

# 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

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SOUNDING FORTH THE SEVENTH AND LAST TRUMPET

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Church of God Tabernacle in Newark, Ohio

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

*Psalm 122:1*

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

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

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

**THE CHURCH OF GOD BELIEVES IN:**

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

**SOME SPIRITUAL FACTS  
PERTAINING TO THE CHURCH**

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

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Vol. 41 November 2011 No. 11

**Guest Editorial**

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

Matthew 5:16

**IS YOUR LIGHT SHINING?**

This world is filled with spiritual darkness, and Ephesians 2:2 lets us know that Satan is the "prince of the power of the air." He is striving to blind the minds of men and women to the light and the love of God. Multitudes in our day and age do not know the right from the wrong. They grope onward in a lost condition, unaware of the love of God and how to live a life pleasing to Him. The light of the glorious Gospel needs to shine forth to show them the way of salvation and of deliverance from the bondage of sin. We who are saved are in the world but not of it.

Christ placed us here to be a light and an example of the reality found in salvation. Honest hearts who see the Gospel light shining in our lives will be drawn to Christ. In John 12:32 Jesus said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth [through our lives], will draw all men unto me."

It would be well for each one who professes Christianity to examine himself or herself to see if he or she is living a life that is pleasing to God. It is easy to profess to be a Christian and yet fail to live the way a Christian should live. The Lord wants our light to shine. Why? So that others can see Him through the lives we live. We are to be witnesses to those around us of God's goodness, grace, and power. It is Christ dwelling on the inside that radiates out and makes the difference in the Christian's life. The things we do and the way we conduct ourselves will have a great effect

on those around us. Man cannot see our hearts, but he can see the deeds of our lives. If our hearts are truly right with God, His goodness will show forth to the outside. Our lives may be the only Bible some people will ever see or read.

We must be an example in word and deed (in our talk and in our walk). The words we speak and our actions must reflect a godly character. Too often ones become careless and fail to be on guard as they ought. Some conversations and conduct are unbecoming to the Christian. Words and activities influence others; therefore, it is necessary to always live a Christlike example. Slang words ought to be eliminated from our vocabulary, for these words are only a substitute for words that actually take God's name or Christ's name in vain. You should avoid words that imply vulgarity or filthiness of any sort. We who profess godliness must lay aside everything that is hurtful to our Lord.

Our conduct is so very important. Worldly people are eager to ridicule the Christian should he or she do something wrong. The places we go, and the things we do should be done with Christ in mind. If you are not careful, carelessness can overtake you, and then you will exemplify a wrong example to those looking on. God does not want His children to live in straitjackets, so to speak, with no liberty or freedom to enjoy life. On the other hand, He does [continued on page 13]

*Psalm 24:1 The earth is the LORD'S, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.*

*2 For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods.*

*3 Who shall ascend into the hill of*

*the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place?*

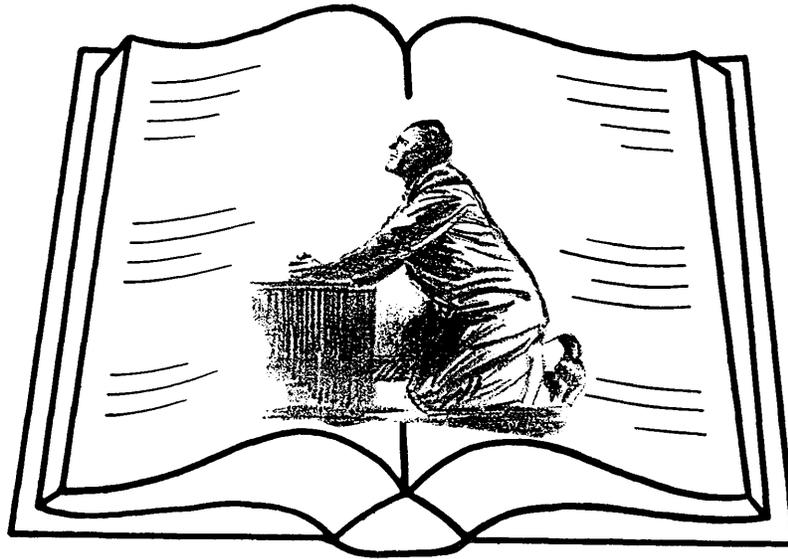
*4 He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.*

*5 He shall receive the blessing from*

*the LORD, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.*

*6 This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O Jacob. Selah.*

# The Need of Seeking the Lord



*Brother Roger L. Decker*

## **When Should You Seek the Lord?**

In verse 1 the Psalmist let us know that the whole world—everything in it and all the inhabitants—belong to God. Verse 2 lets us know that He created it. He established it upon the seas and upon the floods. In other words, the earth rises above the waters. In verse 3 he said, "Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD?" "The hill of the LORD" simply means Mount Zion, His tabernacle. In verse 4 he stated, "He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully." Verse 5 says, "He shall receive the blessing from the LORD, and righteousness

from the God of his salvation." Then in verse 6 he said, "This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O Jacob. Selah."

The word *seek* means "to inquire, to search out or request, to strive after." It is very important that you seek the Lord, not only for salvation and for the benefits that accompany serving Him but also to maintain your Christian experience.

We want to look at the time to seek the Lord, the manner in which you should seek Him, the promises in His Word, and the results of not seeking Him. When it comes to the time to seek the Lord, we find that the Bible always urges you to seek Him immediately. Throughout the

Word of God, people are urged to seek the Lord early and to do so in haste. Many people procrastinate, or put it off until another day. They may decide to put it off for days, weeks, months, or years; nevertheless, the Word of God lets you know that you should seek Him early. You should not delay, because it could be too late.

Ecclesiastes 12:1 instructs, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them." The writer was saying, "Seek the Lord in your youth while the body is strong, the spirit is active, the conscience is tender, and

the spirit is not cluttered with sin or the things of the world." You should seek the Lord while you are young and strong, while you have the right use of your mind, and while you are able to do things for the Lord. You should give God the best of your life. You should not wait until you are unable to do anything for God.

If you serve Him while you are young, you will avoid a lot of scars and hurtful things. You will miss out on the things that will mar you for the rest of your life. Many things in sin will create in your memory unpleasant thoughts. You will wish that you had never been involved in those things.

I have some physical scars that are reminders of an automobile accident. I was not the driver, but I was in just as bad a shape as the driver. It was only the mercy of God that I came through it. Those are scars that I would not have if I had served God in my youth. The Bible says to serve Him before the evil days draw nigh and before you sow fleshly seed. You will take no pleasure in those days when you are old.

### **"Now Is the Accepted Time"**

Proverbs 8:17 says, "I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me." You need to seek the Lord while He may be found and while He is near. The Prophet Isaiah said in Isaiah 55:6, "Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near." You need to seek Him before the opportunity passes. You have to desire to become His friend. You are not seeking something worthless, but rather you are seeking salvation, which is of the greatest value there is. Isaiah 55:6 implies that a time may come when He is not found. There may be a time when He is not near. There may come a time when you will seek Him, but you cannot find Him.

It is of utmost importance that you seek God when He presents the opportunity, because things have been known to change in a moment

of time, and you could find yourself outside the bounds of mercy. This is the reason that you need to seek Him while He is near.

There are times when surrounding influences are more favorable than others. When is a good time to seek Him? You can seek Him under the preaching of the Gospel; that is when He is near. You may seek Him when a Christian friend is witnessing to you. If you are ill you should seek God. You can seek Him during the death of a loved one, when you feel contrite, or when you have had a close call. Have you ever had a close call? I have had plenty of close calls, and they always cause me to pray. I always pray when I get on an airplane. I am not down on my knees praying, but I guarantee you that I am praying.

You should pray when you begin the day and at the close of the evening. You can pray in your mind just going about the duties of the day, asking God to help you. You do not have to get in a certain position to get hold of God. It is the attitude of the heart. It should be the desire of your spirit to pray. Time passes quickly, not to return. Many times people die the death of the wicked. If a man or a woman does not seek the Lord for mercy or ask for pardon, he or she will perish. Dear one, you need to seek the Lord today.

Psalm 95:7-8 says: "For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. To day if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your heart." When should you hear His voice? You should hear His voice today. Too many people keep putting off salvation. Oh, they might have good intentions. They might think they have a good reason to wait. They may even think they are justified in waiting to serve God.

Dwight L. Moody once held a great revival in Chicago, and after he preached the message one night, he told the people to think about it and then return and give their answer. What happened? There was a great fire, and many of those people per-

ished. Dwight L. Moody said after that, he would never have people put off their decision concerning salvation.

Today is the day of salvation. You cannot command one moment of the future. You could drop over from a heart attack or you could be killed in an automobile accident. There are several ways that you could leave this life. This is the reason that a sense of urgency is expressed throughout the Gospel. You need to seek the Lord while He may be found. You should call upon Him while He is near. You need to make haste in your salvation.

Second Corinthians 6:2 says, "(For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured [that word simply means helped] thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)" The Word of God urges every man and woman to seek Him immediately. God gets tired of people putting Him off. You see, when you want help, you want it right now; but when God wants to save you, you put Him off. If you were upside down in an automobile, you would *not* pray, "Lord, when I get out of this thing, I'm going to pray and ask You to help me." No, you would want immediate help. If you were in an adverse condition, you would want God to help you instantly. I believe that God expects the same of you and me. God wants to save you. You should not put it off.

### **How Should You Seek the Lord?**

You should seek the Lord with your whole heart and soul. The Bible says in Deuteronomy 4:29, "But if from thence thou shalt seek the LORD thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul." God wants you to seek Him with your whole inner nature. You must repent of sin and turn from sin. Repentance calls for bringing the whole man under the honor and the respect of all that God stands for. You must come to a right state of

mind toward God.

Jeremiah 29:13 reads, "And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart." That is a promise in God's Word. When your whole heart is turned toward seeking God, you can rest assured that you will find Him. You should seek Him with deep, heartfelt repentance and prayer. Repentance is the fruit of godly sorrow. True repentance causes a change in your life.

Too many times people do not truly repent. How can you tell? You do not see a change in their lives. They run around with the same people, and they are involved in the same old things.

When you truly repent, you must go beyond confessing your sin, although that is a starting place. When you confess, you have to confess with the attitude that you are going to quit sinning. You may say: "Well, that's the reason I don't serve God. I don't believe that I can live it." You cannot live free from sin in your own strength. You do not understand salvation. When you are truly saved, a change takes place on the inside. You do not stay the same person. You receive a new heart and a new Spirit. You get God's Spirit on the inside, and you also obtain a desire to do right and to turn from wrong. You do not remain the same person when you truly repent.

Often the devil tells people that they cannot live holy. He tells them that they cannot quit this and that. Friend, if you are truly sick of the lifestyle that you are living and you truly want to change, you can. I did not get saved until I came to the place where I truly wanted to turn everything over to God. When you turn everything over to God completely and let Him have the reins of your life, you can live right, by His grace. When you go to an altar of prayer, God does not wind you up as though you are a robot and then turn you loose. No, God will do His part. God will take away all sin, forgive you, and put His Spirit within you.

When He puts His Spirit within

you, that means you have the life of God living on the inside. When the life of God is on the inside, you can live this life of holiness by His grace. God is no respecter of persons. You can live for God if you want to. Now, if you do not want to live for God and you want to play around in religion, God will let you take on a religious spirit. However, if you want the real thing, He has the real thing for you.

Having godly sorrow means that you are sorry that you sinned against God and hurt Him. It does not mean that you are merely sorry that your marriage failed, that you had to go to jail, or that you lost your job. God can be hurt just as you can be hurt. God has feelings just as you have feelings. How do we know? The inner man is made in the image of God. You may say, "I thought feelings were just for the flesh?" No, the rich man who died and was buried and went into eternity still had feelings.

