

SOUNDING FORTH THE SEVENTH AND LAST TRUMPET

Vol. 48 February 2018 No. 2



Church of God Tabernacle in Newark, Ohio

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

***Psalm 122:1***

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

# Guest Editorial

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

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

### THE CHURCH OF GOD BELIEVES IN:

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

### SOME SPIRITUAL FACTS

#### PERTAINING TO THE CHURCH

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

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*"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."*

*Romans 10:13*

*"And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart."*

*Jeremiah 29:13*

## BECOMING A CHRISTIAN

Becoming a Christian is the wisest decision anyone can make. It is also the most serious and important decision a man or a woman will ever make in this life. This is not a matter to be taken lightly or to be attempted on an experimental basis. Far too often individuals have begun with the thought in mind of just simply trying it out for a little while. They think if it does not work out, they can drop it. This is not the proper attitude to take toward such a serious matter. Men and women are offered the opportunity to receive this "pearl of great price" that cost Heaven so much. To become a Christian, a person must begin first with a strong determination to go all the way with God. He must be willing to finish the race regardless of what happens or what it may cost. When seeking salvation, one must be willing to forsake all to follow the Lord.

Salvation has been offered to everyone who desires to obtain it. You may ask, "How do I know that God wants me to be saved?" First of all, God loves and cares for you. John 3:16, a well-worn Scripture, states, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever

believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." God not only wants to save men and women daily, but He is calling them to urge one and all to come to Him and to become Christians.

In Luke 19:10 Jesus said, "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." In the parable of the lost sheep, we find that the good shepherd left the ninety and nine in safe keeping and went out searching and seeking to find that one lamb that had gone astray. In 2 Peter 3:9 we read that God is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." Knowing that God loves your soul so much ought to assure you that it is His will to save not only you as an individual but also the entire world.

The Apostle Paul, writing in Romans 10:13, said, "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." God is waiting to hear your desperate call coming from a broken heart. He listens for those who are sick of living a life of sin and disgrace. Jesus spoke these beautiful words in John 6:37, "... him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." He promises to save all who will come to Him in repentance, confessing their sins and allowing

*[continued on page 18]*

2 *Chronicles 12:1* And it came to pass, when Rehoboam had established the kingdom, and had strengthened himself, he forsook the law of the LORD, and all Israel with him.

2 And it came to pass, that in the fifth year of king Rehoboam Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem, because they had transgressed against the LORD,

3 With twelve hundred chariots, and threescore thousand horsemen: and the people were without number that came with him out of Egypt; the Libyans, the Sukkiims, and the Ethiopians.

4 And he took the fenced cities which pertained to Judah, and came to Jerusalem.

5 Then came Shemaiah the prophet to Rehoboam, and to the princes of Judah, that were gathered together to Jerusalem because of Shishak, and said unto them, Thus saith the LORD, Ye have forsaken me, and therefore have I also left you in the hand of Shishak.

6 Whereupon the princes of Israel and the king humbled themselves; and they said, The LORD is righteous.

7 And when the LORD saw that they humbled themselves, the word of the LORD came to Shemaiah, saying, They have humbled themselves; therefore I will not destroy them, but I will grant them some deliverance [God said that because, in reality, the humbling of themselves was not in full humility]; and my wrath shall not be poured out upon Jerusalem by the hand of Shishak.

8 Nevertheless they shall be his servants; that they may know my service, and the service of the kingdoms of the countries [in other words, the difference between serving God and serving sin].

9 So Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem, and took away the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king's house; he took all: he carried away also the shields of gold which Solomon had made.

10 Instead of which king Rehoboam made shields of brass, and committed them to the hands of the chief of the guard, that kept the entrance of the king's house.

11 And when the king entered into the house of the LORD, the guard came and fetched them, and

brought them again into the guard chamber.

12 And when he humbled himself, the wrath of the LORD turned from him, that he would not destroy him altogether: and also in Judah things went well.

13 So king Rehoboam strengthened himself in Jerusalem, and reigned: for Rehoboam was one and forty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city which the LORD had chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, to put his name there. And his mother's name was Naamah an Ammonitess.

14 And he did evil, because he prepared not his heart to seek the LORD.

15 Now the acts of Rehoboam [he was the son of Solomon], first and last, are they not written in the book of Shemaiah the prophet, and of Iddo the seer concerning genealogies? And there were wars between Rehoboam and Jeroboam [they were brothers] continually.

16 And Rehoboam slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David: and Abijah his son reigned in his stead.

# God Wants a Perfect Heart



**Brother Roger L. Decker**

## **A Lack of Earnestness and Consistency**

Rehoboam was king of a divided kingdom. Solomon went into idolatry and married foreign wives. He

knew better, so God was angry with him. The Lord had appeared to him twice concerning this matter. Solomon also put tax burdens on the people. Before the death of Solomon, God told him that He would

not divide the kingdom in his day, but after his death, He was going to divide the kingdom, and He did. The kingdom was divided into a Northern Kingdom and a Southern Kingdom. Jeroboam was king of the

Northern division and Rehoboam was king of the Southern division.

I want you to understand a little history explained in this chapter. Verse 1 of our Scripture text tells us, "And it came to pass, when Rehoboam had established the kingdom, and had strengthened himself, he forsook the law of the LORD, and all Israel with him." When Rehoboam was strong enough that he had nothing to fear from Jeroboam, his brother, he cast off his outward profession of godliness.

I want you to read some lengthy Scriptures found in the Book of Deuteronomy, Chapter 8. Verses 7-18 read: "For the LORD thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills; A land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil olive, and honey; A land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack any thing in it; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass. When thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless the LORD thy God for the good land which he hath given thee.

"Beware that thou forget not the LORD thy God, in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes, which I command thee this day: Lest when thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt therein; And when thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied; Then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the LORD thy God [the One who made all of that possible], which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage; Who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where there was no water; who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint; Who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that he might

humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end; And thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth.

"But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day." It is very common and very disappointing when in distress or danger or near death, people seem much engaged in seeking and serving God, but once they are through the crisis, they throw aside all their faith in God.

God quickly brought troubles upon Judah, and He did it to awaken the people to repentance before their hearts became hardened. The affliction that God sent their way had done the work that He sent it for, especially when it caused people to humble their hearts. David said in Psalm 119:67, "Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word." In other words, the affliction had done its intended work. An affliction does not necessarily mean disease or death. A person can be afflicted in many ways. Rehoboam never cast off God completely, but he did not engage his heart to seek the Lord. He did not pray and ask for wisdom, grace, or divine direction to oversee his kingdom as his father Solomon did. One thing a godly pastor does is ask God for wisdom, guidance, direction, and the ability to feed His people.

Rehoboam did not consult God. He strengthened himself and thought he had all he needed to be successful. He made nothing of his religion because he did not set his heart to do it. He did evil because he was never determined to do good. As long as everything was going all right, he stubbornly resisted serving the Lord. There were imperfections in Rehoboam's heart that he held onto, and it kept him from wholly following the Lord. Rehoboam's sin was a lack of earnestness and consistency.

## The Work of Perfecting

We can read in the Word of God that some served God, but not with a perfect heart. Speaking of Abijam, the son of Rehoboam, 1 Kings 15:3 says, "And he walked in all the sins of his father, which he had done before him: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father."

Second Chronicles 25:1-2 tells us: "Amaziah was twenty and five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned twenty and nine years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Jehoaddan of Jerusalem. And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, but not with a perfect heart." What did it mean for Amaziah not to have a perfect heart? He was not willing to go all the way with the Lord. He balked at some things. Amaziah ended up turning from the Lord. He fled to his city, and there he was killed. He started out doing good things, and God gave him time to rid himself of imperfections, but he allowed the imperfections to be his downfall and died a fugitive.

Let us take that message and bring it up to you and me. Some people may start out living for God doing things in life that those who have been serving God for a while could not do. You might call them imperfections. God can see that these things will eventually take them down if they do not rid themselves of them. Now, we know that God is very patient, even more patient than we are. Sometimes instead of dealing with the imperfection, they allow the imperfection to destroy everything God has done for them, and they end up back in sin. You see, that is the reason God gives pastors, teachers, and evangelists, for the perfecting of the saints.

Ephesians 4:11-12 states: "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying [or building up] of the body of Christ."

There is a move by some to discredit the need of a pastor, but it is certainly not a biblical move.

I want you to notice that Paul used the word *perfecting*, or another word for perfecting is improving. No matter how long you have been serving God, you need to improve. When a person gets saved, his soul is perfect toward God. If it is not, he is not going to make it into Heaven. He does what the Bible says and repents, but some things still need to be cleansed. Some people hate to admit that, but let us read it from the Bible.

Second Corinthians 7:1 tells us, "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." What was Paul writing about? He was writing about Christian sanctification. The Christian needs to separate himself from some things or he will become unholy. He will become defiled if he does not cleanse himself from some things that made inroads in his life when he was in sin; they need to be driven out. When some people come to God, they come with impurities that need to be removed. One can only repent of that which he has a knowledge of.

When I came to God, I could not remember all the wrong things that I had done. I had a terrible list, so I just asked God to clean up the whole mess, and He did. However, I had some habits in my life that would hinder me in serving God; therefore, I needed to be perfected.

### **Move When God Calls**

We read in Numbers 33:51-56: "Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye are passed over Jordan into the land of Canaan; Then ye shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, and destroy all their pictures, and destroy all their molten images, and quite pluck down all their high places: And ye shall dispossess the inhabitants of the land,

and dwell therein: for I have given you the land to possess it.

"And ye shall divide the land by lot for an inheritance among your families: and to the more ye shall give the more inheritance, and to the fewer ye shall give the less inheritance: every man's inheritance shall be in the place where his lot falleth; according to the tribes of your fathers ye shall inherit. But if ye will not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you; then it shall come to pass, that those which ye let remain of them shall be pricks in your eyes, and thorns in your sides, and shall vex you [or trouble you] in the land wherein ye dwell. Moreover it shall come to pass, that I shall do unto you, as I thought to do unto them." If they failed to obey God, He was going to treat them like foreigners, or strangers, to the covenant of Israel.

Our Scripture reading says that Rehoboam strengthened himself and he had control of the kingdom. He was elevated, so what did he do? First, he forsook the Law of the Lord. In other words, he laid aside the Word of God. When a king goes down, so do his followers. He forsook that which would have guided and helped him and kept him separate from the enemy.

