

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

"But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished. Rev. 10:7 Matt. 24:31

SOUNDING FORTH THE SEVENTH AND LAST TRUMPET

Vol. 43 May 2013 No. 5



Church of God Tabernacle in Newark, Ohio

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

Psalms 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. 43 May 2013 No. 5

Guest Editorial

"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."

Joshua 24:15

"And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word."

1 Kings 18:21

Making the Right Choice

In these verses God is calling men and women to make a choice between whom they will serve, either the one true God who brings blessing or the gods of this sinful world, which will result in an everlasting curse. All people are required to make this important decision. We cannot serve two masters; we must serve one or the other. Some people have the notion that they will not make a definite choice. However, to refuse to do that which is right is a choice to do that which is wrong.

Throughout God's Word, He has pleaded with men and women to choose to serve Him and to be blessed. He has never desired to see any soul die lost. Ezekiel 33:11 says, "Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?"

Let us look at two different individuals to see the choices they made and their attitudes when they met the Savior. Both men were wealthy in this world's goods. The first man was a rich, young ruler, recorded in Mark 10:17-22. He came to Jesus

asking Him what good thing he could do to inherit eternal life. After greeting the young man, Jesus told him to keep the commandments that he was taught. The man let the Lord know he had done that from his youth, but after doing all this, he yet lacked something.

As Jesus looked on him, He pointed out his real need. In essence, He said, "You lack just one thing." Anxiously, the young man wondered, "What is it that I need to do?" Jesus loved this dear young man, but he simply and kindly told him the truth. In so many words, He said, "Son, if you truly want to inherit eternal life and make Heaven your home, you must do what I tell you. Go and sell all your possessions and give the proceeds to the poor, and then come and follow Me. If you will be obedient to this command, you will inherit life and lay up treasures in Heaven." When the young man heard this, he was deeply grieved in his heart. His riches meant more to him than anything else in this world, even fellowship with Christ.

The problem that kept him from being a follower of Christ was not his wealth, but it was

[continued on page 6]

Proverbs 31:10 Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies.

11 The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil.

12 She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life.

13 She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands.

14 She is like the merchants' ships; she bringeth her food from afar.

15 She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens.

16 She considereth a field, and buyeth it: with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard.

17 She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms.

18 She perceiveth that her merchandise is good: her candle goeth not out by night.

19 She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff.

20 She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy.

21 She is not afraid of the snow for her household: for all her household are clothed with scarlet.

22 She maketh herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing is silk and purple.

23 Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land.

24 She maketh fine linen, and selleth it; and delivereth girdles unto the merchant.

25 Strength and honour are her

clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come.

26 She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness.

27 She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.

28 Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her.

29 Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all.

30 Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised.

31 Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates.

MOTHERS



Brother Roger L. Decker

A Mother's Place and Her Influence

In this country we set aside a day in the month of May to honor mothers throughout the nation. It has been said, "The destiny of a child is a work of its mother." Everyone knows that being a mother is more than just having a child. Being

a mother is one of the greatest positions of honor a woman could ever attain, and it is a position that should be honored.

God even placed the honor as one of the Ten Commandments. It is written in Exodus 20:12, "Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land

which the LORD thy God giveth thee." Ephesians 6:2 tells us, "Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise)." For a considerable time in a child's life, parents stand in the place of God. Rebelling and showing disrespect for the parents' lawful commands is considered to be a

very serious offense in the sight of the Lord.

It has been said that one of Abraham Lincoln's quotes was: "I remember my mother's prayers, and they have always followed me. They have come to me all my life." Another of his quotes was, "All I am or can be I owe to my angel mother."

Mothers have a persuasive power over their children and over the home. A story is told about how George Washington got blessed. When he was quite young, he was about to go to sea as a midshipman. Everything was ready. His trunk had been taken aboard the boat, and he went to bid his mother farewell. When he did, he saw tears filling her eyes. Seeing her distressed, he turned to the servant and said: "Go and fetch my trunk back. I will not go away to break my mother's heart." His mother was struck with the decision and said to him, "George, God has promised to bless the children who honor their parents, and I believe He is going to bless you."

A mother's influence can persuade or bend the children for or against right and wrong. Mother is the greatest title ever bestowed upon a woman. Today it is sad that many women are not satisfied in just being a mother when God gave mothers such an important role. Some women do not want to be bothered with children, and that is very sad. Too many women are discontented, so they go out into the work force, and their children are suffering as a result.

I know there are exceptions to the rule, but the Word of God says in Titus 2:5 that women are "To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed." In this day and age, many people do not want to hear this, but it is still in the Scriptures. No one is qualified to take the place of a mother. Neither day-care centers, nor grandparents, nor friends have the qualifications to take the place of a true mother. No home is

stronger than the mother who guides it. Satan does a real work when he attacks the homes of our nation. When homes get out of the order that God put them in, Satan has done a damaging work.

The Word of God covers the Christian mother, both young and old. First, I want you to read a Scripture pertaining to the young mother. First Timothy 5:14 reads, "I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully." For the older mothers and grandmothers, we read in Titus 2:3-4: "The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children."

Mothers should not want to look like their teenage daughters or one of their grandchildren, but a mother should act like a mother. Some mothers put their careers above their children. Mothers should teach their daughters how to clean a house, how to do spring cleaning, and how to love their husbands. How should mothers teach their daughters? They should teach them by example. Mothers should teach the children to pray before they eat their meals and to be respectful at the table. The best training a young man or a young woman will receive is in the home.

What Is a Virtuous Woman?

Our Scripture text says in verse 10, "Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies." The word *virtuous* is used three times in the Bible. It is used once in the Book of Ruth, when speaking of Ruth, and twice in the Book of Proverbs. The word *virtue* means "a force." A virtuous woman is a force of strength and a force of courage, and she is one who is noble.

There are some things about a

virtuous woman that we need to consider. The wise man let us know that her worth is far above the wealth of this world. She is a costly treasure. A costly treasure is not found everywhere. She is an ornament, a joy, and a blessing above all that earth affords.

Proverbs 18:22 says, "Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the LORD." Money cannot replace the heartaches caused by a woman who is contentious, unsubmitive, and disobedient.

Proverbs 31:11 lets us know that the husband can safely trust in a virtuous wife. She can be trusted in the home. She can be trusted to teach the children, to guide the home, and to instill righteous principles in her family. Verse 12 says the wife "will do him good and not evil all the days of her life." She is a help in his spiritual life. I thank God that my wife has been there for me in my spiritual walk. She has been an outstanding help to me. When I have things troubling me that I can tell no one but the Lord, she is there as my helper. She is just what the Bible says she should be—a helpmeet. She has been everything the Bible speaks of and more.

A virtuous woman does those things that help to make a man a good husband. She does the things that are good for the welfare of the home. She is good not only to her husband but also to her children. When we had five children in several different schools and they arrived home after school, often they grouped around her and carried on multiple conversations. God gives a mother something special when it comes to working with children and knowing how children feel. She can tell when a child is not feeling well or when things are not going well. A godly mother teaches the children responsibility. She teaches the children how to trust God and how to pray for others.

A virtuous woman insists on having a family altar. What can you do at that altar? You can bring the

family's burdens. I believe that pleases God to bring those burdens for strength in the time of need. Proverbs 31:1 says, "The words of king Lemuel, the prophecy that his mother taught him."

A godly mother enforces discipline. She does not have to wait until the husband comes home. She is the major force in the training that goes forth in the home. The Bible says in Proverbs 22:6, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." Training in the home is a major responsibility. A godly mother teaches her children reverence, how to respect their elders, and how to respect the house of God. She trains the children to observe, to think, and to reason. She gives training in morals, temperance, honesty, forgiveness, and purity. She teaches the children how to pray. As children go through life, many times they will need to call upon the Lord. Mothers need to teach the children to take their burdens to the Lord and to have private devotions.

A virtuous woman helps to make the atmosphere of the home a good atmosphere all her days. She helps not only her children but also her husband. She rises early and applies herself to her household. Many times a mother rises at night to check on the younger children to see if they are covered.

A virtuous woman is not afraid of work. Verse 13 of our Scripture text says, "She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands." Verse 16 reads, "She considereth a field, and buyeth it: with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard."

A virtuous woman is charitable and giving. Verse 20 says, "She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy." Deuteronomy 15:11 says, "For the poor shall never cease out of the land: therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land."

A virtuous woman takes care of her own household and yet takes time to reach out to others.

A virtuous woman is a praise to her husband. Verse 23 of our Scripture lesson says, "Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land." What is this verse talking about? It is speaking of a man sitting in a place of respect. Deuteronomy 16:18 reads, "Judges and officers shalt thou make thee in all thy gates, which the LORD thy God giveth thee, throughout thy tribes: and they shall judge the people with just judgment." The husband sits in a place of respect because of his wife's loyalty and the good she has done for him in their home. He is respected among the elders because he is first respected at home.

Having the Fear of the Lord

Our Scripture text reads in verse 26, "She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness." A woman who fears God has much wisdom, and her husband needs to use that wisdom. Why does she have such wisdom and such good understanding? She keeps the commandments of the Lord. Psalm 111:10 states, "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth for ever." Her wisdom and her good understanding come from the Lord. Her children and her husband will stand up and praise her. She is rewarded with praise and honor by those who are the closest to her.

Verse 30 of our Scripture text reads, "Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised." That verse is the essence of this whole chapter, and the focus is upon her having the fear of the Lord.

A virtuous woman is one who lives a spirit-filled life and desires to obey all the understanding that the Lord reveals to her. A mother can

turn the hearts of her children toward or against the Lord. We read in the Bible of kings who were taught by their mothers. Some were taught to do evil, and others were taught to do good.

In the New Testament we can read about Timothy. He was blessed with a godly mother and a godly grandmother. The Scripture says they had unfeigned faith, which means that their faith was real. In the Old Testament, speaking of Ahaziah, 2 Chronicles 22:3 says, "He also walked in the ways of the house of Ahab: for his mother was his counsellor to do wickedly." Mothers have an influence as no one else has. If you are a mother, I trust that you are guiding your household in the way that is right.

My wife was never in a hurry to be free from the children. We had our children with us all the time. Today many mothers want a break from their children. Well, they are going to get that break one of these days when the children leave the home, and then they are going to be lonely.

