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 Matt. 24:31

SOUNDING FORTH THE SEVENTH AND LAST TRUMPET

Vol. 41 March 2011 No. 3

Church of God Tabernacle in Newark, Ohio

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

Psalm 122:1

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

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

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

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

SOME SPIRITUAL FACTS PERTAINING TO THE CHURCH
Jesus organized it (Matt. 16:18)
On a good foundation (Eph. 2:20; I Cor. 3:11)
Christ governs it (Eph. 1:22-23; Isa. 9:6)
God admits members (I 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)

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

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Vol. 41 March 2011 No. 3

Winter 2010 Camp Meeting Report

"And the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the LORD, and to seek the LORD of hosts."

Zechariah 8:21

"Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causeth to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple."

Psalm 65:4

Coming Into God's Courts

We passed through the time of year when the world gets caught up with the hustle and bustle of the yuletide season. So many people become entangled with the spirit of giving and receiving, but either they have forgotten or they are unaware of what life is all about. What a wonderful time of year to go into the courts of the Lord and receive encouragement, insight, and instruction! It was so good to be in the presence of God and to feel the lasting joy and the true happiness that only He gives. This atmosphere is where we hear the Gospel proclaimed and enjoy the fellowship of the saints. It was a precious time afforded us, even though the world may look on it as foolishness.

On Sunday morning, December 26, 2010, saints from various places came together for another camp meeting. Pastor Roger Decker greeted the saints by welcoming everyone to God's Acres, and then he opened the service with prayer. He asked God for His guidance and His blessing throughout the meeting. It is always so good to see the many people who travel from other cities and states to hear the Word of God and to worship together. Winter Camp Meeting no sooner seems to begin and then it has ended. It is amazing how swiftly time passes, especially when we are enjoying ourselves so immensely. Although the meeting was short, that does not diminish the benefits we each received. Fellowship and worshiping with the saints is surely a precious time!

As the meeting progressed, we saw the Lord move mightily in each of the services, and He overshadowed the services with His presence. He knows what to do to accomplish His will and purpose and to manifest Himself for every need. The weather, which is so often a concern for travelers at that time of year, proved to be cooperative, for which we are truly grateful.

Prayer proves to be such an important factor in having a successful meeting and for the saving of souls. It is the vital key that turns hearts and minds to God, and it is also an essential element in sustaining a strong spiritual life. Before each camp meeting, the church in Newark always gathers for special prayer. The pastor and the congregation greatly feel the need for God's presence being in the midst. The

[continued on page 20]

2 Timothy 4:14 Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works:

15 Of whom be thou ware also; for he hath greatly withstood our words.

16 At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge.

17 Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.

18 And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Brother Roger L. Decker

Endurance

We read in Psalm 46:1, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." Surely He is a very present help in trouble. In the day and age in which we are privileged to live, it seems that many people today are caving to ungodly pressures and giving in to temptations. Many people have lost out with the Lord completely. Others cannot endure hardships or trials. Church, without a doubt we are going to be a tried people. There is no way that we are going to get around it. Dear one, if you are going to live for God, work for the Lord, and be effective in His kingdom, you are going to be a tried individual. That is a real hindrance to some people.

When it comes to living for God, some people do not want to get too close to God because they are afraid they will have to go through some really hard circumstances or some hard temptations or trials. You need to always keep this in mind: if you serve God with all your heart, He will be with you in adversities, in trials, and in temptations.

Jesus did not leave those who were followers of Him in the dark about trials and persecutions. He said in Matthew 5:10, "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Jesus said in John 15:20, "Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also." Trials, persecutions, and adversities will come, not to weaken us, but rather to strengthen us so that we can be better soldiers for the Master.

When entering the military, the first thing that a new recruit participates in is physical training. I thought I was in good shape physically until I was shipped to Paris Island. If a recruit was not in shape when he arrived there, they got him in shape after thirteen weeks of training.

Physical exercise is good for the body as well as the mind. First Timothy 4:7 says, "But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness." Soldiers must get in better condition than when they joined. The same is

true for those who are in the Lord's army.

The physical exercise that we went through in the military did not weaken us for combat, but rather it strengthened us so that we could perform our duties and be the best at what we were trained to do.

We did not like the strenuous training, and it was something that we were not used to doing. Also, we were not used to going to bed around nine o'clock in the evening and getting up around four o'clock in the morning. We did not make the rules or set the guidelines; others did. All we were supposed to do was obey the orders.

We have example after example of individuals standing for that which is right in both the Old and the New Testaments. I want to repeat to you, Church of God, you are going to be tried. The devil will do his very best to deceive you, to turn you aside, and to cause you to lose out with God. He would rather have you lose out after you have served God for a while and have some influence. That is when the devil really likes to turn up the heat, because the more influence you have, the more little trees you will bring down if you go down.

Finding Strength in the Lord

In our Scripture text we found that the Apostle Paul was going through a heated trial. Again, Paul wrote: "Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works: Of whom be thou ware also; for he hath greatly withstood our words. At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge.

"Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

In the second letter to Timothy, Paul was writing to this young pastor to encourage him, and he spoke of the sufferings that he had to endure. He talked about "perilous times" that come against a Christian and how the Lord was with him at a time of great persecution. In our Scripture text he mentioned Alexander the coppersmith, and he stated that Alexander did him much evil. What did he do? What caused this trial to become so heated? Verse 15 says, "Of whom be thou ware also; for he hath greatly withstood our words." He was not just an individual who had turned away from God, but he greatly withstood Paul's words.

Alexander had some influence, and he stood against the Gospel and the Apostle Paul. No doubt, Alexander had a following of people who stood with him. The Apostle Paul had to go before the magistrates because Alexander was spreading false information against Paul to try to destroy him. This troubled the Apostle Paul, mainly because it hindered the Gospel from being preached.

Verse 16 says, "At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge." A lot of pressure was on those who stood with Paul, because in that day it was very dangerous to be a friend of the accused.

Although all men forsook Paul, in verse 17 we read that the Lord did not forsake him. The Lord stood with him and gave him strength. Paul was in the midst of adversity and severe trial. Do not think for one minute that this was a small matter. Alexander the coppersmith had much influence, or clout; therefore, the Apostle Paul named him out in a letter. He was a coppersmith, and undoubtedly he had dealings with many people in that area. He had probably done work for nearly everyone in that town at one time or another. He used that influence and went to the magistrates to spread false information about the Apostle Paul. The devil was using him to hinder the Gospel.

At Paul's first defense, he said no one stood with him, but the Lord stood with him and strengthened him. Though Paul was in the midst of adversity, he knew something for sure, and you can know the same thing: God will not forsake you. Also, Paul knew that God was opening a door for him to proclaim the Gospel. Moreover, he was certain that one way or another, God was going to rescue him. At that particular time, he had no idea how God was going to rescue him, but he knew that God was with him.

One person said this: "If to do right means to be alone, it is better to be alone with God." Hebrews 13:5 says, "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."

God Knows How to Deliver the Godly

Throughout the Word of God, we have examples of men who stood out in every age of time. Many men suffered wrong and extreme hardships rather than give up their walk with God. There was Enoch. The Bible says he walked with God. There was Noah. At a time when all the thoughts of the people were evil continually, Noah was perfect in his generation and found grace in the eyes of the Lord. There was Job, who was perfect and upright. Then there was the Patriarch Joseph, who stood firm right in the midst of hardship. He went through being cast into a pit by his own brothers to being falsely accused and cast into prison. Through all those heated trials, he stood true to God.

I could go on and on naming men who stood out in the eyes of the Lord, men who were willing to stand against all odds, even if they had to stand alone. They were will-

ing to stand in the face of adversity, even when all men forsook them. The Apostle Paul knew that this trial would bring an opportunity to preach the Gospel. Wherever the Apostle Paul went, he spoke for Jesus Christ, whether he was in a prison or in the court of a magistrate.

In Colossians 4:1-4 the Apostle Paul wrote: "Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven. Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving; Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds: That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak." Paul's greatest desire was to preach the Gospel. He had a real burden for souls and for the furtherance of the Kingdom of God.

The Apostle Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 4:1-2: "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine." Child of God, do you know enough Scriptures to lead someone to Jesus Christ? It is necessary. You may not know a lot of Bible, but you know what happened to you. In John, Chapter 4, you can read that the woman at the well went into the city to tell others what Jesus had done for her.

With a burden to preach the Gospel and trust in God, Paul's fears were minimized, and he was very certain that he would be rescued. Verse 17 of our Scripture text says that he "was delivered out of the mouth of the lion." He was not talking about a literal lion. The Apostle Paul saw beyond the present and saw the future, and he knew that with God he would be safe. Friend, you are safe with God. One has said that it is always better to be in danger for a moment and safe for eternity than to be safe for a moment and miss Heaven.

Second Peter 2:9 states, "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished." In Psalm 41:1-2 the Psalmist David said: "Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the LORD will deliver him in time of trouble. The LORD will preserve him, and keep him alive; and he shall be blessed upon the earth: and thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his enemies."

Psalm 50:14-15 reads: "Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the most High: And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me." Dear one, God knows how to deliver you from the heated trial. Do not seek other avenues. You ought to stick with the Lord. He knows how to deliver. He does not need your help or assistance. He is the One who controls the mind, the heart, and the thoughts. I am talking about the God who brought down the walls of Jericho! I repeat, He knows how to deliver you.

Standing With God

Throughout the Word of God, we have words of admonition to stand. God wants you to stand. He does not want you to cave in, give up, seek other avenues, or lean upon a man to deliver you out of the trial. God wants you to stand right there. If you are living right, you can rest assured that God is with you. He is not against you. He is for you, and He is allowing that trial to come upon you so that you might gain strength and wisdom. You will gain help that will benefit you further down the road in serving God. God knows how to deliver the godly from temptation.

Ephesians 6:13 says, "Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand." I am amazed when individuals get offended over the least little thing. All a person has to do is say something that they feel is wrong and people get up a miff tree, so to speak, and pout. They will not talk to that individual, yet they still profess to be saved, and they still go around praising Jesus. Dear one, if you cannot get beyond that, then you have a real need, because you are going to be talked about, and you are going to hear some of the talk. Not everyone is going to talk to you, and not everyone is going to welcome you.

People are going to do things that you do not like. In fact, you might become a little offended, but you need to take it to the Lord and mature. Sometimes God allows those things to happen to strengthen you, to make you better able to fight the good fight of faith. How would you have lived in the morning time? What would you have done had you tangled with Alexander the coppersmith? What would you have done had you been required to go to a court?

The Apostle Paul said all men forsook him. No doubt, he had some close ties back then, some brethren who were close to him, but the Bible says *all* men forsook him. They did not want to be counted as knowing him, just as Peter forsook Jesus. He did not want it to be known that he had any association with Him, because he was afraid that he would be brought before the magistrates; therefore, he fled.

