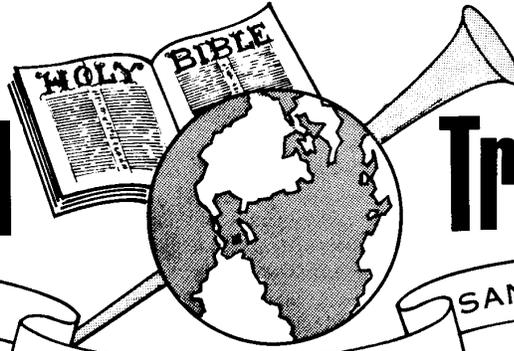


# The Gospel



# Trumpeter

JUSTIFICATION

SANCTIFICATION

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

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

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SOUNDING FORTH THE SEVENTH AND LAST TRUMPET

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Vol. 47 September 2017 No. 9



Church of God Tabernacle in Newark, Ohio

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

***Psalm 122:1***

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

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

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

**THE CHURCH OF GOD BELIEVES IN:**

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

**SOME SPIRITUAL FACTS**

**PERTAINING TO THE CHURCH**

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

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articles or items.

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Vol. 47 September 2017 No. 9

# Guest Editorial

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

Matthew 5:16

## Let Your Light Shine

This world is filled with spiritual darkness, and Ephesians 2:2 lets us know that Satan is the "prince of the power of the air." He is striving to blind the minds of men and women to the Light and the love of God. Multitudes in our day and age do not know the right from the wrong. They grope onward in a lost condition, unaware of the love of God or how to live a life pleasing to Him. The light of the glorious Gospel needs to shine to show them the way of salvation and deliverance from the bondage of sin. We who are saved are *in* the world but not of it. Christ placed each of us here to be a light and an example of the reality found in salvation. Honest hearts that see the Gospel light shining in our lives will be drawn to Christ. In John 12:32 Jesus said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth [through the lives of the saints], will draw all men unto me."

It would be well for those of us who profess Christianity to examine ourselves to see if we are living lives that are pleasing to God. It is easy to profess to be a Christian and yet fail to truly live the way a Christian should live. The Lord wants our light to shine. Why? So that all can see Him through the lives

that we live. We are to be witnesses to those around us of God's goodness, grace, and power. It is Christ dwelling on the inside that radiates out and makes the difference in the Christian's life. The things we do and the way we conduct ourselves will have a great effect on those around us. Man cannot see our hearts, but he can see the deeds of our lives. If your heart is truly right with God, His goodness will show forth to the outside. Your life may be the only Bible that some people will ever see or read.

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

*[continued on page 26]*

*Isaiah 62:1 For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth.*

*2 And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD shall name.*

*3 Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God.*

*4 Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzi-bah, and thy land Beulah: for the LORD delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married.*

*5 For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee: and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee.*

*6 I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the LORD, keep not silence,*

*7 And give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.*

*8 The LORD hath sworn by his right hand, and by the arm of his strength, Surely I will no more give thy corn to be meat for thine enemies; and the sons of the stranger shall not drink thy wine, for the which thou hast laboured:*

*9 But they that have gathered it shall eat it, and praise the LORD;*

*and they that have brought it together shall drink it in the courts of my holiness.*

*10 Go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones; lift up a standard for the people.*

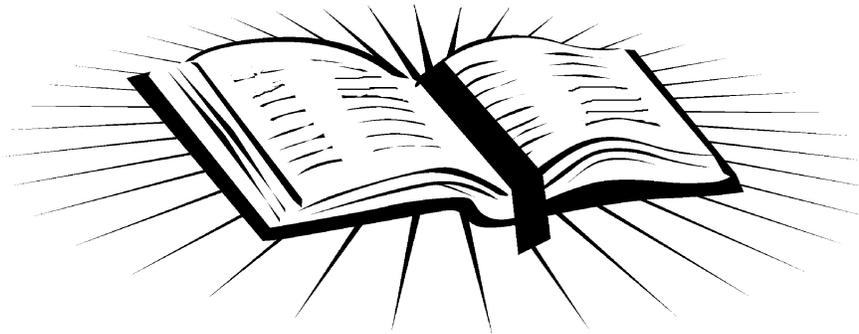
*11 Behold, the LORD hath proclaimed unto the end of the world, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh; behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him.*

*12 And they shall call them, The holy people, The redeemed of the LORD: and thou shalt be called, Sought out, A city not forsaken.*

*Jeremiah 4:21 How long shall I see the standard, and hear the sound of the trumpet?*

# The Standard for the Inner Man

## Part 1 of 2



**Brother Roger L. Decker**

### **A Common Salvation**

As you read these Old Testament verses in Isaiah and Jeremiah, you can see that God has a standard for His people. It is the duty of the watchman on the wall to go through and prepare the way of the people. He is to cast up the highway, gather out the stones, and lift up a standard

for the people, not let it down. The overseer, or the pastor, is to gather out the stones, clear out those things that offend, and lift up the highway of holiness where it belongs. He is to lift up the highway so all people can see it.

Isaiah 35:8-10 reads: "And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of

holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there: And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon

their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." I want you to take a look at the standard for the inner man.

When the standard is used to discuss spirituality, usually one only thinks of the dress standard, but I want to get closer than the outward man and deal with the heart of man. The word standard simply means, "normal, usual, typical, regular, or average." I want to talk to you about that which is usual, normal, typical, and average for a child of God.

Jude wrote in Jude, verse 3, that he "gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation." This Scripture lets you know that this salvation is common for all. It does not have to be a certain type of salvation for you and a certain type of salvation for me. One salvation fits us all. Paul, writing to Titus, said it is "the common faith" in Titus 1:4. The standard is a normal apparel for the Church of God for the inward man and the outward man. We are threefold beings: soul, spirit, and body.

Paul, writing to the church at Thessalonica, said in 1 Thessalonians 5:23, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." The spirit is the life of the soul. The condition of your soul depends on the spirit that you have. Also, the soul is the life of the body. The type of spirit you possess reflects the condition of your soul. When a man or a woman is saved, there are some things that automatically take control, and they take control right away. You do not have to seek them or look for them; they automatically come with salvation.

### **All Sin Must Be Removed**

First John 3:14 says, "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death." Love is the first attrib-

ute of the Holy Spirit. It immediately enters into your soul when your spirit is made right, when you have been born again. This love is not just for certain people; it is a love for everybody, for people whom you know and for people whom you do not know.

The inside of a man needs to be cleaned up first. Jesus said in Matthew 23:25-26: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also."

This was a great sin of the Pharisees and the elders. They adhered to every jot and tittle of the law, but at the same time they refused the inward change. There are people like that today. They hold to the standard outwardly, but inwardly they are full of extortion and excess. All they can see in salvation is a change in outward apparel. The inside of the man needs to be cleaned up first. You can tell when it is not cleaned up right. How can you tell? The outside does not change as it should. When the inside of the cup is completely clean, there is no problem with the outside.

Although the outward apparel needs to be changed from worldliness to godliness when one is saved, a change has to take place on the inside first. The standard for the soul is holiness, or living free from sin. The soul is the real you that will be judged. In 2 Corinthians 5:10 Paul wrote, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." Every one of us must face the Judgment, and in order to go to Heaven, the soul must be clean; all sin must be removed.

Someone may say, "I do not believe that a man can live free from sin." How much sin can you take to the Judgment and get by? The an-

swer is none. You may say, "Well, Christ forgives your sins." That is absolutely right, but He does not forgive you from future sins. He forgives you from past sins. You are supposed to go your way and sin no more. Jesus said to cleanse that which is within first, and there is only one cleanser for the soul. It is not in joining a church. We are a church-joining nation.

If you were to walk up to most people on the street and ask, "Do you go to church?" they would probably say yes. Some might go on to say, "I was baptized as a baby" or "I was confirmed as a child" or "I go to such-and-such church." Friend, there is no cleansing from sin in merely joining a church.

Others think that being baptized in water will get them into Heaven. Some think having a baptismal certificate will insure that they make it to Heaven someday, but that piece of paper can never change anyone's life. Also, salvation is not in partaking of the Lord's Supper, in being a good moral person, in speaking in some unknown tongue, or in being raised in a Church of God congregation. The only cleanser for the soul is the blood of Jesus Christ, and it will cleanse every sin and make you completely clean. It will cleanse your soul, change your spirit, change your actions, and change everything about you that needs to be changed. The power is in the blood of Jesus Christ.

The soul has to be cleansed from all sin. It must be free from the traits of the "old man," or the man you used to be before salvation. All the works of darkness must be eliminated when one is saved. Romans 13:12-14 reads: "The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." You can see in

these verses that you must cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. You must walk in honesty and put on the Lord Jesus Christ.

In 1 John 1:7-10 we read: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another [in other words, it is automatic; it is not put on], and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us." John was saying that all have sinned and that Jesus Christ can cleanse from all sin.

We read in 1 John 2:1, "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not [the rule is that you sin not]. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." When the soul appears before God at the final Judgment, it must be free from sin. The standard for the soul of the Christian is holiness.

First Peter 1:15-16 says: "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy." God's church is a holy church. Ephesians 5:27 states, "That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."

### **The Defilement of the Inner Man**

We want to look at some things that defile the inner man that we need to put off, or get rid of. When salvation comes into a man's life, he must put away some things, and he does not have to wait to do so. There are some things that you should no longer do.

Ephesians 4:25-32 Paul stated: "Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his

neighbour: for we are members one of another. Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: Neither give place to the devil. Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, [That even means by text message or through social media, such as Facebook or Twitter. I do not know how anyone who claims to be a Christian can post some things that they do. Some people who claim to be Christians should be embarrassed and ashamed of what they post on Facebook.] but that which is good to the use of edifying [or building up], that it may minister grace unto the hearers.

"And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

The Apostle Paul said to put away lying. A lying spirit is a terrible spirit to get hold of someone. You must keep in mind that God is a God of truth, and He is opposed to lying; in fact, that is one of the six things that God said He hates in Proverbs, Chapter 6. That spirit will get hold of you if you are not careful.

In 2 Chronicles, Chapter 18, King Ahab and Jehoshaphat were preparing to go to war against Ramoth-gilead, and Jehoshaphat was a little uneasy concerning this war. He knew that Ahab had many prophets who said, "Go up." Nevertheless, Jehoshaphat was still uneasy, even though all four hundred prophets were in agreement.