If you are not a godly mother, I trust that you will start guiding your household in the way that is right. If you are not guiding them in the way that is right, it is not too late to start, because it is better to start late than not to start at all. I read this Mother's Day poem, and it explains the role of a mother. The title of the poem is *Super Mom*. It reads:

*Mom, you're a wonderful mother,
So gentle, yet so strong.
The many ways you show you care
Always make me feel I belong.*

*You're patient when I'm foolish;
You give guidance when I ask;
It seems you can do most anything;
You're the master of every task.*

*You're a dependable source of comfort;
You're my cushion when I fall.
You help in times of trouble;
You support me whenever I call.*

I love you more than I can express;

*You have my total respect.
If I had my choice of mothers,
You'd be the one I'd select!*

I trust that you will bestow respect on your mother all the days of the year, not just on Mother's

Day, but Mother's Day is a special day. It is a day set aside to honor your mother. It was set up by the world, but why shouldn't the church take advantage of that day to honor and respect mothers? If you are a mother who has not been on the

right path, I beseech you to change your life, because you are having a tremendous influence on your children's lives, either for the right way or for the wrong way.

(Compact Disc TR-985M)

[Guest Editorial—continued from p. 2] his attitude of heart toward those riches. The Lord Jesus went on to say in verse 23, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!" There was only one thing that prevented this man from obtaining eternal life, and that was his love for something else that was greater than his love for Christ. Multitudes will miss receiving salvation and a home in Heaven for possibly one thing. To some, it could be an addictive habit such as tobacco, drugs, or alcohol. To another, it may be an obsession for sports, pornography, gambling, houses, or possessions. Many people are viciously bound with a spirit of unforgiveness and hatred. Regardless of the condition that a man may be in, Luke 19:10 says, "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

Let us now look at the second individual who sought after the Lord. He is found in Luke 19:1-10. This man was also a wealthy person in society. His name was Zacchaeus, whom we find was a publican and a tax collector. His position in life made him a very unlikable character; therefore, his friends were extremely few. Although he was unwelcome and even hated by many, he felt a deep need for something greater in life. Zacchaeus had heard of Jesus going about saving souls and healing the sick. In his heart he wondered if Christ would consider him and his need.

Hearing that the Savior would be coming nearby, he climbed up into a tree so that he could see Him. As Jesus came by, He looked up and saw Zacchaeus sitting on the limb of the tree. Beholding the honesty

of Zacchaeus's heart, Jesus told Zacchaeus to hasten and come down. Somewhere between that limb and the ground, salvation came to this hated publican. Before the Lord said another word, Zacchaeus immediately said, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold" (Luke 19:8). By the attitude he manifested, Zacchaeus was prepared to do whatever the Lord would demand. Jesus said, "This day is salvation come to this house." The Lord was satisfied with the commitment that Zacchaeus made.

Dear reader, what is your attitude toward Christ and the Gospel? Are you like the man who thought too highly of his possessions? Do you cherish something more than hav-

ing forgiveness and a close relationship with the Savior? Could it be just one thing that stands between you and having real peace of soul and mind? Or will you be like Zacchaeus, who was anxious and ready to forsake all that he had to have Christ dwelling in his heart? When the Savior comes into a person's heart, He brings forgiveness, soul rest, peace, happiness, and joy. The opportunity to allow Christ to forgive every sin is presented to you and all men. The question is, What are you going to do about this wonderful opportunity that is being afforded to you today? We certainly hope that you will make the right choice.

Selected

The Keeper of the Light

A lighthouse keeper is always on call. He must be there to guide ships through the storms and keep them safe from the rocks that threaten to tear the vessels apart. He can lead them to safety or allow them to flounder on their own and possibly crash against the rocky shore. We must be a constant light for those sinking in the sea of trouble. If our light flickers in the wind, it will be hard to follow. "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid" (Matthew 5:14).

Shine His light brightly!

Compassion



Brother Donald Orr

Examples of Compassion in the Old Testament

In 1 Peter, Chapter 2, Peter was speaking to the early Christians and reminding them of what the conduct of Christians ought to be. The word *compassion* means "a feeling of deep sympathy or sorrow for another's suffering; the human quality of understanding the suffering of others and the desire to alleviate it." Some synonyms related to compassion are pity, mercy, tenderness, and forgiveness. Some antonyms (words having the opposite meaning) of the word are "merciless, having or showing no mercy, and indifference."

There is a human quality to compassion, and also a spiritual side. To look at the Bible meaning of

compassion, we do not need to look much further than the character of God and of Christ. In the Scriptures compassion is a quality of God. From the beginning of the Old Testament and throughout the New Testament, we can see mercy, pity, tenderness, and forgiveness. All these qualities can be associated with compassion.

Exodus 3:7 says, "And the LORD said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows." The children of Israel were in bondage in Egypt, and they were being cruelly abused by the Egyptians and forced to build their buildings. The children of Israel cried to the Lord because of all the cruelty

and hardness they were enduring. They got God's attention, and He looked down and had compassion on their situation.

When Pharaoh finally let the children of Israel leave Egypt, God opened the way for them many times. He parted the waters of the Red Sea so they could cross on dry ground, and He provided water and food for them in the wilderness. No matter what happened, God opened the way for them. God did not forget His people, but many times they forgot Him. We can read about the many times when they turned their backs on Him after all the things that He had done for them. Nevertheless, God did not let them down, not one single time.

Exodus 2:6 is an example of how

God used human compassion to further His plan: "And when she had opened it, she saw the child: and, behold, the babe wept. And she had compassion on him, and said, This is one of the Hebrews' children." Pharaoh's daughter went down to the river to bathe herself, along with her maids, and Moses was in a basket in the bulrushes. All things worked together in order for this plan to take place. She sent one of her maids to retrieve the basket with Moses in it, and when she opened it, Moses started crying. God worked in many ways. There had to be motherly instincts in Pharaoh's daughter as she looked on that baby. She knew that he was a Hebrew child, but she had so much compassion on him that she wanted that child to become a member of her family in the royal household. That is amazing. God used that form of human compassion to put His plan in motion for the saving of His people from Egyptian bondage.

Moving through the Old Testament, you can see that David was an example of showing compassion on Jonathan's son, Mephibosheth. After Saul died and time had passed, David inquired of his servants whether anyone was left of Saul's household so that he could show the kindness of God to him. They said, "Yes, there is one," and they sent for one of Saul's servants, who told David that Jonathan yet had a son, but he was lame. This was very unusual at that time, because normally the new king would have had all the former king's family killed so there was no chance of somebody rising up and trying to take over the kingdom. David showed compassion by taking in Mephibosheth, supporting him and taking care of him until the day he died.

David had compassion on Saul's grandson, but David failed the Lord many times. Psalm 86:15 records, "But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, long-suffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth." Because of the long-

suffering that God had shown to David in all the things he went through, including his many failures, God still worked with him. The quality of long-suffering that God showed to David caused David to show compassion and mercy to others. It is amazing how God works.

Examples of Christ Being Moved With Compassion

Now let us move on to the time of Christ. In the Bible we can read of examples of how Jesus was moved with compassion. Matthew 9:36 reads, "But when he saw the multitudes [speaking of Jesus], he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd." Jesus went many places and healed the sick. He performed many miracles as He traveled. Large groups of people followed Him everywhere He went. In this particular case, as He looked upon the multitudes of people, He could see more than just those people. He could see the children of Israel and what was going to take place shortly. He knew they needed guidance and help, and He knew He was not going to be with them all the time.

Jesus was moved with compassion. As saints of God, we are to be like Christ. Many times in our lives, we are going to see and experience things, and the Spirit of God is going to touch us to the degree that we should be moved with compassion toward situations. Matthew 14:14 is another example of Jesus' compassion. It says, "And Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them, and he healed their sick." All the people's needs were supplied when Jesus was there. He did not leave anybody out. As Jesus went from place to place, He took care of the needs of those who came to Him. He did not avoid people and say, "I'll have to get to you another day; I'm sorry." No, He took the time to care for the needs of

the people.

Matthew 15:32 states, "Then Jesus called his disciples unto him, and said, I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat: and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way." Next, Jesus performed a miracle. He fed the multitude because He had compassion on the people. He was teaching them things that they had never heard before, and they were so engrossed with what He had to say that they continued with Him for three days without food. Jesus looked on them and said they must have something to eat, lest they faint on the way home.

Jesus had compassion for the unfortunate. Matthew 20:29-34 reads: "And as they departed from Jericho, a great multitude followed him. And, behold, two blind men sitting by the way side, when they heard that Jesus passed by, cried out, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David. And the multitude rebuked them, because they should hold their peace: but they cried the more, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David. And Jesus stood still, and called them, and said, What will ye that I shall do unto you? They say unto him, Lord, that our eyes may be opened. So Jesus had compassion on them, and touched their eyes: and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed him."

This is an example of persistence. The persistence of these two blind men got them the miracle that they needed. Jesus was not avoiding them. There was a crowd around Him, but through all of that Jesus called them to Him and asked them what they wanted. They were yelling at Him, "Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David." When Jesus asked them what they wanted, they said they wanted to receive their sight. The Scripture says Jesus had compassion on them and touched their eyes, and immediately their eyes received sight. The best

part is, they followed Him.

Jesus had compassion on the lepers, the shunned members of society. Back then, the lepers had to cry out, "Unclean," because as a society, they were shunned by everyone. Nobody else wanted leprosy, so the people did not want lepers around them.

Mark 1:40-42 says: "And there came a leper to him, beseeching him, and kneeling down to him, and saying unto him, If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth his hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean. And as soon as he had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed." That shows us a quality, not of withdrawing, but of having true compassion and fixing the situation. The leper needed help.

Jesus had compassion on those who suffered the loss of a family member. Luke 7:11-16 reads: "And it came to pass the day after, that he went into a city called Nain; and many of his disciples went with him, and much people. Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her [I would say the town had emptied out and was going with the widow to bury her only son].

"And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not. And he came and touched the bier: and they that bare him stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother. And there came a fear on all: and they glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us; and, That God hath visited his people."

We see that a twofold work took place. First, Jesus, having compassion, raised that dead young man. Second, He showed the rest of the people that He had power and that

He was the Son of God. Jesus had compassion for the bereaved.

Manifesting True Compassion

Child of God, you possess the Holy Spirit of God. You have the ability to get in contact with the One Who can move mountains, Who can perform miracles, and Who can cause things to take place. To truly help somebody, you can do nothing in yourself. It takes the Spirit of God to work in situations. With God all things are possible. When the work of God is accomplished, you are His hands and His feet. You need to use the wisdom that God gives you when helping others.

Showing compassion is not a public relations technique, where you want everybody to know what you are doing to help somebody. Some people do things so that others notice they are helping, and then they can say, "Look what we did." That is not true compassion. When working with those who are in false religion, you should not have sympathy for the system of religion, because God has already condemned false systems of religion. However, you should have compassion for those who are caught up in false religious systems. Remember, but for the grace of God, you could be caught up in falseness. Some people do not understand the Gospel. People try to put Scriptures together and come up with all kinds of philosophies and false doctrines. What do they create? They create utter confusion. The Truth is something to be thankful for.

