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SOUNDING FORTH THE SEVENTH AND LAST TRUMPET

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Vol. 46 May 2016 No. 5



Church of God Tabernacle in Newark, Ohio

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

***Psalm 122:1***

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

# Guest Editorial

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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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"For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another."

Romans 12:4-5

"But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him."

1 Corinthians 12:18

### EVERYONE HAS A PLACE

In the beginning God created a perfect man. David said in Psalm 139:14, "I am fearfully and wonderfully made, marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well." The human body is beautifully made up of many parts and members compiled together to make it a complete unit. Not all the members are the same; they are different with each one operating in a separate manner. Some members are visibly seen, such as the head, the face, the eyes, and the hands, and others are not, yet they are the same body. Then there are many organs in the body that are unseen, such as the lungs, the heart, and the liver. The seen and the unseen are designed to perform their own special work in the body. Each member is vitally important as they work together in harmony with one another, making the body one complete unit.

The individual members of the body do not operate independently of one another. Should one member of the body suffer injury, the entire body suffers the pain and works to help relieve the hurt. Not one part is ever considered to be unnecessary, unwanted, or unneeded. If any member fails to function properly or becomes missing, the body does not work to its fullest capacity. God wonderfully designed the physical body of man.

God has miraculously constructed His spiritual body in the same manner. This spiritual body that God

has made is known as the body of Christ, the Church of God. It is divinely made up of men and women who have repented, confessed, and forsaken all known sin. As a saved member, God perfectly fits and places each member in the body as it pleases Him. Some are visible and others are not as visible. However, each member of Christ's spiritual body is extremely important. No member is considered to be useless or unprofitable. Each member works together in unity and harmony so the lost world can visibly see the living body of Christ.

Paul informed us that the ear could not say, "Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body" (1 Corinthians 12:16). We each have an important place and a work in the body to do for the Lord. Let us not allow Satan or self to hinder anyone from doing his or her part.

Some feel that because they cannot preach the Gospel, teach a Sunday school class, sing, or fill some outstanding position, they are of little value to God or His kingdom. This is certainly not true in any way. God's church is not made up of only preachers, teachers, and singers. The body is made of many members with a place and a work for each one to do. Some are called to greater positions than others, but each one has a place. It is not how great the job one does for the Lord that counts the most, but it is how faithful one is to do the task that

[continued on page 26]

*1 Corinthians 6:19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you,*

*which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?*

*20 For ye are bought with a*

*price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.*

# **The Cardinal Teachings of the Church**

## **Adornment and Worldliness**



*Brother Roger L. Decker*

### **Pure Religion**

In our Scripture reading, Paul said we are to glorify God in two things, and those are the body and the spirit. As individuals, we are made up of spirit, or soul, and body. The Bible lets us know in Ecclesiastes 12:6-7: "Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern. Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it."

These verses of Scripture let us

know beyond a shadow of doubt what transpires when we pass from this life. A separation takes place between the soul and the body. Paul said we are to glorify God in both body and spirit. Today there is a move to try to present everything as a conscience matter, but what if the conscience is not pure and has become defiled by yielding to sin? What your conscience accepts as a standard depends on the condition of your soul. There is a Bible standard that God has set to help guide us in our walk with Jesus while here on this earth.

I want to talk to you about the

cardinal teachings of adornment and worldliness. Here is where the differences are between false religion and true religion. God has given us a standard, church, for both the internal man and the external man. The inner man has to measure to the standard of God's Word first.

Jesus, when speaking to the Pharisees, said in Luke 11:39-42: "Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness. Ye fools, did not he that made that which is without make that which is within also? But rather give alms of such

things as ye have; and, behold, all things are clean unto you. But woe unto you, Pharisees! For ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone."

Jeremiah 4:6 reads, "Set up the standard toward Zion: retire, stay not: for I will bring evil from the north, and a great destruction." James 1:27 says, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." How can we possibly keep ourselves unspotted from the world? You cannot unless you have the Holy Spirit and you are taught the Bible standard of holiness.

Jesus said in John 15:3, "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." The Word has to be preached. People do not seem to mind when one preaches on the internal standard, but they sometimes get really stirred when someone talks about the external standard that a child of God should have in his life.

God wants the brothers and sisters in Christ to dress right, to dress modestly for protection. Also, we should dress right as a witness, as well as a buffer against the world. The church does not get its standard from the world, but the world should get its standard from the church. Conformity to the standard shows obedience to the Word of God.

Let me go through those again: the standard is for your own protection, for a witness, for a buffer against the world, and to show obedience to the Word of God. The standard of God's Word is neither worldly nor unattractive. Your body either glorifies God and promotes holiness or glorifies self and promotes sin.

### **True Spiritual Beauty**

First Timothy 2:1-10 reads: "I exhort therefore, that, first of all,

supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

"Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity. I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting. In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works."

The outward standard in God's Word is mainly to the woman, but that in no way means that a man does not have to dress right and act right, just as much as a woman does. There are reasons that the Scriptures especially speak of the woman adorning herself. Children have parents who are responsible for dressing them. This is not talking about children adorning themselves, but the woman adorning herself.

Paul was not prejudiced against women or out to put the women down in any way. A woman is usually more bothered with pride than a man is. Usually a woman spends more time in front of a mirror than a man does. A woman is more particular in how she dresses, how she looks, and how her hair is fixed. She is concerned about every little detail.

A woman usually has more physical attraction than a man does. Her skin is softer, her hair is prettier, and she walks around looking helpless. She needs a man to help her through life.

Your body is an instrument of

the spirit that you possess, and that is the reason you are to glorify God in both your spirit and body. The real issue is false beauty versus true beauty, physical attraction versus spiritual attraction. The Bible lets us know there is beauty in holiness. Psalm 110:3 says, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning; thou hast the dew of thy youth." True spiritual beauty comes with salvation.

Psalm 149:4 says, "For the LORD taketh pleasure in his people: he will beautify the meek with salvation." The true and lasting beauty is that which God gives us through salvation, and that beauty lives on to attract other souls to Christ, to influence others by example. Physical beauty dies with the body.

There is even a beauty in growing old. The Bible says in Proverbs 20:29, "The glory of young men is their strength: and the beauty of old men is the gray head." Old men need to stop coloring their hair so they can look beautiful. Regardless of a person's looks, there is a beauty, a glow, and a bright look that comes with salvation. For example, before a woman is saved, she may be burdened down with sin and sad looking, but when she lets salvation come into her soul, the real beauty will come out.

### **God's Standard of Modest Apparel**

As we get into the standard of modesty, you must first see what the word modesty means, and then you can better understand the Scripture. Lots of people try to interpret that word by their own understanding and not by what the word actually means. One of the best translations of the Greek words in the New Testament is by W. E. Vine's *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*. I have found that to be one of the most accurate. The word *modest* means "well arranged, decent, and orderly." This definition applies not only to the dress standard but

also to the inner life, which expresses itself in outward conversation or conduct.

When the Apostle Paul mentioned modest apparel, he was talking about that which is not vain, that which does not call attention to one's body, or does not display one's body. I do not believe that God wants every Christian to dress alike. If a group goes somewhere and everyone is dressed alike, it draws extra attention, and I do not feel that is modest. It may make people think that you are better than they are. True holiness starts on the inside first.

There is diversity in everyone in how we dress, but the main thing that God wants from every one of us is modesty. Remember, you should not draw attention to yourself. It has been said that if a woman cannot get a man by what she really is, then what she gets in a man is not worth having. Hollywood works hard to influence you to become what you really are not. When a sister puts on a skirt or a dress or a blouse, it should be loose enough, long enough at the bottom, and high enough at the top. Examples of immodest apparel are bathing suits, shorts, sleeveless dresses, low-cut tops, skirts or dresses that are not below the knees, and skirts or dresses that are too tight and show your undergarments. Today some people do not seem to understand what being too tight really is.

A woman should never put on a man's garment. Deuteronomy 22:5 states, "The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the LORD thy God." You may say, "Well, this was done away with in the Old Testament; that was blotted out in the New Testament." If you say that, what you are really saying is that anything goes.

Colossians 2:14 says, "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the

way, nailing it to his cross." In this verse Paul was talking about the ceremonial part of the law; he was not talking about the moral part of the law. A man dressing like a man or a woman dressing like a woman is a moral law. You may say, "He meant all the laws of the Old Testament." If that was so, what about the other commandments, such as not killing, not committing adultery, and not stealing? We know these commandments are just as much enforced today as they were when they were written, and even before they were written.

Some people try to justify the reason that they dress wrong. They give all kinds of arguments. Also, it is wrong to be a cross-dresser, or a transvestite. Nothing is more ungodly than to see a man dressed like a woman or a woman dressed like a man.

### **Purity and Uprightness**

In 1 Timothy 2:9 Paul went on to mention "shamefacedness and sobriety." The word *shamefacedness* means "timid, bashful, or modest." The word *sobriety* means "sober-minded, soundness of mind, soberness, and sound judgment." Habitual sound judgment constantly reigns in passions and desires. If you are a single Christian woman, your body is holy and someday may be given in marriage. You should want to be pure when you stand before the preacher.

Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 5:14, "I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully." You should not display your body to the world. What is displayed in the window of a store is usually for sale on the inside. I understand that there is a country where prostitution is legal, and the prostitutes actually stand in store display windows so that those who pass by can look at them. Child of God, you need to save yourself for your husband or your wife.

What kind of woman did God bring to Adam? She was pure, holy, and upright. Married women have no business flirting or displaying themselves to the opposite sex.

What does the Bible say about tattoos? Leviticus 19:28 reads, "Ye shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor print any marks upon you: I am the LORD." Although this Scripture applies to both a man and a woman, I think tattoos look especially degrading on a woman. What does it do? It makes her look like lowlife. In no way am I saying that anyone who has a tattoo is lost. I almost got one when I was in the Marine Corps, but I did not have enough money to carry it out or I probably would have one. A lot of military men get tattoos. I am in no way saying that because you have a tattoo that you are a sinner. I am just saying that God does not want us to make markings on the body. According to the Scripture in Leviticus, God is opposed to tattoos.

What about makeup or other adornments such as fingernail polish or jewelry? These things are not for the saints of God. For the life of me, I do not understand why basketball players or football players would want to run around the court or the field with big rings hanging on their ears. If somebody were to grab hold of one, it would rip the ear, but they do it anyway. Not many years ago, people thought earrings on a man made him look like a sissy, or girlish.

### **Bible Examples**

Some people like to use the prodigal son as an example of wearing a ring. Yes, he is an example of someone wearing a ring. Luke 15:21-22 tells us: "And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand [not on his finger, but on his hand] and shoes on his feet." The

prodigal son was coming back from the hogpen, and the father told the servants to put a ring on his hand. Why was that? So that once again he could do business as a son in his father's house.