God stood with Paul, and He will stand with you too. God will stay right with you if you will stay with Him. Too many people forsake God. They quit and turn away from Him. When the slightest trial, the slightest hardship, or the slightest adversity comes their way, they turn and say, "If that is what serving God is, I was better off out in sin." Oh, no, you were not better off out in sin! There is one thing that you have to remember when you are living in sin: your soul is lost, and there is no hope for you if you should die in sin.

Put on the Whole Armor

Paul said in Ephesians 6:11-18: "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

"Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints."

You need to put on the whole armor of God and obey Truth. Truth is what holds everything together. The breastplate of righteousness guards your heart and soul. Your ability to stand will come from the Gospel. Also, you need faith to quench the fiery darts of the wicked. The helmet of salvation protects your mind and your thoughts, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, is the only offensive weapon. Prayer is good for all occasions.

Paul, writing to the Philippians, said in Philippians 4:1, "Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved." If you profess to be a Christian, you need to know that all Christians are targets for Satan. We read in 1 Peter 5:8, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." If you are living for God, Satan is circling you right now, trying to devour you.

Why was the Apostle Paul used mightily of God? One reason was that God could count on him to stand for that which was right. God knew that when the dust settled, the Apostle Paul would still be standing for what was right. May God help you to have such an experience with the Lord that you can be counted on to stand for what is right. Paul was willing to be misused, mistreated, misrepresented, and lied against for the Gospel's sake.

Dear one, do not allow the ugly spirit of jealousy to get into your heart. Do not allow the enemy to cause you to become jealous of another individual's gift. It will hinder you. Do not think more of yourself than you ought to think. You need to stay where God has placed you. God elevates the humble and abases the proud.

The Apostle Paul was ready to be misused. He was mistreated, beaten many times with stripes, and misrepresented. Paul spent a good share of his time serving God in prison. There he wrote some of the richest letters ever written. The Thessalonians were known for misrepresenting him. God knows the truth, and some things you just have to leave with God. He will always reveal the truth.

The devil will lie against you, misuse you, and misrepresent you. He wants to devour you and tear you down. Today it seems that when the smallest of persecutions come, some people are quick to abandon the faith and seek other avenues. Dear one, the thrill that is out in sin is but for a moment. Now, you may go out and spend all night getting drunk, but the next day you will have to sober up, and you will have to look into an empty wallet.

Determined to Be Steadfast

You need at least four things in serving the Lord. First, you need to stand for the Lord. Second, you need to have a desire and a determination. Third, you need to have discipline. Last, you need to have dedication. No doubt, there are others, but those four things are necessary in living for the Lord.

The word *desire* means "to long for." Second Corinthians 7:11 says, "For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, 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."

When salvation comes to your heart from godly sorrow, these things are going to be present. You will have a vehement, or earnest, desire to live for God and to further the Kingdom of God. You must have a longing for the things of God. Sad to say, many people have lost that longing and that desire. They no longer desire the things of God. When they were first saved, they had vehement desire, and they were prayed up and ready to go. As time has gone on, their desire has slowly diminished. They have lost that desire for God's Word.

Psalm 119:131 says, "I opened my mouth, and panted: for I longed for thy commandments." Job 23:12 reads, "Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food." Job wrote that. God's Word is food for the soul; it is God talking to us.

Many people have lost their longing to pray and to see ones saved. Mark 11:24 says, "Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." If some people have any thoughts about the lost, they are very few. Do you realize that when an individual is lost, if he dies in that condition, he will suffer throughout eternity? Does that cause you to have a burden for the lost? If you are truly a Christian, it should. The Apostle Paul stated in

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

When you are saved, you have a desire to see the brethren. Paul wrote in Philippians 4:1, "Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved." He had a desire to see them. He said in Romans 15:23, "But now having no more place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come unto you." People have lost their desire to be with the people of God. I want to be with God's people. I want to be with all my brothers and sisters in the Lord.

You must have a determination to serve God. You have to get a spiritual backbone about you to live for God. One who has determination must settle it to the place where he is going to serve God, even if no one else does. He is determined that if he has to be the only one in the family serving God, he is still going to serve God. He has it settled in his heart, his mind, and his spirit.

In Psalm 57:7 the Psalmist said, "My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed: I will sing and give praise." The Psalmist was saying that when it comes to God, his heart was steadfast, or settled. It was in a position that will not change. My heart is fixed.

The Christian must be dedicated to the cause of Christ. The word *dedicate* means, "to set apart for a specific use." Dedicating your life to the cause of Christ pleases God, and it is the right thing to do. You ought to dedicate your skills, your work, and your abilities to God. You should set them apart for the Lord to use however He sees fit.

"Whom the Lord Loveth He Correcteth"

Last, I want to talk to you about discipline. Job said in Job 36:10, "He openeth also their ear to discipline, and commandeth that they return from iniquity." God is going to chastise, or correct, you from time to time. He is your Father, and that is what a father is supposed to do. Sometimes you may get out of line a little, and God has a way of letting you know when you get out of line. Do not despise His chastening. If God did not chastise you, you would go astray.

In adverse conditions one will be corrected by the Lord. Without correction each of us could get out of control. You are still in the flesh, but not sinful flesh. We still have humanity that needs to be kept under control by the Spirit of God or you will end up being a castaway. First Corinthians 9:27 says, "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."

The Apostle Paul said he died daily. Romans 8:13, "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." There needs to be discipline in your spiritual walk. We read in Proverbs 3:12, "For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth." God's people are going to be a tried people.

God loves every one of us, and He knows what is best for us. With the trial He will give you grace to endure it. With the temptation He will give you grace and make a way of escape. God allows you to go through the trials, though you may not understand why. It is natural to think, "Why am I going through all of this?" Well, you may rest assured that God has allowed it, and He has something good planned for you if you will seek His face and stay true to Him.

Often God allows trials to come to draw you closer to Him. The Psalmist David said if he had not been afflicted, he would have gone astray. You need to get that vehement desire working once again in your life. God loves you, and He knows what is best for you.

God's people are going to be tried. Peter said not to think it is some strange thing when trials come. You are serving God. You are not going to be free from trials. No, I repeat, God's people are going to be a tried people. First Peter 4:12-13 states: "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy."

(Compact Disc TR-573M)

DOES YOUR CHURCH WANT A REVIVAL?

When all the *sleeping* folks wake up,
And all the *lukewarm* folks fire up,
And all the *dishonest* folks confess up,
And all the *disgruntled* folks sweeten up,
And all the *discouraged* folks cheer up,
And all the *depressed* folks look up,
And all the *estranged* folks make up,
And all the *gossipers* shut up,
And all the *church members* pray up,
And all the *true soldiers* will stand up,
Then *revival will be here!*

1 Chronicles 21:1 And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel.

2 And David said to Joab and to the rulers of the people, Go, number Israel from Beersheba even to Dan; and bring the number of them to me, that I may know it.

3 And Joab answered, The LORD make his people an hundred times so many more as they be: but, my lord the king, are they not all my lord's servants? why then doth my lord require this thing? why will he be a cause of trespass to Israel?

4 Nevertheless the king's word prevailed against Joab. Wherefore Joab departed, and went throughout all Israel, and came to Jerusalem.

5 And Joab gave the sum of the number of the people unto David. And all they of Israel were a thousand thousand and an hundred thousand men that drew sword: and Judah was four hundred threescore and ten thousand men that drew sword.

6 But Levi and Benjamin counted he not among them: for the king's word was abominable to Joab.

7 And God was displeased with this thing; therefore he smote Israel.

8 And David said unto God, I have sinned greatly, because I have done this thing: but now, I beseech thee, do away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly.

9 And the LORD spake unto Gad, David's seer, saying,

10 Go and tell David, saying, Thus saith the LORD, I offer thee three things: choose thee one of them, that I may do it unto thee.

11 So Gad came to David, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Choose thee

12 Either three years' famine; or three months to be destroyed before thy foes, while that the sword of thine enemies overtaketh thee; or else three days the sword of the LORD, even the pestilence, in the land, and the angel of the LORD destroying throughout all the coasts of Israel. Now therefore advise thyself what word I shall bring again to him that sent me.

13 And David said unto Gad, I am in a great strait: let me fall now into the hand of the LORD; for very great are his mercies: but let me not fall into the hand of man.

1 Corinthians 10:12 Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

Take Heed Lest You Fall

Brother Paul Prinkey

David's Strong Will

I want you to consider some thoughts concerning the life of David and how he got himself into bad shape with the Lord. David was a man who was not easily put off from going after what he wanted. When he was determined that he was going to have something, he went after it with all his heart. This was a very noble characteristic. However, sometimes our characteristics can get us into trouble, though they may be noble and for our good in one way.

Someone who is bold has a strong backbone and easily speaks his mind can also get into trouble by speaking his mind when he should hold his peace. Some people are

backward and do not speak up, and sometimes that trait is good and can serve a good purpose, but other times they need to show backbone and stand for God regardless of the ideas or opinions of the world. They can get themselves in trouble because when they should be standing, they are sitting down.

David had a strong characteristic, and most of his life it served him well, but in our Scripture text we find that it did not serve him well on that day. David wanted Israel numbered, and he would not be denied, no matter what effort was made to discourage him. Joab was a man who had some faults, but he was standing in the right that day, and he did everything within his power to discourage David from making this grave mistake.

Joab was a great fighter, and he came from a family of great fighters. Joab had two brothers, and they were members of David's thirty elite fighting men who surrounded David in the time of battle, and there were no better fighters than those thirty men who surrounded David. Joab and his two brothers stood together with David through thick and thin and protected him.

The time came when David became too weak in battle. He had slain Goliath, one of the giants of the land. Well, that giant had brothers and other family members, and they were all great men of warfare. Every time they went to battle, it was already elected that David would take on the biggest one of the group. David went out and slew many of them.

When David grew older, he began to grow weak. He could still wield the sword with skill and fight a good fight, but he got a little weary in the battle. One giant that David was fighting was just about to overtake David, and Joab's brother, Abishai, stepped in and took over the fight and slew that giant. That day they told David, "You are not fighting the giants anymore. You are too precious for us to put you out on the battlefield to fight the giants and take a chance of losing. You are going to stay back and watch us defeat the giants." David did not like that, but it was for his good.

Joab's Characteristics

David was a strong man, and Joab and his brothers were strong men. As I mentioned previously, Joab had some faults. One day Abner was fighting against David. At first, David was not made king over all of Israel. He was only king of Judah. When Saul went out to battle and was losing the fight and fell on his own sword, Judah decided to own David (who was anointed by Samuel to be the next king of Israel) as their king. However, Israel was not ready to resign themselves to David's kingship. Ishbosheth, a descendant of Saul, was on the throne in Israel, and Abner was the right-hand man to Ishbosheth.