Too many try to serve God with an imperfect heart. Oh, they are saved, free from sin, and on their way when it comes to living for God. However, there are things that they need to get rid of in their lives, and God gives them time. They are not sinning, but those things can lead a person into sin if not dealt with when God puts His finger on it.

God is faithful, and He knows what is going to hinder you. He sees the future, and He knows where you will be a few years from now. One hindrance to you could be a wrong relationship. You cannot keep company with some individuals and remain saved.

You need to make moves when God is dealing with you to do so. I am reminded of a guy who used to be a good friend of mine. Before I

was saved, I often went with him to a place to hang out, drink, listen to ball games, and play cards. I knew him from work. Also, my wife knew his wife. I got saved, and he watched my life change. I did not go out with him any more; that was over. Sometimes he would come to me and ask me if I wanted to go here or there. I knew where it would lead, so I always said no. He watched me for a long time, and then one time he called and said: "I would like to talk to you. I want what you have." I could tell by his voice that he had been drinking heavily.

I said: "All right, I will come." So I went to where he was staying, and he said: "I want to be saved like you are. I want to be able to do what you do."

I said: "I would like you to talk to me when you are sober. You get back to work, and I will talk to you tomorrow." So he went back to work, and I walked up to him and said: "I'm ready to talk to you about salvation." He had strengthened himself and was feeling okay, so he replied, "I think maybe I will talk to you some other time, not right now."

I said, "Okay," and walked away.

Some time later, I was going into a grocery store and met somebody who knew him well, and I asked how my friend was doing. He told me that he had passed away. That really crushed me because we had been very close friends at one time. This just shows you that when you have a need before God, you should not strengthen yourself once the crisis is over and think that you no longer need God.

### **What Can Hinder People?**

Sometimes people may get wrong attitudes. Sometimes they do not even realize that they have a wrong attitude until they sit under the preaching of God's Word. Other people have an unpleasant personality. Have you ever met someone who had a personality like a grizzly bear? If you have a personality like

that, God can help you.

Some people get involved with those who are a detriment to their souls, and they need to break off the relationship or they will end up losing their salvation. Why? Their friends are always doing sinful things against the things of God. They are no longer interested in the same things. It could be a relative. You should not get so close to somebody that you cannot hear the voice of God.

Young person, if you are dating, you should not get so close to each other that you cannot hear the voice of God. Sometimes when I pray, I pray this way: "Lord, not my own will, but may Your will be done." If God sees that you want something that will not be detrimental to you, He will help you to attain it.

God gives a person time to correct things. It took my wife and me time when we got saved to really understand the dress standard. We found out later that it was about modesty, but God gave us time. God gives you time to correct things.

A hindrance to some people could be stubbornness. Have you ever been stubborn? Some acquired it from living in sin, and it is not easy to get rid of. God will give you time. He will give you grace to deal with it. It is so wonderful how God leads. He is so patient and will show you through a message, a testimony, or a song. God has so many ways of revealing things.

Some people need to take care of restitutions. If you do not take care of what God shows you, you will struggle with keeping victory in your soul. God will be patient with you when it comes to restitution. He will be very patient. He will make a way so that you can take care of it.

If you owe a debt that you have not paid, you should not just walk away from it. You had better make a way to straighten it out, because you will never have true victory with God until it is straightened out. Perhaps you have slandered someone's name. Maybe you borrowed something and failed to return it. God will

bring it to your mind. Did you borrow something and break it? What should you do? You should replace it.

Rehoboam knew better than what he was doing. He was raised differently. He knew that his father prayed and worshiped God; however, his father did get out of order and marry foreign wives. Still, both Rehoboam and Jeroboam knew what God required of them.

Some people are like Rehoboam. When they were strong, they forsook the Lord, or forsook the law of His kingdom. Rehoboam felt very established in the kingdom and very secure. He had a strong military and was blessed materially. However, he failed to realize that nothing is secure unless it is grounded in God. He had peace with Jeroboam. It was then that God allowed an enemy to come into the camp. When the enemy came, he was well equipped, and he overthrew all those who were in disobedience.

### **Seek the Lord**

The Scripture says in 2 Chronicles 12:2 that they had transgressed against the Lord. Friend, you do not have enough strength to stand against the enemy of your soul when you are a transgressor.

Some enemies came against Rehoboam and even took the cities that were strengthened and fortified. Verse 4 reads, "And he took the fenced cities which pertained to Judah, and came to Jerusalem." He was right in the capital of Judah, and then God spoke to Rehoboam and gave him a message through the Prophet Shemaiah. God is so faithful. God saw all that was going on. He decided to give Rehoboam another chance, so He spoke to the Prophet Shemaiah.

Verse 5 says, "Then came Shemaiah the prophet to Rehoboam, and to the princes of Judah, that were gathered together to Jerusalem because of Shishak, and said unto them, Thus saith the LORD, Ye have forsaken me, and therefore have I

also left you in the hand of Shishak." The reason that Rehoboam had problems was that he forsook God. Then the king and the people humbled themselves and acknowledged the Lord as righteous. For the rest of that war, we find that the Lord had mercy upon Rehoboam because he humbled himself. God did not let Rehoboam be destroyed altogether.

God does His best to salvage souls and bring them into a right relationship with Him. Even then Rehoboam still did evil and would not live an earnest and consistent life for the Lord. When Rehoboam was in affliction, he humbled himself.

Deuteronomy 6:10-12 says: "And it shall be, when the LORD thy God shall have brought thee into the land which he swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee great and goodly cities, which thou buildedst not, And houses full of all good things, which thou filledst not, and wells digged, which thou diggedst not, vineyards and olive trees, which thou plantedst not; when thou shalt have eaten and be full; Then beware lest thou forget the LORD, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt [or sin], from the house of bondage."

When it seems as though everything is going all right, you need to be careful. Rehoboam did not prepare his heart to seek the Lord. How does one prepare his heart? He prepares his heart by seeking the Lord. The Lord is the one who gives preparation. Are you prepared? Is your heart set to serve the Lord regardless of your situation? Something is coming down the highway that you cannot handle. Will you stand firmly with your heart fixed? Are you ready to stand for the Truth and for godly principles or are you one who puts God on the shelf as soon as everything seems to be going all right? Second Chronicles 16:9a reads, "For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him." God wants you to have a perfect heart.

*(Compact Disc TR-1847)*

Matthew 4:18 And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers.

19 And he saith unto them,

Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.

20 And they straightway left their nets, and followed him.

21 And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his

brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them.

22 And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him.

# Fast Christians



*Brother Paul Prinkey*

## **God Demands Immediate Obedience**

The Bible clearly teaches that sometimes we need to move fast, and other times we need to move slowly. For example, the Bible says we need to be slow to anger. We need to be able to stay in control of our emotions. The Bible tells us that one fruit of the Spirit is temperance, or self-control. I believe it is important to be slow to make certain decisions. The Bible makes it clear that fools make quick decisions. I believe it is important to be slow to

change. We need to be slow to change whenever other thoughts and ideas come around that are different from the way we have been taught in the Church of God.

There are times when we need to be quick. When Jesus called the disciples in our Scripture text, we find that they were quick to obey. The Bible says when Jesus walked by the sea of Galilee, two brethren (Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother) were casting a net into the sea because they were fishermen. Jesus said, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." Straight-

way, or immediately, they left their nets.

Then a little later, Jesus saw two other brothers, James and John, the sons of Zebedee. They were in the ship with Zebedee their father mending their nets when Jesus called them, and they immediately left their nets and their father and followed Jesus. The word *straightway* means "right away; immediately." The word *immediately* means "without delay; at once; without interval of time." They did not say, "Well, wait a minute, Lord, give us some time." No, they *immediately* left their nets

and followed Jesus.

I would like to ask you a question. What is it that God has told you to do and you have not started doing it yet? I dare say that we might see revival happen right now if people did what God has already told them to do.

There are some things that we need to be fast at doing. Sometimes even Jesus was fast in His life, although some people think that He was a little slow. They say that He traveled no further than one hundred miles from His birthplace, but you have to understand that He did not have a car to drive. He walked everywhere, so that was much slower, was it not? However, there were times when Jesus was quick. The Bible talks about Jesus being quick to heal when people asked Him to heal them.

I like how He moved on those who had need of healing from blindness and the way that He did things. Jesus spit on one man's eyes and asked the man if he could see anything. The man said, "I see men as trees, walking." So Jesus touched his eyes again, and he was able to see clearly. Again, Jesus was quick to heal.

Hebrews 12:1 tells us to run with patience the race that is set before us, so I believe it is important that we are quick Christians. We like things quickly in our lives, do we not? We like to be able to pull up to a drive-through, order a milkshake, pull up to the window, pay for it, and get our milkshake. We want it quickly.

I would like to say again that we need to obey the Lord immediately. That is what the disciples did when Jesus called them. Straightway they followed Jesus. As parents, we expect this from our children. When we tell our children to do something, we do not want to hear them say, "Well, give me a couple of days, Dad, and I will get that done for you" or "I will get it whenever I get ready. I am busy talking to my friend on my cell phone." No, you do not want to hear that, do you?

Whenever you tell your child to do something, you want immediate obedience. I demanded immediate obedience from my children with no delay of time. Whenever you tell children to do something, sometimes they like to shuffle their feet and take their time getting there to do it, so I told my children to run and pick up the pace. Sometimes I would run behind them and make them run. They learned that I demanded immediate obedience with no other options and zero tolerance.

### **The Key to Happiness in Life**

Delayed obedience is disobedience. When God tells you to do something, you must obey immediately. You do not need to discuss it, ponder it, or pray about it. You need to get after it and do it when you know that it is the will of God in what He is telling you to do. We know it is right. God will not tell you to do something wrong. He cannot be tempted with evil or tempt any man. Everything that God demands and requires is right. The Bible says the way of the Lord is right. It is the right thing to obey God every time. Wholehearted obedience is done with joy. David said in Psalm 100:2, "Serve the LORD with gladness."

One time a young man spoke with a wise man and said: "I would like to know what the key to happiness is in life. I have always done the right things; I have lived for God from a child up. I have always done the will of the Lord. I have always made good decisions. I have always been mindful of not doing something that I would regret."

The wise man told him, "If you are going to be happy, you need to do the right things and enjoy doing the right things." I believe that is important. I repeat, David said to serve the Lord with gladness. Jesus is our pattern for obedience. What were the words of Jesus? He said, "I do always those things that please the Father." Can you say that? Has God asked you to do something that

you have not started to do yet?