When you come to God, you need to get everything out of the way — all your hang-ups and wrong attitudes. God's people should not have wrong attitudes against others. You are not justified in having a wrong attitude or unforgiveness. You must forgive others whether or not they forgive you. That is the kind of forgiveness that Jesus had. On the Cross He said, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). They did not ask for forgiveness, but He gave it to them.

### **Surrendering All to God**

When you come to God, you need to get rid of all those reservations that cause you to only go so far with God. Some people go only part of the way with God. They know in their hearts, even before they go to an altar of prayer, that they are unwilling to give up one certain thing. They still go through the motions of repentance, and they may even cry, but they fail to fully surrender all to God. Dear one, you are not going to get in touch with God until you get

all sin cleansed from your heart. When you get everything ungodly cleansed from your heart, you will find Him.

You must get everything wrong out of the way — all lustful desires, all sinful habits, all covetousness, all envy and strife, and all wrong attitudes and hatred. You must get rid of revengeful feelings, feeling that you would be glad if something bad were to happen to somebody else. Perhaps you think that a certain individual would be receiving his just dues if something bad were to happen to him, maybe because he did something to you in the past. You must get rid of that kind of attitude.

Have you been warned repeatedly not to smoke cigarettes? The Surgeon General's warning is on each pack of cigarettes. That is not a Scripture on the cigarette pack; that warning is from worldly people. The Surgeon General is not quoting the Word of God, but she is speaking as the world speaks. The only reason that cigarettes are still a lawful substance is due to the tax revenue the government receives from the sale of them. Cigarettes are as addictive as illegal drugs. Young person, you should not even try to smoke cigarettes. Do not even put one in your mouth. God will reward you for staying away from them. Many people wish they had never smoked the first one.

When I first started smoking, I think I was about thirteen or fourteen years of age. The first time I tried to smoke, it made me sick. I was coughing and hacking and carrying on, yet I kept doing it because of peer pressure. The other guys were doing it, so to be included in the group, I did it too. The next thing I knew, I was addicted. After awhile, along came a morning cough, because the lungs get clogged with the tar and other substances in cigarettes. I used to have a terrible cough, yet I could not wait to get up in the morning to have a cigarette and a cup of coffee. I repeat, cigarettes are addictive. You should not even start down the road of tobacco

usage. If you have already started using tobacco, you need to stop. You need to bring that habit to Jesus Christ, and He will deliver you from it, if you want deliverance.

One way to get delivered from the cigarette habit is to get rid of them. Do not keep them around the house or in the car. You should not keep an emergency pack somewhere, just in case you are ready to throw a fit. You will not die without them. The devil may tell you that or your nerves may tell you that, but you are probably in that condition with your nerves because you are smoking.

You should not take the first swig of beer. It tastes rotten, but if you keep drinking it, eventually it will taste good to you. I can remember starting to drink as a young man. It tasted bitter and nasty, but the other guys were doing it; so I thought, "Why not?" The next thing I knew, we had contests to see how much we could drink, and we made fools of ourselves.

Drinking alcohol will cause you to do stupid things. If you drink and drive, one of these days you may be driving down the highway and see flashing lights in your rearview mirror. When those lights come on, if your blood-alcohol content is over a certain level, you will be in trouble. The officer will not pat you on the back and say, "Try to drink less." You might have to spend some time in jail. If you do it again, you may lose your driver's license. That is not worth it. Also, look at how much money you spend on alcohol.

How much does a pack of cigarettes cost? I do not know where people get the money to afford to smoke in today's economy. You should not even go down the road of taking drugs. You do not have to take drugs to prove that you are somebody. You do not have to prove yourself to somebody else. You should prove yourself to God.

### **Seek the Lord Diligently**

If your friends want you to partake of vices, they are not really

your friends; they are your enemies. I have never tried drugs. I had no desire to try them, but there are people who do. They start out like everything else, a little at a time. The next thing they know, they go on to harder, more costly, more powerful drugs. Eventually their brain gets burned out.

I remember reading the story about Betty Ford, who was former President Gerald Ford's wife. She was not a heavy drinker, but when they entertained guests at the White House, she began to drink a little at a time to socialize. Next, she started drinking more and more until she became an alcoholic. She entered a rehabilitation center, and later she started The Betty Ford Center, an alcohol treatment and drug rehabilitation clinic.

The only one who is going to keep you from those vices is God. You are no stronger than anybody else. You cannot grit your teeth and say, "I'm not going to do this anymore." No! It does not work that way. Some of the wealthiest, the strongest, and the most successful people in the world have been brought down by the vices of alcohol and drugs. When professional athletes start making big money, that puts them in a different lifestyle, and every crook around connives to get some of that money. The next thing they know, they get into drugs and get into trouble. Some have ended up losing their jobs and their reputations. They have been brought down to the level where they started.

Young person, you need to seek God in your youth. It is much better to seek Him early in your life. Young couples should seek Him early in their marriage. When the call of God comes to you, you ought to answer that call. You should not become stubborn or argue with God. He knows what He is doing. When God puts out a call to you, He does not call upon you to trouble you. Everything that is wrong in your life needs to be dealt with and destroyed. All sin must be brought to an end.

Hebrews 11:6 reads, "But with-

out faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." When God speaks to you, you should be in earnest and make haste. Luke, Chapter 19, talks about Zacchaeus. Verses 5-6 read: "And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house. And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully."

When you seek the Lord, you must seek Him honestly. If you have sinned, it is your fault. Sin is not a mistake. You cannot blame your sin on someone else. You need to be honest with your own soul; do not deceive yourself. Jesus, talking about honesty, said it was the sign of good ground. Luke 8:15 says, "But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience." You will never receive the blessings of God upon your soul if you are dishonest. Jesus is looking for the good and honest heart.

You need to seek the Lord until He rains righteousness upon you. Hosea 10:12 says, "Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the LORD, till he come and rain righteousness upon you."

There are promises to those who seek the Lord. One is, they will find Him. When you seek God, He will not hide from you. You will find Him. Again, Deuteronomy 4:29 reads, "But if from thence thou shalt seek the LORD thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul."

### **"Seek the Lord, and Ye Shall Live"**

When you seek the Lord, you will find rest. Jesus said in Matthew 11:29, "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." What else will you find when you seek the Lord? You will find life. In John 10:10 Jesus said, "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

Amos 5:4 reads, "For thus saith the LORD unto the house of Israel, Seek ye me, and ye shall live." Verse 6 states, "Seek the LORD, and ye shall live; lest he break out like fire in the house of Joseph, and devour it, and there be none to quench it in Bethel." Those who seek the Lord are going to prosper. Psalm 34:10 reads, "The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the LORD shall not want any good thing." God will take care of you.

Those who seek the Lord are blessed. Psalm 119:2 tells us, "Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart." Those who seek the Lord will praise Him. Psalm 22:26 reads, "The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the LORD that seek him: your heart shall live for ever."

There are some terrible results in not seeking the Lord in His time or in His way. Proverbs 1:24-30 states: "Because I have called, and ye refused; I

have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD: They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof."

In these few verses, look at the things that God does to get someone to repent. Verse 23 says He will pour out His Spirit upon you. Verse 24 says He has called you. Verse 25 says He gives you counsel and reproof. Yet people ignore His Spirit, ignore His call, and refuse to take His counsel or reproof. They will not hold still for His correction, so what happens? Calamity, misfortune, and destruction will come upon them. That is a sad ending to a soul who wastes his time of visitation and refuses the counsel and the reproof of the Lord.

Luke 19:41-44 reads: "And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, Saying, If thou

hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation."

Dear one, you should not ignore the time of God's visitation or ignore His counsel, His reproof, His call, or His Spirit. He does all these things because He wants to help you to be saved. God desires to help you, so you need to seek Him. If He is speaking to your heart, you should not put off answering His call. You should not say: "Maybe next week I'll have things together and I'll be ready to serve the Lord. I'll have this thing all taken care of." You do not know that you will even see the light of another day. Today is the day of salvation. Do not harden your heart. You need to take advantage of the light that you have today and seek the Lord.

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10,937		10,856
18. Paid Distribution by Other Classes of Mail Through the USPS (e.g., First-Class Mail®)		
0		0
19. Total Paid Distribution (Sum of 17a, 17b, and 17c)		
10,937		10,856
20. Free or Nominal Rate Distribution Outside the Mails		
0		0
21. Free or Nominal Rate In-Country Copies Included on PS Form 3541		
0		0
22. Free or Nominal Rate Copies Mailed at Other Classes Through the USPS (e.g., First-Class Mail)		
0		0
23. Free or Nominal Rate Distribution Outside the Mail (Carriers or other means)		
280		280
24. Total Free or Nominal Rate Distribution (Sum of 20, 21, 22, 23, and 24)		
280		280
25. Total Distribution (Sum of 16 and 24)		
11,217		11,136
26. Copies not Distributed (See instructions to Publishers #4 (page 83))		
366		414
27. Total (Sum of 16 and 26)		
11,949		11,550
28. Payment Method (13c checked by 13c areas 100)		
97.50		99.49
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30. Signature and Title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager, or Owner		
Roger L. Decker editor - pastor		Date
		10-3-11

*James 4:17 Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.*

*1 John 3:4 Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law; for sin is the transgression of the law.*

*5 And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.*

## Is There a Knock at Your Heart's Door?



*Brother Irwin Seshier*

### **Making the Right Choice**

As we walk through this world, lots of things grab our attention. Some of those things are good, but other things are very negative. Even when you do not want to listen to certain things, sometimes it is unavoidable. I am thankful that as children of God, we can use the things that God has given us to fight the enemy of souls.

When I became a child of God, the things of this old world did not mean much to me anymore. I wanted to do the things that God wanted me to do. I think any true child of God wants to live this life. As children of God, we want to do everything we can to please God. Why? He is the most pleasing Person to enter our lives. We have made our choice. Christian friend, are you glad that you have made the choice to follow Jesus Christ? Think what might have

happened to you had you not made that choice.

Sometimes I wonder where I would be had I not given my heart and life to Jesus Christ. I could be in hell or in prison. I do not know where I would be, but God does. I thank God that He spoke to me one day and that I heeded His voice. I thank God for His voice! He is still talking to individuals today, saying, "Let Me be your choice." If you will make Jesus Christ your choice, that will be the best decision that you have ever made.

We live in a world full of choices. When you go to the grocery store, you can choose from many different brands of products. If you think there are too many choices at the grocery store, just consider buying a car. Many options are available for you to enjoy and to indulge in. The same is true with the clothes you wear, the foods you eat, the types of

computers you can buy, and the types of homes you can purchase. However, the most important choice that you could ever make is whether you are going to be saved or lost. The most important of all choices is deciding whether to follow Jesus Christ or to go your own way. Will you go God's way or the ways of the world?

There is no room for the doctrine, "We all sin a little more or less every day." There is no such place as purgatory after you die. You are either saved or lost. You have only two choices: eternal bliss or eternal damnation. It all boils down to serving the Lord or serving the devil. Serving God and being called one of His own is the most important choice that you could ever make in this life. Therefore, you would think that narrowing it down to only two choices would make it very easy for people to make the right choice. Nevertheless, too many other things

come into people's minds that sway their choice toward this old world.

The enemy will try to convince you that God does not really mean what He says. The devil is very convincing and very powerful. I am not talking about a make-believe character. He is not merely a figment of someone's imagination; he is real. We fight him each and every day. The devil will come to you and say: "There must be an easier way. You do not have to do that to serve God." That is the way he talks because he does not want you to follow the strait and narrow path to Heaven. Again, He will try to convince you there is an easier way. One way he tries to convey his message is by telling ones to go to the church of their choice. Also, he says, "If it looks good, it must be right." However, when I got saved, I was born into the Church of God, so the choice of which church to attend was made for me. My choice was made very simple and clear. I could have made the wrong choice.

