Success**

God gives a formula for spiritual success, strength, stability, faithfulness, dependability, and reliability in His Word. All the necessary ingredients for you to make a successful journey through this life, from the day you are saved until the day you leave this world, are in the Word of God.

The Hebrew writer told us that Christ saves us to the uttermost. Hebrews 7:25 states, "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." God can keep you all the way through to the end, but He has given you some things that you must do. In other words, you have some homework to do to prepare yourself for some things.

As a teenager, I often thought:

"If God wants me to go to Heaven, why didn't He make it easy for me? Why didn't He make it so that after I got saved, I would never have to worry about anything else again?" Well, if you are going to God's Heaven, you must get down to the business of applying yourself to the things of God. I like what the Scripture text says about the young man Jotham. He became mighty because he prepared his ways before the Lord his God. He did not just serve the Lord, but he worshiped God and made God his Lord.

In examining the life of Jotham, I want you to notice that his father Uzziah was sixteen years of age when he became king, and he ruled Judah for sixty-eight years. We are told in the previous chapter, in verse 5, that as long as he sought the Lord, God made him to prosper. This man did much good, and he was a great

man with God. He was very successful, but he had a moral failure. Although he was a successful individual, he had a flaw. There was something wrong with him.

We find in 2 Chronicles 26:15 that Uzziah "was marvellously helped, till he was strong." God marvelously worked with him, and he became strong in the things of God. He became a strong leader, a man great with God, but the next verse says, "But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction: for he transgressed against the LORD his God, and went into the temple of the LORD to burn incense upon the altar of incense."

You need to realize, dear one, that you may be doing well for the Lord, but the devil is always there to work on you, and he knows your every weakness. He knows where to set a trap for you. He knows right

where to place the temptations and how to twist up your thinking to try to get you off course with the Lord, just as he did with Uzziah. He ruled well for a long period of time, but after a while he became exalted in his own ability. He began to think, "Look what I am doing! Look what I am getting accomplished!" When he was strong, something happened to him and he became exalted. His heart was lifted up to his destruction. It blinded his mind and clouded his pure vision of the power of God that was at work in his life. He had a moral failure.

### The Plague of Moral Failures

The vast majority of spiritual failures are the direct result of moral delinquency. The word *moral* means "to be concerned with the judgment of the goodness or badness of action and character; conforming to a standard of what is right or just in one's behavior; to be virtuous; arising from conscience or the sense of right or wrong; a concisely expressed precept of general truth; rules of habit or conduct, especially sexual conduct with references to standards of right and wrong."

Moral failures are a plague to the human race. Beloved, every one of us is subject to moral failure. We are subject to losing out with the Lord. None of us has it made in this life. We do not have a right to Heaven, but we have the right to earn Heaven.

We need to realize that the father of Jotham was marvelously helped by God. As long as he sought the Lord, God made him to prosper. However, he became strong and began to be lifted up in his own heart and mind to his own destruction, and it led him to a terrible indiscretion. He was blinded to what was discrete and lost that holy ability to decide responsibly. Therefore, he transgressed against the Lord his God.

No doubt, the thought came to Uzziah's mind: "I'm so strong. God has blessed me so mightily; I have

been gifted by God. I'll just go into the temple and burn incense to the Lord." When he did that, he was taking upon himself to walk in upon the holy things of God where man was not allowed unless he was a priest or the high priest, sanctified and set apart for that office. Although he was the king, he had no right to go into the temple of God.

In 2 Chronicles 26:16-18 we find that he "went into the temple of the LORD to burn incense upon the altar of incense. And Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him fourscore priests of the LORD, that were valiant men: [Eighty-one priests rushed in after him. You would have thought that would have been enough to melt his heart and affect him. Eighty-one holy men, sanctified to that office, ran in after him.]

"And they withstood Uzziah the king, and said unto him, It appertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the LORD, but to the priests the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense: go out of the sanctuary; for thou hast trespassed; neither shall it be for thine honour from the LORD God." Had Uzziah listened and humbled himself and said, "Yes, I was wrong to do this," no doubt the story would have been altogether different. When he was rebuked by those eighty-one priests, do you know what happened? He got angry at them. His wrath was stirred. He had the censer in his hand and refused to listen to their wise counsel. They entreated him to leave while he could get out, but Uzziah refused to go.

As Uzziah was showing himself before these men of God, the wrath of God fell upon him. Verse 19 tells us, "Then Uzziah was wroth, and had a censer in his hand to burn incense: and while he was wroth with the priests, the leprosy even rose up in his forehead before the priests in the house of the LORD, from beside the incense altar." He was banished from his kingdom and lived in a separate dwelling until

the day of his death. While Uzziah sought the Lord, God made him to prosper. God blessed him. This teaches us some lessons. When we seek the Lord and He is blessing us, we need to be ever so careful to remember where our blessings are coming from.