Makeup had its start in heathenism. We read in 2 Kings 9:30, "And when Jehu was come to Jezreel, Jezebel heard of it; and she painted her face, and tired her head, and looked out at a window." If you read the rest of the story, you will read what happened to her.

Ezekiel 23:40 states, "And furthermore, that ye have sent for men to come from far, unto whom a messenger was sent; and, lo, they came: for whom thou didst wash thyself, paintedst thy eyes, and deckedst thyself with ornaments." Jeremiah 4:30 says, "And when thou art spoiled, what wilt thou do? Though thou clothest thyself with crimson, though thou deckest thee with ornaments of gold, though thou rentest thy face with painting, in vain shalt thou make thyself fair; thy lovers will despise thee, they will seek thy life."

Makeup started in heathenism, and it is a big moneymaker in Hollywood and Paris. First Peter 3:1 tells us, "Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; [I performed a wedding ceremony one time, and the sister actually wanted me to remove the word 'obey' from the vows. I would not remove it, so she wrote her own vows and in no way had the word obey in there. Nevertheless, a woman is still to love, honor, and obey her husband. The word obey is not in the man's vow.] that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation [or conduct] of the wives." That is how I was really won to God. There were witnesses where I worked then, and I came to church because of their witness. However, my wife lived the Christian life before me. Her conduct, or her actions, drew me to Christ.

First Peter 3:2-6 reads: "While they behold your chaste conversa-

tion coupled with fear. Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit [one thing I love about my wife is her meek, quiet spirit], which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement."

### **Having a Desire to Do What Is Right**

We are living in a very technical age. Almost everything is computerized. The banks and the stores are run with computers. Today the cashiers scan a barcode on the items, but they used to key them into the cash registers. We cannot go back to the fifties. Back then, we only had landlines for telephones. Do you remember when we used to have party lines, and sometimes it seemed that the neighbor was always on the phone? Next, we moved on to private lines, and then cellular phones.

Modern technology is here to stay. My position on these things is, they can be dangerous to your soul if they are used wrongly, but they in themselves are not sinful objects. There are bad books in the library, but you do not have to look at them or check them out. If you want to engage in pornography, it is there. If you want to text message filth, you can do that, but you do not have to. If you want to use it right, it is a wonderful invention. The misuse of the Internet is dangerous. You cannot place the Internet into the lives of young teenagers unsupervised and expect them not to check it out. Parent, you need to check out who your children are texting, check what they are texting, and check on

what they are watching. You may ask, "How can I do that?" You can do it very easily. If that cell phone is in your name, you can get a copy of all the calls from the phone company.

Another misuse of the cell phone or iPad is to look up ball scores or to play games during a worship service; that is wrong. When that takes place, God is looking down at you all the time, and God could become very angry. It is amazing how many people cannot live without a cell phone, but they can live without the Bible. I bring these things to help you to be more God conscious and more spiritual in your walk with Him.

The standard of the Word of God was given to protect you, especially the sisters. There is a lot more to the standard than the outward standard. There is also an inward standard. Again, that is where salvation starts first. To the mother who has little children in the home, God is going to hold you responsible for how you dress those children. As they get older and dress themselves, before they go out the door, you need to check to see that what they are wearing is modest. If you want to do right, you can do right. I do not believe our children ever went out the door without being checked. We might not have told them we were checking them, but our eyes were checking them anyhow.

Godly mothers should teach their children how to dress modestly. When a child comes into the world, he or she does not know God. You are in place of God in their lives until they reach the age of accountability. Some children come to the age of accountability sooner than others because of how they are taught in the home.

I trust that you will see that the Bible standard is a beautiful standard. I think the sisters look very godly the way they dress. The message of modesty never changes.

*(Compact Disc TR-1451)*

*Hebrews 11:1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.*

*2 For by it [faith] the elders obtained a good report.*

*3 Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things*

*which do appear.*

*4 By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.*

*5 By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and*

*was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.*

*6 But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*

# Triumphant Faith



***Brother E. David Stegmeier***

## **Cast Not Away Your Confidence**

Faith and trust in God will enable you to stand after the storms of life. Faith enables you to be victorious, to be successful, and to be an overcomer in your struggles and difficulties of life. It enables you to conquer every foe. In Isaiah 54:17 there is a promise that came to me as

I was studying for this message, and I think it is applicable today. Through faith, every one of us can claim this promise. Isaiah 54:17 says, "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of

me, saith the LORD."

Verse 6 of our Scripture text tells us, "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." If you refuse to believe God and His Eternal Word, you are, in essence, calling Him a liar. John wrote in

1 John 5:10, "He that believeth not God hath made him a liar." God is displeased with those who mistrust Him and those who do not believe His Eternal Word. Paul went on to say that God rewards those who diligently seek Him and who believe Him and His Word.

Hebrews 10:35-39 says: "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul."

Faith is a firm belief, or complete trust, in God. I would like you to read these verses from the *International Children's Bible*. It reads: "So do not lose the courage that you had in the past. It has a great reward. [Sometimes you will have to walk through a very difficult place, and it may seem there is no way out. You may not see a light at the end of the tunnel, but remember what God has done for you in the past. God will always help you through.] You must hold on, so you can do what God wants and receive what he has promised. For in a very short time,

*'The One who is coming will come.  
He will not be late.  
The person who is right with me will  
have life because of his faith.  
But if he turns back with fear,  
I will not be pleased with him.'*

*Habakkuk 2:3-4*

But we are not those who turn back and are lost. We are people who have faith and are saved."

One reason you should never look back is that it displeases your Heavenly Father. You should want to be faithful and endure until the

end. I was saved as a young boy, and I have never left the church. I was convinced that it was, and still is, the only way to live. I am thankful I made that decision years ago, and I have never regretted it for one split-second. It is the greatest decision I have ever made.

Another reason for not looking back is that you will incur the anger and wrath of God. In the Scripture text, Paul wrote to those who had turned back from Christianity and had returned to the ways of the old Jewish economy. The sacrifice in the temple had become obsolete, because Christ became the ultimate sacrifice for the sins of mankind, then and forever.

### **Have Faith in God's Promises**

Someone once said, "This is the life that values God's promises; that sees the unseen and that perseveres to the end." There is an old song we sing written by James Wells entitled "Living by Faith." It reads:

*I care not today what the morrow  
may bring,  
If shadow or sunshine or rain,  
The Lord I know ruleth o'er  
everything,  
And all of my worries are vain.*

*Though tempests may blow and the  
stormclouds arise,  
Obscuring the brightness of life,  
I'm never alarmed at the overcast  
skies—  
The Master looks on at the strife.*

*I know that He safely will carry me  
through,  
No matter what evils betide;  
Why should I then care though the  
tempest may blow,  
If Jesus walks close to my side.*

*Our Lord will return for His loved  
ones someday,  
Our troubles will then all be o'er;  
The Master so gently will lead us  
away,  
Beyond that blest heavenly shore.*

*Living by faith in Jesus above,  
Trusting, confiding in His great  
love;  
From all harm safe in His  
sheltering arm,  
I'm living by faith and feel no  
alarm.*

In 2 Corinthians 5:7 Paul said to the Church of God in Corinth, "For we walk by faith, not by sight." Habakkuk 3:17-18 reads: "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation." That is faith. Someone once said: "Here is the hilarity of faith—joy at its best with circumstances at their worst." What a victory! This victory can be yours. No matter what tests and trials you may face, you can still rejoice in God.

I remember Brother Emerson Wilson saying years ago that he met with a sister who was going through very difficult circumstances. He said, "Sister, how are you doing?"

She said, "Well, under the circumstances, fairly well."

He replied, "What are you doing under the circumstances?"

If you have faith in God, you can live with great confidence. One writer said that Habakkuk started in a deep valley in Chapter 1; he then went up to the watch tower in Chapter 2; in Chapter 3 we find him on the mountain. Faith always lifts us higher and makes us happier. You may not be able to rejoice in the economy, but you can always rejoice in the Lord. Also, you can rejoice that your name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life, and no one can touch it.

### **Faith Is Indispensable**

The Bible says in Proverbs 18:16 that "A man's gift maketh room for him." The song "Amazing Grace" was written by John Newton,

and he also wrote this old hymn entitled "Begone Unbelief." The first two verses read:

*Begone unbelief, my Savior is  
near,  
And for my relief will surely  
appear:  
By prayer let me wrestle, and He  
wilt perform,  
With Christ in the vessel, I smile at  
the storm.*

*Though dark be my way, since He  
is my guide,  
'Tis mine to obey, 'tis His to  
provide;  
Though cisterns be broken, and  
creatures all fail,  
The Word He has spoken shall  
surely prevail.*

Faith is a vital, essential ingredient in your walk with God. Three short Scriptures confirm this truth. The first one is Hebrews 11:6, which reads, "But without faith it is impossible to please him: [Have you ever read the story *The Very Worried Walrus*? It is a children's story about a worried walrus that did not do anything because he was always fearful that something would happen. He would not go out if it was going to rain, fearing that he would stumble and fall. He did not want to cook his meal because he feared he would get burned, and he feared other things as well. Some people are like that with worry.] for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

The second Scripture is Romans 1:17, which states, "The just shall live by faith." The third one is found in 1 John 5:4, and it reads, "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."

Since the beginning of time, God's people have been called to live a life of faith. All significant happenings in the Word of God have been brought about by faith. Noah constructed an ark when there had never been any rain, and only Noah and his family were saved.

Would that not be rather discouraging to preach for more than one hundred years, yet no one but you and your family was saved? Nevertheless, Noah constructed the ark when there had never been any rain, and the Word of God tells us he did it by faith. Hebrews 11:7 reads, "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house."

Verses 17-19 continue: "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son. Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead." Abraham had faith that if he took his son's life, God would raise him back to life. He told his servant before he left, "I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you" (Genesis 22:5). That is having confidence in God! I believe God wants us to have greater faith. Jesus said in Luke 18:8b, "Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" We need to bolster our faith, and to do that we must work on it.

### **Obedience and Faith Go Hand in Hand**

We read that God told Gideon to reduce his number of soldiers, lest they vaunt themselves, or boast. When they won the battle against the Midianites, Gideon had reduced the size of his army from twenty-two thousand to three hundred as he was challenged by the huge Midianite army. Judges 7:12 reads, "And the Midianites and the Amalekites and all the children of the east lay along in the valley like grasshoppers for multitude; and their camels were without number, as the sand by the sea side for multitude." Gideon's three hundred men won the battle with only a trumpet and a pitcher in each man's hand.

You have a vessel, if you are

saved, and you have a light within. When that vessel is broken, it emits a wonderful light that the world can see. Sometimes it takes a broken vessel for the world to see the light and to see that you have something that others do not have.

In the Book of 1 Kings, you can read that Elijah the prophet requested that a poor, widow lady bake a loaf of bread from her last handful of meal for a stranger when it seemed that she and her son were going to die. First Kings 17:15-16 says: "And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah: and she, and he, and her house, did eat many days. And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruise of oil fail, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by Elijah." Obedience plays a part in faith. God blessed her with a barrel of meal and a cruise of oil that never ran out during the famine.