Jehoshaphat felt that something was not right. Therefore, he asked King Ahab if there was a prophet of the Lord around that he might inquire of him. King Ahab said there

was yet one man, but he was reluctant to get him because he did not want to hear any prophecy of doom. King Ahab said that prophet never prophesied anything good for him. The reason that prophet never prophesied good things to King Ahab was that there was nothing good in this king.

King Ahab brought the prophet forth, and as he was brought forth, the messenger who went to get him told him that all the prophets before him prophesied good things and were with one ascent. Then the messenger told him that he should do the same. The prophet informed the messenger that he could only prophesy what the Lord told him to prophesy.

The Prophet Micaiah prophesied the same as the others did. He told the kings to go up and prosper and that they would win this battle, but that did not satisfy King Ahab. This time King Ahab raised up because this prophet had never prophesied anything good about him before. Then the Prophet Micaiah told him that the Lord allowed the spirit of lying to speak to those prophets.

Friend, if you fool around with liars and fool around with Truth, God will allow a lying spirit to take hold of you. As 2 Thessalonians 2:11-12 says: "God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." This is serious! Some people are so used to lying that they lie even when the truth would sound better. They do not have to work at it; it is something that just comes out.

In 1 Kings, Chapter 13, you can read about a prophet in Judah who was sent to Bethel to cry out against the idolatry of King Jeroboam. God had told the man of God what to say, and He also told him what to do when he left. He obeyed until the very end of his journey, and then something happened. (Many times the enemy will pour out temptation when a person gets near the end of

his earthly journey.) What happened? An old backslidden prophet went to that man of God and convinced him that an angel had spoken to him and said that God had changed His mind. The latter part of 1 Kings 13:18 says, "But he lied unto him." What did the old prophet's lying do? It cost the man of God his life.

Lying will keep you out of Heaven. Young person, you need to be careful of lying. You need to be careful of making up stories that are not true. If you were someplace where you should not have been, then do not lie and tell your parents that you were somewhere else. If you were doing something that you should not have been doing, you should not lie and tell your parents that you were doing something else. Revelation 22:14-15 states: "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie."

You must be careful of overexaggerating to the degree that it becomes a lie. What did the Apostle Paul say? He said to put all lying away from you. You should not lie when you get into trouble.

### **Dealing With Anger**

Paul also said to put away anger. Now, we know there must be some anger in the Christian life, but it must be the right kind of anger. However, there is no defense for a bad temper or irritability. There were times when Jesus became very angry. He was angry with the scribes and the Pharisees when they were watching to see if He would heal the man with a withered hand on the Sabbath day. The Bible says in Mark 3:1-5: "And he entered again into the synagogue; and there was a man there which had a withered hand. And they watched him, whether he would heal him on the sabbath day;

that they might accuse him.

"And he saith unto the man which had the withered hand, Stand forth. And he saith unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill? But they held their peace. And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it out: and his hand was restored whole as the other."

Jesus was not angry over their criticisms, but he was angry at the original orthodox stance that imposed unnecessary suffering on their fellow man. John 2:13-17 says: "And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem, And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting: And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables; And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise. And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up."

Jesus was so angry that He made a whip and drove the changers of money and the sellers from the temple courts. Jesus' anger was kindled against dead, formal religion that holds men in the bondage of false doctrines and seducing spirits. If you want to get angry, get angry at the doctrines that hold men and women in the bondage in which they are being held.

Paul went on to say that the Christian should never let the sun set upon his wrath. In other words, do not let a day end without straightening out an issue. Husband and wife, boyfriend and girlfriend, it is not a good policy to hold things and let them fester and get bigger. It is best to deal with a problem in the budding season, right when it first appears.

I read about a certain man who had some disciples, and in their society they had a rule that, if during the day, anger had caused them to speak insultingly to one another, before the sun went down, they shook hands and were reconciled. Some people hold things until the problem gets bigger, and the next thing they know, they have an even bigger case on their hands, when the thing only started with a little, insignificant matter.

There was a Jewish rabbi whose prayer was that he might never go to sleep with any bitter thought against a brother on his mind. He asked God to help him. I never want to lie down at night and have any bitter thought of a brother. Paul's advice is sound. The longer you postpone mending a quarrel, the less likely you will ever mend it. If there is trouble between you and anyone else, if there is trouble in the church or in the fellowship or in any society where men meet, the only way to deal with it is to deal with it at once. The longer it is left to flourish, the more bitter it will grow.

If you were in the wrong, you must pray to God to give you the grace to admit that you were wrong. Now, it is not easy to say you were wrong. No, in your mind it is always the other fellow who is in the wrong. You can believe it so much that you believe every time that it is always the other person who did the wrong. You might need to get in front of a full-length mirror to look at the real culprit.

Even if you believe that you were right, you should pray to God to give you the graciousness to enable you to sometimes take the first step to get the matter made right. Sometimes taking the first step leads the one who is wrong in getting things healed. What did Paul say in Ephesians 4:27? He wrote, "Neither give place to the devil." An unhealed breach is a magnificent opportunity for the devil to sow dissension.

Churches have been torn into factions because two people quar-

reled and let the sun go down upon their wrath. Many times couples have ended up in divorce courts because of unhealed breaches. Disagreements have gotten so heated that one of them left the home, and next they wound up in divorce court. They seemed to have forgotten the vows they took to honor and love each other for the rest of their lives. Friend, you need to take these things seriously.

### **Theft and Corrupt Communication**

The Apostle Paul said in Ephesians 4:28, "Let him that stole steal no more." The man who was a thief must become an honest man, and he must go to work. You cannot steal your way into Heaven. In the ancient world, thievery ran rampant. We are living in a time when the economy is poor and jobs are not always easy to get. Too many people find it easy to pick up something that is not theirs and walk away with it and think they are entitled to it. If you are going to talk about Jesus Christ, you ought to live as honestly as He lived.

Back in Paul's day, it was very common to have a lot of theft going on at the docks and in the public bathhouses. The public baths were the clubs of the time, and stealing the belongings of the bathers was one of the most common crimes in a Greek city. Again, Paul said in Ephesians 4:28, "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth." I want you to notice the interesting way in which Paul said this. He did not say to become an honest worker so that he may support himself, but he said, ". . . that he may have to give to him that needeth"; in other words, to give to those who were poorer than himself.

In Ephesians 4:29 the Apostle Paul mentioned corrupt communication. This does not necessarily have to be spoken words; it could be body

language. As a Christian, your words should be edifying, not foul or ungodly. Job 4:4 says, "Thy words have upholden him that was falling, and thou hast strengthened the feeble knees."

Smutty or foul words tear down the spiritual man and build up the flesh. A Christian should have enough of the fear of God in him that he would not dare to say smutty words and still profess to be a child of God. I would be afraid to say such words, lest God would strike me dead. Sometimes people say things through text messages that they would not say to someone's face. Some people send text messages with lewd, filthy pictures that should not even be in their minds, let alone on their phones.

Ephesians 4:30 says, "And grieve not the holy Spirit of God." Why? The Holy Spirit is a guide, a comforter, a helper, and everything you need. Just as a child can hurt his parents and grieve them, the Holy Spirit can also be hurt and grieved.

Psalms 78:40-41 reads: "How oft did they provoke him in the wilderness, and grieve him in the desert! Yea, they turned back and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel." This is speaking of Israel of old when they provoked God in the wilderness. How did they provoke God? They wanted to return to Egypt, and they set limits on the power of God.

God could do a lot more for people if they would not set limits on Him. If you really want to get into living for God and enjoying your salvation, you must fully surrender to Him. When you do that, you can trust God. He is not going to embarrass you or make you do something that will embarrass you. When you fully give yourself over to God, it is a wonderful life.

### **Showing Kindness to One Another**

Ephesians 4:31-32 says: "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put

away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." A person can get so bitter and feisty that they look as though they want to fight with somebody. Jesus let us know that these things that come out of the heart are the things that defile the soul.

Another defilement is division. There are ones who have separated themselves who do not see the body of Christ. They do not see the church. If they ever did, they do not see it anymore. Christ is not divided. It is one body, one church, one God, one Lord, one baptism, and one spirit. There is one church mentioned in the Bible. If there were two, you might choose the wrong one. When God saved you, He brought you into one body, the one church.

God hates division, whether it is in a home, in a congregation, or between brothers or sisters. It is through the preaching and having daily communion with God that you keep these things out of your life. When these things start to crowd into your life, it is because you have not really taken the time to pray as you ought to. It takes time to be holy.

You can talk to God while you are doing various tasks. You do not have to be in a prone position or down on your knees. You can talk to God while you are doing the laundry. You do not have to be in a certain place to talk to God. You have access to God anytime, and only as you submit to God can you be victorious in your journey here on earth.

In our Scripture text in Jeremiah 4:21 we read, "How long shall I see the standard, and hear the sound of the trumpet?" We read in 1 Corinthians 14:8, "For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?" Church, we are in a battle against ungodliness and wickedness. In many cases, the trumpet is not being blown as clearly as it ought to be. As long as the

trumpet makes a certain sound, it rallies God's people to stand for that which is right. You have a soul, a spirit, and a body that need to lift up a standard of holiness.

This standard is necessary for both the inner man as well as the outer man. Let me give you an example. When I am traveling, I like

to strike up a conversation with someone that I see who looks like a Christian. Often I have asked others where they go to church because they are dressed as a Christian should dress. I would not ask that question of a woman who is wearing a mini skirt or a guy who looks unkempt with long hair, but some-

times I do walk up to those who look like Christians. Friend, when you get the inner man cleansed from sin, you will want to do everything you can to please God with the outward man.

*(Compact Disc TR-1026E)*

### **Abiding Purity**

The Holy Spirit is the author of your hunger for more of God's power in your life. The prayer which He inspired Paul to pray is the echo of the heart-cry of God, that you might know "the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe" (Ephesians 1:19). More than half of Paul's prayer is given to describing this power. It is an exceedingly great power, a resurrection power, a power by which Christ reigns over all, and all this power is for you.

Weymouth translates this, "the transcendent greatness of His power in us." Williams translates it "power in us." This is God's will for you and me.

### **Indwelling Fulness**

We will never be constantly victorious until this power indwells us; we will never be able to say with Paul, "Thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ" until God's power is always triumphant within us. The tragedy of the ministry is its spiritual ineffectiveness. Is it power or lack of power which is most characteristic of your spiritual life?

The average Christian makes one primary mistake. Thousands pray for power to come upon them. God's plan is for power to indwell them. It is not an external, added power for you to use; it is an internal, transforming power to use you!