The day came when those of Judah were fighting against some men of Israel, and Joab's brother pursued Abner. Abner told him to turn aside to the right or to the left, but he would not listen. He was a good runner, but he was not as good a good fighter as Abner. He caught up to Abner, and the Bible says Abner took the hinder end of a spear and ran it through Joab's brother. Asahel fell and died, and Abner set up enmity between Joab and Abishai and himself.

Finally, it came to pass that Joab tricked Abner and got him in a place where he and his other brother could kill him. Joab slew Abner, and David stood against Joab for that deed. David disapproved because Joab used trickery, and Joab was wrong for what he did.

Although Joab had faults, when it came to the issue in our Scripture text that we are talking about, Joab was right. According to our Scripture text, David called Joab to him and said, in essence, "I want you to go out and number Israel."

Joab said, "David, this is not the thing you want to be doing." Joab was putting his own neck on the line by standing against David. David could have denounced the opposition of Joab and called for his head. He could have had Joab killed for resisting the kingship of Israel. David was the greatest man in Israel, and Joab was putting up a fuss against what the king wanted. The Bible plainly points out that Joab did not quietly speak to David and say, "Listen, this is not the best thing you could do. Why don't you go about your kingly business and dispense with having Israel numbered?"

The Bible says David "prevailed against Joab." This indicates that Joab was putting up a good fight against David. David made some strong arguments against Joab and overruled him to get him to do what he wanted him to do.

Joab tried to convince David, "Don't do this! This thing is abominable before God. God does not want you to number Israel. We do not need to know the number of men in Israel. God will take care of us regardless. David, when has God ever worried about how many people were in Israel whenever it came down to the time to fight? Look what God did in the time of the Judges. When Gideon had only three hundred men that went against the host of Syria, God caused them to overcome and prevail. One man with God is still in the majority, David."

I can imagine some arguments that Joab used to try to persuade David, but David kept telling him, "I want Israel numbered; go number them." David became a casualty of his own strong character. He had a strong backbone; he would not bend, and he would not reverse his decision. He forged ahead over the top of Joab and told Joab what he wanted him to do. Do not forget that I am preaching on the thought, "Take heed lest you fall." Joab did all he could to discourage David, but David prevailed against him.

David's Remarkable Life

Not many men in the Word of God have as much written about them as David did. Such remarkable instances took place in David's life. From just a young man, David believed God and trusted Him. Young person, this ought to be an encouragement to you. David had unshakeable confidence in God. It did not matter to him what the opposition was; it mattered to him how big his God was. The Bible says he was "a ruddy youth," or sort of pink-cheeked, but he was obedient to his parents. Whenever his father said, "Go out and tend the sheep," David did not put up a fuss and argue. He did what he was told to do.

Young person, it is your job to obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. David obeyed his parents, and he went out and took care of the sheep. From all indications of the Scripture, none of his many brothers ever helped him. It was his responsibility alone. Whenever danger or trouble came, such as a bear or a lion, David did not have any help fighting them. In so many words, he said, "There came a bear once to take one of my father's sheep, and I slew the bear. Another day a lion came to steal away one of the sheep, and I grabbed him by his beard and killed him." Now, that is getting awfully close, is it not?

I do not know about you, but I have hunted wild game; however, I have always done so from a distance. I would rather avoid the physical contact. I like to have a good rifle and some distance between the wild game and me; then I will see what I can do about it.

David did not have a rifle. He had a sling with some stones in a pouch on his side. He said he reached up and grabbed hold of the lion by the beard and slew him. I would say he had great courage, would you not? He was a strong young man. Also, his faith in God was strong. It was his duty to protect his father's sheep, and he protected his father's sheep with his life. He put himself between the danger and his father's sheep.

One day a battle was going on between the Philistines and Israel when Saul was king. Three of David's brothers went to war. Before this took place, we find that Samuel showed up at Jesse's house and knocked on the door. He said, "Jesse, I need to see your sons."

"What for?"

He said, "Well, God wants me to anoint the next king of Israel." Jesse called his sons out before him, and he lined them up. I can imagine all those young sons standing there; this was an honor. The great prophet of Israel came to Jesse's house. Jesse said, "Here they are," and they all came marching out. They were big, strong men, especially Eliam. When Samuel's eyes rested on Eliam, he spoke within himself and said, "Surely this is the man," but in essence, God said, "Hold on, Samuel, he is not the one. My eyes do not see as your eyes see. You are looking on the outside, but I am looking on the inside."

After the Lord showed Samuel that none of those sons was the one He had chosen, Samuel inquired, "Do you have any more sons?"

Jesse said, "Well, I have one young son, but he is out tending the sheep. Surely you do not want to see him, do you?" Samuel told Jesse to send for him. Samuel's eyes rested on him. As soon as David came in from the field and stepped on the scene, God witnessed to Samuel, "This is the one. I want you to anoint him."

David's Triumph

Samuel called David forward in front of his father and all his brothers, and he poured out the oil and anointed David as the next king of Israel. God's Spirit was upon David from that day forward. When the battle was in array against the Philistine army, this anointing showed. Jesse sent David to check on his brothers and sent some refreshments with him. David no more than got to the valley and out stepped the giant Goliath across the way. Goliath made his claim and charged Israel, "Send a man, and we will fight together, and whoever wins, that nation will serve the other." David looked around and no one was volunteering to go. David said, in essence, "Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of God?" It was not just the armies of Israel; it was the armies of the Living God to David.

His brother said: "Where are the little sheep, you naughty boy? You are supposed to be taking care of your father's sheep. Why are not you doing it?"

David said, "Well, Father sent me here with some food for you, but is there not a cause?" Eliab tried to talk him down, but David was not talked down very easily.

He said, "I will fight that giant!"

Saul got word of this and told a servant to send David to him. No doubt, he was expecting something different than what he saw, because when David stepped in, Saul said: "You are but a youth; you can't fight that giant. He has been a man of war from his youth, skilled in the art of warfare. What do you do for a living?"

David answered: "I am a shepherd, but let me tell you what happened. One day a bear came, and another day a lion came and sought to steal my father's sheep, and I slew both the bear and the lion. The same God who delivered them into my hand will deliver this uncircumcised Philistine into my hand."

Saul had to acknowledge that David possessed something that even he did not have. He let David go, and David proved that day who was the victor. When he killed Goliath, he went around that day with Goliath's sword in one hand and his head in the other. What a victory! David's life was filled with many remarkable events like this.

He had many triumphs in his life, but he also had tragedy in his life. He had many hardships that he went through as well as the successes.

David's Hardships

David's whole life's story is filled with excitement. David was a man of God who believed in God and who trusted in God. He sought God with his whole heart. There was nothing else in David's mind but serving God. He wrote in Psalm 84:10, "For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness." In his heart he sought God, because he loved the Lord. Year after year, David proved that he only wanted God in his heart.

When David got blessed, he took out his pen and started writing the psalms that still blessed us today. David wrote in Psalm 86:11, "Teach me thy way, O LORD; I will walk in thy truth: unite my heart to fear thy name." David's desire was for God to show him the way that He wanted him to live. He wanted to follow the way that God led him. In one Scripture we can read that he asked the Lord to search his heart to see if there was any wicked way in him. David wanted to be led in the way everlasting, away from the wicked way.

David was a man whose heart sought after God. He wanted God to be pleased with him. He knew that as long as he pleased God, God would bless him. David also experienced tragedy in his life. His good friends, the priests at the temple, were slain because they helped David when he was on the run from Saul. Saul was seeking to kill David, and David was on the run with a few hundred men who were supporting him. Saul was trying to run him down and kill him.

One day David was hungry, and he did not have any food to eat. The priests came to him and brought him the "shewbread" from the holy place and gave it to David to eat. Saul heard about it and had all the priests slain; David grieved.

The day came when his closest friend, Jonathan, went out to battle and was slain, and David grieved. He was not even able to go to the funeral because he was so hated. Although tragedies struck David's life, he still stayed true to God. Many times he had to run through the wilderness to get away from Saul. At times he was hungry and asked villagers and other folks who were living out in the country for food. One time he was denied by a man who had a hard heart. He stiffened up against David and his men and would not give them anything to eat. God brought retribution on that man, and the man's wife brought David some things that they needed.

Many hardships came on David because he had to hide from Saul. One time David and his men were asleep in a cave, and they heard a noise at the front of the cave. After night fell and the men in the front of the cave had fallen asleep, David sneaked out of the cave. Lo and behold, Saul and his troops were there. David sneaked past Saul's men of battle and got his men out of there. David did not know when the day might come when he might be slain, but God protected David and took care of him.

In the midst of hardships, David had many successes. The day came when David went back to Israel after he sought refuge in another country. While he was there, he went out to battle with that country, and men came and took all the wives and the goods from David's camp. When David and his men got back from the battle, they came home to empty houses. Their possessions, their wives, and their children were gone. They were tired from being in the battle, but David said, "Let's go after them." They went out after them and rescued all their wives and children because God's blessing was upon them.

Another great success that David had was this: Israel finally consented to taking David as their king. David became king over all of Israel and all of Judah. This is a wonderful success story! The ark of the covenant was brought back, and many good things happened. David took over the kingship, and neighboring countries sent in laborers to build him a house and sent the materials with them. They built David a house. David was blessed richly with so much great success.

David's Fall Into Temptation

After all the great successes of David, we find that he got himself in trouble. What happened? He was tempted of the tempter to number Israel, and God did not want him to do that. God said no, but David said, "I want to know." Joab told him no, but he said, "I want to know." So David sent Joab out anyway. What do we find? Joab came back with a number and told David how many there were; then David got a visit from the pastor. That is who Gad was. He took care of David's spiritual needs. God had paid a visit to Gad and told him to go and talk to David.

There are times, saint, when we each need to be talked to. When you are in spiritual trouble, God gets right to the point, does He not? When Gad came to see David, he did not come to feast with him. He came with a purpose. When the pastor comes to you with a purpose, it is time to sit up and pay attention. He has been on his knees praying for you, and he has a burden on his heart. Gad went to David with a burden on his heart and a message from God. In essence, he said, "Listen, David, you have done wrong. The Word of the Lord is this: You have three choices, and you need to let me know before the day is out what answer you want me to give to God, because you are not in shape to talk to Him yourself."

Sometimes you may not be in good enough shape to talk to God yourself. You may need your

pastor or someone else to pray with you. You can get yourself in a serious spiritual condition and need pastoral counsel. The flesh works to try to cover things up, but God does not work that way. He exposes the flesh. Sometimes you need to tarry at an altar of prayer.

God wanted to hear David's answer through Gad. Gad told David to choose in verse 12 of our Scripture text: "Either three years' famine; or three months to be destroyed before thy foes, while that the sword of thine enemies overtaketh thee; or else three days the sword of the LORD, even the pestilence, in the land, and the angel of the LORD destroying throughout all the coasts of Israel. Now therefore advise thyself what word I shall bring again to him that sent me." It was time for David to do some serious considering. He made a wrong move, and these were the consequences.

