

SOUNDING FORTH THE SEVENTH AND LAST TRUMPET

Vol. 47 April 2017 No. 4



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?"

THE GOSPEL TRUMPETER
USPS #871620

Periodicals postage paid at the post office in Newark, Ohio 43055.

POSTMAN, send form 3579 to the printer:

THE GOSPEL TRUMPETER
675 N. Cedar Street
Newark, Ohio 43055

This periodical carries no subscription price; however, it is partially maintained through the gifts and offerings of its readers, with the balance of the expenses being paid by the local congregation.

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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 (erJohn 15:2-6)
- Membership is offered to all (Rev. 22:17)
- Final rewards (Rev. 20:12-15; 21:3-4; 22:14)
- Bible name of the Church (Acts 20:28; Gal. 1:13; John 17:11)

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

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Annual Financial Report

The first issue of The Gospel Trumpeter was published and mailed to God's people in March 1971. Since then, many wonderful things have transpired. It began as a bimonthly periodical that was mailed to a few states. In 1982, the paper began to be published monthly instead of twice a month. Along with this change, the number of pages were increased. Many states and foreign countries receive the paper each month. Through the means of this printed paper, many of God's people have become acquainted with one another and lost souls have become saved.

When a work for Christ and His kingdom is successful, obstacles and hindrances always arise. By the grace of God, The Gospel Trumpeter has overcome the many hindrances intended to defeat or quell its progress. To God be the glory! He has thwarted every attempt that was made. As we reminisce over the years, we are made to realize how good and gracious the Lord has been to this religious effort. God has victoriously led us and helped us in the time of need. It makes us more keenly aware of the fact that we could never be triumphant without His divine help and leadership.

Many people who have been converted to Christ have sent letters of appreciation to us. Others have written letters rejoicing over the Truth proclaimed through the printed page. Isaiah 55:11 says, "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in

the thing whereto I sent it."

When the Church of God here in Newark, Ohio, began printing The Gospel Trumpeter forty-six years ago, it was a missionary effort. The purpose was to reach as many souls as possible with the Truth. It was also printed to encourage the saints to press on in their walk with Christ. With this in mind it was decided that no subscription cost would be attached to receive the paper. You, our readers, have wonderfully provided financial support to help sustain this operation.

Each year we have inserted our "Annual Financial Statement" of expenditures and the donations from our readers. We publish this statement to acquaint you with the financial costs involved to operate and maintain the printing of this journal. If you recall our past reports, you can readily see how prices have skyrocketed. It would be wonderful if supplies, paper, and postage costs could be lower, but it does not seem as though that will happen. Inflation has certainly been a problem, and it does not appear that it will decrease.

We certainly want to praise God for always providing the necessary help required for printing this paper. As we offer honor and glory to Him, we do not want to fail to give our faithful readers a special thank you as well. Your letters, prayers, and financial support through the years have been a great blessing and a help to the paper, the editor, and the many

[continued on page 7]

Philippians 3:7 But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.

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

9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by

faith:

10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

11 If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

12 Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.

13 Brethren, I count not myself

to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,

14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

15 Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.

The Need of Pressing



Brother Roger L. Decker

Pressing Toward the Mark

Dear one, you must put forth effort to make it into God's Heaven. To get ahead in the world in which we live, whether it is with a job, a business, or whatever it might be, you have to put forth effort to be a success. Often when a person begins a new factory job, he does not have union backing for the first thirty days. Sometimes that is when you see the best workers. The reason they work so hard is that the company has the right to terminate them within thirty days if they do not

meet the company's expectations. Therefore, many put forth extreme effort.

When I think of that scenario, I think of a newborn babe in Christ—the zeal, the love, and the work that one puts forth to grow spiritually. After one has been saved for a while, he has a tendency to relax his efforts. You can rest assured, dear one, when you are in that relaxed mode, the devil is going to be busy working on you.

If you are God's child, the devil wants you back, and he would like to get to you after you have gained

some influence, some knowledge, and some friends. No doubt, you have heard it said that the bigger the tree, the more little trees it takes down when it falls in the woods. As a Christian, you are going to have to put forth extreme effort to stay saved.

The Apostle Paul said he pressed toward the mark. He knew when he was called on the Damascus Road that God had a job for him to do, and he never forgot it. He worked at it right up to the closing days of his life, and he pressed toward the mark. He had a goal, and

that goal was to please Jesus Christ. Dear one, are you putting forth the effort that you should to see the inside of God's Heaven? Are you up and down in your experience, hot for God one week but cooled off the next week? Are you not alarmed that God might call you home while you are cooled off?

My prayer is that God will find me doing His will when He comes for me. I do not want to be wrapped up in the things of this world. I do not want to be wrapped up in sinful things. I want to be hot for God, do you? To be hot for God, you must put forth much effort.

Young person, you are going to have lots of peer pressure. The devil wants you to worry about what other young people might think if you carry your Bible and take notes in church. I cannot think of a better place to carry your Bible than to church, and I cannot think of a better place to take notes than the house of God while the preached Word is going forth. You must keep pressing, dear one. You are going to have to put forth extreme effort to make it to Heaven.

Sometimes you might be tempted not to attend some church services, but every service is just as important as the other services. You are not going to make it inside God's Heaven by picking and choosing what services you attend. When it came time to be in the synagogue, Jesus was there. Luke 4:16 says it was His custom to be there. In other words, one could rely on Jesus to be there when they had services. Paul wrote in Philippians 3:15, "Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you."

Paul wrote in verse 14 of our Scripture text, "I press toward the mark." The word *press* means "to push forward." Jesus used the same word when He said to "strive to enter in." That means to exert oneself vigorously, which is where we get our English word "agonize." So you could say, "I *agonize* toward the

mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

In every phase of life, whether physical or spiritual, there is a need of doing the very best that you can to the point of pressing. Every man is called by Christ for some purpose. God called you for a purpose; therefore, you should press on so that you might fulfill the purpose for which Christ called you. Press on! God has called you for a reason, and the devil wants nothing more than to sidetrack you and to get you out of the will of God, but you have to press, or strive. You are going to have to put forth great effort to enter into the Kingdom of God.

"Reaching Forth"

Along the way as you press, or strive, there are great blessings in serving God. There is a great God in Heaven who can help you if you live for Him. If you do not forsake Him, He will not forsake you. God only knows the adversity that could be lying out ahead. You do not know what is coming tomorrow. You might have it all planned out, but you do not know if you will ever see the light of another day. God does, which is why it pays to keep God foremost in your life.

The Apostle Paul said in Philippians 3:13, "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before." Those things you left behind in sin have not gotten any better. The glitter might be greater, but sin does not get any better. Leaving those things which were behind, what did Paul do? He reached forth to those things which were before. May God help us to put forth great effort.

The Apostle Paul wrote some very challenging words, and those words can help you to grow into a mature Christian, if you heed the words of admonition. Paul felt that when Christ appeared to him on the Damascus Road, He had a purpose

for him. Paul felt that he was bound to press on, lest he fail Jesus and frustrate that calling and vision.

Every man or woman is called to Christ for some purpose. Child of God, God has saved you for a purpose. He has not called you just to settle down and be inactive in the things of the Lord. He has called you for a purpose. Therefore, for your entire life, you must press on so that you may fulfill the purpose for which Christ has called you.

In our Scripture text the Apostle Paul stressed two main points. He said, "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." In the previous verse, he said, ". . . forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before." The two things that the Apostle Paul brought up are the past (forgetting the things that are behind), and the future (reaching forth to the things that are ahead). These are two things that a Christian must do to mature in his experience and to go forth for Jesus Christ.

First, you must forget those things that are behind you. The Apostle Paul brought up some of those things in his life. He mentioned that he was a Pharisee, a Hebrew of the Hebrews. The Apostle Paul had to forget those things, because he had a future. He had the calling of Jesus Christ to press toward the mark, or toward the goal, which is in Jesus Christ. That is what every Christian must do.

When people get weak in their Christian experience, the past seems to come before them again, and they forget, as Israel of old did. When they went to spy out the land of Canaan, they came to a place of discouragement, and they became so depressed that their past life in Egypt even looked good to them. Dear one, you are not thinking straight when the past life of sin looks good to you. Your thinking is wrong. Nothing about your sinful past could put you on the highway of holiness and get you into Heaven. The past was a burden to you. You

were not what you needed to be before God. Paul said to forget those things that are behind and to reach forth and press toward the mark of the high calling in Christ.

Focus on Winning the Race

As a Christian, you must not glory in any achievements and use those things as an excuse to relax. Those who are running hard to finish first cannot take time to relax or to rest for a while, spiritually speaking. Amos 6:1 warns, "Woe to them that are at ease in Zion, and trust in the mountain of Samaria, which are named chief of the nations, to whom the house of Israel came!" Resting on the accomplishments of the past is very easy. You may be tempted to say, "Let someone else do it for a while; I have done my share." Do not rest on what you have done in the past. You will find in the Word of God that those who were used of God were also the busiest.

Much work needs to be done when it comes to building up the Kingdom of God. Those who are working hard have their eyes on nothing but the goal. You should not look back or look to the side; you must keep your eyes on the goal. If you were running in a marathon race, you would not be concerned about the fellow behind you. The only thing you would focus on would be winning the race. You would have your eyes on crossing the finish line first.

The word *press* in our Scripture text implies that you must pursue, or follow after something. That is what a Christian must do. A mature Christian realizes that he must have discipline, and he must put forth so much effort that it is agonizing. The Christian knows he cannot relax his efforts or lower his standards and still be used of God and enter the bliss of Heaven.

If you are married and have an unsaved companion, you should not compromise the message to win your spouse. You must not compromise the standard, your faithfulness

to the house of God, or your efforts to appease him or her in any way. Now, that does not mean that you should browbeat your unsaved spouse every day with the Truth. You ought to live right, act right, do right, and frequent the house of God. You will do more to win your companion by going that route than any other way.

Jesus said in Luke 13:24, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able." Striving with something means "to labor fervently, to fight; to contend with an adversary, or struggle." The word *strive* in the Greek is the same word as *agonize*, and it represented one who was involved in Grecian games. An athlete struggled and put forth all his power to gain the victory. He trained long for the conflict to receive a corruptible crown.

First Corinthians 9:25 says, "And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible." The goals that pertain to this life are soon going to pass away, and it is very evident that one who does not prepare will never win the race.

I remember when I first entered the military. I traveled from Buffalo, New York, to Parris Island, South Carolina. I can still remember my three drill instructors. I have never been called so many bad names and let somebody get away with it. I spent thirteen weeks training hard. We were not trained just to put up a good fight, but we were trained to win the conflict.

Now, it was very difficult when we first started training. I thought I was in fairly good shape since I was a farm boy, but I soon found out differently. We found that the training was very beneficial. We could not have been ready to go to war without proper training. We could not be quitters, because quitters never win.

I had a smoking habit when I went to Parris Island, but I was not allowed to have a cigarette for the

first few weeks that I was there. Since I was not allowed to smoke, that shows that anyone can quit. It also shows that you will not die when you do not smoke a cigarette, even though you might think you will. There were lots of other things we wanted to do but could not. You see, you can break those vices if there is a need for you to break them.