An account took place when Jesus was hungry and faint as they were traveling. Jesus stopped by a well, and His disciples went on into town to get some meat for Him to eat. While they were gone, a woman from Samaria showed up at the well, and Jesus began to talk to her about serving God. When the disciples returned, they said, "Master, eat" (John 4:31). John 4:34 says, "Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me."

Have you ever gotten so busy obeying God or doing the will of the Lord that you were not hungry? You willingly skipped meals. Sometimes when I get busy doing the will of God, I lose my appetite. Obedience is doing what God says, when He says it, how He says it, and for whatever reason He says it.

There are certain times when we need to be fast. We need to be fast to obey, but we also need to be fast to ask for forgiveness. There are going to be times in your Christian experience, whether you intend to or not, that you are going to get yourself caught up in something, maybe in the heat of the moment. You are going to do something, say something, or react in a certain way, and the Holy Spirit of God is going to tell you that you were wrong.

The flesh immediately begins to justify your actions, your reactions, or the words that you spoke rather than to say, "God, You are right; I was wrong," and ask for God's forgiveness. If you have wronged someone, you need to ask for that person's forgiveness.

What begins to happen in the Christian's life that really becomes a crisis? If you do not get hold of it, it will ruin your Christian experience. If you delay asking for forgiveness, the devil will take advantage of you. Then it will not be long until you will look for any excuse that you can come up with regarding why you do not need to ask for forgiveness. You will begin to feel justified in your actions, in your reactions, in the words that you spoke, or in the way

you treated someone. You will begin to justify yourself and say, "I was right." The flesh works that way. You need to be quick to ask for forgiveness.

You need to pay attention to the weight of heaviness that comes upon you from the Holy Ghost when you do something wrong that is immediately there and say, "Lord, I was wrong; please forgive me." If you have wronged someone, you ought to go to that person and ask for forgiveness. You need to make it right.

Do you know what else you need to be fast at doing? You need to be fast at granting forgiveness to others. Ephesians 4:32 says, "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." As Christians, Jesus Christ has forgiven us. When we asked for forgiveness, we did not deserve it. We did not do anything to earn it. If we had gotten what was justly due to us, God would have sent us to a lost eternity. We did not deserve Christ's forgiveness.

Romans 5:6 says, "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." Before I was even born, the blood of Jesus Christ was there waiting at the throne of God to cover my sins when I asked for forgiveness. As Christ has forgiven you, you need to forgive others. When someone asks for forgiveness, you need to forgive, without exceptions. You should not say, "I forgive you, but . . ." When someone asks for your forgiveness, you ought to say, "You are forgiven," and then give that one your full forgiveness.

### **Making Restitutions**

As a Christian, you need to be fast at making restitutions. A little fellow named Zacchaeus heard about Jesus and went to His locality when he heard about Him; he wanted to see Jesus. When he got to the crowd, he could not see Jesus while standing on the ground, so he climbed up into a tree. As Jesus

came by, He looked up in the tree and told Zacchaeus to come down. We read in Luke 19:5-8: "And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house. And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully. And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner. And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold."

I want you to notice that Jesus bid Zacchaeus to make haste and come down. Zacchaeus obeyed and believed in the Lord Jesus Christ. He said, "Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I will restore him fourfold." When God reveals that you need to make restitution, you should do it quickly.

I was sixteen years of age when I first got saved. There were some things that I had done as a little boy that were wrong. One of those things that I had done was steal while I was at a shopping mall with my mother. I liked little Matchbox cars. At that time, they cost ninety-nine cents apiece, but I did not have ninety-nine cents. We were a poor family of eight children, plus Mom and Dad. Dad was not making much money, and we were doing well to have a few clothes to wear and be able to have food on the table to eat. We did not grow up well to do. We did not have anything extra, so I went ahead and took a Matchbox car. It was already out of the package, so I just slipped it into my pocket and took it home. I never told anyone where it came from.

When I got saved, after a while God brought that back to my mind. The Lord told me that I needed to make restitution. Well, the store from where I had stolen it was closed, so that meant I was off the

hook, right? Wrong. I was not off the hook. I still needed to make restitution. I prayed and asked God how I was going to do that. I will give you the advice that God gave me. He said, "Put the money in the offering plate with interest," so I did and the heaviness lifted.

You need to be fast about making restitution. If you have done something wrong, if you have taken something that you should not have and God brings it to your mind after you are saved, you need to take care of it. Do not let it drag on. You should not argue with God over it. You need to get it taken care of. You will never be able to explain the peace that God brings to your heart after you make restitution. You will not be able to put it into words. The heaviness is lifted. You will be able to sit in the church services and rejoice, lift up your hand, and praise God. Whatever the Lord lays on your heart to do, you should do it, and you will have no heaviness on your heart.

### **Keep Your Promises to God**

What else do you need to be fast at doing? You need to be fast at keeping your promises to God. What promises have you made to God? I hope you have made some promises. Your Christian experience will not last long if you have not made God some promises. It is good for you to bow at an altar of prayer and make some vows to God. What should you tell God? "By Your grace, I will live for You all the days of my life. With Your help I will always obey You and do the right things." You should bind yourself to the Lord with some vows and promises. It is good for you. Ecclesiastes 5:2 says, "Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few."

I wish I had read that Scripture early in my experience. There were times that I talked too much and had to back up and straighten out some

things that I said. Do not be rash with your words, but let your words be few. Ecclesiastes 5:4-5 says: "When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed [you made a promise, so you should keep your promise to God]. Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay." You ought to be quick to keep your vows to God.

Many people have gone through what should be a life-changing experience. They went through a terrible place in life, and as soon as they got into trouble in that place in life, they ran to the church, the pastor, or the congregation and said, "Please pray!" Some went to an altar of prayer, made a profession of salvation, prayed, and promised God, "If You will bring me through this, if You will get me out of this problem, I will live for You." God answered their prayers, brought them through their problems, and they disappeared. Shame on them! God kept His part of the promise. God is not a man that He should lie. God cannot lie. What God says, He will do. God keeps all His promises, and He answers prayer. It is up to you to keep your part of the promise. When you make a promise to God, defer not to pay it. You should keep it and do it quickly.

What else do you need to be fast at? You must flee temptation quickly. People get themselves in trouble many times when temptation comes because they let it hang around. The old saying is, "You can't stop a bird from flying over your head, but you can stop it from making a nest in your hair."

When temptations come, you need to be like Joseph in the Old Testament. When he was sold into slavery in Egypt and he became the chief of servants at Potiphar's house, many times Potiphar was out on business. Joseph had everything under his control in the house except Potiphar's wife. Potiphar's wife was not satisfied with that. She wanted

to commit adultery with Joseph. She tried to entice him and invited him to come and lie with her. In essence, Joseph said: "No! How could I? I have everything in my hands in this house but you, and there is no way that I am going to violate that."

Every time she asked, the answer was the same: "No!" One day the temptation became aggressive. It was not an invitation; she reached out and grabbed him. She laid hold upon his cloak and said, "Come, lie with me," and pulled him to herself. He slipped out of his cloak and left it behind. She was hanging onto his cloak, but she did not have him. He lost something, but not what was most important. He kept his soul intact with God, but it did not go well after that. He had a rough road to go, but he fled temptation.

### **Resisting Temptation**

Young person, you must flee temptation. You are unsettled in your teenage years. There is something unique about the teenage years. Some things begin to happen. When Jesus Christ began to get older, the Bible says, "He waxed strong in spirit." As a teenager, you have the same thing happening to you. When you were a child and just beginning to walk, pulling yourself up to things and beginning to talk and understand more things, you did what you were told. However, when you became a teenager and started to learn things, you began to think you knew so much and waxed strong in spirit. Soon you began to strive with your parents.

The other unique thing about a teenager is that everything is new. You are not forty-five years of age. You have not gone through these things multiple times. This is the first time you are meeting up with some temptations. You may be curious to find out what some things are all about; however, when the devil brings temptation, you had better flee from it fast. The time to decide to keep your purity is not when you are in the back seat of a car. That is

too late! Your flesh will take over, and you can say no all you want to, but the devil is going to have his way.

You need to get it settled with God concerning the way you are going to live and how you are going to handle things in your life before you get there. You need to make some promises to God, such as: "I am going to keep myself chaste before the Lord. I am going to save myself for the one I marry. I am going to do this right the first time, because I will not have a second chance." There are some things in life that you do not get a second chance at. Your purity is one of them. You do not get a second chance to keep your purity if you lose it—one time, and that is it. You need to keep yourself chaste unto the Lord. In order to do that, you must flee temptation.

I want you to read what Joseph said, and then follow his example and flee temptation. Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust. You are going to be tempted, drawn away of your own lust, and enticed. Temptation is not sin. Do not let the devil or any false religion tell you that it is. The Bible says if you will resist Satan, he will flee from you. Do not stop resisting. You need to do as Jesus did. When the devil comes, tell him, "It is written." Quote the Bible to him, and you will get him on the run. You must resist temptation quickly.

First Corinthians 6:18-19 states: "Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" What did the Apostle Paul say? "Flee fornication," and you should do it quickly. Do not hang around on the edge of it and entertain thoughts of it. You need to keep your thoughts pure and make sure your life is where it needs to be with God. You must flee temptation quickly.

## Doing Good

Last of all, when else do you need to do fast? When you have an opportunity to do good, you need to be quick to do it. Proverbs 3:27 reads, "Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it." When we have opportunity, the Bible says we are allowed to show preferential treatment. Galatians 6:10 tells us, "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." You should put church people first, put your pastor first, put God's work first, put church activities first, and put God first in your life. God allows us to show preferential treatment in that respect. You must make sure God comes first, without exception. I will do God's will first, and I am not changing my mind about it. I will not apologize about doing God's will first, and I am not backing down. God comes first. When you have opportunity to do good, you should do it. The opportunity may not come a second time.

There will be times when you are first saved that you will not always know the best way to listen to God. You will not always know the mind of God quite as well as those who have lived for the Lord longer. Sometimes you will question: "Should I do this now or should I wait? It is a good thing to do, but is it the right time to do it? Will there be a better time later?" You may

struggle with that, but the longer you live for the Lord, the more you will learn through experience. Whenever God opens the door of opportunity, you need to step through it. This is the opportunity that you have, and you may not have it again.