### **Only One True Way**

Matthew 16:18 says, "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church [not churches]; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Thank God, there is only one true way. Jesus Christ is the way, and the way has never changed. You still have to go through Jesus Christ in order to make Heaven your home. Sometimes people get a little lax in their thinking or in what they believe, but Jesus Christ is still the answer to this world's problems. Jesus Christ still wants to save men and women from their sins, not in their sins.

You will have choices all the way down to the end of your life. As you get older, you have choices to make about what you are going to do with your life, such as your occupation and whether you are going to buy or rent a home. As you come down to death's door, those choices narrow down to two: are you going to be saved or lost? The choice is nar-

rowed down to two ways. This choice is extremely important. At the end of your life, no other choices will matter. Are you going to serve God or are you going to be lost?

Young person, are you going to be lost or are you going to follow Jesus Christ? No matter what the world thinks of you, you and God are in the majority. If people make fun of you because of the way you dress or because you do not go to certain places, you are still in the majority with Jesus Christ.

When it comes down to the time for you to depart from this world, it will not matter if your name is on a church book. So many people have their faith and confidence in having their names written on a church book, but one of these days those church books are going to burn up. Someone may say, "Well, I was baptized when I was a little child." Being baptized cannot save you. You still have to come through the Door, Jesus Christ. It does not matter that you shook a preacher's hand ten years ago. The important question is, are you saved? Is your name written in the Lamb's Book of Life? Do you have an up-to-date experience with the Lord? Too many people think, "Well, I was saved many years ago, so I still might be right." Either you are saved or you are lost.

Some people do not know where they stand, but I know where Joshua stood. Joshua 24:15 states, "And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD." Regardless of what my employer or the neighbors think about me, I am going to serve the Lord. The Lord is much more important than my employer and my neighbors. If more people would think about what God thinks before they make a decision, they would do the right thing.

Look at Joshua's testimony. It was clear, unwavering, and right to

the point. We are living in a world where many people want to weigh their options. If it does not benefit them the way they think it should, they do not want to do the right thing. They wonder, "How does it benefit me?" If you should have another job offered to you, offering to pay you more money, that would be outstanding. However, if you had to move, your first consideration should be, is there a Church of God congregation in that area so that you can get your soul fed? It would be better to live on minimum wages than to have maximum wages and lose your soul in the end. This old world is going to burn up one of these days. Only what is done for Jesus Christ will last.

### **"I Stand at the Door, and Knock"**

Is it your desire to be in the house of God? When I got saved, there was no doubt about where I wanted to be on Wednesday evenings and on Sunday. I wanted to be in the house of God. Sometimes I had to work, but I did not want to miss any services. Why? Jesus Christ came to my rescue one day. I love being in the house of God and being around God's people. I love to sing praises to the Lord Jesus Christ. I love this way of living. Do you love it? This way is precious! It is a glorious and happy way.

Church of God, we have what the world needs. If you are saved, you should not walk around looking sad. If you do, people will be saying, "I have just as much as he or she does." You need to express yourself. You should let others know that you love Jesus Christ. You may be a little down financially, but at least you are saved from sin. Do you appreciate salvation the way you should? Many people are listening to lots of other things instead of listening to that still, small Voice.

Revelation 3:20 says, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will

sup with him, and he with me." This shows the concern and the love that Jesus Christ has for those who are unsaved. He wants to come in and have fellowship with you.

During World War II, the Japanese dropped a bomb down the smokestack of the great battleship, the USS Arizona, which sank in Pearl Harbor. More than a thousand sailors lost their lives on that vessel. When the bomb went down the smokestack and blew up, the ship flipped over and trapped hundreds of men inside. Some men tried desperately to get to those trapped men, but they could not get to them because of all the burning oil on the water and all the chaos. They kept hearing the men trapped inside tapping, but there was nothing anyone could do.

If you are unsaved, Jesus Christ is tapping on your heart's door. He wants to come in and save your soul. What a terrible thing it would be to keep the door of your heart shut! The Scripture says that He stands and knocks. He will not stand and pound, or knock forcefully. Jesus Christ is a gentleman. You must let Him in because the latch is on the inside of your heart's door. He will not force His way into your heart. You have to want Jesus Christ to come into your heart. You have to be sick of sin and know that you need to go a different way in your life. He wants to come into your heart, sinner friend.

Jesus does not knock the way one of us would if we were to go to someone's house and we did not know whether anyone was home. Sometimes we have the tendency to keep knocking and to knock a little louder each time. Jesus Christ has a distinct knock. Sinner friend, you will know when Jesus is knocking on your heart's door. If you die the way you are living right now, you will be lost. Do you want the dear Savior to come into your heart? You have the opportunity to open the door. Do you want Jesus Christ more than anything? The choice that you have is narrowed down to this: do you

want Jesus or do you want the world?

When Jesus knocks at your heart's door, it is not required that He come back and knock again once you refuse Him. As Noah was building the ark, I am sure the people made fun of him, but they became believers after the rain started. However, the door was shut then. When Jesus Christ shuts the door, no man can open it. When He withdraws His Spirit, there is nothing that you can do to get your heart right with God.

### **Refusing to Follow Christ**

Why do people refuse to open the door? Why do they refuse to follow Jesus Christ? When you first got saved, no doubt you thought everyone would surely want salvation too. You felt differently, acted differently, walked differently, and dressed differently. You were a totally different person. You became a new creature in Christ Jesus. You thought everybody would want this way, but soon you ran into resistance. You found that not everyone wants to believe God's Word, but that did not cause you to waver in your choice to follow Jesus. You knew exactly what He did for you.

Why is it that many people refuse to open their heart's door? Is it due to the love of this old world, pride, a boyfriend or girlfriend, or sinful habits? There are many different reasons that people will not open their heart's door to Christ. Is it because the husband is not saved or because the wife is not saved? Whatever reason a person may give, it is not worth going to hell over. If you are without God, you do not have a valid excuse. No habit or circumstance is worth the cost of going to hell. If you pass from this life into an eternal life of punishment, you will wish that you had opened the door, but then it will be too late to do anything about it. Your eternal damnation will be sealed.

Too many people have not opened the door. They have not

invited the Savior into their hearts. They think that going to the house of God and living a clean, moral life and treating their friends and neighbors fairly are good enough.

They cannot use that excuse before God and say, "This is what I did." That will not work on the Day of Judgment. Are you saved? Is your name written in the Lamb's Book of Life? That is the most important thing. It is worth getting saved. Is your life cleaned up? When your life is cleaned up, you will not have to get up from an altar of prayer and ask someone, "Do you think I am saved?" You will know there has been a definite change in your life. You cannot hide it, and you will not want to conceal it. You will want everyone to know about it, and you will not be bashful.

I know what happened when I walked up to someone to let him know that I was saved. I started witnessing and telling him what the Lord had done for me, and that still works today. If you feel that you do not know enough to tell people about salvation, you can let them know what God has done for you. You can be a witness for God. You can tell others: "I don't commit sin anymore! I don't do the things that I used to do. God has changed my life, and I have no desire for the things of the world."

When the desire for sin is taken away, you do not want to do those sinful things anymore. What type of reaction did you get from others when you first got saved? At some point, no doubt, you had a reaction that you did not think you would face. Were the people to whom you witnessed responsive? Did they accept Jesus Christ right away? In most cases, they did not, but that did not hinder you in your walk with God. As Christians, we are not going to be accepted by this world. The world does not understand us, and we do not understand the world. They cannot understand why we want to be in the house of God. I do not understand why they want to do the things they do.

## Staying Strong in the Lord

The world did not accept Jesus back then, and they are not going to accept Him now. Back then, the crowd kept saying, "Crucify him, crucify him" (Luke 23:21). If Jesus Christ were to come back today, a mob would still want to crucify Him. However, when you pray and ask the Lord to direct you, you may be surprised to whom the Lord will direct you. It could be someone who is down and out, tired of the way he is living. That person may be despondent, heavy laden, and full of trouble and sadness. Have you asked the Lord to direct you to someone? Have you asked the Lord if there is someone that you could visit today? Is there someone to whom you could send a card?

There is much knocking on the doors of men's and women's hearts today. The majority of people will let everyone and everything in except Jesus Christ. The enemy has just about everything imaginable to offer people today. He wants to get them to indulge in sinful pleasures. The old enemy has a boatload of pleasures for young people to get involved with. Christian young person, if you do not stay strong in the Lord, you can be overtaken by the snares in the world. The devil loves to entice young people. He uses the same sinful things that others were once bound by when they were in the bondage of sin. Yes, there is a bondage to sin.

Some people say, "I can quit smoking cigarettes any time I want to." Well, why do they not quit? Others may say, "I can lay down the alcohol any time I want to lay it down." Then why do they pick it up as soon as they lay it down? There is a power to those things. The good news is, there is a higher power above all other powers. You cannot quit in your own strength. You need Jesus Christ living in your heart and life so that He can help you to get free from those things.

Many times when people want to get saved, the devil will say,

"What about your cigarette habit?" or "What about your drug habit?" or "What about your drinking habit?" You need to come to Jesus Christ and let Him help you to overcome those habits. Jesus will give you the power to say no to those habits. Sometimes you might have to pray and resist the enemy to say no to that habit.

Some things will have to be driven out of your life. The Lord did not put that cigarette to your lips. The Lord did not put that bottle of beer to your lips. You might have to work at driving out those things. You might have to suffer withdrawal symptoms and you may break out in a sweat, but that is when you need to ask the Lord to help you and to show you exactly what you need to do. Too many people want to succumb to that habit again, even when they know that the Lord helped them with it the first time. There is a bondage to sinful habits. There are serious consequences to going back and picking up things from which God has delivered you.

If the standard is not held high enough, people will fail to see their true condition. When preachers let down on the standard of God's Word, just watch what happens. I appreciate the standard of God's Word. The Bible standard is good for us. It helps us and protects us. If you are a child of God, you ought to abide by God's standard. You should not want to do anything that would bring a reproach on the standard of God's Word. If you claim to be a child of God, you ought to look like a child of God.

When you are saved from sin, you want to get as far away from the world as you can. Some people say, "I am just as close to God as I ever was," but they no longer dress in a godly fashion. When you are truly saved from sin, you are going to look more Christlike and less like the world.

In the true Church of God, there is no confusion. God hates confusion and division. God's plan is for His people to be in unity. He wants all of God's people to be together. We

might have differences of opinion, but that should not separate His people. If we have the unity of the Spirit, we might have different opinions, but we can still have fellowship with one another.

## Harden Not Your Heart

Is the Lord knocking on your heart's door today? If He is, you are privileged. Do you know the number of people in our world today who wish that God would knock one more time? They say, "Oh, if I could just hear that knock on the door of my heart once again." If God is speaking to you, you should not ignore Him. You are not guaranteed that He will ever knock on your heart's door again. This is serious. You have no guarantees in life. If the Lord is dealing with you and you reject His Spirit, this may be the last time He knocks.

When you reject Jesus Christ, a hardening process takes place. Many times the enemy will get you to think that it is not convenient to get saved. What could be a more convenient time than the present? Today is the day of salvation. Do not harden your heart. Too many people allow things to stand in their way. The enemy will say, "Why don't you wait to get saved? Why don't you wait until you are a little older? You need to go out and enjoy life."

Friend, you can enjoy life with Jesus Christ. I do not know of a better way to enjoy life than with Jesus. Jesus will stick closer than a brother to you. He will be with you through thick and thin. People will run out on you when the money runs out, but Jesus Christ will not run out on you. Some people say, "I will wait until a more convenient time," and those people are still waiting. That more convenient time may never come.

You may inquire, "What do I have to do to be saved?" I am glad you asked. Romans 10:9-10 states: "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt

be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." All you have to do is confess that you are a sinner, confess that you have sinned against Jesus Christ, and turn away from sin. It was your sin and my sin that put Him on the Cross. He died for you, sinner friend.