You must always be pressing onward and upward to win an incorruptible crown. This race takes not only preparation but also discipline. The Apostle Paul said in 1 Corinthians 9:27, "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection."

The Discipline of the Mind

You have to be careful of what you think upon. Temptation normally starts in the mind before it gets into the heart. The Bible says in 2 Corinthians 10:4-5: "(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal [that word means *fleshly*], but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."

Child of God, I repeat, you have to be careful of what you think upon. You can get caught up in your thinking and become enticed. The next thing you know, you will start putting action to those thoughts. They need to be cast down through the weapons of our warfare, which are not fleshly but mighty through God. Imaginations need to be cast down, and thoughts need to be brought into captivity.

Again, Paul said the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty through God, because this is a spiritual battle. God is not going to have His people on a literal battlefield fighting with carnal weapons. The strength of the Christian is mighty through God. We must pray in the Spirit, be led of the Spirit,

walk in the Spirit, preach in the Spirit, and sing in the Spirit. That is where our effectiveness lies.

Zachariah 4:6 says, "Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts." We read in Isaiah 59:19, "So shall they fear the name of the LORD from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him."

You need a goal, a purpose, and intent. You must not run blindly, but you must have divine direction. Becoming more and more like your Savior, Jesus Christ, should be your intent. You should not choose a brother or a sister in a congregation as your pattern, but your goal should be becoming like Jesus Christ. That was Paul's burden, to be more like Christ.

Laying Aside Weights

In order to run the race, you must press, strive, and agonize. You are going to have to lay aside any weights that are heavy to your soul. You must get rid of weights that bog you down and hinder your soul from being what it needs to be. In Hebrews 12:1 we read, "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us."

Weights hinder the souls of God's people. That which is a weight to one person might not be a weight to another. A weight is a hindrance. What is hindering you from being your best for God? What are the weights that seem to be preventing you from being what you need to be for Jesus Christ?

Could it be that you are not putting forth enough effort to serve God? It could be that you are too lazy. I repeat, to serve God you have

to put forth effort. Now, God will remind you to pray, but He cannot pray for you. He might remind you to read your Bible, but He is not going to read it for you. He may remind you to go and visit the sick, but He is not going to do it for you. You have to put forth effort.

In Proverbs, Chapter 6, God took one of the smallest insects known to man, one that we all despise, and gave us a lesson in His Word. Verses 6-11 tell us: "Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise: Which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, Provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest. [Have you ever watched a colony of ants? They are extremely busy providing their meat in the summer and gathering their food in the harvest.]

"How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep? Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: So shall thy poverty come as one that travaileth [not travaileth but 'travelleth'], and thy want as an armed man."

Proverbs 13:4 says, "The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat." Some do not put forth enough effort, and others have a weight, or a hindrance, because they are discontented all the time. Serving God is not enough for them. They want God, but they want something more exciting. Some billboards are awfully alluring to young people. There would be no temptation if it did not seem exciting to the flesh. The devil will not tempt you with dull things. He would not tempt you with something your flesh would not be interested in. He is going to tempt you with something alluring, like you would see on the billboards advertising cigarettes or alcohol.

Some young people have felt that if they tried smoking cigarettes, they would know how to come against them. No, that is not true. You do not have to try cancer to know how to come against it. If you

mess around with these things, thinking you are missing out on the world's best, you may not be able to break free from them. Once tobacco gets into the bloodstream, it is like a drug. Others wanted to try alcohol, and then they could not lay it down. The best thing to do is to resist such temptations, and you can only do that through Jesus Christ.

Striving to Enter In

Philippians 4:11 reads, "Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." The Apostle Paul, writing to the young minister of Ephesus, Timothy, had this to say in 1 Timothy 6:6-8: "But godliness with contentment is great gain [notice that he said *godliness* with contentment]. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content." Discontentment could be a weight to you.

Another weight could be your personality. You might have to work on your personality. Maybe you are not a pleasant individual to be around. Maybe God has shown you that you need to work on it. Maybe you are too curt. Perhaps you do not use any finesse when you speak to others. Maybe you have a negative attitude, and it is so noticeable that some do not want to be around you. They do not want to get discouraged. If you keep company with a negative person all the time, that spirit is going to rub off on you. You are going to feel the same way. You are going to be depressed and discouraged. When an individual starts talking about others in a congregation or starts bringing up past sins, you need to be careful.

It could be that you have the weight of being worldly minded. Perhaps you are too involved with corruptible things, such as sports. There are lots of disappointments in sports, but there is no disappointment in Jesus Christ. It could be that you are caught up with Hollywood.

Another weight could be having too much self. Could it be that all you think about is yourself? Having too much self will hinder your walk with Jesus. Do things always have to be your way? Is it always your hurts, your failures, your offenses, and your feelings?

Another weight could be the excuses that you always offer up for the leanness in your soul. When you are not doing well spiritually, do you always blame it on something or someone else? If you are ever going to see the inside of Heaven, you are going to have to press. I repeat, you must strive to enter in.

Some people say, "I cannot wait to go to Heaven." That reminds me of a story that I read about a man who was carrying a big load of sticks. He said that load was so heavy that he wished that he could die. So he sat down on a bank and took the sack off his back. He wished that Death would pay him a

visit. Death visited him and whispered in his ear, "What do you want me to do?" He said, "Help put the knapsack back on my back."

A lot of people talk about going to Heaven, but they do not want to do the things that are needed to get there. You are going to have to put forth effort to make it into God's Heaven. Jesus said many would seek to enter in but would not be able. There are two reasons that they are not able. The first reason is, they seek to enter too late. The second reason is, they still want to live in iniquity. Dear one, God is not going to save you if you want to live in sin. If you want to continue to live in sin, God will let you have your sin.

In closing, Paul told Timothy in 1 Timothy 1:18, "This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare." God has everything you need to make it

if you press.

In Luke 14:16 we read that a certain man made a great supper, and all things were ready. Dear one, you do not want to be one who seeks Heaven too late. You do not want to come up before the Judgment with iniquity in your heart. What am I preaching on? I am preaching about the need of pressing. It is going to take effort to make it to Heaven, but thank God you do not have to travel the road by yourself. You have Jesus Christ to help you. The Lord knew that you could not fight this fight by yourself. He knew that no man could live holy within his own strength. He knew man could not avoid temptation through his own strength, so He provided a way to enter in. What you have to do is to strive, or press. If you do that, God has a place for you in His Heaven.

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[Annual Financial Report—continued from page 2]

volunteers. We surely covet your continued prayers and financial support to this missionary endeavor. We are living in a lost world that needs the Savior. Many true children of God need to be exposed to the eternal Truths of the Bible. There is a work for each of us to do before Christ returns for His bride. May we never become weary in our efforts to God and in winning the souls of mankind. Again, we thank you for all you have done to help support this work.

Statement of Condition for 12 months ending January 31, 2017

	Income	Expenses
Donations/Offerings.....	\$16,707.45	
Wages.....		\$ 47,012.01
Payroll Taxes/Insurance/Workers' Comp.....		28,012.79
Supplies.....		31,498.52
Equipment Purchased.....		6,038.50
Postage.....		70,558.75
Maintenance & Repairs.....		2,283.92
Miscellaneous Expenses.....		5,542.16
Subtotals.....	\$16,707.45	\$190,946.65

**Balance paid out of the general fund of the
Church of God congregation at Newark, OH..... \$174,239.20**

1 Chronicles 16:23 Sing unto the LORD, all the earth; shew forth from day to day his salvation.

24 Declare his glory among the heathen; his marvellous works among all nations.

25 For great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised: he also is to be feared above all gods.

26 For all the gods of the people are idols: but the LORD made the heavens.

27 Glory and honour are in his

presence; strength and gladness are in his place.

28 Give unto the LORD, ye kindreds of the people, give unto the LORD glory and strength.

29 Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come before him: worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.

30 Fear before him, all the earth: the world also shall be stable, that it be not moved.

31 Let the heavens be glad, and

let the earth rejoice: and let men say among the nations, The LORD reigneth.

32 Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof: let the fields rejoice, and all that is therein.

33 Then shall the trees of the wood sing out at the presence of the LORD, because he cometh to judge the earth.

34 O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever.

The Church Needs to Be Encouraged and Uplifted



Brother Irwin Seshier

Glorifying the Father

In the day in which we are living, many critical statements are being made about the true Church of God and toward men of God who uphold the bloodstained banner before a lost and dying world. The true church is under attack in the world. Many people want darkness instead of light, falsehood instead of Truth, and the world instead of holiness. As the people of God, we have an obligation to continue to live the Truth, to support the Truth, and to

back those who preach the Truth.

The day could come when Truth may be hard to come by. There might be a time in the future when the church cannot gather together as we do today. God forbid, but we do not know what the future holds. That is the reason we need to be encouraged and uplifted. Although the world is dark and some have evil to say about everything the church does, we need to raise the bloodstained banner high. We still have an obligation. There could come a time when Holy Ghost preachers might

not be allowed to publicly declare God's Word. I thank God that we serve One who knows all about us, One who controls the future, and One who knows what we need.

John 12:28-33 says: "Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him. Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes. Now is the

judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die."

Jesus continues to draw all men and women to Him. There is a drawing power in Jesus Christ, but you have to be sick of sin. When I was through with sin, I did not want to go back to it. It amazes me how some people are drawn back to the very things from which Jesus saved them. Friend, if you have been drawn back to sinful things, there has been a letting down on your part.

We should want to be in a position to lift up Jesus Christ. I believe every saint of God wants to do that. We should want to exalt Him in all areas of life. Why? He died for us; He gave everything He had for us. I thank God for that! Can we at least give Him our lives, our time, and our efforts? He gave everything. No other man or woman was able to die for our sins.

God deserves your honor. You need to honor Him with your prayers, with your singing, and in the sanctuary where His Holy Spirit is. Saint of God, do not take this lightly. You need to show dignity to Him.

Jesus Christ was lifted up one day to die on a cruel Cross, and that Cross represents victory over Satan, sin, death, hell, and the grave. I want you to think of that. What a mighty God we serve! Death could not hold Him in the grave. That power transfers over to the child of God. If you are saved, you have that power, not in yourself, but through Jesus Christ, to live above sin. Sinner friend, you do not have to live in sin. The Holy Spirit can give you the power to say no to sin.

Being Dedicated to God and His Work

Jesus did a mighty work, and at the completion of His life, this was expressed at Calvary. Jesus was the

ultimate sacrifice of the Lamb of God for the sins of the people. You and I were included in that group. Even though we were not there at that time, it was my sins and your sins that nailed Him to the Cross. He looked all the way down through time and saw your sins and my sins. He died for our sins. He loved you so much that He took your place and my place at Calvary. Do you truly understand what this means?

Child of God, do you praise and honor Christ enough? Do you exalt Him enough? The redeemed must lift Him up and exalt His precious name. The lost are not going to uplift Jesus Christ. There are needs in their hearts and lives. Many people so desperately need Him to save them from this sin-cursed world. As the Church of God, we must let the world see Christ in our lives. I am not talking about having just a form of religion but a true possession. May God help us. Too many people merely have a religious form. The world is sick of that. The world is looking for those who are really dedicated to God and to the work of God.