The longer I live for the Lord, the more I find that it is so important to take advantage of every good thing that God helps me to do. Everyone that you are around will not be around forever. Sometimes you may get a phone call, and the person on the phone may say: "Can you go visit So-and-So? He was just diagnosed with cancer." You may be tempted to say, "Well, I am really busy right now, so I will go visit him next week." I have learned that is not the thing to do, because you do not know how fast that disease is working.

I have learned that it is better to do good things fast, and I have learned that if you will do that, you will not regret it. I have never regretted doing a good thing fast. The Bible says you need to be careful to maintain good works. As a Christian, that is important. Your salvation is not upheld by good works, but salvation will cause you to do good works. You need to look for those opportunities. When God opens the door, you need to step through it quickly. Also, you need to ask God for wisdom and ask Him for help to know how to do good things. You would be better off to make a mistake by doing something and obeying God (maybe not know-

ing how to say things or when to present something that you are giving) than not to do it at all. You are going to learn by doing. Experience comes by doing, and God will help you to become educated and get better at it. God will help you to do the right things.

How quickly do you obey God? What is it that God has asked you to do that you have not done yet? Do you need to ask God's forgiveness for disobedience? Remember, delayed obedience is disobedience. You need to take this seriously. Jesus told His disciples, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." Straightway, immediately, without delay of time, they stepped out to follow Jesus. Are you doing that? Are you obeying God? Is there something that God has been troubling your heart about?

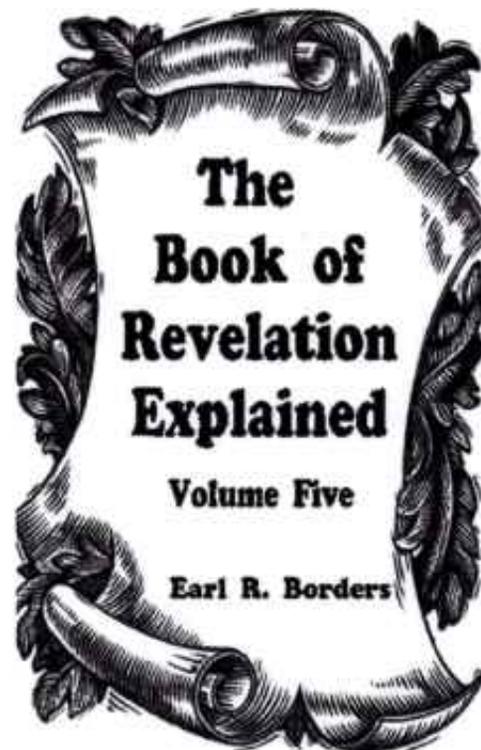
Is there something that you need to do that you have not followed up on yet and it is weighing heavily upon you? Perhaps you have no peace or you cannot sing or rejoice as you used to. Maybe you cannot freely raise your hand in praise to God. Are you struggling in your experience? Maybe you cannot get your prayers answered because you need to do something that God has already told you to do. Now is the time to take care of it. Today is the day to get it straightened out. Let God have His way in your heart.

*(Compact Disk TR-1913)*

God measures our gifts, not by  
the greatness of them, but by  
the self-denial they express in giving them.

*The Book of Revelation Explained* is a series of six volumes specifically designed as a reference for interpreting and understanding any given text. Volume Five, which covers Chapters 15-19, is unique in that it only deals with the evening-time portion of the Gospel Day. This reveals the importance that the Lord attaches in having a clear understanding of the realities of our day. Out of the twenty-two chapters in the Revelation, six are devoted exclusively to the evening time. No doubt, this shows that the Lord intended to lay great stress on His people having a "knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4) concerning our day and not being ignorant of the devices that Satan is employing. The Revelation is one of the avenues that the Lord uses to expose those devices and reveal how we may have victory in our day.

This book can be downloaded at [GodsAcres.org](http://GodsAcres.org). Click on "Resources" and "Study Materials" and "book+(lets)." Printed copies are available for a donation of \$10.00 per book (plus postage and handling). Order by writing *The Gospel Trumpeter*, Publications, 675 N. Cedar St., Newark, Ohio 43055, by calling the Print Shop at 740-345-1312, or by sending an e-mail to: [publications@godsacres.us](mailto:publications@godsacres.us)



Volume Five is the fifth in a series of six volumes of *The Book of Revelation Explained*. The burden of these volumes is multifaceted. Its overall purpose is to provide a "knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4) because the Prophet Hosea tells us, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge" (Hosea 4:6). It is critical to the successful maintenance of our experience of salvation to understand the truths contained in the Revelation. The Revelation exposes the spirits and the systems that have worked, and are working, against the church collectively and the saints individually. The Apostle Paul penned in 2 Corinthians 2:11 that we should not be "ignorant of his [Satan's] devices." The Revelation is one of the avenues the Lord uses to expose those devices.

In reality, these chapters are part of Series Two, which begins with Chapter 12, thus making Series Two the longest series in the Revelation. The evening-time segment of this series begins with Chapter 14. We dealt with that in the previous volume, Volume Four, because we wanted that volume to take us through the entirety of the Gospel Day.

This does not count the portions of the other series that deal with the evening-time portion of this "day of salvation" (2 Corinthians 6:2). I believe this shows that the Lord intended to lay great stress on us having a "knowledge of the truth" concerning our day and the "devices" that Satan is employing and how we may have victory today.

## *I'm Sitting With Jesus*

*When lost in the darkness of guilt and despair,  
Sore cankered in heart by the sin that was there,  
Lo, Jesus then found me and gave me release,  
He lifted me up to the plane of his peace*

*Led captive by Satan, still deeper in sin,  
Enslaved to its scepter so long I had been;  
But calling on Jesus, he severed the chain,  
Exalted my soul to the throne of his reign.*

*My conscience polluted in guilty defile,  
I feared that upon me no mercy could smile;  
But, glory to Jesus, his blood is applied,  
Now sanctified wholly I sit by his side.*

*My heart was all sadness in Satan's control,  
A stranger to heaven's pure love in my soul,  
In glory the Savior then shone from above,  
Transported my soul to the realm of his love.*



*I'm sitting with Jesus, oh, wonderful grace!  
With him I am reigning in heavenly place;  
I'm filled with his glory, transported above,  
Yes, sitting with Jesus in heavenly love.*

*D. S. Warner*

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*AS A GOOD SOLDIER OF JESUS CHRIST —*

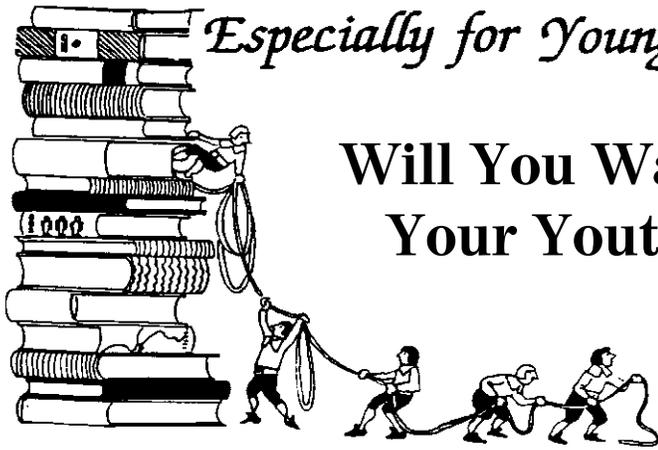
*2 Timothy 2:3*

*I HAVE FOUGHT A GOOD FIGHT — 2 Timothy 4:7*

*You are enlisted, you wear the uniform, you ought to fight; victory is certain, the honors are everlasting — think of Him who is your "Leader and Commander." You will have no such opportunity of distinguishing yourself for Christ in Heaven. Lose no time, then, in waking up to the consciousness that you are a soldier and that you must learn to fight. There is no discharge in this war and no truce with the enemy.*

*Especially for Young People*

## Will You Waste Your Youth?



Ecclesiastes 12:1-2 reads: "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; While the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars, be not darkened, nor the clouds return after the rain." Verses 13-14 continue: "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."

Seventy-five percent of all high school age children drink alcohol, 33 percent try marijuana, and 10 percent experience cocaine in some form. By graduation, the average child has witnessed nine thousand sexual encounters from television and movies. Eighty-eight percent of all affairs on television are outside marriage. Fifty-nine percent imply that sex outside marriage is all right. One million young women a year become pregnant, and two-thirds of those pregnancies are unwanted. Will you waste your youth?

It is very easy to waste your youth, to use up your time without doing anything important, and especially without becoming a Christian. It may look like you have lots of time left. In one sense, no doubt your life is going well. As you move from childhood toward adulthood, every year you get a little smarter, especially as you move forward in

high school or in college. Every year you are getting stronger physically. Every year you become more able to make money and less dependent upon your parents. You are able to do more things and make decisions for yourself.

Perhaps you are already living the way that you decided to live instead of the way your parents taught you to live or the way that you know you should live. Maybe you have not reached that time yet, but certainly you have been thinking about the time when you will turn eighteen, and you think, "Then I will be able to move out of the house and do what I have wanted to do for a long time." Time is on your side, so you think.

You may be optimistic about your life, thinking about having a good time. Possibly you have been considering going to parties, to dances, to the mountains, to the beach, or to Las Vegas. Maybe you have been thinking about the person that you have been going out with or that you would like to go out with. You have been planning a life for yourself with a good education, a good job, lots of money, your own car, and your own place to live. You have been thinking about having a great future.

Friend, if you think about your future and think that the rest of your life will steadily move upward, you are wrong. You will go through different stages in life, but you will never be as free as you are right

now, and you will never have the same level of opportunity to know God as you do now. You have a wonderful opportunity today to know God, to get a real experience with Him, and it may never be this good again. That is the reason the Bible says, "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."

What did the wise man mean by "the evil days"? You could look at it several different ways, but it means soon time is going to turn against you as a young person. Time is going to make a turn in your life. It will not be long and you will come into some evil days that you will not have the times of pleasure that you have now. Your body will begin to run down physically. No doubt, your body is in good shape now, but after you reach a certain age, you are going to find that your body will get weaker. You will not be able to do everything that you are doing right now. You are likely to have some aches and pains as time goes on, and one day you will be called out of this life. We all know that even the best of athletes have to stop playing professionally soon after the age of thirty-five. Why? Their bodies are just not the same.

