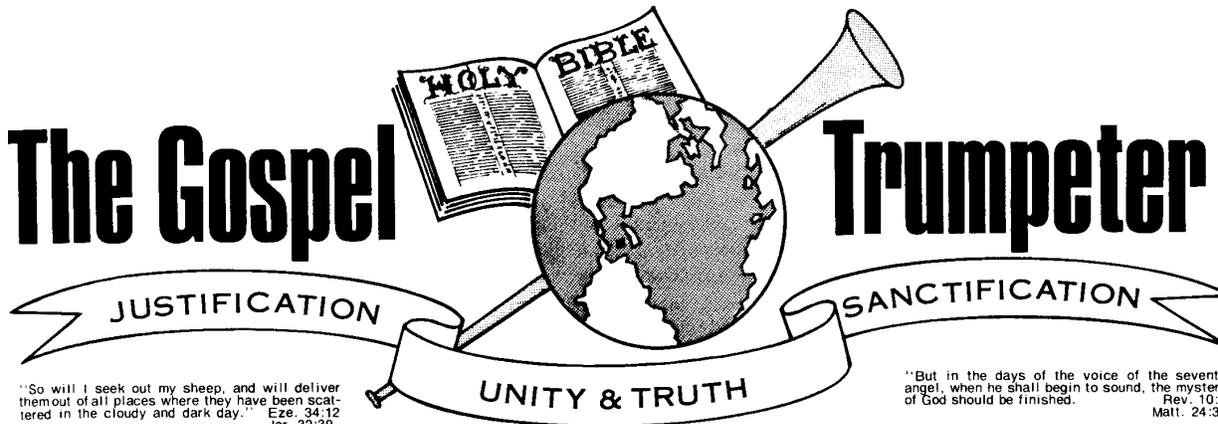


The Gospel Trumpeter



JUSTIFICATION

SANCTIFICATION

UNITY & TRUTH

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

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

SOUNDING FORTH THE SEVENTH AND LAST TRUMPET

Vol. 49 May 2019 No. 5



Church of God Tabernacle in Newark, Ohio

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

Psalm 122:1

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

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

Brother Roger L. Decker Editor
Workers Too Numerous to Mention

THE CHURCH OF GOD BELIEVES IN:

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

**SOME SPIRITUAL FACTS
PERTAINING TO THE CHURCH**

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

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articles or items.

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Vol. 49 June 2019 No. 6

Guest Editorial

"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves
together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting
one another: and so much the more, as ye see the
day approaching."

Hebrews 10:25

IT'S TIME FOR CAMP MEETING

It is nearing that time again for
another camp meeting. This is a time
when saints gather together from differ-
ent places to worship the Lord. Pastor
Roger Decker extends a welcome to you
to join us at God's Acres in Newark,
Ohio. It is an opportunity to feast on
God's Truth and to enjoy rich fellow-
ship with the saints. We always look
forward to these times of spiritual re-
freshing. It is our desire that your visit
here will be a rewarding and memorable
experience to you physically, but most
of all spiritually.

Camp meeting is designed to see
lost souls find Christ and pardon from
sin. It is a time for those who struggle
from oppression to gain renewed
strength. These special gatherings offer
many good things for the people of
God. It encourages faith for the healing
of the body and brings greater enlight-
enment to the Truth. In addition, it will
uncover many of the devil's devices.
This is the reason it is so necessary for
us to take advantage of vital godly in-
structions. The sounding forth of the
Truth will enrich and encourage the
heart in the ways of the good old paths.
It is a blessing to sit in an atmosphere
where sin does not pollute and the Holy
Spirit can move about freely.

One of the highlights of the camp
meeting is seeing the various ministers
come to the campground. They bring
us the beautiful Word of God that un-
folds the precious truths found in the
sacred Scriptures. Men of God share the
many blessings of their experiences as
they deliver that heavenly manna to us.

Recently, we met several brethren who
we have not known previously. These
are men of God who have a burden for
lost souls. They also expressed a great
interest in the spiritual growth and
welfare of the Church of God.

As always, we are looking forward
to experiencing another wonderful time
in the Lord with His dear saints. We
know the Lord will have many good
things in store for all who will be here
at the camp meeting. Being together
with the saints that love the Lord is
always a blessing. Hearing the testimo-
nies of victories gained through fierce
battles will be uplifting to our souls. Be
assured that whatever effort you put
forth to be in the meeting will not be a
disappointment.

Finally, if you have not already
made plans to be here at the camp
meeting, now would be a good time to
do so. We also urge you to begin pray-
ing for the meeting. God knows what
each of us stands in need of and just
how to help supply that need. His di-
vine direction for the services is such
an important matter. Having the right
man bring the message is vital for the
hour. Before the meeting, the local
congregation always sets aside a time
for prayer and fasting to seek God's
leadership. We know that He is ready
to supply every need, but we must call
upon Him for His help and guidance.
Allowing the Lord's presence to over-
shadow and to be the overseer will
guarantee the success of the camp
meeting.

John 4:19 The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.

20 Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.

21 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor

yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.

22 Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews.

23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.

24 God is a Spirit: and they that

worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

25 The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things.

26 Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he.

True Worship



Brother Roger L. Decker

Ignorant Worship

Our Scripture text begins with the meeting of a Samaritan woman with Jesus Christ. The Scripture says in John 4:4, "And he must needs go through Samaria." Jesus needed to go there because there was a need. Jesus was sitting on Jacob's well when a Samaritan woman came to the well to fetch water, and a conversation broke out. No doubt, she was nervous in the conversation, especially talking to a Jew. Remember now, she was a Samaritan woman, and she was talking to an Orthodox Jew of the lineage of David. John 4:9 says, "Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a

Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans."

The conversation progressed about the Living Water. Verses 16-19 read: "Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither. The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband: For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly. The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet."

This was quite a lesson that Jesus taught the woman at the well. There are two revelations

that one always receives in Christianity. First, the revelation of God; second, the revelation of one's self. When anyone meets God, those two observations are prominent. No man really ever sees himself until he sees himself in the presence of God; then he is appalled at what he really is.

The Samaritan woman was staggered by Christ's ability to see into her innermost being. She was amazed at His intimate knowledge of the human heart and her heart in particular. The Psalmist David was awed by that same thought. He said in Psalm 139:1-4: "O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou

understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassed my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether."

I read a story that once a small girl heard a sermon by C. H. Spurgeon. At the end of the message, she whispered in her mother's ear, "Mother, how does he know what goes on in our house?" There are no wrappings or disguises that are proof against the gaze of Christ. It is in His power to see into the depths of every heart. It is said that He not only sees the evil there, but He also sees the soul of every man. He is like the surgeon who sees the diseased thing, and also sees the help that will follow when the evil thing is taken away.

Jesus gave more to this woman than just forgiveness and a revelation of Himself. Jesus also taught in this chapter about true worship. As soon as He brought up worship, she mentioned worship by pointing to the mountain. In John 4:20 she said, "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship."

The Samaritan woman was referring to Mount Gerashon, the most sacred spot in the world for the Samaritans to worship. She was a Samaritan, and she referred to the fathers as worshipping there. In essence, she said, "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain, but You say Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." In other words, she was saying, "The Samaritans worship at Mount Gerashon, and You say the temple at Jerusalem is where we should worship."

Jesus let the woman know that the old rivalries between the Samaritans and the Jews were on their way out, that the day was coming when controversy about

their respect to Mount Gerashon and Mount Zion would be irrelevant. He that truly sought God could find God anywhere. You can find God anywhere. For all that, Jesus still stressed the fact that the Jewish nation had a unique place in God's plan and revelation. Jesus said "true worship." If there is true worship, then the others must be false. "True worship" means that every other kind of worship is false.

False and Selective Worship

Let us look at false worship for just a moment. False worship is a selective worship that chooses what it wants to know about God and omits the rest. It only goes so far. The Samaritans accepted only the Pentateuch, or the first five books of the Old Testament. They rejected all the other Books from the Old Testament. They rejected the great messages of the prophets and the devotion contained in the Book of Psalms.

Some look no further than the Scriptures that justify their condition. For example, Romans 3:10 states, "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one." They do not even want to consider the Truth about that. They do not want to consider that it is Old Testament Scripture, where there was no sacrifice to take away sin. However, under the new covenant, we have not only a perfect sacrifice but also Jesus Christ living on the inside, and He gives us power over sin. You do not have to sin if you do not want to sin after you have been saved.

Many people become selective in their worship. They pick and choose what they want in the Scriptures. You will do well to remember that. Although no man will grasp the whole knowledge of all the Truth, it is total Truth that you should aim for, not the snatching of fragments that hap-

pen to suit yourself and fit your position.