### Learning From Mistakes

Uzziah's son Jotham took his place as king until his father died, and then he assumed the title of King of Judah. He had major accomplishments in his short reign. It says in our Scripture text that he "became mighty, because he prepared his ways before the LORD his God." The name *Jotham* means "the perfection of the Lord," or "Jehovah is perfect." He shared history with the Prophets Isaiah, Hosea, and Micah; their time lines interlapped. Jotham had very good wisdom and counsel given to him. He heard the prophets of old, and he knew some of the true things about God. He knew what his father had done and observed his downfall. I can picture Jotham getting in earnest with God because he did not want to fail as his father did. He got down to serious business and began to prepare his ways before the Lord his God.

When talking about preparing our ways before God, I want you to consider several things in this preparation process. One of the things that Jotham did was this: he paid attention to where his father went wrong. Second Chronicles 27:2a reads, "And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father Uzziah did: howbeit he entered not into the temple of the LORD." I can imagine that he stayed far away from that place; he left that to the priests who were ordained for that position. Even today people need to leave things alone that belong to and are ordained to the man of God's position. You can get into much trouble if you try to take upon yourself the responsibilities that belong to the man of God.

Jotham knew where his father fell and got into trouble. We all can learn from the mistakes that others have made. Do you know anyone who has made a mistake? I have made mistakes. If you are human, I can guarantee you that you, too, have made mistakes. We can do as Jotham and avoid those areas where others have fallen. You ought to stay away from things that you know have brought down mighty men of God. Also, you can learn from your own mistakes. You can look back in your own life and learn from your past failures. You can reach back and take that failure and place it in front of you and use it as a stepping stone and draw closer to God. You do not have to let a failure be your ruin. You may fail God, but you do not have to become a failure.

If you are going to be a winner, you must never quit! You must run to win, and you should be in this race to the end. If you stumble and fall, if you get tripped up over something, do not throw in the towel and quit! Do not say, "Living for God is not for me." You can say, "Lord, I made a mess here. I want You to forgive me. I am sorry for it." Repent, and God will be right there to lift you right back up, put you on your feet, and say, "Let's go again, My child." You need to make every failure into a stepping stone for the future so that you do not fail repeatedly over the same thing.

### **God's Formula for Going Upward**

You need to prepare yourself with the wisdom that the Word of God gives. You need to be a reader of God's Word. You need to get in the Book and learn from the Word of God. You need to become a familiar student of the Word.

Many people know everything about the Internet, the sports world, or the automotive world, but not very many people become students of God's Word. We need to study the Word of God. This is good advice, and it is an order from the Lord to study the Word of God. In

James 1:21 James said, it is "the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls."

Every one of us ought to have a desire to be faithful to God, not a desire to be mighty. We should not seek to be great. "So Jotham became mighty" was written postmortem about Jotham. It was not something that he was seeking, but it was a result of what he did and how he lived. A child of God should not strive to be great or mighty, but he or she should strive to be faithful and true. Jeremiah 45:5 says, "And seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not."

God has given us an unusual formula for going upward. The world does not like this formula, and many church people do not like it. Nevertheless, the way to go up with God is the way down. You may say in your mind, "I can't go up by going down," but God says you can. In 1 Peter 5:6 Peter said, "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time." The way up with God is always the way down.

What is another means of preparing your heart before the Lord? Jude gives a two-part formula in verses 20-21: "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, [Oh, how important it is for every child of God to live grounded in the faith of the Word of God, believing in the promises of the Word, holding to the things that God has given us, and exercising ourselves daily in a faithful walk! In the midst of fiery trials, in the storms of life, God wants His children to stand strong, to stand firmly, and to stand tall with Him. In the time of affliction, through the maze of terrible temptations, God wants you to survive. He wants you to be on the winning side all the way, praying in the spirit. This is the second part of Jude's Scripture.] Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."

You must keep yourself in the

love of God in preparing your ways before the Lord. You must avoid bitterness and shun every hateful thought and ill-mannered temptation. You have to keep yourself in constant subjection to the will of God and be in full obedience to the Lord. You ought to live that way and obey God. You should not obey your own intuition. Do not obey your own impulses, but obey the Lord. Also, you must obey the Word of God that you hear come across the pulpit.