Sometimes God reminds us of where we were when He picked us up from the mess that our lives were in. This helps us to be more long-suffering toward others. Some people want to put limits on being long-suffering. For example, they compare it with their own lives and think, "God worked with me for a couple of years, and then I got saved." So in their minds, two years might be their limit for long-suffering. That is not necessarily so

with God's long-suffering. Sometimes people make mistakes. How many mistakes have you made? Sometimes people forget the little places where they have stumbled; so when they try to help somebody else, they seem to forget about all the little steps that they had to take to get to where they are now.

Christians have compassion for the sick. Some people have weaker immune systems than others. The handicapped, the blind, and the hearing impaired might need your help. Those individuals may not attend your congregation, but they might live down the street or next door to you. Perhaps you recently met somebody at the grocery store who needs your help. You need to have compassion on others in their times of need.

Do you have compassion on those around you who are bound by sin? At one time, each of us was bound by the devil. It took the stronger than the strong man to break those bonds and set us free. Some people are not as bound as others and may be able to break free fairly quickly. Other people are bound tremendously by the devil, and they need all the help we can give them through prayer, understanding, and working with them to see that they truly get free from the bondage of sin.

We must have compassion on those who are mentally troubled. In our society it seems as though there is more and more of this today. Some people have a difficult time getting through situations, and sometimes doctors have people on a lot of medications. God is there to help, and we know that God can help them, but we must have compassion on those people. Jesus took time for such individuals. I think about the man who was possessed with devils and dwelled among the tombs. When that man came to Jesus, Jesus could have gotten back on the ship and left or He could have said, "I don't want to deal with this man," but He did not do that. He healed that man. What a witness of

His power He left there!

Today there is a great need of understanding where people are coming from. We meet people in all kinds of situations from different walks of life. If you were raised in the church, you probably have not seen the things that some people have seen and experienced. Some people with whom you work or with whom you go to school have terrible lives. The conditions in which they have been raised or in which they live are absolutely terrible, so we need to be understanding of where they have come from.

I found this saying: "True compassion comes from real understanding." Sometimes when you see people and situations, you have been through something similar, so you understand what that person is feeling. God may use that to touch you so that you can have compassion and help that person. Often we compare others with ourselves when we do not understand why they do not seem to get it. May God help us to see the world around us as He sees it.

Possessing Boldness and Compassion

Looking through the eyes of Christ can really bring things into focus. When you look on an individual, you may see someone that you do not want to be around, but God looks on the heart and sees that person as one who needs to be saved just as much as the next person. You might be the tool that God uses to help bring about that person's salvation. As I studied for this message, I thought, "God, help us to be able to have greater compassion on those around us."

The world needs salvation, and brothers and sisters in Christ need encouragement. Sometimes you may see in people's expressions that they are discouraged or that something has happened. What can you do? You can try to encourage them. God knows and understands, but we need to be there for them and

say: "I'm praying for you. Whatever has happened, I'm praying that God will work things out and help you in the situation." Sometimes that is all it takes to encourage someone. Prayer is a mighty, mighty tool. Sometimes to help a brother or a sister, you need to reach your hand out to that person or put your arms around that one and say, "I'm praying for you." That can go a long way toward helping somebody to know that others really care and that he or she is not going through the situation alone.

Regarding the miracle that happened at the gate Beautiful, we read in Acts 3:1-8: "Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour. And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple; Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms.

"And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us. And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them. Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk. And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God."

Peter and John were getting ready to go into the temple. There were several gates to get into the temple, and they could have entered the temple a different way. Peter and John showed compassion toward the man at the gate. This man had been lame from his mother's womb, and undoubtedly they had seen him there many times. Most of the people in Jerusalem had probably seen him at the gate many times, because when he was healed, the

whole town knew about it. Peter and John could have said: "We don't want to go in that gate. Let's go around the other way so we won't be bothered by somebody asking for alms," but they did not do that. Had they done so, this passage would not have been included in the Bible.

Peter and John had received the Holy Ghost, which was what made the difference when they came to the gate. Also, they possessed boldness and the compassion that was embodied in Jesus Christ. I want you to think about that. Wherever Jesus went, He was healing and doing that which is good. Before the Day of Pentecost, the disciples did that as well, but they lacked the Holy Spirit and the guidance they needed. On the Day of Pentecost, they were filled with the Holy Ghost.

As the lame man sat and begged for alms, I am sure that many people passed by that way. Probably most of them ignored him, while some stopped and gave him a little change. As Peter and John were about to walk by, he asked them for alms. No doubt, that plea struck right to the hearts of Peter and John. At that point, the compassion of Christ came out in them. Peter spoke directly to the lame man, and of course, he thought, "I'm going to receive something," but instead a miracle took place.

Having Genuine Love for Others

It is awfully hard to have compassion for someone if you have wrong attitudes in your heart. How can you show the true compassion of Christ for somebody if you have a wrong attitude against that person? You cannot do it. Oh, you might try, but it will not be genuine.

Carrying unforgiveness in your heart will squash true compassion. You need to be careful. Do you have genuine love for the brethren? If you do not have the love of God being shed abroad in your life by the Holy Ghost, you cannot have true compassion. Without the love of God

many things will happen all around you, but you will be as one who has blinders on. Your brother or your sister may be in need, your neighbor may need help, or someone else that you know may be crying out for help, but you cannot see or hear anyone. You need to check yourself. Are you showing the compassion that Christ showed?

First John 3:17 reads, "But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" In other words, if you cannot show true compassion, the love of God does not dwell in you at all. Shunning people, putting them off, or avoiding them is not the character of Christ.

When you show compassion and help others, it can take many different forms. As I mentioned earlier, you can definitely pray for people. Sometimes as saints get older, the enemy works on them and tells them that they cannot do anything for the Lord anymore, but prayer is a big thing. Knowing that your brothers and your sisters are praying for you is like having that big cloud of witnesses right behind you to encourage and strengthen you.

Sometimes help could take the form of financial aid, but if you help somebody financially, you should not broadcast it, or tell others about it. That is not how God wants you to work. If God moves on you to help someone, it is for a reason. You may not see what God is trying to work, but down the road God might reveal how He had a hand in it, how it worked toward that person's salvation, or how it worked toward good to help that person.

Making a Difference in People's Lives

You could show compassion and encourage another person by offering your physical labor. For example, you could change somebody's tire on his or her vehicle, mow

someone's lawn, or go to the grocery store for someone. Perhaps you could babysit a couple's children so they could go out to eat by themselves. How about volunteering to take somebody to an appointment or wherever he or she needs to go?

Helping someone in need can take the form of supplying someone with clothes. Perhaps you have a closet full of clothes, and you could spare some to help someone in need. Sometimes an individual may just need a hug to show that someone cares. Of course, a brother should only hug a brother, and a sister should only hug a sister. There have been times when I have walked up to an individual and have given him a hug and said, "I'm praying for you; I love and appreciate you." That can encourage and uplift an individual. It makes a person feel good and feel that somebody really cares. It could be that others have never really shown that person that they care about him or her.

Jude wrote in verses 20-22 of the Book of Jude: "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And of some have compassion, making a difference."

By having compassion on those who need it, you can make a difference in the lives of those around you. As a Christian, you should want everyone to make it to Heaven. Your ultimate goal should be to see everyone around you saved. You should always keep that in mind no matter what happens in life. You should not want to leave anybody behind.

I trust that the Holy Spirit has made these thoughts clear to you. As you read through the New Testament, you will see the many places where Jesus looked on the multitudes with compassion. I ask you to think about this: you are to be as Christ, which means you must have compassion as well. You cannot do all the things that Jesus did, but you

have the Holy Spirit. God can give you the wisdom to be able to help others, thereby accomplishing exactly what He wants to accomplish. If you shut up your bowels of compassion, as the Scripture says, you will show the world around you that you lack the love of God.

The religious world is full of works. Those in false religion do all kinds of things to make people feel good when they accomplish this or that, but they are trying to build up false systems of religion. Many times people are all about the works that they have done. When it goes on the big scales of balance with God, those good works cannot outweigh all the bad things they have done. Some people may think that is the way God operates, but He does not work that way.

Dear one, you must be born again, and then all these other things that I have talked about will follow. When you are born again, the Holy Spirit dwells within you, and there is a compelling force that goes with compassion when you see a need. The Holy Spirit will compel you to help individuals. Many times some people suppress that because they do not want to do things outside their comfort zones. That is a human trait that we all have to work on, but God is here to help us. He will be with you to guide and protect you, but you have to use the wisdom that God gives you. You cannot do things on your own, because that leads to disaster.

(Compact Disc TR-992E)

**No atheist can injure
the Bible's influence
so thoroughly as
a professed Christian
who disregards it in
his daily life.**

The Time Is Short



Holiness and Christ's Return

The blessed hope is only for those who shun the world and walk with God, but if He has enabled one Enoch, God can enable a thousand.

The divorce between the teaching of consecration and the heralding of Christ's return is a painful and dangerous development. For many people, the Judge standing before the door is no longer the dynamic truth that shook the apostolic church to its foundations, and the reason is obvious. Too many people are assuming that preparation for Christ's Second Coming is solely a matter of past experience and not at all a matter of having an up-to-date walk. They seem to think that no matter how unchristlike a life they live, it will be pure, un-mixed, inevitable joy, an instant, miraculous deliverance so wrapped up in the gift of salvation that covers even the most unconsecrated, unholy person.

Thus, there is and can be, so long as this is believed, no demand for any sanctity beyond salvation,

and the tremendous thunders of the fast-approaching end of time leave myriads of professed Christians unawake. The issue is a grave one, for our Lord's descent from Heaven with a shout to take His bride away is either a comforting opiate for disobedient disciples or else it is one of the most rousing of all truths, but it cannot be both.

Christ's Statement

Jesus said in Luke 12:42-46: "Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath. But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken, The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour

when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers."

The Lord's summary is now as alarming for the unfaithful servant as it is inconceivably joyous for the faithful. Verse 47 goes on to say, "And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself [for the Lord's Second Coming], neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes." The Savior thus established forever that overwhelming joy is not the fact of His coming standing by itself, but that this great event will find you obedient. Entering into the joy of the Lord depends on your multiplying the talents. To change a conditional promise into an unconditional one is a very daring act, because it alters the Word of God and puts into Christ's mouth sentiments He has never expressed and which are not His.

Peter's Statement

The Apostle Peter, to whom the words of Christ in Luke, Chapter 12,

were addressed, enforced the truth of his Lord. In 1 Peter 4:7 he spoke in words that thrill us to the soul: "But the end of all things is at hand; be ye therefore sober [let your thought life be sane, balanced, and Scriptural], and watch unto prayer." You are to be watchful as you immerse yourself in frequent praying and constant gathering for prayer. Peter wrote in 2 Peter 3:11, "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation [living] and godliness."