There is also ignorant worship. Worship ought to be the approach to God of the whole man. A man has a mind and a duty to exercise that mind. Religion may begin with an emotional response, but the time comes when the emotional response has to be thought out. You have to use your mind in worship. Religion is far more than merely the strenuous exercise of the intellect.

A great part of religious failure is due to nothing other than intellectual laziness. This is the reason that many people do not like to study. They do not like to have to dig into the Word of God. If they do not understand it, they skip it. However, to truly understand the Word of God, you have to dig deep. You must use your mind.

Some people are ignorant about the Word of God, and they choose to stay ignorant. For example, they say, "What I don't know won't hurt me." Yes, it will. Some people do not want to go to the house of God because they do not want to be responsible for what they might hear and they do not want to be found guilty. Well, they are already guilty, because they did not take the opportunity to go to the house of God.

Breaking Down Barriers

Religion is never safe until a man can tell not only what he believes but also the reason he believes it. Religion is hope, but it is always hope with reasoning. First Peter 3:15 reads, "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear." Why do you have hope within you? That is what people want to know. You need to know the

Scriptures for yourself. The only way you will know the Scriptures is to put forth effort to exercise your mind to know them.

Jesus' answer to the Samaritan woman was that she did not need to go anywhere special to find God. She did not have to go to Mount Gershon or to Mount Zion, and she did not need to offer a sacrifice at some special place. True worship finds God wherever a person goes.

John 4:25-27 tells us: "The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh [she had some knowledge of the Scriptures], which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he. [Jesus was saying: 'This is not a dream of the Truth. I am Truth itself.'] And upon this came his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman: yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her?"

There is little wonder that the disciples were in a state of bewildered amazement. They had just returned from their errand to the town of Sychar to find Jesus talking to a Samaritan woman. The Jews had strange ideas about women. Their Rabbinic precept was: "Let no one talk with a woman in the street. No, not with his own wife." The rabbis so despised women and thought of them as being incapable of receiving any real teaching that they said, "Better that the words of the law should be burned than delivered to a woman."

They had a saying that each time a man prolonged conversation with a woman, he caused evil to himself and desisted from the law. By Rabbinic standards, Jesus could hardly have done a more shattering, unconventional thing than to talk to this Samaritan woman. No wonder the disciples were amazed. They were shocked that Jesus Christ the Messiah was talking to a Samari-

tan woman. What was Jesus doing? He was gradually breaking down the barriers.

Genuine Worship

I have pointed out ignorant worship, selective worship, and false worship. Now let us look at true worship. I believe that every child of God wants true worship. In John 4:23-24 Jesus said: "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

Jesus pointed to true worship. He said in verse 24, "God is a Spirit." Since God is a Spirit, God is not confined to things, and therefore idol worship is not only irrelevant, but it is an insult to the very nature of God. God is a Spirit, and He is not confined to places; therefore, they could not limit the worship of God to Jerusalem or Mount Gershon. Many people limit God in their worship. If God is a Spirit, a man's gifts to God must be gifts of the spirit. Animal sacrifices and all man-made things become inadequate. The only gifts that befit the nature of God are gifts of the spirit, such as love, loyalty, obedience, and devotion.

Let us talk about the spirit. A man's spirit is the most elevated part of him. That part of man lasts when the physical part has vanished. This is a part that dreams and sees visions, and because of the weakness of the body, dreams and visions may never be carried out. It is the spirit of man that is the source of his highest dreams and thoughts of his ideas and desires. In true worship, man through his spirit attains friendship and intimacy with God.

Genuine worship does not consist of coming to a certain

place, going through a certain ritual, or even bringing certain gifts. True worship is when the spirit, the immortal and invisible part of man speaks to and meets with God Himself, immortal and invisible. Jesus was telling the Samaritan woman that she did not need to offer a sacrifice at some special place. You can find true worship and have worship with God any place you go. You can have true worship with God while driving your car or sitting in a chair at home.

Again, John 4:24 says, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." I want you to notice that the "s" in the word spirit is lowercase. When quoting that, sometimes it is as if some think it is speaking of the Holy Spirit, but that is not so. It is speaking of your spirit. Since God is a Spirit, then to have worship, there must be contact between His Spirit and your spirit. The spirit is the real you. That is the part that goes back to God at death.

Ecclesiastes 12:7 reads, "Then shall the dust [the outward man, the body] return to the earth as it was: and the spirit [the real person that lives in that dust] shall return unto God who gave it [the spirit]." The real you is a spirit, and the spirit is the real life of a Christian.

Walking in Truth

To have true worship, there is one more ingredient needed, and that is Truth. John 4:24 says that you must worship Him "in spirit and in truth." You cannot have true worship outside of Truth. You cannot have worship unless your spirit is in agreement with Jesus Christ. You cannot be at odds with Christ and still have true worship. In John 14:6 Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." You cannot have contact with the Fa-

ther unless it is through Jesus Christ, you have to be in Truth. Just going to church, singing a few songs, and listening to a message is not necessarily true worship. Romans 8:16 says, "The Spirit [notice the capital 'S,' meaning the Holy Spirit] itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."

In order for the Spirit to bear witness with your spirit, your spirit must be in Truth. You cannot worship God outside Truth and have true worship. You must walk in all the light, knowledge, and understanding that you have received. Let me explain that a little. There are degrees of understanding. Someone who has been saved recently does not have the understanding of someone who has been serving God for thirty years, but they can have fellowship because their spirit agrees with God's Spirit and they are worshiping and walking in all the light they have. Therefore, they are walking in Truth and can have fellowship one with another.

Dear one, you must walk in all the light, knowledge, and understanding that you have received. You may raise your hand and sing in the choir, but to have true worship, your spirit must agree with God's Spirit. For your spirit to agree with God's Spirit, you have to have Truth.

In order to have true worship, there must be an unconditional love between God and you. People have a tendency to love only when it is conditional. As long as everything is going all right and they are getting blessed, and as long as there are no hard places to go through, and conditions are right for them, they love God. However, consider the apostles in prison. They were beaten and slandered, yet they loved God so much that they were willing to lay down their lives for Him. Consider Jesus. He was beaten, spat upon, slandered, and cruci-

fied, yet He loves us unconditionally.

When you love someone, you communicate with that one. You call, you might write a letter, you might text, and you express your love. That is how it is with God. You communicate with God when you love Him. You do not become one of these children that will not speak to the Father. You communicate with God and you express your love to God. You talk to Him, you obey Him, you do what He wants you to do, and you obey His Word. You read and study His Word. Do you realize that when you read the Word of God, it is God talking to you? This is not like reading a short story.

Meeting Bible Conditions

In Mark 12:30 Jesus said, "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment." The heart, the soul, and the mind must be what worship God, but it is always easy to let a form take the place of love. It is always easy to let worship become a matter of the church building or what is going on in the building instead of a matter of giving your whole life to God.

In Luke, Chapter 10, Jesus told the story of the Good Samaritan. He said the priests and the Levites passed by the wounded traveler because they were eager to get on with the ritual of the temple. It is easy to say, "We went to church this morning," instead of entering into true worship. True worship is when you give your heart, mind, soul, and strength over to God completely. God cannot be number two or three in your life. He must be number one in your life.

Worship is more than going to church on Sundays and Wednesdays. You can have your

own personal worship with God at home in between services. You do not have to be in a church service to enter into true worship. You can have true worship wherever you meet conditions with God. Your motivation in worship must be out of love for God and love for His Truth. True worship is what pleases God. True worship is wherever you meet Bible conditions and your love for God fills your soul, your mind, and your heart.

The woman of Samaria who Jesus met at the well of Jacob perceived a real truth that extends to you and me. True worship involves your spirit and Truth. They both must be active in true worship. You must be walking in all the light that God has revealed to your soul. When you seek those things which are above, everything about you is centered on Christ.

There are times when you can enter into true worship at home. Sometimes getting alone with God is the best time that you can have with God. I love the times when I get alone with God and His Spirit bears witness with my spirit. When you enter into true worship with God and God rains down from Heaven, it is a witness to your spirit that you are a child of God. God has to be number one in your life, not a boyfriend or a girlfriend and not your husband or wife. God has a place for them.

God will be anywhere you meet conditions. Anywhere your spirit lines up with His Spirit, you can have true worship. If you have been failing along that line, may God help you to get back to where you need to be. May God help you to get back to true worship instead of merely going to church, enduring the service, and going home.

(Compact Disc TR-2040)

Ephesians 6:1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right [children are not duty bound to obey any directive by their parents contrary to the will of God, but orders and commands in line with the Word of God must be obeyed].

2 Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;)

3 That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.

4 And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath [I believe that means do not aggravate your children; when you tell them to do something, follow through and get

them to do it immediately]: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. [As a parent, you should help your children to grow spiritually and provide all means possible to see that they grow spiritually. A father should be the best example that he can possibly be. He should be serious about the things of God. Remember, your child has an eternity bound soul.]