I am old-fashioned enough to still believe that God works through a pastor to shepherd His flock. Church of God, you have only one pastor, and that is the man whom God has set over you. Every child of God needs a pastor. You cannot pastor yourself. You need a flesh-and-blood man, a man with feelings, a man with temptations, a man who is subject to afflictions. God could have sent angels down here to pastor that did not have any feelings, that did not know how you were hurting, that had no way to sympathize or to have compassion, but He did not do that. He chose a man, a flesh and blood human being, and God said for the flock to pay attention to him. If he is truly a man who is called of God, you have no excuse for disobeying the anointed preached Word.

### **How to Become a Seasoned Warrior for Christ**

If you want to be successful in living for God, you must come down. When everything is going your way, you do not have to submit. For example, the wife does not have to submit herself to the husband when everything is going her way, but when they do not agree, she ought to submit. You have to submit when your way clashes with whoever is in charge. The pastor is in charge of a congregation. The Word of God calls him "the overseer"; that is a supervisor.

You must keep yourself in the love of God and stay away from

bitterness, hard feelings, strife, ill will, malice, and discontentment. When people lose the love of God, they get restless feet that want to move. That is the reason I always preach at home to our people: "You need to stick close to the one to whom you are married. You need to keep that love fervent toward the one to whom you are married." If you begin to lose that love, you will begin to look over the field a little, and the devil will work on your mind. It is your job to keep yourself in the love of God. God is not going to do that for you. You must pray in the Holy Ghost, building up yourself in the most holy faith. That is your work.

Another method of heart preparation is found in the many Christian virtues. We have the fruit of the Spirit, and then we have a list in 2 Peter 1:5-7 where Peter admonished to give all diligence to add to your faith, your virtue, your knowledge, your brotherly kindness, and so on, continually adding to yourself. This is building up yourself in the most holy faith.

One who excels in his vocation of life is one who is good in all aspects that concern his work. For example, let us consider a professional carpet installer. Many people could probably lay carpet if all the cuts were in a straight line or if they did not have anything to cut. An experienced tradesman must calculate some measurements in his head. He has to picture in his mind what he has to do, and he needs to have the tools and the equipment to meet every circumstance.

In my younger years often I would look at an older saint and think, "What a wonderful experience he has! I'd like to have an experience like that." Do you know what? It does not come by wishing or by thinking that you want to be like that person. I am not talking about being like this person or that person, but about having the quality of spiritual life that a person possesses. Do you know how they got that? That person obtained it

through a lifetime of hard, faithful, diligent work.

You cannot gain a reputation for God in a few days. You do not become a seasoned warrior for Christ in just a few years, but it is a lifetime of work. It is laboring every day, and never breaking the cycle. You must be faithful, true, reliable, and dependable every day, when you feel good or when you are feeling bad or when the whole world turns upside down. You must stay faithful and true to God, believe in His Word, and lay hold of His promises. Being an influence for the good does not come easily.

### **Developing Christian Virtues**

Getting saved, or getting right with God, might possibly be part of the easiest process of the whole Christian life, even though that may be hard. You have to put forth much effort to live faithfully every day through the battles, through the trials, through the misunderstandings, through the hurt feelings, and through the upheavals. Staying sweet in your soul, being true to yourself, to God, to your family, and to the Church of God requires you to give all diligence in digging into the things of God.

Why must you give all diligence? It is not easy to give all diligence. Paul admonished the saints to think on whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of a good report. You should meditate on these things and fill your mind with them. You should stay away from trash and keep your mind pure and clean so that you can truly focus on your walk with God.

You are to build yourself up in the most holy faith. This building up is a work that is not done in a day or in a year. It is the work of a lifetime. You will never reach the end of the ladder of adding to your faith, your diligence, your virtue, your knowledge, and your brotherly love. Every time you go up a rung, you will have another one yet to climb. As long as you are alive, you will be

climbing that ladder, developing Christian virtues, growing in the things of God, building up yourself, and preparing your ways before the Lord your God.

Another step in preparing your heart concerns the need for a large portion of divine wisdom. Divine wisdom will enable you to quickly develop your spiritual senses (knowing right from wrong), and enable you to become strong. Paul said in Hebrews that you need to exercise yourself by reason of use, exercise every day, working those spiritual muscles. You have to work them until it gets down into the very fiber of the muscle in order to do you any good. It is not merely thinking about it, but it is working those things, and discerning right from wrong. Most of the time people have questions about things to which they already know the answer down in their hearts. We each need to exercise ourselves!

First Corinthians 15:33 says, "Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners." You must avoid any influence that leads you away from closeness with God. You should avoid anything or anyone who drags you away from church services, robs you of your quiet time with God, or steals away your prayer time. You need to be aware of and be wise to the fact that these are the areas that Satan is well aware of. He knows they are important to your spiritual life. Satan will use anything he can to get you to stay away from church.