Jesus Christ is concerned about our lives, not only individually but also collectively. I am thankful for my church family. We need to let other saints know how much we appreciate them, and it ought to come from the heart. If ones really let others know exactly how much they care about them, there would be less putting people down, less fault finding, less back biting, and less criticism.

Showing Love and Care for One Another

The church is a family that gathers together in love and compassion. No matter what your race or your social status is, the body of Christ is a true witness to others. The devil wants to draw your love away from your brothers and sisters and work against the church from within.

We read in 1 Corinthians 12:23-

27: "And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked: That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye [this is a very important key ingredient] are the body of Christ, and members in particular." We each have a particular and powerful position in the body of Christ.

God is watching you, dear one. He is looking at your life. You cannot win the war unless you win the battles. The church is strengthened through the battles. Members should feel the pain of other members. We need one another's prayers, not only when we go to the house of God but also when a member comes to your mind. God will not fail us, church. We ought to pray for the worship services and pray for the needs of others. If you needed a definite touch from God, you would want the saints to pray for you. Let us pray for one another.

The church family can help you to grow spiritually. Someone once wrote, "You will never grow to maturity just by attending worship services and by being a passive spectator." We need to be active in all phases of the services and grow in the things of God. The problem is there are too many spectators and not enough volunteers.

More than fifty times in the New Testament, the phrase "one another" or "each other" is used. We have a responsibility to our church family. I believe we can grow spiritually by being around others who are spiritual and learn from them. When you are around others who are spiritual, they share with you the battles they

are going through and the things that they have done to fight the battle. You never know, the person to whom you are talking could be going through a battle similar to what you are going through. Hearing about those experiences may help you to grow spiritually. You need to share with others the battles that you have fought and the victories that you have won.

When you find something good, you should not keep it to yourself. If you find a bargain, you cannot wait to get on the phone to let people know that you found something cheaper at one place than you did down the road. Some are hesitant when it comes to talking to people about the battles they have fought and the victories they have won. You may be able to take inventory of what you could have done differently. Sometimes the Lord wants you to share information with someone else so you can help another brother or sister.

Having Unfeigned Love

God put you in a congregation to uplift and strengthen others and to grow. You are not placed in a congregation just to take up a seat. A true child of God is a help, a strength, and a pillar. If I am going through a trial in my life, I can look to other individuals for help. I can see those who have gone through the same battle with victory. Surely we need God to help, but we also need one another. Remember, we are a family in Christ Jesus.

John 13:35 tells us, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." This love is precious. Love for the people of God and the love for the Word of God inspires me to go through the battle. No matter what trial comes my way, I know that I can call on ones to pray for me and to encourage me.

Prayer services are an outstanding place to get the day started. They are beneficial to your soul. We all have needs. Many people need to

be saved and others need to be healed. There are needs in every congregation and in the world. When God sees that we have taken time out of our day to gather together and to honor Him, He will honor that.

Are you in a position to encourage and uplift others? Can others look to you for the support and the compassion they so desperately need? Are you a light to others? Romans 12:10 says, "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another." Are you concerned when others miss the services? They may be going through some trials in their lives. Do not become critical. Let the Spirit of God work on their lives and remember them in prayer.

I have a desire to be in the services twice on Sunday and on Wednesday night. However, some may need that desire strengthened. Instead of pointing a finger at them and telling them that they should have been there, you should encourage them to come. They know they should be there. You should not drill them about why they have not been in the services, but you should show concern and let them know that you missed them.

We read in 1 Peter 1:22, "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently." The word *fervently* means "having or showing great emotional warmth, devotion, or enthusiasm."

Encouraging One Another

Now, I do not get my eyes on people, but I do notice when others have gone through the battles victoriously. They showed the devil that they were not going to give in to him. They have fought the battle and won. That lets me know that if I go through the same battle, I can come through with victory too. They are an inspiration to others.

We each have a responsibility to

stay where we need to be with the Lord. If you see an individual who is struggling or backing away from the mercies of God, you should be there to encourage that person and help draw him back to where he needs to be. Hebrews 3:13 says, "But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." I do not want to see anyone fail God. I do not like to see anyone be up and down in his experience. God is too powerful for that. If you were to waver in your walk with the Lord, you would want others to help you and to pray for you. Saint of God, if you are not careful to live the Truth and back the Truth, you could waver and go back to the very things that you have left behind. It could happen easily.

We are responsible to help draw ones back to the Lord. We do not want to see anyone lost, especially those who know what Truth is. What a terrible thing to be lost! James 5:19-20 says: "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."

Encouragement comes from being in the midst of others rejoicing in the things of God. I am thankful for the worship services. The Lord fashions the services. I am thankful that the true Church of God services do not have programs.

You ought to be thankful if you have a godly pastor who guards and protects the flock. Pastors have an awesome responsibility. A true pastor is concerned about your spiritual welfare, and he is concerned when you are not in the services. He knows that this is extremely important in your walk with God. You should not feel like he is meddling in your business. A true pastor cares and must give an account at the Judgment. Hebrews 13:17 reads, "Obey [some people hate that word] them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they

watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you."

Dear one, the enemy knows that if he can steer you away from those who are spiritual, he will draw you to those who are not spiritual. The enemy does not want you to get any help from people who are spiritual. He will draw you to those who make critical remarks. The enemy always steers you to those who think as you do. That is the reason the enemy will give you every excuse as to why you should not be in worship services. Do you know what you can do? You can give him a list even longer as to why you should be there. Do not let the devil cheat you.

When the devil starts talking to you, you can say, "I don't have to listen to you; you are the one who got me into trouble in the first place." No matter how spiritual you are, you are in no position to reason or compromise with the enemy. There are stories throughout the Bible where people tried to reason with the devil, and you can read about what happened to them.

Making a Difference With Others

The difference between a church attender and a church member is commitment. Attendees are spectators; members get involved. Can others draw strength from you and see that you are encouraged and strengthened in the things of God? Are you excited about the things of God? You ought to be. Do you enjoy reading God's Word, talking to God, and telling others what Jesus has done for you? You need to tell others what Jesus has done for you. You may be able to talk to others about many things, but when it comes to personal salvation, you may think that some individuals do not want to hear your testimony. That might be the very thing an individual needs to hear. People hear many things in the work force, but when you start talking about Jesus

Christ, maybe that will cause them to perk up their ears and listen. I still believe there are honest-hearted people out in the world who want to hear about Jesus, the One who died for their sins. You should ask the Lord to give you that opportunity to share the good news of the Gospel with others.

I challenge you to work harder on being an encouragement to others. You should greet ones with kindness and let them know that you love and appreciate them. Someone you meet may be going through a difficult time. If you let that person know that you care, that may be a turning point for that individual. When you see new people come into the sanctuary, you ought to show them hospitality. If you do not show hospitality the first time, there is a good possibility that they may not come back. You should let them feel truly welcome. Not only will that help them, but it will give you the assurance that you did the Lord's will. The body of Christ needs every child of God working to reach out to a lost and dying world.

We read in Ephesians 4:3, "Endeavouring [in other words, making an earnest effort] to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." The devil would love to break our unity and destroy us from within. Saint of God, it takes work on our part to keep that unity in place. It is not a time to sit on the sideline and say, "Well, they know who I am." We have to work to keep unity in place. You must watch your attitudes. You might have had a bad day, but you should not bring a bad attitude to the house of God. You are no different there than you are at home.

You need to watch your words. You should speak words of kindness, not harsh words. People hear that enough out in the world, on the job, or at school. Also, you need to be careful of what you listen to. Do not allow yourself to be drawn away by anyone. Saint, you are not quite there yet, so do not give up on the things that you have been taught and

shown.

First Corinthians 1:10 says, "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." When you serve the Lord, you need to be patient. You have to wait upon the Lord to answer your prayers. If you want to be encouraging and uplifting to others, you need to wait upon the Lord. The Lord will show you what you need to do and how to go about doing it.

I want you to read a poem entitled "Don't Quit." If you have an idea in your mind that you want to give up, don't quit. There is nothing to go back to. The poem says:

*When things go wrong, as they
sometimes will,
When the road you're trudging
seems all uphill,
When the funds are low and the
debts are high,
And you want to smile, but you
have to sigh,
When care is pressing you down
a bit,
Rest if you must, but don't you quit.*

*Life is queer with its twists and
turns,
As every one of us sometimes
learns,
And many a failure turns about,
When he might have won if he'd
stuck it out,
Don't give up though the pace
seems slow,
You may succeed with another
blow.*

*Often the goal is nearer than
It seems to a faint and faltering
man,
Often the struggler has given up,
When he might have captured the
victor's cup.
And he learned too late when
the night slipped down,
How close he was to the golden
crown,*

*Success is failure turned inside out
The silver tint of clouds of doubt,
And you never can tell how close
you are,
It may be near when it seems
so far,
So stick to the fight when you're
hardest hit,*

*It's when things seem worse that
you mustn't quit.*

I want to be uplifting to others,
and I want to be an encouragement.
How about you? If the Lord has
shown you some things that you
need to work on to be more encour-

aging to others, you need to pray,
"Lord, I want to do what You want
me to do; I want to be a better child
of God."

(Compact Disc TR-1072)

He Took My Place

Charles Dickens wrote that during the French Revolution the French had enormous hatred for the English. To be an Englishman in France was like putting a lamb in a den of wolves. In the *Tale of Two Cities*, Dickens tells of a young Englishman who found himself in just such a plight. While trying to flee the country with his French wife and child, he was caught and tossed into the Bastille.

The wife could do nothing for him, and he was sentenced to death by the guillotine. While he was awaiting his execution, one of his friends heard of the trial and the sentencing. He attempted to have him released, but to no avail. At last, the day of execution arrived. As the last hour approached, the Englishman's friend and the jailer appeared at the cell door. The jailer opened the door, and the friend stepped inside. The door clanged behind him as the guard turned and walked down the noisy hall.

The two friends embraced, and the prisoner asked, "What are you doing here?"

"No time to explain," replied his friend. "Only do as I say." With that the Frenchman removed his clothes and demanded his friend do likewise. "Now," he went on as he put on the prison garb, "you put on my suit."

"I cannot do it," protested the Englishman. "You must," he ordered. "Your wife and child are waiting for you in a carriage at the door." The Englishman dressed in the Frenchman's suit, and unknowingly the guard escorted him safely to the carriage. Within the hour the Frenchman knelt at the guillotine. Later the Englishman knelt on

English soil to give thanks.

This story reminds me of the story of my life, for you see, I was a sinner condemned to eternal death. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans 6:23).

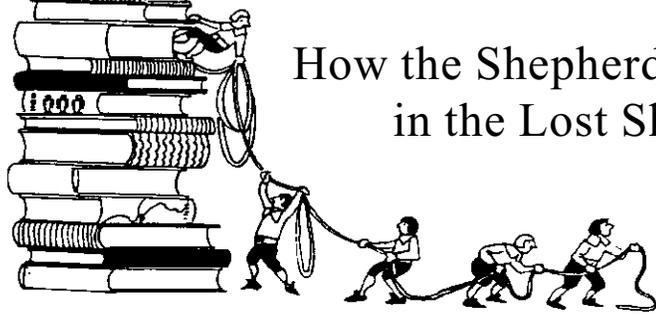
There was not a thing I could do for myself. Then Jesus Christ stepped on the scene. "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:6-8).