The Holy Spirit does not merely come upon us. He comes within us. His baptism is not an external baptism upon us; it is a burning baptism of fire within us. The fullness of His presence is not proved by a transient gift, but by His abiding, transforming, empowering indwelling. His purifying, anointing, empowering presence is essential.

### **Purity and Power**

The anointing of the Spirit is not an occasional, external application of God's power on your work or life. It is an abiding in working of God's Spirit in you. "The anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you" (1 John 2:27). In God's order, abiding hunger because He wants to satisfy you. God wants it to work as surely in you as it worked in raising Christ from purity must precede abiding power. God insists on power to be—before power to do. The reason God entrusts some people with so little of His power is that they are so full of self.

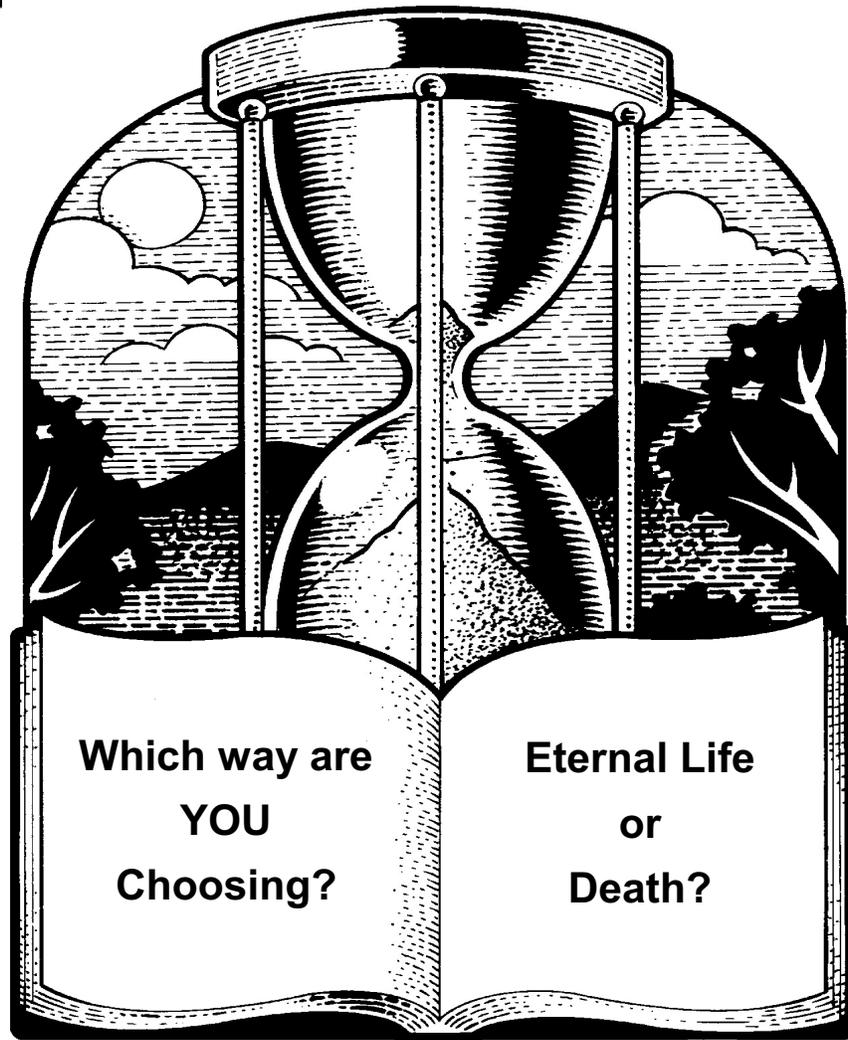
Are you hungry for the power of the Holy Spirit? That hunger is God-given. It shows you the need of your Christian life. God has promised this power to you (Acts 1:8). It will be proved by His power within your daily life. It means power to love, power to serve, power over sin.

When the Holy Spirit crucifies self in your life, you, too, will be able to testify with Paul that it is no longer you, but Christ living in you (Galatians 2:20). Thank God for your hunger. Believe Him to fulfill His promise and to do the exceedingly abundant within your life (Ephesians 3:20-21).

Selected

*1 Peter 3:10 For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile.*

# You Only Live Once



*Brother Calvin Foster*

## **"Let a Man Examine Himself"**

I thank God that since I have gotten saved, I love life. I do not think I would love life as much as I do had I not gotten saved. Do you love life? Life has its bumps and bruises and its ups and downs, but I thank God for Jesus! I want to keep living as long as God would have me to live.

The thought that I want to put before you is that in this world you only live once. "Once" is quite a word. Its definition is, "a single occurrence." It is said that time once gone will never return. Yesterday is gone; you will never see it again.

Psalm 23:4-6 says: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy

staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever." I love life with the Lord, and I love being around God's people. However, while we are in this life, we are walking in the

valley of the shadow of death. We only live once.

Hebrews 9:27 reads, "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." In this life we are going to die, and after death comes the Judgment. In 1 Timothy 6:6-8 the Bible says: "But godliness with contentment is great gain. 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." I thank God that I am living a godly life.

Friend, you brought nothing into this world, and you are going to take nothing out. Whatever you have, you probably treasure it. You might have it in a bank safety deposit box or you might have it hidden somewhere, but when you leave this world, you can take nothing with you. Therefore, you should be wise. Since you know that you only live once, you need to examine your life. In Psalm 139:23-24 the Bible says: "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." You only have one chance at this life. You do not want to miss Heaven. You only live once.

One good time for a checkup that would make you think about examining yourself is found in 1 Corinthians, Chapter 11, when Paul was teaching the church about communion. In verse 27 he said, "Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord." Partaking of the Lord's Supper is a serious time. Before you hold the little communion cup in your hand, you need to examine yourself. Do not wait until the end of life to check yourself, because you do not know when your life will end. Verses 28-29 continue: "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to

himself, not discerning the Lord's body."

If you are unsaved, you should not partake of communion when you know that you are not living right. You must not play around with God. The Bible says he who eats and drinks unworthily eats and drinks damnation to himself. I never give people communion unless I read that Scripture to them first. One lady who recently got saved said, "I never heard that Scripture in my life." Therefore, you need to pause sometimes and read the Word of God and take a good look at your life to examine how well you are doing spiritually.

### **Shun the Broad Way**

We read in Matthew 7:13-14: "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." More people are traveling the broad way than the strait and narrow way. Whatever way you choose, you need to remember that you only live once.

Many men and women pass the time in life very carelessly in many unprofitable ways. They are drunken with the sinful pleasures of the world. The majority of people are now making riches, honor, station, and titles their highest aim in life. They say, "I want to be this" or "I want to do that," but they forget that they only live once.

Most people make provision for this present life as if it will continue forever, but none of us will be here forever. It is time to be about the Father's business, and the King's business requires haste. Remember, your days are numbered, and your years are fleeting. The Scripture says in Genesis 3:19, ". . . for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." Death is sure to come. You do not know when or where it will come. You might have a long life or a short one. If you have ever read the obitu-

aries in the local newspaper, you know that no matter what the age of the deceased is, whether the person was a little baby, a sixteen year old, a twenty-one year old, or an eighty year old, the newspaper editors do not hold back any obituary because of a person's age. They put them all in the newspaper. Graveyards hold the bodies of people of all ages, and no family is exempt from death.

Most people want to live and enjoy the pleasures of sin. They want to go the broad way. They do not like the strait and narrow way. If you choose to go the broad way, you are going the wrong way. I thought about the Scripture in Hebrews 11:24-25, where it talks about Moses. It reads: "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season."

Moses could have been called the son of Pharaoh's daughter and could have had all kinds of pleasures in sin, but he said: "No, I don't want that. I want to go the strait and narrow way. I don't want to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." Dear one, you are going to die one day. Life is not about bouncing a ball or playing with a toy. Your soul is at stake. Heaven is to gain, and hell is to shun. Hell is a terrible place.

In John 8:21 Jesus said, "I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come." If you do not accept God's plan of salvation, you are going to be very sorry at the end of life.

### **Taking Life for Granted**

The Bible talks about the prodigal son in Luke 15:11-13. It reads: "And he said, A certain man had two sons: And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. And not many days after the younger son gathered all together,

and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living." The father gave him the inheritance he had coming to him, but he went out and wasted it with riotous living.

Are you taking care of yourself? Many people out in the world are sucking on cigarettes or taking drugs. Some people do not even know what they are taking. Do not take life for granted, because you only live once. What kind of people are you keeping company with? Do you think you are going to skip through life and think, "Ah, I've got plenty of time." What are you doing with your time? What are you doing with the blessings that God has given you?

The prodigal son went out and wasted his inheritance. No doubt, as long as he had money, he had lots of friends, but where were they when he ended up in the pigpen? Finally, he came to himself, and he remembered that he had a family. In essence, he said to himself, "There is no place like home, and I am going home."

The prodigal son's father saw him coming, so he had the fatted calf killed. When he arrived, he put shoes on his feet, put a robe on him, and put the ring of authority back on his hand. His son had come home! Christian friend, if you backslide, you might not get back to God. God blessed this son to be able to get back home.

There is a short story in the Book of Acts 5:1-4, which reads: "But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, And kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God."

Ananias dropped dead immediately. Later, his wife came in, and Peter asked Sapphira whether she sold the land for a certain price. She said, "Yes, we sold the land for so much," and then she dropped dead. They had only one chance to tell the truth, and they failed to do it.

Verses 9-10 tell us: "Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out. Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying her forth, buried her by her husband."

Verse 11 states, "And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things." Some people are not dropping dead literally, but they are dropping dead spiritually. They know the way, they know the doctrine, and they are still going on as though they are saved, but with no strength and no victory.

### **The Effects of Sin**

Second Kings 5:1 says, "Now Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master, and honourable, because by him the LORD had given deliverance unto Syria: he was also a mighty man in valour, but he was a leper." Naaman was a great soldier with a great celebrated reputation, but he had leprosy.

The Scripture continues in verse 10, "And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean." The Prophet Elisha told this great military man to go wash in the Jordan River seven times, but he did not want to do it. Naaman became angry. He thought the rivers of Damascus were just as good as the waters in Israel.

After Naaman obeyed the man of God and was healed, he went back to Elisha and offered him a gift, but he refused it. However,

Elisha had a servant named Gehazi who ran after Naaman after he left so that he could accept the gifts for himself. He was on that broad way. Gehazi lied to Naaman, and when he returned, he lied to Elisha about what he had done. Naaman gave Gehazi two bags of money and two changes of clothes.