Thank God, there is a way to be free from the burden and the bondage of sin. Do you want to be free? Do you want to be part of the beautiful Kingdom of God? You do not have to wait until the future to enjoy the Kingdom of God. It starts when you become a child of God. What a kingdom this is, knowing that your sins are gone and you are saved. It is a beautiful kingdom and a beautiful way. It is a beautiful experience that the world needs to hear more about. Some are too quiet about this great salvation. We need to express ourselves about how great this kingdom is and tell others what God has done for us.

John 3:36 reads, "He that believeth on the son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." What has your attention other than Jesus Christ? What is keeping you from living this holy life? Is it pride? Is it the things of this old world? You cannot give a valid excuse for why you should not follow Jesus Christ. What will it matter in the end if you hold on to things that keep you from getting saved? Will it matter how much money you have in the bank? It will not matter how many homes you own or how many certificates of deposit you have in the bank. The most important question is, Is *your* name written in the Lamb's Book of Life?

### **Freedom Versus Bondage**

You may say, "Well, look at what I would miss if I were to become a Christian." You need to look at all the things that you will gain as a Christian. A child of God gains eternal bliss, a little bit of heaven to go to

Heaven in, and a love for his brothers and sisters in Christ. The hate, the bitterness, and the jealousy will be gone. You will be able to pillow your head at night and know that if you should die in your sleep, you will be in eternity with Jesus Christ.

Look at what you will gain if you turn your life over to God. It will be joyful! What will you get in return? You will get a clear conscience. Many people pillow their heads with their conscience clouded and cluttered. When you are saved, you have a clear conscience. You did not have that when you were living in sin, but in Christ you can have joy unspeakable and an experience full of glory. Again, you do not have that if you are living in sin, not true joy.

When you are living in sin, you may be happy as long as the money holds out. When the money is gone, often the happiness ends. You have to constantly seek pleasure. When you are satisfied on one level, the enemy will try to move you to another level. The enemy is smart. He knows that he cannot get you to go out and commit vile sins at the very beginning, so he gets you to play around the edge. After you get your feet wet, then he will draw you into other things that you thought you would never get involved with.

Sin has a heavy price, financially, physically, and mentally. I do not know how people who only make minimum wage can afford to pay their bills when they smoke and drink. Sin will bind you and get you to the point where you have nothing. The devil will pull you around by the nose and let you think you are enjoying life, when in reality, you are in bondage.

The devil does not care how you get satisfied with pleasure. He just wants to get control of your life. Many people do unlawful things to try to satisfy their sinful habits. If they do not have a job, they steal from others to satisfy their habits. There was a time when you could keep your front door unlocked during the day, but you cannot do that anymore. You cannot leave your

garage door open. Too many people are looking for things to steal to try to get money.

Some time ago, I read in the newspaper that people were stealing copper from high power lines. They were cutting the lines while they were still in service. I am sure they received a jolt. The article in the newspaper said that was not the first time that had happened. When a person is living in sin, he gets desperate to try to satisfy his habits. When God saves you from those habits, you do not have to worry about going out and cutting the lines and getting the copper so you can satisfy your sinful habits. God is so good to us!

Some people cheat to get this or that, and the devil says, "That is okay. You have to take care of your habits." That is sin. The sin keeps piling up. You may injure someone or, God forbid, kill someone to get something to satisfy your habit. Is that worth spending eternity in hell? No! People are missing out when they do not live this Christian life. It is much more than being a member of a church. It is much more important than shaking a preacher's hand. I am talking about choosing Heaven or hell. There are only two choices: being saved or being lost.

I once read a statement that said, "Hell has no exits; Heaven needs none." Do not turn the Lord and Savior away. He has walked this way before you, and He will help you. You do not have to walk this way alone, because He will walk with you. He will be there with you in every circumstance. All you have to do is give your life to Him.

### **Do You Want New Life in Jesus?**

First John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Friend, *you* have to open your heart's door to invite the Savior in. You need to confess your sin, not somebody else's. You have to convey to God that you are the one in need, not

somebody else. You can say: "I am lost; I need help. I do not know Jesus Christ as my personal Savior."

When you have Jesus, you have life. Thank God there is life in Jesus Christ. I am talking about something that is alive, not something dead. I am talking about an experience that you can have right now. If you are alive in Christ, you want to go someplace where you can get your soul fed.

First John 5:12 reads, "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." The choices are so easy to understand, so easy to figure out. You do not have to be a rocket scientist to figure out salvation. Who is knocking at your heart's door? Is it the draw of this old world? Is it the draw

of people trying to get you to do something that you do not want to do? Young person, are you going along with the crowd? Peer pressure is great, especially among young people. Young people experience things in school that you may not think happen. Much wickedness goes on in the schools.

There are many things in the world that would love to get hold of you. You can open your heart to the wrong things. There are bad things that can come into your heart, but you cannot go wrong with Jesus Christ. Friend, what is it that is preventing you from getting saved? In which kingdom are you residing? Are you reigning in the glorious Kingdom of God or are you dwelling in the kingdom of darkness? Do you

have light in your life or do you have darkness? Again, you have only two choices.

Are you tired of the life in which you are living? Do you want to be saved? When you enter God's kingdom, you are under new management. Jesus Christ directs your life. You do not have to be led around by the old enemy any longer. Jesus Christ has given a gift. It is the gift of salvation. Second Corinthians 9:15 says, "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift." You owe so much to Him because He did so much for you. Now would be a good time to give your life to Jesus Christ. You never know when Jesus will stop knocking and turn away.

*(Compact Disc TR-679E)*

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*[Guest Editorial—continued from page 2]*

not want us to live loose, uncontrolled lives that will bring a reproach and a disgrace to His name and cause. The way we live, the way we talk, and the places we go do make a difference. In Titus 3:8 the Apostle Paul gave sound advice to Titus, and that advice is good for us yet today. He stated, "This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men."

We must be an example in charity, or love. Genuine love is in great need today. First, love to God and then to our brothers and sisters in the Lord. Jesus informed us in John 13:34-35: "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." We are to love those who are living in sin and who know not God. We are not to love the sin that they do, but we are to love the individuals. In Matthew 5:44 we read these words of Jesus: "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use

you, and persecute you."

There will always be some people who may do things that hurt you. Some individuals may make remarks about you that will mar your influence and your character. Possibly you could be mocked or disrespected. In a time such as this you will need to lean heavily upon the grace of God and continue to show forth the right example. A Christian must be ready to love his enemies and react as Jesus did when He was ridiculed, laughed at, and scorned. A Christian must always be ready to forgive another, even though the individual may never ask for forgiveness. As Christ forgave you of your sins, likewise, you must be willing to forgive all that sin against you. Doing as Jesus would have you to do will keep your spirit right before God and man. You can be the example that He desires you to be.

Our Lord wants each of us to be a vessel that He can work through to help others. Dear one, will you be that vessel of love and mercy that reaches out to others? A Christlike example may be the only Gospel that some people will ever see or hear. It is not always what we say that influences those around us; but more often it is a godly life and example. An old adage states, "I'd rath-

er see a sermon lived than to hear one."

The example we live as Christians certainly influences others we come in contact with every day.

One last thought to consider is, you should never allow discouragement to overtake you when those around you seem to be paying no attention. Many times people will never let on that your life is having an effect on them. They may seem not to notice when you bow your head in prayer before you eat, but they are watching. Be encouraged, and continue to be the Christian example that God wants you to be. He may place you somewhere to show men and women how a Christian ought to live. Although they refuse to acknowledge God in this lifetime, someday they will wish they had. Many people will stand before God at the Judgment and try to claim they never knew how to live; then God will point them back to the godly example that you lived in their presence. This will render them without excuse.

Selected



"If we should make up our minds to be Christians, it would make her pleased," said Tim, "and perhaps she would rather be pleased in this way than in any other way."

"I know that she would," said Nettie, "and I say, let's settle the question once for all."

The others looked in amazement at Nettie. They could scarcely understand what she meant. Her face was flushed, and she was trembling with emotion, but one thing was certain, and that was that Nettie was in earnest, and also Tim; and whatever Tim wanted the others to do, they generally did.

"You may as well tell us what you do mean," said Mark.

"Why, just what I said," replied Tim. "I think it is about time that we each began to think some of being Christians. What the minister says is true, and I believe it is time for every one of us to do what he says and do the right thing."

"I should say as much," said Nettie.

"But what can be done about it?" queried Mark, in perplexity.

"We might all sign a paper, telling Sister Martin what we intend to do this Sunday in Sunday school and give it to her," proposed Tim.

"So we can," said Mark, "and let's do it at once."

So Tim went to the desk and spent a few minutes writing something on a piece of paper. When he had finished, he turned around and asked: "Want to hear it?"

"Of course," answered Nettie.

So he read: "We four scholars of your class have made up our minds to be Christians. We give you this note for your remembrance from us."

"Just the thing," said Ada.

"I suppose that we must all sign it," suggested Nettie.

"Of course," answered Tim.

"But is this all that we must do to be Christians?" queried Mark.

"I should say not," answered Tim, "but if Sister Martin knows that we are in earnest, she will tell us what to do."

So the paper was signed by the four, after which Mark and Nettie continued on their way homeward.

On Sunday morning following Thanksgiving, after the class had gathered and was waiting for Sunday school to begin in the little church on the hill, Tim passed to Sister Martin an envelope bearing her name. When she opened it and read the note that was within, her eyes filled with tears of joy.

"Oh, my precious class! My precious class!" This was all she could say, as she looked from one to another with face shining like an angel's.

"We thought that you'd tell us just what to do," began Ada. "We felt that we needed help from you."

"And you shall have it this very hour. We will let the lesson go today and just have a little meeting all to ourselves."

"That will be just beautiful!"

exclaimed Nettie.

While the other classes in the church were discussing the lesson for the day, Sister Martin's class in the pew in the rear were settling the great question of their lives.

Sister Martin began by telling them the story of Christ—how He left His heavenly home and came to earth to die for all men, since all have come short of the glory of God; and how all may be saved from sin by being sorry for their wrongdoings, deciding to lead a right life, and taking Him as their personal Savior. "Is this what you all believe?"

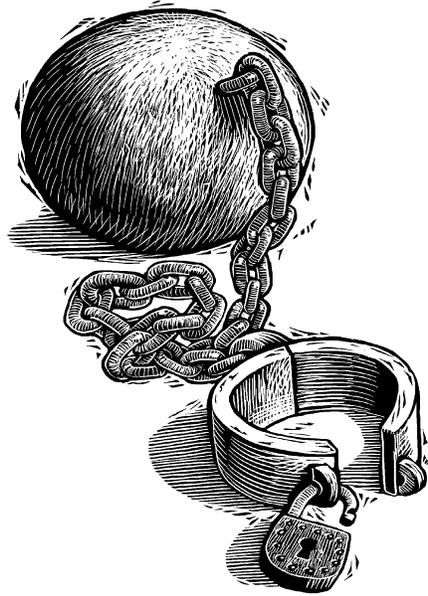
"It is," replied the class softly.

Then they all knelt down and closed their eyes, and Sister Martin prayed softly for each of them, after which each child prayed for pardon. By the time Sunday school was dismissed, they all felt that Christ had accepted them as His very own.

"Oh, how I shall prize this day and this little note," said Sister Martin, as they were leaving the church for home. "You could not have given me a more precious remembrance that would have meant more to me. Also, I am not the only one that you have remembered this day—you have given yourselves to Christ, Who died and rose from the grave for you, and He will treasure this day even more than I can treasure this day and this little note that you have given to me."