5 Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ;

6 Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of

Christ, doing the will of God from the heart;

7 With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men:

8 Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.

9 And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening [in other words, you should never use any kind of abusive language]: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him.

10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

The Father's Presence



Brother E. David Stegmeier

A Godly Father Will Command His Children

The greatest need in America today is for strong, Christian fathers. Perhaps this is quite a bold statement; however, the destiny of God's church and our nation is contingent upon the integrity of

our homes. According to the well-known saying, "As goes the home, so goes the nation." I would like to say, "As goes the home, so goes the church." I want to be careful of what I say, because I am a father and a grandfather. As fathers, sometimes we can be too passive, and maybe

too austere, but the pendulum also swings over to the other direction. The Bible says in Genesis 18:19, "For I know him [Abraham], that he will command [that is a strong word] his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that

the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him."

Command is a word that means "to give an authoritative order." Some synonyms are direct instruction, or require something. As a parent, you should require something of your children. In my own home, we never debated when it was time for church. We all went to church, and we did not discuss it. An individual must be strong enough to give an authoritative command, and a godly father occupies that place. As a church, we need to pray for our fathers. Fathers have a serious and grave responsibility.

I believe the Scripture backs this up: the condition and the state of a nation is a reflection of its homes. The church is a reflection of its homes as well. According to the principles of God's Eternal Word, fathers should be the backbone of the nation and the church. Likewise, a home in tune with God and His Word will be a strong pillar in a congregation. Have you ever heard of the family altar? Every home needs a family altar, and I believe the father is the one who should take the lead. The nation and the church are weakened when homes are not what they should be, and the father has a great part to play in this. If the church and the nation are to be strong, the homes must be strong.

As a father, your greatest responsibility in life is the moral and the spiritual training of your children. Many parents are so concerned with basketball, football, fishing, hunting, and so on. That is not your greatest responsibility. Your greatest responsibility is the moral and spiritual training of your children. I advocate that nothing should hinder bringing your children to the house of worship. Taking your children to the house of worship should be your top priority. Again, your greatest responsibil-

ity is the moral and the spiritual training of your children.

Discipline in Love

The home is the basic center for instruction and morality in the things of God. Our Scripture text says in verse 4, "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." That verse from the Amplified Bible reads, "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger [do not exasperate them to the point of resentment with demands that are trivial or unreasonable or humiliating or abusive; nor by showing favoritism or indifference to any of them], but bring them up [tenderly, with lovingkindness] in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."

If you put down a child, that is a grave mistake. We have a very similar injunction in Colossians 3:21, where it says, "Fathers, provoke [aggravate or needle] not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged." As a parent, you need to be all you can be for your children. You ought to encourage them in the things of God.

As a father, you must be careful in disciplining and correcting your children so they will never doubt your love for them. If they do, it will be doubly hard to get them to be submissive and obedient. You must show a child that you love him even though you have to discipline him. If you are disciplining him, you should put him on your knee, give him a hug, and tell him how much you love him and want him to grow up to be an asset to society, not a detriment. You should always reassure a child that you love him after you have corrected him. There is a great misfortune among parents today in that they are placing their responsibility of training their children more on the school and on the church.

God assigned parents that responsibility first.

Years ago, I had a principal whom I really respected at the school where I taught. He was a farmer, but he went on to school and became the principal of our high school. The schools began to introduce sex education to the high school, and he called me into his office and inquired, "Dave, are you going to allow your children to attend this class?"

I said, "No."

He said, "Neither will I, but the reason we have to do this in the schools is that churches and homes have fallen short, so it is dumped in the lap of the school system." The church and the home are responsible for the moral and spiritual training of children.

Fatherless Homes

When children grow up without a father in the home, they have a more difficult time and are at a greater risk when facing the difficult challenges of life. There is a definite correlation between the curses in our nation and the negligence and the absence of fathers. Here are some disturbing statistics. The incarceration rates of young men who grew up in homes without fathers are twice as likely to end up in jail as those who come from traditional two parent families. Think of that! The boys whose fathers were absent from the household doubled the odds of being incarcerated, even though other factors such as race, income, parent education, and urban residences were held constant.

Suicide among young people is an epidemic. Sixty-three percent of youth suicides are from homes where there is no father. Eighty-five percent of children who exhibit behavioral disorders come from fatherless homes.

Seventy-one percent of all high school dropouts come from fatherless homes. Children who are living in single parent homes or who are in stepfamilies report lower educational expectations on the part of the parents. They have less parental monitoring of school work and less overall social supervision than children from intact families. Seventy percent of juveniles in state operated institutions come from fatherless homes. In a longitudinal study of 1,197 fourth grade students, researchers observed greater levels of aggression in boys from mother only households than from boys in mother and father households.

Many times I was called upon to teach at a school for wayward boys, which was one step from a penitentiary. They were very strict with them. I will be really honest, it was not what I wanted to do because we had to be ready for fights and other problems. I was teaching high school one Friday afternoon, and there was a big uproar in one of my classes. Those boys began to fight, throw desks, and overturn tables. It was a mess! The bell rang, and it was the last class of the day. One boy was lying on the floor crying, but the others left.

I said to him, "Son, I want to talk to you." So I talked to him and said, "I'll take you home; don't get on the bus."

As we drove in the country, he said: "Mr. Stegmeier, I've never had a father. I wish I had a father." That tore my heart out, because all children need a father.

One brother who is a police officer said he has had to incarcerate many young men and put them in jail, and then they go to prison. Many boys asked him, "When I get out of prison, will you be my father?" Children need a father, especially young men.

When it comes to achievement, children from low income

two parent families outperform students from high income single parent homes. Almost twice as many high achievers come from two parent homes as from one parent homes. Only 13 percent of juvenile delinquents come from families in which the biological mother and father are married to each other. By contrast, 33 percent of juvenile delinquents have parents who are either divorced or separated, and 44 percent have parents who were never married.

The likelihood that a young man will engage in criminal activity doubles when he is raised without a father and triples if he lives in a neighborhood with a high concentration of single parent families. A study from the United States Department of Health and Human Services concluded that fatherless children are dramatically at greater risk of drug and alcohol abuse.

God's Plan for the Home

God has a plan for the home. Where do we find it? God's plan for the home is found within the pages of His Word. Matthew 19:4-6 reads: "And he [Jesus] answered and said unto them [the Pharisees], 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? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder [another translation says let no one split apart what God has joined together]." If a home is built according to God's pattern, the family will be in fellowship with God. We need the help of God.

A home built according to the principles of God's true Word is in tune with God. We should want our homes to have a direct

connection with our Heavenly Father. We never know when we might need Him. In Deuteronomy, Chapter 6, Moses spelled out the requisites or the essentials for a godly home. Verses 6-9 state: "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up [you ought to bring in the principles of the Word in whatever you do]. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates."

The Department of Health and Human Services in 1996 gave these figures: Only one out of four children have a father. Only one out of four children lives with his or her father. In 1996, 42 percent of children with a female head of household were children who were poor.

Girls without fathers in their lives are two and one half times more likely to get pregnant out of wedlock, and 53 percent are more likely to commit suicide. Boys without fathers in their lives are 63 percent more likely to run away from home, and 37 percent are more likely to use drugs. Boys and girls without a father's involvement are twice as likely to drop out of school, twice as likely to go to jail, and nearly four times more likely to need help for emotional or behavioral problems.

I realize that the Internet is even worse than the television. When I was growing up, we never had television. According to the Health and Human Services, the average American father spends only seven and one half uninterrupted minutes per week with his children, but 32

hours a week watching television. When a father is out of touch with his family or absent from the home, the family is at risk in life-challenging experiences that often affect a child throughout his or her lifetime.

A Father's Influence

I used to teach school almost every weekday. I never missed a day of teaching. I had a family, but when school was out, I hurried home as fast as I could go. That was where my heart was. I could not get home fast enough. When a father is out of touch with the family or absent from the home, the family is at risk in life-changing, life-challenging experiences that often affect a child throughout his or her lifetime. Even more disastrous is that these cycles repeat themselves when the children who are affected by an absent parent grow into adulthood, and they themselves are out of touch or absent from the home. History repeats itself.

On the positive side, children who are raised by Christian fathers usually produce Christian children. There is incredible evidence that when a Christian father attends worship service on a regular basis, the rest of the family follows. This information is derived from a study. I was brought up that we never missed church. As I was putting my notes together, I thought of the Christian allegory "Pilgrim's Progress." After Christian was dead, his family followed him in his walk with God.