What would you consider selling out God for? Would you do it for money and clothes? People are standing for nothing and falling for everything these days. Second Kings 5:27a says, "The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed for ever." Gehazi's punishment for his greed and his deceit was the leprosy of Naaman. He got it, as well as his seed, forever. He left there as white as snow with leprosy.

People err by going on the broad way. Sometimes they make one mistake and have to pay for it for the rest of their lives. If you make a mistake, young man or young woman, and run with the wrong crowd and get a felony on your record, you become a felon. A felony on your record can keep you from getting a good job. Someone may say, "Well, I only did it once." Even so, you are a felon. I do not think it is fair all the time when a person makes a mistake in life that he cannot get a good job, but that is the way it is. I deal with guys who have been in jail, and I try to help them get jobs. They have great difficulties with felonies on their records.

In the Bible leprosy represents a type of sin. Naaman could conquer armies. He had many military victories, but he was a leper. Leprosy was going to conquer him. It is said that Alexander the Great was a brilliant man who conquered many, but he ended up an alcoholic because he could not conquer himself. People get hooked on many vices.

### **Sin Is a Destroyer**

The first time a young person smokes a cigarette, most likely he will cough and cough if he inhales

the smoke. I was a young boy the first time I inhaled cigarette smoke. I thought I was going to die. I got down on my knees and asked God, "Please, don't let me die." If you play around with tobacco, you will be like a fish. When you go fishing, a fish will come up and nibble a little of the bait, and then it will swim away. Soon it will come back, nibble at the bait again and swim away. Next, that fish will come back and take a bigger bite, and soon it will be in the frying pan.

If you smoke one or more packs of cigarettes a day, you are hooked. Are you taking care of yourself? You have only one life. No matter how strong a man is or how intelligent he is, sin is stronger. You should not play around with sin. Sin is stronger than you are. You cannot control sin in your heart. You need God in your life. Sin will destroy you. Many false teachings are in religion. They are not trying to cast out sin; they are trying to control sin. Sin must be cast out.

Doctrines out in false religion are trying to control sin a little. They say: "You have to sin a little every day. Sin you will, sin you must, and sin you can't help yourself." Friend, sin will take you down. Sin does not care anything about how long you have been married, how long you have been saved, or how healthy you are. Sin wants to destroy you. If you keep playing with sin, this is going to happen to you.

You may say: "I have been married for forty years. The devil can't get to my wife and me." Brother, you had better not flirt around with another woman. Sister, you had better not flirt around with another man. Sin is lying at the door to get you. We would be in a terrible condition in sin without Jesus Christ. I thank God for Him. I do not know where I would be today without Jesus Christ. Without Him we all would be living in sin with no way out. God says, "Look to Jesus, and you can get out."

In Moses' day God told Moses to put a brass serpent upon a pole and

lift it up, and everyone who had been bitten by one of the fiery serpents could look at the serpent of brass and live. What are we doing today? We are lifting up Jesus Christ, and everyone who has been bitten by sin and looks to Christ will live. Jesus did not come to control sin, but He came to deliver man from sin.

You may say, "I am strong, and I can do lots of things." You cannot overcome sin without Jesus in your life. People may do lots of things, and time goes on; therefore, they feel they are getting by. Ecclesiastes 8:11 states, "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil."

Although people think they are getting by with sin, God has their number. There is a lot of unbelief in the world today. Unbelief is the greatest cause of the ruin of mankind. Many people do not believe the Bible. They do not believe that God is going to do what He said He would do. The spirit of unbelief in the hearts of men and women causes them to do evil.

In Moses' day often judgment was executed speedily. If a man was caught picking up sticks on the Sabbath day, Moses went to God and asked, "What should I do with this brother?" God's instruction back then was to stone him. Today many people think they are going to get by with disobedience to God's Word, but no one can do wrong and get by—not a preacher, a deacon, a choir member—no one. The Word of God is like a two-edged sword. It cuts out to the people, and then it swings back at the preacher.

### **"Only One Life, So Soon It Will Pass"**

Isaiah 55:6-7 states: "Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he

will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." God is full of mercy, and He will forgive you and pardon you.

Again, Psalm 139:23-24 says: "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me and lead me in the way everlasting." You may be beautiful or handsome, you might have lots of money and be well educated, and you might live in a nice home in a fine neighborhood; but you will only live once, just as the man living in the gutter.

Young person, Ecclesiastes 12:1 instructs, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them." Although you may be strong and healthy, you need to come to God in your youth. You are blessed to be young. What happened to some? They took up smoking and drinking and started doing things that they had no business doing. Then as they got older, they said, "I am old now, and I have no pleasure in life." When I look back on my life as a young person, all I see is trouble, sorrow, woe, and all the mistakes that I made. As one song says, "*Only one life, so soon it will pass, Only what's done for Christ will last.*"

When David was fleeing from Saul, he spoke to Saul's son Jonathan. In the latter part of 1 Samuel 20:3 David said, "There is but a step between me and death." Life is so uncertain; therefore, you need to be wise. You have only one chance at life; use it wisely. Are you taking care of yourself? Are you taking care of your soul? Your body might be sick. Perhaps you have made some mistakes in life, and now you are paying for them. Your body might be sick, but what about your soul? "*Only one life, so soon it will pass, Only what's done for Christ will last.*"

In 2 Samuel, Chapter 12, when David's son that he had with Bathsheba was sick, David prayed

and fasted, but the child died. After the child died, David got up, cleaned himself up, and washed his face. The servants looked at him and said, in essence, "David, when the child was sick and you were fasting, you were sad and upset, but now that the child is dead, we expected you to be the same way."

Verses 19-23 read: "But when David saw that his servants whispered, David perceived that the child was dead: therefore David said unto his servants, Is the child dead? And they said, He is dead. Then David arose from the earth, and washed, and anointed himself, and changed his apparel, and came into the house of the LORD, and worshipped: then he came to his own house; and when he required, they set bread before him, and he did eat. Then said his servants unto him, What thing is this that thou hast done? thou didst fast and weep for the child, while it was alive; but when the child was dead, thou didst rise and eat bread. And he said, While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept: for I said, Who can tell whether GOD will be gracious to me, that the child may live? But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me."

### **"The Lord Is Not Slack Concerning His Promise"**

When you leave this world, you are gone; it is over. You should be wise, because you have only one chance. In Matthew 16:24-26, I want you to read the words of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. It states: "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" This is serious business.

What value do you place upon your soul? Are you going to let people cause you to lose your soul? No doubt, you have things in your life that you value. You take good care of them. Well, what about your soul? The greatest thing you can do for your soul is give your soul to Christ. You can do no greater thing in life.

Some people may ask: "Why are you traveling seven hundred miles to attend a camp meeting? That's a long ride." Friend, what we receive in the camp meeting is worth all the miles that we travel. We are not riding on horseback or in a covered wagon. We travel comfortably by bus, by train, by jet, or in an air-conditioned automobile.

Remember, you only live once. This is your time, and you have only one chance to do it right. What value do you put upon your soul? When Jesus told that parable about the man that had one hundred sheep, He said the shepherd left the ninety and nine to find that one lost sheep. It is more valuable to find that one lost person who will get saved than to stay with the ninety-nine who need no repentance. The Bible tells us the angels in Heaven rejoice over one sinner that repents. You may not care about your soul, but God loves your soul. God is so good!

My friend, sin will take you further than you want to go, it will keep you longer than you plan to stay, and it will cost you more than you want to pay. Sin will take a beautiful life, a beautiful family, or a beautiful home and destroy it. Sin wants to get into your life and pull you away from a beautiful congregation where the man of God is pouring out the Word of God. The people of God are the best friends you have. It is worth it all to be His child.

What value do you put on your soul? There is a famine in the land for the Word of God. Second Peter 3:3-4 states: "Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers [these are people who find fault, people who want to get you

off the strait and narrow way, people who talk foolishly to others, people who talk foolishly to the young people, or family members who talk foolishly], walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation."

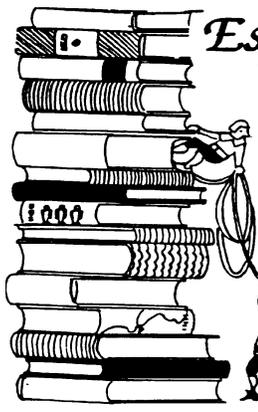
Then, verse 9 says, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." God does not want anybody to die and go to hell. If you die and go to hell, it is going to be on you. God is not willing that any should perish. God wants you to turn from your wicked ways and turn from the sinful life. You need to come out of that gang of friends that is bringing you down and causing you to commit sin. You need to turn from them and run for your life. God is not willing that any should perish.

Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 admonishes: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." God is going to bring every work into judgment. You are going to stand before God by yourself. You will not be able to say, "Come on, brother, speak for me." No, you will have to stand alone and give an account for what you did in your life.

*(Compact Disc TR-1730M)*

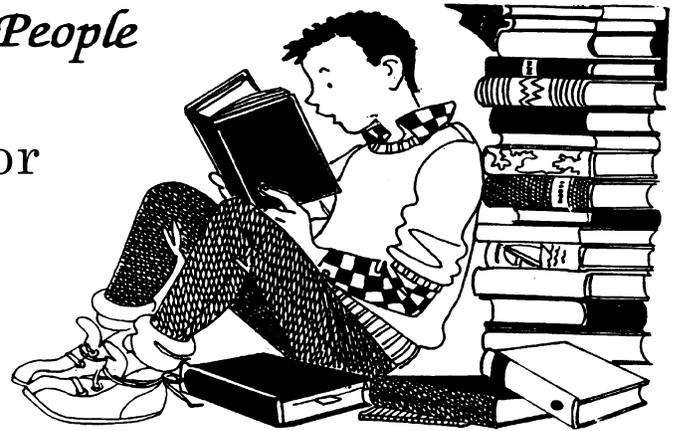
The struggle you're in today is developing the strength you need for tomorrow.

**Don't Give Up!**



*Especially for Young People*

## Thank God for the Miracle



It was 1935, and our country was in the midst of the great depression. My mother was then eleven years of age, and one of seven children, ranging in age from one to sixteen.

My grandfather, previously employed at the local limestone mining company, had been laid off with the rest of the workers soon after the depression began. To feed his family, he took odd jobs whenever available. Hunting and fishing, two sports in which he had engaged at leisure, now became necessary for survival.

The family planted a garden each spring, which supplied food for canning. However, this particular year had brought drought and a shortage of food to can.