I have said to the congregation at home: "If I were to start paying people \$75 cash every time they came to church, not one person would miss." They would come in on stretchers. Why? They would not want to miss getting \$75. Most people will not miss work too easily. They will go to work tired, worn out, or limping along because they say they cannot afford to miss getting a paycheck.

On the other hand, if they get up on Sunday morning and have a little touch of sore throat or they have a

headache or if they stubbed their toes Saturday afternoon, they say: "I think I ought to stay home and rest. I need to take care of my health." The devil will ensnare you if you listen to him. You need to be in church every time the doors are open, if it is at all possible for you to be there.

### **Be Not Wise in Your Own Eyes**

Why should you go to church? I want you to read a letter written to the editor of a newspaper. A man complained in his letter that it made no sense to go to church every Sunday. He said: "I've gone for thirty years, and in that time I have heard about three thousand sermons, but for the life of me, I can't remember a single one of them. So I think I'm wasting my time and the preachers are wasting their time by preaching at all."

This started a real controversy in the *Letters to the Editor* column, much to the delight of the editor. It went on for weeks until someone wrote in this clincher: "I've been married for thirty years now, and in that time my wife has cooked some 32,000 meals, but for the life of me, I cannot recall the entire menu for a single one of those meals, but I know this: they all nourished me and gave me the strength I needed to do my work. If my wife had not given me those meals, I would be physically dead today. Likewise, if I had not gone to church for nourishment, I would be spiritually dead today."

You cannot stay alive spiritually when you hit and miss in your church attendance. Those who are possessed with divine wisdom realize the need of being in the church services. Moreover, you should be there with a good attitude and a good spirit. You would not want everyone to bring into a worship service the same spirit they leave home with. Sometimes you would not want people to come into the church building with the same attitude they show in the parking

lot: arguing, fussing, fuming, bickering, and criticizing one another. Then they walk in the door and someone greets them and inquires "How are you?"

"Oh, I'm doing wonderfully. Praise the Lord!" Then they expect God to bless them. You must go to church with the right attitude. Your bodily presence is necessary, but having the right attitude is just as important. You have to come hungry and desire to be fed, spiritually speaking, and anxious for what God has for you. Every Sunday ought to be a challenge to you so that you can see what God is going to do for you.

Proverbs 3:5-7 teaches: "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil." Proverbs 4:23 reads, "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." Verse 26 instructs, "Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established." You need to do all these things in preparing your way before the Lord.

### **Conquering the Flesh**

A child of God must be one who is self-commanding. By the grace of God, you can discipline yourself and police your own life. You have to keep yourself in line and stay true to God. It is going to take some digging and dedicating and keeping yourself consecrated to God. It will not always be easy to conquer the flesh. The flesh will put up quite a battle, but God can bring down everything the devil raises up. No giant is too big for God to bring down. No mountain is too high for God to make a way through.

Jotham was mighty before God because he prepared his ways. Every moral failure is due to a weakness of self-command. I think of the two men who went to the temple to pray. One man was a Pharisee and the other a publican. The Pharisee boasted of all that he had done. He

thought he was a really good fellow, but he had a moral failure. His character was not perfect before God. On the other hand, the publican would not even so much as lift up his head toward heaven, and he said, "God be merciful to me a sinner." His prayer brought the power of God down. Friend, you cannot get saved any other way than the old-fashioned way.

Moral failure due to the weakness of self-command opens the door for undisciplined ranks and makes for a very weak and unstable army. You should not try to make excuses and justify lapses into self-indulgence. Every time you fail, the devil will give you a whole list of excuses. You need to throw the excuses aside, and do not try to justify your failure. Do not try to make it better than it is.

Sometimes people go to an altar of prayer and confess one thing that is not as critical as their real problem, while they confess silently their true need. They seem to think they are going to receive help without really being honest. You cannot play games with God. If you have failed or if you have done wrong, you need to own it and confess it! You should not try to play games by trying to make it seem better than it is, and you should not try to justify it. Do not try to act as though it is not nearly as serious as you know down in your heart that it really is. Just own up to it and say, "I've messed up; I've failed, and I've sinned."

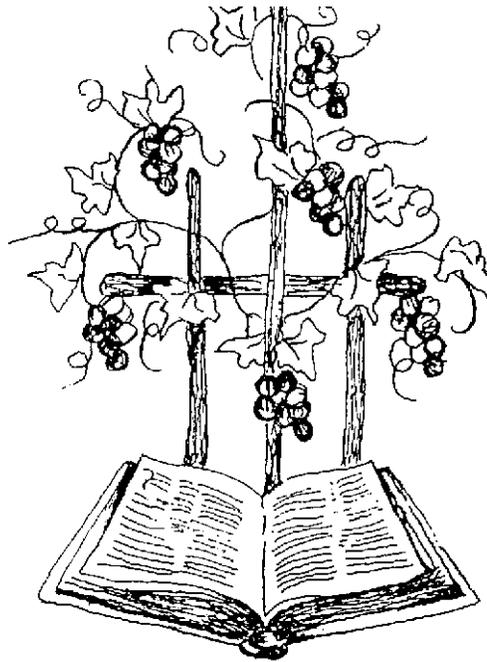
Today there is too much lightness, too much carelessness, too much being at ease in Zion. Many people do not feel enough of an obligation to God, or even to themselves, yet they want to be great with God. You cannot be great with God unless you prepare your ways before the Lord.