In a 2000 study, it was determined that when fathers and mothers attend church regularly, 41 percent of the children will go to church when they reach an adult age. Sad to say, when the father attends church on an irregular basis, 60 percent of his children who reach adulthood also have a hit-and-miss

attendance record. I want to be faithful.

I say this to the glory of God! One of my children said to his mother, "I want to be more like my dad." I can say, "Thanks to God, I would not be where I am if it had not been for God." Since I was saved in the middle forties until today, I have had thousands of decisions to make, but I thank God that I am where I am today. One song segment says, "*I can see far down the mountain, . . . but the Spirit led unerring, To the land I hold today.*" We have had lots of difficult situations to go through, and lots of decisions to make, but God has helped us.

When a father never attends church, only 2 percent of his children who grow into adulthood will attend church, and almost none of them become real Christians. The influence of the mother is not so extreme. I am not putting down mothers. This was the study I gleaned and read. The influence of the mother is not so crucial or so extreme. In my case, my mother is the reason that I am saved. According to the study, we could come to the conclusion that fathers have the greater influence on their children's lives and affect them to more of a degree in becoming Christians. As I said previously, I am a father and a grandfather. Grandchildren are precious.

When a father is indifferent about Christ, the Bible, and the church, then the overwhelming majority of the time, his children will be lackadaisical as well. I have pastored for almost fifty years, and I have found this to be true. If a father is serious about serving God, the children will grow up being serious about it as well. This shows us the importance of having a godly father. Not only do we see how critical role modeling is, but we also see the necessity of the father being the spiritual head of the home.

The Word Brings Unity in the Home

Malachi 4:6 says, "And he [I believe he was referring to John the Baptist] shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, [It happened to John the Baptist in his preaching. That happened to every Christian minister. When people get saved, that is what happens. Fathers are turned to their children and children to their fathers.] and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse."

That is what is happening in America today. I have never heard that Scripture brought, but it is true. Some of my family was involved in an insidious cult, and that cult leader destroyed their homes. They told me almost every home in that cult has been destroyed. A real man of God works hard to keep homes together.

All the young people that I have married in our congregation since I started as a pastor have remained in the church. Thank the Lord, we have not had one divorce. Staying in church is the key, and when they listen to the pastor and obey the man of God and the Word of God, it will keep their homes together.

We are living in a difficult time. It is a difficult time to raise children, and it is a very difficult time to build a New Testament Church of God, but God can help us. Again, Malachi said in Malachi 4:6, "And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse." That is what is happening in our country. Through the preaching of John the Baptist until now, through all ministers of the Gospel, fathers and children are converted and reconciled. When fathers and children are converted, they are reconciled to one an-

other. When they say they love each other, they are getting along in peace and harmony.

When there is a lack of unity in the home, there is a great disaster in the church. We have considered some of these curses earlier in the message. According to the true sayings that I quoted earlier: "As the home goes, so goes the nation" and "As the home goes, so goes the church."

Teaching Your Children

Deuteronomy 4:9 reads, "Only take heed to thyself, [I think of Acts 20:28 where it instructs Church of God ministers to take heed to themselves. My most important concern is the man that I see in the mirror.] and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons." Is that not good?

You should tell your children all the beautiful things that you have experienced. My congregation has heard repeatedly how Brother George Gordon was healed. His testimony was what brought me to Newark. Back in 1961, I was going to the University of Montana to get my degree in education, and Brother E. A. Wilson brought Brother George Gordon to Montana. I could not even hear Brother Wilson for watching Brother Gordon jumping and shouting. We are serving a wonderful Heavenly Father!

Deuteronomy 11:18-21 states: "Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes. And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou

shalt write them upon the door posts of thine house, and upon thy gates: That your days [here is a promise] may be multiplied, and the days of your children, in the land which the LORD swore unto your fathers to give them, as the days of heaven upon the earth."

In Psalm 78:1-4 we read: "Give ear, O my people, to my law: incline your ears to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old: Which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done."

Proverbs 4:1-4 says: "Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father, and attend to know understanding. For I give you good doctrine, forsake ye not my law. For I was my father's son, tender and only beloved in the sight of my mother. He taught me also, and said unto me, Let thine heart retain my words: keep my commandments, and live."

"Except the Lord Build the House"

Solomon, writing in Proverbs 22:6, said, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." Paul, writing of young Timothy in 2 Timothy 3:15, said, "And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."

I gleaned this quote that I thought was so profound. A young man said this: "My father did not tell me how to live. He lived and let me watch him do it." Father, do not be a father missing in action. Also, rather than giving your children so many presents, give them your

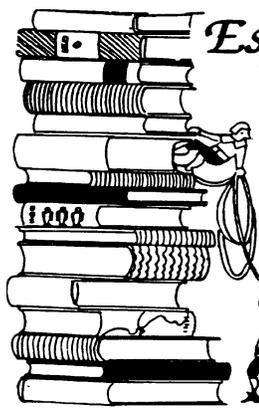
presence. Your children need you. You should spend more time with them at home.

As a father, you should not be so concerned about making more money and laying up money in a bank. You should be more concerned about being in touch with your children and spending more time with them. Do not take on an extra job that would take you away from the home. You ought to live on less so that you can spend more time with your children. As far as I am concerned, that is the way it should be. I realize a father and a mother must be agreed when that child is in your home and you are providing food and all the necessities for them. They should be required to come to church. A father and a mother must be agreed. Father, remember, it has been said that the greatest thing you can do for your children is to love their mother.

Going back to my Scripture text in Ephesians 6:4, we read, "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." I would like to include something else. In my message title, "The Father's Presence," has a double meaning. Without the presence of our Heavenly Father, homes and churches would be unsuccessful. Without the presence of our Heavenly Father, there will be failures and curses along the way in building our homes and in building the Church of the Living God.

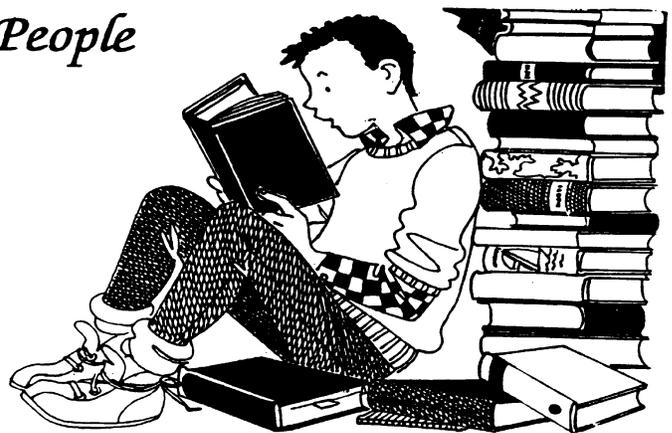
David wrote to Solomon in Psalm 127:1, "Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain [I do not want to labor in vain. Being a pastor in this day is a very arduous, heart-rending task. Sometimes it tears my heart out, so to speak. We need God.] that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain."

(Compact Disc TR-1899)



Especially for Young People

How to Overcome Sin



Second Corinthians 5:17 reads, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." Every one has weaknesses, or things that they struggle with from time to time. Some people might have a problem with their prayer life. It is something that they have to work on all the time. Others might have a problem with their devotional life. They know they need to study the Word of God, but they have to really work at it.

Others struggle with church attendance, with gossip, or with exaggeration. Some young people battle staying away from the wrong kind of music, while others battle watching the wrong thing. Some may battle envy, jealousy, unforgiveness, or bitterness. Some young men have a battle with pornography, drugs, alcohol, or smoking. Jesus let us know that the flesh is weak, but the spirit is willing. I want you to read a poem entitled "Men With Broken Hearts," by Hank Williams, Sr. It reads:

*You'll meet many just like me
upon life's busy street,
With shoulders stooped and
heads bowed low, and eyes
that stare in defeat,
Or souls that live within the past,
where sorrow plays all parts,
Where a living death is all that's
left, for men with broken
hearts.*

*You have no right to be the
judge, to criticize and
condemn,
Just think but for the grace of
God, it would be you instead
of him,
One careless step a thoughtless
deed and then the misery
starts
And to those who weep death
comes cheap, these men with
broken hearts.*

*Oh, how humble you should be
when they come passing by,
For it's written that the greatest
of men never get too big to
cry,
Some lose faith in love and life
when sorrow shoots her
darts,
And with hope all gone they walk
alone, these men with broken
hearts.*

*You've never walked in that
man's shoes or saw things
through his eyes,
Or stood and watched with
helpless hands while the
heart inside you dies,
Some were paupers, some were
kings, and some were masters
of the arts,
But in their shame they're all
the same, these men with
broken hearts.*

*Life sometimes can be so cruel
that a heart will pray for
death,
God why must these living dead*

*know pain with every breath?
So help your brother along the
road no matter where he
starts,
For the God that made you made
them too, these men with
broken hearts.*

The Bible presents several different resources to aid in the effort to overcome sin. It should be your goal with God's help and by the following the principles of His Word. Thank God, you can progressively overcome any sin. I am glad there is a God in Heaven Who can break the power and the bondage of sin. I have heard people say many times, "I can't do this" or "I can't quit that." What they mean is, "I don't want to quit."