Summer had turned into autumn. With each passing day my grandfather would seek work, hoping that the mining company would soon open.

It was late November when my grandmother's test of faith occurred. The last of the canned goods had been used. All the staple items in the cupboard were gone. For breakfast that morning the children had eaten pancakes from the last bit of flour and shortening. My grandfather, with the last piece of homemade bread, and an apple in his pocket, set off with his dog to hunt for supper. Time passed too quickly that morning. At noon my Aunt Emma approached my grandmother: "Mother, what are we going to do? We don't have anything left. There's not a bite of anything in the house!"

"I know," she replied, "and there's no money either. But I believe that

God will provide something. I want all of you to gather around me on your knees. We're going to pray and ask God to help us."

She led her children in prayer. When she finished, she asked her son William to bring her Bible, and she turned to Psalm 37:23-25: "The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholdeth him with his hand. I have been young, and now I am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread."

"God will not forsake us," she said. "Let us thank Him for taking care of us and for all that He has given us." With bowed heads and closed eyes, she led her children in prayer again. While they were still praying, someone knocked loudly at the door. It startled the baby, and he began to cry. My grandmother cautiously went to the door.

There stood a young man she had never seen before. He looked very pleasant and was dressed neatly and modestly.

"Mrs. Henry?"

"Yes."

"I was told you have need of this and was sent here to deliver it to you," he said, handing her a white envelope. The envelope contained forty dollars, quite a substantial amount for those days. Surprised, when she opened the envelope, my mother looked up. The stranger had gone. So my grandmother sent her son William running down the hill to ask the man to come back. She

wanted to thank him, and to satisfy her curiosity, she wanted to ask his name and from where he had come.

William returned and said: "Mother, there is no man on the road. I've looked up and down, and there is no man there. I don't know where he could have gone!"

"Where do you suppose he came from, and why did he give us that money?" he added.

"Because God knew we needed it," she answered. "I believe, William, that truly that man was an angel sent to us from God, because we were in need."

She pressed her son's hand in her own and turned back toward the house, walking slowly with tears streaming down her face. To her children, all standing in the yard, she said, "Let's get ready to go into town. God wants us to have supper tonight!"

That forty dollars provided the family with enough food to last throughout the winter, and by spring my grandfather was called back to his old job.

My mother told me this story when I was a little girl. I have told it to my children, and I hope they will tell their children how simple faith brought a messenger from God.

"Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33).

"My God will supply all your needs, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19). Praise His name!

Selected

*Philippians 4:8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue,*

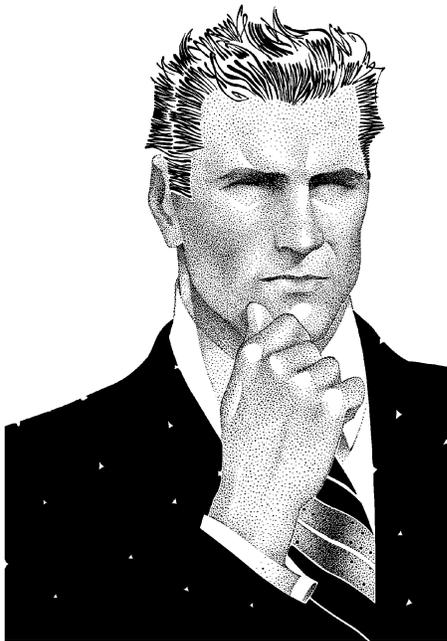
*and if there be any praise, think on these things.*

*9 Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.*

*Philippians 3:17 Brethren, be*

*followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an example.*

*Psalm 37:37 Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace.*



## The Amazing Power of Your Thoughts

**Brother Richard Talbot**

### How to Successfully Deal With Your Thoughts

God has always worked through a man. He has a leader for the people to follow. He has not changed His plan.

Verse 8 of our Scripture text in the Amplified Bible reads, "For the

rest, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is worthy of reverence and is honorable and seemly, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely and lovable, whatever is kind and winsome and gracious, if there is any virtue and excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think on and weigh and take account of these

things [fix your minds on them]."

Psalm 139:1-2; 23-24 states: "O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my down-sitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. . . . Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any

wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." This was a prayer, and it should be the desire of every one of us. Many times the prayer of my heart is, "Search me, O God." Oftentimes when I come into a service and listen to someone preach a message, I ask God to search me. I like to search myself, but I find that sometimes I am a little too favorable or too prejudiced. That is the reason I need an independent agency to examine me. Therefore, I ask the Lord to search me, try me, prove me, and examine my thoughts to see if anything is out of order. My prayer is this: "Is there any wicked way in me? Lead me in the way everlasting."

The psalmist recognized human life versus divine intervention. Between the first verse and the last verse of Psalm 139, David realized there is nothing about mankind that God is unaware of. David said God knew his down sittings and his uprisings; God knew the things David undertook to do. Friend, God knows the things with which you allow yourself to get involved. He knows what is going on in your life, and He even knows your thoughts afar off before you are aware of them.

There is nothing about you that God is unaware of. He knows the path of your life. He knows when you lie down, and He is familiar with all your ways. The Lord knows about every word that you are about to speak. If you really believe this, you ought to be a really good child. There is no hiding place from the Lord, yet many people live as though God cannot see them or is not interested in all the little details of life. God is interested in every little detail of your life.

### **Thoughts Can Be Deceiving**

Your thoughts and the power they have can direct your life for good or bad. What are your thoughts? Impressions of innumerable things occur every day. An average brain weighs approximately three pounds. Albert Einstein's brain

weighed only 2.71 pounds. The weight of his brain was significantly less than the average, but he had many great achievements in his life. It has been determined that your brain stops growing at the age of eighteen. Approximately fifty to seventy thousand thoughts flow through your brain every day, which equates to between thirty-five and forty-eight thoughts every minute. Have you ever wondered why your mind seemed so tired at the end of the day? It is like a busy factory. Thoughts are coming and going all the time.

Your life will always express the results of your dominate thinking. That which you think upon the most and seems to take control of your mind dominates or directs the course of your life. We all have thoughts. Your brain is active constantly, and you cannot stop yourself from having thoughts. Sometimes lying in bed at night, my mind is in a whirl of thoughts. Some of them seem to crash into each other, so to speak.

You may even toss and turn while trying to get to sleep because your mind is active and full of thoughts. You have deep, inner thoughts that affect you. In your home life, as a parent or as a husband or a wife, you will have thoughts that come in unannounced that bring imagination or suspicion with them. Some thoughts can be destructive to you. Since many thoughts are coming to you constantly, you need to consider how you are going to deal with them.

Thoughts are floating around in everyone's brain. Some thoughts are positive and others are negative. Nobody knows about your thoughts except you and God, unless you make them known to others. Some thoughts that people have could be surprising to others, and they would not want anybody to know about them. God has the record. You may look at someone and smile and shake his hand and say, "I love you brother," yet in your mind you harbor troubling thoughts toward that person. When you allow such thoughts to exist in your mind, they could

control your actions. Obviously, you cannot prevent some thoughts from entering your mind. Although bad thoughts, evil thoughts, and wrong thoughts may crowd in along with good thoughts, how you deal with those thoughts is what matters. You need to stand against the bad thoughts and feed and nourish the good thoughts. This will determine your success as a child of God.

If you are having a battle with a certain temptation, how you think about that temptation has much to do with how you conquer it or if it conquers you. Temptations are a part of life as a Christian. They are part of your fight for holiness. As a child of God, I cannot allow myself to yield to an evil temptation. I must conquer and defeat it by the grace of God or it will defeat me. You must deal with your temptations properly. If you make an excuse for yourself to fulfill a temptation, if you say it is more powerful than you are, then you are saying that God is unable to save your soul. Dear one, God is able to give you conquering power and conquering victory.

Too many people do not really want to think strong thoughts against certain things. They fight against those things, but not forcibly enough. Your thoughts can be deceiving. You can think yourself into problematic situations. In other words, you can meditate or let your mind wander into areas that you should not wander into. Unchecked thoughts can soon become a reality. It is important to pay attention to your thoughts.

### **The Channel to the Soul**

Now I want to focus on more serious, character-controlling thoughts that result in major decisions in life. These thoughts affect the unity and the love of companionship and the things that are most important to you. The devil wants to destroy every good thing that God has ever done or has put together. If you have a good, strong marriage, you need to guard it with everything

you have. Satan is against every successful marriage. He will try to sow thoughts into your mind against your companion. Those thoughts might not have any foundation or anything to substantiate them. The devil is a hard taskmaster. He will place an idea in your mind in hopes that you will eventually believe it, even though it does not have any foundation or validity.

Concerning adultery, Jesus said in Matthew 5:28, "But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." That is a very powerful statement. No one could know that someone had such a thought. In this day and age, one could apply it to a man lusting after a woman, committing adultery in his heart. Jesus was not talking about such thoughts merely passing through someone's mind. He was talking about allowing such a thought to lodge there. In other words, He was speaking of nourishing or feeding such a thought and finding pleasure in thinking about that thought. No one else may ever know about it, but God has the record.

The vast majority of your thoughts may center around a few important areas, things with which you are really involved. If you are really involved in church, your home, your child's school, or your job, then your thoughts are going to feed on those things. As great a man as the Apostle Paul was, he said in his testimony in Philippians 3:13-15 that he did not count himself to have apprehended, or to have attained, but he was always pressing forward for the prize of Christ Jesus. The Apostle Paul's thought life was seemingly set on having *more* of Christ in his life. He already had Christ, but he was saying, "I want to seek Him more and more."

It is sad when people show wrong attitudes, wrong actions, or wrong behaviors, yet they seem to feel that they have reached the plateau of spiritual success. They have no real inclination to strive for more.

If anyone could have rested on his accomplishments, the Apostle Paul could have sat back and said, "I have already done a powerful work for the Lord." Instead he said: "I have not apprehended yet. I am not where I really want to be." He pursued perfection. Let us be like minded.

Proverbs 23:7 says, "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he." How is your mind? The mind is the channel to the soul. The mind is the first battleground for the devil. If you conquer Satan in your mind, you will never have to battle him out of your heart. The only way the devil has to capture your heart is through your mind and through the thoughts that you allow.

### **Dealing With Negative Thoughts**

If you dwell on negative thoughts toward anything of God, toward your pastor, toward your brothers or sisters in Christ, or toward your husband or wife, the devil is going to feed that until you begin reacting negatively. Therefore, you need to guard your soul by guarding your mind. Do not allow anyone to whisper anything negative in your ear. You do not need that. Do not play with the enemy of your soul.