You ought to live in preparation for those supreme conflicts which both the Lord and His Apostles prophesied would conclude the present dispensation. However, your preparation is your own, and how the Lord finds you is a responsibility that you cannot cast upon Him. We read in 2 Peter 3:14, "Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless." Anyone who imagines that the saved can conform to the conditions that the world is in and yet make Heaven his home is not living in reality.

John's Statement

The Apostle John revealed in 1 John 2:28 that shame may overwhelm some professed Christians in that day when he said, "And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming." The Lord said in Revelation 3:17, "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." It is not a question of what the Lord will say; it is a question of what He has already said. Therefore, John pressed the truth home. Like Samson, shame awaits every victim of Delilah, although once God-empowered.

James' Statement

The Apostle James unveiled an element in the Second Coming, which is a sobering fact. He said in James 5:8-9: "Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door." Here the Second Coming of Christ is presented as a direct threat against sin. The sinner is saved only if he abandons his sin. Those who live in carnal worldliness or doctrinal rebellion and accept the teaching that the Second Coming of Christ will be joyous for all those who profess to be saved will not thank their teachers in that day. There is an element of awe in His Second Coming, for we have the assurance that God has appointed a day in which He will judge the world, and in which the individual must give an account of himself and his stewardship. On the other hand, we must never forget the radiant aspect of His Second Coming. We have to remember the coming of the Bridegroom for the bride, the breaking in of that blissful hope. Titus 2:13 reads, "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."

Paul's Statement

The Apostle Paul summed up exactly the conditional joy that is embodied in Christ. He wrote in 2 Corinthians 5:1-4: "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be clothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life." What this clothing is the

Holy Spirit has made clear in Revelation 19:8, which reads, "And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints."

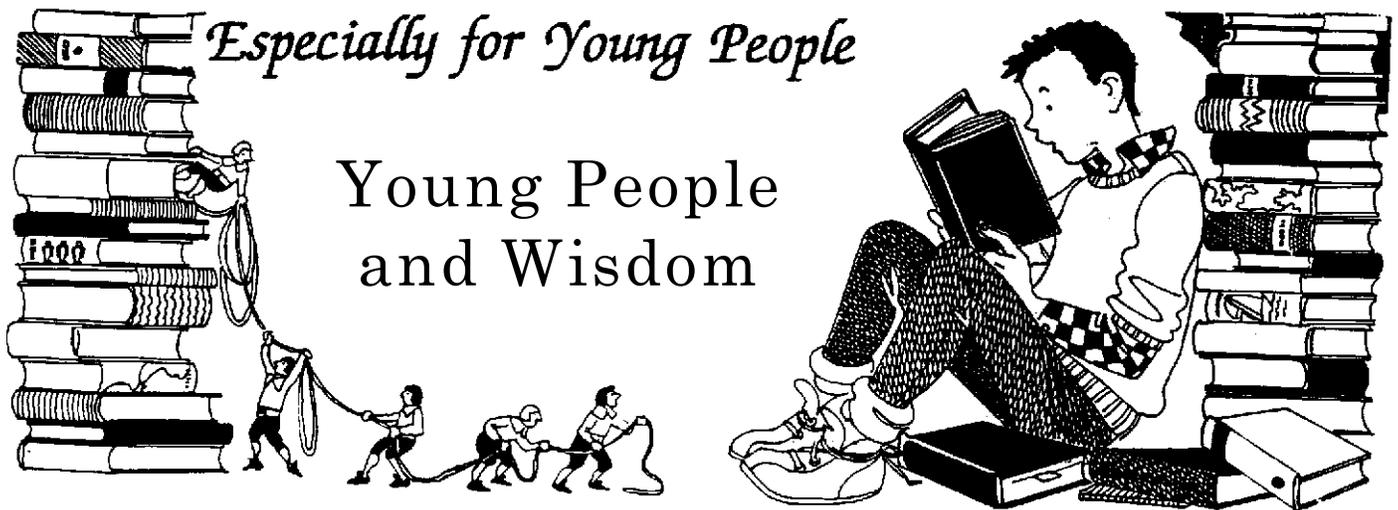
The joy of the Second Coming of Christ, once again, is made contingent upon obedience. In one of the last warnings given in God's Word to the church, Jesus said: "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame" (Revelation 16:15). So now we understand the reason that it is to believers that Paul wrote in Acts 20:31, "Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears."

Jude's Statement

Finally, who shall measure the ecstasy of our possible joy? Jude stated in a doxology, perhaps the most exquisite in the Bible: "Now unto him that is able [once more, the point revealed is only the ability of God, not His arbitrary action, but an ability equal to the wrestling saint's utmost need] to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen" (verses 24-25). This is a statement profoundly differing from current comments. To keep saints in an un stumbling walk is a greater feat than to keep stars in their courses, yet if God has enabled one Enoch, He can enable a thousand.

Being found blameless at the judgment seat of Christ, with nothing but exceeding joy, all are facets of one diamond, and that diamond is holiness. Who can conceive the joy when the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of our Heavenly Father? It will be joy unspeakable and full of glory!

Selected



Wisdom is spoken of in the Book of Proverbs far more than any other Book in the Bible. Solomon, the writer of Proverbs, was inspired of God to give us this wonderful Book, which was written more than twenty-five hundred years ago. Perhaps millions and even billions of people have read it across the centuries, multitudes of whom have been wonderfully and gloriously inspired by its never-failing truths. In fact, God's Truth never dies; it is everlasting.

What is the meaning of the word *wisdom*? Webster, who is probably the best authority on the meanings of words, gives this definition: "Knowledge practically applied to the best ends; natural sagacity; skill in affairs." He gives the meaning of sagacity as follows: "A readiness of apprehension; discriminative intelligence; acute, practical judgment." So we see the word has a great meaning.

To be wise in truth and to put it into practice always brings wonderful results, but to fail because one does not want to practice it or does not want to measure to its requirements means eventual failure, both for this life and for the life beyond.

We find in the Book of Proverbs that much is spoken to young people. Solomon would have them wise as to the right, that they might heed it, and as to the wrong that they might shun it. This applies

likewise to all people. If you would go the right way through life, you must know the way. If you would flee from the wrong way, you must know how to turn from it. You must know God's way if you go heavenward, and you must know the wiles of the devil, his deceitfulness, and his purpose to drag you down into sin and wickedness to damnation, if you are to escape it. Therefore, you must have divine wisdom, and indeed blessed salvation, if you make of life a blessed success and be gloriously successful in reaching Heaven and obtaining everlasting life when you change worlds.

Solomon said in Proverbs 1:5, "A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels." He wrote in Proverbs 1:7-10, 15-16: "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction. My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother: For they shall be an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck. My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not. . . . walk not thou in the way with them; refrain thy foot from their path: For their feet run to evil, and make haste to shed blood."

What great advice to young people! How wise to take heed, but how unwise and tragic to fail to take heed! The youth who takes heed to divine instructions will be a "burn-

ing and a shining light" as he travels life's pathway; but the youth or the person who refuses to take God's way of wisdom and warning will blight his life, wreck himself, and go down in final defeat at the end of his earthly journey, unless he deeply repents and turns to God before it is too late.

Proverbs 3:5-7 states: "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil." Proverbs 4:23 reads, "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life."

Here is another Scripture that every youth should take heed to: "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold" (Proverbs 22:1). Time and time again, Solomon addressed his son, saying, "My son," giving him the best advice and wise instructions. He said in Proverbs 13:1, "A wise son heareth his father's instruction: but a scorner heareth not rebuke."

What a wonderful Book is Proverbs! Oh, young person, you need to read this wonderful Book to be wise, and you need to heed it, along with the entire Holy Bible! Let it help you to be holy in heart.

In this brief article, we can only give you a few instructions from Proverbs and one from the New

Testament: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth [or reproach] not; and it shall be given him" (James 1:5).

Dear young person, you need to live wisely, clean, and holy. Let Christ come into your heart, soul, and life. You can make the world

better by living in it, and Heaven will be fuller, brighter, and sweeter by entering it. You must seek wisdom from above and be content to walk therein. You need to read and reread the wonderful instructions in the Book of Proverbs. The wise man Solomon instructed in Ecclesiastes 12:1, "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." God bless this message to the good of every youth who reads it, and even to the good of all readers.

Selected

Priceless Moments

I heard the story of a soldier who, when he asked for a certain leave of absence from the army, was told to ask for anything but time. His commanding officer had learned that time is our most precious possession, something that but few people in this world ever learn fully to appreciate until it is too late.

Although time is our most priceless possession, yet many times it is used as if it were of the least value. How often do we hear the expression "pastime" or "Just passing the time away" or "Something to pass the time away." Is it not strange that humanity must invent more ways to pass time away than anything else, yet it is the most precious and the most limited of anything entrusted to us? Men use their time and live as though they were going to live a thousand years here on this earth. They hurry themselves into eternity without realizing what they are doing.

Did you ever sit down and count up the time that you will have here on earth, even if you should live your full allotted time? Still you have no assurance of one second in the future. Then take out your watch and listen to it tick and watch the hands go around. Did you ever watch the sun as it moves across the heavens and begins to sink in the western sky? How fast it seems to move, especially if you are a long

way from home or have some task unfinished. Just so of the soul who has put off salvation until life is about spent and is trying to get into the ark of safety before the darkness of eternity comes on them. Young people, especially, are inclined to place but little value on the precious hours of childhood and youth; and thus their time is often spent in frivolity and riotous living, only to become awakened in later years to find themselves morally and spiritually bankrupt, with nearly all of their time spent, and facing an endless eternity, with little or no time in which to prepare. Oh, I beseech you, do not waste your time. God has given it to you for one purpose alone, and that is to prepare for eternity.

The way you use the precious moments of time will largely determine how you will spend the endless years of eternity. If you waste your time while here on earth, when you are facing eternity, that on which you have placed the least value will become the most priceless.

I want you to think about the words of a few who misused their time and were slipping from time into eternity. Voltaire said to his physician: "I will give you half of what I am worth if you will give me six months to live." His physician answered, "I have medicine to

dispense, but I cannot dispense time." Another person said: "If I had the whole world to dispose of, I would give it to live one day." Then I want you to read the cries of Queen Elizabeth. She said, "All of my possessions for a moment of time."

Alas, how valueless is the wealth of this earth when your time is all gone and you are facing eternity. When death moves on the scene and declares that time shall be no more, all the wealth of this old world will not be sufficient to buy back even one moment of the time that you have so carelessly thrown away. When time ends, eternity forever begins.

The Apostle Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 6:2, "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." Christ died for your sins and my sins and rose again." The Prophet Isaiah admonished in Isaiah 55:6-7: "Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." First John 1:7 states, "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

Selected

Genesis 13:1 And Abram went up out of Egypt, he, and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the south.

2 And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold.

3 And he went on his journeys from the south even to Bethel, unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Hai;

4 Unto the place of the altar, which he had made there at the first: and there Abram called on the name of the LORD.

5 And Lot also, which went with Abram, had flocks, and herds, and tents.

6 And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together: for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together.