Friend, if you make a wrong move and you get yourself out of the will of God and get in trouble with God, there will be consequences. Moses had respect to the recompense of reward. Why was that? Because you are going to be rewarded for everything you do. There are results to your actions. You will experience a return for the things you do. God is watching, and He has His eye on everything that you are doing. He does not merely pay attention to fifty or sixty percent of your life. God knows all about you, all day, every day, all week, all month, all year long. You might have some things hidden from man, but you do not have anything hidden from God. You might be successful at keeping some things from other people's view, but God sees it and knows it.

The Hebrew writer said, "All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do" (Hebrews 4:13). You cannot hide anything from God. Sometimes people get themselves in trouble after they have lived for God for years, and they do not want anyone to know about it. They hope it does not get out. Why? Because people have known them to be Christians for years. Therefore, they try to cover it up. Proverbs 28:13 reads, "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy."

God wants you to get down to business with Him. If you are wrong, you ought to acknowledge where you have gone astray and let God lead you back. Thank God for the mercy of God that sent Gad to see David. If it were not for him, David might have died lost. Because of Gad's faithfulness, David was shown his wrong and had a chance to make it right.

The Folly of Numbering Israel

Who would have thought that after David had been such a great man of God from his youth, he would have stumbled and sinned after such a long life with God? If you study David's life, you can read of all the things that he did, all his successes, all his triumphs, and all the hardships that he went through; yet he stayed true to God. There were times when he could have given up, but he did not quit. Dear one, the same thing could happen to you. This is the reason you need to take heed, lest you fall. You might have lived many years for the Lord and been faithful through hardships, times when it would have been easy to quit, but you stayed true to God; then after all those things you have come through—the hardships, the losses, and the grief—here comes the devil with something that trips you up. You need to take heed lest you fall.

Sometimes the devil works and plans for months, maybe even years, to get someone. It does not happen overnight. It may seem that a person has changed in a week or so. No, it does not happen that way. The Bible talks about there being an occasion of stumbling. Each of us has a weakness in our lives that can become an occasion of stumbling. This is a place where a person is not as solid, a place where he struggles a little more than others, a place where he has to guard a little closer than other places.

There are things that bother each of us, and there are places where we are not as keen or as strong, and the devil will focus on those places. Those areas can become an occasion of stumbling in us; therefore, we can get in spiritual trouble. We need to take heed lest we fall.

David was a strong man. You would have never thought he would have given in to this temptation of the devil. After all the victories God had wrought for Israel, why did David need to know how many men wielded a sword? If you will go back and read, you will find that one man took a spear and slew eight hundred men at one time. Why did David want to know how many men he needed in his army when he had one guy who could wipe out almost one thousand men by himself?

David said one time when they were in battle array, "If I could have one drink from that well right by the gate of Bethlehem, would that not satisfy me?" Three of his strong men among the thirty heard him say that, and they sneaked away from David's presence and ran through the garrison of troops, dipped the bucket in the water, and ran back through the troops. When they got back to David, they handed him a cup, and he said, "What's this?"

They said, "You said you wanted water from Bethlehem, from that well by the gate, so we got it for you."

In so many words, David said, "You have to be kidding me. You went through all those men and dipped water out of the well, fighting the whole way, and you still have enough water to bring to me? I can't drink this. This water was bought with the blood of men." He poured it out as an offering before God and gave praise to God.

When David had men who would fight for him that way, why did he want to number Israel? As long as God was with them, God helped them to be greater than the host that came against them. Whether the enemy's number was greater or less, God caused Israel to prevail. God did not want Israel numbered because He did not want them to think they had strength in numbers. He did not want them to be as the neighboring nations.

The idolatrous nations took great pleasure in how many men they had who could wield the sword, sling the sling, pull the bow of the arrow, and get out in the chariots and run through the streets. God did not want Israel to take pleasure and praise in that. He wanted them to take pleasure in Him and to praise Him, the One who gave them the victory when they went out to battle. God was greater than any foe that could come up against Israel, no matter how great or how small the number. Israel was His place of abode.

Trusting God's Mercies

David was tricked by the enemy of his soul, and he stumbled. In verse 8 of our Scripture text, David said to God, "I have sinned greatly, because I have done this thing: but now, I beseech thee, do away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly." David told Gad it was time to bring him the Lord's answer.

David was in a great strait. He acknowledged this was not a small transgression. Sinning before God is not a small thing, no matter how small or great you may think the sin is. It does not take a multitude of sins to send your soul to hell; it takes only one. I repeat, sin, no matter how great or small you may think it is, is no small thing.

David said in verse 13, " I am in a great strait: let me fall now into the hand of the LORD. . . ." David did not choose his punishment. He had three choices, but he did not want to make the choice. David continued, ". . . for very great are his mercies: but let me not fall into the hand of man." Man would have chewed him up and spit him back out, but David knew that God would have mercy, even though he was going to have to endure the chastening of the Lord, because God loved him. The rod of correction was going to be laid upon him, but he resigned himself to God's mercy and not man's hand.

If you have fallen, if you are in spiritual trouble, the answer is humility. You must humble yourself and cast yourself on the mercies of God. If you are ever going to be lifted back up and made able to stand, it will be God who does it for you. You cannot do it on your own. Others cannot help you, no matter how many words of encouragement they might speak; it will take God to lift you up.

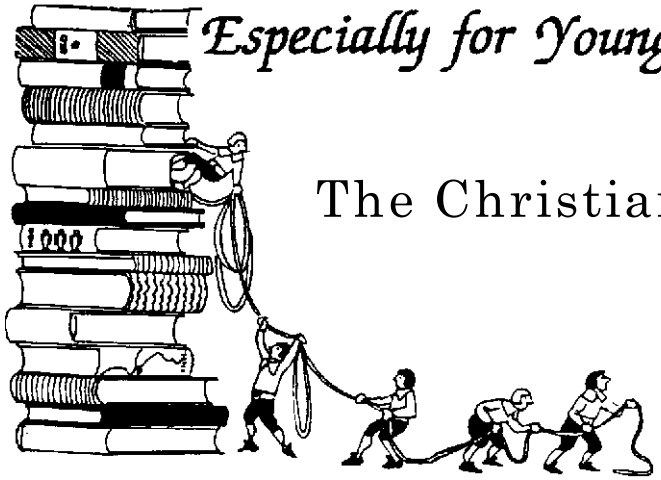
The Bible says there is lifting up in the Lord. God can enable you to stand. The best thing to do is to get your eyes off what other people might think. You need to be more concerned about what God is thinking. Do you need victory? Have you fallen short of the glory of God? If God has shown you where you have erred, you need to pray about it. You must get down to business with God. The best thing you can do is fall on God's mercy and ask the Lord for help. Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God, and He will exalt you.

If you have a need in your heart, you need to pray. Do not wait. You must pray, and then let God have His way.

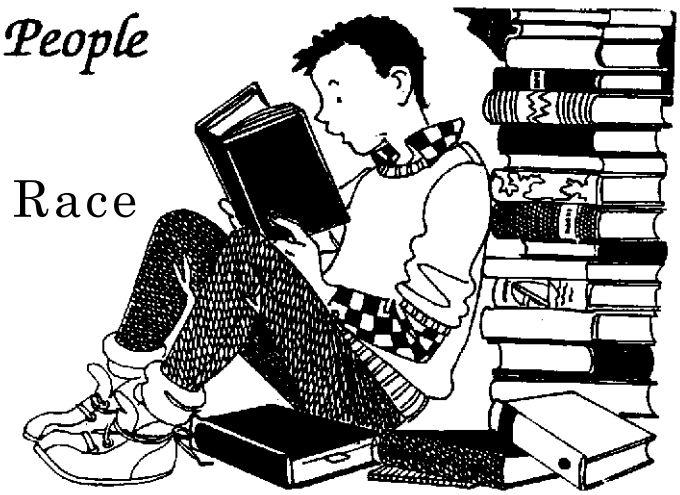
(Compact Disc TR-639M)

The Sham Rock

A street preacher in London was preaching to a crowd that had gathered around him. It was at the time of the Shamrock races, and everyone was talking of the event. A ruffian on the edge of the crowd thought he would have a little fun, so he called three times, "Mr. Preacher! what do you know about the Shamrock?" Finally, the fourth time, not to be silenced, the ruffian called again, "Mr. Preacher! I am asking you what you know about the Shamrock." This time the preacher paused. The crowd became very still. Pointing upward, with one hand he said, so clearly and distinctly that everyone could hear him, "On Christ, the Solid Rock, I stand; all other rocks are—sham rocks!"



The Christian Race



Proverbs 3:5-6 says: "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." When I first got saved in 1992, my parents decided that they were going to take our family to the camp meeting in Newark, Ohio. What was on my mind then was, "I guess I'll make a few friends." We were going to go on a vacation after the meeting, so I was really looking forward to that.

When we arrived at the camp meeting, I noticed a big difference in the young people, especially in how friendly they were. As I sat through a few services, I felt the Spirit of God. Although I did not know much about being saved, I knew that God was dealing with me.

As I watched all the young people, I thought about how I would like to be just like they were. I had lived a very rough life, but I wanted an experience that would cause me to treat people the way they were treating me. I wanted to have their kind of attitude. There was a real difference in my life compared to theirs.

When I was younger, I used to cry myself to sleep at night, thinking that I might die while I was sleeping. That night, as I lay in bed, I remember pleading with God. In the past I tried to serve God a few times, but I did not sell out to God completely. As soon as I got around my friends, I failed. This time I pleaded earnestly: "God, save me this one last time and give me a good experience. I believe that You can do it, but I need Your help. I need to stay away from my old friends." I asked God into my heart and told Him that I wanted to change. I did not want to do the things that I had done before.

When I first arrived at the camp meeting, an older saint asked me if I was saved, which really caught me off guard. No one had ever asked me that before, and I had to tell him no. Deep down inside, I wanted to say yes, but I had to tell him the truth. My hair was a little longer, but when I got saved, I had a desire to get my hair cut. I did not know that the Bible says concerning long hair, but right away I had a desire to live right. I was working in the dining hall at the time, and I asked somebody where I could get a haircut. I wanted to surprise my parents when they came through the dinner line where I was working. I remember my parents walking to where I was, and my mother started crying. She could see that I had changed. That was just the start of the new life that I was getting ready to live.

As I look back on those years, I can see the importance of praying about decisions in life. When I was younger, I made many foolish decisions. As I got older, I had to make serious decisions that would affect my entire life. The first major decision that I had to make occurred as I was approaching the end of my senior year in high school. I had to decide whether to go to college. Many young people attend college for additional education for their career or for where they work.

During my senior year, many people pressed me to go to college. Teachers from school and people I looked up to encouraged me to attend, but I kept seeking God. I had opportunities to go, but I believe God told me personally that I should not go. Looking back, I can honestly say that not going to college was the best thing for me. The summer after graduation, I received a good job. Next, I faced another big decision that I had to make, and that was marriage.