Let us face it, you are not going to keep getting stronger until you die. You will reach a turning point in life. The evil days will come soon. Even the strongest person will

grow weak and die, because "it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27).

Young person, you cannot imagine how quickly the evil days are going to come. That is the reason the Bible says, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth." The rest of your life is not going to be like the life that you are living now. Very soon your life is going to change from a life of freedom to a life of obligations. Now you are thinking about enjoying yourself and what you are going to do with your time, and you think you have so much time that you do not know what you are going to do with it all. Perhaps you are thinking about movies to see, places to go, and people you like to be with, but soon it is going to be different, and it is going to hit you hard.

Soon you are going to be out in the working world. You will have to work to make money so that you can pay the rent and buy food, gasoline, insurance, and so on. Instead of wondering what you are going to do with your time, you are going to be thinking, "There is so much I would like to do, but I don't have the money." You are going to come into a life of limits and obligations, just as your parents did before you.

You may get married, and then little children will probably come along. Someone may say, "Well, two can live as cheaply as one," but ten cannot. I found that out. Once you have a family, you have more to worry about than yourself. You are going to have your wife and children to feed and take care of. You will have to buy their clothes and shoes. There are going to be bills to pay, and they never stop coming. They are going to keep coming for the rest of your life. Other people besides your wife and children may depend on you. You might have to live from paycheck to paycheck and fight to survive as the demands and obligations increase.

Young person, you are never going to be as free in your life as

you are right now. As you get older, you will be less and less free in your mind, in your character, and in your habits. Humanly speaking, we know that most people get set in their ways as they get older. People form habits in life. When they are young, and when they grow older, it is hard for them to change. Those people who make a mess of life when they are young usually keep making a mess of life as they get older.

If your life is in a mess and you do not get saved, it is not going to get better; it is going to get harder. If you do not change while you are young, the longer you live, the harder it will be for you to change. Most important, if you are not careful, you are going to lose the freedom to change your relationship with God. That is the reason the writer said to do this while you are young.

As I mentioned, most people get set in their ways as they get older and become less open. Often they will not even give their name and telephone number to a preacher or someone who might want to call and invite them to church. Some act as if the church is something bad instead of good, and many are not interested in getting right with God. Statistically speaking, it is harder for one to become converted as he gets older.

Another reason it gets harder to get saved as you get older is that the time may come when God quits speaking to your heart. One day, perhaps soon, the Holy Spirit may withdraw from you and quit talking to you. That is the reason the Bible warns in Genesis 6:3, "My spirit shall not always strive with man." Romans 1:26 tells us that "God gave them up unto vile affections." This is serious! This is another reason that you ought to remember your Creator in your youth.

If God gives up on you, I doubt that you could ever get saved. You might think about God from time to time, but will you ever come to Christ in conversion? Physically, you will live as long as you live, but spiritually you will be dead forever if you wait too long to get saved. For

this reason, it is important to come to Christ now, while you still can. It is a serious mistake to think that you can wait and be converted just before you die. That does not happen very often. Thank God, sometimes it happens, but it is rare.

Ninety percent of all conversions occur before the age of thirty, according to statistics. I want you to think about that. The man who wrote Ecclesiastes 12:1 was a man of wisdom. He knew the importance of getting right with God while young. I came to Jesus when I was eighteen years of age, and I thank God that I did not wait any longer. I wish I had gotten saved sooner. Young person, do not waste your youth.

I want to show you four ways that you can waste your youth forever, and I want to plead with you not to waste your life. First, you will waste your life and your youth if you die without Christ while you are young. Youth has no guarantee of the future. Death is no respecter of persons. Death frequently strikes those who believe that they are invincible through accidents, diseases, and war. No one is promised the future.

Life is truly as the Bible states in James 4:14: "Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." Once I saw a bumper sticker that read, "Many who plan to repent at the eleventh hour die at ten-thirty." In the course of my youth, I saw death come upon many young people. Most young people seem to think they are immortal. That is the reason young people take drugs, get into fights, and drive their cars recklessly. They do not think they can die. In theory, you will admit that one day you are going to die, but you think and act as though you are never going to die. You live your life as though it is impossible for you to die while you are young, but that is not true.

The Bible says we cannot be

sure about tomorrow. The writer said in Proverbs 27:1, "Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth." Young person, do not boast of what you are going to do when you get out of high school. Do not boast of what you are going to do when you get out of college. Do not boast of what you are going to do when you get married, because you do not know what one day can bring forth.

Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, David said in 1 Samuel 20:3, "There is but a step between me and death." Have you ever had a close call with death? Almost everyone has. Perhaps there was a time when you were sick, had an accident, or almost had an accident. Almost everyone has had a close call. Before my conversion, I had several close calls. I came close to being called out into eternity. Had that happened, I would be in hell right now.

Second, you will waste your youth if you destroy it by wrong living. Do not waste your youth by wrong living, young person. You reap what you sow. No wonder Paul said in Galatians 6:7-8: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

What you do while you are young can permanently affect your future. One thing that you could do while you are young is get married out of the will of God. You need to wait on the Lord. Some people make bad decisions. They marry the wrong young man or young lady. Sometimes when one does that, it can be like a millstone around his neck for the rest of his life. What about marrying in the Lord? What about praying until God shows you the right companion? What about seeking the wisdom of Heaven?

I want you to consider some who have made bad decisions, who have gotten out of the will of God, and who have gone out into the world.

Their companion will not attend church with them. They would like to take their children to church, but their companion says, "You are not taking my children there." You do not want to get involved in such a situation, where you could be miserable for the rest of your life. There is a danger in sowing wild oats and then praying for a crop failure. It does not work that way.

Jesus told a parable in Luke, Chapter 15, about the prodigal son. This young man went to his father and said, in essence: "Give me the portion of goods that I have coming to me," and then he took all the money that was coming to him, went into a far country, and wasted his money with riotous living. No doubt, he had some good times out there. There is pleasure in sin for a season, but the pleasures of sin do not have a pleasant ending.

It was not long until the prodigal son did not have any money or friends. Then it was not long until he did not have shoes or the clothes that he needed. He found himself in a hogpen. That is the way it is with some young people who leave the church and go out into the world. Many times they find themselves down in the hogpen. Thank God, this young man woke up. I am glad that God woke me up, but a lot of people never wake up. They spend the rest of their lives in the hogpen.

The prodigal son woke up and said: "I remember what it was like to be in father's house. My father has plenty to eat at his table and food to spare. I tell you what I am going to do. I will get up and go home. As soon as I get home and see my father, I am going to kneel down and say, 'Father, I have sinned, and I am not worthy to be called your son. All I ask is that you make me a hired servant.'" When his father saw him, he ran to meet him. The son could not even get out what he intended to say. His father said to one of his servants, "Go and get the best robe, shoes for him, and where is the ring?" They began to make merry and killed the fatted calf. I thank

God for the love of God! You might have walked away from God, but He still loves and cares about you. He always has His arms stretched out waiting for you to come home.

I was raised in a Christian home with good Christian parents. I had no excuse to go out in sin. I was taught better by example, but I did it anyway. God had mercy on me, and I am so thankful for the grace of God. He has been good to me.

The sad story is, some young people never come home when they go out into the world. Some children raised in the church went out into the world and are in the depths of sin. They are bound with the habits of life, and they see no way to ever break loose from the things that have them bound. Young person, you need to turn to God while the door of opportunity is open to you. Some young people get wild for a few years and get their lives messed up, and then they cannot see any way to get their lives straightened out. One song says, "Pick up the broken pieces, and bring them to the Lord." That is what you need to do.

Sometimes it is difficult to keep on the strait and narrow road when you are young. Staying away from Christ is easy when you are young. It is easy to stay out of church. It is easy to waste your youth. You might have a couple of wild years, but if you are not careful, those wild years will cost you the rest of your life. You could end up living a life of unhappiness and turmoil.

Many people were raised in church, and now their lives are in such a terrible mess that they will never be able to fulfill their plans, hopes, and dreams. They messed up their lives and lost their way. Is that going to be your story? Are you going to go that direction? Will you refuse to come to Jesus? Will you waste your time living in sin? Will you throw away your life for a short time of worldly pleasure and then live as a nobody going nowhere until you finally die and end up in hell?

Third, you will waste your youth

if you put your selfishness ahead of the call of Jesus Christ. Perhaps you will not die when you are young. Perhaps you will not destroy your future in a burst of sinful living, but you can and probably will waste your youth by putting your plans ahead of Jesus Christ. You might have plans for your life, but you have no time for a Bible-believing church. You do not have time to think about being converted because your plans take up your life and leave no room for Jesus. Jesus warned against putting your plans ahead of His call when He said, "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it" (Matthew 16:25).

You may agree with me that it is a mistake to throw your life into a life of drugs, partying, and illicit sex, but for the wrong reason. It would interfere with your plans for your life. Many feel good about themselves because they do not take drugs, smoke marijuana, or live as other people do, but they will not get serious about living for God either. You may say, "When I finish school, get married, or get out of college, then I will get saved." Please change your priorities now before it is too late! You need to make time for God now and rearrange your schedule so that you can have time for God. You should make it your top priority to seek your conversion. Nothing is more important than being absolutely sure that you are right with God.

Fourth, you will waste your youth if you reform outwardly without an inward conversion to Christ. Maybe you were raised in church, and you are not into sinful things, but you are just going with the flow. Perhaps you have been going to church for months or a few years, but you are still not converted. You are making a big mistake, because Jesus let us know that except a man is born again, he shall in no wise enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

No doubt, you know the basic facts of the Gospel. You have heard

that Jesus died for you, arose from the grave the third day, and ascended to Heaven, but you are still a lost sinner. In your mind you know that you have never truly been born again. You cannot point back to a time when you were made a new creature, where old things passed away and all things became new. You may be religious but lost, like the man who came to Jesus in Matthew 19:16 who said, "Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" When Jesus told him, he went away sorrowfully because he came short of the glory and honor of God.

There is something about the mind, the heart, and the soul that becomes insensitive and callused. The will can become paralyzed as a nerve or a muscle in your body can. For example, if I were to put a patch on my eye and leave it there for a long period of time, eventually when I did remove the patch, I would be blind in that eye. The nerves would atrophy. If I were to put an ear plug in my ear and leave it there long enough, when I removed it, I would be deaf in that ear. It would atrophy. If I were to take my arm and put it down by my side and leave it there long enough, it would eventually become paralyzed. I would not be able to lift up my arm, even if my life depended on it, because it would atrophy. The muscle would waste away. Similarly, a man's soul can become paralyzed, insensitive, and callused to the things of God. The decision for or against God will always be made in your life.