### **Striving to Go Forward**

You need to strive to be a pillar in the church. You need to be someone upon whom the church can



# *The Sweet Gifts That Come From God*



*Brother Allen Polston*

## **The Good and Perfect Gifts**

I would like to begin by reinforcing the thought that God truly does have good things for you. If only the world could realize the value of the rich blessings of the Lord's bountiful storehouse. If only they could understand the good things that God has for those who will seek Him.

James 1:17 says, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variable-ness, neither shadow of turning." God is set to provide blessings to those who will seek His face. Many people want to seek Him to receive what they need and what they think they want in life. However, God is interested in your seeking His face so that you might find a smile upon

His face. Many people do not want to see the face of God because they know their lives would not merit His smile. God is interested in your seeking Him.

Every good and perfect gift is from above. Today gift cards are very popular items because people can take their gift cards and use them to select the gifts they want and not have to return them. The Bible lets us know that every good and every perfect gift is from above and comes down from the Father of lights. Dear one, you will not be dissatisfied with what God has to give you. If you will turn your cup upright and let God begin to fill your life with the good things that He has for you, your life will be good and complete.

These gifts come down from the Father of lights. There are shining

lights in this world who have let Jesus into their hearts. They have allowed the Truth to enter their hearts, and they stand on the Word of God. The Father of lights has good and perfect gifts for His children. There is no variable-ness in Him. God is not one thing today and something else tomorrow.

Many Scriptures in the Bible tell us about God's gifts. Matthew 7:7-11 states: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more

shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?"

God has already given to you good things, but He has more that He wants to share with you. Paul wrote to the Corinthians in 2 Corinthians 9:15, "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift." I thank God for the gifts that He has for each of us. God has wonderful things available, and it is sad to think of the many people who are forfeiting these gifts that God has provided and is able to give them.

Many people spend a long life here on earth and never receive these precious gifts from Heaven. The Hebrew writer wrote about this very thing in Hebrews 6:4-5. He spoke of those who "have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come." You can taste all of that in this life. You can get hold of those things now. You do not have to wait until you get to Heaven to enjoy the peace, the satisfaction, and the happiness of serving God. Thank God, it is available through the Holy Spirit right now in this time world. You can enjoy these gifts now, day in and day out.

### **The Hidden Riches**

In 2 Peter 3:1 Peter said, "I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance." Sometimes old Satan will work on you when you go through hard places and battles, so you need to have your mind stirred afresh concerning the things of God and the good things that God has for you.

Many times in the difficult places, you experience the good things of God in an even greater way. Isaiah 45:2-3 says: "I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron: And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou

mayest know that I, the LORD, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel."

God gives "treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places." There are some blessings that you do not receive when everything is going well in your life, when nothing is presented as an obstacle. These blessings come when you go through hard times and when you are not sure what is going on. Your understanding may be darkened in the sense that you do not know what God is doing, but He has "treasures of darkness" that He gives during those times.

Christian friend, if you have been serving God for a while, surely you would agree that you have had to go through some very difficult places. However, you can stand and say, "I thank God for the victory that He has given me. I thank God for those things that He has brought me through." Sometimes the sweetest victories come from the toughest battles, from the times when you have come up against the tempter. He is as a roaring lion. You can face temptations and sore trials and overcome by the grace of God. Right during that time, God can bless your life with things that you cannot have any other way.

When Samson faced the lion and killed it, he came back that way a few days later and saw a swarm of bees and some honey in the lion's carcass. He took a big handful of that honey and tasted of the victory, and then he took some of the honey home to his parents. He let others share from the victory that he had experienced.

God has some good things for you. The problem that many people have is the same problem that the woman at the well in Samaria had. In John 4:10 Jesus said to her, "If thou knewest the gift of God. . . ." Sinner friend, if you only knew what God could do for your life. If you only knew what God would like to work and bring to pass in your life, you would serve Him. If you have compromised on God or if you

are just playing around the outside edges, God has better things for you. If you only knew what God would do for you, if you would really dig deep in the things of God and get involved! You need to pour out your heart to God and let Him have full control.