Selected

# Shackled and Unshackled



Brother C. H. Ferguson

## Transgressing God's Law

I would like to speak to you about what sin is. If you will read our Scripture text again, you will see what the Bible definition of sin is. I realize that people have many different ideas concerning what sin is and what it is not, but this verse contains the Bible definition of sin. Sin is simply a transgression of God's law. The very purpose for Jesus' coming to this earth is found in Matthew 1:21, which reads, "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins." The purpose of salvation is to save people from their sins.

I marvel at the so-called church world that teaches that men can live in sin and yet make Heaven their home. A person cannot make it to Heaven if he has disobedience to

God's Word in his life. One song says this: "Heaven is a holy place, Filled with glory and with grace—Sin can never enter there." No matter what you may think or what some ministers may or may not preach, sin can never enter Heaven. It never has been there, it is not there now, and it will never be there. I say again, the purpose for Jesus coming to earth was to save people from sin.

In John 14:5 Thomas said to Jesus, "Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?" Jesus replied in verse 6, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." Many people throughout the world are trying to worship God without including the Son of God; however, without Him there is no avenue of approach to God the Father. The Bible says there is one man between God and man and that man

is Jesus Christ. If you leave Him out of your life, you have no way to approach the Father, no sacrifice for your sins, and no way to get rid of sin. May God help you to realize that you must go through Jesus Christ if you want to make Heaven your home.

James 4:17 reads, "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." If you are living in sin and you know what is wrong in your life, unless you come to the Lord Jesus Christ and ask for forgiveness, you have no hope. In Luke 13:3 Jesus said, "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." Some people are trying to make Heaven their home without repentance. There are things in their lives, and many times it equates to pride. I believe that pride is at the top of the list as a reason that people do not repent.

Proverbs 16:18 states, "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall." Pride will keep you out of Heaven. I believe that pride is the number one sin that will keep people from making Heaven their home. Many people are too proud to repent. Things are working in their lives that they do not want to give up.

### **The Scars of Sin**

When I was first saved, an older saint said to me, "A person can hold on to sin as if it were something precious." Sin is not precious. The devil does not tell you the end results of sin. When I was living in sin, I thought I was having a wonderful time, and certainly I was pleasing the flesh. The Bible lets us know that sin brings pleasure for a season, but next comes the reaping time. I have scars on my body, scars in my heart, and scars in my soul that are the result of sin. God has forgiven me, but the scars remain.

The story was once told of a young man who felt badly that he did not have a roaring testimony of deliverance as some other people did. So his pastor had him pick up a nice piece of wood and said, "I want you to take this hammer and fill this wood full of nails." So he did. Then his pastor said, "Now pull them all out."

He pulled out the nails, and his pastor said, "What does the wood look like now?"

The young man answered, "It is full of holes and scarred."

His pastor replied, "That is what sin will do to you. You should be glad that you were never in deep sin and that you do not have scars in your life as a result of sin."

I thank God for anyone who gets saved early in life. As many people grow older, they become hard and cynical and less receptive to the wooing of the Spirit of God. When you are young and have not gone through the hard places of life, it is easier to give your life to God, and it is more profitable. Serving God is

wonderful.

Again, James 4:17 reads, "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." Undoubtedly, you know what is the matter with your life. May God help you to have a receptive heart, mind, and soul and to do away with whatever is keeping you from being what God would have you to be.

If you are living in sin, dear one, you are shackled and bound with a chain of sin that no man can remove. Only Jesus can remove it and set you free. God has chosen the foolishness of preaching to save those who believe.

I am thankful for ministers who preach the Truth. There are untold numbers of ministers in this world who do not even remotely tell their people what their problem is. If they do, then they come right behind it and say that people are all right while living in sin. Dear one, that is not true. If you are living in sin, you are shackled by sin, and the only way that you will ever get loose is through the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no other way. As you read earlier, Jesus said in John 14:6, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." There is no way to get help except through Him. If you try any other way, you are wasting your time, and you risk becoming deceived. You cannot get free without Him.

### **Are You a Servant of God or a Servant of Satan?**

Romans 6:16 states, "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" Many people do not like to think about that. When I was a sinner, I did not like to think that I was a servant to anybody. I thought I was my own man, but I really was not. I was a servant of sin. Dear one, no matter who you are, what your background is, what you believe, where you think you are going, or where you have been, you are either

a servant of God or a servant of Satan. No one is exempt from this.

Sometimes people think the pastor of a congregation is running things. Friend, the preacher is not running things; God is running things. The godly preacher is only telling people what God has told him to say. If he does not tell you what God told him to tell you, then he is in trouble with God. If you want to know the duties of your pastor, you can read Ezekiel, Chapter 33, and it will tell you plainly. There you can read and understand exactly what position your pastor occupies and what his duties are.

May God help you in a special way to heed the things that are spoken in God's Word concerning your soul. Sin will take you further than you want to go, it will keep you longer than you want to stay, and it will cost you more than you want to pay. People may not pay much attention to that saying, but that does not mean it is not true. You will have to pay a bigger price for sin than you really want to pay. It will take you some places where you really wish you had not gone, and it will cost you your soul. Sin will shackle you.

One day while visiting someone in a hospital, I saw two policemen standing at a hospital room door. Since my fishing buddy is a policeman, I asked them if they knew him and got into a conversation with them. As I looked in the room they were guarding, I saw a young man in the bed, probably in his teens, and he was shackled. His sin had caused him to be shackled with real chains. The officers were determined that he was not going anywhere or getting rid of those shackles. Have you ever seen someone walk who was shackled with chains? It is not a pretty sight. Oftentimes their hands are shackled as well as their feet, and they have to shuffle along. They cannot get away.

Those literal shackles can be removed. A man can remove them. However, no man can remove the shackles of sin except Christ. Try as

you may, you cannot get rid of sin by yourself. It takes the Lord Jesus Christ to remove those shackles. It is beautiful to see someone unshackled and set free by the Lord Jesus Christ. Oh, how wonderful it is! What a blessed message we have of being set free from sin and of being able to live free from sin. You can be God's child in this present, wicked world. John wrote in 1 John 5:19, "And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness."

Regardless of what you may think, John said the whole world lies in wickedness. I thank God that I am a child of God. Only Jesus can break the chains of sin that bind you and enslave you. If you are a disciple of Christ, did you know that you are a slave of the Lord Jesus Christ? If you are a sinner, you are a slave to the devil, and his bidding you will do. The only avenue that you have of getting rid of those sins is through the Lord Jesus Christ. It is wonderful that He stands nearby! God said He is not a God that is afar off. Isaiah 40:22 says, "It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth." He is right nearby, looking for souls. He is pleading for souls to come to Him and to get their sins taken away.

### **The Binding Power of Sin**

I want to give you an illustration of the binding power of sin. Some time ago, I went to the barber shop, and the owner had lots of National Geographic magazines. I picked up one that contained a story about the wild fig tree. I believe it was in the rain forest of Borneo. The wild fig tree produces wild figs, and the birds eat them. When the birds fly up to the tops of those trees, the seeds pass through them and lodge in the forks of the limbs in the tops of the trees. There they sprout and begin to grow.

As I looked at the pictures and read the article, I got a picture of sin. First of all, sin finds lodging in the brain, and just as the wild fig seeds take root in the tops of the trees in the jungle, the new little fig tree

begins to grow and sends one single root downward. As it goes downward, it puts out new roots every few feet. Also, as it grows downward, it puts out two new roots. These roots wrap around the tree. The main root grows down further and two more roots come out and wrap around the tree, and it continues to go downward until the main root reaches the ground. By that time the roots that had grown around the tree have totally choked and destroyed the mother tree, and it has begun to decay.

As I looked at that picture, I thought, that is the way sin works. The longer a person entertains it, the worse it gets. Sin puts out roots, and it binds people. It grows and puts out more roots and binds people until it totally consumes them. You are not your own. You belong to somebody, whether it is God Almighty or the enemy of your soul. There is no gray area. Sin does not paint a good picture. Concerning the wild fig tree, I thought, "What a horrible picture that is!" I had a total dislike for the wild fig tree. That is the way sin will do. Sin does not start big; it starts little, by causing you to deviate from that which you know is right.

Very few drug addicts start with the hard drugs. They start with marijuana or something mild, and then they go on to something else that is harder and more deadly. The next thing they know, they are so bound that they cannot get loose. It is a gradual condition, just as the root of the wild fig tree gradually kills the main tree. At first, it has only one root going down, and then two going around, and the more it grows, the more binding it becomes. Likewise, the longer you are in sin, the more binding it becomes.

Sin will bind you to the place where you cannot get loose. You are the one who chose to start indulging in the habits of life, but it takes God to break those habits. Many people end up in prison because of sin, but being in prison cannot cure a person of sin. Sin has a way of consuming

you to the degree that you cannot get loose unless God sets you free.

Some of our high schools in Arizona say they are drug free, but that is nothing but a lie. I marvel at how the devil works. I am against anything that is wrong, but the drug dealers are worse than murderers. Drug peddlers disguise themselves as students, and they begin to peddle drugs that will damage the minds of many young people, and then society has to care for them for the rest of their lives.

### **Keeping Company With the Wrong Crowd**

Do you remember Art Linkletter? Years ago he was a television personality. He had a daughter, and evidently she was a good girl, but some of her friends had a party and somebody slipped a drug into her cola. She thought she could fly and jumped out a window and killed herself. Her father dedicated the rest of his life to fighting the drug trade. What a tragic thing! When people get hooked on drugs, they will steal, lie, cheat, and do everything possible to get drugs to support their habit. Many times young girls will sell themselves, even during the lunch period in the schools, to support their habit. Dear one, sin is not a pretty picture. What heartache it causes! What heartache it is for mothers and fathers and those who are involved with it!

May God help you in a special way to be what God would have you to be, to stay away from evil, and to live a good life. I am a strong believer in the Word of God, which lets us know that a mother's place is at home. I realize there are some cases where mothers cannot be at home, but whenever possible, mothers need to be at home.

When you send your children to school, you need to be there when they come home. You may say, "Oh, my boy or girl would never do anything bad." You do not know what your boy or your girl will do. You may think you know, but you do not

really know. You need to be there when your child comes home and check how he smells. When your child comes in the door, you should say, "Hi son, how are you?" You should love him up, but you may need to ask him, "What is in your shirt pocket?" If he says, "Oh, Mom, I was just keeping these for a buddy of mine, but I didn't use them," you need to be concerned and ask more questions. You need to know what your children are doing. You may say, "Well, I trust my children." Sometimes you should check on your children just to see if they deserve your trust.

The ministry has a very responsible job. I realize that sometimes people in the congregation do not realize the responsibility that the minister has. No matter how small or how large a congregation is, you still have burdens. It is a pastor's responsibility to tell the people what their true condition is, where they are heading, and what they can do about it.

Those who sit in the pews have the responsibility of listening to the Truth and being obedient to the Truth. In my little congregation, some people are never on time. That condition is a burden to a pastor. If the pastor was often absent or late, would you attend there? If a pastor were to cut corners in his business dealings, as some people do, would

you want him as your pastor? You would not even consider it. A minister is supposed to be an example to the whole congregation.

### Heed the Good News

Moses said in Numbers 32:23, "Be sure your sin will find you out." Dear one, your sins will surely find you out. Several years ago, I heard a true story of two men who robbed the mail back in 1830. One of the men was executed because he shot a man. The other man received a life sentence for robbing the mail. His mother and his loved ones tried to get his sentence repealed, but he said, "No, I robbed the mail, so I accept my sentence. I do not want a pardon." The judge pardoned him of his crime and said he could go free, but he said, "No, I don't want the pardon."

The case went to the Supreme Court over the controversy about the pardon. The Supreme Court ruled that once a pardon is refused, it is the same as if there was no pardon at all. Dear one, Jesus stands at the door of your heart to pardon you of your sins. I want you to think about this for a minute. If you refuse His pardon, you may never have a pardon offered to you again. You have no assurance that God will offer an opportunity to you again. Jesus said to the Laodicean church in

Revelation 3:20, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."