After I got married, I soon was faced with another decision about which I really had to seek God's direction. I began to pray about changing jobs. I was working a day shift job with fairly decent pay, but I would have to give up some things if I took this other job. I was going to have to start working nights, which is a bad shift to work when one has a family. My wife did not want me to take it, because she would have been alone at night.

Then one day another opportunity came up, so I prayed and sought God's will. When you are in the midst of an important decision, it can be very scary. You do not want to make the wrong decision. Looking back, I can see where God has directed my path. I took that job, and it has all worked out for good.

Normally it takes twenty years

to get a day job where I was working, but in about eighteen months, I was working the day shift and had four weeks of vacation. That is unheard of! When it came to scheduling vacations, they went by seniority. There were probably one hundred fifty people ahead of me. People love to take the summer off, so usually when it got down to me, all that was left was winter days, when it is cold and there is not much sunshine. However, when I started this new job, they made a new rule that each person could only schedule two weeks at a time. By the time it got down to me, I was able to get vacation time for the camp meeting in Ohio and our camp meeting in Oregon. That may seem little to some people, but in this day and age, I need all the spiritual help I can get. It means much to me to have the opportunity to go to camp meeting.

When I started this new job, I honestly thought that I would never be able to go back to Ohio for the camp meetings, because to get time off in the summer was very difficult. However, God had something else in mind for me, and I appreciate that from the depths of my heart. When the vacation schedule got back around to me, I was able to take off the week after the camp meeting too. God gave us not only the opportunity to attend the camp meeting but also the opportunity to stay afterward to visit with friends and to do some things that we wanted to do. So we appreciated that.

Before we left for camp meeting, a friend asked me if I was afraid to fly. I told him that I was not afraid to fly, because if I died, I knew where I would go. I had an opportunity to testify to him that when you are a Christian, you do not have those fears. God's people can take comfort in knowing that if they do die, if the plane does go down, they are on their way up. I told that man that Christians look forward to the day when they can go to Heaven.

When I got on the plane, I completely forgot about what I had said to the man. We started on our way, and everything was fine. After we boarded our connecting flight and we had been flying about three or four hours, suddenly the flight attendants were hurrying back and forth. It seemed that something was wrong. The movie and the lights were turned off. As the flight attendants were gathering things up, I looked over at my wife and said, "Something must be wrong." I thought maybe somebody in the back was having a medical emergency. When the flight attendant came to pick up our trash, I asked
if there was a problem. She replied, "There is a problem, but the pilot will have to tell you what the problem is." Right away my wife started crying. She had already gone through a bad flying experience the previous year that had really frightened her, so she was hesitant to fly again.

As we were flying, there was lightning all around us, and the plane was shaking. We started talking and praying aloud, asking God to help us. Soon the pilot told us that we were going to have to make an extra landing. (He did not call it an emergency landing. Had he done so, no doubt, people would have been in a frenzy.) The pilot stated that they smelled something that they needed to check out. The people on the plane were really beginning to be frightened, but we were so thankful that we had Someone to call on in the midst of that experience. Although I was fearful, I found comfort in knowing that God was in control. I believe that God spoke to me as I was sitting there and let me know that the plane would land safely. I thought of the shipwreck that Paul had experienced, and yet God spared his life. I thought also of the life of Job. God takes care of His children.

It only took six minutes to go from 31,000 feet down to the ground. We were heading down as fast as the pilots could take us. When we landed, fire engines were everywhere, along with other emergency vehicles. Once we landed, we learned there were some burnt wires. Had God not helped us, no doubt that plane would have crashed. We do not know all the details, but we know that God was certainly in control. We are thankful for that. I appreciate everything that God has done for my family and me in the past. God's people have a comfort that the world does not have. We know Someone whom the world does not know.

I would like to bring a few thoughts about the Christian race to encourage the youth. In the day and age in which we are living, we really need to pull together. I heard people say that when I was younger, but it seemed that those words were for the older brethren in the church, but then the Lord started dealing with me, telling me that one day today's youth will be the song directors, the ushers, the treasurers, and the ministers, and so on. We each should want to be used of God. You may want to be used of God, but unless you are completely obedient in what you know to do, God cannot use you. You ought to be completely obedient to the Word. When the church doors are open, you ought to be there. When the minister speaks, you should be supportive of him.

One of these days, you may be called to do something for God, such as being a song director, a choir director, or whatever it might be. Unfortunately, it seems that generation after generation has lost something in our society. We really need to hold on to the Truth and look to those who are our examples. We can look to many examples, but we must look especially to Christ. As the older saints pass on, young people will need to step in and fill the positions as God calls them. You must stand fast right now to do that. We need to pull together and uplift one another.

We could compare the Christian race to a foot race or a car race.

[continued on page 26]

Philippians 3:1 Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe.

2 Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision.

3 For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

4 Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more:

5 Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee;

6 Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

7 But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.

8 Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ.

Winning Christ

Brother Richard Talbot

Have No Confidence in the Flesh

The thought of winning Christ ought to be your goal. You may say: "I have already won Him. He saved me many years ago." The Apostle Paul's desire was to win *more* of Him, to find Christ in a deeper and a more fulfilling way. Every day he lived, he was living to win Christ in a greater measure.

The thought of winning Christ implies a contest. It is something that you must work for and put in for. You must put forth great effort to have more of Christ in your life. You have to live this earthly life in such a way that you can win your heavenly award. You need to realize that no one can do for you what you need to do for yourself. No one can work to go to Heaven for you. You must live as God requires for your personal entrance into Glory.

As I was traveling the highway some time ago, I came across a billboard advertising a general handyman for a local community. The big words on that billboard read, "Let Wendell do it." That thought really struck me. I thought, "If only I could find a 'Wendell' around, I would not have to do so much. I could just call

Wendell and let him do things for me." The advertisement was to get some business for Wendell.

In this Christian life "Wendell" cannot do it for you, your husband or your wife cannot do it for you, your parents cannot do it for you, and your pastor cannot do it for you. If you are going to do it, you must do it for yourself. Wendell is out of the picture in this case. It would be great to pick up a telephone and call for some help. It requires effort deep within your heart, soul, and mind. You must generate the energy to seek God.

Sometimes folks look at serving God the wrong way. I realize that the promise of Heaven is an incentive, but in reality Heaven is an extension of your walk with Christ here in this world. The degree of hunger and desire that you have for Christ in this life is not going to change in death. What you experience for the Lord here is what you will go into eternity with. You need to be a saint who truly hungers and desires and craves a deeper, richer, and stronger experience for the Lord than you have ever had up to this point. You may think you have already reached this point, but you have not.

The Apostle Paul said he had not yet attained to this, but he was pressing forward in a very definite and positive way. Many people are trusting in the flesh. The Apostle Paul said in our Scripture text that you should "have no confidence in the flesh." Some people will argue, "I have left all of this behind me," but in our Scripture text Paul said in verses 4-6: "Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless."

Paul had a problem, in that he wanted to lean to the flesh, but when he found Christ, those things that were so important to him in the flesh began to fade out of existence. As he thought back on his life, he counted all his education, knowledge, and blameless living by the law (every thing that he had going for him in the flesh) as dung. In other words, he was saying that it was useless and of no value.

We are living in a modern society where men try to place great value on the flesh. They try to walk the line in both worlds. They say they want Christ, but they do not really want to let go of everything on this side of eternity, because they feel the flesh has been good to them. This is the reason people have such a battle with the flesh. They do not want to let go of that which they can see and feel as tangible objects in their lives.

The True Measurement Needed to Win Christ

Many people are trusting in the fact that they feel confident in salvation because of the things they do not do. They say, "I do not go to the honky tonks, I do not lie, I do not steal, I do not smoke, I do not chew tobacco or rub snuff, and I do not drink alcoholic beverages." They rely on this. Some religious people are building their hope of salvation on things they do not do. They feel strongly confident that because they are not involved in those vices, they must be good. At the same time, there are those who take credit to themselves that they are not as bad as some others. You might have heard someone say, "Well, if So-and-So gets to Heaven, I will not have any trouble getting there." So-and-So just might not make it, so where is that going to put you?

The word *confidence* means "to have a belief in one's own ability; to have self-assurance or a belief in your own ability to succeed." Paul said in our Scripture text in verse 3, ". . . and have no confidence in the flesh." Some people take credit for what they do not do and for things that they do. They say they go to church faithfully, regularly pay their tithes, help their neighbors, and assist the elderly. Also, they are involved with various organizations. However, their salvation is based on merely what they do not do and what they do, but they are missing the mark all together.

Salvation does not just involve what you are doing or what you are not doing. It involves whether or not you have come humbly before Christ as a sinner lost. Before you can be saved, you must first acknowledge that you are on your way to hell with no hope of redemption. Next, you must come to Christ, broken in your heart, bowing down before God, and confessing yourself to be a sinner, not a religious person, lost and on your way to hell. It is hard to get religious people to own their sin.

As you look at the Scripture text, it is important to come to grips with your own condition. Paul said in verse 3 of the Scripture lesson, "For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." He was talking about the circumcision of the heart. We are to have no confidence in the flesh. In other words, we must not rely upon the flesh in any way. Our confidence should not be in our own human efforts, but rather in the power of God through Jesus Christ in our souls.

Paul set the scale that measures our endeavors to truly win Christ. I am afraid that many people in the world are falling far short of the true measurement needed to win Christ. They have religion, but how many of them have really won Christ? Verse 8 of our Scripture text says, "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ." Christ was so indemnified with the Truth that Paul knew that if he could win Him, he would have won

the highest point of knowledge. He knew that Christ was the way, the Truth, and the life. If he could win Christ in his daily walk, his effort and desire would be to keep winning more of Him.

A Desire of Heart

The more you gain of Christ, the more of His knowledge you will have. Paul identified with the life of Christ. He knew that if he could just win Christ, he would be endowed with the noblest form of eternal life. How Paul desired and hungered after this Jesus Christ! It consumed him. That was his craving, his hunger, and his desire. Paul so identified with Christ and His spiritual influence that he felt if he could just win Him, his whole nature would be filled with power, gladness, and the graciousness of God flooding his body and soul.

Most folks need to do much more striving in this effort to win Christ in a greater way. How do you count the things that are truly important to you? Your income is a necessary part of life. Your home is of utmost importance, as well as your family, but with all these things Jesus said, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God" (Matthew 6:33).

Being Christ's disciple requires a desire of heart. You must love Christ more than your husband or wife, your mother and father, and even your own life. You must seek Him, crave Him, love Him, and desire Him in the midnight hour, in the early morning hours and throughout the day. Your desire must be for more and more of Jesus Christ.