In the Book of 2 Kings, you can read of a widow mother with two little boys whose only possession was one pot of oil. She owed a debt to a certain creditor who had come to take her two sons as slaves in payment for the debt. She was told by Elijah to borrow all the vessels she could from her neighbors, and then to go into her house, shut her door, and fill the empty vessels with the oil. She acted in obedience, and she did all that the prophet instructed.

Second Kings 4:6-7 reads: "And it came to pass, when the vessels were full, that she said unto her son, Bring me yet a vessel. And he said unto her, There is not a vessel more. And the oil stayed. Then she came and told the man of God. And he said, Go, sell the oil, and pay thy debt, and live thou and thy children of the rest."

Jesus is concerned about two things when He comes: love among His people and faith. In 2 Kings, Chapter 3, we read that Elisha instructed the king of Israel to dig ditches in the valley where there was no water so that they might be refreshed for battle. The next day the

Moabites came on the scene and saw the water as blood when the sun shined on it. The Israelites took advantage of the Moabites' great fear, and they won the battle over them.

We read in Joshua, Chapter 6, how Joshua's army brought down the walls of Jericho through faith and obedience. Joshua's army marched around the city of Jericho once each day for the first six days, and then they marched around seven times on the seventh day. All these miraculous events were done through faith and obedience. Great things are done through faith. If you will do your part, God will do His.

### Various Kinds of Faith

Action played a part in all these happenings. If you have faith, you will take action. As I was growing up, my father always used to say that Church of God people do so many works, but faith and works go together. Faith can only be demonstrated by your actions. As you continue to read the Word of God and pray, God will reward your efforts. Jesus told the man who had the withered hand to stretch forth his hand. What happened? His hand was healed.

The centurion who sought Jesus on behalf of his servant was told to go back home. Matthew 8:13 reads, "And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour."

I have several points that I want to discuss. Faith is demonstrated in various ways. First of all, we might call what we just read an active demonstration of faith. Faith is seen by actions. It takes faith and works to get results. James said in James 2:20 that "faith without works is dead." Years ago, a brother had cancer of the lymph nodes. He had huge growths. He had one on his shoulder, which was the size of a watermelon, and one on his side, which was almost as large. One

summer he said, "I'm going to go to God's Acres to attend the camp meeting." Some of us said, "Brother, you will never make it."

His reply was, "God told me to go." He went, and he returned stronger. Sometimes we need to step out in *active faith*.

Next, there is *persistent faith*. This is faith that holds on until the answer comes. Jacob said in Genesis 32:26b, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." That is an example of persistent faith. On Mount Carmel Elijah sent his servant seven times to verify the impending rain. His servant went out six times and saw nothing, so Elijah prayed again. After the seventh time, his servant saw a cloud about the size of a man's hand. In essence, Elijah said: "Hurry! Let us get down out of this mountain." King Ahab took off in his chariot, and Elijah began running, and he outran King Ahab's chariot. Elijah demonstrated persistent faith.

Luke, Chapter 18, talks about the persistent widow and the unjust judge, who did not fear man or God. Luke 18:5 reads, "Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me." We need more of this kind of faith. Too often people give up before the answer comes.

Another kind of faith is *resolute faith*. To be resolute in your faith is to be firm, determined, and unwavering. Job endured much because of his resolute faith. Job 13:15 reads, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." He had faith that was resolute and unwavering. The three Hebrew children also possessed resolute faith. We read in Daniel 3:16-18: "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter [I do not believe that they were being arrogant, but they were determined and unwavering in their stand for God]. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O

king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up."

The last type of faith that I want to speak to you about is *adventuresome faith*. The Bible says that Abraham went out not knowing where he went. He went on an adventure. Noah built an ark when he had never seen rain. The sixth-seal ministers and missionaries in the Church of God went all over the world preaching the Gospel. These are examples of adventuresome faith.

I was told the story of a minister whom God told to go to a logging camp in the hills of West Virginia. Upon arriving, he discovered that no one was in the camp. He said God told him to go to the cook's shack and preach the Gospel. He reasoned with the Lord and said no one was there, but he went anyway and preached. Several years later, a young man came up to this minister with a lady by his side and said: "Do you know what? One day some lumbermen sent me back to the cook's shack because they left something there. I stepped up to the window and listened to you preach. God spoke to me, and I got saved, and later God called me into the ministry." That minister stepped out into adventuresome faith. Because the preacher did not see anyone, no doubt he thought it seemed ridiculous. Nevertheless, God told him to preach. By faith, a great work was accomplished.

Fannie Crosby went to a mission house to bring the Word of God, and she talked to a boy about his soul. Many years later, she attended a large gathering in Boston and that same young man came up to her and said, "Fannie, do you remember me?"

She said, "No, I have no idea who you are."

He said: "Ten years ago when you came to the mission, you spoke to me and I got saved. God called me, and I have been preaching the Gospel ever since."

## Great Deliverance

Sometimes I am amazed when I read about the sixth-seal church and how they traveled all over the world to establish congregations. Oh, how sad that they would become lukewarm and not appreciate the Truth that the pioneer ministers brought to them. I thank God for the pioneer ministers that brought us the Truth! Just as I appreciate the pioneers in America who traveled west to Oregon and made great sacrifices, I appreciate the Church of God pioneers who made great sacrifices. They gave us a great legacy. We see very few hymn writers today. Although we have some, the sixth-seal church gave us a tremendous number of spiritual hymns. We should feel a great indebtedness.

One great virtue, and greatly needed virtue, is faith. There may be times when you do not get the answer that you are looking for. There may be times when you pray and pray without getting the answer that you are expecting. At times you may be somewhat disappointed because what you have been praying for is not happening, or did not happen. You must leave the results with God. Let us consider Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. They were tested. They said, in so many words: "We will not do what you want us to do. We are going to stand true to God." Greater than their faith was their faithfulness. To me, this shows complete resignation to the will of God. They were resigned to do the will of God no matter what. God honored their obedience and their faith, and He delivered them *in* the fiery furnace, not *from* the fiery furnace.

If God does not deliver you from something, He will deliver you in it. He will give you grace, and it will work for good. Being delivered in the fiery furnace was a greater deliverance than being delivered from the fiery furnace. King Nebuchadnezzar came out astonished and said: "Did not we cast

three men bound into the midst of the fire? . . . Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God" (Daniel 3:24-25). What a testimony! This was a great trial of faith. Godly character is made by testing one's faith.

Daniel retained his faith as he was cast into a den of lions. I think of Brother Esau Brooks who said, "It was not a lion's den, but it was a den of lions!" Daniel was not kept *from* the lion's den, but he was kept from harm *in* the lions' den. When the king came the next morning to inquire of Daniel's welfare, Daniel said in Daniel 6:22, "My God hath sent His angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt."

### Keep Your Faith Anchored and Focused on God

Sometimes when your prayers are not answered the way you want them to be answered, there is a reason for it. In Matthew 26:39 Jesus prayed, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." Jesus was not spared the pain, the agony, and the shame of the Cross. Through His death, the plan of God for mankind was consummated; it was completed and accomplished.

I often tell people when they have a little problem with something, "The Bible says in Philippians 2:8 that Jesus was obedient unto death." Perhaps God is merely asking you to dress modestly. How does that compare with being asked to die on a cross? There is no comparison. God might be asking you to give up something. How does that compare with what He required Jesus to do? In your mind's eye, can you imagine as you get to Heaven and sit down with all the saints, and as you begin to talk, you ask, "Peter,

what did you suffer for Christ?"

Peter's reply would be, "I was crucified upside down."

"Stephen, what did you suffer for Christ?"

He will recall, "I was stoned to death."

It would be rather embarrassing if all you could say was, "I had to give up my engagement ring" or "I had to give up my worldly clothes."

Some people's hearts are centered on their worldly possessions. How will that compare with what the martyrs suffered? You can read in the last few verses of Hebrews, Chapter 11, the things that those great men and women suffered for Christ. How will their sufferings compare with your sufferings? God may not always answer prayer in the way that you want Him to. He may not save you from adverse situations, but you must say, "If the answer does not come as I want, if I am not spared the pains of adversity, then His way is best; He will be with me in the midst of it." This is triumphant faith. Romans 8:28 tells us, "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."

A song in our hymnal is called, "The Virtue of Faith," by Clara M. Brooks. It reads:

*As far above the howling storm,  
Secure from danger's reach and  
harm,  
Triumphantly the eagle flies—  
My soul on wings of faith would  
rise;  
When raging is the tempest's blast,  
Ere yet its wrath is overpast—  
My soul would rise from earthly  
woe,  
To leave the stormy winds below.*

*Upon the troubled, restless wave,  
His fearful, trembling ones to save,  
The Master walked and calmed the  
sea,  
The wildly tossing Galilee;  
By faith again I hear His voice,  
In tones which make my heart  
rejoice,*

*When fears my soul with terror  
thrill,  
He gently whispers, "Peace, be  
still."*

*The lilies clothed in garments  
fair,  
The ravens flying through the air,  
Our blessed Father cares for all—  
He seeth e'en the sparrow's fall;  
His children more He surely  
loves,  
Their cry His heart with pity  
moves:  
Though thorns bestrew the path  
we've trod,  
He whispers still, "Have faith in  
God."*

*The waves around may fiercely  
roll,  
They cannot harm my trusting  
soul,  
Regarding not what I may see,  
My faith, O Lord, ascends to Thee;  
The darkest night and brazen sky  
Are pierced by faith's unfailing  
eye—  
My cry shall be till time shall  
cease,  
"O blessed Lord, my faith  
increase."*

You need to keep your faith anchored and focused on God. He has something for you to learn in every trial and difficulty. I tell the Lord many times as I go through a very difficult situation: "God, please help me to understand. Please help me to be cognizant of Your will, and please help me to understand what lesson You want me to learn, because I do not want to repeat this lesson again." At times when I was young, my father would say, "You are getting too big for your britches," and we would go out to the woodshed. He would get his belt, and I started to holler and scream before he even started (I thought it would help, but it did not). I wanted to learn my lesson, because I did not want it repeated! God has something for you to learn in every trial and difficulty.

## **Deepen Your Walk With God**

You can deepen your walk with God during times of testings and trials. A song entitled "Peace in the Midst of the Storm" by Stephen R. Adams reads:

*When the world that I've been  
living in  
Collapses at my feet,  
When my life is shattered and  
torn;  
Tho' I'm windswept and battered,  
I can cling to His Cross,  
And find peace in the midst of my  
storm!*

*When in twenty-four short hours,  
Years of living are brought to  
moments.  
And when life's final picture is  
taking form.  
In the dark-room of my suffering  
There's a Light comes shining  
through,  
He gives me peace in the midst of  
my storm.*

*There is peace in the midst of my  
storm-tossed life  
Oh there's an Anchor,  
There's a Rock, to build my faith  
upon.  
Jesus rides in my vessel  
So I'll fear no alarm.  
He gives me peace in the midst of  
my storm.*

When you believe in salvation, you believe that He can save you and keep you and give you grace to live a consistent, holy life. However, it may sometimes be difficult for you to believe that God will heal you or supply certain other needs that you might have. I tell young people at home to be careful that they do not go out in the world and choose a companion. They need to be patient and wait on the Lord. Young person, you need to wait on God.