I want you to look at the progression. There are various statistics regarding this, but they are all close. There is only 1 youth in 5,000 who makes a decision for God after the age of eighteen. You need to think about that. There is only 1 young man or young woman in 250,000 that makes a decision for God after twenty-five years of age. With some of you it is now or never. That is how serious it is. Do not waste your life! Do not harden your heart! It is time for you to remember God. He

will judge you on the last day. It is time for you to seek your conversion until you have found the Savior sweet to your soul. Young person, you need to begin life with a solid foundation and a good head start. Will you be able to enjoy pleasurable memories and not bemoan your past?

What a difference in the quality of life there can be when one makes the right choices while he or she is young. The end of time could occur. Many youths will not have the benefits of a long life. A lot of young people will be alive at the end of time, and they are not going to have the benefits of living a long life. For all those who are living in the last of the last days who have the attitude, "Let me go out and sow my wild oats for a few years," the end of time will catch them unprepared.

If one is blessed to live a long life with plenty of time to change, there is another reason to serve God. A well-spent youth can bless your future. Compare the foolish young person to the wise young person. The foolish young person does not remember God in his youth. He will not listen to the advice of others. He has to learn for himself. Invariably, he will make a mess of his life, his health, his marriage, and his career. He will spend a good portion of his life undoing the foolish actions of youth and suffering from the consequences of his actions. A wise young person learns to control his body, as Paul did, by obeying, by growing spiritually, and by bearing the fruit of the Spirit, thus becoming an example to the believers.

How is it with you young person? "Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth." It has been said that most men spend the first half of their lives making the second half miserable. No one can be forced to remember God in his youth. As much as your mother and father and your friends love you, none of them can force you to remember God in your youth. They can only point out the dangers when one does not. I merely scratched the surface of the

dangers that a young person faces when he or she turns down God. We can remind you of the benefits when a person does remember his or her Creator while young.

I hope this lesson will encourage you to make the right choices, young person. One thing is certain: God

will remember. You only have one life to live. Will you make the right choices and remember God in your youth? Our Scripture text reads in verse 13, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man." What does

that mean? It means the whole meaning and consummation of life is this: accept God's will for you, find your place in the Kingdom of God, and achieve that purpose humbly and the best you can.

Brother Larry Dishman

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*[Guest Editorial—continued from page 2]*  
Him to have control of their lives.

Many feel that they have gone too far or that they are too deep in sin for the Lord to save them. This is in no way true! Friend, it makes no difference how far down in the depths of sin you have gone. His hand is capable of reaching further down than you have fallen. In Isaiah 59:1 the Prophet Isaiah informed us, "The LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear."

Jesus Christ is very much interested in you. However, it is important for you to hear and to heed the warnings that God sends your way. You cannot be converted at just anytime you feel like it or choose to. You can only come to God when He invites you to be saved. In John 6:44 Jesus said, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw

him." The time to be saved is when God calls. Failure to move could cause Him to turn away and never speak to you again.

Then, too, salvation is not obtained by thinking that you can try it out to see if you like it. Neither can this experience be gained by your attempting to bargain with the Lord, such as telling God, "If You do this or that, then I will get saved." As a sinner, you must come to God unreservedly. Jeremiah 29:13 tells us, "And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart."

You must seek God with all your heart. You have to come to the place of forsaking all your ways and your thoughts and willingly submit your life fully to Him. Real Christianity is not difficult to obtain; however, it demands that you give up all your sinful ways of living. Failing to yield your life to Christ

only leads to heartache and misery. Loving one's self more than God is the greatest mistake that you will ever make.

God's desire is to transform you into a new creature through faith in the shed blood of Jesus Christ. It does not come by cleaning yourself up, by tapering off worldly habits, or by doing good works. Salvation is a miraculous transaction done in the heart by the Savior. Ephesians 2:8-9 tells us: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."

Will you take advantage of the opportunity that He is affording you? You must allow Him to come into your heart and you will find peace and joy that you have never known.

Selected

*"Truly my soul waiteth upon God: from him cometh my salvation. He only is my rock and my defence; I shall not be greatly moved. . . . My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him. He only is my rock and my salvation: he is my defence; I shall not be moved."*

*Psalm 62:1-2, 5-6*

*Jude 1:1 Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called:*

*2 Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied.*

*3 Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the*

*common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.*

*4 For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace*

*of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.*

*5 I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not.*

# Earnestly Contend for the Faith



*Brother Calvin Foster*

## **A Time of Apostasy**

I would like to call your attention to the latter part of verse 3, which states, "Ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." I want to put the thought before you to earnestly contend for the faith. The word *contend* means "to strive after; to struggle for." We are living in a day of apostasy. People are backing away from the Truth and falling away. An apostasy is the abandoning of that which a person

once believed. Some people have abandoned the faith, the cause, and the principles for which they once stood for a long time.

Jude warned the people of his day to earnestly contend for the faith. In other words, he was warning them to be careful because they could have been destroyed. Friend, you can apostatize, or fall away. He went on to use the word *lasciviousness*, which means "lust or lewdness." It denotes excess and refers to unrestrained behavior and practice. It means "not conforming to strict

rules or correctness." It refers to being unruly, loose, immodest, and undisciplined. Jude said that they would turn the grace of our God into lasciviousness.

The word *deny*, as it is used here, means "to reject or resist; to deny Christ; to deny the principles and the things that you have learned, lived by, and were taught; to deny morality and become immoral under the cloak of religion." God has always had men who would stand up and declare His Word, and He will always have a church. Whether you

are a part of the church or not, God will always have a church.

I want to encourage you to earnestly contend for the faith. When Moses went to the mount and came back with the Ten Commandments, he saw that the people were worshipping around a golden calf. We read in Exodus 32:30-32: "And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses said unto the people, Ye have sinned a great sin; and now I will go up unto the LORD; peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin. And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written."

Moses loved the people and was such a dedicated man of God that he said, in essence, "God, blot me out if You will not forgive them." God had an answer for that. In verse 33 we read, "And the LORD said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book." One day you, too, are going to stand before God on the Day of Judgment.

### **Believing an Evil Report**

When the Israelites complained, it angered the Lord. In Numbers, Chapter 11, we read that the people were murmuring, complaining, finding fault, and being unthankful. Numbers 11:4-6 says: "And the mixed multitude that was among them fell a lusting; and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat? [They complained even after what God had done for them in getting them out of Egypt and parting the Red Sea right before their eyes. What a mighty God we serve! They forgot all of that.] We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick: But now our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes."

Saint of God, you have to

contend for the faith. If you do not, you will allow your heart to go back to what you might call the "good ole days." When you were living in sin, those were not the good ole days. Those were the worst days of your life. If you are a sinner, you may not see it. You may not understand it, but when you get saved (and I hope you do get saved), you will realize how blind you were in sin. You will realize what you have been missing by not serving the Lord. Everybody that has ever gotten saved always says, "Why didn't I get saved a long time ago?" The Israelites wanted to go back to Egypt. You have to be careful that you do not murmur and complain, find fault, and become unthankful.

When Moses sent the spies to spy out the land of Canaan and the people heard the evil report that the ten spies brought back, they cried. In Numbers 14:1-8 we read: "And all the congregation lifted up their voice, and cried; and the people wept that night. [Ten of the twelve spies came back and told them that they saw giants, and that the giants were so big that they looked like grasshoppers in their sight. The people wept and cried all night.] And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would God we had died in this wilderness!

"And wherefore hath the LORD brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? were it not better for us to return into Egypt? And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt. [What did they want to go back to, the beatings and the garlick and onions? Friend, you need to be careful who you listen to.] Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the children of Israel.

"And Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, which were of them that searched

the land, rent their clothes: And they spake unto all the company of the children of Israel, saying, The land, which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land. If the LORD delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey."

### **Walk Not in the Counsel of the Ungodly**

Numbers 14:9-10 reads: "Only rebel not ye against the LORD, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: [The Lord is on your side, so do not fear or do not look back. Let the would-be prophets preach fear and the lack of faith. We serve Almighty God, and He is still in charge. He said they are bread for us.] their defence is departed from them, and the LORD is with us: fear them not. But all the congregation bade stone them with stones. And the glory of the LORD appeared in the tabernacle of the congregation before all the children of Israel."

Psalm 81:10-12 says: "I am the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt: open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it. But my people would not hearken to my voice; and Israel would none of me. So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust: and they walked in their own counsels."

The Bible lets us know that we need to listen to good counselors. Psalm 1:1-3 says: "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."

Proverbs 15:22 states, "Without counsel purposes are disappointed: but in the multitude of counsellors they are established." Proverbs

11:14 reads, "Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety." I am not saying that you should open yourself to any kind of counsel. When it comes to godly counsel, you should start with a true man of God, a watchman on the wall.

The reason I believe the Lord would have me say these things is that in these last days, people are beginning to question the time-honored standards and teachings of the Bible. Many people have the attitude that the old Bible standards, and even the Bible itself, can be set aside. They think the Bible is old-fashioned. The truth of the matter is, if society and families are to prosper, they must be built on the principles in the Bible. It is old, but it is timeless. Though it was written hundreds of years ago, it is still fresh. It will still bless you, and it will still prosper your life.

Many men want to cast aside the Word of God. Isaiah 5:20 says, "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!" Today we are living in just such a day as this. You should not listen to would-be prophets who are turning away from the things in the Word of God. When the blind lead the blind, they both will fall into the ditch. In this world there is a great need for people to stand for what is right. It is wonderful that we stand together for what is right. God wants people to stand for what is right. In order to do this, you must earnestly contend for the faith.

### **Adhering to Biblical Principles**

The Bible teaches us how to raise our children. Proverbs 22:6 says, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." Proverbs 22:15 reads, "Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him." Children need to think, "Where would I be if it were not for

my momma and daddy?"

The Apostle Paul said in Ephesians 6:1-3: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth."

Did you remember your father on Father's day? Did you honor your father and get him a Father's Day card or are you angry at your father? How about the second Sunday in May, which is Mother's Day? Did you honor your mother? I can tell you sad stories of how some children treated their mother and how some mothers treated their children. God promised you that if you honor your father and mother, He will give you a long life. Is that not a blessing?