Genesis 6:5 reads, "And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." He was not speaking of actions and outward behavior at this point. He said their thoughts were only evil continually. Every day their purposes and desires were evil, and it upset the Lord so much that He decided to destroy the whole world. He was very disturbed at these wicked people and their evil imaginations.

Murder is fueled by hatred, which is fueled by evil thoughts. First John 4:20 tells us, "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" First John 3:15 says, "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer:

and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him."

You do not have to pull a trigger on a gun or stab someone with a knife to be a murderer. You just have to hold thoughts of hatred and murder in your heart. You may be accepted by others as a child of God or sing in the choir or preach a message, but nobody knows what is in your mind; however, God knows.

Those who are free from resentful thoughts will surely find peace. I do not like resentful thoughts, but I have had to battle them, and they are disrupting. The devil wants to destroy the saints. He wants to disrupt your home and your marriage. He is trying to sow resentful thoughts in your mind against anyone or anything good. Satan wants to bring you down.

We all need to follow the advice of Peter. First Peter 1:13-15 reads: "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation."

The Amplified version states in verse 13, "So brace up your minds; be sober (circumspect, morally alert); set your hope wholly and unchangeably on the grace (divine favor) that is coming to you when Jesus Christ (the Messiah) is revealed." One day it is all going to be over. We are going to be ushered into the presence of God in Heaven, God's dwelling place, for eternity. If you have been faithful, you will hear the words, "Enter into My court, ye blessed and holy." It is going to be a battle to get to Heaven. You are going to have to fight as a good soldier of Jesus Christ and learn to endure hardness rightly.

Some people endure hardness, but they endure it with bitterness and a belligerent attitude. They endure it as though they should not have to go through what they are

going through. You should endure hardness as a good soldier without complaining or growling or being upset because of what you are going through. God knows what you are going through, and He has led you the way that you are going for a purpose. You need to trust Him and believe in Him. He will not fail you. If you will stay true to God, He will bring you through the battles that you are fighting. One day it will seem as nothing.

Paul said your light affliction appears but for a short time. Oh, for the joy of Heaven! Do not get yourself out of order with God because you let your thoughts control your actions. We all have had our feelings hurt. That is not a sin, but how you deal with those hurt feelings can become a sin.

### **Wrong Thoughts Can Rule Your Life**

In Ephesians, Chapter 6, after Paul listed the armor of a Christian, he said in verse 16, "Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked." You need to put the shield of faith into action and quench *all* the fiery darts of the wicked. You do not have to let bad thoughts dominate your behavior, or control your actions. You do not have to let wrong thoughts rule your life. You can fight them off and conquer them with the shield of faith. Paul said above everything else you are doing, take the shield of faith and trust in God.

You can read of many instances in the Scriptures where thoughts have gotten man into trouble. Consider Abraham's experience with Abimelech and the lie that he told concerning his wife. Genesis 20:11 says, "And Abraham said, Because I thought, Surely the fear of God is not in this place; and they will slay me for my wife's sake." Abraham lied and deceived the king. His thoughts brought about an action that almost got another man into serious trouble with God. Your thoughts often

dictate your actions.

Naaman the leper came to Elisha in 2 Kings 5:10-12. He thought that Elisha was going to come out to him and do this and that to heal him, but Elisha was not impressed with Naaman's greatness. Naaman came from another country where he was a mighty man of valor.

Elisha sat back in the inner section of his house and sent his servant to meet Naaman. I can picture Elisha when his servant came in and said, "Naaman is here."

"Really? Well, go tell him to wash in the river Jordan seven times and he will be healed," and then he went on about his business.

When Elisha's servant went out to tell Naaman what to do, it upset him so much. Even in his leprous condition, he was angry with Elisha for not showing him any special privileges or favors. He drove off in his chariot in a fury. I can picture Naaman's servant tapping Naaman on the shoulder and saying: "Master, you need to calm down. If he would have asked you to do some great thing, would that have changed you? All he has asked you to do is to go to the river Jordan and dip in there seven times, and you will be healed." Logic finally set in. He turned around, went to the Jordan River, dipped seven times, and was healed. What stirred up all of this? He said in verse 11, "Behold, I thought. . . ."

Many people get upset with things because what they thought was not the way it went. Nothing is wrong with your having a thought, but you need to bring it into subjection to the will of God. Do not let your thoughts rule you or ruin your life. Some people have divided from congregations because of a thought. The rich man's ground brought forth plentifully, and he "thought to himself," and his thinking got him into serious trouble.

King Ahab looked on Naboth's vineyard and liked it. He might have brought Naboth into the palace to have a big dinner with him. Perhaps he treated him with the finest food, wines, and breads. When Naboth

finished, King Ahab might have leaned over and said, "Naboth, how about selling me your vineyard?"

Naboth said, "The Lord forbid me that I should sell my father's inheritance, even to you." He would not sell, so Ahab got upset. He wanted what was not his, and he showed his displeasure at being denied. First Kings 21:4 states, "And Ahab came into his house heavy and displeased because of the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him: for he had said, I will not give thee the inheritance of my fathers. And he laid him down upon his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no bread."

Poor Ahab, the king and ruler of the kingdom of Israel, was pouting. No doubt, he shed some tears because he could not have his way. He turned his face to the wall and would not even eat. Ahab's wife came in and said, in essence: "What is the matter, Ahab? Why won't you eat?"

Ahab told her that he was upset over the fact that Naboth refused to sell him his vineyard. It is amazing how a bad attitude can take away your appetite, physically and spiritually. The wrong attitude spiritually can spoil your appetite for the things of God and for the pastor's messages. That is the reason some people go away saying, "He cannot feed my soul." No one can feed their souls until their wrong attitudes get straightened out.

Ahab's actions and his wife's actions brought about their own destruction. It was all due to a vineyard. How serious it is that thoughts can get so many into trouble. Thoughts can either help fortify and build unity or work against unity. A pastor may preach a message that you do not fully agree with, and immediately your mind will go into a defensive mode. Next, you will be thinking, "I don't have to do that." There is no sin in having that thought, but you have to deal with it. You need to rebuke it, conquer it, and say to yourself: "He is the man of God, and he has been feeding my

soul. If he asks this thing, surely I can bring my life into line for the sake of unity. The Church of God means more to me than my own little personal feelings."

### **Guard Your Thoughts**

Thoughts are going to be the ruination of many good people on Judgment Day. You had better watch your thoughts. You cannot stop them from coming, but you need to deal with your thoughts appropriately. You are today where your thoughts have brought you, and you will be tomorrow where your thoughts take you. Many have been in strong, evangelistic church services where conviction was heavy and their hearts were melted by the visitation of the Holy Spirit only to allow their thoughts to block them from making the right move. Many times thoughts have driven good people away that God was trying to draw to an altar. Thoughts in the mind have caused individuals to leave the services unsaved. We need to guard every thought.

The Jews had a real problem with Jesus. He did not line up with what they thought He should be.

Many of the Jews believed Him in their minds and in their hearts secretly, but they would not own Him because of the peer pressure of all the other Jews. Caiaphas was the high priest, and he knew that Jesus was the Messiah. He told them that He was, but later on, he had his hand in Christ's crucifixion. He refused to deal with his thoughts.

Luke 19:41-44 reads: "And when he was come near [speaking of Jesus], he beheld the city, and wept over it, Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation."

Jesus could not save His own nation because their thoughts about Him stood in the way. They allowed their thoughts to build a barrier between them and the truth. Only God can see what the future holds. God may see trouble ahead for your

life because you have been tolerating wrong thoughts or allowing the enemy to build a barrier between you and Him.

God is calling and weeping over you. His Spirit is wooing you to conquer your thoughts and press your way to an altar of prayer. You will be surprised at the relief, the joy, and the happiness that awaits you when you cast aside the barriers and thoughts.

Sometimes it is difficult to deal with thoughts. What will others think or say? The devil will throw things into your mind, such as, "I have tried to live for God, but it just didn't work out for me." My pastor once told me, "Keep on trying; never quit trying." When you meet the conditions, God will meet you with the victory. You need to cast away your negative thoughts about what you are going to do. Do you feel the Spirit of God wooing, talking, and pleading with you, dear one? Won't you humble yourself and receive the good things that God has for you?

*(Compact Disc TR-1651)*

## **In Christ We Have—**

**A LOVE that can never be fathomed;  
A LIFE that can never die;  
A RIGHTEOUSNESS that can never be tarnished;  
A PEACE that can never be understood;  
A REST that can never be disturbed;  
A HOPE that can never be disappointed;  
A JOY that can never be diminished;  
A GLORY that can never be clouded;  
A LIGHT that can never be darkened;  
A PURITY that can never be defiled;  
A WISDOM that can never be baffled;  
RESOURCES that can never be exhausted.**

*Matthew 15:8 This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.*

*9 But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.*

# Using Musical Instruments in Worship



**Brother Allen Polston**

## **Turn Not to the Right or to the Left**

If you study the Bible, in many cases you will find that the Word of God cautions you not to go off in one direction or another, but rather to live the strait and narrow way. The wise man penned in Proverbs 4:27, "Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from

evil." As a Christian, you must stay on guard so the enemy of your soul does not get you to compromise.

Proverbs is not the only place where this kind of instruction is found. In fact, Deuteronomy 17:20 says, "That his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment, to the right hand, or to the left: to the end that he may prolong his days in

his kingdom, he, and his children, in the midst of Israel." It is often said that pride is the cause of a person beginning to go down the path of worldliness and compromise. I believe an individual starts going in the wrong direction when he starts adding things to God's Word and putting requirements on people in another direction. Both are equally wrong. If you go off into the ditch

on the right hand, you will be in just as much trouble as if you go off into the ditch on the left hand. You must follow God as He has instructed.

A movement of men often establishes their own identity, and thus gives some kind of explanation for their actions. Unfortunately, this almost always leads them to enforce positions in an effort to be separate, but those positions are not truly biblical. For example, the teaching that you should not use musical instruments in worship does not line up with biblical principles. Some say it is wrong to use a guitar, a piano, or some other form of musical instrument in worship services. We base our position and our beliefs on the Word of God, not on tradition, popular opinion, or general consensus.

Living by faith is certainly challenging. At times we come under fire, and we are put to the test. Do you remember how the three Hebrew boys were put to the test when they were thrown into the fiery furnace? In this New Testament day, Peter told of being tried as gold is refined in the fire. Sometimes trials are very challenging, and many saints of God have found this to be true.