7 And there was a strife between

the herdmen of Abram's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle: and the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land.

8 And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren.

9 Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left.

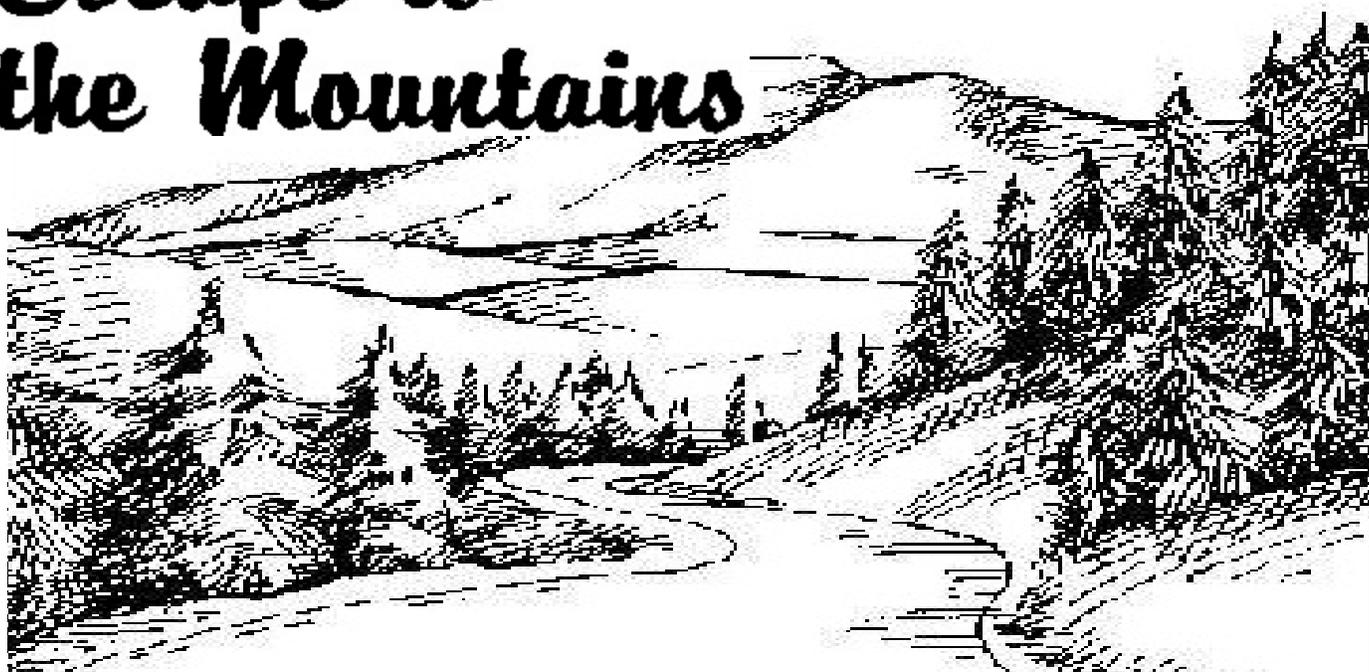
10 And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar.

Genesis 19:15 And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city.

16 And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the LORD being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city.

17 And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed.

Escape to the Mountains



Brother Michael Wilks

The Cost of Ignoring God's Warnings

Many people in the world who do not know much about religion know about the story of Sodom and Gomorrah. It is a monument to what God did regarding utter wickedness. He only has one story

in the Bible like this because of His mercy and compassion. He wants to warn people, and then He wants them to heed the warning. Those people are lost and in hell at this very moment. Who knows what the people were thinking the day God destroyed the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah? It was a day just like

any other day until the fire and brimstone rained down. The people had no idea what was coming. God's will cannot be stopped. Lot and his family were warned: "Get out of this place! Leave it! It is going to be consumed," but they tarried because they did not believe the Word of the Lord.

In the New Testament you can read that Pilate's wife pleaded with him to have nothing to do with Jesus because she had some dreams and was troubled. She told Pilate, "Have thou nothing to do with that just man" (Matthew 27:19). Pilate disregarded her warning, and that is exactly what many people are doing today. The warnings come, yet they seem to go in one ear and out the other. God sends those warnings for a purpose. He is trying to get people to a place where they can see what this great plan of salvation is all about. Some people say they remember a time when God moved on their hearts, but they continue to ignore the warnings. They carry on as they have always done.

The people of Sodom and Gomorrah went about doing evil, but on the other side of the mountain, Abraham was interceding with the Lord. All those souls were unaware of it, just as this world is unaware of the saints interceding for souls right now. You see, this world is unaware of what is coming. These things are very serious, because Judgment Day is coming.

I can remember when I was lost without God. I hated to think about dying because it scared me. The Lord worked on me, but I pushed the thought of dying out of my mind. Why? It is a very unpleasant thought for anyone who is not saved.

Abram was interceding on behalf of the people of Sodom, but God was weighing their actions. He sent visitors down to weigh them. The angels arrived in the evening. Often that is when evil gets started yet today. God is watching, and He is weighing the actions of everyone. All people are being weighed in the balance. It was a strange occurrence when the angels of the Lord smote those men with blindness when they surrounded Lot's house in the city of Sodom. They should have known that was a warning. No doubt, the word spread, yet the people did not take note of it. They

just carried on in their wickedness.

Lot had made the choice to go to the city of Sodom. He was wasting his time dwelling in the midst of wickedness, and then he had to be pulled out. That is exactly what getting out of the will of God will cause you to do. You will waste a lot of time. Down the road, you are going to wish to God that you had not done some of the things that you did. There will be scars that you will take with you for your entire life. If you are living in sin, one day you will look back with regrets. God will forgive you, but you will carry those things with you for the rest of your life, especially if you were raised in a good Christian family.

Some people in the world say, "Well, it is a lot of fun out in the world." I can tell you one thing, those people in the world do not really care about you. You can talk all you want about how great it is out in the world, but people in the world do not care about your soul. All they are concerned about is having a big time, but the big party time does not last forever. Some people do not have any idea what being a child of God is. They go out and partake of the cheap pleasures of life.

If I wanted to, I could go down the street, pull out my wallet, and buy alcohol and cigarettes and have some cheap fun; but cheap pleasure gets you a cheap reward. When you go with God, He does not give you any old thing. He will give you salvation, but it will cost you something to live for God. He is not going to let you go your own way. He will help you along the way. He is a comforter, and He will give you exactly what you stand in need of.

The Plains of Sin

As Lot and his family exited the plains, the city of Sodom carried on. Genesis 19:23-24 states: "The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar. Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the

LORD out of heaven." Undoubtedly the day was beautiful, but Lot and his family were heading out on the plain, and God was getting ready to consume those cities with fire and brimstone. As Lot and his family were walking away, no doubt, the people of the city of Sodom wondered what was going on. They had no clue what was coming.

I was in deep sin in my early twenties, but I remember having a dream that seemed very real, and it was serious. In this dream, I was standing on my aunt's back porch, and I was looking up in the sky. I will never forget it. The sky was blue, and as I was staring up in the sky, all of a sudden, I heard that noise—the sound the Bible speaks of when the Lord returns. When Jesus splits the clouds, there is not going to be a secret rapture. God is not going to come and steal away His church. He is going to come with a great noise (2 Peter 3:10).

In my dream, as I heard that noise, two thoughts popped into my mind immediately, and I felt panicked. My first thought was, "I'm lost." My second thought was that my eternal destiny was sealed forever. I will never forget it. I want to tell you, I came out of that bed quickly because it was so real. After I came out of that bed, I said: "I thank You, God, that I'm still alive. Thank You, God!" When that moment hit me, it got my attention. One day it will get your attention, because it is going to happen. It is a very serious matter.

God is the God of all mountains. The majority of mankind is dwelling on the plains of sin and in false religion. There is not much to say about the plains. Do not waste time living on the plains of sin. There is nothing but flat ground, mile after mile. It is the same old routine, and that is exactly what sin is. Oh, you might think it is exciting and great, but it is not. It is only pleasurable for a season, until the reaping comes along. You might have a big time drinking alcohol, but then you could be sick the next day. When

you are saved and you go to the house of God, you can praise God, get high in the Spirit, and walk out feeling that you have been to the greatest place on earth. You will not go home sick or with a headache from drinking alcohol; you will go home and think about how wonderful the service was. I appreciate God for that.

The Book of Genesis lets you know that the tower of Babel was built on the plains, and they got in trouble. They were trying to find an alternate way to Heaven, and that is exactly what false religion is doing.

Ecclesiastes 1:9-10 reads: "The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun. Is there any thing whereof it may be said, See, this is new? it hath been already of old time, which was before us." There is no new thing under the sun. Man just keeps repeating what he is doing. We have new gadgets and new technologies, but as a whole, mankind is doing the same thing over and over.

A Great Mountain

Land accounts for only 30 percent of the earth's surface, and water is the other 70 percent. Mountains account for only 20 to 25 percent of the earth's land mass, so they are uncommon in many areas. The title of our message is, "Escape to the Mountains," because that is where there is safety, spiritually speaking.

I want you to consider a particular range of mountains called the holy mountains, and that is exactly what they are. In this range the first prominent mountain is Mount Sinai. This was the first great mountain in the plan of God. The people of Israel were in a desert being sustained by God, and God gave Moses the Law on Mount Sinai. There the nation of Israel was born. Moses received the Law, the Ten Commandments, and it was the highest moral order of any of those nations

that were around, and that is what the Church of God is. We have the highest moral order of anything around because we have the Holy Spirit. We have the commandments of God. Right in the midst of this mountain, a stone was cut out without hands. Right in the midst of this mountain, God was working a work.

Speaking of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar saw in a dream, we read in Daniel 2:35, "Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth."

Verse 44 reads, "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever."

Revelation, Chapter 21, gives us a picture of this mountain that took up the whole earth, and it is the great Church of God; it is universal. Verses 2-3 read: "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God." What a promise! That is exactly what the Church of God is. It is God dwelling with His people when they assemble. There is nothing else like it.

I am so thankful for the truths proclaimed across the pulpits of the Church of God. Does your doctrine line up with the Word of God? Many people twist the Word. The Church of God is built on the Bible, not men's ideas. The Church of God is like a mountain. A mountain

brings confidence. I have been to the state of Washington and have seen Mount Rainier, and it is remarkable. It rises high above the surrounding area. It is so enormous, and no matter where you are standing, you can see that mountain. It is looming, and I just stared at it in awe. That is exactly what the Church of God is. People look at the lives of God's people and wonder how they can live holy lives.