Jesus Christ took my place. He forgave me and I escaped my punishment. He bore the punishment I deserved. "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." (1 Peter 3:18).

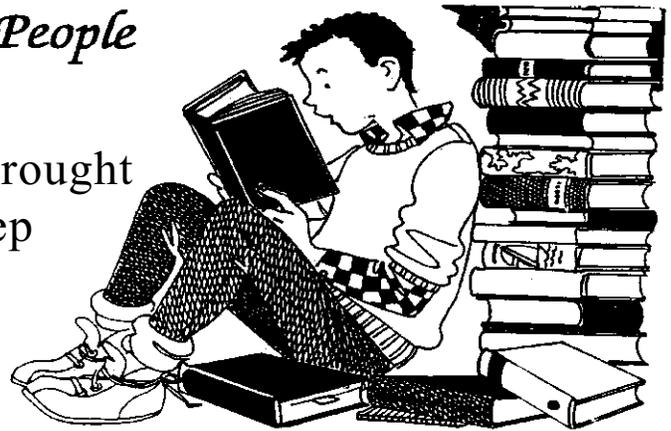
Just as Jesus took my place, He is willing to take yours. Why not pray to Him right now? Admit that you are a sinner worthy of eternal death, and ask Jesus Christ to save you. He is waiting to set you free. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved" (John 3:16-17).

Selected

Especially for Young People



How the Shepherd Brought in the Lost Sheep



Early one morning, I was awakened by a knock on my door. A man who was a stranger to me said, "I have come to ask you to go with me to pray for a dying girl."

When I suggested that I would come at daylight, he said he feared it would be too late; so I made ready to go. As I was dressing, he said: "I want to tell you that where you are going is no nice place, but this girl seems to have known you and asked me to come with you, as she wants you to pray with her." I set his mind at rest on that by telling him it did not matter where she was. If she wanted me to pray with her, I would go with him.

He took me down into the poor district and into a house where I found a poor girl in her teens. It was very evident that she was soon to meet her Maker. A little light was on a table by her bedside, and I turned the shade so the light fell on her face to see if I could recognize her. She at once sensed what I was doing and said, "I don't think you know me, but I knew you'd come and pray with me. The girls here do not believe I am dying, but I know that I am going."

While I was wondering how I could bring the poor soul to a loving Savior, she asked me about the story in the Bible about a sheep that had left the fold and of the shepherd who had gone after it and brought it back. I said, "That is the parable of the ninety and nine, and the one that went astray."

"Yes," she replied, "the one that went astray." Then she asked, "Can you find that in the Bible?"

I answered, "It is in Luke, Chapter 15," and I turned to it to read.

When I finished reading about the Great Shepherd, I turned to John's narrative about the Good Shepherd who gave eternal life to the sheep. As I knelt to pray by that dying girl, the other girls knelt too, sobbing by their companion's bed. What an audience! I have preached to vast congregations, but never was a meeting more hallowed by the presence of the Lord Jesus! As I prayed there, the conscious feeling that she was being lifted into the very light and love of God gripped me, and right then and there, was literally flooding her soul.

I shall never forget the expression on her face when I looked up. "Oh!" she cried, "It is wonderful! The Good Shepherd has found me, and He is holding me to His heart!"

How I thanked God that He had given me a Gospel of grace, for what message would I have had for that poor, dying girl like that if works or merit were demanded? That poor lost sheep was so happy in her new found joy that I really wondered if the lifting of that burden of sin from her heart was not giving her physical strength that might bring recovery, and so I ventured to go home. However, when I returned later, I knew the end had come, for the undertaker was entering the house as I came in.

One of the girls came out to meet me, and her first words were: "We wish you had been here when Mary passed away. She was so happy! She kept saying, 'The Shepherd has found me and is holding me to His heart.'"

You may say it was all fancy, but I believe He did. She tried to clasp her arms around the Unseen, and then with a soft 'Good-bye' to us girls, she was gone."

Did Christ bring to a rejoicing Heaven only that one lost sheep on His shoulder? Well, listen to the sequel.

Some years later, I was preaching the Gospel in a city. A young woman came to me and asked, "Don't you recognize me?" When I replied that I could not say for sure, she said, "I am the girl that told you of Mary's passing that morning and how happy she was in her new found joy, as she died, saying, 'The Shepherd has found me and is holding me to His heart!' There is something I want to tell you. Once or twice, I started to write and tell you the story, but I did not have the courage to finish the letter."

I said, "What is it you wanted to tell me?"

She replied, "That morning when the Good Shepherd brought Mary in on one shoulder, I came on the other."

Hebrews 9:27 states, "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." We read in Acts 17:30, "But now [God] commandeth all men every where to repent." Jesus said in John 6:37, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" Then John wrote in 1 John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Selected

Numbers 13:1 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying.

2 Send thou men, that they may search the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel: of every tribe of their fathers shall ye send a man, every one a ruler among them.

3 And Moses by the commandment of the LORD sent them from the wilderness of Paran: all those men were heads of the children of Israel.

17 And Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan, and said unto them, Get you up this way southward, and go up into the mountain:

18 And see the land, what it is; and the people that dwelleth therein, whether they be strong or weak, few or many;

19 And what the land is that they dwell in, whether it be good or bad; and what cities they be that they dwell in, whether in tents, or in strong holds;

20 And what the land is, whether it be fat or lean, whether there be wood therein, or not. And be ye of good courage, and bring of the fruit of the land, Now the time was the time of the firstripe grapes.

21 So they went up, and searched the land from the wilder-

ness of Zin unto Rehob, as men come to Hamath.

22 And they ascended by the south, and came unto Hebron; where Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmai, the children of Anak, were. (Now Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt.)

23 And they came unto the brook of Eshcol, and cut down from thence a branch with one cluster of grapes, and they bare it between two upon a staff; and they brought of the pomegranates, and of the figs.

24 The place was called the brook Eshcol, because of the cluster of grapes which the children of Israel cut down from thence.

25 And they returned from searching of the land after forty days.

26 And they went and came to Moses, and to Aaron, and to all the congregation of the children of Israel, unto the wilderness of Paran, to Kadesh; and brought back word unto them, and unto all the congregation, and shewed them the fruit of the land.

27 And they told him, and said, We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it.

28 Nevertheless the people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled, and very great: and moreover we saw the children of Anak there.

29 The Amalekites dwell in the land of the south: and the Hittites, and the Jebusites, and the Amorites, dwell in the mountains: and the Canaanites dwell by the sea, and by the coast of Jordan.

30 And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it.

31 But the men that went up with him said, We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we.

32 And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel, saying, The land, through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature.

33 And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight.



Defeating Your Giants

Brother Reggie Stegmeier

Facing Giant Difficulties

There is a song entitled "With All the Many Miracles" by Rodney Griffin that I really like. It reads:

*God gave a bold command
To cross the Jordan and take the
land,
Not to worry about the giants
they would face;
But when the spies returned
To tell the others what they had
learned,
They said, "For us to win, there's
just no way."*

*Still two of them trusted God:
Caleb and Joshua,
They said, "Children, don't believe
what you have heard;
We know we're out-manned by far,
They're much bigger than we are,
But let's not forget just Who it is
we serve!"*

*Like when we were about to die,
Manna fell from the sky,
Then water came from a dry old
dusty rock;
And back when Pharaoh was
closing in,
God closed the sea again,
But not before we all had safely
crossed.*

*So here you are, my friend,
You face a battle you cannot win,
And you tell yourself there's just
no need to try;
Consider how good God's been;
He's so faithful time and again,
You must believe, and here's the
reason why.*

*With all the many miracles
Why don't you think it's possible?
With all the many things we've
seen
Why do you think it's just a dream?
With all the things He's done
for us
Don't you think it's time we trust?
Remember what is possible
With all the many miracles.*

I want you to consider the evil report brought back by ten of those twelve spies. Our Scripture text says in verse 33, "And there we saw the giants. . . ." We do not know what a day will bring forth, but we may face difficulties. Deuteronomy 33:25 states, "And as thy days, so shall thy strength be." There are many Scriptures in God's Eternal Word, and if you follow them, you can be like Joshua and Caleb and always have a good report and defeat the giants.

Have you ever felt that you were in a land of giants? Perhaps everywhere you looked, you stood at the feet of a giant difficulty that appeared insurmountable? Does the task at hand appear daunting? Have you ever battled the giant of despair, the giant of depression, the giant of unbelief, the giant of unrest, the giant of persecution, the giant of affliction, the giant of tribulation, the giant of temptation, the giant of bad attitude, the giant of unforgiveness, or the giant of restitution?

I am convinced that we each should be like a tree planted by the rivers of water (Psalm 1:3). No matter what comes your way, you can stand strong. I am still of the old-fashioned belief that God plants an individual in a local body of Christ, and he is to remain there until the pastor sees that God's hand is on him to preach the Gospel somewhere else or until the pastor bids him Godspeed that it is okay to relocate.

Another giant could be family problems, such as an unsaved companion or another loved one. Another giant could be a business deal or a sickness or affliction that you have been battling for many years. A giant could be your calling as a father or your duty as a mother. Have you ever felt overwhelmed? As a Christian, certainly there are times when you become overwhelmed. Many men of God have felt that way. Many great men and women have met with giant problems, and they remained great men and women

when they went through those problems victoriously. I like what B. E. Warren wrote in the song entitled "Fiery Darts." The chorus of the song reads, "*We shall not be wounded in the hottest fight If we raise the shield of faith in Jesus' might; Thro' the grace of God we'll conquer to the last, While the fiery darts are flying thick and fast.*"

Having a Positive Outlook

In our Scripture reading Moses sent out spies to spy out the land that God had promised them, to see if it was what God said it would be. Saint, I want to warn you to be careful of doubting God and His Word. Many individuals thought they needed to help God along in His plan for their lives and foiled God's plan. They wrecked and ruined their lives in the process.

Young person, God has a companion out there for you to marry if it is His will, and in most cases it is His will. The Bible lets you know it is His desire that the younger women marry and bear children and guide the house. Sometimes young people try to get ahead of God's plan and they spoil it. You need to ask, "Is this really God's plan for my life?" You should not try to work things out on your own and make a mess of your life. You need to take God at His Word and do what God says, and it surely will come to pass.

Second Corinthians 1:19-20 reads: "For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, even by me and Silvanus and Timothy, was not yea and nay, but in him was yea. For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us." All of God's promises are true and will be just as God said they would be. As I was studying, I thought of a promise in Genesis that has not ceased to exist for thousands of years.

Consider this promise in Genesis

8:22, which reads, "While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease." Do we not still enjoy those things today? God has kept that promise, day after day, week after week, month after month, year after year. How often do people question God and ask if He is really going to do what He has promised? Yes, He will do what He said He would do. The Word of God is more sure than anything in this world. I say again, what God said, He will do. His promises have stood true.