A young man who was counseling with his pastor said, "I can't quit cursing no matter how hard I try." The pastor said: "That is a strange thing, to say that you have no control over cursing. You have been here for nearly an hour, and you have not said one curse word."

He said, "Oh, I would never say a curse word in front of you." The first step in overcoming sin is wanting to quit. You must determine that you are going to defeat each particular problem and determine that each problem will not defeat you.

If you do not decide that you are going to defeat that problem, it is going to defeat you. You have to take a "do or die" approach to the battle that lies before you. It has

been said that the hardest battle is the first battle. You have to set your will to address each weakness successfully. Tell yourself: "By the grace and help of God, I am going to defeat it. I am going to rip it from my character." You must recognize that you cannot fight this battle on your own.

You must have a will and a desire. All the help in the world would be of no value if you do not have a strong desire to avoid sin. Without desire you will not accomplish much in this life. Your desires determine the direction of your life, but they also reveal your motivations and your priorities. Even God has desires. For instance, He desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the Truth. If something is God's desire for you, it must be for the best. Even when He allows suffering and pain and disappointments, He wants you to trust Him more and to grow spiritually through that problem.

You can have wrong desires. You can have desires to get rich, according to 1 Timothy 6:9. You can be tempted with worldly desires, according to Titus 2:11-12. You can also have ungodly and corrupt desires, according to 2 Peter 2:9-10. You can have sensual and fleshly desires, according to 2 Peter 2:18.

If you get what you want, will it leave you either satisfied or empty? If your desire is a wrong desire, when it is all said and done, it will leave you empty. If you get drunk, when it is over, you will be empty. If you get on drugs, after you come down, you will be empty. If you struggle with pornography, when it is over, it will leave you empty.

It takes determination to have victory over sinful things. Determination is an asset for most any endeavor. If one wants to lose unwanted pounds, he has to determine to do so. If one wants to develop a thriving business, he has to determine to overcome the obsta-

cles that would keep him from that goal. The realization of one's goals is likely to be in direct proportion to his determination. One's determination, good or bad, determines the direction of his life as well as his choices and actions.

Daniel was a spiritually determined individual. He made up his mind to serve God and obey Him. Daniel could not be dissuaded from his loyalty to God by public opinion or private pressure. Those two things can get you into trouble. That is where a lot of people give in, but Daniel was determined to walk with God. That is exactly what every child of God should do. You need to determine that you are going to walk with God no matter what everyone else does. You must have it settled that, by the grace and help of God, you are going to walk with God. Young person, that is how you need to get started. You need to have the determination that you are going to do right and go all the way with God.

You can read about Daniel's determination in Daniel 1:8, which reads, "But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself." I want you to notice Daniel's circumstances.

You may say, "I cannot be like Daniel and have that kind of determination because of my circumstances. Many Christians tend to let circumstances govern their closeness to God when their closeness to God should govern their circumstances. Daniel was a captive chosen to serve in the king's court. Determination is the strength that carries you through to the path of success in the midst of obstacles. The word *obstacle* is derived from two words: "obstruction" and "tackle." Every obstruction in life is to be tackled. You have to tackle your weaknesses,

young person.

What was the driving force that motivated the Apostle Paul? What is the driving force that is motivating you? Paul had the driving force of a vision that he received from the Lord, when he had that marvelous encounter with the Lord on the road to Damascus. This proved that Paul had a determination when he said in Acts 20:24, "But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God."

Paul had a vision to finish with joy. He was determined to complete the race, no matter what it cost him. Are you determined to finish this race as a winner, no matter what it might cost you? Young person, you must be determined to finish this race.

I have been around the church all my life, and I have seen many people start serving God and quit. Often I thought to myself, "When I get salvation, I want to keep it." So when I was eighteen years of age, I determined that, by the grace of God, I was not going back into sin, and I have never been sorry.

The Bible encourages you to hold fast to what you have received. The Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Thessalonians 5:21, "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." Hebrews 3:6 reads, "But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end." Hebrews 10:23 states, "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised)."

Many people easily give up and go back to their own vomit. Are you holding on to the rope of salvation? This works both ways. As long as you will hold on to the rope of salvation, God is going to hold on to you, so do not let go. The devil will do all he can to

discourage you and try to get you to turn loose of the rope of salvation, but just keep holding on. If you refuse to give up, the devil will give up after a while and leave you alone for a season. He did Jesus when Jesus spent forty days and nights in the wilderness and then was tempted of the devil. Every time the devil tried to get Jesus to turn loose of the rope, He refused. The devil decided, "He is determined," and he departed for a season. It will work in your life just as it worked in Christ's life.

I read that after a tsunami disaster, a man gave the story of what happened to him. He said that as the waters carried him and others away, he suddenly saw a rope and grabbed hold of it and held on. As he was holding on to the rope, he saw dead bodies and debris passing by with great speed. He was determined not to let go, knowing that his survival depended upon holding to the rope.

Your spiritual survival is dependent upon your holding on. The Bible teaches you to hold on. One song encourages, "Hold on a little bit longer." You need to keep holding on, because one day it will all be over, and you will be so glad that you held on! Do you know what the man caught in the tsunami disaster said? The difference between him at that moment and the dead bodies around him was his ability to hold on to the rope and not let go. Guess what? He not only survived but also saved a little child that he was carrying while he held on to the rope. He said it took every bit of his strength to hold on until the flood subsided.

There will be times in your life, young person, when it will seem as though it is taking every bit of strength you have to stay true to God, but God will strengthen you. God will not fail you. He will give you the power you need in your life. It has always worked for me. I got saved when I was eighteen years of age, and

God has given me the power to hold on because His grace is sufficient. Jude, verse 24, states, "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy."

Philippians 1:6 says, "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." Dear one, every Christian who has the right strategy and practices self-discipline can win. Determination makes all the difference.

One of the world's greatest tragedies is a person who possesses great abilities and potential but drifts through life because he has no ambition, no drive, and no determination. He settles for mediocrity. If I would describe the Apostle Paul with one word, I would have to say he was determined. He did not merely live life; he attacked life. He sold out completely to Jesus Christ. Paul was determined to be a winner and to make wise investments of his time, his abilities, and his resources.

At the end of Paul's life, he said in 2 Timothy 4:7-8: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

Young person, there lies within you a God-given power to choose. It is the power no force in the universe can prevail against. Do not say, "The devil made me do it," because you have a choice. You have the power to choose, and all the devils in hell cannot make you do wrong. Satan and all his unholy angels cannot make a person sin when he has decided not to.

The Biblical word for movement of the will away from sin toward God is repentance. It is basically a deliberate change of mind, heart, and direction. You

could call it a 180-degree turn around. The moment you decide against sin and begin to act in a new, moral course, your mind begins to take on a new shape. Paul said you literally become renewed in your spirit.

Ephesians 4:23 reads, "And be renewed in the spirit of your mind." As the repentant frame of mind is sustained, a new personhood is formed in the image of Christ. New patterns of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors become easier with every passing day. As you keep doing the right thing, it becomes easier.

I am reminded of the farm our family lived on as I was growing up. My dad had a large farm, and we had a tractor that we drove up into the woods. As we drove that tractor in those woods, it made ruts, and because the ruts were so deep, the tractor just followed the ruts when we turned loose the steering wheel. That is the way people's lives are out in sin. You might have been in a rut for a while, but God will help you to get out of the rut, and He will help you to stay out of the rut. You have to keep steering away from the rut or you will slip back into it, and then you will have to get back out again.

If you do get down in a rut again, do not say, "Here I am again, so I will have to stay here." No, 1 John 2:1b-2 tells you: "And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." If you mess up, you do not have to stay messed up. All you have to do is get up one more time when you fall, and you will hear Him say, "Well done," when you come to the end of life's journey. Press on, child of God. Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence. Keep pressing on!

Living for God takes being willing, having a desire, having a

determination, and having discipline. You have to discipline yourself. This is what Paul was talking about in 1 Corinthians 9:23-27 when he said: "And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you. Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."

As a follower of Jesus, if you want to fulfill God's purpose in your life, you have to practice self-discipline. Self-discipline is a personal training that develops self-control and character, resulting in an orderly and efficient life. You must practice self-discipline through the power of the Holy Spirit. Divine discipline is God's correction when you step out of His will or disobey Him.

Hebrews 12:5 states, "And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him." Self-discipline is essential to godliness. Why is self-discipline so necessary? Unless you submit your natural desires to the control of the Holy Spirit, those desires will dominate your life.