### **The Full Soul**

We find in our Scripture lesson that the writer mentioned the honeycomb. The honeycomb represents something good. God has many good things for you and me. He has a storehouse full of good things. Malachi 3:10 talks about God opening the windows of heaven and pouring out His blessings. God has more than enough to satisfy you and to keep you satisfied. Every time He visits with you, your life can have a rich, new meaning. God has some wonderful things for you. Have you ever had a good meal and eaten so much that even something that you normally enjoy eating did not look good to you anymore? You have to be careful that you do not overdo things.

In our Scripture lesson God was not dealing with the physical appetite and nourishment, but He was dealing with something that is a need of our day and time. People are getting too full on the things of this old world, and they are not hungry for the things that God has for them. There is a reason that ministers who love your soul warn and caution you about getting too involved in the things of this world. It is not because they have gotten together and said, "Well, we are going to preach on this and that." It is not because they want to get people under their control. The reason is that when you get too full on the things of this world, even the good things that God has for you will not look appetizing. You will have no craving for them, and you will not want them.

The Scripture text says, "The full soul loatheth an honeycomb." To *loathe* something is to detest it. It

looks despicable, and you have no desire for it. This is the condition that is taking place in the world today.

God put us here to live in the world, but we should not be *of* the world. He did not call us to go off to some little, remote island. He did not call us to forsake everyone and to take on a self-righteous attitude as if we are better than everyone else. We have to work and function and be part of a community and a family. We have to be involved in the things that are going on around us. We have to try to steer things in the right direction the best we can. Also, we have to be careful that we do not fill our lives with other things and get so busy and so preoccupied in this world that we lose our appetite for the things of God.

God has victory for you, and He has things for you that you cannot get through any other source but through Him. You will not find those things through worldly wealth or fame. You are not going to escape having problems in this world. Everyone has their problems. You are not going to be trouble free in this life. You have to labor in this world, but you need to be careful. You must not forsake spending time with God and having a relationship with Him. You must keep up your Christian experience. Many people become careless and drift away because they neglect their experience.

### **The Honeycomb**

Jesus said to enter your closet and pray. You are not in this race to please men, and you should not do all that you are doing to be seen of men. When Jesus said to enter your closet and pray, He did not mean that you have to get in where you hang your clothes to pray, but He meant that you ought to take the time to get alone with God and to be personal with God, to keep up your experience. The full soul, the person who is filled with so much of this world, has no desire for the good things of God.

Some good things can be wrought in prayer. God may not change your situation, but He can change you. Many times on bended knees God did not change my problems, but He gave me the strength and the grace to arise and face those things afresh. Sometimes things may look hopeless, but you can pray. Prayer still changes things. Prayer still touches the throne of God. James 5:16b says, "The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." It still brings about results. God's ears are open to the cries of the righteous, and His eyes are upon those who are living right. Proverbs 15:3 reads, "The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good." When you do that which is good, God takes note of it.

Prayer to God can change things. It can make a tremendous difference. You can get some "honeycomb" in prayer, some sweet things. God can change your attitude in prayer. He can change you. Sometimes things can really frustrate you. Someone may do or say something, and it can build up pressure. No wonder the world is always blowing their top, so to speak. They do not have any place to go to find relief.

Ephesians 4:26 tells us, "Be ye angry, and sin not." In prayer God can pour in some grace and a little of the sweet Spirit of God, and you can come out of the secret place with a honeycomb. You can come out with victory over the situation. You do not have to hate people or become bitter toward them. Others may wrong you repeatedly, but God can help you. Some sweet things can be wrought.

Sweet things can come through Bible study. You may say, "I don't have time for Bible study." You need to make time to study God's Word. It is not just ministers who need to study the Bible. Every Christian needs to make time to study the Word. Some precious things can come about from studying the Scriptures. You should study the Bible

with your family. You should sit down and study the Bible with your children. You should share the Bible stories with them. Some precious times can come about from doing that. We are living in a time when everyone is so busy and everything is so demanding; nevertheless, you must take time for the things of God. You need to take time for the precious things, the honeycomb, the sweet things.

### **Seek Him Diligently**

If you are not careful, you will get so full on the things of this world that you will not want the honeycomb, and the good things that God has for you will start to lose their appeal. Paul wrote to the Corinthians about repenting with godly sorrow, not just because they had been caught doing wrong or because someone had found out something about them, but because they were truly sorry about the way they had been living. People ought to be sorry about the way they have been living when they have not been living for God.

Individuals should be sorry if they have been slack in their attendance to the house of worship or neglecting their Bible study or their prayer life. Dear one, if you are not saved, you need to be sorry about your condition. Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 7:11, "For behold the selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you [they were serious, and it worked carefulness in their lives], yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation [they got mad at the devil], yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter."