Dear one, Jesus is standing at your heart's door and knocking. Very tenderly, lovingly, and kindly, He is asking: "Will you let Me in? I have a full pardon for you. I will forgive all your sins. This pardon is signed with My own blood. If you will accept it, I will remove your shackles, let you go free, and I will make you a new creature. If you refuse, I may never offer the pardon to you again." In ancient days when a person went to a prison, if he did not pay his fine or pay whatever he owed, he stayed in prison. He had to stay there until the penalty was paid. When you refuse God, you are in the prison house, so it would behoove you to heed the good news of the Gospel. You need to do it while you still have a chance to act.

I trust that God will help you in a special way. Jesus is waiting to pardon you. He is standing at your heart's door and knocking. If you will open the door, He will unshackle you and come into your heart, but He will not force entry. If you refuse Him, He will simply go away.

*(Compact Disc TR-642M)*

## Annual Thanksgiving Meeting

### Church of God

Canby, Oregon

November 22-27, 2011

Service Times: Tuesday - Wednesday 7:30 p.m.

Thursday - Saturday 10:30 a.m. & 7:30 p.m.

Sunday 10:30 a.m. & 6:00 p.m.



**For further information contact:  
Pastor David Stegmeier @ Telephone: 503-266-9297**

*Luke 3:2 Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness.*

*3 And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins;*

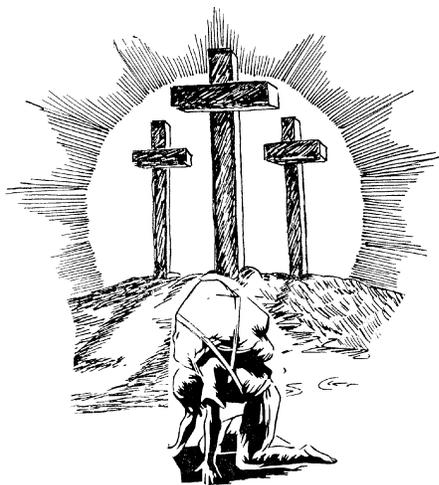
*4 As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.*

*5 Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be*

*brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth;*

*6 And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.*

# The Miracle of Salvation



*Brother Leamon Whitehead*

## Being Born Again

The Hebrew writer said in Hebrews 2:3, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" The new birth is not something common or something to pass off. The new birth is nothing short of a miracle. When Jesus was talking to Nicodemus in John, Chapter 3, He talked about being born again. I can about envision Nicodemus' mouth falling open when Jesus said, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (verse 3). In verse 4 the first thing Nicodemus asked was, "How can a man be born when he is old?" In verse 9 he asked, "How can these things be?"

Salvation takes a miracle from God. That is what it took to change every child of God. He took us out of that old wasteland of sin that we were living in and washed us in His own blood and made us clean. We can hold our hands up and say: "Praise God, I have a hope! Because

He lives, I can live." My friend, salvation is something that is hard to keep quiet about. He has changed our lives, turned us around, and placed us on the highway of holiness.

When Jesus began to talk about being born again, Nicodemus did not understand. The only way to get into His kingdom is to be born again. In verse 5 of our Scripture text, Luke, quoting the Prophet Isaiah, said, "Every valley shall be filled." God knew exactly what we needed. We had wandered away from God and had gone our own way. The Prophet Isaiah said, "The LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6).

Can you imagine the load that was on Jesus' shoulders as He walked up Calvary's hill and hung on the Cross? The sins of the whole world weighed Him down. He laid down His life so that we could pick up ours and live for Him and serve Him in this time world. I am so

happy about what He has done! Glory be to God! It is Jesus who has made me what I am, not myself. He took me out of the rough and cleaned me up, washed me, straightened me up, and He made me ready to go up! It is amazing what God can do. He made me a new creature. The habits of life got hold of us before we were saved, and we had some valleys, or some low places, in our lives. Jesus filled in those low places to make us look more like Him.

My friend, the Lord can change you. He can free you from the old wretched life and make you anew. You can be a true child of God and be a glory for God. He will level every mountain and hill, those places that are too high, such as high-mindedness and pride. He will lift you out of the pit of sin. If you will allow the Spirit of God to dwell in you, you will not have trouble with strife. You will have unity and harmony with the people of God.

## The Stormy Sea of Sin

The Bible says that we would not learn war any more. Isaiah said they would beat their swords into plowshares. Some were ready to fight at the drop of a hat, so to speak, and kept their fists doubled up much of the time. When God got finished with them, they did not want to fight any more. They wanted to dwell in harmony and unity and peace so they could serve God. Jesus is the One who has done that.

You cannot just wake up one morning and decide that you are going to make a change. No, you are too far down in the quicksand of sin to get yourself out. It takes the Lord. It is wonderful to behold how good and how pleasant it is for brothers and sisters in the Lord to dwell together in unity. What can take the fighting spirit out of you? Salvation can take that out of you. Is that not wonderful? Before I was saved, I had such a bad temper that people called me "Hot Steam." It is the Lord who brings the change. The Lord will put a smile on your face and the love of God in your heart. He causes people to be able to dwell together. He will knock off those rough edges.

Christian friend, the Lord found you and me out on the broad way, sailing on the stormy sea of life, and picked us up. Do you know where He found us? He picked us up out of the coal pile on the road to hell. We were lost without a Savior. We could not say: "I am saved. Praise God!" We had our heads down, and we were unworthy and lost. When we came to an altar of prayer, we came hoping that He would love us enough to forgive us for the sins that we had committed and for the lives we had lived. We did not have anything good to offer Him. Our lives were ruined. I thank God that the Lord picked us up, cleaned us up, straightened us up, and got us ready to go up. I praise God for all His marvelous love and for what He has done for us!

I can remember back when I was just a young boy, I thought it was

really something to go out with the older boys and try to act the way they did and get into the ways of life. I thought that was the "in" thing. I could not see it then, but the devil had laid a trap for me. I had a good father and mother who taught me right, but I began to ease out and go the ways of the world. The devil had my life all planned out at an early age, and it was downhill all the way. That is the reason I am so happy that the Lord saved me when I was a young man. He turned me around, changed my life, and made me a new creature. The longer I serve Him, the sweeter He grows.

### "The Crooked Shall Be Made Straight"

Sometimes even after we get saved, the Lord has to deal with us on things. Many times our own makeup gives us a battle as we go through life. If you will stay true to God, humble yourself, and listen to Him, He will smooth out every rough place. He will knock down the high places and bring up the low places; then you will become a shining light for Him. He wants you to be a bright, shining light for Him in this dark world. When we were living in sin, our lives were so crooked, but He made the crooked places straight. Friend, you can know without a doubt that you are saved, because you can have the witness down on the inside. The Lord can move upon you, work on you, and rid you of those crooked ways and make them straight.

If someone was hanging drywall in your house and they just threw it up and put screws in it and painted it, you would not like it. There are some steps that the installer must take to smooth it out, but once he gets it all done, it looks like one continuous wall. He has to join it all together by taping the seams and spackling them with compound; then he must let it dry and sand it down. When the job is done right, it makes the difference between ugly and beautiful. The steps to finish

drywall are many.

When we first bowed at an altar of prayer, we were not much. After He made us His children, He helped us to get rid of the sinful habits of life, and He cleaned up our conversation. It is no wonder that when people who knew us before passed by us, they would take another look and say: "Is that really him?" or "Is that really her? What happened?" The Lord has been filling in the low spots, taking down the high spots, and smoothing out the rough places. When He does that, we began to look peculiar, as far as the world is concerned.

The Prophet Isaiah spoke of the beauties of salvation. In Isaiah, Chapter 35, the Prophet said the desert would bloom roses. It does not matter how high you go up the corporate ladder or what you might attain in life, the world cannot do that for you, but God can. You see, in the flesh you cannot really be happy unless you have lots of things. If you have God in your heart, you can be happy with nothing. You can have peace right in the midst of trouble. Praise God! What the Lord has done for us is wonderful!

The miracle of salvation is not a light thing. The Apostle Paul said in 2 Corinthians 5:17, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." Do you know what has turned off many people? They have seen so many people in nominal religion profess to be saved without a change in their lives. Knowing what I used to be, sometimes it is hard for me to believe what God has done for me.

### Be Not Conformed to the World

Living for God, being with the family of God, preaching, and singing is my life. My family knows that God has done something for me, and they do not try to hinder me in any way because they know God comes first in my life. I love them dearly, but I love God more. As a Christian, you should love your family and be good to them, but you

should not let them hinder you in your walk with God. You must not let them keep you from obeying God, because you need God, and they do too.

Most of the preachers in nominal religion do not preach that any real change takes place in salvation. Your life cannot change by laying your hand on the television screen or on the radio and repeating a prayer spoken by someone on the air. That cannot bring real change, and there is no real change expected by the people. The end results are what we see today. It seems strange to people when we talk about holiness and living clean because most people are not taught these Bible truths any more. In many cases it is not the people's fault, but it is the fault of those who are teaching them. I am convinced that there are people who would embrace holiness if preachers would preach it, but they will not preach it. Even when some people do hear it preached, they realize that it does not cost much to be a member of some other church.

Although salvation is free, it costs to be a true child of God. Romans 12:2 says, "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed." What a change takes place in salvation! In Ezekiel, Chapter 36, Ezekiel talked about how the Lord would take away the stony heart and give us a heart of flesh. If you love God and the things of God, it is due to a change that God has made in your heart and life. When you have Christ in your heart, you love the things you once hated, and you hate the things you once loved.

Before conversion, we were living in darkness in a dark world. We could not see what had us bound, but God turned the lights on when we got saved, and then we could see what He had delivered us from. I do not know about you, but I do not want to go back to the sinful things that I left behind. When I see people so bound in sin, my heart breaks for them. Many people are so bound by the habits of life. Some people think that the more tattoos

they get on the body, the more happiness they will have. Others think that the more jewelry they wear, the better they will feel. Some people are bound with alcohol, and others are bound with drugs. When I see those folks, I thank God for what He has done for me.

### **The Lord Will Not Withhold Any Good Thing**

In the hard times in which we are living, I wonder how some people can afford to keep food on the table when I see them carry big cases of beer and packs of cigarettes out of the stores. Do you know what has hold of them? It is the habits of life. They are wasting their resources and destroying their bodies. Those vices may be the killers that take them out of this life. Jesus said if you will follow Him, you will know the Truth, and the Truth will make you free.

I got into some things when I was young that I am ashamed of. I am ashamed that I went to some places. I could not have bought some of those things today because at that age I would not have had any identification. Back then, I got by with it. Today I look back and I can see how close the devil came to getting me hooked on those things. Also, I had a close call with false religion one time. I can look back and see that now, since the Lord saved me. Do you know what He did when He saved me? He lifted me up. I am not down in the quagmire of sin any more. You see, when you are down in the crowd, you cannot see much. The reason Zaccheaus was looking for a tree to climb was that he wanted to get a better view of Jesus.

When you are down in the muck and the mire, you cannot really see well. That is the reason when you talk to sinners out in the world and your unsaved children, they will say they cannot see certain things. Down in the midst of all that sin, they cannot see. When they get saved and the Lord lifts them up, they can

really see sinful things for what they are, and they say: "Thank you, Lord, for what You have done for me. I did not know that I was in the hogpen. I did not know the things that had me bound." The closer you get to God, the further away from the world you get. You can look down and see the folly of the things of the world. You can see that those things that looked like jewels had hooks on them. The devil put them there to trap you and to squeeze the very life out of you.