We have to earnestly contend for the faith. When my children were young, I would go to my sons' room on Sunday mornings and knock on the door. I did not say, "Do you boys want to go to Sunday school this morning?" I said: "Wake up in there. We are going to Sunday school this morning. Momma is making breakfast, and then we are going."

Paul said in Ephesians 6:4, "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath [do not make them dislike you, but show them love, hug them, and do things with them]: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

There are foundational principles in society that we do not want to lose sight of. Genesis 1:27 says, "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." Genesis 6:19-20 reads: "And of every living thing of all flesh, two of every sort shalt thou bring into the ark, to keep them alive with thee; they shall be male and female. Of fowls after their kind, and of cattle after their kind, of every creeping thing of the earth after his kind, two of every sort shall come unto thee, to keep them alive."

I want you to notice that the verse says, ". . . two of every sort . . . male and female." That is a principle in society that we never want to see society get away from. The word *male* means, "masculine, manly, a man or a boy." The word *female* means, "one who is a woman or a girl." In Matthew 19:4-5 Jesus said: "Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?"

God put that in the Scripture to make a point. I thank God that most of society still respects that to some degree, and it is a world-wide standard. When you go to any airport, you will see symbols on the rest room doors. On the women's you will see a symbol of a woman with a dress on. On the men's you will see a symbol of a man with a pair of pants on. Using those symbols, you know whether it is a men's or a women's rest room.

### **Foundational Principles**

The Bible teaches us how to dress as Christians. We are going to be challenged by the world on that. First Timothy 2:9-10 says: "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works."

When godly women obey that Scripture, they have a right to be respected. You ought to be able to say, "I am doing this because the Bible tells me to do it." It gets over a hundred degrees Fahrenheit in Arkansas in the summer, but you will never catch me cutting grass with my shirt off, no matter how hot it gets, because that is my Bible conviction. If the women ought to be modest, the men ought to be modest as well. I am a contender for the faith.

When Paul wrote letters to the Church of God at Corinth, he exhorted the ministers to feed the Church of God. God has only one church. I love the beauty of holiness. It looks beautiful to me. One foundational principle of society is the distinction of the sexes. God does not want people to get away from that. Girls are girls. Therefore, they should be girls, act like girls, talk like girls, laugh like girls, and dress like girls. Boys like girls. When I got married, I married a girl. I was attracted to a girl in the choir.

Deuteronomy 22:5 says, "The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the LORD thy God."

I have come too far to turn back. God has brought me too far, and He is not going to leave me. God made a distinction between the sexes. If a baby is born a male, he will always be a male. I am not being disrespectful to anyone. I am contending for the faith. We have to be contenders.

A Christian should not smoke or chew tobacco. People are dying of lung cancer from smoking tobacco. The Bible says in 3 John, verse 2, "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth." A Christian man does not drink alcohol and get drunk. Do you want to be a Christian or do you just want to be a churchgoer? A Christian does not lie. The Bible says that one of the six things that the Lord hates is a

lying tongue. A Christian does not steal. If you stole something, you need to give it back.

Ephesians 4:28 says, "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."

If a couple gets married and starts a family, that couple should stay together until death parts them, just as the Bible says. Husband, you ought to be man enough that if she burns the food, you should give her another chance. Maybe she cannot cook well. Wife, you need to stay with your husband. No man out in the world is better than the husband that you have. He may see different kinds of women, but he is faithful to you. We have to contend for the faith. When a man makes the decision to be saved, it is a serious decision in his life. A godly life is good. Living for God is going to be good for your family. When a man or a woman makes that serious decision, he or she ought to stay with it.

First Timothy 2:4 tells us, "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." Paul told us to pray for our leaders and to pray for all that are in authority. Paul said we all must appear before the judgment seat of Christ. Do not forget that. Remember, you are going to stand before the judgment seat of Christ for the decisions you make.

Paul said in 2 Corinthians 5:11, "Knowing therefore the terror of the

Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences." If you are with the Lord, you need to stay with the Lord. If you do not have the Lord, you need to come to Him before it is everlastingly too late.

The Word of God is not going to change for you, and it is not going to change for me. It is not going to change for anyone. The Bible tells us God's Word is settled in Heaven. God is not going to change. Men change, women change, organizations change, but the Word of God is not going to change. The foundation of God stands sure. Jesus said in Matthew 11:28-30: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest [thank God for that rest] unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." If you are not saved, God can save you. He can give you understanding of these things. He can show you that His yoke is easy and His burden is light. Saint of God, keep the faith. Your children, your grandchildren, your neighbors, your schoolmates, and the people in your community are looking at you when you go to church every week. Let us earnestly contend for the faith in Jesus' name.

*(Compact Disc TR-1906)*

***Learn to BEAR and to FORBEAR,  
FORGET and FORGIVE,  
For this is the way all Christians should live.***

*Luke 6:27 But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you,*

*28 Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you.*

*29 And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloak forbid not to take thy coat also.*

*30 Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again.*

*31 And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.*

*32 For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them.*

*33 And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same.*

*34 And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again.*

*35 But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is*

*kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.*

*36 Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.*

*37 Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven:*

*38 Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.*

# The Recompense of the Reward



**Brother Richard Talbot**

## Time to Make a Choice

I would like to direct your thoughts toward one great godly principle that governs all our living: the recompense of the reward, which is always according to one's sowing. Matthew 7:2 reads, "For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." Matthew 5:7 states, "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy." What is the standard? What is the rule for being merciful? Verse 36 of our Scripture text tells

you, "Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful." Some like to be a judge more than they want to be merciful. They like to be strong in their outspoken opinions more than they enjoy showing the spirit of mercy and compassion. Sometimes it takes a lot of courage and strength to be merciful when you do not really want to be merciful. Some people irk you in such a way that you do not want to be merciful toward them. We need to learn to be merciful and compassionate. It takes effort to be merciful.

I want you to consider how the

thought of recompense played in the decision that Moses made when he chose to suffer with the children of Israel rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. The greater the sacrifice, the greater the blessing of recompense. The more you give out and the more you deny the flesh its way, the more you overcome inner desires to take things into your own hands and learn to commit all things in your life to God, the greater the recompense will be in your own life. You can never lose by obeying the Lord.

Hebrews 11:24-25 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 had been looking the situation over. This young man was in a very delicate situation. He was in a place that was not of his choosing, but he was in a good place. It was a place that suited the flesh extremely well. He was in Pharaoh's court. He was a ruler in the land, and he was raised up under Pharaoh's direction. He was educated in all the wisdom of Egypt, and he had everything at his fingertips—whatever he wanted was his.

Moses had everything a young man could ever wish for. He had wealth, money, prestige, and honor. Now he was forty years of age, and it was time for him to make a decision. Pharaoh's daughter came to Moses one day and told him that he had to make a decision. Would he like to be called her son? He was a Hebrew, but he was raised as an Egyptian. Therefore, he had to make a decision. At stake was all the glamour, the glory, the prestige, the ease of life, wealth, and anything he wanted. He was superior to most others. Would he give up all of that to go out and live in the desert and to suffer as a slave? What caused Moses to be this way?

A few Scriptures tell this whole story. I like to read between the lines, so to speak, and try to feel how someone else would feel. I try to imagine in my mind how Moses must have felt. I picture him as a normal human, a man of flesh and blood. I cannot believe that he just said, "Forget it; I do not want to be Pharaoh's son—no way." I cannot believe it was that easy and that simple. I believe after she gave him a choice, he no doubt got into his chariot and took a ride around the kingdom and looked everything over. Maybe he rode down among the Hebrew servants, the Israelite camp, rolling this decision around in his mind, thinking: "What should I do? What am I going to tell her?

How can I handle this?" When he had come to years, he was asked to make a decision.

### Moses' Decision

We read in Hebrews 11:26, "Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: [How could he do this? How could he come to such a conclusion to esteem the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures in Egypt?] for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward." Moses made his decision, not based on earthly values, but in light of eternal values. He refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. I like that word "refused." It settles the issue, does it not?

Moses could have said, "Well, I don't really think so." Had Moses responded in that manner, Pharaoh's daughter probably would have pressed him a little more. Or he could have said: "Well, I just don't see how I can do it. We will have to work this out." As long as Moses would have left an opening, she would have had more time to convince Moses and to get into his heart. However, when Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, that cut the ropes, so to speak. There was no recourse. How could he come to such a decision? He was not raised as an Israelite. He had the choice to be a prince in the kingdom or to become a slave in the field. What caused Moses to be so sure in such a dramatic decision that was going to change his life forever? He saw something that no one else could see. He had eyes that could see the invisible. Hebrews 11:27 tells us, "By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible."

If you could get such a love for God built up in your heart and get such keen insight into eternity and eternal values, you would not have so much losing out with God and falling by the wayside. You need to keep your eyes upon Him who is in-

visible and keep your eyes upon the eternal values of life. Life can be difficult at times. You might have to endure lots of trouble, trials, and hardships. Some people have extreme difficulties to go through, but remember this: the end is going to pay off. When you take that final step, when you are lying on that bed of affliction and suffering and breathing your last breath, you can look up with a clear conscience and with assurance in God and say, "Saints, I am going home!" The end will be glorious! Do not get so wrapped up in what is happening here that you make wrong decisions and wrong choices. Consider Him who is invisible, and look to Him.

### Recompensing the Faithful

Confidence is necessary in your life. Someone once said, "Confidence is keeping your chin up; overconfidence is sticking your neck out." Brother Decker called to encourage me one time years ago when we were going through some hard places. As he got ready to hang up, he said, "Brother Talbot, keep your chin up." That cheered me up, and I have never forgotten it. Saint, you need to keep your chin up, because you are not living for this world. This world is not your home. You are going to a better place. Do not forget that. The end is what is so important. There is an eternal recompense awaiting the faithful.

The word *recompense* means "to reciprocate, to give again, to make good a promise, to repay, to render; requite, restore, reward; a payback." A week's work out on the job may be hard. Your job may be hot, sweaty, and dirty. On the other hand, your job may be in an office, full of boredom with numbers, papers, file cabinets, and computers that just wear you out. Whatever kind of work you do, when that paycheck comes in, that makes you feel good. It makes you feel as though that labor was worth it if you are getting a decent pay.

God never underpays His saints;

He gives a decent pay for faithfulness. He is true to us. In the thought of recompense, Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 5:4, "But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to shew piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God." That word "requite," in relationship to your parents, means to pay your parents back, or to take care of your parents. You should respect the labor and the effort they put in for you and pay them back.