Difficulties that are in the way of salvation will vanish before a lively, active faith in the power and the promise of God. All things are possible if they are promised to him who believes, but carnal sense and carnal professors are not to be trusted. Unbelief overlooks the promises of God and the power of God; it magnifies every danger and difficulty and fills the heart with discouragement. May the Lord help you to believe, and then you will find all things possible.

What was Caleb's report concerning that which he and Joshua saw? Much good is housed in that passage of Scripture, as in all the Word of God. We read in Numbers 13:30, "And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, [What a positive outlook! He saw the same sights the other ten spies saw. He experienced the same things, but he was looking at them through God's eyes. He knew what God could do.] and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it."

The reports of what the other ten men saw focused on the obstacles that stood in their way. They focused on the giants. Verse 33 begins, "And there we saw the giants." Now, keep in mind that those twelve men went to the same place and saw the same sights in the same country, yet they brought back two very different reports.

As I was studying, I thought, you should never blame God for your prayers not being answered.

Usually it is not that you are waiting on God to respond, but that God is waiting on you to measure up, do differently, or learn some valuable lessons before He responds. Other times you may fail to see His works. You must remember that God's ways are far superior to your ways. Many times He is working, but you may simply fail to recognize it.

The Negative Effects of Unbelief

Numbers 13:31 says, "But [In English grammar that word is a conjunction, and it is used to contrast with what was already mentioned. What was previously mentioned? First, Caleb's good report was mentioned, and then ten men presented a contrasting, evil report.] the men that went up with him said, We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we."

The other men responded with a defeated attitude before the battle had even begun. It is possible to be defeated before you even meet defeat. I am a school teacher, and I have done some coaching and teaching in music. I teach the students to think positively, to think thoughts of victory and not defeat. I work with lots of musicians, and if they are going to do well, they have to be very lively and active. They have to really get into the instrument playing if they want to be successful and produce a quality sound.

Some people pick up an instrument as though they are afraid of it. They need to put more into it. So it is with one's experience with God. You have to go forward thinking of victory and not defeat. How is your mental outlook? The battle is in the mind, and that is where most people meet defeat.

The people in our Scripture text had not even gone into the land to fight against the giants. Even in the midst of a fertile land with great pomegranates, figs, and milk and honey in abundance, the men had something evil to say. Today, even after God has taken people to new heights, brought them through great

difficulties, presented them with joy and peace, they still find reason to complain.

After Caleb proclaimed his good report, the ten other spies followed with an evil report. What was their evil report? In essence, they said the people were most certainly stronger than they were, because they were giants. Ten spies emphasized the obstacles instead of the opportunities and concluded that Israel was too weak to conquer the enemy.

Joshua and Caleb walked by faith and not by sight. The people of the land were giants, the walls of the cities were high, and ten of the twelve spies said they felt like grasshoppers. Never mind that 603,550 strong men, twenty years and up, were able to go forth to war in Israel's camp.

Unbelief blinds you to God's greatness and magnifies your own weaknesses. God had already promised them the land, so why did they worry about it? Faith takes God at His Word and needs no other evidence. It is the sum of things hoped for, not the evidence of things seen. You cannot see faith; you must believe.

The Peril of Forgetting What God Has Done

In Psalm 78 we can read the accounts of the children of Israel. How soon people forget what God has done! God can take people through a great battle and bring them out victoriously, as He always does; yet, when they face another battle, they get discouraged, as if they are going to lose out and fall into defeat. Psalm 78:9-12 and 17-22 read: "The children of Ephraim, being armed, and carrying bows, turned back in the day of battle. They kept not the covenant of God, and refused to walk in his law; And forgot his works, and his wonders that he had shewed them.

"Marvellous things did he in the sight of their fathers, in the land of Egypt, in the field of Zoan. . . . And they sinned yet more against him by

provoking the most High in the wilderness. And they tempted God in their heart by asking meat for their lust. Yea, they spake against God; they said, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness? Behold, he smote the rock, that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed; can he give bread also? can he provide flesh for his people? Therefore the LORD heard this, and was wroth: so a fire was kindled against Jacob, and anger also came up against Israel; Because they believed not in God, and trusted not in his salvation."

Verse 29 says, "So they did eat, and were well filled: for he gave them their own desire." Verse 32 continues, "For all this they sinned still, and believed not for his wondrous works." There is a danger in unbelief, and that is the reason the Apostles stirred the saints' pure minds over and over by way of remembrance. We need to be reminded repeatedly of what God has done and of what God is able to do, if we will only believe.

Many times we take our days for granted. If you are fifty years of age, how many tomorrows have you lived? When tomorrow comes, you may think it will be just another day, but you have never lived that day before. You have never lived tomorrow before. You do not know what tomorrow holds, and neither do I; therefore, we need God's help. We need to take God with us tomorrow.

The impossibilities with men are possible with God. The giant you are currently facing may appear impossible to conquer, but not with God. With God all things are possible. In Deuteronomy 6:12 Moses exhorted Israel to beware of the peril of forgetting God after being blessed by Him. You must daily remind yourself where your blessings in life come from and that today is a gift from God.

Wholly Following the Lord

You should treat each new day as a gift that may never be given to

you again. One of these days, truly this will be the case. It will be your last gift. Psalm 68:19 says, "Blessed be the LORD, who daily loadeth us with benefits." The Amplified Bible says, "Blessed be the Lord, Who bears our burdens and carries us day by day, even the God Who is our salvation! Selah [pause, and calmly think of that]!" God is bigger than any giant that may be in your life.

The word *giant* means, "imaginary, a make believe or mythical being of human form, but supernatural in size; an abnormally tall or large person." Again, our Scripture text says, "And there we saw the giants." While the ten spies saw giants, Joshua and Caleb saw God. Oh, how big God is! I want to tell you about a simple illustration that God brought to me. This illustration talks about the value of our attitude and the way we look at life, whether it is good or evil.

Three men approached a mountain. One said, "The climb ahead is too great, the mountain is too tall, the road is too rugged, and climbing this mountain will require too much effort." He quickly turned back from whence he came.

Along came another climber who reached the base of the mountain and said: "The climb ahead is too great, and I am weary from my toilsome journey thus far, if you do not mind," he said to the third climber. "I cannot go one step farther at this time, so I am going to sit down and rest awhile. Perhaps I will consider climbing this mountain sometime in the future."

Along came the third climber who said: "This mountain is mine for the taking. Surely it cannot be too bad if taken one step at a time. What an opportunity to be able to climb this gorgeous mountain! Oh, what bliss I will surely find when I reach the summit of this beautiful mountain with God as my helper, with the compass of the Holy Bible as my guide, and with the Holy Spirit as my personal instructor, coach, and teacher. I can most certainly do all things through Jesus Christ my

Lord who gives me the strength. Surely He will lead me in a plain path and establish my goings (or my footing) all the way up so that I do not slip. In faith I will begin my climb. After all, just think of the strength I will have gained from climbing this great mountain."

These three men had very different mind-sets and approaches to life. Oh, how we need the mind of Christ, as the third climber had. So many of the struggles in life come from taking the wrong approach, from having the wrong frame of mind, or having the wrong attitude about a trial. You are afforded the privilege of knowing and understanding the councils and purposes of God so as to guide your life in the way of peace and to give you the knowledge of what to do and say when faced with each new giant that stands in your way. You need the mind of the Lord.

Caleb's testimony forty-five years later spoke of what a great victory this young man had. Joshua 14:6-9 and 11-12 tells us: "Then the children of Judah came unto Joshua in Gilgal: and Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite said unto him, Thou knowest the thing that the LORD said unto Moses the man of God concerning me and thee in Kadesh-barnea. Forty years old was I when Moses the servant of the LORD sent me from Kadesh-barnea to espy out the land; and I brought him word again as it was in mine heart.

"Nevertheless my brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt: but I wholly followed the LORD my God. And Moses sware on that day, saying, Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance, and thy children's for ever, because thou hast wholly followed the LORD my God. . . . As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me: as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war, both to go out, and to come in. Now therefore give me this mountain. . . ."

What an example for us to follow! Age did not hinder him, disappointments of the past did not embitter him, and giants did not frighten him. At a time when others were looking for security and ease, Caleb said, "Give me this mountain." What was his secret? He wholly followed the Lord God of Israel. God's Word assures you that the mountains shall be yours.

You can do three things with these mountains. One is, you can climb them. Mountains can look sinister or threatening from a distance, but they lose much of their terror when you boldly approach them. Two is, you can take each mountain. History has been made by men and women who have taken mountains that seemed formidable or terrifying to others. Three is, after you take a mountain, you can use it to strengthen your faith and testify to others. Caleb did just that, and you and I can do the same yet today.

The hard climb will strengthen your spiritual muscles. The problems solved will train your mind, and the difficulties conquered will build your character. There is joy unspeakable in conquering mountains and triumphing in His victories. The Lord is not asking you to climb in your own strength. The Scripture says in Isaiah 41:10, "I will strengthen thee." The Christian is not on this journey alone. Jesus said in Matthew 28:20, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." Thank God, in His power, His might, and His Spirit, you can conquer every one of the giant mountains out ahead.

Faith Can Bring the Victory

Zechariah 4:7a says, "Who art thou, O great mountain?" Just ahead of that, it says in verse 6, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts." Oh, how we all need God's grace to defeat and conquer our giants. Certainly, we have grace. When you take God's Spirit with you, you can look at your mountain, or giant, and

say with great confidence, "Who art thou, O great mountain?"

Are you facing some sort of giant in your life? Are you in the midst of a real battle or difficulty? Do you have an illness or an affliction? God is bigger than that illness or that affliction. Are you having financial struggles? God is bigger than your finances. Are you having trouble in your home? God is bigger than the godly institution of marriage, and He stands ready and willing to help, but you must seek His face and obey His Word.

God is bigger than any giant. Whether the giant can or cannot be seen does not matter much. What matters is that God is bigger than whatever it is you are facing. If you are in the mist of a battle, what do you see? Do you see it as an opportunity for the world to see God's attributes? Is the fruit of the Spirit manifested in your life? Or do you see your battle as a giant that you are unable to overcome?

Many times when met with difficult situations, you may pray, "Get me out of this, Lord!" Like the Apostle Paul so many years ago, you may ask God to remove the thorn from your flesh, because it is uncomfortable and painful. What did the Lord tell Paul? "My grace is sufficient." Why? When you are weak, then He is made strong and glorified. When you struggle, if you carry the right attitude, you are a lighthouse to those about you. While you may be praying, "Get this out of my life," God may say no. He may remove it or He may say, "My grace is sufficient." If you are facing a giant and God does not remove it, you will need to pray for more grace.

Do you see your present battle as insurmountable and one that lends itself worthy of turning your back on God? What a tragedy that would be! You need God in such a great way. Even after all God had done for Old Testament Israel, in Psalm 78 we read that most of them turned back, with the exception of Joshua and Caleb.