In the Old Testament, Joshua was among that group. Joshua 1:7 says, "Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest." Joshua received this kind of instruction early on, and as he was passing the torch, he gave the same kind of instruction. In Joshua 23:6 he said, "Be ye therefore very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, that ye turn not aside therefrom to the right hand or to the left."

I repeat, it is challenging to live by faith. It takes courage to walk by faith. Sometimes there is nothing visible or available to give you confirmation. When you are brought to

a place in your life that you have never been before, that is when you must walk by faith.

If you knew every time you faced a trial that you were going to be brought to one particular point and it was all going to work out, all you would know would be to get to that one point. However, sometimes you are brought to that point, and then you have to go on. You do not know what the next step may hold around the corner. That is when you must live by faith. You do not know what all is going to happen, but you know that God is in control.

### **Beware of Vain Worship**

Many times there is nothing to give you confirmation. Because of that, some people begin to impose things upon other people for them to trust in and turn to. It may be something that man has come up with, just so people will have something to grab hold of. Jesus cautioned in Matthew 15:9, "But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." When man begins to impose things upon people as though they come from God when they do not, it becomes vain worship. It is not really profitable.

We must worship God in Spirit and in Truth. In so doing, your worship is profitable, and it will strengthen your soul. It will cause you to want to live more for God. It will challenge you to press on. It will help you through the week as you face the pressures and the challenges of life.

Even good, well-meaning people can come up with things on their own that are not directed of God. Once that gets started, it can gain momentum, and there is no end to it. Where is the stopping point? The Galatian writer said in Galatians 5:9, "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." Some people start adding things to God's Word as though they are commandments from God, such as telling people that God would not have them to use musical instru-

ments in worship. When things begin to be added that are not scripturally sound, there is no stopping point.

The Revelation writer told about a bottomless pit, where there is no place to stand, no place to get a foothold. Once a person begins to yield to compromise, it accelerates. It can be that way on the other side. For example, if someone says that everybody has to wear black or that all the men have to grow a beard, there is no end to coming up with giving people something visible to look upon or to put their faith in.

If you come up with a new set of restrictions and regulations, that will only hold people for a while. If you hold a rod over them and demand conformity to some mandated decree or commandment, that will only last so long. When they measure to that, what happens? You start losing your authority, and you have to come up with something more. I have seen this happen. This is just one area where people can get off track.

We should allow preferences; that is acceptable. I believe God enjoys some variety. Just look at His Creation. He did not make every flower a red rose. He did not make all the land flat. God made the hills, the mountains, beautiful scenery, and landscapes of all kinds. Sometimes people sing a cappella. Sometimes a choir will sing part of a song without music, and it sounds wonderful. Sometimes singers choose to blend their voices without using instruments, and there is nothing wrong with that. Variety like that is sometimes a real blessing, so I am not preaching against variety or preferences. If you prefer not to use any kind of instrument when you sing, that is your privilege, but I do not believe we can teach that God is against the use of musical instruments.

### **"Do All to the Glory of God"**

Revelation 22:18-19 reads: "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this

book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."

The Bible is clear. We do not have the liberty or the right to add to the Word of God and to put things on people that cannot be scripturally proven and substantiated. That being said, we realize that not everything is spelled out in the Bible. However, the principles in God's Word let us know that God's people are not going to roll a marijuana joint, even though the law may accept that in some states. Although the Bible does not spell out some things word for word, there are godly principles that cover those things.

Coming up with a teaching or a doctrine that says you should not use musical instruments in the worship of God cannot be proven in the Scriptures or by biblical principles. As God's people, we need to understand why we believe what we believe. First Peter 3:15 says to "be ready always to give an answer to every man." I believe when people ask about this subject, we ought to be able to let them know there are reasons that it is not wrong to use instruments for the worship of God.

Musical instruments are mentioned many times in the Bible. Let us look at the Old Testament and the setting in which they are found. Psalm 33:1-3 says: "Rejoice in the LORD, O ye righteous: for praise is comely for the upright. Praise the LORD with harp: sing unto him with the psaltery and an instrument of ten strings. Sing unto him a new song; play skilfully with a loud noise."

Here we find the psalmist sharing some basic instruction about rejoicing in the Lord and offering praise to Him. When is it that we find in the Bible people being able to sing a new song? We find that when people get saved. Although

this is an Old Testament Scripture, what the psalmist was talking about is an experience that takes place in the New Testament. When you really get saved in this New Testament day in which we are living, what happens to you? You start singing a new song. You might have been singing different kinds of songs before, but when you get saved, you start singing songs of praise to God.

Psalm 92:1-3 says: "It is a good thing to give thanks unto the LORD, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High: To shew forth thy lovingkindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night, Upon an instrument of ten strings, and upon the psaltery; upon the harp with a solemn sound." These Scriptures in God's Word tell us of those who were praising God with the use of different kinds of musical instruments.

To be able to play skillfully is a gift from God. If God has given you such a talent, you should not hide that talent. You should use your talent for God's glory. First Corinthians 10:31 reads, "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

### **Forms of Praise to God**

Psalm 87:1-7 says: "His foundation is in the holy mountains. The LORD loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob. Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God. Selah. I will make mention of Rahab and Babylon to them that know me: behold Philistia, and Tyre, with Ethiopia; this man was born there. And of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her: and the highest himself shall establish her.

"The LORD shall count, when he writeth up the people, that this man was born there. Selah. As well the singers as the players on instruments shall be there: all my springs are in thee." What was the psalmist talking about? He was dealing with the thought of Zion, and he said the

singers as well as the players on the instruments would be there. Hebrews 12:22 states, "But ye are come unto mount Sion." If you are saved, you are a part of Zion. This is not just limited to the Old Testament. What did the psalmist say would be in Zion, or in the church? He said in Zion you would find people singing, praising God, and rejoicing, as well as the players on the instruments.

Psalm 150:1-6 instructs: "Praise ye the LORD. Praise God in his sanctuary: praise him in the firmament of his power. Praise him for his mighty acts: praise him according to his excellent greatness. Praise him with the sound of the trumpet: praise him with the psaltery and harp. Praise him with the timbrel and dance: praise him with stringed instruments and organs. Praise him upon the loud cymbals: praise him upon the high sounding cymbals. Let every thing that hath breath praise the LORD. Praise ye the LORD."

It is clear that many people of old used musical instruments in the acts of praising God and rejoicing in Him. Isaiah 38:20 reads, "The LORD was ready to save me: therefore we will sing my songs to the stringed instruments all the days of our life in the house of the LORD." What is the house of the Lord? Paul wrote to Timothy and let him know that the house of God is the Church of the Living God. People who are saved and in the Church of God want to sing and give praise to God. They employ the use of musical instruments used appropriately to the glory of God.

First Corinthians 14:40 tells us, "Let all things be done decently and in order." Musical instruments are to be included in worship. All things are to be done in decency and in order. Certainly we know that plenty of things through life are abused, but just because some people choose to abuse something does not mean that we should do away with it.

We do not use what God has given us to lift up the flesh, or to exalt man. We are using it for the

glory of God. There may be some places where it is misused or abused, but that does not mean those who use it properly should discontinue using it.

### Public Worship

Some people twist Scriptures or take them out of context and try to say that we should not use musical instruments. The Apostle Paul wrote in Colossians 3:16, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." Does that sound as though Paul condemned the use of musical instruments? Some believe that Scripture is saying that musical instruments should not be used.

This verse in Colossians is talking about admonishing one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. Is this something that we do only in the confines of the church walls, the building where we meet? Is that the only time that we should let the Word of Christ dwell in us richly with all wisdom? Some people teach you should not use musical instruments for worship, yet they do not have a problem with them once they go out the doors to go home.

This reminded me of just exactly what our Scripture text says in verse 9: ". . . teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." That is what people are doing. They get off on a tangent and take Scriptures out of context and teach them for doctrines and hold them upon people. Some men have come up with commandments, and then they have to grab something to try to support it.

If you back up and read the entire third chapter of Colossians, you will find that Paul was not just addressing public worship settings, but he was addressing the saints at all times. In verses 1-2 he said: "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where

Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth."

You are supposed to do that all the time. You are not supposed to set your affection on things above only when you walk in the doors of the church building for public worship. No, you are supposed to keep your affection set on things above. Colossians 3:16 is in no way a support to such a teaching as not using musical instruments.

Have you ever counted how many psalms were directed to the chief musician? Of the one hundred fifty psalms, more than forty-five of them were directed to the chief musician. Colossians 3:16 is not against the use of musical instruments; that teaching has no Bible foundation.

### "Giving Thanks Always"

Ephesians 5:18-20 reads: "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Are those verses of instruction only applicable to us when we are in public worship? Is that the only time God wants us to be filled with the Spirit? No, God wants us to be filled with the Spirit all the time and to manifest a life such as being described. For example, verse 20 instructs, "Giving thanks always. . . ." God wants us to give thanks always, and He wants our hearts to be lifted with singing and praising God with psalms and hymns, making melody in our hearts to the Lord.

I thank God for the wonderful times we have when God's people meet together, but that is not the only time God wants us to be under the influence of His Spirit.

The Philippian writer said in Philippians 4:4, "Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice." How do we rejoice? Some of these

verses have been telling us. We rejoice by incorporating singing and praise to God, using psalms and hymns. To say these are only instructions for when the church comes together has no real basis in the Bible.

Those verses clearly instruct us in our day-to-day living. God wants us to be filled with His Spirit all the time. God wants us to speak in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs and to make melody in our hearts all the time, not just on Sunday. This is not just a Sunday religion. This is not just something we engage in one or two days a week. God wants us to do this all the time.

Someone may say, "Not one time do you find musical instruments in the New Testament." There are many things that you do not find in the New Testament, but that does not disqualify them for use in the worship services. In the New Testament, you will not read of as much shouting and praising of God as you do in the Old Testament. In fact, the word *shout* is found only two times in the New Testament, and neither time is it referring to the saints of God rejoicing.

Acts 12:22 says, "And the people [they were lifting up King Herod] gave a shout, saying, It is the voice of a god, and not of a man." This was not an occasion where the saints of God were rejoicing and praising the Lord. It was basically an occasion of idol worship taking place. The people were exalting Herod.

The other time we find the word *shout* used is in 1 Thessalonians 4:16, where the Bible says, "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout." The words *shout* and *shouting* are not found anywhere else in the New Testament. If you are going to teach that musical instruments would have to be spelled out in the New Testament, as some do, then you would also have to teach that the shouting would have to be silenced. I am convinced that God's people are not going to quit shouting and praising

God. Many saints are still excited today, twenty, thirty, and forty years after God saved them. They are still on fire for God! The world can go to ball games and raise their hands and shout when they get excited. We have something better than scoring a touchdown or winning a ball game! You cannot stop God's people from shouting and praising God.