Church, we have a great head, and His name is Jesus Christ. He is the head of the church, and He places the members in the church exactly where He wants them. There is no arguing with Him. You can make your request known to God, but whether or not He grants it is up to Him. When He says, "This is where you are," you cannot fight against that, because you would lose His presence. God requires perfect obedience every time.

The High and Holy Place

Matthew 26:64 reads, "Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." That is glorious! High mountains are rocky. What is the church based on? She is based on the Rock, Jesus Christ. We have a wonderful foundation, and His name is Jesus Christ. Revelation 1:7 says, "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him."

You need help to survive on a mountaintop. I thought of Mount Everest. You cannot just go hiking up that mountain. First of all, the air is very thin and very cold, so you would need special equipment. Likewise, you cannot survive spiritually in the world without God. The Church of God cannot survive without God's presence and His Word. You need Him every hour of every day. You cannot make it on your own. You need the Spirit and the Word to nourish, help, and guide you.

People are making so many huge decisions without God in their lives. It is comforting to be able to ask the Lord, "What would You have me to do?" God will do what He wants to, and He is looking out for your best interest. If you love the Lord and want to go His way, He will do what He says, and nothing can stop Him. God can move mountains. He is looking out for you. Paul said in Romans 8:31b, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" That is a promise.

False religion is out there on the plains. Joel 2:1 reads, "Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the LORD cometh, for it is nigh at hand." The great mountain is not only to be seen but also to be heard. The Church of God has a message, and it is this: holiness unto the Lord. You should not just talk about it, but you are to live it every day, not merely on Sunday. Holiness has to be in your heart. You have to be holy before God each and every day.

Isaiah 57:13-15 states: "When thou criest, let thy companies deliver thee; but the wind shall carry them all away; vanity shall take them: but he that putteth his trust in me shall possess the land, and shall inherit my holy mountain; And shall say, Cast ye up, cast ye up, prepare the way, take up the stumblingblock out of the way of my people. For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones."

When somebody is living in sin, sin has that person in bondage. I am so thankful that I am no longer in bondage. I can remember sitting through altar calls wanting to do the will of God, but I was bound. My heart desired to be free, but the devil would put thoughts in my head to cause me to hold back every

time. Oh, how thankful I am to be on this side of it! I would much rather be on this side fighting the enemy than to be on the other side, bound by sin and the habits of life. Being bound by sin is a miserable life. In my heart I wanted to do right, but I was stuck in bondage. I watched Christian people have a good time in the Lord. I knew people who lived right, and I knew that was where I wanted to be. The Church of God is where you can grow and be nurtured in the Lord.

If you look at pictures of Mount Everest, you will see that it is an enormous mountain. It is approximately twenty-nine thousand feet to the peak, and it is intimidating. Joel 3:17 reads, "So shall ye know that I am the LORD your God dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain: then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her any more."

The government cannot do anything for your spirit. They cannot do anything for you when you are having a bad day on the job and it feels like everything is going against you. However, you can call on God in any situation and say, "Lord, I really need Your help today," and He will be right there. If you keep putting Him off, you can get into a situation where you might have a mental breakdown. You cannot say with certainty, "I'm a strong person, and I can withstand anything." God knows about your tough situations in life. You can trust Him, and that makes a difference.

In Exodus, Chapter 19, you can read that God set bounds for the people about Mount Sinai. They were not allowed to go up to the mountain or touch it, otherwise they would "be stoned, or shot through" (verse 13). No strangers can come on this holy mountain, Mount Zion. A person must live a holy life.

The Way to God's Holy Mountain

You cannot get past God's law. Ezekiel 43:12 reads, "This is the law

of the house; Upon the top of the mountain the whole limit thereof round about shall be most holy. Behold, this is the law of the house." That is a command. The Scripture does not say it *should* be holy; it says it "shall be most holy," and that is exactly what the Church of God is.

Zion has a culture, and it is holiness and modesty. So many things about the Church of God make it unique. It has a culture of its own, and I love it because it set me free. It will set free anyone who truly wants to be saved. When the Spirit of God gets into your heart and begins to work with you, He will show you these things. This is a know-so salvation. We each must have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. He knows you, and He will come right down and talk with you. God will help you, and He will open His Word up before you. I do not know of any greater thrill than having God reveal Truth to you. There is no thrill like it, but you have to get in the Word and dig for it.

God will never lead you into confusion. There is so much confusion across this land, and it is all under the guise of religion. God is not confused. Some people say: "Well, it's just one little thing. Does it really matter?" We have to live every part of the message; that is what brings the power and the victory. The problem is, some preachers are preaching on the plains, and what the pastor preaches is exactly where the people are going to live. If you have carnal people preaching a carnal message, that is the way the people will live. The Church of God has the message of holiness.

Down in Babylon the people have had to hang their harps on the willow. We want to keep those things that bring life and understanding to us. Revelation 14:8 says, "Babylon is fallen," and so are its pulpits. People need to stand for what is right. If someone has the Spirit of God, he or she is not going to back away from the Word of God. Many people take no thought of

tomorrow, and that is the reason they live as they do. They seem to think they are going to live forever.

The only door to the church is Christ. There is no other way. He is the way to this mountain. People need to quit meddling in cheap pleasures and get on the path that leads to Mount Zion. Saint of God, you can always look to God to help you. If you are struggling, you need to move up this mountain. When God sees that you have the desire to do what is right, He will send help to you. He is going to give you exactly what you stand in need of. He is your help.

A high mountain is clean and pure. There is something about the air up there. Mount Mitchell, which

has an elevation of 6,684 feet, has the highest peak of the Appalachian Mountains. It is an amazing view when you are standing on top of that mountain, and it is the same way with the Church of God. Oh, if people could only see how wonderful it is to be in the Church of God and understand the Truths of what she stands for! We have the love of God in our hearts, and we want to do everything we can to please Him. This is the reason that we live the way we do.

As you make your way up this mountain, God wants you to reach your potential. People are watching the lives of those who claim to be Christians, and they want to see something different. That is the

reason the devil fights us so hard. We want people to hear the great Gospel of Jesus Christ. We do not know where they are in life, but God does.

Jesus said in Matthew 24:16, "Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains." That was a great warning. Those who heeded that message survived, but those who did not came under the most adverse conditions that have ever been. Terrible things happened there. The power of Rome was unleashed on them because they did not take heed to what Jesus had to say.

(Compact Disc TR-994E)

If your religion leaves your life unchanged, you'd better trade your religion for salvation.

Prayer Changes Things

The following is a true story of a man who had pastored in the same church for more than thirty years. When the roads were impassable, he walked over hill and dell to pray for the sick. At last the time came when he was no longer physically able, because of age, to walk miles to visit homes that were located off the main roads, across mountains, or back on the muddy flats.

Early one winter, he heard of an isolated, elderly saint who was afflicted with cancer. He considered walking to the old gentleman's home, but his good wife advised him of the distance involved and mentioned that he was no longer young. As the winter weeks passed by, he fretted more and more because he was unable to visit the sick man.

One morning after a hard freeze, a brother informed him that because of the freeze, his vehicle could reach the home of the aged man. While the pastor sat at the bedside of the aged patient, the following conversation took place. The sick man said in a weak voice: "Pastor, I want you to ask God to take me home. I am old and tired. I have suffered so much that I can no longer bear the pain."

The pastor replied, "Do you have confidence in my

prayers to believe God will grant me what I ask for?"

The reply was, "Yes, I have for so many years seen things happen when you pray."

Again, in great love and compassion, the old preacher asked, "Do you actually believe that God will take your spirit when I pray?"

The answer was, "Yes."

"Then if you have this confidence in my prayers," said the pastor, "why not ask God to stop the pain and smite this cancer?" So he prayed, and with vehemence commanded the cancer to let go. The patient dropped off to sleep, and the pastor returned to his home. The winter passed, the summer came, and there was no word from the backwoods.

At a camp meeting, the old pastor walked slowly through the gates. The first to greet him was the cancer patient—the man who a few months before wanted to die. God had done just what the pastor had asked him to do. The cancer ceased to cause pain, withered up, and dropped out. This is an example of how prayer changes things!

Selected

Romans 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Is Your All on the Altar?



Brother Larry Dishman

The Secret of Holy Living

Much wonderful truth shines forth from these two verses in our Scripture text. In Romans, Chapters 9 and 11, we find that Paul focused on salvation and the Jew's religion. He wanted to show them that God was not neglecting them, but that they could be saved by calling upon the name of the Lord no matter who they were, whether they were Jews or Gentiles.

In the Book of Romans the Apostle Paul spent a considerable amount of time explaining how to be saved, what a person is saved from, and what salvation can do for one. I thank God for what salvation can do for an individual. It definitely makes a person a new creature, so that "old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17). In the last section of the Book of Romans, Paul's focus shifted to some very

practical matters. I would like to discuss many of these aspects of everyday living. I am thankful to be a Christian. I am thankful that I know I have a home in Heaven, and I am glad that one day, by the grace of God, I am going there. However, in this present time, I am just as you are. I am a pilgrim and a stranger living on foreign soil. I have not made it to Heaven yet, and you have not made it to Heaven yet either. I need practical help in my

day-by-day walk with God. I believe if you will be honest, you also need help in your walk with God.

In our Scripture text the Apostle Paul gave insight into an area of our walk with God that we must not overlook. These two verses reveal the secret of holy living. Paul explained what God expects of His people and tells how to achieve His goals in our lives. He explained that holy living revolves around your surrender to three powerful concerns. I want you to see what they are and what they demand. Notice the wording in verse 1. Paul said that the yielding of your body to the Lord is your reasonable service. The word *reasonable* comes from the same word as the word *logic*. Yielding your body to the Lord is both logical and reasonable.

The word *service* comes from a word that means to perform sacred service. It has reference to the function that the Levites performed in the tabernacle and in the temple. It is connected to the idea of worship; therefore, it means yielding your body to the Lord is logical service or worship before the Lord. In other words, when you have your all on the altar, or when you are totally yielded to Him, it is the highest form of worship that you can render. Nothing says "I love You" to the Lord like a consecrated, dedicated, holy life. You may tell your husband that you love him or your wife that you love her, but if you treat your spouse like a dog, he or she is not going to believe it. You may say, "I love God more than anything," but if you are not consecrated and dedicated and living a holy life, if your all is not on the altar, then what you say does not mean much to God.

The Call to Holiness

We are living in unholy times. The standards of morality in the world are so low that our civilization is in danger. The spiritual standards of many churches are so low that they no longer challenge the world as in the days when churches

were faithful to the Word of God. The standards of some professing Christians have been so lowered that it is difficult to distinguish between professing Christians and those who are out-and-out sinners. This adds to the confusion in our world.