The Bible teaches that children are to respect their parents and to do whatever they can to requite them, to recompense them for what they have gone through for you. Piety begins at home. Paul said let them learn first to show piety at home. Again, 1 Timothy 5:4 reads, "But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to shew piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God."

A "main stay" is something that serves as a chief support. What is one of the mainstays of God's principle of endurance? The mainstay is the recompense. He said if you endure until the end, you shall be saved. You need to stay in there, keep fighting, and keep resisting evil.

Young person, you must lay yourself a foundation of firm belief in God so that you will not fail Him. Things may be going well for you now, but you never know when hardship is going to hit your home or hit your life. Disease can come at any time. Sickness, illness, or tragedy can swoop in on you in just a day or two of time. Things can change from being happy and well to being completely upside down in just a day. You need to settle it with God, "Lord, I am living for You, rough or smooth, good or bad."

If you are married, do you remember the vows you took? You both vowed to stay with each other through thick and thin, for richer or poorer, in sickness and in health, forever forsaking all others. No mat-

ter what happens to your companion, you vowed to forsake all others and cling only to her or him for as long as you both shall live.

There is a recompense for how trials, afflictions, hardships, and great disappointments are endured, sometimes for what may seem like a lifetime. I do not know why some seem to be called upon to suffer so much and others seemingly have hardly any problems at all. We do not understand these things, but in essence, Paul wrote, "Let us each run faithfully the race that is set before us." I have a track to run on. I cannot run yours, and you cannot run mine.

My track may be smooth, and another brother may be going through severe hurdles of problems, trials, difficulties, and hardships. He could look over at my track and say, "He does not have any problems." That could cause a lot of trouble. You need to keep your eyes on your own track and run your race faithfully. Only God has the answers for our questions. If your pathway gets rough, the only thing you can do is get tough, hold on to God, and go forward. You have to go forward. How can you do that? You must see Him who is invisible.

### **The Eternal Recompense of Your Reward**

Your reward is out there, dear one. It will be worth it all when you cross over and see Jesus. Everything you ever battled and every trial you ever went through will not even be in remembrance when you see Jesus. Your reward will be paid, and how thankful you will be!

Again, Hebrews 11:27 talks about Moses, saying that "he endured, as seeing him who is invisible." We also read in Hebrews that every transgression and disobedience will receive a just recompense of reward. Hebrews 2:1-2 states: "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if

the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward."

How is it going to be if you neglect so great salvation? How are you going to escape? What a powerful question! Paul also referred to the need of holding confidence.

Hebrews 10:34-35 reads: "For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance. Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward." There is a payback, saint. Heaven is given to the saints. I do not always like to use it in this sense, but I believe it is still true. Heaven is given as an incentive, as a means to encourage and to strengthen us in the heat of the battle. Dear one, do not give up. Do not neglect your salvation. If you do anything at all, make sure your salvation is secure. You need to make sure that you lay hold upon eternal life. Do not let these things slip from your grasp.

Luke 14:12-14 tells us: "Then said he also to him that bade him, When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made [or a payback be made] thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just." You need to think about that. Your reward is coming at the resurrection of the just.

King David prayed a mighty prayer. Consider his understanding of God's plan of recompense. Second Samuel 22:18-20 says: "He delivered me from my strong enemy [talking about King Saul], and from them that hated me: for they were too strong for me. They prevented me in the day of my calamity: but

the Lord was my stay. He brought me forth also into a large place: he delivered me, because he delighted in me."

David lived such a perfect life before God that God took pleasure in him. All saints should live so close to God that God delights in them in that personal, interacting relationship. Oh, how precious it is to have that inner relationship with Christ in the soul, to know that He lives because He lives in you.

David said in 2 Samuel 22:21-22: "The LORD rewarded me according to my righteousness: according to the cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed me. [Why did God do this?] For I have kept the ways of the LORD, and have not wickedly departed from my God."

David received recompense from the Lord for his faithfulness. When he cut a piece off Saul's garment and carried it away, his heart smote him, even for that innocent act. He could have killed Saul, but he took a piece of his garment just to prove that he had been there. Afterward, David felt that he had dishonored the Lord's anointed, even though Saul hated David. If Saul could have gotten his hands on David, he would have killed him; yet David's heart smote him for cutting a piece off Saul's robe. Oh, how God delighted in David! He delivered David from all his enemies.

### **"To the Righteous Good Shall Be Repayed"**

Proverbs 13:21 states, "Evil pursueth sinners: but to the righteous good shall be repayed." Good will be repaid to the righteous.

As our Scripture text spoke in our opening Scripture reading, "good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete [the same that you give out] withal it shall be measured to you again." In other words, it is going to be returned to you. If you want a good measure in return, you have to give

out a good measure.

Cornelius was a devout man; he feared God, gave much alms, and prayed always. One day an angel appeared to him and, in essence, said: "Cornelius, your prayers have been heard. Send to Joppa. There is a man there who is going to come and tell you how to get saved. His name is Peter. Have the messengers bring him back."

You talk about a recompense! Even though Cornelius did not know a lot of things, he was faithful to what he knew. He knew he needed the fear of God, he knew he needed to pray to God, and he knew he should give alms. His heart was free in his giving, in his praying, and in his seeking God. God took note of that. Without Cornelius even asking God to pay attention to him, God responded, because "to the righteous good shall be repayed." God sent a message to tell Cornelius to reveal to him what he could do to find a real experience with God. Your works will not go unpaid, dear one.

Isaiah 40:28-31 reads: "Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."

Isaiah 41:10 reads, "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: [He did not say there would not be occasion for fear or no reasons to be dismayed. There will be times when you are going to be fearful. Sometimes you may be totally dismayed, but He said not to let fear overtake you. Do not let fear overcome you. He is with you. Do not let being dismayed bother you.] I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will

uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness."

God cares about you, saint. Isaiah 43:1-3 says: "I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, [We do not like that. We may think it ought to read, 'I will keep the waters from becoming a problem to you,' but He did not say that. He said, *when* you pass through them.] I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, [This is talking about trials, tests, tribulations, darkness of night, storms, tragedies, the terrible things that hit us sometimes. Listen, when you pass through these things, He said He would be with you. The rivers shall not overflow you. They may seem as though they are going to, but just trust Him. They are not going to overflow you. When you go through the fiery trial, you will not be burned by it.] thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour."

God has a great recompense for His church. We could sum up this message with a closing thought that you cannot go wrong serving God. Stay true, be faithful, never falter, and never fail! If you are defeated in a battle, rise up and fight on, and you will not be a failure.

If you stumble, refuse to stay down; rise again, square your shoulders, and say: "Lord, I'm sorry. I want to go on." God will forgive you, strengthen you, and enable you to keep right on. The only time you become a failure is when you quit trying altogether. If you will be honest with yourself and honest with God, you cannot be a failure. God will bring you through. He will respond to your need. Always be true, faithful, and honest to yourself and to God, whatever you may be going through. Proverbs 3:6 says, "In all thy ways acknowledge him, [Why? What good will it do? Consider the recompense.] and he shall direct thy paths."

(Compact Disc TR-1772)

Don't miss these . . .

## UPCOMING MEETINGS

### MEDINA, OH

April 4-8

**Revival:** Church of God, 6745 Wooster Pike, Medina, OH  
Evangelist: Brother Calvin Foster, Kensett, Arkansas  
Service times: Wednesday - Friday 7:00 p.m.; Saturday 10:00 a.m.;  
Sunday 10:00 a.m. & 3:00 p.m. A meal will be served by the local  
congregation after the morning service.  
For further information contact: Pastor Mike Miller  
Telephone: 269-447-4227 or 330-725-5993.

### MT. PLEASANT, PA

April 21

**Fellowship Meeting:** Church of God, 109 Salvation Lane, Mt. Pleasant,  
PA. Service time: 10:30 a.m. A meal served by the local congregation.  
**MOTELS:** *Holiday Inn Express*, 724-547-2095 (This is on the same road as  
the church. Please mention that you are there for the church meeting.);  
*Super 8 Motel in New Stanton*, 724-925-8915 on I-70W, 10 miles north of the  
church); *Melody Motor Lodge*, 724-628-9600 on 119N in Connellsville).  
For further information contact: Pastor Paul W. Prinkey, 109 Salvation Lane,  
Mt. Pleasant, PA 15666. Telephone: 724-547-2151

April 30-May 6

**Revival:** Church of God, 109 Salvation Lane, Mt. Pleasant, PA.  
Evangelist: Larry Dishman, Hurly, Mississippi  
Service times: Monday-Saturday 7:00 p.m.; Sunday 10:30 a.m. & 1:30 p.m.  
For further information contact: Pastor Paul W. Prinkey, 109 Salvation Lane,  
Mt. Pleasant, PA 15666. Telephone: 724-547-2151

### NEWARK, OH

June 17-24

**Camp Meeting:** Church of God, 675 N. Cedar St., Newark, OH 43055  
The first service begins Sunday 10:00 a.m. Three services daily: 10:00 a.m.,  
3:00 p.m. & 7:00 p.m. Please make reservations in advance, if possible.  
For lodging/camper reservations, please contact Bro. or Sis. Bush at  
740-345-1213.  
For further information contact: Pastor Roger L. Decker, 83 Decrow Ave.,  
Newark, OH 43055. Telephone: 740-344-2543

### CANBY, OR

July 9-15

**Camp Meeting:** Church of God, 522 NW 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave., Canby, OR 97013  
The first service begins Monday at 7:00 p.m. Two services daily: 10:30 a.m.  
& 7:00 p.m. Please make reservations in advance, if possible.  
For further information contact: Pastor E. David Stegmeier, 522 NW 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave.,  
Canby, OR 97013. Telephone: 503-266-9297

### MUNCIE, IN

July 9-15

**Camp Meeting:** Ninth Street Church of God, 125 S 9<sup>th</sup> Street, New Castle, IN  
47362. The camp meeting will be held at the Central Friends' Campground,  
5601 E County Road 650 S, Muncie, Indiana. Service times: The first service  
begins Monday evening at 7:30 p.m.; Tuesday - Saturday 9:00 a.m. & 7:30  
p.m.; Sunday 9:00 a.m. For lodging/camping reservations, please contact  
Sis. Michelle Gingerich @ 765-808-8705  
For more information contact: Pastor Allen Polston. Telephone: 765-521-8284

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