Jesus was confronted with unbelief in a situation where a young man was possessed with a dumb spirit. Mark 9:23-24 reads:

"Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief." I think every one of us, if we are honest, can say "Lord, I believe, but I need some help with my unbelief." Unbelief hems people in and keeps them from appropriating the things that God has told them He will do for them.

## **Ways to Increase Your Faith**

I have five points that I would like to mention regarding ways in which you can increase your faith. First, you need to get better acquainted with the Word of God. You need to know the Word of God and look to the Word of God. The Bible says in Romans 10:17, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." When you have a need of any kind, you should search the Word of God, get a promise there, and hold on to it.

The promises in the Word of God are yours. We sing a chorus that says, "Every promise in the Book is mine, Every chapter, every verse, every line; All are blessings of His love divine, Every promise in the Book is mine." God is no respecter of persons, so you need to get well acquainted with the Word of God, find His promises, and store them in your heart.

My second point is, you must be sure that you are faithful in your walk with God, faithful to the church, faithful in your church attendance, and faithful in your tithing. You need to make sure that nothing is between you and another brother or sister, and make sure you are clear with God. If you are not, you need to take care of the problem.

The three Hebrew children were faithful to God. The Bible lets us know that Daniel was faithful in his prayer life. Faithfulness will help you. You can read in Job 23:10 that Job said, "But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold."

Third, submission and consecration to God's will works for greater faith. Abraham was put to a great test. God asked him to offer his son Isaac, the son of promise, whom he greatly loved.

Since I was a child, I was taught to put my faith in God. I was taught that Jesus Christ is just the same today. Hebrews 13:8 states, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever." I believe in divine, physical healing, but there may be times when we need medical help. For example, there are those who do not believe in having a blood transfusion, but I am not that way. However, I think we need to consider God, to allow our faith to grow. Too many times if a person even gets a sniffle, they hurry to a doctor's office or to an urgent care facility. Have you ever considered trusting God for a headache or for a stomachache?

I was brought up that if my parents had a physical problem or if the children had an ailment, we went to the pastor and he anointed and prayed for that one. When I was a boy, I had appendicitis. My parents said one morning: "What do you want us to do? We can take you to the hospital or we can take you to the pastor." I said I wanted to have the pastor pray for me. He prayed, and I have never had a problem with it since. I am just encouraging you to have faith in God.

My fourth point is, to increase your faith, use the faith that you already have. If you use a little faith, it will grow. My fifth and final point is, you need to keep your faith focused on God. Your faith can go all kinds of directions, but keep your faith focused on God and His Eternal Word. He should be the focal point of your faith and your hope. There is a song that says, "*My hope is built on nothing less Than Jesus' blood and righteousness.*" He should be the center of your faith, your hope, your inspiration, your comfort, and your confidence. A poem written by John Sidebotham reads:

*With my eyes upon the Saviour  
I can walk the sea of life  
With its waves and billows 'round  
me,  
With its tempest, storms, and strife.*

*Should I look upon another,  
Look at self or turn my gaze  
On life's problems and  
temptations,  
I would sink beneath the waves.*

*Saviour, let me walk beside Thee,  
Let me feel my hand in Thine,  
Let me know the joy of walking  
In thy strength and not in mine.*

### Divine Healing

Some might struggle with the thought, "Is the Word of God applicable to the day in which we live or is it antiquated?" The Word of God *is* relevant and it *is* up to date. However, too many people want to philosophize, or reason it away.

About fourteen years ago, I came down with spinal meningitis, although I did not know what it was at that time. I have always tried to step out by faith, so I continued with my plans to attend the camp meeting at God's Acres. As I traveled, I became extremely ill. When Brother Decker arrived to pick me up at the airport, he could see that something was really wrong. He asked me if I needed something to eat, and he was very kind to me, but I said I wanted to go and see my wife (she had taken an earlier flight). All week I struggled horribly with that illness. It was as though I was in a very dark abyss. I have always believed in stepping out by faith, and I could not

have been in a better place than right at the camp meeting at God's Acres. I do not remember much of what happened that week, but God was so good to me.

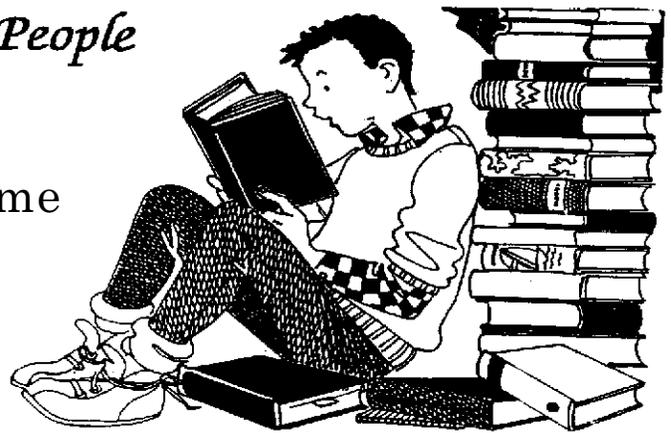
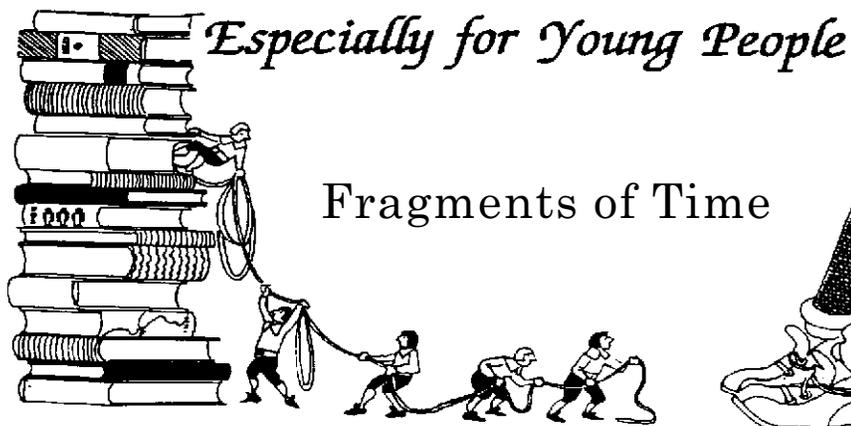
If you have need of healing or whatever your need might be, God is able to supply that need. James 5:13-15 reads: "Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. [There might be a reason for your affliction; therefore, you need to check your life, check your submission, and check your consecration. You need to pray about it and examine yourself.] Is any merry? let him sing psalms. Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord [the healing is not in the oil, but in the point of contact]: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him."

My intention in bringing this message is to try to help you to increase your faith. You need to ask God to help you so that your faith might grow stronger. I want my faith to grow. I do not think anyone should be hard-nosed about trusting God for healing. Years ago, Brother Emerson Wilson said, "If you go to get medical help, I will be there to pray with you." Jesus said to the blind man in Matthew 9:29, "According to your faith be it unto you." I do not think we should be satisfied with only a little faith. We should ask God to increase our faith.

*(Compact Disc TR-1436)*

*Little self-denials, little honesties, little passing words of sympathy, little nameless acts of kindness, little silent victories over temptations—these are the silent threads of gold, which when woven together, gleam out so brightly in the pattern of life that God approves.*

*Selected*



James 4:14 states, "Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." The Bible says a day is coming when we must give an account of everything that we have done. Eternal issues hang on fragments of time.

John 6:5-13 reads: "When Jesus then lifted up his eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat? And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do. Philip answered him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little. One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him, There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many? And Jesus said, Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand. And Jesus took the loaves; and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would. When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost. Therefore they gathered them together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten."

Jesus told His disciples to gather the fragments that remained so that nothing would be wasted. Eternal issues that pertain to the welfare of our immortal souls hang on mere fragments of time. Young person, what are you doing with these fragments of time? Time is a gift of God. Some people live to be ninety years of age, but others do not live that long. Only the Lord knows how much time you have.

These thoughts are so important for the youth, because that is when life-long habits are formed. Young person, you are forming habits. One good habit to form is that of being in the house of God and of being in the youth services. Christian young person, you are fighting the devil. If you want to be successful in your Christian experience, the best thing you can do is fortify yourself by attending the youth services. There is power and support in numbers.

It is important how you spend your life. We are living in the last days. Romans 13:11 states, "And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." You need to look at how you spend your time. I have learned that you will never have any more time than you do when you are a young person. Marriage and children are wonderful, but the time that you have to yourself is more limited.

Young person, you are very blessed to have the element of time, and it is so important that you invest

it in things that really matter. I think it is good to associate with one another and to play games, but you should not waste all your time on playing games. Ecclesiastes 7:29 says that "God hath made man upright [or righteous]; but they have sought out many inventions." If you are not careful, the inventions of our day will waste your time. When I was in college, I always carried my Bible with me. The greatest use of time is spent in the Word of God and with the saints of God in worship.

Eternal issues, or topics and problems in life that deal with our eternity-bound souls, hang on fragments of time. Time is the indefinite, unknown, continuous progress of existence in events of the past, present, and future regarded as a whole. Time waits for no man, regardless of one's money or status in society.

You may remove the batteries from a clock, but time still marches on. Time is something that no one can stop or bring back. When it has passed, it is gone. In the miracle in our Scripture lesson, Jesus did not give them an abundance so they could waste it. All the leftovers were collected so that nothing would be lost. One should never waste God's blessings, and time is one of God's blessings.

Have you ever heard the statement that time heals all wounds? Is it not amazing how something that hurts you deeply mends as time passes? You may talk to someone about it, and that may help to mend it, but you should go to God and pray

about it. Time is a healer of many things, and I believe God ordained it to be that way. Time is responsible for so much good in our lives. It takes time to grow, to heal, and to learn. However, time will allow for much evil if you choose to waste it in licentious, loose, immoral, worldly living. You may mess around, be silly about life, waste time on the Internet, and get involved in things in which you should not be involved, but those things will catch up with you. Numbers 32:23 states, "Be sure your sin will find you out."