Giants represent great difficulties, and they stalk us every day. You must overcome your giants or they will devour you as they did the ancient Israelites. You need to exhibit faith, as did Joshua and Caleb, who exhorted the people not to be afraid. Joshua and Caleb told the others they would be stronger by overcoming the giants than if there had not been giants to defeat in the first place. Unless you have overcoming faith, you will be consumed by the giants that block your path. You need to look to God for the same spirit of faith that Joshua and Caleb had, and God will take care of the difficulties. Faith in God can move a mighty mountain and calm the troubled sea.

The Key to Handling Discouragement

Numbers 14:1-3 reads: "And all the congregation lifted up their voice, and cried [those ten spies got the people really worked up over that evil report]; and the people wept that night. And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would God we had died in this wilderness! And wherefore hath the LORD brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, [Now, they had not fallen by the sword. They were basing all of that on the evil report that was brought back.] that our wives and our children should be a prey? were it not better for us to return into Egypt [a type of sin]?"

In no way would it have been better for them to have died in Egypt. Many times the devil tries to get you to forget about all the heartaches you had in that evil life of sin. He wants you to remember only the good times you had, but do not let that happen. You need to remember all the lonely nights, the nights you were drunk, the nights you committed evil sins in adulterous situations. You need to remind the devil of those times and say: "I don't want

anything to do with that; in no way did I have it better in sin. I am enjoying 'Canaan' much more, and it is a beautiful land flowing with milk and honey."

Verse 4 reads, "And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt." We find the response given by the congregation after the evil report was brought by the ten unbelieving spies. How do you respond to the problems of life? Do you become hysterical and weep and cry and moan? God does not want you to spend your days riding on emotional highs and lows, but rather He wants you to be steadfast, constant, and unmovable, always abounding in the work of God.

Many people like to ride on emotional highs and lows. For example, one may come to church happy and excited with his hand raised, and he shouts because his paycheck was more than he thought it would be. Also, the wife was really nice to him and cooked a good dinner, and maybe he got a new suit, so he was feeling really good. However, the next service suppose he has a frown on his face, because not a thing has gone right for him all day long. Dear one, that is not the peace of God that passes all understanding! I am thankful that I did not see that kind of behavior growing up, and we do not have that in our home today. We do not have days where we are up and down and in and out.

If you have a steady diet of the Word of God, the future is going to look bright all the time. You cannot help but read God's Word and be encouraged! I know what I am talking about because I read His Word and faithfully study it every day. God gives me a positive outlook on life. Instead of seeing the glass half empty, I see it half full.

You can defeat your giants. You can have the victory with God on your side. God has done so much. There is no reason that you should ever reach your wit's end with Him on your side. Before you ever get to your wit's end, you had better be

praying, because God will give you the victory right in your prayer.

Sometimes when you pray, you should do less talking and more listening. Many times when you pray, you may think you have to talk to God about things, but God also wants to talk to you. He does it through the avenue of prayer. You need to try it sometime. Get on your knees in your secret prayer closet and say, "Lord, what is it that You have for me today?" Then be patient and listen for that still (the Hebrew says "silent") voice. God will impress it upon your heart, whatever it is. He might have something for you to do. God may give you a song, a message, or a testimony. He may tell you of a letter that you need to write. Saint, we have a Rock that is higher than we are to which we can cling. He acts as an anchor, sure and steadfast for the soul. One songwriter said we should never be discouraged when we take it to the Lord in prayer.

Looking at Giants Through God's Eyes

Corrie ten Boom, who was responsible for helping many Jews escape the Nazi Holocaust in World War II, once said, "Any concern too small to be turned into a prayer is too small to be made into a burden." If you carry something around as a burden, you had better take it to God in prayer, and then leave it there.

You need to cast all your care upon the Lord, and then you must continue to do so daily. First Peter 5:7 says, "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you." You need to cast the whole of all your care, your anxiety, your worries, and your concerns upon Him, because He cares for you affectionately and watchfully. Saint of God, God will sustain you. He will never suffer the righteous to be moved.

Why is it so important that you cast all your care upon the Lord? He is the One responsible for caring and tending to your concerns. It is not your job; it is God's job. Anything

that you refuse to let go of, feeling that it is too small to give to God or feeling that you cannot let go of it, will not be properly tended to and cared for. You need to let go and let God.

Joshua and Caleb traveled the same ground the others did. They calmly said, "Let us go up at once, and process it; for we are well able to overcome it." Joshua and Caleb were looking at the situation through Spirit-filled eyes instead of natural vision, human wisdom, and reasoning that man teaches.

How could Joshua and Caleb say with such confidence that they were well able to overcome or conquer the giants in the land? Joshua and Caleb were walking with the same God that we have the privilege of walking with today. They knew full well that with God on their side, they had no reason to fear what man threatened to do to them. If God be for us, who can be against us? What should our response be to the many giants that we face in life?

Proverbs 3:26 reads, "The LORD shall be thy confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being taken [or caught in a trap]." Psalm 118:6 says, "The LORD is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?" Do you believe the Scriptures? Psalm 37:23 states, "The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way." Do you believe as the Psalmist penned so many years ago? The steps of a good man are handpicked, or selected, as you would do at a restaurant. You do not just order menu items arbitrarily. You are selective in what you order from the menu.

God handpicks your giants, or your trials, for you. Do you remember God's discourse with Satan concerning Job? God told Satan exactly what he could and could not do to Job. God ordered Job's giants. God has a purpose in everything He does. One of His divine attributes is omniscience, or knowing everything. God knows what giants will make you a stronger Christian. One giant may give you more faith, another giant

could give you more grace, while another giant may give you more patience.

Do you want to defeat the giant that is troubling you so? You need to exercise more patience, and then it will not seem like a giant. You will be able to endure it and enjoy it. Caleb was a man of great faith who did not worry about the size of a problem because he trusted a great God. The important concern in life is not how big the problem is, but rather how big God is. We are serving a great God.

Our Scripture text says they saw the giants. When Moses prayed, he said that God had been their dwelling place in all generations. How could Moses say that with such confidence? We read in Psalm 90:2, "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God." It was no wonder that Moses could say God had been their dwelling place in all generations.

God has always been there for His people, and He always will be. There is neither beginning nor end of God. He does not change with all the grievances that arise from your own mortality and the mortality of your family and friends. You can take comfort from God's immortality. We all are dying creatures, and all our comforts in the world are dying comforts, but God is an everlasting and an ever living God. The comforts He provides will keep you alive spiritually if you will accept what He provides.

Giants That Jesus Faced

Let me allude to a few giants that Jesus faced. The Bible lets us know that He is our example in all things. Many times Jesus faced giant problems. Did Jesus conquer the giants that He met? The Bible lets us know that He defeated them every time. How about the giant problem of feeding four thousand men, plus women and children, with only seven loaves of bread and a few

small fish? Was this a giant problem? Absolutely! Matthew 15:37-38 says: "And they did all eat, and were filled [the Greek says satisfied]: and they took up of the broken meat that was left seven baskets full. And they that did eat were four thousand men, beside women and children." The Greek said there was a large basket there, large enough to contain a man's body, and it was full. These were seven large baskets filled to capacity that Jesus supplied those brethren with. Did Jesus defeat a giant need that day? The Bible lets us know that He did.

What does the Word say? He is able to do exceeding, abundantly above all that we can ask or think. How about the giant of having to feed five thousand men, plus women and children. Was this a giant? From a human standpoint, you would probably say that would have been impossible to feed five thousand men, plus women and children, with five loaves and two small fish, but not with God. With God all things are possible to them that believe. Again, this giant was defeated.

How about the giant of inclement weather, which His disciples met with when Jesus walked on the sea to get to them? On yet another occasion, after sending forth His disciples on a ship, Jesus resorted to prayer. His prayer was soon interrupted by the cries of those aboard the ship who had met with a tremendous storm. Jesus went out to them, walking on the stormy sea, the giant that had come up against His disciples. From the human standpoint, looking at this situation through natural eyes and human reasoning, walking on water would be a giant of gigantic proportion, but not with Jesus. Even to His disciples, who should have known better, this was a daunting, impossible task, but not to the great I AM, however. With Him all things are possible. He calmly conquered this giant as well.

What giant are you troubled with? Is it an illness? Maybe you have prayed for someone's salvation,

and it seems like a giant. Perhaps you prayed, "Lord, will You ever move on him?" or "Will he ever be saved?" God's Word has promised that what you pray for, if it is in His will, will come to pass. So you need to hold on and cast all your care upon Him, for He cares for you. Psalm 8:6 reads, "Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet."

A Key Called Promise

You can have victory over all the giants in your life. Philippians 4:13 says, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Through Christ, God is able to put all things under your feet. He can take the most difficult trials of life and make them seem as nothing. God is able. Dear heart, do you believe that God can do for you as He did for our precious Lord?

Think about Daniel in the lions' den and the three Hebrew children in the fiery furnace. They faced giants. When it had never rained, Noah preached to people for approximately one hundred twenty years as he built the ark and the onlookers scoffed. How about Jonah when he was commanded to go and preach to the wicked city of Nineveh? How about when Joseph was thrown down into a well? These were all giant situations that men faced in the Old Testament.

In the New Testament, how about Paul and Silas in jail? How about James being killed and the king seeking Peter's life? Do you know what the key was for defeating that giant? It was prayer. The Bible says in Acts 12:5, "But prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him." Soon God removed those shackles that bound Peter and freed him.

Have you ever thought that your giant could be there because you are wholly following the Lord? There is a fallacy out here that says when you take God into your life, you will not have any problems. Paul talked

about that. Once he was converted, the battles began. One Bible scholar said that we encounter giants only when we are serving and following God. When Israel went forward, the giants appeared, but when they turned back into the wilderness, there were no giants. Some people may think that the power of God in a Christian's life should keep him from trials and conflicts, but that is not so.

Many times the power of God given to us to resist temptation and to live free from sin starts a war with those closest to us, such as family members. When people see the change that God has made in your life, they may become exceedingly jealous. Others may not like why you have changed so drastically, so they begin to find fault and make fun, but God is able to give you the victory. Saint, how is it with you in your life? I want you to remember this message as you face the trials in the days to come. With God's help you can defeat every giant that you face.

In Christian's journey in the allegory of *Pilgrim's Progress*, he and his traveling companion meet Giant Despair. While Christian was attempting to go an easier route by way of By-path Meadow, Giant Despair (that name implies a complete loss of hope), who despised the king of the Celestial country, or Christ Himself, was seeking to destroy all His holy pilgrims. Giant Despair and his wife, Diffidence, ruled Doubting Castle.

On one rough, stony stretch of road, Christian and Hopeful left the highway to travel on what they thought was an easier way where a rainstorm forced them to spend the night. The next morning they were captured by Giant Despair and taken to Doubting Castle where they were imprisoned, beaten, and starved. The giant wanted them to commit suicide, but they endured the ordeal until Christian realized that he had a key called Promise. It would open all the doors and gates of Doubting Castle, so they escaped using the

key.

Today we have the Word of God and faith, and both will free us from all the giants we face. The promises are found in His written Word, and faith enables us to put those promises to practical application and use in our lives. Giant Despair was only met when Christian was faced with difficulty and tried to go another way. What appeared to be an easier route to Christian actually proved to be a terrible setback in the journey. We had better be careful that we do not try to run from our problems or faint in the day of adversity.