What can you expect when you fail to practice self-discipline? You will indulge in fleshly and carnal desires, and you will become defensive about your sinful lifestyle. It will hinder your health. You will not be able to perform on the job as you should. You will be overlooked for promotions. You will develop slothful habits. You will speak recklessly and waste time and energy. You will have a

poor testimony.

What is required for a disciplined life? You must detach from things that draw you away from your God-given goals, pursue your objectives with diligence, be consistent, and practice self-control. What are the rewards for practicing self-control? You will have a more orderly and less stressful life. If you will practice self-control, young person, you will improve your self-esteem and increase your productivity. You will have better health, have a positive impact on others, and most of all, have eternal rewards in Heaven.

How do you begin a disciplined life? You must spend time each day reading God's Word, make time for prayer, and attend every worship service that you possibly can. You should not allow your natural desires to hinder your ability to reach His purpose for your life. Also, you need to be accountable to someone spiritual. If you have your desires in check, you will not care if someone says, "How are you doing?" You should not go to someone who has the same problem.

There is a saying in the world, "Get'er done," but you cannot do that without the power of the Holy Spirit. The power of the Holy Spirit is essential when it comes to overcoming sin. You are in desperate need of power above yourself to be poured into your moral being. No other power will do except His power. It is about striving to act the right way, and it is also about the power of God in your choosing to consistently follow the prompting of the Holy Spirit in your life and not walking after the flesh. You must walk in the Spirit. I am thankful for the power of the Holy Spirit and what He does in my heart and life.

The Bible says in Romans 6:19, "I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to unclean-

ness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness." Only abandoning sin will leave a vacuum in your life. Before you got saved, you dedicated yourself to sin, so once you are saved you must dedicate yourself to good, using your body to serve the Lord. You should not keep dwelling on past failures or get discouraged and give up after you have failed. You need to hang in there.

I want you to think about God's power. It is amazing! Think about Jesus. He was in the grave for three days and nights. They ran a sword in His side, and blood and water flowed out. It took the power of God for Jesus Christ to get up out of that grave alive. If you are saved, the same power that raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you. That is the reason you do not have to live for the devil anymore or go back into sin.

Perhaps you are not saved, and you say, "I cannot get saved because if I did get saved, I could not quit sinning" or "There is no way that I could quit drinking or smoking" or "There is no way that I could give up drugs." Young person, you can when the power that raised up Christ from the dead comes into your heart and life.

You may ask, "Is that really in the Bible?" Yes, in more places than one. One place is in Romans 8:11, which reads, "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." Praise be to God!

The same power that gave life to the crucified Son of God exalted Him to the highest position possible in the universe and subjected everything in Heaven and earth to His authority. It has been manifested toward those who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. That almost makes me want to shout to think about the Son of God being

in the grave and how the power of God came upon Him and raised Him up out of the grave alive with all power in Heaven and in earth. The Bible says the same power and the same Spirit that raised Him up dwells in me. Glory be to God! The same power is dwelling in you if you are saved.

Do not be discouraged, young person. You can overcome sin. You do not have to go back. You can live for God. All you need to do is appreciate, appropriate, and act upon what already belongs to you in Jesus Christ. You are guaranteed success in whatever battle you might be fighting, not because you are sufficient for this

battle, because none of us is sufficient within ourselves, but because you have massive powerful provisions at your fingertips. God has all the power you need to make it from here to glory.

Now, you can get saved and become discouraged because you are not as mature as other Christians. We all start out as babies. We do not start out mature. Every one of us had to learn to crawl before we learned to walk, and we fell many times. Just as it takes time to mature physically, it takes time to mature spiritually. Do not get discouraged because you have not grown to the place that you are as mature as some other Christian.

You need to hang in there. If you have fallen, you need to get back up. Fully mature Christian adulthood only comes after a long period of practicing the right way of living. That is what brings you to spiritual adulthood after years of practicing doing the right thing.

What do you need to overcome in your life? What is there that you have been battling? Young person, sometimes you will struggle with things, but you can make it. You need to ask God for more power. One song says, "*His power can make you what you ought to be,*" and it can.

Brother Larry Dishman

A Letter From Daddy

We are thrilled as you begin your expanding adventure with God, where your life will be given to following God's will in training for a lifetime of service in His kingdom. We have nothing but gratitude in our hearts because you enter these important and decisive years with God. How glad we are that you have chosen Him for life and eternity!

How well I remember the day when God gave you to us. I will never forget how precious and tiny you were. Ours has been a continuing joy as we have watched your life blossom for God. Our hearts have been made glad as we have seen your deep love for the church. The happiest times we have spent together have been those times around the family altar at home and at church.

As you embark on this journey of life, there are some very simple things that life has taught me that I would like to share with you. One important truth is that we are debtors, both to God and to man. Never get the feeling that you have given more than you have received. The salvation that we have is free, but it was purchased by Christ.

Life has taught me to learn the disciplines of life. You must discipline your mind not to neglect prayer time, your time for the study of God's Word, and your service to the church. Never neglect times of private devotion. You must discipline your time. You must also discipline your body.

The body is filled with strong desires that can easily get out of control, and your passions can destroy like a fire. You must seek the Holy Spirit's guidance over the fires of passion. That will not only

keep your own passions under control, but also will guide you to conduct yourself in such a way as not to tempt others in this respect.

Life has taught me to guard who my companions are. All of life's lessons cannot be learned in a text book, though you should study them carefully. You should learn from history that sin does not pay. Compare the lives of those who really know God and those who do not, and you will see the difference.

You must learn to establish priorities, and base the premise of your priorities on whether it is *temporal* or *eternal*. Do not let temporal things crowd out eternal things. There will be constant bids for your time and your interests. Make sure that both things and people to whom you give your time are those that build your life, now and for eternity. You should give your life in a cause that will outlast life.

God has many areas of service open whereby you can serve in the cause of God. The doors of opportunity are wide open in the fields of service. To fill these places of service, God is looking for those who are seeking to do His will; then, in finding God's will, commit to follow His leading in the giving of your life in the pursuit of these goals. The most important thing to have as your goal is God's will and to give your life in pursuit of that goal. There can never be a higher calling than that which comes from God. You ought to make His call your one objective. "Set your affections on things above, and not on things on the earth" (Colossians 3:2).

I love you very much,
Daddy

Romans 15:30 Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me;

Ephesians 6:18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.

Prayer



"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

2 Chronicles 7:14

Brother Mike Wilks

Communicating With God

Friend, the Gospel still works. It has never changed, but people do. Throughout all generations, God's Word still works. God has

given us an avenue and a means to touch the world. What can we do? We can pray. I am a product of prayer, because my grandmother and my aunt spent time in prayer. Prayer is a solemn re-

quest for help or an expression of thanks addressed to God.

One of the most important parts of this life is communication. I want you to think about what you personally spend on

communication. Have you ever looked at your cell phone bill? We e-mail, we talk, we text, and we do all these things to communicate. Communication is important, and it is a part of us.

There is a part of communication that is lacking today, and that is having communication with God. The most essential part of our daily walk with God is prayer. The world is pulling at us; it has a magnetism. You know how hard it is to step away to go pray. It takes effort. Why is that? Prayer changes things. Friend, there is power in prayer. I have witnessed it in my own life. If you want to see things happen, you need to pray. If you really get under a burden, it works.

When I first moved here, I did not want to guess about getting the right companion or about where I needed to be in the body of Christ, so I prayed and fasted much. I wanted direct answers, and God was very direct with me. Do you have a big decision to make in your life? The answer is there through the avenue of prayer if you want it. No mystery is too great for God. He will reveal things to you.

In the Old Testament, you can read in the Book of Daniel that Daniel walked in before King Nebuchadnezzar to reveal the king's dream to him. The king said in Daniel 2:47, "Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, . . . and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldst reveal this secret." He is the same God that you serve today. It is the privilege of a child of God to pray. It is your privilege. Oh, how you need to take it, guard it, and use it!

When you pray, you are talking to God Almighty Himself. If you were a good friend to the mayor of your city and you needed a favor done in town, you would not hesitate to pick up the phone and call him. I am talking about Someone so much greater

than the mayor of a city. I am talking about God Himself. He can change all things. That is the amazing part about Christianity. Everyone has the right to talk directly to God. Would it not be terrible if we had to cast lots in order to talk to Him? However, that is not the way it works. Thank God, we have the avenue of prayer.

Prayer is something that is neglected far too often. I want you to think about who you talk with daily. Who do you make it a point to talk to daily? I want you to think about that circle in your life. If I did not talk to my wife, something would be wrong, because it is normal for a man and his wife to communicate.