The Corinthians were excited about serving God. Their lives had been cleared, they were saved, and they were walking with God. They were out of the clutches of the devil, and they were in the hands of the Lord. They were happy to be

servicing God. One songwriter expressed his joy by writing: "Praise the Lord! My heart with his love is beaming, I am a child of God." They were excited and happy. The honeycomb was desirous. They wanted to find something in God's Word. They wanted to get something from the message. They were not anxious to hurry home.

God has something for you, friend. You can get so full of worldly things that you loathe the honeycomb. Have you ever heard anyone say: "I don't have time to go to church. I'm too busy." People can get so full of the things of the world that the honeycomb of God, or the good things of God, have no appeal to them. They would rather do a number of other things than to receive something from God.

In Hebrews 11:6 the writer stated, "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." If you are full of the things of the world, you cannot diligently seek Him. God has good things for you.

### **Restraining the Flesh**

Again, the Scripture lesson says, "The full soul loatheth an honeycomb; but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet." When you are hungry, you will not complain about what is set before you to eat. The Proverb writer said that every bitter thing is sweet to the hungry soul. There are some restraints that must be put on the flesh to serve God. When people cast off the restraints, they end up in trouble.

Galatians 5:13 reads, "For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another." You have not been called and set free to do anything and everything that comes to your mind. There are some things that you need to put a halt to as soon as they enter your mind. You need to put the brakes on those thoughts

and send them away. There are some restrictions and restraints that must be put on the flesh in order to make Heaven your home and to serve God successfully.

We are living in a time when people do not want anyone to tell them how they should live. They want to be the driver, so to speak. If a problem comes along, then they are willing to let someone else sit in the driver's seat. As soon as the problem is cleared up, they want to sit in the driver's seat again and do not want anyone to tell them how to live. I repeat, some restrictions must be put on the flesh in order to serve God, but anytime you restrain the flesh, it will try to buck up. You must put restraints on your flesh to hold a good job. Some restraints have to be put on your flesh to keep a marriage relationship, a family relationship, an employer-employee relationship, or a client-customer relationship. There have to be restrictions in many things, but the flesh does not like to be restrained. Restrictions are bitter to the flesh, and it does not like difficult things.

Again, the Proverb writer said every bitter thing is sweet to the hungry soul. When your soul is hungry for the things of God, even those things that come across a little bitter will be sweet. There are demands that the Gospel puts upon you concerning how you conduct your life, but those demands are for your own good. You must walk in His ways, and you will benefit as a result of doing so.

God does not want you to run around exposing your body. You may attract some followers, but they would be there for the wrong reason. As soon as their curiosity would be satisfied, they would be gone, and you would be used and abused. God does not want you to behave in an ungodly manner. He wants you to live as a saint ought to live, bringing glory to Jesus. When people look upon you, it should cause them to think more highly of God. Their minds should not be prompted to go the wrong direction when they look

your way, but they should begin to think about God. Your life should bring old-time, Holy Ghost conviction upon them.

The standard of modesty and the doctrines of the Bible are for your good. These things benefit the saint. The devil wants to cause people to be miffed and to rise against the man of God and fight the standard. God has your best interest in mind, and what He requires of you is for your good.

### **Keeping Your Appetite for the Things of God**

Some indulgences ought to be stopped before they begin. God's people should not be sipping wine or any other intoxicating beverage. Many people would not know where to stop. It is just too risky and too dangerous. The true Christian is interested in pleasing God, and he or she does not want to take any chances. God's men preach strongly against drinking intoxicating beverages, and you ought to leave them alone. It is dangerous, and a wrong spirit is involved in partaking of alcohol and other vices.

There are many other things that you should not partake of because they are bound to lead to other sinful things. Before I was saved, my mother used to tell me, "One drink will lead to another."

I said, "Mom, I've got it under control. I'm all right."

She said, "I'm telling you, son, you are going to end up in jail or end up killing somebody." I can remember standing out in the barn of the little farm where we lived, and my mom came out and pleaded with me, "Allen, leave that stuff alone." Three or four days later, I wrapped a truck around a tree. It is a wonder that God did not let me go into eternity. One thing leads to another. Some things are better left alone.

What God gives you through the dress standard and the preaching of the Gospel is for your good. It may be a little bitter to the flesh, but

when you are hungry for God's Word and for the will of God to be done in your life, the bitter will become sweet. No matter what man of God is preaching or where he takes his Scripture text from, the child of God will be happy about it, because the bitter is sweet when you are hungry for the things of God. When you are hungry, your cup will be turned upright, and you will be ready to receive something from God. God has sweet gifts for us.