In Weakness Made Strong

The Proverb writer said in Proverbs 24:10, "If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small." You should pray rather that God will give you courage to face the giant, as David did so many years ago, in the name of the Lord; then take that one stone, Jesus Christ, and send your giant to the ground.

In your life there may be some phone calls that God has asked you to make that you have been putting off. The Bible says, we are to strengthen one another, exhort one another, and encourage one another, and so much the more as we see the day approaching. Perhaps your giant is, God has told you to testify and you have been putting it off. If you are a little bashful, that may seem like a giant.

Sometimes I have felt that speaking out was a giant in my own life at times when God told me to. It is fairly easy to stand up and testify, but how about speaking out in front of a group of colleagues or students or friends who want nothing to do with Christ and God tells you to speak up? Are you going to let people swear in your midst? Are you going to let them tell dirty jokes while you are there? What are you going to do? You should either speak up or walk away. I do not allow any filthy language to be spoken around me, and it does not

matter where I am. I may be with colleagues who are much older than me, but either I am going to say something or I am going to remove myself from the situation. Dear one, you need to either speak up or walk away in such situations. God is commanding you to do so.

Maybe you need to make a restitution or ask a brother or a sister for forgiveness. Perhaps you need to get rid of a nasty attitude. Possibly jealousy is working on you. These are giants that you may face, and they will need to be defeated if you intend to remain on the winning side with God. Maybe in your family you need to take a stronger stand for God. If you take His Word and Spirit as your guide, your help, and your strength, you can defeat these giants.

What giants do you have in your life? What do you see in your trials? In our Scripture text, ten of the spies brought back an evil report. They saw the giants. What do you see, a giant or an opportunity? How will you handle your giants? Will you believe God's Word and count His promises as being already performed in your life or will you look at the circumstances that you are faced with and take your eyes off God and His Word and His fold?

Do you give up and give in right in the midst of a battle? Oh, what a terrible thing to quit right in the midst of a battle! Saint of God, may you ever be reminded that God has it all under control. In order for your faith to grow and your giants to fall, you must be exercised in circumstances impossible in your eyes, because that is what faith is. Are you going to turn back to the mess and the bondage of sin that God has brought you out of? What are you doing with your giants? Are you defeating them or are they defeating you? I want you to think soberly and seriously about these questions. There is very little out in the world to turn your thoughts toward God. That is the reason you must have a steady diet of the Bible every day.

Are you in the midst of a trial that you feel is insurmountable? Are

you battling an illness? Are you troubled over a lost companion, a friend, or a family member? Are you facing the giant of unforgiveness, jealousy, or bitterness? Perhaps you need to make a restitution or clear up something with a brother or a sister. Would it not be nice to have a clear conscience, a conscience void of offense toward God and man? You can. You can defeat your giants, every one of them, but you cannot do it without God. Are you defeating your giants or are your

giants defeating you?

Ephesians, Chapter 6, talks about the weapons of our warfare, You need every bit of that armor to defeat the giants in your life. First, it starts with prayer, and there is not an individual who believes more in the power of prayer than the old devil, not that he benefits from it, but he suffers from it. He knows that when you get on your knees and acknowledge your weakness before God, then you will be made strong. How is it with you? There is no reason

that you should be defeated and lose out with God because of your giant. You can give him a deadly blow with the sword of the Spirit. All you have to do is kneel down before God in faith, believing His Word, and believing that He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that you can ask or think. According to the power that works in you, you can conquer your giant. If you have a need, won't you seek the Lord?

(Compact Disc TR-1108)

A Safe Refuge

Psalm 46:1 says, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." Psalm 27:5 tells us, "For in the time of trouble he shall hide us in his pavilion." Psalm 34:7 states, "The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them."

There are many ways that the Lord is a refuge and hides His people in the time of trouble. Here is one way the angel of the Lord built up a wall of defense to hide a family of His children over a century ago:

It was during the campaign of Napoleon in Russia, while the French army was disappointed in their hopes of conquering Russia, that God protected a poor widow woman and her children. Because of the severe winter coming on, the people of the little village sought to preserve their own lives by taking everything they could find in the food line, and taking vengeance upon the Russians by destroying all the property they met and even killing many of the people.

In the line of their retreat from Moscow, there was the little village in which was a poor, low-roofed cottage where an invalid boy lay. Everyone in the village who had strength to leave fled. Some tried to take their earthly goods, and others chose to hide them. Some even burned their houses or tore them down to keep the French soldiers from having any shelter from the cold weather. The older people were placed in wagons in order to get away, and the younger ones hurried their families away with them.

In one poor little low cottage, there was no such stir. A poor crippled boy could not move from his bed. The widowed mother had no friends intimate enough to spare a thought for her in this trouble, where everyone thought of those nearest to him or of himself. There was no chance for the poor mother to leave as her neighbors did, because of her young children, among whom was the crippled boy.

It was evening, and all had now become quiet as the sound of distant voices had faded away. This lone family

had heard that the French soldiers were cruel and acted more like ravenous beasts than humans, because of the methods used by the people in their defense. The poor boy, wakeful with fear, urged his mother to take the other children and go too and leave him to his fate, yet dreading that she would take him at his word. However, this good Christian mother assured her invalid son that she would not leave him to the cruelties of the soldiers. She said she felt that God would build up a sure wall of defense around them and that He was a refuge in the time of trouble.

Being more assured by his mother's low, quieting words, the anxious boy was soon sound asleep like his sisters. The morning came of the day that was to bring the dreaded enemy. The mother and her children opened their eyes to find it was still dark in the house. Upon opening the door, they quickly discovered the reason. The snow had begun to fall the evening before, and through the night it had collected rapidly. A stormy wind had piled the snow into deep drifts against the low-roofed house, so that it had entirely covered it. A protecting wall had been built by Him who holds even the winds in His hand and uses them to defend those who trust in Him.

Behind the house, a low shed where the animals were, protected the way to the outhouse, and the mother and children kept themselves alive within the cottage by the heavy barricade of snow.

It was during that time that the dreaded scourge passed through the village. Every house left in the village was ransacked. All the wealthier homes were deprived of their luxuries, and the poorer ones were robbed of their necessities. The low-roofed cottage lay sheltered beneath its wall of snow, which in the silent night had gathered about it. God had protected the defenseless, with a "sure wall."

Selected

Ecclesiastes 3:1 To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:

2 A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted;

3 A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up;

4 A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;

5 A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;

6 A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away;

7 A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;

8 A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.

1 Corinthians 3:1 And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.

2 I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now

are ye able.

3 For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?

4 For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?

5 Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?

6 I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.

7 So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.

8 Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.

9 For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.

10 According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.

11 For other foundation can no

man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;

13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.

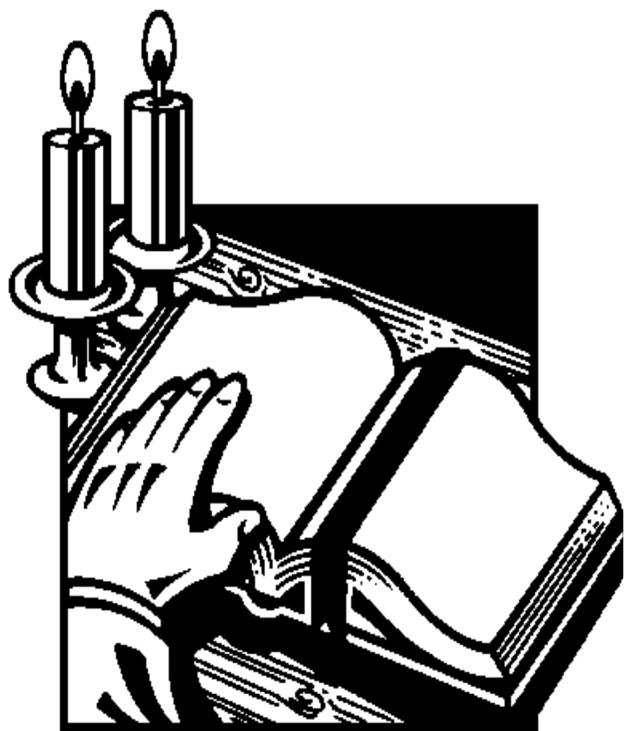
15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

16 Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

17 If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.

18 Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise.

19 For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.



It Is Time to Grow Up

Grow in Grace and Knowledge

The word *carnal* comes from the Greek word *sarkinos*, which means, "having the nature of flesh; centrally controlled by animal appetites." Salvation is sweet to the soul. It is a feeling that one cannot express. It is a love that you feel, and it comes straight from God.

If you can look back on your life and remember a time when you were more spiritual and doing better than you are now, what happened to you? Perhaps you can see that time itself has affected you. God does not want you to go backward; He wants you to go forward and to grow in grace and knowledge, and then to keep growing.

Sad to say, some parents have never grown up, and they are raising children. Many parents grow up with their children. Many times that is the reason people cannot get Santa Claus or the Easter bunny out of their hearts, because they want their children to have the same experiences in life they had. It is time to grow up.

I was so hooked on Santa Claus when I was a boy that I sneaked downstairs and actually thought I saw him. One sister told me she was so sad that she cried when she found out there was really no Santa Claus. The story of Santa Claus is a big lie. Men and women in the family need to grow up.

We are living in a time where the spirit of incest is taking the land. You need to be careful. You mothers need to watch your little children, no matter how much your children love Uncle Onion.

First Corinthians 13:11 reads, "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things." You put away toys when you grow up. Child experts say that certain toys stimulate vision and others stimulate hearing. A teenager

does not still play with a baby rattle. They have outgrown that toy.

My wife likes stuffed animals, but I never see her talking to them. Children use their imagination. Often boys play with building blocks; those blocks teach them mental development. Toys can teach children how to count, how to speak, and how to tell time; however, an adult would not want to be caught playing with them.

When I was a little boy, I used to suck two fingers, but I am a grown man now, so I do not suck my fingers any more. As one grows up, a person's judgment matures with age and experience, at least it should. As an adult man, you would not go out and play a ball game with little boys and start crying because your team lost. You would try to teach the little boys that they should not cry when they do not win.

Some people have a fantasy with never growing up, like Peter Pan. In that fantasy play, Peter Pan would go to "Never Never Land," where he would never grow up. Life is not like "Never Never Land." We all have to grow up.

Saint of God, you have to stand for Jesus. Sometimes you have to stand for Jesus all by yourself. You have to tell the truth when others tell you not to tell the truth. Some people say it is easier to tell a lie than to tell the truth. You need to grow in the Lord. No matter how long you have been serving the Lord, you still need to grow in the Lord.

You might have been around for thirty or forty years, and if that is the case, you need to act like it. You should not get angry and walk around with your mouth poked out, pouting because something did not go as you thought it should have. This is not "Never Never Land." The Church of God is marching on. Constant immaturity is unacceptable. Some just seem to never grow up; they are immature.

Sow in Righteousness

After you have been born again, you must mature in the Lord. You might have started out with a little Bible that had a little dictionary in the back of it, but now it is time for you to move on and get a good Bible and a better concordance and to learn how to study. It is time for you to grow. God does not want you to stay a spiritual baby.