The God of the Bible is a holy God, and holiness is the all-essential attribute of God's character. Holiness is His basic nature. Therefore, He yearns to produce holy people with whom He can commune and have fellowship. God's Word teaches that men are saved so that they might be sanctified to Him and so that they might be separate from the world and be a separate people to God. Christians could not be Christians and God could not be God without holiness. Heaven is still a holy place, and it is prepared for a holy people. Sin can never enter there. It will stop you at the door, and it will bar you out forevermore. Sin cannot enter there.

Holy living is not an afterthought, but it is a part of God's original plan of salvation. The call to holiness is not man's call or a pastor's call, but it is God's call. Therefore, it is a sacred and serious call. God is the One who calls men and women to holiness. Do you walk holy and righteously before God? Is your heart set on obeying God? Are you hungry for God and walking according to all the light that you have been given? You are called to present your body a living sacrifice. God is calling you to present all that you have and ever will have to His glory, His power, and His honor.

As a Christian, you are set apart for His use. The Apostle Paul said, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice." This means that you are no longer holding anything back from God, but you have placed your all on the altar for God's disposal. You must be totally surrendered to God. Many people want to be saved and want to go to Heaven, but they are not willing to lay everything on the altar.

They are guilty of holding back areas of their lives that are precious to them, but God wants it all. God wants everything to be laid on the altar.

The word *present* suggests a once-and-for-all action. You should not present your body to God and then take it back for your own use again. Once you have given it to Him, it ought to be His forever. As you grow and mature, God will show you more things that you need to put on the altar. You cannot give all to God one week and then take those things back the next week. You need to keep them yielded to God.

Being a Living Sacrifice

The Apostle Paul said, ". . . by the mercies of God . . ." in verse 1 of our Scripture text. He had been talking about the fact that the redeemed are only redeemed by the grace and the mercies of God. You may ask, "Why does God think that He should control every aspect of my life?" The reason is that since He bought you at Calvary, you belong to Him. If you are a Christian, you are not your own; you have been bought with a price. You are to glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

As a Christian, you have no rights. You are to be subjected to God's commands, regardless of what they are. May you never forget, friend, when God saved you, you were on your way to hell. Someone may say: "I was not that bad. I was a good, moral person." You were still on your way to hell when God saved you. Jesus loved you, and He died for you. God convicted you and gave you faith to believe that you could be saved by His grace. When you repented, He made you a new creature. In the light of that, you owe God everything. God does not owe you anything, but you are indebted to Him.

The Apostle Paul emphasized in 1 Corinthians 15:10, "But by the grace of God I am what I am." You

did not change yourself. You are where you are today because of the grace of God; therefore, God has the right to issue any command that He wishes. You do not have the right to say anything but "Yes, Lord, here am I; send me." You ought to say this 100 percent of the time, but you cannot do that until your all is on the altar.

Your body is to be presented as a living sacrifice. To some, that may sound dreadfully painful, because a sacrifice in Bible times was an animal that belonged to the person who was offering it, and that animal was put to death. Its blood was shed, and its flesh was burned on the altar. Now that does not sound like something that my flesh wants to go through. The difference between what the Lord is calling you to do and what He called those people to do in the Old Testament is this: their animal sacrifices were to die, but your living sacrifice is to live. God is no longer looking for dead sacrifices; He is looking for living sacrifices.

Someone may say, "I have read *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*, and I do not think that I would be willing to die for the Lord like some of those people did." Right now He is not asking you to die for Him; He is asking you to live for Him by presenting your body a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to Him, which is your reasonable service. Do not be conformed to the world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what is that good, acceptable, and perfect will of God.

God is commanding you to put your all on the altar of sacrifice. At the same time, your living sacrifice must continue to function in the world around you. First, being a living sacrifice means that you are to be on the altar wherever you are, regardless of your geographical location. You need to remember that your body belongs to God. There is never an instance in life where you are out of His view or free to do as you please. You are not your own;

you are His. Second, being a living sacrifice means that you constantly and continuously sacrifice. This is not something that you do from time to time, but you must offer up your body to the Lord and never ask for it back.

Third, being a living sacrifice means that the body sacrifices its own ideas and desires for the will of God. Being a living sacrifice requires that the body does not live for the world, the flesh, or the devil. Everything the body does is held in the guidelines of the Word of God; that is what a living sacrifice is. The body does what it does for the glory and the honor of God.

Fourth, being a living sacrifice means that the body is devoted to the task of serving God. This means that you are to lay down your ambitions and your desires and commit yourself to doing only that which God bids you to do. You are to be His vessel through which He can work in this lost and dying world. The sacrificing of your body is not something that you do only in church but in every action and every activity to glorify and honor God. The body is the temple of God. God must be in absolute control of the will, the emotions, the passions, the deeds, and the thoughts. All your rights are released and the body is delivered to God to do as He pleases.

Paul tells how the body is to be sacrificed, and he gives two conditions that must be met. To be holy is to be consecrated, or set apart. It has reference to that which inspires righteous living in the sight of the observer. Imagine how all-inspiring it would have been to have stood with Elijah on Mount Carmel when God sent the fire of Heaven down on the altar. I want you to think about what it must have been like to witness that. Imagine what it would have been like to stand beside Moses as God conversed with him from the burning bush.

Can you imagine how it would have felt to have been with Solomon at the time of the dedication of the

temple when the fire of God fell? These were holy times that inspired all the people around them. There was not a doubt in people's minds that God was in these events. It takes the God of Heaven to do such things. When a life is totally sold out with all on the altar, separated and sacrificed to God the Father, it will be all-inspiring. It will demonstrate the power of God as nothing else can.

I am convinced that God could do more in a church with one person properly sacrificed than He could with a thousand who are half-heartedly serving Him. The word *acceptable* means it is well pleasing; it satisfies God. He is pleased when you put your all on the altar. God is pleased when your life is sacrificed on the altar for His service and for His glory. It honors Him as nothing else can. It proves His power and shows His glory. It tells a lost world that God can make a difference in the life that He touches by His power. The truth of the matter is, you are either pleasing God or hurting Him. Your body must be placed on His altar without reservation and without hesitation.

I want you to notice that in our Scripture text Paul was talking to brethren in this command to sacrifice. This consecration is not for just a select few saints. It is for every child of God. Not one saved person has the right to deny God the pleasure of his or her body sacrificed on the altar.

The Danger of Conforming to the World

Paul moved on from dealing with the body to dealing with the mind, which is the root of all problems. When the mind is thinking as it should, the body will be obedient. In the matter of conquering the mind, two steps must be taken. First, you must not be conformed to the world. What does that mean? To conform is to comply to another pattern, to do what others do, to act as they act, to wear what they wear,

and to accept what they accept. A conformist is a person who conforms to the practices and standards of a group or a church. Are you a conformist when it comes to the Bible standard?

Today there is tremendous pressure to conform to the standards of other people. The pressure to conform is often strongest during adolescence because sometimes young people have low esteem and want desperately to be accepted, especially among certain friends. They want desperately to be esteemed by others, so they conform to be accepted. Advertisers often complicate this problem by trying to market and sell their products. They try to get people to use their products. However, there is a danger in conformity. It can easily lead you to do things that you know are wrong.

Many times young people are tempted to smoke marijuana, drink alcohol, or take drugs. A man who professes to be a Christian at a business luncheon where drinks are served may be pressured or ridiculed to try to get him to conform. Young people at school will ridicule others to try to get them to conform. Once a person gives in, the next time conformity will be easier.

There can be conformity to be like Babylon. You can be pressured to be like a church down the road because they have larger crowds. You should not go that route. Conformity to the things of the world can separate you from God. Yielding to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life will destroy your soul. Perhaps now you can understand why Paul said not to be conformed to the world.

There is a danger in conforming to the patterns of others by acting the way they act and walking the way they walk and going to the places where they go. A conformist could allow another to lead him into harm's way. You have a choice, either to be led by those who are destroying the body, mind, and soul or to be like Jesus. You should allow

yourself to be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

Bringing the Flesh Under Control

First John 2:15 says, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." What is the world? It is all that opposes the Lord Jesus, all that is not of the Heavenly Father. Many things in this world can alienate or separate you from God. The world is whatever causes you to lose spiritual power. It is the sum total of all that is opposed to God and that makes obedience to Christ difficult. What is in your life or what are you playing around with that makes obedience to Jesus Christ difficult?

God wants His children to be peculiar people. Exodus 11:7 states, "But against any of the children of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue, against man or beast: that ye may know how that the LORD doth put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel." There is still a difference between the saints and the sinners. Often there is little difference between those who profess to be Christians and the world. If your love for God is waxing cold, you may find the pull of the world too strong for you to resist.

God has commanded you not to be conformed to the world. That means you should not be fashioned or molded as the world is. In other words, you are not to allow the world to squeeze you into its mold. You should not allow the world to cause you to become as it is. The world and those who are controlled by its influences are vastly different from what God intended His people to be. This is made clear in the list of the works of the flesh in Galatians 5:19-21. You must avoid being squeezed into the world's mold. As a Christian, you must be different, and you must remain different.

Paul said that you are to be transformed by the renewing of your mind. The word *transform* can be used to describe the change a

caterpillar goes through to become a butterfly. Did you know that a caterpillar and a butterfly are the same creature? When a caterpillar spins itself a cocoon, it later emerges radically transformed. The part of the insect that resides on the inside is changed and manifested on the outside.

God wants to affect a change in each of His children. God moved into your heart when He saved you. He transformed your spirit and changed you into a child of God. Now He wants to transform your mind. Why? Friend, He wants the flesh to be changed. You must remember that the flesh will do what the mind tells it to do. It is only when the mind is changed and brought under the power of God that the flesh will be brought under control. How is that accomplished? You must surrender your will to God by filling your mind with the Word of God, by ordering your life after the teachings and the commandments of God, by cutting yourself off from the influences of the world, and by allowing the Spirit of God to control your mind.

Developing the Mind of Christ

Basically, there are three types of people, but first, I want to say that if you do not profess to be saved, I want to encourage you to let this be the time that you get right with God. These three types of people are distinguished by the way their minds operate. First of all, there is the sensual person. This kind of person is ruled by the physical world around him. He lives by his senses. Everything comes down to how he feels, what he sees, how he is affected, what he wants to do, and what he wants to hear. He is living far below his potential.

The second type of person is one who is ruled by his intellect, his will, and his emotions. This person is harder to spot than the sensual person. There is a very fine line between this person and the truly spiritual person. To be intellectual, to be

emotional, and to possess a strong will is not necessarily spiritual. The intellectual person may know the Bible forward and backward, and that person could be a walking Bible or a walking concordance, so to speak; however, that does not mean the person is spiritual.

It is good if you can memorize the Bible, but knowing the letter of the Word is far different from living the Spirit of the Word. Second Corinthians 3:6 says that "the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." The emotional person may shout and cry in the services and praise the Lord, but these things are not always signs of a spiritual person.