My brother and I talk almost every day, because he is important to me. People who are important in your life are in that circle of people that you talk to every day. The One who should not be pushed out of that little circle is God Himself. He is your strength.

Have you ever seen the food pyramid? The foods on the base of the pyramid are what you should be eating the most of in your diet, and the foods near the top should be limited. If you were to make a similar pyramid for the Christian's life, the base of the spiritual pyramid should be prayer.

When you pray and have a healthy prayer life, you will read the Bible more. If you are lacking in any area, the root of it usually is a lack of prayer. Communication with God is the means of power as a Christian. You get it from God Himself, and the only language that you can use to communicate with God is prayer.

The Whole Duty of Man

There are roughly six thousand five hundred languages in the world. Mandarin Chinese is the most popular. However,

prayer is the thread through every religion. Every Christian wants to do more, and they want to do better. As a Christian, that should be your desire.

One commentary states, "You know what your promotion is after you work really hard." Do you know what your promotion is? It is more work. You may say, "I cannot do anymore." Through the power of God you can. If you are looking to get to a place and stop, that is not God's plan. His promotion is to put even more on you. He will give you the grace to bear it, but the only way you can bear that is to talk to Him.

We all are fighting a spiritual war, and it is real. The devil is fighting hard to oppose you. If he is attacking you, that is a good sign that you are still in the battle. If you are not getting attacked, I would be concerned, because that means the devil is not too worried about you. If you have a burden for the work of God, he is working against you and your family members. Do you know what the devil does with your problems? He amplifies them. He wants to make them feel bigger than they really are. Why? He wants to discourage you. He will work in any way he can, whether it is through work, through your family, or through associations.

I am sure that you have seen a magnifying glass. It makes something really small appear larger. That is the devil's favorite tool. He will take a magnifying glass and try to amplify every problem that you have in your life to discourage you. What can you do? You can place that problem beside God, and then see how small it really is. The devil is running around fiercely trying to enlarge every problem in your life, but when you pray, a divine assurance will come upon you that cannot be touched by anything else.

Reading the Word of God is

essential. It is pulling in what you need. You are collecting what is needed. Do you know what prayer is? It is an outpouring. It is giving your soul and your spirit's needs and wants to God.

How are your prayers ascending to God? Are they hot and strong or are you merely sending up little smoke signals? God does not want to see just a couple of smoke signals. He wants to see you on fire. No doubt, you have seen pictures of wild fires; they are apocalyptic and have caused whole towns to evacuate. You can read in the New Testament that when the church got under a real burden, places were shaken, and it caused people to flee from sin. The fear of God came upon the hearts of the people. This is just not for one age.

Do you have a real burden to see things change? Do you get concerned and burdened when you see people seemingly unaffected by the Gospel? That disturbs me. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is not a network marketing scheme or some pyramid scheme trying to sell you a product. The Gospel is about eternal things, and people's souls are at stake. When people sit under the sound of the Gospel, it should get their attention. The Gospel is the whole reason for life. To fear God and keep His commandments is the whole duty of man.

Many times in this world, prayer is only accompanied in trauma, problems, and fear. One time I remember a tornado coming over a building, and all the people ran down into the basement. As that tornado was going over the building, you could hear it. Oh, what power it had! I could hear one woman crying out, "O Jesus, Jesus, Jesus!" and she was very in earnest. There was a crowd in that basement, but she could not have cared less who was there. Too many people

think about Him only when they are in trouble. God's people do not do that. We think about Him at all times. We realize how much we need Him in our lives.

Taking Time to Pray

Prayer is natural. I want you to think about how natural it is to pray. It is a privilege to pray. It is an outpouring of your needs and your wants. Revelation 8:4 says, "And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand." Did you know that you can see the smoke from those wild fires from space? What is God seeing when He is looking down on you? Verse 8 reads, "And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood."

Prayer involves one essential ingredient. The most important ingredient we all possess is not your bank account. It is your personal time. Your personal time is required in prayer. What are you putting first? I want you to think about all the fragments of time that you have in your day. What are you doing with that time?

If you could collect all those fragments, at the end of the day, what would you have? Think about how much time is wasted that you could put to use for God or to spend in prayer for lost souls. Some only give God about ten minutes a day. Do you really expect God to move in when you only give Him ten minutes? God is eternal. I want you to think about Him. He is not bound by time. In ten minutes of prayer, do you think that is going to move Him?

The most important point that God showed me in all of this is that God is a just God, but He will not reward laziness. He cannot overlook laziness and say,

"Well, I am going to bless that person anyway." He does not work that way.

Mark 13:37 states, "And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch." Do you think the CIA and FBI close at five o'clock? No, those places run twenty-four hours a day. Why? Because they are watching for our national security. As a Christian, you are to watch all hours of the day. You can pray anytime. Every one of us has that advantage. Prayer brings soul security. It brings an assurance that you can make it through to the very end.

Prayer is like a cord. When you pray for someone, you send out a lifeline. If you were going to rescue someone in the ocean, you would not throw that person a ten-pound test line. Have you ever gone fishing? A ten-pound test line is tiny. A perch might break the line if he fights hard enough. You would not throw out a light cord to someone who is in trouble or to someone who needs healing. We are surrounded by problems. Are you throwing out a strong enough lifeline to others? The more you pray, the stronger it gets.

Your prayer life should look similar to a spider web with prayers going out in all directions. Why? To catch people who are falling. Your prayers should look like a network. We have the biggest network, and it is called prayer. We ought to pray for one another. If someone is unable to be in the services, we ought to pray and reach out to them and send a card. We need everyone. No one is expendable. Everyone has a place. We should be sending out prayers in all directions, catching people who are falling into the devil's trap.

The Christian's Heritage

In 2 Thessalonians 3:10 the Apostle Paul wrote, "For even when we were with you, this we

commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat." We could apply this principle to our prayer lives. Our prayer lives must remain strong.

Today some people have a spirit of indifference. The world has it, and if you are not careful, you will be affected by it. It seems that everywhere you go, you hear about political correctness today. The Gospel will never be politically correct. The Gospel will reveal your true condition to you. Before I got saved, it revealed to me that I was a sinner. I needed to be saved, and that is what I needed to hear. I did not need to hear some politically correct jargon telling me: "You will be all right. We don't want to offend you. Come and listen to our service." No, when you go to the house of God, you are going to hear a message sent from God. God's Word is like holding a mirror up in front of you, and if there is something wrong in your life, you are going to see it.

Again, God cannot reward laziness. How does your spiritual paycheck look at the end? If you are spending only ten minutes a day in prayer, you cannot survive in this life spiritually on that. My wife would not be excited with my paycheck at all if I worked only ten minutes a day. The principle is the same. God is going to reward you according to your works. My prayers cannot take the place of your prayers, and your prayers cannot take the place of mine. We each have a work to do. It is a challenge. My challenge is for you to spend a few more minutes in prayer; then watch the difference. You cannot just turn God on and off. If you spend more time in prayer, it will manifest itself. We all want more power with God.

We were created in the image of God, and God is not lazy. Every Christian should want to strive to become more Christlike. That is the message of the

Gospel. If you work, God will reward you. Every one of us who has served God for any time at all know it is worth the effort. How can we move up? We need more prayer.

I was reading about the Apostle Peter. People just wanted to get in his shadow. Acts 5:15 tells us, "Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them." This was not a fable. This is the Word of God, and it is real. Imagine just trying to get Peter's shadow to overshadow them. There was so much power in his shadow that it would heal people's bodies. This is our heritage, and we are living way below our means. I want to see more power; it is ours.

Luke 6:12 reads, "And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God." Is it really too much to spend a night in prayer for a soul? I know what I used to do under the guise of sin, I used to be out until all hours of the night. I was out reveling and partying. I could not have cared less what the clock said. Is it really a big thing to spend more time in prayer?

God showed me something else. Food is not the only thing you can fast from. We like our sleep as much as we like food. If we really get burdened for someone, is it such a big thing to deprive ourselves of a couple of hours of sleep and pray into the night hours for someone? There is only one language that God understands. Unfortunately for the flesh, there is only one language, and that is sacrifice. God is not moved by ease; He is moved by sacrifice. Do you ever fast? It is not easy. Friend, God wants to see some sacrifice in our lives. If we really want something, we will sacrifice for it.

Are You Satisfied With Your Prayer Life?

How many spiritual calories are you burning? The richest source of spiritual calories is found in prayer. I want to challenge you to read the Word of God more. Throughout the Bible, what do you find the men of God doing? Yes, they read the Scriptures, but what did they do all the time? They are praying. On Mount Carmel Jesus was not reading the Word of God. He got down and prayed. Jesus prayed all night. We do not read that he read the Word of God all night, but we do read that He prayed all night. Do you really want to see things accomplished? Do you want to see your spiritual life enriched?