If you are unsaved, do not ever think that serving the Lord is a boring life. Serving God is the best life that you could ever live. It is going to cost you, but you will be so glad that you paid the price. The Lord said He would not withhold any good thing from those who walk uprightly before Him. The devil will tell you what all you have to give up, and what all you will lose; but I want to tell you that the Lord can open your eyes and help you to see that all those things He asks you to give up are unhealthy and dangerous to you. Furthermore, they will destroy you and send your soul to hell. You would be glad to get rid of those things if you could see what they are. God will set you free and fill your life with so many good things. Life is a beautiful thing.

I urge you, if you are unsaved, you need to think seriously about turning your life over to God. I am so glad that I got saved when I was fifteen years of age. If I had it to do over, I would have wanted to get saved sooner, because it would have spared me some of those memories and those things that I got into. I have been saved down through the years, but I can tell you that it is getting better and better. If the Lord is speaking to your heart, won't you yield to His voice and turn your life over to Him? If you will, He will bring the miracle of salvation into your life.

*(Compact Disc TR-630M)*

Genesis 22:1 And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am.

2 And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.

3 And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him.

4 Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off.

5 And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you.

6 And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together.

7 And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?

8 And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together.

9 And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood.

10 And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son.

11 And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I.

12 And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me.

13 And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in

a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son.

14 And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovahjireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen.

15 And the angel of the Lord called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time,

16 And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son:

17 That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies;

18 And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.

19 So Abraham returned unto his young men, and they rose up and went together to Beersheba; and Abraham dwelt at Beersheba.



Brother J C Carr

### Obedience to God's Commands

This Scripture portrays a very familiar lesson. First Corinthians 10:11 says, "Now all these things

happened unto them for examples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." This is an example taken from the Old Testament and

can be applied to our lives today.

Are you presently going through a hard place? All people go through hard places. Things may be going well for you right now, but the time

is coming when you will face something that seems impossible for you to handle. In the worst trial that you may be facing, just as with Abraham, God will provide for you, if you meet Bible conditions. Many dramatic things were taking place in this Scripture text. Verse 1 says, "And it came to pass after these things, that God did *tempt* Abraham." God does not tempt us, but this Hebrew word means "to test." Hebrew 11:17 lets us know that God was trying Abraham.

God called Abraham, and in verse 1 of our Scripture text you read that immediately Abraham answered, "Behold, here I am." Abraham and God had a close relationship. Abraham knew the voice of the Lord. In the next verse you read that God said, "Take now thy son, thine only son Issac, whom thou lovest. . . ." A command was given, and it was to be done immediately. The next response from Abraham was that he rose early in the morning. There was no hesitation and no conversation with others. We do not read of his conversing with Sarah, his servants, or his family. God commanded him to do something, and immediately Abraham followed through in obedience to what God told him to do. Abraham had it settled that no matter what God commanded him to do, he would follow through. God had never failed him.

When you have a relationship with God and build on it, soon you will realize that God will not fail you. Therefore, it becomes easier to follow through with the commandment that He gives you. There was no reason for Abraham to doubt what God was telling him to do. I like verse 4, which begins, "Then on the third day. . . ." Here we find that a little time had passed. It was easy for Abraham to answer God's command immediately, but he was into the third day. Sometimes you get into trials and say you will do whatever God asks you to do. However, when that trying time comes and you do not get an answer right

away, you can become discouraged. It may go on for weeks, months, or even years. That is when the testing of your faith comes in.

Though three days had passed, Abraham did not waver. He continued to prepare for the sacrifice, always listening for God's direction. It is easy to profess faith until it is tried. As time marches on and no answer comes, that is when faith can begin to waver and you can become weary; then it is easy to question things. One song says, "Be strong and true." God has not and will not forsake His people.

### Faith and Trust in God

Verse 7 of our Scripture text says, "And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My Father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for our burnt offering?" Here we find an interaction between Abraham and Isaac. Isaac asked where the offering was. They addressed each other as "my father" and "my son." It was a loving relationship between Abraham and Isaac.

Abraham knew what the commandment was, but his response to Isaac was, "God will provide." How was it that Abraham was able to make such a bold statement? Paul talked about the faith of Abraham in Romans 4:16-21, which reads: "Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all, (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were. Who against hope believed in hope [seemingly there was no hope, but Abraham still believed in hope], that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be.

"And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb: He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform."

What an account Paul gave of Abraham's faith concerning the birth of Isaac! Abraham was human, just as you and I are. Abraham might have questioned why God had commanded him to sacrifice Isaac. Isaac had not committed any sin worthy of death. Isaac was innocent, yet Abraham followed through with God's command.

You need to put yourself in Abraham's position. He was unwavering. He could have dwelt on human thinking very easily, and his emotions could have overridden what God had commanded him to do. No doubt, the questions entered his mind: "How am I going to handle this? What are others going to say when they find out what I did? How are they going to understand what God commanded me to do?" Imagine the emotions of a father walking with his son up to where the sacrifice was to be made. Sometimes a trial is easier if you know the purpose and see how God is working in your life. However, that was not the case with Abraham.

### The Child of Promise

Isaac had been promised, and Abraham and Sarah had waited twenty-five years for his birth. What an exciting event when it finally came time for Sarah to give birth to Isaac! What a joyous occasion that must have been! Can you imagine how the enemy made Abraham think? How was he going to explain his actions to Sarah? How was he going to explain it to all those who rejoiced in Isaac's birth? The enemy will try to scare you with the unknown future when you obey God.

The enemy likes to cause you to question, "What is it going to cost you down the road?" Friend, you need to have faith and trust in God just as Abraham did. Abraham did not know the reason for what God told him to do. According to the Scriptures, God never gave Abraham any indication or reason for commanding him to make such a sacrifice. God commanded, and Abraham followed through.

In previous chapters we read that God had promised Abraham that he was going to be the father of many nations. One is found in Genesis 12:1-2: "Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing." Abraham moved by faith. This was confirmed in Genesis 13:16 when God said to Abraham, "And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered."

Years after those promises had been made, Sarah was still barren, and the promise of Abraham becoming the father of many nations started to seem foolish. We even read that Sarah laughed within herself when Abraham was told that this would take place. Finally, we read of the fulfillment, and Isaac was born twenty-five years later. Sarah and Abraham were well past the age of childbearing years, but the child of promise finally arrived.

Several years later, God demanded that Abraham sacrifice Isaac, after all those years of waiting for him. This sacrifice would have taken away that promise. Totally contrary to what any human thinking could imagine, Abraham made ready for the sacrifice. Our Scripture text states in verse 7 that Abraham called Isaac "my son." Abraham loved Isaac. We read in our Scripture text in verse 2 that God said, "Take now thy son, thine only son

Isaac, whom thou lovest. . . ." This was a love that is only felt between a father and a son.

In my own personal experience, if my children get hurt, I want to be right there to do whatever I can to make them feel better and to get them on the mend. If children have a problem, it affects the parents. That is just the way love works. Abraham knew what God was commanding him to do. I can just see them going up the mountain. Isaac was carrying the wood, and if he would have stumbled and fallen, no doubt Abraham, with the love of a father, would have reached out to help Isaac. He had much love for Isaac. Again, I say, there is a special love between parents and their children.

### **Having Confidence in God**

Many preparations took place as the altar was built. The wood was gathered, and I am sure that Abraham was listening for God's voice, wondering, "Are you sure this is what You want me to do?" God still had not intervened. There was no word to stop what God had commanded. Next, Abraham bound Isaac with rope and laid his own son upon the altar, and then he raised the knife to slay him. I can just imagine, as Abraham hovered the knife over his son, the look of terror that might have crossed Isaac's face. No doubt, he was in utter shock of what his father was doing. Yet, through it all, Abraham firmly believed that God would provide.

Concerning Abraham, Hebrews 11:8-12 states: "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. Through faith also Sarah her-

self received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised. Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable."

Verses 17-19 read: "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure."

Abraham believed that even if he were to follow through and slay Isaac, God's promise was that "in Isaac shall thy seed be called" (Genesis 21:12). He had such great faith that even if he would have slayed Isaac, he had confidence that God would have raised Isaac up. Oh, what great faith Abraham had! We find that at the precise last moment that he was getting ready to follow through with the command, the angel of the Lord said, "Abraham, Abraham." The angel said his name twice.

We know that this must have been at the last possible moment to stop Abraham from following through with the command. Isaac was spared, and a ram caught in a thicket was to be sacrificed instead. All of this was due to Abraham's complete faith in God and his obedience to Him. His seed and all the nations of the earth would be blessed. This was a hard trial for Abraham, but he passed with flying colors, all because of his faith in God.

### **Enduring Difficulties**

Romans 8:28 reads, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." How wonderful to serve an all-powerful God who is in

control of our every situation. Sometimes it may seem as though there is no way out. It may be hard to find anything good about a situation that you are going through, but God will provide. My mind goes to the familiar story of Joseph, who was favored by his father. Perhaps you have read the Bible account of how Joseph was sold into slavery by his own brothers. What a low point it must have been when he was sold into slavery!

Joseph could have very easily become bitter and turned against God. That was only the beginning of the many trials that Joseph was to go through. He was falsely accused by Potiphar's wife and ended up in prison, but the Scripture says that the Lord was with Joseph. Even in prison, the Lord made him to prosper. As you study the life of Joseph, you can read of one hard situation after another, yet Joseph continued to live for God. He knew that God was in control. God was working behind the scenes the whole time through those many years of hardship. God was working a plan, and in the end Joseph was raised up to be high in command. Due to the awful famine, his brothers ended up traveling to Egypt where Joseph was. This happened because Joseph stayed true to God.

Paul faced a hard place recorded in 2 Corinthians 12:6-9: "For though I would desire to glory, I shall not be a fool; for I will say the truth: but now I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me to be, or that he heareth of me. And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."

Paul was going through a difficult place, and he prayed about it three different times. He felt that he could serve God so much better if that infirmity was removed. Paul was a spiritual giant, yet as spiritual as he was and as greatly used of God as he was, he still had hard situations to endure. When it seemed there was no other way, God provided the grace and the strength for him to go on.

### **"God Shall Supply All Your Need"**

We can read of many instances of Paul being in trouble. He was shipwrecked and beaten, and he suffered assassination attempts against his life, yet he pressed on, proclaiming the Word of the Lord. Just because you are living for God today does not mean that hard places will cease to exist in your life. That is not the case, but God will be there for you. God will provide in every situation. Just as with Joseph and Paul, God works in many miraculous ways yet today. In those two illustrations, God worked through various means. God provided for both Joseph and Paul. We need to be open to God's way.

If you are going through a hard place, you must have patience. God's timetable does not always line up with yours. God is in control, and He knows what you stand in need of. Many times in a trial you can see God working this way or that way. The only way that you can see some things is when you totally give it over to Him. God can work in ways that you do not even see Him working. Isaiah lets us know that God's ways and His thoughts are so much higher than human reasoning. God may not remove your situation, but He can provide a solution. He will either provide an escape or give you the strength and the grace to go through it.

Are you facing a fiery trial or a hindrance in your life today? God will provide for His children. This is the promise of God. Sometimes as

Christians, certain hindrances prevent God from providing as He would really like to. Sometimes people do not ask God for help. They forget to take it to Him in prayer. Jesus said to ask and it shall be given to you.

Hebrews 4:14-16 says: "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

Sometimes you may confuse needs with wants. Philippians 4:19 states, "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." You need to be careful of how you ask when you come to God. You should not ask for selfish reasons. James 4:3 reads, "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts." God knows what you need even before you ask Him. He knows your frailty, but He wants to hear from you. Again, Hebrews 4:16 says, ". . . and find grace to help in time of need."

What can be a hindrance to faith? In John, Chapter 11, we read that Lazarus had died. When Jesus went to his tomb, He was in great sorrow and told the people to roll the stone away from the tomb. When they rolled the stone away, Jesus was able to raise Lazarus from the dead. Those people were not able to raise the dead, but they were able to roll away the stone. God will not do for you what He has equipped you to do or enabled you to do. God expects you to put forth effort. You are still in the flesh, but you need to press forward and do whatever God has equipped you to do. You must do your part, just as Abraham did when he obeyed the command and followed it through with action.