You may say, "I would like to be a really strong child of God." If you really desire to be the master of any art, to master any instrument, to become an accomplished tradesman, or to become a skilled professional, it takes work. Musicians cannot become accomplished without diligent practice. One cannot merely say, "If God wants me to play the piano, He will give me the gift to do so," just as a person cannot say, "If God wants me to be this or to do that, He will have to do it for me." If that is your attitude, you are in sad shape, dear one.

When I was a young boy, I had a desire to learn to play the guitar. Someone said to me, "Brother Richie, you come over to my house on Thursday evenings, and I will give you some lessons." I was all excited. My parents bought me a practice guitar, and I started taking a half-hour lesson each week. It went well until one time he said, "Let me see your fingers." I showed them to him, and he said: "Richie, if you are really serious about playing the guitar, I want you to go home and practice. When you come back next week, I want to see some grooves in your fingers." He took the fun out of it for me.

I really wanted to learn to play the guitar, but I did not want to practice. He expected me to come back the next week with grooves in my fingertips. I lost interest in that because I would rather have been outside playing ball, playing with the neighborhood kids, or riding my bicycle than sitting in the house and running my fingers up and down those strings. I did not accomplish much, but I respect those who have. I have read of some endeavors of accomplished musicians. They practice many, many hours. Some people may think they are so good that they should not have to practice. On the contrary, an accomplished musician must practice every day.

Being Prepared

Many people have seen apples fall from a tree, but Isaac Newton was sitting under a tree one day and saw an apple fall, and it struck something in his mind. He had been meditating, studying, and thinking about the Christ of the universe and wondering how the universe was held together. When he saw an apple fall and he gained understanding concerning the forces upon this earth, he came up with the word "gravity," which holds the world together. It was not merely a casual thought, but his mind had been meditating on that.

One day James Watt saw the lid blow off a kettle of boiling water. He thought if steam could blow the lid off a pot of boiling water, perhaps he could harness the steam and create a steam engine. Many people had seen a lid blow off a kettle, but that never triggered such thoughts in their minds. James Watt's mind was filled with questions and wondering.

Dear one, are you worldly minded? In general, congregations across the country have become worldly minded, and God is trying to awaken people. He is trying to stir their souls, but many people are not connecting or relating because they are not really interested in winning Christ. If you want to be a powerhouse for God, you have to seek Him and desire Him.

When I think about these things, my mind goes to the story of the ten virgins. All ten of them were exactly alike except in one important area. In the beginning there were just ten virgins, and the five who were foolish did not show up as being foolish until the end. There was no noticeable difference among them until the cry was made that the bridegroom was coming and they trimmed their lamps. Then the five foolish virgins suddenly realized that they did not have enough oil. The foolish virgins asked the wise virgins for some of their oil.

What were some of the characteristics that separated the five wise virgins from the five foolish virgins? First, the five wise virgins did not trust in the circumstances or in the flesh. They had it in their minds to be ready no matter what the cost might be or how it looked to others. The foolish virgins did not consider the circumstances until they looked back, and then their foolishness became evident. The wise virgins took an extra container of oil. They carried "just-in-case oil," which is

good oil to have on hand. When the bridegroom came, they were ready. Had the bridegroom come sooner, they all would have been ready, and they all would have been ushered in. However, just in case His coming should be delayed, the five wise virgins wanted to be prepared.

If you want to be ready to meet Him, you have to make additional preparations. You will have to dig deeper and strive harder to win Christ. You must be serious about winning Christ, because in the end, that is all that will matter. Dear one, this must be the total desire of your heart.

Paul wrote in Philippians 3:8, "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ." When Paul said that he "suffered the loss of all things," he meant that he allowed, or permitted, the loss. In other words, God did not take it away from him. The Apostle Paul permitted himself to be separated from those things. He said that he counted those things but dung so that he could win Christ.

Foolish-minded people expect to have enough oil to get in when the Bridegroom comes. Some people say, "I am not doing everything that I should be doing and living exactly as I ought to be living, but I expect the Lord to take me to Heaven." God's people know better than that. There is no alternative to being well prepared.

Make Spiritual Things a Top Priority

The five wise virgins had extra oil, but the five foolish virgins put confidence in the thought that they should have sufficient oil to last them until the bridegroom arrived. Would you like to have "just-in-case" oil to take along with you or do you feel that you probably have sufficient? I should think that you would rather have a vessel of "just-in-case" oil. This means that you must go deeper than you may think is necessary. It means living closer to God than you really think you should have to. Having an attitude of "Do I have to do that?" bothers a true Church of God pastor, and it bothers Church of God saints. If your attitude is, "If I am going to be accepted in the church, I have to do this and that," you are already out of the ark of safety. That kind of attitude will not bring you to Christ.

I count everything in my past as dung, or as unimportant. Your income is important, but not nearly as important as your spiritual life and your endeavor to win Christ. If your career becomes a conflict between your prospering spiritually and your having to downsize materially, you should not have a real struggle in that, because your desire should be to prosper in your soul.

I remember when my father was laid off after working for twenty-five years as an electrical engineer. A job opportunity came up for him in Saint Louis, Missouri. The company would have moved our family there with all expenses paid. He would have received a large pay raise and a promotion. The first statement my father said to my mother when he came home and told her the news was this: "I don't know of a Church of God congregation in that area. I can't move my family away from the church." He went from that job to selling newspapers out of the back of his station wagon until God called him to pastor.

Although he lost prestige, honor, and the additional income that job would have provided, I never saw my father act as if he was sorry. I never saw him depressed or discouraged over it around the family. He knew that what he was doing was for the Lord. I might not be saved today had they moved to Missouri.

You must make spiritual things a top priority and work to win Christ, whatever the cost involved. You must always constantly desire to deepen your experience in the Lord. This involves a continual process of drawing closer to God day by day, spending extra effort to go that extra mile, just to make sure.

The Two Builders

My mind goes to the two builders that Jesus talked about. Two men went out, and each man built a house. Looking at the two houses, you probably could not tell much difference between them. No doubt, everything went well for a while after the houses were built. The sun shone and things seemed to be going along great. One night a storm came, and the Scripture says it beat upon those houses and the floods came and flooded those houses. The wise man had spent extra money and had labored hard to dig a deep foundation, and he built his house on bedrock. He put forth a lot of effort to dig down deep so that he could build on a solid rock.

No doubt, the foolish man looked on and said: "I don't know why you want to do all of that. I have my house half built already, and you are still digging down in the ground." The wise man might have said: "That is all right. I am doing what I feel I need to do."

Friend, people may laugh at you, and you may feel peer pressure not to become too spiritual. If so, you need to tell them, "I am doing what I need to do to make Heaven my home." The wise man who built his house upon a rock spent a lot of extra labor and expense to dig down to the rock before he began to build, but when the big storm hit, he was able to sit cozily in his house. I can imagine that he got up and pulled the curtain back and looked out and saw the other house. Oh, the foolish man's roof was blowing off and his walls were beginning to shake. The storm was beating on his house, and soon it collapsed and washed away. What paid off? No doubt, the foolish man thought, "Oh, if I had only taken more time to dig deeper."

Young person, you need to take

time in your life to dig deep. You need to get really solid footing. If it takes twenty trips to an altar of prayer a month to keep you coming to church, do not quit! One of these times your feet will be on the Solid Rock. You will find something to stand on that your worldly friends have never found. Do not be a push over or a coward. It takes someone with a real backbone to stand up for God and Truth and righteousness. You will not be a loser if you prepare for the worst and build for the unexpected, even if it never happens.

Most people buy fire insurance for their homes, especially those who have financed their homes. We hope that we never have to use it, but we pay money every year for fire insurance. The chance of your house burning down is slim, so why purchase it? There is always a chance of electrical wiring going bad or of something else happening that could cause your house to burn down. The possibility is there, so you must protect yourself. We all are on our way to face eternity; therefore, we must not misplace our confidence.

Had the five foolish virgins heard the cry that the bridegroom was coming a little sooner, they would not have been foolish, but the cry did not come when they were expecting it to come. In the end when you stand before God and He begins to tally everything, when the total sum of your life's activity is weighed in the balance and the Eternal Judge holds the final decision over you, then you will be thankful that you worked much harder than necessary. You will be thankful that you spent much time in prayer. You will be glad that you dug deeper, perhaps deeper than you really had to, and you will be glad that you carried around the extra "just-in-case" oil. It will surely pay off in the end.

Are you really living to win Christ? Is your heart really craving and longing for the things of God? I am asking you to honestly consider, in the depths of your soul, is your heart really longing to win Christ in a greater way? Do you want more of Him? Paul said he counted all things but loss so that he might win Christ. In Philippians 1:21 Paul said, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." While you are living in this world, do you want Christ living in you?

(Compact Disc TR-540E)

[Camp Meet. Report— contin. from p. 2]

Lord is pleased when He sees the saints travailing for the furtherance of the Gospel and pleading for lost souls to find deliverance from sin. Persistent prayer is crucial for healing the body of those fastened under the hand of affliction. We attribute the success of this meeting to the Lord and the way He moved in answer to earnest prayer.

It is always a blessing to see the ministry in attendance and sitting on the platform to back the speaker of the hour. Each message brought forth was outstanding and was delivered with power and anointing. God is a faithful God who will not allow souls to continue in a lost condition without warning them. The Spirit of conviction moved again and again on men and women who needed help. We thank God for those who heard and heeded the warnings. As it was when Jesus preached and taught, some turned and went their own way, not heeding the Lord's call. This grieves the Lord and the saints to see conviction working and then to watch needy souls seemingly turn a deaf ear.

Many wonderful things were accomplished during this Winter Camp Meeting. Time after time, our hearts were made to rejoice as the singing and the preaching went forth. The visitation of the Lord brought joy, praises, and happiness to the saints. His presence uplifted each soul with encouragement to press on and fight the good fight of faith. We can truly recommend ordering a copy of each message that was preached and the beautiful songs sung by the choir as well as the special singers. This camp meeting was one that will not be soon forgotten. Surely our hearts were overjoyed as we drank in the blessings that only the Father could bestow.

It will not be long until it is time for Spring Camp Meeting here at God's Acres. We hope that you will begin to make preparations to attend this camp meeting as well the Fall Camp Meeting, if the Lord tarries.

Hold the Line

A woman telephoned the business manager of a large concert hall that she had lost a valuable diamond pin there the night before and asked if it had been found. The man said to hold the line. A search was made and the pin was found, but when the manager went back to the telephone, the call had been cut off. He waited for the woman to call again, but never heard anything from her, even though he advertised. How often we act that way concerning our requests to our Father in Heaven.

Isaiah 55:1 Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.

2 Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.

3 Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.

Matthew 11:28 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

29 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.

30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

The Simplicity of the Gospel

Brother Leamon Whitehead

Man's Basic Need

I never cease to be amazed when I think of Jesus and the message that He taught in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. It is a very simple message. We are living in a day and time of high technology in the computer age and in the space age. We are living in a complex world, and it seems that man's spiritual needs are complex. We have gotten away from the simple life, and this is one reason that Jesus' message was simple. I am not against modernization, but it has not helped us in every way. In some ways, it has made it harder for people to get to God. In this day and time it is almost a must that you have a high school education, and it is quickly coming to the place where you need to have a college degree. That alone has caused people to feel that their problems are so complex that God cannot reach them.