What about your will? When a person gets saved, he may decide to stop smoking. I believe every person ought to stop smoking when he gets saved. He ought to lay the tobacco down, not just taper off. That is the best way. If you are having a struggle with tobacco, you ought to ask the saints to pray for you and throw the tobacco down and walk away from it. That is a good thing to do, but it is not always necessarily a spiritual victory. It could be the exercise of a strong will.

The third type of person is the spiritual person. This kind of individual is very rare. This person is under the control of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit controls his thinking, his actions, and his speech; He is the One who rules his life. This person has given total control to the Lord. He has no life but the life which God gives him. This is God's will for every believer. We read in Ephesians 5:18, "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit." Friend, you need to empty yourself of all that is unworthy and allow the Holy Spirit to fill you through and through.

Someone may say, "I don't know how to tell the difference." The sensual person is not hard to spot. He stands out because he is selfish and carnal in the way he lives. However, the line between the one who is ruled by his intellect, his will, and his emotions and the spiritual per-

son is a fine line. There is one indicator that reveals the difference, and it is the Word of God. Hebrews 4:12 reads, "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." The Word of God is a discerner of a person's thoughts and motives.

The word *discerner* comes from the same word as the word *critic*. The Word of God can teach you the difference between that which is of the flesh and that which is of God. The Word of God is the only way to tell whether you are pleasing the Lord or living for yourself. Are you really living for the Lord or living for yourself?

Paul said the mind must be renewed. The only way this is possible is to transform the mind by the Word of God. Just as the body of a caterpillar hides the butterfly within, the flesh hides the glorious new man living in each redeemed person. The mind must be brought under the control of the Lord so the flesh can be subdued and the new man, who is made in the image of God, can be set free.

What the Lord is attempting to do in your life is to get you to think as He thinks. That is what a renewed mind does. It revolves around the will of God. The secret of holy living revolves around worshiping God through the sacrifice of your body and by developing the mind of Christ. Paul lets you know that accomplishing these two things will enable you to carry out God's will for your life. You honor God as you yield your body and your mind to Him. His will becomes more and more clear, and He becomes more and more important to you.

The Key to Victory

Regardless of what the Lord may ask you to do, in the end you will find that it is good. The devil will tell you that the Lord's ideas

will bring hurt and problems. However, God will never ask you to do anything that is not for your eternal good. Romans 8:28 states, "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."

Holy living is precious, and it pleases God. It is pleasant in His sight when His will is performed in you. It is something that the Christian is willing to do. As you move through life, God is maturing you and causing you to grow. As you grow, He demands that your life be conformed to the image of His Son. This is a good change, and it is His perfect will. One could not add to God's plan to improve it. God has a perfect plan, and the wisest man in the world could not add to or change God's plan to make it one iota better.

When God reveals His will to you, you need to realize that God sees the end from the beginning. He knows the path that you take, and He knows the obstacles in the valley that you are going to pass through. God already knows the path that each of us is going to take.

Dear one, God has already made the provisions that you need along the way. He knows what you are going to stand in need of, and He already has it waiting for you. You may not need much grace today, but you are going to need it tomorrow. You can be in no better place than in the perfect will of God.

By yielding your body and your mind to God, you will live out God's will before a world that is looking on. When people in the world see you living a life that is absolutely spiritual, they will know that you have been transformed by the power of the Gospel of grace. As a result, the Lord will bless you and use your life. God will be honored, and you will be an all-inspiring weapon in His hand. You will be positive proof to a dying world that God can take the worst and make the best out of it. When God does this for an individual's life, it is only then that the

person can be the light that God asks him to be. He can be the salt of the earth that God has asked him to be.

The secret of holy living comes down to giving God control of your mind, your body, and your will. Does that describe the life that you are living? Is God in absolute control of all that you have and all that you are? Is your mind being renewed by the transforming power of the Word of God so that the new man on the inside is permitted to live on the outside? Have you discovered the will of God for your life? Is there a need in your life? I want to live holy. What about you? Will you surrender to Him? It is time to get serious about living for God. Will you allow the Lord to transform you?

The key to victory is not in holding out your hand and saying, "God, give me, give me, give me." The key to victory is in surrendering everything to Him, saying, "Lord, I am Yours." The issue is not what you can get from God, but what you can give God. What are you willing to give Him?

I fear that many have become satisfied with a nominal Christian experience. They become content by going to church. In this present day, surrender and consecration is too shallow. Consecration to God and self-indulgence cannot live together. To give ninety-nine parts and withhold the one undoes the whole transaction. The best way to tell God that you love Him is not to say it merely with your lips. If you really want God to know that you love Him, the best way you can tell Him is to put your all on the altar. You must consecrate and dedicate your life completely to Him.

A song entitled "Is Your All on the Altar?" by Elisha Hoffman reads:

*You have longed for sweet peace,
And for faith to increase,
And have earnestly, fervently prayed;
But you cannot have rest,
Or be perfectly blest
Until all on the altar is laid.*

*Would you walk with the Lord,
In the light of His word,
And have peace and contentment*

*always?
You must do His sweet will,
To be free from all ill,
On the altar your all you must lay.*

*Oh, we never can know
What the Lord will bestow
Of the blessings for which we have
prayed,
Till our body and soul
He doth fully control,
And our all on the altar is laid.*

*Who can tell all the love
He will send from above,
And how happy our hearts will be
made;
Of the fellowship sweet
We shall share at His feet,
When our all on the altar is laid.*

*Is your all on the altar of sacrifice laid?
Your heart does the Spirit control?
You can only be blest,
And have peace and sweet rest,
As you yield Him your body and soul.*

(Compact Disc TR-944E)

Meeting Announcements

Summersville, WV April 29-May 5

Revival: The Church of God, 74 Armstrong Road, Summersville, WV 26651
Evangelist: Brother Leamon Whitehead, Minerva, Ohio
Service times: Mon.-Fri. 7:00 p.m.; Sat. 6:00 p.m. & Sun. 10:30 a.m. & 6:00 p.m.
For further information contact: Pastor Earl R. Borders. Telephone: 304-872-4047
Visit our website at: www.ChurchofGodSummersvilleWV.com

Newton, KS May 13-19

Revival: The Church of God, 400 N. Meridian, Newton, KS 67114
Evangelist: Brother David Stegmeier, Canby Oregon
Service times: Mon.-Sat. 7:00 p.m.; Sun. School 9:45 a.m. Sun. Worship 10:45 a.m. & 7:00 p.m.
For further information contact: Pastor Sandy Killfoil. Telephone: 316-842-5127

Kensett, AR May 24-26

Memorial Day Fellowship Meeting: Kensett Church of God, 409 SE 2nd St., Kensett, AR 72082.
Service times: Fri. 7:00 p.m.; Sat. Dinner will be served at 3:00 p.m. & service will be at 7:00 p.m.
Sun. School 10:00-11:00 a.m.; Sun. Worship 11:30 a.m. & 6:00 p.m.
Dinner will be served after the Sunday morning service.
For further information contact: Pastor Calvin L. Foster
Telephone: (Church) 501-742-3006 or 501-742-3961



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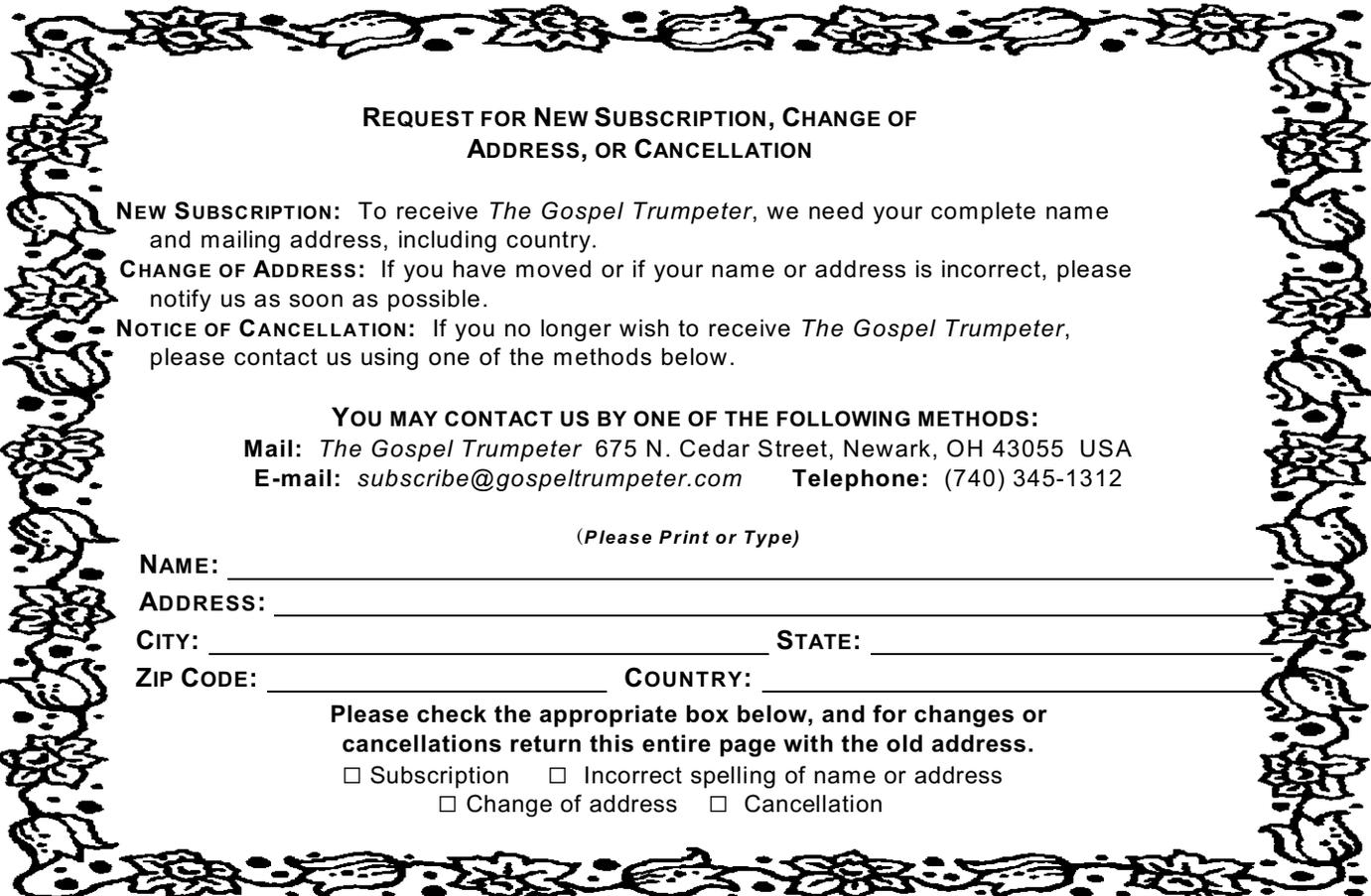
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