Time is too valuable and too precious to waste. I think statements such as, "I have some time to kill" or "I have some time to burn" are unwise statements. Henry David Thoreau, a great writer in the nineteenth century, said, "As if you could kill time without injuring eternity." Another writer said, "Men talk of killing time, while time quietly kills them." When we think of how short life is, it ought to make us stop and consider how we can best make every second of our day count for Jesus. Barney E. Warren wrote a song entitled "Every Hour for Jesus." It reads:

*Every hour for Jesus! shall my motto be,  
There is plenty of work we may do;  
We may all keep busy till the Lord we see,  
Till He comes for His faithful few.*

*Every hour for the Lord,  
Every hour for the Lord let us spend;  
Every hour for Jesus till He comes again,  
When the labor of life shall end.*

A Scottish botanist went forth into a field one bright, sunny day to study his favorite flowers. He plucked a heather bell and put it upon the glass of his microscope. Stretching himself on the ground, he began to scrutinize it. Moment after moment passed, and still he remained there gazing, entranced by the beauty of the flower. Suddenly a shadow fell on the ground beside him. Looking up, he saw a tall, weather-beaten shepherd gazing

down with a smile of half-concealed amusement at the man who was spending his time looking through a glass at so common a thing. Without a word the botanist handed the shepherd the microscope. He placed it to his eye, and he began to gaze. For him, too, moment after moment sped by while he gazed in enraptured silence. When he handed back the glass, the botanist noticed that tears were streaming down the shepherd's bronze cheeks. The botanist asked: "What is the matter? Is it not beautiful?"

"Beautiful?" said the shepherd. "It is beautiful beyond all words, but I am thinking of the thousands of times I have trodden them under my feet."

Priceless opportunities can pass by us. We can lose them, and then they are lost forever. You should make every second of your day count for Christ.

An old Arabian proverb says, "Four things come not back: the spoken word, the sped arrow, the past life, and the neglected opportunity." Time is something that we can never retrieve once it passes. Today will never again be today, and tomorrow will be but yesterday. Should we choose to put off the needs, the responsibilities, and the duties that God would have us to do today, tomorrow they will be spoiled opportunities.

Instant obedience is the only way to true obedience. Delayed obedience is really disobedience. It is so important as you go through your days to ask God: "What would You have me to do? How can I best use my time?" If you have five or ten minutes, that time could prove to be very encouraging to someone if you spent it writing a letter or a card.

Proverbs 10:5 says, "He that gathereth in summer is a wise son." I believe youth is as the summer. It is the time for gathering knowledge, for the formation of habits, and for the fusing of the sinews of godly character. Youths who improve their opportunities and who are diligent in summer gathering for winter's needs

will come to the responsibilities of their latter years prepared.

Those who would shine as God's fairest children must not have wasted years. You must work to garner this time. He who excels in godliness is he who, in the springtime of his life, was obedient to the heavenly vision.

Early on God's altar of youth's springtime, we can master the music of the everlasting city, learn the dialect of the King's country, graduate into divine wisdom, become proficient in spiritual knowledge, and adept in the things of grace. The time of youth, diligently improved, prepares one for whatever may come in the stern days of mature years. Let us not let one fragment of the precious gift of life be wasted.

We all have leisure moments throughout our days. We have time during which no urgent duty demands our attention. How should that time be used? Time is far too valuable to be used aimlessly. There is an inscription on a sun dial at Oxford that says, "The hours perish, and are laid to our charge." I want you to think about that for a moment. One songwriter said, "Time is now fleeting; hours are passing."

You can never go wrong spending leisure moments in God's Word. The psalmist said, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Psalm 119:11). I can tell you from experience, having the Word of God stored in my heart has helped me throughout my life.

As I have talked to many people and as I have gone through different situations, having God's Word has proved to be a real foundation. When others say things contrary to the Scriptures, I can say: "That is not quite right." It has proved to be a foundation for me to have the Word stored up so that I can decipher what is right. It is so important to have the Word of God in your heart.

Ecclesiastes 12:14 reads, "For God shall bring every work into judgment. . . ." What a sobering thought! We will have to answer for our work. Jesus let us know in

*[continued on page 25]*

*Genesis 13:8 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 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.*

*11 Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed*

*east: and they separated themselves the one from the other.*

*12 Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom.*

*13 But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly.*

# Are You Leaning in the Wrong Direction?



**Brother Leamon Whitehead**

## Decisions Carry Consequences

Before I begin the lesson, I want you to read part of an old song that I heard entitled "Hold Fast to the Right." The theme concerns a dear godly mother who taught her son about the things of God. After he grew older, he got ready to leave home. One verse reads, "*You leave us to seek your employment, my boy, And by the world you are yet to be tried.*" The chorus reads, "*Hold fast to the right, Hold fast to the right, Wherever your footsteps may roam, And forsake not the way of salvation, my boy, You have learned from your mother at home.*"

That song touched my heart when I thought about a mother pleading with her son. It is different when you have your children at home, but that changes when they grow up and go out into the world. This mother was pleading with her son to hold fast to the right. Young person, you should never give up and turn away from God.

As we look into this lesson, I trust that you are leaning toward God. Are you leaning toward the right things in life? You can lean either to the right or to the wrong.

When Abram left his homeland to follow God, he took his nephew Lot with him, and they spent a lot of

time together. They got along well, but as the years went by, both Lot and Abram began to have great herds. Finally, there was strife between their herdsmen, so some decisions had to be made, just as you and I have to make decisions from time to time. May God help us to make the right decisions, because decisions carry consequences.

Verse 10 of our Scripture lesson says, "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." What a temptation! Everything looked so good in

## Stay Close to God

the plain of Jordan, the Bible says the area was well watered, even as the Garden of Eden. Lot had to make a decision. As he was looking at that land, it seems that his eyes were looking in the direction that would profit him. He was not really taking the things of God into consideration about where this would lead him. The Word of God tells us that it led him down to a very wicked city. Lot had not chosen Sodom yet, but he was leaning in that direction.

You may be in a battle and leaning in one direction or another, but you have not fully made up your mind. I trust that God will help you. You need to always lean toward that which is good, right, and holy. It is not wrong to lean if you are leaning in the right direction. The Bible even tells us we can provoke people if we provoke them to love and good works. It is all right to provoke people if you provoke them in the right way.

### The Grave Outcome of Lot's Choice

Lot had a serious decision to make. His family and everything he had was going to be involved in that decision. As Lot was looking out for his herd, he saw that it could get fat and increase more and more in the well-watered plain of Jordan. He thought everything would be wonderful if he went that way, but it was leading him down to a bad place.

Sometimes people have to move for a job, but some things are more important than a job. Wherever you are thinking of moving, you need to consider this: Is there a true Church of God there? Is there a place where you can get your soul fed? You must stay with God and the things of God if you want God to bless your home. You need to be in the center of God's will, so you must lean in the right direction.

First of all, Lot lifted up his eyes and looked at the plain of Jordan. Verse 11 says he made a choice, and he chose the plains of Jordan. Abram was a man who loved God.

He was not worried about being left out. That is the reason he told his nephew to look around him. He told Lot, in essence, "If you take the right hand, I will take the left." He was not afraid, because he knew that God was looking out for him. God was taking care of Abram, and Abram knew that everything was going to be all right. He did not say, "You are my nephew, but I am older, so I am going to take the first choice and you can have whatever is left."

There is a song that says, "*Little is much when God is in it.*" Lot finally made a choice. The plain of Jordan looked good, but he had not considered what might happen. Dear one, a wrong move can start you in the wrong direction and lead you and your family into disaster. This is the reason it is so important to stay in the will of God. Verses 12-13 tell us that Lot pitched his tent toward Sodom, but the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly.

Genesis, Chapter 19, tells us that Abram came out of his tent one day and looked in the direction of the cities of the plain and saw that Sodom and Gomorrah were on fire. The wrath of God had come down on Sodom and Gomorrah, and Lot and two of his daughters were able to escape, but two of his other daughters and sons-in-law never got out. His wife did not make it either because she looked back and became a pillar of salt. Our decisions can have grave consequences. That is the reason we always need to lean in the right direction, which is toward God.

The Bible says that the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly. This was not a place that Lot should have taken his family. We can see by the Scripture text that Lot was in a very vulnerable position. Lot leaned toward that wicked city. His whole family was affected and eventually exposed to the wickedness of Sodom, all because of the decision that he made.

Living too close to the edge is not a good policy. You need to plunge fully into the things of God and leave the world behind. You need to wade out into the deep waters and put everything you have into serving God and living for God. You have an influence upon your children, their families, and those around you. If you are living on the edge, it would be very easy to get over into a foreign land.

Everything I have is invested in serving God. I do not want to reserve anything for the world or for the devil. I want everything I have to be in the Lord's work. I want to get closer and closer to God, just as Enoch did. One day he went walking with God and never came back. I want to get deeper into the things of God, because the closer I get to God, the more I love Him and the more joy and peace I have in my soul. This world holds nothing for me.

Maybe you are having certain thoughts or leaning toward some worldly things, but you have not made a move yet. Let me remind you that it is dangerous to lean in the wrong direction. A child of God should always lean toward holiness. You should not fight the Bible standard, but you should praise God for the Truth that has set you free.

The Apostle Paul wrote in Galatians 5:1, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." Men of God must keep preaching the Truth, because we are washed and kept clean by the preaching of the Word of God. It is necessary that we see ourselves just as we are in the mirror of God's Word. We have to stay clean and stay close to God, because the devil is a tricky fellow.

I thank God for pastors who keep the Word of God before the people. That is what will keep us on the highway of holiness. It will keep us polished up and ready to go up when this life is over. As preachers,

we are being worked on also. We never outgrow the need for the Gospel. That is the reason we travel to revivals to listen to the Word of God preached.

If you have a knife, you have to keep it whetted to keep a sharp edge on it. God wants you to keep a sharp edge on your individual experience. The preaching of the Word will get right down to where you are. It will sharpen your experience. You must have that sharp edge or you will become complacent and will not be on fire for God.

Your service to God should never be something hard to do. His blessings are fresh every morning. The joy He gives will cause your cup to overflow, but you have to stay close to Him. I like to be in that inner circle with Jesus, right up close to Him. I want to live so that I can hear His faintest whisper. I want to live close enough to God so that I can be sensitive enough to feel the slightest touch of the Holy Spirit.

### **Keep the Fire Burning**

As a saint of God, you have to be careful, "because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8). The devil is looking for the weak ones. He is looking for those who have become slothful. He is looking for those who have backed away from church attendance and attend only occasionally. The Lord does not mean as much to them as He used to. Have you lost your joy and your desire to be in the house of God? Have you lost the thrill of it? Do you remember how the services used to thrill you? In Psalm 122:1 David said, "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD."

Sometimes your body will get tired, but do not let your spirit get tired. I am finding that almost everything is a real drag on my body anymore, but I still have a song, I still have joy, and I still have fire in the furnace. No one has to beg me to go

to church. Something on the inside makes me want to go, and I never want to lose that.