The reason that Jesus' message was simple was that man's basic need is very simple. These things that the enemy presses in upon people make it hard for them to get to God and to come to the place where they can open their hearts to Him and forget about who they are and what they know. They need to open themselves before God and cry out to Him as lost sinners so that He can save their souls.

Again, Jesus' message was very simple because man's real need is

simple. Regardless of how high a man might get in society or how high he might go in this complex world, man was made from dust, and he is going back to dust. Man's basic need is still the same, and the ground at the foot of the Cross is still level. Everyone has to come to the same level to find Christ. My friend, He is the answer for the needs in your life.

Jesus' message is still the only thing that will satisfy the deep longing of the soul that does not have salvation. Nothing else will satisfy the longing of man's heart. That is the reason the Bible tells you and me that having food and raiment, let us be content. You have to get back to the basics, my friend, because that is the basic need of man. That is where you will find real salvation.

What Makes Life Worthwhile?

Many people feel that they cannot really be happy in the Lord by having Jesus alone, but that they must have lots of other things. However, Jesus said in Matthew 11:28, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Man needs soul rest on the inside. This is what brings joy and peace; it is not in having this world's goods. The things of the world cannot bring satisfaction or peace of mind. Being at peace with God and having a real experience of salvation is what makes life worthwhile.

The Prophet Isaiah said in verse 1 of our Scripture text, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." Oh, how down to earth that is! The reason that people are running to and fro and are dissatisfied is not for the things they long for and pursue, but it is due to the lack of the basic needs that Jesus was talking about. They are hungry and thirsty for real peace and satisfaction that only comes from God. The world is unable to give that. These things do not come from the world but from God.

The needs of people today in an age of high technology are the same as they were for those old sheep herders out on the range. Jesus let us know there is only one way to find real peace, and that is to come and drink of Living Water, the kind of water that comes down from God out of Heaven. The Living Water will quench the thirsting of the soul and bring peace over one's being as nothing else can. Someone may ask, "Could I be satisfied with something so little?" If you really get to Jesus, you will be satisfied. People are pursuing many things in life, but those things cannot satisfy, and they cannot bring peace and joy. There is only one place to find the help you need, and that is to come to Jesus Christ in old-time repentance.

I am not against the good things that have been invented to make people's lives easier, but right in the midst of all those things, people seem to have less time than ever before. I have heard some older brothers and sisters talk about years past when they drove the horse and buggy and did not have all the modern conveniences that we have today. They still had time to visit folks and go here and there. Today we have automobiles, and we can drive long distances, yet it seems that we have less time than they had.

Man came from the dust, and he is going back to the dust. Job said in Job 1:21, "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither." When you die, you are not going to take anything with you. God may bless you abundantly with material blessings, and you may keep the victory in your soul, but you have to watch that you do not become too attached to the things of this world. That will always be a danger.

"Come Ye to the Waters"

In our Scripture reading the Prophet Isaiah was not talking about going down to a well and getting a drink of water. No, he was talking about that Living Water. It is hard for people to be contented today when they have so many material things, but Paul said in 1 Timothy 6:8, "And having food and raiment let us be therewith content." Also, he said in verse 6, "But godliness with contentment is great gain." In our Scripture text the Prophet Isaiah let us know that he was talking about Jesus Christ. He is the only One who can quench the thirsting of your soul. He is the only One who can satisfy the hunger way down on the inside.

In verse 1 of our Scripture reading, the Prophet Isaiah said, "Ho, everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money. . . ." You do not need money for this because you cannot buy it. When John the Baptist was in prison and sent word to Jesus that he wanted to know if Jesus was the Christ or if he should look for another, Jesus sent word back to John and said in Matthew 11:5, "The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them."

I want to tell you that the millionaire cannot buy salvation. He has to come down to ground level at the foot of the Cross and pour himself out before God and accept this salvation that only Jesus Christ can bring. That is the reason you do not need money, because you cannot buy this. All Jesus is asking you to do is to throw yourself upon Him and surrender your life to Him and say, "I'll live for You for the rest of my days." You do not need money to obtain salvation, but you have to surrender completely and give yourself to Jesus Christ; then He will put this great salvation within your very being.

Some people think they can buy their way through, but they cannot buy their way to Heaven. If you have money, you can do lots of things and go to lots of places, but this great salvation is something that

money cannot buy. Again, the Prophet Isaiah said, "Come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." Isaiah was talking about spiritual things. Oh, how I like to drink a cold glass of water when I am really thirsty. When you are really thirsty and all dried out, a cold glass of water quenches the thirst of the body. It is so refreshing.

The Water of Life

The Bible speaks about the Water of Life that we can take on the inside to quench the thirst down inside the soul. It will settle that dry condition in your soul and bring peace that passes all understanding. Glory be to God! Isaiah was not talking about going to a literal water well. He was talking about coming to Jesus Christ and finding that which will satisfy your soul. These things are spiritually discerned. In John, Chapter 4, you can read about the woman at the well. She thought Jesus was talking about the water out of Jacob's well, but He was talking about the Living Water that people can drink of and never thirst again. There will be a well of water springing up on the inside.

Isaiah said, "Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." Wine is a symbol of the Spirit of God. Milk is the basic need for little babies. Without milk to sustain them, it would not do them any good to come into the world. They would soon waste away and die, because they are not born with a mouthful of teeth and a digestive system that can handle the foods that children and adults can eat as they mature. Isaiah was not talking about buying a little goat's milk or cow's milk. He was talking about the sincere milk of the Word.

If people will stop long enough, they will realize that the fountain from which they have been drinking does not satisfy. It leaves people thirsty, dry, and disappointed. If you are in that condition, Jesus is telling you to stop and turn around and take notice. He has a fountain that you can drink of that will not leave you thirsty and dry.

God intended from the very beginning that man would realize his need of God. Everything man needs comes from God. He cannot make it without God. This age in which we are living hurts us. When God put Adam and Eve in the garden, He did not tell them, "I'm going to bring you a big Cadillac tomorrow, and Eve and you can ride around in an air-conditioned vehicle; that's going to make you really happy." What did God supply? He supplied their basic needs. He said that of every tree in the garden except one, they could eat freely. Man's basic needs are the same, even in this complex world in which we are living. In order for people to get to God, they must humble down and realize that their real need is God.

When God speaks to hearts, it is just a simple message right down where the needs are. God appeals to the thirsty soul in dire need. There is a deep longing down in man's heart and soul, and the only way he can be satisfied is to get to God.

Hearken Diligently to God

Satan does not like for you to stop long enough to think about spiritual things. Dear soul, if you would stop long enough to consider how your life is going downhill with one problem after another, you would realize how the enemy is taking you down. You need to stop long enough to consider your eternal welfare and take inventory of your life. The Spirit of God wants you to stop and realize that you are not climbing upward, but you are going down, getting closer to a lost eternity.

This old world is spinning so fast. The devil has people's minds wrapped up in the things of this world. He wants to keep you occupied. Let me illustrate it this way. When you really get busy at something, the time gets away from you. Maybe you are supposed to be somewhere at a certain hour and you get busy; then you look at your watch and realize that you are late, because time had gotten away from you. That is what the devil is trying to do to precious souls. He wants to keep you occupied in the things of this old world until finally you will realize that it is too late. Life has passed you by, and you have spent your life in sin.

You may say: "I'm planning to get right with God sometime. I don't want to die lost." The Bible lets us know that we do not know the day or the hour when the Son of man will come and God will call everything to a halt. If you want to make it to Heaven, you need to get right with God now, and then you need to watch and pray and stay ready, because you do not know what hour He is coming. Do you truly want to be saved? You do not want to miss Heaven. You need to make preparations right now, while you have time and opportunity.

The Prophet Isaiah tried to tell the people about the good things of God, and he asked them why they spent money for that which is not bread and labored for that which does not satisfy when the Lord had what they needed. Dear one, He has what it takes to make you really happy, satisfied, and content on the inside. You need to get an experience of salvation with Him.

The Prophet Isaiah said to hearken diligently to the Lord, to eat that which is good, and to let your soul delight itself in fatness. He was still dealing with man's basic needs. Some television evangelists are telling people that if they will get saved and send them so many dollars, the Lord will bless them abundantly with material goods or a new Cadillac, but the Word of God does not promise that. God deals with the basic needs of man.

You can have joy in the Lord even if you do not have two nickels to rub together. Praise God! A man's life does not consist of the abundance of things he possesses. My

friend, your real need is to get to God and to get the Living Water that only Jesus Christ can give. He is the answer for your problems and your needs. You can be satisfied if you will meet God's conditions.

In John, Chapter 4, Jesus was not talking about getting a drink of literal water. That is what the woman at the well thought Jesus was speaking of. She thought Jesus was talking about getting a drink from Jacob's well, but He was talking about a different kind of water. She talked about giving Him a drink, but He said that if she would have asked Him, He would have given her a drink of Living Water.

There is a lot of difference between literal water and Living Water. The Living Water was what Isaiah was talking about. This is what people's souls really thirst for. A drink of Living Water will lift you up from your earthly troubles and cares and cause you to put your faith, your trust, and your confidence in God. He wants you to cast all your cares and your troubles upon Him. He will take care of them.

Basic Things That Sustain Life

Going back to our Scripture text, we see that Isaiah talked about those basic things that sustain life. The Word of God often illustrates in the natural realm to bring spiritual lessons. Isaiah spoke about milk. We know that milk is a sustainer of life for little babies when they are born into the world. In 1 Peter 2:2 Peter began, "As newborn babes," talking about newborn babes in Christ having a desire for the sincere milk of the Word, so that they may grow thereby. It will cause you to grow spiritually so that you can become strong in the things of God, and then finally you will be able to eat the meat of the Word. Just as milk sustains the natural life, bread also sustains the natural life. When you read the Word of God, it adds spiritual strength to you.

I want you to see that the Word of God dealt in simple, basic things. Again, Isaiah said in verse 1 of our Scripture reading, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters." There is plenty of water to go around. We are drinking from a fountain that will not run dry. Glory be to God!

I want you to see that Jesus taught in very simple terms. God made us with basic desires, and two of those desires are food and water. You do not have to set the clock to remind you to get a drink. If you go without water long enough, you will be looking for some water. You do not have to tell anyone, "You remind me to eat." God placed that desire in us. Likewise, He instilled that same desire in the soul.

Sinner friend, as you go through life, you override your better judgment. You override something inside you that is telling you to do the right thing. You need to get to God. You should not play around with sinful things. You need to stop and realize that there is a hunger in your soul for something that the world cannot satisfy.