### **Truth Brings Freedom From Error**

John 8:32 states, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." What does the Truth make you free from? God's Truth makes you free from error so that you can get free from things that are not accurate, not appropriate, and not according to God's will. You need to be free from those things so the devil cannot use them against you.

When error is permitted, it makes opportunity for a chain of errors. Sometimes people will not even consider coming around where musical instruments are used because of what they have been taught. Again, lots of things are not spelled out or mentioned in the Bible, but that does not disqualify those things. When people are taught the commandments of men, those things have a power on them, and they miss out on other truths and glorious things that God has because they are under bondage. You can read in the Old Testament where God's people shouted praises to God. Psalm 32:11 says, "Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, ye righteous: and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart."

Isaiah 12:6 reads, "Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee." To whom was the Prophet Isaiah speaking? He was speaking of not only those people in the Old Testament but also the inhabitants of this day and age.

First Samuel 4:6 reads, "And when the Philistines heard the noise of the shout, they said, What meaneth the noise of this great shout in

the camp of the Hebrews? And they understood that the ark of the LORD was come into the camp." We read of shouting in the Old Testament, but we do not find it in the New Testament. Does that mean we have to shut it off? Does that mean we have to stand against it? Shouting praises to God is found throughout the pages of the Old Testament. The people got happy when they had victory. They rejoiced and shouted and gave God praise, but you do not find it spelled out like that in the New Testament. Does that mean we have to cut it off? Absolutely not. I thank God for that!

Thank God, we can rejoice in the Lord! Some people may not shout, but they might tear up and begin to cry or smile or laugh or rejoice in some other way, but it is all permissible when it is done decently and in order. So it is with the use of musical instruments. You do not find them being used by the disciples at the Last Supper. We do not read of them all getting their guitars and singing a few songs, but we do find God making reference to musical instruments, such as the use of a trumpet, a type of the preaching of the Gospel.

We also find the harp being used when John talked about God's people harping with their harps in the Book of Revelation. We know this is not speaking of a literal harp, but He uses musical instruments to bring about understanding in type. If musical instruments were sinful, God would not use them to illustrate a type. In Matthew 11:17 Jesus mentioned the pipe. He said, "We have piped unto you." The Bible does not condemn the use of musical instruments for the worship of God.

Let me share one more thing along those lines. I do not think you will find a duet or a quartet mentioned in the Old or the New Testament. Also, you will not find mention of a choir getting up and singing in the New Testament days.

Some people who say you should not use musical instruments have duets and quartets that sing a

cappella. You see, what they use to condemn one thing, they are not using to condemn the other. Sunday school is not mentioned in the Scriptures, yet we have it, and it is a good thing. A lot of things have been implemented as a result of wisdom, in doing things decently and in order, for the glory of God, and for the salvation of souls.

### **Use Your Talents for God's Glory**

There are things in God's Word that we base on principles. I believe the musical instruments can aid the singing and the service in such a way to touch people's hearts and to have an impact upon them.

In 2 Corinthians 5:11 Paul said, "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." If we use these things in a godly fashion, along with the Gospel message, the prayers of the saints, and the moving of the Spirit of God to persuade people, then we should.

When Paul was speaking to King Agrippa, the king said that Paul had almost persuaded him. In Acts 26:29 Paul said, "I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds." We want people to be altogether persuaded to serve God, so we labor. Support is given and finances are spent, all because we want people to be persuaded to serve God.

Using musical instruments can certainly be of great benefit and have an impact on the worship services, but it is not the main thing in a service. Yes, there may be places in the religious world where some may overdo things, but just because people abuse or get carried away with things does not mean we should do away with them.

Some people abuse the position of pastor. They are just there for the money, or for filthy lucre. They say one thing and do another. Just because there are some hypocrites does not mean we should not have

pastors. One old expression is, "I would rather go to church with hypocrites than go to hell with them." Some people go to church and claim to be Christians, but they are living hypocritical lives. So what should we do? Should everybody quit because of hypocrites in the mix? No, and neither should we cease from using the things that we can use for God's glory.

The teaching that says the Bible is against using musical instruments in the worship services is false. It does not have footing in God's Word. I will tell you what it does have though. It has a man's signature

on it. In some cases, it may be that teaching has been carried down by tradition. Tradition and ways of living sometimes are very difficult to break.

There are times in life when we have to swallow our pride, so to speak, even as Christians. For example, sometimes we may speak too quickly, so we have to make that right. It would take humility for someone to say, "I see what you are talking about in this message." I thank God for the Truth, because the Truth sets us free.

I want to encourage you to use your talents for the glory of God. I

want you to press the battle on. God supports using those things in an appropriate manner so that we can bring glory to His name and for the salvation of souls. The teaching that says or tries to say the Bible teaches against the use of musical instruments has no foundation in God's Word. Jesus said in our Scripture text that people are worshiping Him in vain because they teach for doctrine the commandments of men. May God bless you.

*(Compact Disc TR-1087)*

*When we put our  
problems in God's  
hands, He puts  
Peace in our hearts!*



[Guest Editorial—continued from page 2]

profess godliness must lay aside everything that is hurtful to our Lord.

A person's conduct is so very important. Worldly people are eager to ridicule us should we do something wrong. The places we go and the things we do should be done with Christ in mind. Again, too often carelessness overtakes individuals, exemplifying the wrong example to those who are looking on. God does not want His children to live in strait-jackets, so to speak, with no liberty or freedom to enjoy life. On the other hand, He does not want us to live loose, uncontrolled lives that will bring reproach and disgrace to His name and His cause. How we live, the way we talk, and the places we go make a difference. The Apostle Paul gave sound advice to Titus that is good for us yet today. He stated in Titus 3:8, "This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men."

We are to be an examples in charity (or love). Genuine love is in great need today. First, love to God, and then also love to our brothers and sisters in the Lord. Jesus informed us in John 13:34-35: "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this

shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." We are to love those who are in sin and do not know God. We are not to love the sin that they commit, but we are to love the sinners. In Matthew 5:44 we read these words of Jesus: "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you."

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

Our Lord wants each of us to be a vessel that He can work through to help others. Dear one, I admonish you to be a vessel of love and mercy that reaches out

to others. A Christlike example may be the only Gospel some people will ever see or hear. It is not always what we say that influences those around us, but more often it is our godly living and example. There is an old adage that states, "I'd rather see a sermon lived than to hear one." The example we live as Christians certainly has an influence on those with whom we come in contact with every day.

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

Selected

### **Matthew 5:14-16**

*"Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."*

# MEETING ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Medina, OH**  
September 2  
**All-Day Meeting:** Church of God, 6745 Wooster Pike, Medina, Ohio 44256  
Service times: 10:00 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. A meal will be served after each service.  
For more information call 330-725-5993 or 330-421-0187
- Medina, OH**  
September 5-10  
**Revival:** Church of God, 6745 Wooster Pike, Medina, Ohio 44256  
Evangelist: Brother Larry Dishman, Hurley, Mississippi  
Service times: Tuesday - Friday 7:00 p.m., Saturday 6:00 p.m., and Sunday 10:30 a.m. & 4:00 p.m.  
For more information call 330-725-5993 or 330-421-0187
- New Castle, IN**  
September 11-15  
**Revival:** Ninth Street Church of God, 125 S Ninth Street, New Castle, IN  
Evangelist: Brother Larry Dishman, Hurley, Mississippi  
Service times: Monday - Friday 7:00 p.m. nightly. Food and fellowship after the service on Friday night.  
For more information contact: Pastor Allen Polston. Telephone: 765-521-8284
- Chicago, IL**  
September 17-24  
**Revival:** Harding Street Church of God, 3924 W 14<sup>th</sup> Street, Chicago, IL 60623  
Evangelist: Brother Larry Dishman, Hurley, Mississippi  
For more information contact: Brother Aurelius Raines.  
Telephone: 708-751-1725 or 708-747-1534
- Kalamazoo, MI**  
Sept. 25-Oct. 1  
**Revival:** Comstock Church of God, 555 Alger Street, Kalamazoo, MI 49041  
Evangelist: Brother Larry Dishman, Hurley, Mississippi  
For more information contact: Pastor Jerry Miller. Telephone: 269-998-3194
- Morehead, KY**  
October 2-8  
**Revival:** Blue Bank Church of God, 3200 Blue Bank Road, Morehead, KY 40351  
Evangelist: Brother Larry Dishman, Hurley, Mississippi  
For more information contact: Brother Jeff Fannin.  
Telephone: 606-784-2858 or 606-776-2639 or 606-784-9241
- Kentucky**  
October 13-15  
**Revival:** Church of God in Kentucky (more information will be forthcoming).  
Evangelist: Brother Larry Dishman, Hurley, Mississippi  
For more information contact: Brother George Sparks. Telephone: 859-749-3324
- Mt. Pleasant, PA**  
October 16-22  
**Revival:** Mt. Pleasant Church of God, 109 Salvation Lane, Mt. Pleasant, PA 15666  
Evangelist: Brother Larry Dishman, Hurley Mississippi  
Service times: Monday-Saturday 7:00 p.m.; Sunday 10:30 a.m. & 1:30 p.m.  
For more information contact: Pastor Paul Prinkey. Telephone: 724-547-2151
- Summersville, WV**  
October 23-29  
**Revival:** The Church of God, 74 Armstrong Road, Summersville, WV 26651  
Evangelist: Brother David Stegmeier, Canby, Oregon  
Service times: Monday - Friday 7:00 p.m., Saturday 6:00 p.m. & Sunday 10:30 a.m. & 6:00 p.m.  
For more information contact: Pastor Earl R. Borders. Telephone: 304-872-4047  
Visit our website: [www.ChurchofGodSummersvilleWV.com](http://www.ChurchofGodSummersvilleWV.com)
- Newark, OH**  
October 23-29  
**Revival:** Church of God, 675 N. Cedar Street, Newark, OH 43055  
Evangelist: Brother Larry Dishman, Hurley, Mississippi  
Service times: Monday-Saturday 7:00 p.m.; Sunday School 9:30 a.m.,  
Morning Worship 10:45 a.m., and Evening Worship 6:00 p.m.  
For more information contact: Pastor Roger L. Decker. Telephone: 740-344-2543

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