The devil is trying to put out the fire in your soul and kill your zeal. He is working on each of us. That is the reason we have to be so careful, because the enemy is looking. You must stay on fire for God. If you keep the fire burning, you are going to have to keep piling on the fuel. You have to stay close to God. How can you do that? You must read and study God's Word, hear it preached and obey it, meditate on it, and pray to keep the fire burning in your soul. Again, you need to lean toward holiness. You should always lean toward being positive, never negative.

You need to give God a good measure. Many times I have prayed, "Lord, give us a good service." Then I pray, "Lord, help me to give You a good service." I can guarantee you that you will not be able to give God a good service without getting blessed. If you stay close to God, you will not have to spend a lot of time praying, "Lord, bless me, and help me to be a blessing to someone else." If you are a blessing to someone else, you will get blessed. It is like a cup running over and drinking from the saucer.

The message is about making sure that you are leaning in the right direction. Jesus said in Luke 6:38, "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over." We read in Psalm 84:11, "No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." God does not just measure a little blessing out to you, but He will flood your soul. He is good to us, so you should give God a good measure. You need to give Him your best.

### **Hold Fast to That Which Is Right**

God has a standard for His people. Your dress standard should never be liberal. The enemy moves slowly. Little by little, he will work on you. He is trying to trick you.

Your dress standard should always be modest. You may say, "I know this is not as long as I normally wear my skirts, but it will be okay" or "I know the neckline is not as high as I usually wear it, but it is not really that bad." That is how compromise starts, so let your leaning be toward modesty. You should go the extra mile so there is no doubt where you stand with God. I am sending out a warning: you ought to always lean toward modesty as a saint of God.

Men must lean toward modesty as well. If the Lord made you a male child, you should want to look like one. The enemy likes to move people a little at a time. That is how some congregations have gradually moved away from the foundation. They did not suddenly fall off the edge, but they were leaning, and little by little, they leaned further away from Truth, and the next thing they knew, they were down in Sodom.

You need to stay close to God and hold right on to the precious Truth that brought you out of sin. God has been generous to mankind. He gave His Son to save us. He not only said, "I love you," but He proved it in every way. I want to prove to the Lord that I love Him. When you pray for something and He answers prayer, you should give praise to God and thank Him for all that He has done for you.

Your conversation should always be wholesome, not borderline. Sometimes words come out of the mouths of professing Christians that are not good. You have to be careful because the devil will try to pull you into joining the crowd. Some people are very wicked, and the devil will use them to try to trick you into leaning in the wrong direction. You have to watch yourself because some things can become so commonplace that eventually they seem all right. At first, those things might have startled you, but after a while you can become calloused to them. You should not allow yourself to do that. That is what the enemy is trying to do.

You should not run with the wrong crowd. The wrong influence will not do you good; it will do you harm. You probably have some friends who are not saved. I am not talking about that. I am just talking about running with that crowd. Their influence will pull you down, and they will try to get you to be more involved in what they are doing. You cannot lean that way. You have to hold fast to that which is right. As a Christian, you must stay true and stay on the highway of holiness because we are a light to the world. You are a light to those who are living in sin.

I have a computer, and I have Facebook. If you have Facebook, you need to be careful. I have seen people share something that somebody else had posted. Sometimes it will have little smutty words in it. The Christian should not want his name attached to anything like that.

Personally, I would not share something that had a woman who looks like a Jezebel or who is half dressed. You have to always guard your influence and stay on the high ground. You need to stay where you ought to stand as a Christian. If you stand for what is right, you are going to live right, do right, and stay right.

### **Stay on "Strait Street"**

The Lord saved me from false religion. I was raised in sectism, and because they did not have much of a standard, my conversation was terrible. God had to work on me, but praise God, He cleaned me up. By His grace, I am going to stay clean. I want to stay where He can use me. I want to stay where He and I can have fellowship. If you have lost your testimony, you will lose your influence.

Are you having trouble dealing with some things? Maybe some wrong thoughts have come into your mind, and the enemy has been fighting you hard, and you just do not know what to do. Maybe you are just about to lean in the wrong direction. Please, do not make that deci-

sion. You need to get help from God. You must get back on "Strait Street" and get back into the things of God. Leaning in the wrong direction will take you away from God.

You should not lean toward compromise. I thank God for the standard of holiness. You must not lean toward the world or think about giving up on God. There is nothing to go back to. If it seems hard when you have God with you, what do you think it would be like if you were to leave God? Then you would not have anyone to help you. The devil has no mercy. God will take you through. You can go through any test, any trial, or any valley with God's help. You should not think, "I am just going to give up." You should not even consider that to be an option. The Lord started a good work in you, and He is able to finish that work.

Do you know when some people are more apt to backslide? First, they begin to cool off a little spiritually, and then they do not get as much out of the service. They may start to find fault with the preacher. They may say, "I didn't like what he preached, and I'm not getting fed anymore." Friend, the problem is not with the preacher. You are the one who is having the problem, and the enemy is feeding that problem. You need to think back to when the problem first started. It might have started as a small thing, but the enemy keeps feeding that, and it has grown. The devil knows what he wants to accomplish. He wants you to get cold in your experience with God.

I was raised in the country, and we did not know anything about having a thermostat. If we needed heat, we had to build a fire. If you are a little cold, do you know what is the best thing to do? You should come up to where the heat is. When I was growing up, we had one of those big heating stoves, but it just warmed us on one side at a time. When we got too hot on one side, we turned around the other way. I want to tell you, God has a place where you can get warm and stay

warm. He will put joy in your heart and soul!

One song says, "*We have a good home in the fold of our Lord, Where His sanctified children all dwell.*" Another song says, "*Keep me underneath the spout where the glory gushes out.*" Praise God, if you want to be underneath that spout, the devil and all his imps cannot keep you from getting what God has for you. You need to get closer to God if you are having difficulties.

### **Be an Overcomer**

If you are having any kind of problem, you need to get it taken care of. Just as in your physical body, there are illnesses, even cancer, that, if caught soon enough, can be treated and taken care of. However, if you let the problem go, it usually gets worse and worse. That is the way it is spiritually. The problem that you are dealing with may be small, but if the devil has his way, it will snowball and become larger than you can handle. You need to bring it to Jesus and get it taken care of, and then you can lean in the right direction. You must lean toward holiness and modesty.

You are never going to get rid of the humanity in you until you breathe your last breath. The humanity in each of us makes us vulnerable to these things. That is the reason we have to be taught to listen and to get a firm hold on Truth. We each must be an overcomer. If you do not overcome the flesh, the flesh will overcome you.

If you are having trouble, you need to do as the Apostle Paul said in 1 Corinthians 9:27 and keep under your body "and bring it into subjection." You might be surprised at how much victory you can have if you will do that. We all have to do that. If you have victory, it is due to your being an overcomer.

In every age and in each of the seven letters in the Book of Revelation, the Bible talks about blessings to those who are overcomers. In this Laodicean (lukewarm) age,

there is much to overcome. If you do not overcome it, it will overcome you, and you will lose the victory. You need to get strong in the doctrine and settled in the things of God.

The devil does not want you to make a commitment. He does not want you to make a decision that you are going all the way with God. Do you know why he does not? A soul that is totally sold out to God and has it settled does not turn to the right hand or to the left. This just about paralyzes the devil, and He does not have much to work with. He likes to work with the doubting mind. I am not saying you can get to the place where there is no temptation, but you can convince the devil. When he sees you coming along, he will say: "There is no need to mess with that fellow. I have tried him, and he is totally sold out to God." This is the greater part of the battle.

### **Be Steadfast**

If you are being tossed about and you are not really settled, thinking you ought to give up, you will not have any power with God, and you are just a playhouse for the devil.

I think the devil must have just about given up on Job. He watched Job. Job had integrity and character, and he loved God. He was determined to do what was right. The devil likes to go to some people's houses where he can be fed. When God said to the devil, "Hast thou considered my servant Job?" the devil did not say, "Yes, I have been there several times." You can tell from the conversation that he had been testing Job and was not having any success. In essence, he told God, "If You will just let me get to Job for a little while, he will curse You to Your face."

The devil got so upset that he said, "You have a hedge around him, and I cannot get to him." You can have a hedge around you if you will hang up a sign that says "No

Vacancy." When you are traveling, and you start looking for a motel room, if the sign says, "No Vacancy," do you stop and go in and say, "Hey, I need a room"? No, you have read the sign and continue to look for some place else to stay. Well, you can have a sign (not a visible one) hanging over you, and the devil can know you well enough to know that you are committed to doing what is right. There is no need for him to try to get you to stay home from church on Sunday morning because you have it settled that you are going.

What is going to keep the devil from getting to you? He can holler at you over the fence, but he cannot get in because you have said: "No Vacancy. I am not going to listen to you. I am going to do what is right. I am going to serve God."

As I was growing up, sometimes when I was ready to go outside to play, my father wanted me to do something, and it would mess up my plans. I would do as he said, because I knew better than to disobey him, but I did not enjoy it. When we serve God from the heart, there is so much joy and peace in it. He just floods the soul and we love to do it. I like to go to the house of God to see what God will do, because He always works in wondrous ways.

### **Be a Godly Example**

You should not lean toward missing church or worldliness. The spirit of the world will get hold of you. No doubt, you can see what sin is doing to sinners and to some of your loved ones. Worldliness is being like the world. John said in 1 John 2:15a, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world." Do not allow dressing modestly and living this Christian life to become a burden to you. You should enjoy it!

If you are not careful, little by little, the devil will try to pull you into the wrong crowd. If you dress right, you should not feel beat down

about it. You are a light to the world. If you are having trouble with the standard, you need to get the thorn out, so to speak. It could push you over the edge. You should be an example of what living for God is all about. You should not be leaning toward rising up against the standard. If you are having trouble with the standard and you do not get help, it will not be long until you throw off the standard. God wants to help you.

You should not lean toward sectism, an easier way, or loose living. You should want to get closer to God. If you have a godly pastor who preaches the Truth, you should not reject his counsel. He is the watchman. He is the one whom God has placed there to watch for your soul. The Lord would not put a person in the position of pastor who does not have a heart of love for people and compassion for the people in the congregation. He wants to see you make Heaven your home. That is the reason he cries out against anything that would put your soul in peril. You would not want him to wait to cry out after the wolf has already gotten you. You want him to cry out: "Look out! Here comes the wolf!" That is what God will help him to do.

You should never lean toward unfaithfulness. You can overcome all the things that might hinder you. Tests and trials will come as you are living for God, but you need to live above the fray.

The devil would like to weigh you down with troubles so that you cannot help anyone else. If you have been a saint of God for any length of time, you ought to have the victory. You should have the strength to help others. The Lord wants you to reach out to others. You should not spend all your praying time on yourself, but you should spend time praying for others as well. You should busy yourself with helping others and always hold fast to that which is right.