If you check closely, you will find that you have been thirsty for something for a long time, but you have never found anything to satisfy you. The earthly water will not do it. All the drinks that man has will not do it. You are still thirsty on the inside. God is so good to us. He instilled something in you to let you know when you get hungry and the body needs strength. Likewise, there is a hunger in the soul of every man, woman, boy, and girl who has come to the age of accountability to let them know that the worldly things they are feasting on will not satisfy them.

Friend, why do you not listen to God? Why do you not listen to that voice that is speaking to you? A cry is coming from down inside you, saying, "I'm thirsty and hungry." The only thing that can satisfy that longing is to get back to God and get a drink of that Living Water. I am trying in my feeble way to tell you how good and how wonderful it is to serve God and to help you to see your need. If you will get to God, He will satisfy the longing of your soul.

I like Psalm 23. In it, David told of some of the joy and the pleasure in living for God, and he told how He will take care of us and furnish those things that we stand in need of. He leads us gently along and feeds us on green pastures. Glory be to God! He leads me beside the still waters, and He restores my soul. That is what your soul hungers for. Oh, the appeal that God made to man. He did not promise you a nice ranch home up on a hill and everything to go with it, a new car, lots of money, and a big bank account, because that is not what it takes to satisfy your soul.

If you could talk to people who have become millionaires, you would find a void in their lives that money cannot satisfy. They can go anywhere they want to go and buy anything they want to buy. They can have almost any company they want, but they still have a longing in their souls that is not satisfied. I would rather have Jesus than anything that this world has to offer. I would rather have Him in my soul and have peace of mind and the joys of real salvation. Praise God!

If you were to talk to those who have had great honor bestowed on them, you would find that does not really satisfy them. When they go home and get away from the bright lights and the crowds, in the quietness of their own homes when they are trying to sleep, inside their hearts they are not satisfied. Oh, how wonderful it is to be able to pillow your head at night and know that if you do not awake in this world any more, that it will be "good night" to this world and "good morning" over yonder. You can know that you are at peace with God, at peace with yourself, and at peace with your fellow man.

Finding Soul Rest

I want you to notice that Jesus said in Matthew 11:28, "Come unto

me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." He was not talking about going home and laying back in your recliner and having your wife bring you some iced tea. Now, that is wonderful, but that is just for the body. Dear one, he was speaking of the spiritual needs of men and women. In verse 29 He said, "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." This is the rest that you need.

The Lord wants you to know that if you are tired and weary on the inside, searching, traveling to and fro, trying to satisfy yourself with the things of this world, what you need to do is to come to Jesus right now. You need to take His yoke upon you and learn of Him. He will give you a deep-settled peace in your soul. He will give you the rest that satisfies the inner man.

No doubt, you can relate to the physical body getting tired and worn out. Nothing can do the body any more good than a good rest, just to sit down and relax and take it easy. How relaxing that is! Perhaps you have been so tired at some point that you would have liked to have lain down on the ground anywhere to get some rest. I want to tell you, that is just a drop in a bucket compared with the strife that is going on in a man's heart and soul. He needs to get to God so that he can find the soul rest that the Lord has for him.

The devil tries to tell people how hard it is to serve God. He will say: "You don't want to live for the Lord. You can't stand that; it's too hard." My friend, the devil is lying to you. In Matthew 11:30 Jesus said, "For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Oh, may God help you to get hold of this and to see it! Many times people miss the message because they fail to see the simplicity of this thing. These are the basic needs of man in such a complex world.

You may be saying, "How can I be satisfied on so little?" That is because of the complex world in which we are living. You think you must have this and that heaped around you to be happy and content, but your basic need is to get back to God so that you can have peace and joy flowing in your soul. Just lift your eyes a little higher, and you will see that He was talking about soul rest, a soul rest that really satisfies.

Dear one, why do you spend your money for that which does not satisfy? Why do you labor for the bread that does not satisfy the hunger of your soul? Why not come to Jesus? Why not listen to the voice of God? Although the Book of Isaiah was written many years ago, it is still real today. Again, verse 1 of our Scripture text reads, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters." I want you to notice that you have to take the first step. You have to believe the Gospel. You have to let Him know that you mean business and press your way toward Him. If you will do that, He will satisfy the deep longing of your soul.

True peace, joy, and happiness is not in the abundance of things that you possess. Not many people have this peace that I am talking about. This is the reason there is such a struggle going on. One neighbor gets a new car, so another neighbor gets a new lawnmower. It stirs something within them. Another neighbor may say, "I have to get one of those." Not many people have real peace that comes from God.

God made it very simple. I do not mean that we do not have other things, but Paul said in 1 Timothy 6:8, "And having food and raiment let us be therewith content." Those are the basic needs of the physical man. Everything else that God gives to us are fringe benefits that He allows us to have. I thank God for all His benefits, but they are not essential to our peace, joy, and happiness. These things come from God.

Precious friend, the cry of your heart is to get back to God. You need some of that Living Water and Living Bread that will really satisfy the thirst and the hunger of your soul. May God bless your heart.

(Cassette C-2060E)

ROOM FOR ALL

"And yet there is room."
Luke 14:22

The provisions of the Gospel are for the lost (Luke 19:10). Millions have accepted the Gospel invitation, "and yet there is room."

There is room in God's heart for all.
—"Whosoever will" may come.
There is room in God's power.
—He is able to save to the uttermost.
There is room in the church.
—The door is wide open (Revelation 3:8).
There is room in Heaven.
—John 14:1-3).

There is room for all, young and old. Nothing can keep one out but a bad heart. Only the blood of Jesus can cleanse from all sin.

[Espec. for Young People—contin. from p. 15]
This is an individual race. We are not racing against other Christians, but we are racing against the devil. In this race the body of Christ wins. We need to always remember that and be sure that we each are a part of the body. The devil has many ways of causing individuals to lose this race. Often the devil cannot get the Christian to drink alcohol, because he knows it is wrong. However, he will try to get one to take a wrong attitude or to hold a grudge toward someone. If that person is not careful, it will develop into something really ugly.

When thinking of running this race, I split this up into six different categories. The first one is striving for the prize. This prize is eternal life. First Corinthians 9:24 says: "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain." We are running this race together; therefore, we need to work together. When someone stands up to testify or to speak, we need to be supportive and encourage them. We should get behind our ministers and support our youth. It is so important to support one another and to encourage one another.

The second category is concerning hindrances to the runner. We need to keep our eyes open and our hearts clear. We read in Galatians 5:7, "Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?" We need to stay away from hindrances by keeping our eyesight clear.

The third category is pressing toward the goal. Philippians 3:14 says, "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." We are pressing toward the finish line; therefore, we must lay aside the weights of this world. We need to strip ourselves of worldly things. I want to emphasize that we must to stay away from the world and stay away from the way the world is going with its stress on materialism. As Christians, we must avoid the many things that the world is doing, be humble, and avoid hindrances so that we can be steadfast.

The fourth category of laying aside weights is found in Hebrews 12:1, which reads, "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us." We need to take this Scripture to heart.

The fifth category is the home stretch. Certainly we are getting close to the end. In 2 Timothy 4:7 Paul stated, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." Paul was a good example. One of these days when I pass on, I want to be able to say that. I thought while flying in the airplane, "Is there anything that I should be taking care of?" Had I waited, it might have been too late. We each need to make sure that we live our lives in such a way that we do not call on the Lord too late. We need to live so that we are ready to go at any time.

My last category is the prize to which we all are looking forward. Second Timothy 4:8 reads, "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 says: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." We must always keep in mind that the conclusion of the whole matter is to we fear God and keep His commandments. One day our works will be shown in front of us, and we need to make sure that we are clear with God and that our works are pleasing to Him.

Are you going to be able to go to Heaven and stand with Paul and the martyrs and those who have really given up some things for Christ? I would like to be able to stand with those who have laid their lives on the line for Christ. We must lay aside everything that hinders so that we can be better Christians and to win this Christian race.

Brother Jeremy Boyd

2011 Camp Meeting Dates

June 19-26

July 31-August 7

December 28-January 1

Winter 2010 Camp Meeting Recordings

CD NO.	DATE	MESSAGE TITLE	MINISTER
TR-738M	12-26-10	Keep Your Vows Sacred	Brother E. David Stegmeier
TR-739E		"O That My Ways Were Directed to Keep Thy Statutes"	Brother E. David Stegmeier
TR-740M	12-27-10	Confidence and Determination	Brother Paul Prinkey
TR-741A		The Prophecy of the Church	Brother E. David Stegmeier
TR-742E		Will Your Marriage Last the Cyber Age?	Brother Richard Talbot
TR-743M	12-28-10	Are You Following the Lamb?	Brother Leamon Whitehead
TR-744A		The Rise of the Church	Brother E. David Stegmeier
TR-745E		This Is a True Saying	Brother Richard Talbot
TR-746M	12-29-10	The Wall of Jasper and the City of Gold	Brother Earl R. Borders
TR-747E		The Bushel Effect	Brother Richard Talbot
TM-246	2010	Winter Camp Meeting Songs #1	
TM-247	2010	Winter Camp Meeting Songs #2	
TM-248	2010	Winter Camp Meeting Songs #3	
	2010	Winter Camp Meeting Choir Songs	
	2010	All Songs for the Winter Camp Meeting on MP3	
	2010	All Messages for the Winter Camp Meeting on MP3	

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Upcoming Meetings

Greenville, TN
March 17-20

REVIVAL: Church of God Fellowship at the Barn, Greenville, TN
Evangelist: Brother David Stegmeier, Canby Oregon
Service times: Thursday-Saturday 7:00 p.m.; Sunday 10:00 a.m.
For further information contact: Brother David Shelton, 404 Bill Jones Road, Afton, TN 37610. Telephone: 423-639-0974 or 423-552-6410

Mt. Pleasant, PA
April 16

FELLOWSHIP MEETING: Church of God, 109 Salvation Lane, Mt. Pleasant, PA 15666
Service time: 10:30 a.m. A meal will be served by the local congregation.
MOTELS: *Holiday Inn Express, 724-547-2095* (This is on the same road as the church. Please mention that you are there for the church meeting.); *Super 8 Motel in New Stanton, 724-925-8915*, on I-70W, 10 miles north of the church); *Melody Motor Lodge, 724-628-9600* on 119N in Connellsville).
For further information contact: Pastor Paul W. Prinkey, 109 Salvation Lane, Mt. Pleasant, PA 15666. Telephone: 724-547-2151

Summersville, WV
April 17-24

REVIVAL: Church of God, 74 Armstrong Rd., Summersville, WV 26651
Evangelist: Brother Irwin Sesher, Heath, Ohio
Service times: Mon.-Fri. 7:00 p.m.; Sat. 6:00 p.m.; Sun. 10:30 a.m. & 6:00 p.m.
Visit our website @ www.ChurchofGodSummersvilleWV.com
For further information contact: Pastor Earl R. Borders at telephone: 304-872-4047

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