The Apostle Paul said he could not feed people meat because they were carnally minded. He said he had to give them milk instead of meat. Hebrews 5:12 reads, "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat."

Now, I am not trying to tell you to grow too fast. Some boys grow up too fast, especially when they get a part-time job and get a little money in their pockets. Then, all of a sudden, they try to tell Dad how to run the house. It does not work that way. You are still living in his house.

Hebrews 5:13 says, "For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe." It never ceases to amaze a pastor when a new convert gets saved, and as soon as he learns a few Scriptures, he wants to tell the pastor how to run the church. Such a person must be listening to the wrong people. Some followers of Christ will drop out of this Christian race along the way and go another way, but God is going to have a church.

Hebrews 5:14 tells us, "But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." Hosea 10:12 reads, "Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the LORD, till he

come and rain righteousness upon you." It is time to seek the Lord and grow up.

I thought about King David. In 2 Samuel 11:1 we read, "And it came to pass, after the year was expired, at the time when kings go forth to battle, that David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they destroyed the children of Ammon, and besieged Rabbah. But David tarried still at Jerusalem." It was a time when kings went to battle. Every time the church house is open, it is time for "kings" to go to battle. Does the Bible not say we are kings and priests? When it is time to go to church, it is time for you to be there. What happened to David when he walked out on the balcony? It was a time when kings went to battle, but David was at the wrong place at the wrong time. That would not have happened had he been where he should have been. Perhaps certain things would not have happened to you had you been at church as you should have been. God wants you to be in your place.

Walk in the Spirit

Romans 13:11 reads, "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." It is closer to Jesus' coming now than it was when I first got saved. We do not have time for foolishness, strife, or division. We ought to be men and women enough to stand in front of one another and talk about something face to face and deal with it.

The Apostle Paul said to walk in the Spirit. He told the Corinthian church they were carnal and walked as men. I am preaching the Word of God to give this admonition: you might have made mistakes in the past, but you can learn from your mistakes. It is time to wake out of sleep, spiritually speaking.

The Apostle Paul told Titus in Titus 2:6-8: "Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded. In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you."

Then the Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 4:12-14: "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. [You must learn how to study the Word of God and give attendance to reading. God gave you a gift, so you should use it. It is time to grow up and use the gift that God gave you.] Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery."

Luke 2:52 says, "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man." What does that mean? That means Jesus became subject to God and His earthly parents. He had great character, He pleased God, and He pleased His parents. As a Christian, you should not think you can go to church and act spiritual and then go home and act like the devil. Christianity does not work that way. Are you the same person at church and at home? Do you and your husband or wife argue all the time at home, but at church you sit there piously? God sees that. As Brother Emerson Wilson used to say, "God is more interested in how you act around the breakfast table than how you act around the communion table."

When the prodigal son, spoken of in Luke, Chapter 15, left home, he had no idea that he was heading for the hogpen. He had money, pride, and self-indulgence. He had bright hopes for himself. He proba-

bly thought he was going to call his older brother a fool for staying home, but the brother who stayed home was fine and the younger son ended up in the hogpen. Friend, you can learn from other people's mistakes. It is time to grow up. It is time for men to be men of God and for women to be women of God. If you are a family man, it is time to stand up and be a good husband and a good father.

Children have duties too. They should be good, be respectful to their elders, and be respectful to their parents. When they attend school, they ought to be respectful to their teachers and their coach, if they have one. If you live for God, you can rest assured that God will have blessings coming your way.

God's Word is true. He has never failed on a promise. It will be well with you if you obey your mother and father. Ephesians 6:2-3 reads: "Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth." God will honor that promise. You can take that promise, put it in your heart, and believe it. You ought to do right by your parents and do right by God; then God will bless you.

You need to have faith in God. You get saved by faith. When you asked God to forgive you for your sins, your faith was in the deal. You cannot depend on someone else's faith. You must have faith in God that He is going to do what He said He would do in your life. It is all about faith. God promised you blessings, but you must have faith. These blessings might not come today, but they are coming. Remember this: Jesus calls sinners to repent. Jesus does not turn down anyone.

(Compact Disc TR-1211E)

"My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness."

In the Robber's Den

The following took place in the days of Russian persecution.

Mr. Dexter was arrested by the authorities and put in prison for preaching the Gospel. He did not stop preaching, but continued witnessing to his fellow prisoners. Many of them were converted. The authorities asked him to stop his preaching, but with holy boldness he replied: "As long as I can talk, I shall preach the Lord Jesus Christ, and also to you who are judges. There is one high Judge at whose bar all of you will have to appear, and you will be judged before Him whether you choose or not."

With sharp and blasphemous words they scoffed at him and cried, "We will force you into silence; just wait!" and they locked him in a cell among some Communists. Still he was not silent, and he testified and prayed much. Night after night, one by one, they came to him secretly and inquired about salvation.

Again, Mr. Dexter was called before the court. "Well, have the Bolsheviks taught you to curse by this time?" they asked mockingly.

"No, thank God," he replied, "but I have taught them to pray."

"What!" they cried aloud. "You are lying!"

"No, I don't do that," replied Mr. Dexter. "I always tell the truth. They are praying on their knees now; they have acknowledged the Lord Jesus as their Savior."

"Down in the Robber's den is one place where you will lose your ambition to preach and pray," they replied angrily.

In this den was a large robber band that had been looting whole villages and murdering scores of innocent people. Prisoners who were placed in the den with them were soon stripped of their clothing and abused until they died.

Along with Mr. Dexter, a Russian orthodox priest and a colonel of the former emperor were thrown into the den. Before the robbers had a chance to say a thing, Mr. Dexter stepped up to the leader, shook hands with him, and with a smile said: "God bless you. We also are criminals condemned to die the same as you are." This courageous and kindly act had such an effect upon these low and merciless beings that the leader said to his associates, "No one ever spoke to us in that manner. We will not molest this man."

That night before Mr. Dexter lay himself on the dirty concrete floor, he knelt and prayed aloud to God, remembering his co-inmates in prayer also. In amazement they stood around him wondering what it meant, but they had never seen or heard such things—a man that was not a priest praying and not in a church service! Some who watched began to make fun, but one look from their leader was sufficient to silence them.

Mr. Dexter grew in favor with the robbers, but the priest was suffering much as the robbers made sport of him. He did not know what to do and would like to have prayed with Mr. Dexter but did not have the courage.

One of the prisoners hung in the corner a piece of paper on which was hung some funny picture to which he made the priest say his prayers. In his distress the priest began to call on "the mother of God" and on the saints.

"Tell us, you old bird; do you really believe the prayers you say ever do any good?" The priest was silent. Hard blows from the fellows brought his answer, "No."

Voices rose in laughter and mockery. "Listen, men! This devil doesn't believe in his own prayers, but he taught others to do so and

charged them plenty of money for his chatter. If you had taught us to pray as Dexter is praying, then would I also have been an honest, respectable man. Wait, we will kill you, but before we do, you will have to learn how to pray."

Mr. Dexter's heart bled for the priest, but he felt there was much truth in what the robber said and that he should not interfere. He prayed silently that the Lord would reveal Himself to the priest, and in a low tone said to him, "Only acknowledge your sin and call on the Lord, and He will help you." Finally, in his deep despair the priest openly acknowledged that he was a blind leader of the blind, misleading the people, and that he was a miserable shepherd who cared nothing for the sheep.

"Now that's better," said one of the fellows, "That sounds more like Dexter's prayers. Go right on." The priest was soundly converted, and both he and Dexter joyfully praised the Lord. The priest became an altogether different man. His speech changed, and he was fearless. Together the two men prayed with fervor. It was not long until the colonel also joined them and became a believer.

Mr. Dexter had the privilege, although he had no Bible, of giving them Bible studies. He plainly explained God's plan of salvation. At the second hearing of the story about the thieves on the cross, the leader could stand no more.

"Comrades, this is enough for me. I will confess all our deeds that we have done." Then there followed a terrible confession. "All that I have done is frightful." He continued, "Do you think the Lord would forgive me for all of this?" A new name was soon written down in Heaven.

The leader confessed fully to the court, but the surprise of the

officers was still greater when they learned that it was through the preaching and praying of Mr. Dexter that he was led to confess.

The next day, word was sent to Mr. Dexter that he might go free. When they parted, the leader gave Mr. Dexter these words: "You have been a father to us. You have taught us how to pray, and you shall see us again in that great day."

Mr. Dexter later said, "The eight days that I spent in that cellar dungeon were the most joyful days of my life."

Reader, how is it with your

soul? Does this moment find you at peace with God? Jesus has borne the penalty of all your sins, so that you may be forgiven. First Corinthians 15:3-4 reads: "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures. . . . and rose again the third day according to the Scripture."

Isaiah 53:4-6 states: "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace

was upon him; and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; but the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."

John 3:18 says, "He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." Oh, won't you accept Him now!

Selected

Meeting Announcements

Mt. Pleasant, PA

April 15

Fellowship Meeting: Church of God, 109 Salvation Lane, Mt. Pleasant, PA 15666

Service time: 10:30 a.m. A meal will be served by the local congregation.

Lodging: *Holiday Inn Express*, 724-547-2095 (This is on the same road as the church.

Please mention that you are there for the church meeting for a discount.);

Super 8 Motel in New Stanton, 724-925-8915, on I-70W, (10 miles north of the church);

Melody Motor Lodge, 724-628-9600 on 119N in Connellsville).

For more information contact: Pastor Paul Prinkey. Telephone: 724-547-2151

Summersville, WV

April 24-30

Revival & Fellowship Meeting: The Church of God, 74 Armstrong Road, Summersville, WV 26651

Evangelist: Brother Allen Polston, New Castle, Indiana

Service times: Monday - Thursday 7:00 p.m.; Friday 10:30 a.m. & 7:00 p.m.;

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

Meals will be provided by the local congregation Friday - Sunday.

Lodging may be obtained at Econolodge for \$50.00 per night.

Telephone: 304-872-6900 for reservations.

Mention that you are with the Church of God. Other motels are in the area.

For more information contact: Pastor Earl R. Borders. Telephone: 304-872-4047

Visit our website: www.ChurchofGodSummersvilleWV.com

Mt. Pleasant, PA

May 7-14

Revival: Church of God, 109 Salvation Lane, Mt. Pleasant, PA 15666

Evangelist: Brother Larry Dishman, Mobile, Alabama

Service times: Monday-Saturday 7:00 p.m.; Sunday 10:30 a.m. & 1:30 p.m.

A meal will be provided by the local congregation on both Sundays.

For more information contact: Pastor Paul W. Prinkey, 109 Salvation Lane, Mt. Pleasant, PA 15666

Telephone: 724-547-2151

Kensett, AR

May 26-28

Memorial Day Fellowship Meeting: Kensett Church of God, 409 SE 2nd St., Kensett, AR 72082.

Service times: Friday 7:00 p.m.; Saturday dinner will be served at 4:00 p.m. & service will be at 7:00 p.m.

Sunday Worship 11:00 a.m. & 5:00 p.m. Dinner will be served after the Sunday morning service.

For more information contact: Pastor Calvin L. Foster

Telephone: (Church) 501-742-3961 or (Cell) 501-593-5105

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