*(Compact Disc TR-1579)*

*Genesis 2:15 And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.*

*Genesis 1:26 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over*

*the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.*

# The Seeds of Light and Darkness



*Brother Mike Wilks*

## God Is in Control

As we look at these Scriptures, we can see that we are made in God's image, and God gave man dominion over the creatures on the land and in the sea. God has dominion over the people, although many do not recognize that fact. Many people are out doing their own thing, but God is still in control. Many religions are making a mockery of God's Word, and they are causing all kinds of trouble. Prayer is the only thing that can change anything.

When we look at the dominion that God has, we realize that He has given mankind amazing dominion. He lets man control his own destiny. We each have a destiny, and we each have a choice. John 19:11 says,

"Jesus answered [He was speaking to Pilate], Thou couldst have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above." The only reason the President has the power he has is that God gave it to him. It is the same with each of us. Whatever sphere of influence we have, it is because God gave it to us. We are absolutely nothing. Right now you are breathing His air, and you are dwelling on His ground.

Some people are so proud and think they know so much, but friend, we are nothing. People may make all kinds of proclamations, but let us wait till the end of the matter. We are going to be in that throng one day. The people who speak swelling words are going to remember the Christian in the back of their minds and say: "I wish I had lived

the way he lived. Now I see why he lived his life as he did." We are going to stand before God one day.

God has established the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness. Psalm 119:105 says, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." God is light, but right from the beginning another power was working, and that was the power of darkness. In the garden the old devil, through the serpent, started working. From the beginning of time, we have had two kingdoms.

Jesus said in John 8:44, speaking to the Jews, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar,

and the father of it."

There is a false doctrine that teaches that the devil was once in Heaven. What a phony doctrine that is! The Scripture says he was a murderer from the beginning. If you are going to take everything literally, then that would mean the angels have a flesh, but there is no flesh in Heaven. The Scripture says he was a murderer from the beginning and abode not in the Truth. If one is dwelling in Heaven, he is dwelling in the presence of Truth.

Most people do not want to look deeply into the Word. They just want to live in a couple of chapters or in a couple of Books of the Bible, but Jesus told John to eat the whole Book. If you are going to be a child of God, you have to eat the whole Book. We cannot live out of only a few Books of the Bible in the Church of God. You can find comfort in every Book. Some people want to stay in the Book of Acts, but there is much more to it than that. God has a message all through His Word, and when you read it, it all comes together.

### **The Two Kingdoms**

What causes people in the world to behave the way they do? Some people say there are no answers. They do not know why people are acting that way. First of all, they act the way they do because of what they feed on, and in back of it all is the devil. Once you open your heart to him, there is no telling how deeply in sin you will go. You have no power against him.

I used to think that I had such discipline that I could control anything I wanted to. I even thought I could pick up the cigarette habit just to see how strong I was to lay that habit down. How foolish was that! When you live in sin, this is what the devil will tell you. These are the things that work on your mind.

Once God turns something loose on you, as He did King Saul in the Old Testament, you have no power against it. God turned an evil spirit

loose against Saul, and Saul had no power against it. No matter how strong you may think you are, without God you are going to fold. This is the reason you need to have a living experience of God's Word.

Two kingdoms are issuing decrees, but the majority of the world is taking the easy road. When you talk to people, often they want something easy. If they are feeling bad physically, they just want to take a pill. All they want is something easy spiritually as well. They want to go to church and hang out for a little while, have some coffee and cookies, and go home. When you go to the house of God, you should want to hear from God. You need spiritual strength for the week. You never know what kind of situation you might get into. I ask God to help me and give me backbone when problems come up. We all need that.

The Bible says the fear of man is a snare, and fear is strong. When peer pressure starts working, no matter who you are, you need God working on the inside to help you. Solomon said the fear of man is a snare, and he was the wisest man who has ever lived. God's kingdom is perceived by some as harsh, rugged, and rigid, but He makes it all worth your while. The way does get difficult sometimes. Every saint of God can attest to that. God comes down and meets with us, and that makes it worth every struggle and sacrifice ever made.

Ephesians 6:12 says, "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, [Not once do you ever read in the Book of Acts of Paul raising up an army and fighting people. He conquered evil with God's power. All our weapons are mighty through God, and He gets all the glory.] but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."

The Bible says to pray for those in authority so that we may live in peace and go to the house of God and worship. That is a good thing. I

would not want to hide in somebody's basement to try to worship God. We need to pray for peace and pray for our leaders. They need guidance. Proud men may think they have things figured out, but we are supposed to pray for them so that God will help them in their decisions. What an awesome job it is to run the country! Our leaders need the wisdom of God, whether they ask for it or not.

In Romans 7:23 we read, "But I see another law in my members," warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. The devil is working on the instruments of the flesh. God's plan is perfect, but the devil works on human nature to corrupt it. He takes human pride and works it for destruction. He takes the natural things that God put in man, and takes them too far. The devil, through the avenue of the flesh, will work on you. That is the reason you have to watch your conduct.

Young person, you have to watch the flesh. You can get in a certain situation, and the flesh can become really strong. You need to flee such situations. You should not want to put yourself in a situation to prove how strong and how spiritual you are. You may say: "I can handle things. I'm getting along just fine." Friend, that is the flesh speaking. You need the power of God.

### **Guard Against Spiritual Wickedness**

The rulers of darkness preside over Christless religions. Second Corinthians 6:15 says, "And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?" Young person, do not let the devil pull that one over on you. You may say, "If I marry someone who isn't a Christian, I can bring him to church, and he can learn." It does not work that way. You should let him come to church first and see how he stands for a while. If he gets saved and establishes himself, that

would be wonderful. You need to ask yourself: "What do we have in common? What are we going to talk about?"

In Acts, Chapter 19, we find that Demetrius, a silversmith who made silver shrines for the goddess Diana, was upset because his trade was being destroyed by the power of the Gospel. He and the other workers of similar trades got the whole town in an uproar, because the Gospel was destroying their wealth. Those people were angry about that, so they began shouting, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians" (Acts 19:28). This was spiritual wickedness. As the devil looked at the church, he knew that he could not take it on through paganism, so he had to come through a different avenue.

The Apostle Paul wrote in Ephesians 2:6, "And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." God places you in the body where He wants you. He said He made us sit together in heavenly places.

Division is sin. Some people get so angry when they come under that message. They need to unpack their bags, and then they will not have to worry about that message. They need to sit down and enjoy the good things of God and quit moving around. What are these people looking for? Friend, it is dangerous to come under the sin of division. You need to stay away from it. I do not want to struggle about where I am going to go to church every Sunday. God forbid! I know where I am going. I do not want to play around with religion. Do not play around with religion, friend, because another spirit will take hold of you. When a minister gets up, he had better preach the Word of God. Gospel singing is wonderful, but singing has not saved anyone; it takes the Word of God.

Second Thessalonians 2:7 reads, "For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way." This verse in the Amplified Bible states, "For the mystery

of lawlessness (that hidden principle of rebellion against constituted authority) is already at work in the world, [but it is] restrained only until he who restrains is taken out of the way." Friend, that is personal. Who restrains that which is working on you? You are not just out in the world, and something comes along and washes you to shore. You allow that thing to work until you are taken out of the way. You have a choice either to stand against iniquity or to let it take you out of the way. This was what was working. The devil was just biding his time. He knows human nature, and human nature is to let down. That is what we have to guard against.

When a team that is not expected to win wins a ball game, they experience a huge emotional victory. However, if the team loses the next game, that is a huge let down to the team and its fans. That is something we have to guard against in the church. We worship in heavenly places. People say Mount Everest is the highest spot on earth, but it is not. When God is with you while you are worshiping, that is the highest place you can be, spiritually speaking; there is no higher.

### **Seeds of Darkness**

The devil wants to make his way into people's lives, and unfortunately he has in too many cases. John 13:2 says, "And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him." The devil needs suitable ground to sow the seeds of darkness. The devil has some seeds unlike any other, because they grow in darkness. There are no other plants that exist like the devil's. They do not need light. They grow and take root in the hearts of those who allow them, which is exactly what the devil wants. Once those seeds take root, it is hard to get rid of them. Some are worse than others, and some have roots that are nearly impossible to destroy.

I do not know if you have ever

seen kudzu. It grows in the South, and once it starts growing, it is almost impossible to get rid of. It is a horrible vine that grows about a foot a day, and it destroys everything. That is the way it is with the devil. He wants to get into your heart to crowd out the Word of God; then it will not be long until you will be on the outside of the church looking in. Weeds are wild and unruly. They do not need tender care. You do not have to do anything for them. They just sprout up everywhere. Likewise, the devil is everywhere trying to plant his seed in people's hearts. He tries to plant seeds when you go to work or when you are partaking of entertainment. You must be careful.

The Gospel can clear things up. Deuteronomy 29:18 speaks of "a root that beareth gall and wormwood." First Timothy 6:10 says, "For the love of money is the root of all evil." Hebrews 12:15 reads, "Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled." You can deceive yourself if you hop around here and there. Some people around the church are just hanging out on the fringe edges, never getting involved. They are just there to fill a seat. They need to get saved and get involved.

If God asks you to do something, He will give you the grace to do it. It might feel like it is going to kill you. I know that feeling, but God will help you, and you can make it. Afterwards, God will bless you for it. It is well worth your while to put time into the work of God. Sometimes you are going to get in a situation where you really need God. He is watching, He cares, and He wants to fill your need.

Some people only want to hear smooth things. They do not want their feathers to be ruffled, so to speak. They only want to hear about the love of God and not the wrath of God. The love of God is wonderful, but the Word of God is going to measure every one of us. When you get under the sound of the Gospel,

God is going to measure you to see how you have measured to His Word. Preaching is a great responsibility; it is serious. Every minister who has ever preached the Gospel prays that it becomes serious to the hearers.

### Following His Steps

When my feet are planted over in Heaven, I will know then that I can never lose out with God. I am living for that day! Can you imagine knowing that you have made it through? The only way you are going to get there is to fight the good fight of faith. You are not going to get there by coasting along. You will have to press every step of the way.

People do not understand salvation until the Gospel light shines on them. What is light? The dictionary says it is "electromagnetic radiation by which things are visible." A lamp or a window is a source of light. Spiritual light makes God visible to us. Some people asked Jesus to show them the Father. He told them He was showing them God through His actions. God is a Spirit, and we are never going to see Him physically. We could not handle seeing Him in the flesh. It would be too much for us. We will have to get a new body to be able to handle that.

God is a Spirit, and Jesus said that His works show us the Father. In John 10:30 Jesus said, "I and my Father are one." John 10:37-38 states: "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him." You cannot know God if you do not possess His Spirit and have a knowledge of His Word.

In 1 Peter 2:20-23 we read: "For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us,

leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth. [He is our pattern. Many people believe they cannot help but sin. When they make statements such as that, they do not truly understand the Bible. If you really study the Bible, you will see that holiness is the theme all the way through, from the beginning to the end.] Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously." Christian friend, when you are suffering, you are suffering for the cause of Christ. It is a glorious thing because He is going to reward you for it.