## Listening for God's Call

Let us examine some of the characteristics that Abraham demonstrated in Genesis, Chapter 22. These can be easily applied to help each of us. First of all, Abraham listened for God's call. Psalm 1:1-2 reads: "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night."

You can easily lose your way by listening to the counsel of the ungodly or by justifying a reason against doing what God has commanded you to do. Abraham heard the angel of the Lord immediately, just before he was to slay Isaac. It was critical that he heard God's command to stop. If he had not been listening, he would have totally missed the mark of what God wanted him to do. Jesus said in John, Chapter 10, that the sheep know the Shepherd's voice, but a stranger they will not follow. You must be keenly aware of that still, small voice when God speaks to your heart.

Abraham demonstrated great faith. Hebrews 11:6 says, "But without faith it is impossible to please him." God cannot lie, and you can be assured that He will fulfill His promises. We read in Romans 4:21 about Abraham being fully persuaded that what He had promised, God was also able to perform. He trusted that God would make a way even when there was seemingly no possible way. Abraham trusted God though he had no indication of why God was commanding him to do this. That trust was solid with Abraham, and he put action behind what God had commanded him.

When God asked Abraham to do something, he demonstrated obedience. Obedience brings blessings. Have you read about Elijah and the widow woman and how she was down to her last meal? The famine was severe in the land, and the Prophet Elijah commanded her

to fix that last meal for him. What a difficult choice when she was in a famine! Have you ever been to a place where you were so hungry that you wanted something to eat so badly? That was the situation with this widow. No doubt, her stomach was growling as she began to prepare that meal, and then the prophet came and said, "Make one for me first." She obeyed the prophet, and though the famine was fierce, the barrel of meal did not run out, all because she obeyed the prophet. The famine continued, but God blessed and every time she went back, one more meal was there because she obeyed the command from the man of God.

## Examples in the Bible

Think about when Joshua was leading the children of Israel and they came to the mighty city of Jericho. Joshua was close to Moses, and Joshua was a great military leader. Have you ever read the Bible story of when Amalek fought against Israel? Moses was sitting on a rock, and Aaron and Hur held up Moses' hands. Victory for the Israelites prevailed as long as his arms were lifted up. Joshua was leading the charge on the battlefield.

Joshua was a man of war. He was one of the twelve spies who was sent to search the land of Canaan. Joshua was very good strategist when it came to military knowledge of how to take down the enemy. However, when God commanded them to march around Jericho, it had nothing to do with military strategy. Had Joshua looked at it from a military perspective, it would have made absolutely no sense to march around the wall and blow the horns. Using military strategy, Joshua would have probably checked to see where the weakest point of the city was, but God did not want him to do that. Joshua obeyed the exact plan that God set forth, and the wall came tumbling down.

As we read earlier in 1 Corinthians, Chapter 10, these things were

given to us for an example. They are for our admonition. There are many examples in the Bible of people who obeyed what God commanded. However, there are many examples in the Bible of how one simple act of disobedience brought a great fall to a man, a family, and generations. No doubt, you have read the story of King Saul. In the beginning God was pleased with him, but disobedience, jealousy, and bitterness built to the point that God withdrew his presence from King Saul. He was rejected of God due to his disobedience.

The Israelites wandered in the wilderness for forty years because of disobedience. Those people had been delivered from Egypt, and they had the Promise Land right in front of them. That is what God wanted to do for them, He did not intend to bring them out of Egypt and lead them around in the wilderness for forty years. He wanted to take them directly into the Promise Land. They experienced many miracles of how God had lead them out of Egypt, yet they continually disobeyed to the degree that God delayed their entrance into the Promise Land.

Consider Ananias and Sapphira in the New Testament. Lying to the Holy Spirit cost both of them their lives. They were struck dead because of their disobedience. You need to be careful to obey God when the Lord asks you to do something. You may think, "That is just a simple thing. I can override it." One act of disobedience can lead to your destruction.

Looking again at Abraham, we see that he was willing to sacrifice. It is easy to profess faith, but the proof comes when God asks you to give of your most precious possession. Abraham had it settled that wherever God led him, he would follow without hesitation. Abraham and Sarah had waited twenty-five years for the promise of Isaac's birth to be fulfilled, yet Abraham was willing to sacrifice his only son Isaac if the Lord commanded him to do so. He did not hold back anything from

God.

In the Old Testament we find many types and shadows of the New Testament covenant. Abraham was a type of our Heavenly Father. John 3:16 states, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son." Isaac was a type of Jesus Christ, the sacrifice for our sins. In John 10:17-18a Jesus said: "I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself."

Jesus was innocent. Pilate said he found no fault in Him. Jesus, who knew no sin, was faultless, and He went to the Cross for you and me. God freely gave His Son to be mocked, to be spat upon, to be beaten, and to die an excruciating, painful death on the Cross. God gave His Son freely for each of us. Jesus endured the Cross to purchase our salvation. Sometimes when you go through battles it may seem that the Lord is not answering as you would like, but you can rest assured God cares. God cared so much that He sent His only Son for you and me.

### **Developing a Personal Relationship With God**

Matthew lets us know that God takes care of and feeds the fowls of the air. How much more does He care about you and me? The enemy will try in any way he can to bring discouragement into your life to hinder you in your walk with God.

God cannot fail, and He is willing to provide for you. The faith that Abraham demonstrated did not happen in just a short period of time. It took Abraham years of obeying and developing that personal relationship with God. It was a growing process. If you follow Abraham's example, God will provide for you also.

We read in Matthew 1:1, "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham." The first person in the genealogy of Jesus Christ is Abraham. Verse 2 says, "Abraham begat Isaac; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat Judas and his brethren." Through Isaac, God fulfilled the promise to Abraham of being the father of many nations.

Verse 17 says, "So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away into Babylon are fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ are fourteen generations." Here we see the fulfillment of how Abraham's seed became innumerable as the sand along the seashore and as the stars in the sky. This fulfillment happened all because Abraham was willing to do what God commanded him to do.

How is it with you? The characteristics that Abraham displayed are critical to the Christian's life. You need to listen to God's voice. Have you been spending time with God as you ought? The only way to really

know God and to hear His voice is to spend time in the Word of God and to communicate with Him through the avenue of prayer. God cannot bless over sin. When the children of Israel were a mighty army, they could not defeat the little city of Ai because there was sin in the camp.

Abraham was willing to give his most beloved treasure, his only son, for whom he had waited many years. He was willing to give him up if God wanted him to. This was necessary for him to reap the reward. God was well pleased when He saw that Abraham would not withhold anything from Him. When Abraham gave his all, look at the return that came.

Sometimes you may feel that you cannot give up a certain thing. The enemy will try to hold you back. Maybe you are lost or backslidden or struggling in your Christian experience. The devil will try to convince you to hold back on just one thing. You cannot calculate the blessed return that Abraham got for his faithfulness. God will be your all in all, but it is still your choice. When God asks you to do something, it is still your choice of what you want to do. God wants to provide for His people. Will you truly meet His conditions?

*(Compact Disc TR-619M)*

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## **Announcements**

### **MEDINA, OH**

November 7-13

**REVIVAL:** The Church of God, 6745 Wooster Pike, Medina, OH 44256

Evangelist: Bro. Larry Dishman, Moss Point, MS

Service times: Monday-Saturday 7:00 p.m. & Sunday 10:30 a.m. & 4:00 p.m.

For further information contact: Brother Roger L. Decker, 83 Decrow Avenue, Newark, OH 43055

Telephone: 740-344-2543 or 1-888-730-0461

### **NEWARK, OH**

December 28-  
January 1

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

Three services daily: 10:00 a.m., 3:00 p.m. & 7:00 p.m. The first service begins

Wednesday evening at 7:00 p.m. The afternoon service will be a teaching service.

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

For further information contact: Pastor Roger L. Decker, 87 Decrow Avenue, Newark, OH 43055

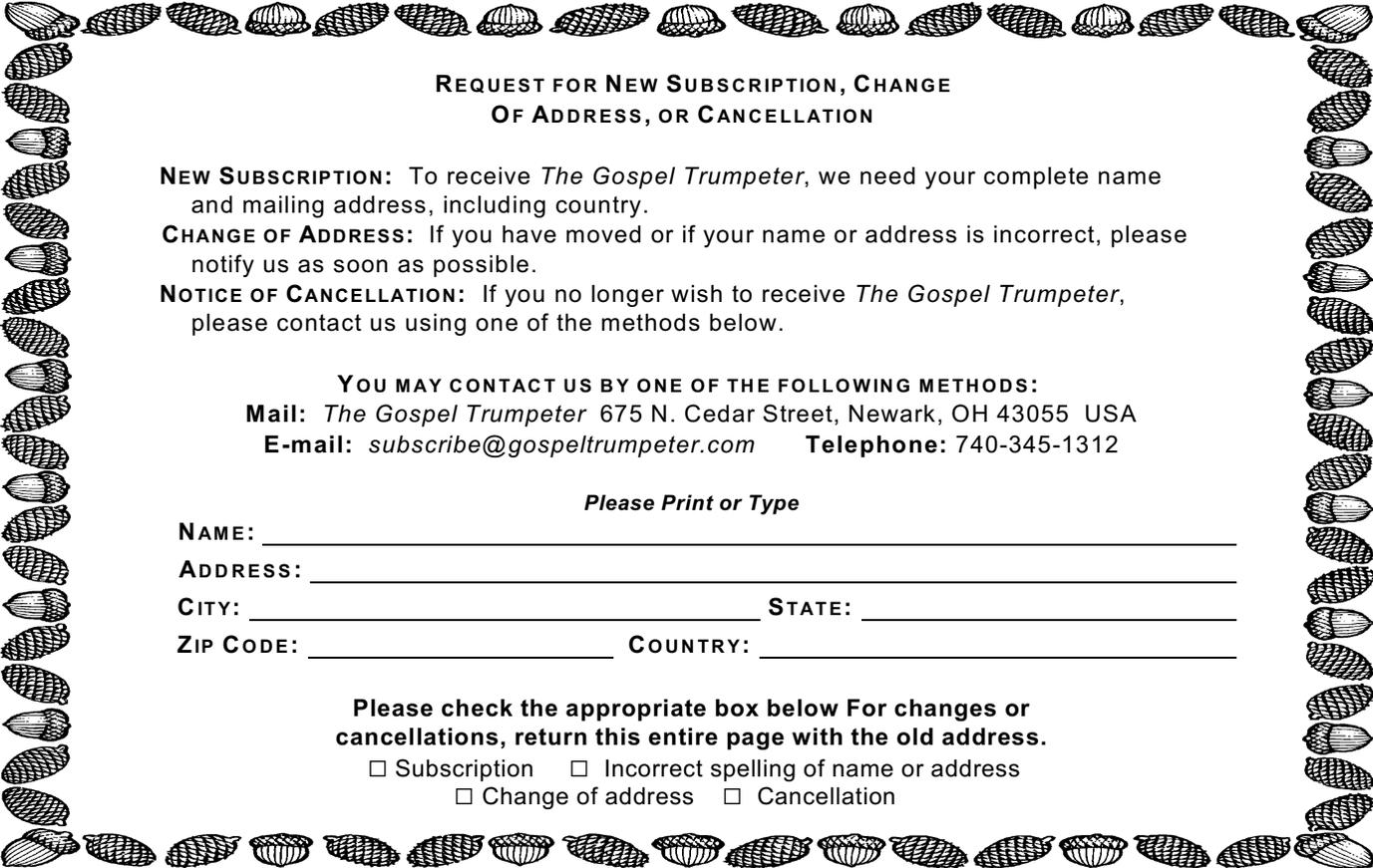
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