I ask you, with all these wonderful things available that God has for you, are you willing to receive them? The Apostle Paul said

in Romans 6:23, "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." What a gift! The Apostle Paul said in Ephesians 2:8, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." Oh, if you only knew, like the woman at the well, the gift of God.

Dear one, God has precious things for you. If you will diligently seek Him, He has good things for you in His storehouse. Do not get full of the things of this world. Do not let the enemy of your soul trick you. Some things may not be sinful, but you can become too involved

with them.

In Mark, Chapter 4, you can read about a sower who went out to sow seed. One of those ground conditions represented the cares of life, which choked out the experience. Again, our Scripture lesson reads, "The full soul loatheth an honeycomb; but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet." Do not get too full of the things of this world. You need to keep your appetite for the rich things of God. He has sweet gifts for you. May God bless you.

*(Cassette C-5518E)*

## *To Thee, O Lord We Give Thee Thanks*

To Thee, O God, we render thanks,  
To Thee give thanks sincere,  
Because Thy wondrous works declare  
That Thou art ever near.

Thy righteous judgment, Thou hast said,  
Shall in due time appear,  
And Thou Who didst establish it  
Wilt fill the earth with fear.

Thou teachest meekness to the proud,  
And makest sinners know  
That none is Judge but God alone,  
To honor or bring low.

Jehovah holds a cup of wrath,  
And holds it not in vain,  
For all the wicked of the earth  
It's bitter dregs shall drain.

The God of Israel I will praise  
And all His glory show;  
The righteous He will high exalt  
And bring the wicked low.

Author Unknown



*[Guest Editorial— continued from page 2]*

Him, He will hold fast to you.

The Apostle Paul shared some very important information when he stated: "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed" (2 Corinthians 4:8-9). What was he conveying to us with these words? We may be handicapped or hedged in, in

many ways, but we are not beyond the point of finding help and relief. Oftentimes we lack understanding on certain matters and are puzzled about finding a way out, but we are never driven to a place of despair or hopelessness. Regardless of how dark things may be, no matter how great the burden or the problem that is crowding in on us, God is still on His throne, and He greatly cares for each and every one. Let me

remind you that our dear Lord is vitally interested and concerned about every minute detail of our lives. Let us hold tightly, for He knows how and when to calm the storms that beat against our frail vessels. He has promised us that He will bring us through safely.

Selected

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## Meeting Announcements

### **MOSS POINT, MS**

November 17-23

**REVIVAL:** Pine Grove Church of God, 11629 Hyway 614, Moss Point, MS 39562 (The church is located 18 miles west of I-65 Mobile, Alabama, on Airport Blvd., which turns into Hyway 614)

Evangelist: Brother Aurelius Raines, Chicago, IL

Service times: Monday-Friday 7:00 p.m.; Sunday 10:00 a.m. & 6:00 p.m. (See Saturday service times below) MOTELS: *Motel 6*, Phone 251-343-8448;

*Fairfield Inn*, Phone 251-316-0029; *Hampton Inn Suites*, Phone 251-776-5866

November 22

**FELLOWSHIP MEETING:** Two Services: 10:00 a.m. & 7:00 p.m.

Meals will be provided by the local congregation.

For further information contact: Pastor Larry Dishman, 11629 Hyway 614, Moss Point, MS 39562 Telephone: (Home) 228-588-6288; (Cell) 251-776-2100

### **NEWARK, OH**

December 28-31

**CAMP MEETING:** The Church of God, 675 N. Cedar St., Newark, OH 43055

Three services daily: 10:00 a.m., 3:00 p.m. & 7:00 p.m. The first service begins Sunday morning. The afternoon service will be a teaching service.

For lodging reservation, please call Bro. & Sis. Dave Bush at 740-345-1213

For further information contact: Pastor Roger Decker, 87 Decrow Ave., Newark, OH 43055 Telephone: 740-344-2543

### **CANBY, OR**

November 24-30

**REVIVAL & FELLOWSHIP MEETING:** Church of God, 522 NW 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave., Canby, OR 97013

Evangelist: Brother Earl R. Borders, Heath, OH

Service times: Monday - Wednesday 7:30 p.m.; Thursday, Friday & Saturday there will be two services each day: 10:30 a.m. & 7:30 p.m.; Sunday: 10:30 a.m. & 6:00 p.m.

For further information contact: Pastor E. David Stegmeier, 552 NW 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave. Canby, OR 97013 Telephone: 503-266-9297

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**The first service begins Sunday at 10:00 a.m.**

Send your reservations to:  
**David L. Bush**

**725 N. Cedar Street Newark, OH 43055**  
or call (740) 345-1213