Many people are in prison cells suffering for doing the wrong things. If not for the grace of God, it could be you or me. There is no glory in that kind of suffering; it is a shame. When you are reviled for the Word of God, there is a glory that comes with it because God is pleased with you. God's Son had to suffer, and we are not going to get around it. When the devil comes against you, that is suffering. He will come against you and make your life horrible if he can. During those times, you need to call on God.

We read in 1 Peter 3:1-2: "Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear." Friend, when you suffer in this life, just as Christ brought souls to God through His suffering, people around you may be brought to God by your suffering. Nothing is more powerful than when you suffer for the cause of Christ. God is glorified as at no other time. If you are going through a hard place, God is working. When you suffer for the Gospel, God is working through you, and that is something that you can be confident about.

### Having a Clean Heart

How is your light? You are not going to win the world by sitting in a church building. As a Christian, you are Christ's disciple, and you are to minister to others by the way you live. People are watching your life. The only way they are going to come to God is by hearing your conversation or by watching how you act. You need to make sure you have an up-to-date experience. People know whether or not you have the goods. I want people with whom I come in contact to see and feel something different. That is when God can begin to work on them.

You must have a clean heart for your prayers to go through. When your heart is clean, you have power with God. Prayer changes things. Do you realize how powerful it is to pray for someone and to have that prayer go through? Do not let the devil tell you any differently. Just because something does not happen right away does not mean that your prayer is not going through.

If you have a clean heart, you need to make sure that you pray for those around you. It will have an effect. I know prayer had an effect on my life. If somebody had not prayed for me, I do not know where I would be today. There are people out in the world who want Truth. It is up to every one of us to try to reach out to others. It is a serious thing. People are not going to be won to Christ any other way. What a responsibility it is to be in the Kingdom of God!

Let us work as never before to save souls. Being a soul winner is the greatest calling. I want to be a soul winner, and I know every child of God wants to be a soul winner. We do not want to go to the Judgment empty handed. We want to take souls with us. That excites me, and as a Christian, it should excite you.

*(Compact Disc TR-1049)*

[Esp. for Young People—contin. from p. 15]

Matthew 12:36 that we will give an account at the Judgment for every idle word we speak. That is the reason we must be very careful of what we say. Verse 14 continues, ". . . with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." We will have to give an account of how we spend our time.

At the year's end, many companies have what they call an audit, and those in authority must give an account of what was wrought throughout that year. They must answer questions such as: How much did you gain this year? Did you go into more debt or make a profit? How many employees were hired? What kind of production did you have? I believe that it will be like that on the great Judgment Day. Today you can take an account of your own life. What did you do last year? How did you spend your time? Was it spent in good, wholesome activities and in reading God's Word? Did you waste it on frivolous and loose activities? An unseen pen is writing every detail of your days. How will your life read? How will your story end?

One quote says, "I expect to pass through this world but once; any good thing therefore that I can do, or any kindness that I can show to any fellow creature, let me do it now; let me not defer or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again."

Again, Jesus said in verse 12 of the Scripture lesson, "Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost." That verse in the Amplified Bible reads, "When they had all had enough, He said to His disciples, Gather up now the fragments (the broken pieces that are left over), so that nothing may be lost and wasted."

Young person, I want to encourage you to use your leisure moments for the Lord when you have no pressing obligations. You need to be very careful with your leisurely moments; do not waste them. It is good to have a Bible and good, spiritual literature to read.

Reading your Bible in public is a good witness. People may ask you questions, and that is a wonderful opportunity. You can feed your mind. Do not waste it, but fill it with good things.

I want you to read a poem that I wrote entitled "How Will You Spend Today?"

*We have this day but twenty-four hours,  
How will you spend each one of these  
hours?*

*Will they be used to further His cause  
Or tragically wasted seeking man's  
applause?*

*We must give an account of each deed  
that we do,  
Whether it be noble or evil through  
and through,  
The things that you engage in,  
The different games you play,  
Do they fortify your Christian influence  
Or weaken your good name?*

*In all your activities, does the life  
of Christ appear?  
By your response to those about you,  
And by the souls you help to cheer?  
Make each second count for Christ  
By filling it with good words  
of praise and kind deeds,  
Living as Jesus would.*

*May each fleeting moment of this  
present day at hand  
Be consumed with eternal issues  
and not with earthly plans.  
How will you spend today?  
How will you spend this hour?  
Will you let the Lord direct  
Or will your time the world devour?*

Young person, what are you doing with your fragments of time? Let me mention a few ways to use your time. You should carry a Bible with you. It might be helpful to carry a note pad to jot down some thoughts that might come to your mind while you are studying and meditating on God's Word. You can jot down questions that may come to your mind. You can make a detailed list of what God has done for you and of the things that you are

especially thankful for and tell others about them. It is good to carry wholesome literature, such as *The Gospel Trumpeter*. If you have fragments of time, you can listen to good, wholesome church music.

Other ways to use fragments of time are to witness or to help someone. You could give someone you know a ride or prepare a meal for someone. You could speak or sing at a nursing home. You could write a song or a poem or send someone a letter, a thank you card, or a card of appreciation. You could make a phone call to encourage someone. Certainly, much time should be spent in prayer. You need to busy yourself in the work of God.

You have only one life. You should not waste your time on careless activities. Yes, certain activities, a little sports, or getting outside and running around are good, but 1 Timothy 4:8 tells us that "bodily exercise profiteth little." More than anything else, you should not waste your time on sinful things. When you invest your time in the things of God, your return is always greater than what you put in. Many things in the world that you invest in will be lost, so you need to be very careful of how you spend your time.

Many people say, "There are not enough hours in a day." Since the dawn of humanity, God instituted a twenty-four hour day. Fanny Crosby, who wrote more than eight thousand hymns, had the same twenty-four hours that you and I have. D. S. Warner, who established more Church of God congregations than anyone we know of, had the same twenty-four hours that you and I have. J. S. Bach, who wrote more than one thousand compositions, had the same amount of time that you and I have. The problem is not that we do not have enough time. The problem is, often time is wasted on trivial things. Let us rearrange our activities so that we are involved in things for Christ. Let us be all that God would have us to be.

Brother Reggie Stegmeier

[Guest Editorial—contin. from page 2]  
God has given him or her to do. When explaining the parable of the talents, Jesus told those who had been faithful, "Well done, good and faithful servant . . . enter thou into the joy of thy lord" (Matthew 25:23). It requires each one to do his or her part wholeheartedly to enable the spiritual body to function efficiently.

God does not grant the choosing of one's place in the body to the individual. Having the privilege of selecting a particular place or position could prove to be dangerous. An individual may select a lesser place than what God knows he is capable of or desires for him. On the other hand, there may be that one who would select a place above his ability. For one to try and preach when God did not lead him to do so could bring great hurt to the individual and to the work of the Lord.

God chooses capable people to be in the ministry, to preach His Word, and to pastor a work. That person may not desire to have such great responsibility placed on him.

However, to continue to wholly follow the Lord and keep His smile of approval resting upon him, he must submit his will to God. God knows the ability that each one has and the potential of each one to be effective in the service of His kingdom. God will place each one in the body as it pleases Him, but if an individual refuses to accept his position, it causes God to become displeased.

There is great need for more workers and helpers in each local congregation. God needs ministers and missionaries who will consecrate their lives to work in His vineyard. It is needful for each one to surrender his life to be a helper in any position that God has. God places the members in the body, but it is up to each individual to fill the position that pleases Christ. Some feel they need some special prodding from the Lord before they act. Friend, to wait on this will cause you to rob yourself and the Lord of getting that job done.

If you desire to work for the

Lord but do not know for sure what your place is in the body, you need to go to God in prayer. Let the Lord know that you are available and willing to be used wherever He sees fit. Also, you should consult with your pastor (if you have one) and tell him of your desires. Remember, prayer is a necessity before you go to visit the sick or contact some soul who is discouraged. Working with those who have become discouraged requires God's guidance. There are many ways that God's people can be used. Praying for the burdens of others is one of the greatest needs. Working on the buildings, improving or keeping the grounds, preparing food for the sick and those who are bereaved is also needful. There is a place for you in the body and a work for you to do. Regardless of how great or small the task that you have been given, there are rich blessings to be received from the Lord.

Selected

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**You are writing a Gospel,  
A chapter each day,  
By deeds that you do,  
By words that you say.  
Men read what you write,  
Whether faithless or true;  
Say, what is the Gospel  
According to YOU?**

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2016 Camp Meeting Dates

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# Announcements

**Medina, OH**

May 16-22

**Revival:** Church of God, 6745 Wooster Pike, Medina, Ohio 44256

(The church is located on Route 3 South at Poe Road)

Evangelist: Brother Larry Dishman, Mobile, Alabama

Service times: Mon.-Fri. 7:00 p.m.; Sat. 6:00 p.m.; Sun. 10:30 a.m. &amp; 4:00 p.m.

For more information contact: 330-725-5993 or 330-421-0187

**Kensett, AR**

May 27-29

**Memorial Day Fellowship Meeting:** Kensett Church of God, 409 SE 2<sup>nd</sup> St., Kensett, AR 72082

Service times: Fri. 7:00 p.m.; Sat. Dinner will be served at 4:00 p.m. &amp; service will be at 7:00 p.m.

Sun. Worship 11:00 a.m. &amp; 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 (Cell) 501-593-5105

**Newark, OH**

June 19-26

**Camp Meeting:** Church of God, 675 N. Cedar St., Newark, OH 43055

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

Please make reservations in advance, if possible. *Please bring your own towels.*

For lodging/camper reservations, please contact Bro. Dave or Sis. Ruby Bush at 740-345-1213.

For further information contact: Pastor Roger L. Decker, 83 Decrow Ave., Newark, OH 43055

Telephone: 740-344-2543

**Canby, OR**

July 11-17

**Camp Meeting:** Church of God, 522 NW 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave., Canby, OR 97013

The first service begins Monday at 7:00 p.m. Two services daily: 10:30 a.m. &amp; 7:00 p.m.

A complimentary breakfast is available each morning at the motel. A meal will be served after the morning service. Also, the snack stand will be open after the evening services.

Please make reservations in advance, if possible.

For further information contact: Pastor E. David Stegmeier, 522 NW 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave., Canby, OR 97013

Telephone: 503-266-9297

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## The Church's Jubilee

*The light of eventide now shines the darkness to dispel,  
The glories of fair Zion's state ten thousand voices tell;  
For out of Babel God doth call his scattered saints in one,  
Together all one church compose, the body of his Son.*

*The Bible is our rule of faith, and Christ alone is Lord,  
All we are equal in His sight when we obey His word;  
No earthly master do we know, to man-rule will not bow,  
But to each other and to God, eternal trueness vow.*

*O church of God, the day of jubilee  
Has dawned so bright and glorious for thee;  
Rejoice, be glad! thy Shepherd has begun  
His long divided flock again to gather into one.*

C. W. Naylor

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