I thought of my grandmother and my grandfather on my mother's side. She got saved and my grandpa fought her. They were getting ready to have their third child, and he said, "As soon as that child is born, I am out of here." That was quite a threat, is it not? Do you know what she did? She went to the altar and wept her heart out. Others prayed with her, and she would say, "He is going to leave." She went go to the altar service after service and wept.

One night when she was at church and he was at home, God visited him and he got saved. When they pulled up to drop her off from church, he was waving at them, and they said, "Oh, we had better get out of here." They knew how he was, but he was waving for them to come inside. He wanted to tell them that he had gotten saved. Do you know how powerful prayer is? My grandmother had a real burden for my grandfather, and she wept her heart out. Do you know who was listening to her? God was watching all of that.

Do you want to be more prayerful and more effective in

getting your prayers through to God? Are you satisfied with your prayer life? Are you accomplishing what you want to accomplish? Do you want to become more effective in your walk with God? Do you want to see more things accomplished in the Kingdom of God? The only way it is going to happen is through prayer, not through more activities. Have you been cold and indifferent in your prayer life? If

so, you need to ask God to rekindle the fire in you. The only way you can live this life is through the power of God, not through your own endurance.

When I first started out in my experience, I had to learn some things. I was zealous, but God showed me that whether I was praying or whatever I did, it must be done in the power that He gives me. In other words, this is not in my own strength but in

God's. The power is there.

Do you want to see things accomplished for God? No doubt, you have family members who need to be saved. Do not forget that God is just. I want to see more accomplished in the Kingdom of God. Would you like to pray? Prayer works.

(Compact Disc TR-1704)

My Father's Hand

*The very hand that paints the sunset sky,
And sends the golden beams across the land,
It cares for me, and ever shall, I know –
It is my Father's hand.*

*It paints the bloom upon the fragrant rose,
And garbs the lily in her purest white;
'Tis raised in wisdom, when the daylight fades
To let the earth rest in the arms of Night.*

*My Father's hand still guides my fault' ring step
As does a shepherd lest his lamb may fall;
He leads me in the valley and the heights – '
I cannot doubt His tender love at all.*

*It is the hand that made me from the dust,
The very one that shaped my worthless form;
The hand that bought me with its precious blood,
When I had wandered out into the storm.*

*Twice God's! I now am kept by His dear hand,
The one that made me and for me was torn.
Twice God's! What blessed thought to know the truth,
That I am His since having been twice born.*

*And so the hand that rules the universe, and more,
That has the Higher Powers at its command,
I know that it will keep me safe till death –
It is my Father's hand.*

*Then some day it will guide me through the vale
Where saints have passed to that Celestial Place,
Unless, oh joy! It beckons through the clouds for me,
And with the Ransomed I shall see His face.*

Selected

Matthew 1:18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.

19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily.

20 But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord

appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.

21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.

22 Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying,

23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

24 Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife:

25 And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS.



A Few Basic Truths of Jesus Christ

Brother Calvin Foster

The Parable of the Sower

A virgin woman was made pregnant by the Holy Ghost, and she brought forth a son so that men and women could find a real experience of salvation through Jesus Christ. The Scripture text says in verse 21, "He shall save his people from their sins." If you have an experience with God, we want you to keep that experience that you have with Him through His Son Jesus Christ. The Bible

speaks many words of warning to live carefully and to keep the right attitude before God. The Lord knows the hearts of men.

Luke 8:4-12 reads: "And when much people were gathered together, and were come to him out of every city, he [Jesus] spake by a parable: A sower went out to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell by the way side; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it. And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away,

because it lacked moisture. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it.

"And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundredfold. And when he had said these things, he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. And his disciples asked him, saying, What might this parable be? And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing

they might not see, and hearing they might not understand. Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved."

The seed that fell by the wayside was devoured by the fowls of the air. In other words, the devil came and took the Word out of their hearts, lest they should be saved. I want to encourage you, as you hear or read the Word of God, do not let the devil take it from you.

Verse 13 continues, "They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away." When the seed fell on the rock, as soon as it sprung up, it withered away because it lacked moisture. That seed needed moisture in order for it to take root. This represents those who receive the Word with joy and realize that it feels good to be saved. They are in a good atmosphere, around good people, and life gets happier and better. Jesus said they have no root and believe only for a while and fall away. God does not want you to believe only for a while. Christ was tempted, so you know that you are going to be tempted.

In verse 14 Jesus said, "And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection." These seeds fall among the thorns, and the thorns choke them. In so many words, Jesus was saying that it is fine for you to have nice things, to get a good job, and to go on vacation with your family and enjoy life. However, you need to remember that if the Word falls among thorns, or the cares of life,

the riches of this life, or the pleasures of life, you will not bring forth fruit to perfection. It is a trick of Satan to choke the Word of God out of you.

The Good Ground

You may deposit some money in the bank and buy a new automobile, but you need to watch that Satan does not choke the Word out of you. He will make you feel like you do not really need to go to church or that you do not need to pray and read the Bible. It is a trick of the devil to choke the Word out of you.

Jesus said in verse 15, "But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience." In this verse we find that the Word of God has fallen on good ground and bears fruit an hundredfold, and that is the way God wants the Word to fall. He wants you to hear the Word of God and obey it.

I want to be good ground, do you? I want to have an honest and a good heart and hide the Word in my heart so that I might not sin against God. The Word of God is precious. May it fall on good ground and bring forth fruit.

If Jesus had to pray, why don't you think you have to pray? Do you ever get in a hurry and get ready to go somewhere and just say a little prayer? While you are praying, perhaps it comes to your mind. Then you get up and say: "Wait a minute! That was not really prayer. I did not really talk to the Lord right then. I have to go back and cast everything out of my mind and concentrate as I talk to the Lord."

Jesus Christ taught in Matthew 11:25-30: "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these

things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him. 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 unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

If you follow the life of Jesus Christ, you will see that He had the Sadducees and the Pharisees to contend with. He did not join them. He did not preach a man-made religion; He preached Himself. Christ said, "Come unto me" and He also said, "Learn of me." In other Scriptures He said, "Follow me" and "love me." Also, He said, "I am the good shepherd," "I am the true vine," and "I am the living bread." He preached the need of Himself personally in the lives of men and women. He preached in Matthew 11:30, "For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." He did not preach any religion; He preached that people should come and get to know Him.

Jesus Came to Save Us From Sin

Our purpose and our mission is to preach the saving Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. In 1 Corinthians 15:3-4 Paul said: "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures." Our Lord and Savior died, was buried, and rose again. Therefore, we do not serve a dead Savior or a dead

God; we serve a Living God and a risen Savior. You may ask me how I know He lives. He lives within my heart. Praise God! We read in Matthew 1:21, "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins."

In 1 John 3:4-8 John said: "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. [The Bible teaches that you are to be like Jesus. How could you be like Jesus and still commit sin?] Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil."

John wrote in 1 John 2:6, "He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked." Jesus came into the world to destroy the works of the devil. I am glad he destroyed the works of the devil out of my life. I thank God for that!

No matter how long you live in this world, you need to be saved. He came to save His people from their sins, and you need to be saved from your sins. What does it mean to be saved from your sins? Being saved means to be delivered, to be healed, or to be cured. I thank God that I got healed and cured. When I had no power and no strength to quit living in sin, God cured me, or saved me. I was on my way to hell when God saved me. I know that I am saved. I am a new creature. I am not the man I used to be. He cured me from the power

and the control of sin.

Sin is a power that enslaves a person and drives him against his will. That is the reason you should not play around with sin. Sin is stronger than any human being, and it will drive you against your will. You may say, "I'm not going to sin anymore." However, having sin in your heart enslaves you. You get wrapped up in sin. This is a true saying: "Sin will take you further than you want to go, and it will keep you longer than you want to stay."

"What Must I Do to Be Saved?"

A damsel who had a devilish spirit, a spirit of divination, followed Paul and Silas around. In Acts, Chapter 16, you can read that she followed them around saying, "These men are the servants of the most high God." She followed them for days. Today a lot of preachers would probably love to have such a woman follow them around, saying, "This is a man of God," praising man. Paul turned around one day and rebuked the demon in that woman.

The men for whom she worked got angry at Paul and Silas, beat them, and put them in jail. At midnight, Paul and Silas sang praises to the Lord. An earthquake came and shook the jail, and all the doors were opened. The jailer thought everyone was gone, and he was going to kill himself because it was Roman law that if the prisoners escaped, the Romans were to kill the jailer. Paul cried out and said, "Do thyself no harm: for we are all here" (Acts 16:28). That is the cry today to all sinners: "Do thyself no harm."

Living in sin is self-destructive behavior. The jailer brought Paul and Silas out and said in verse 30, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Friend, you need to be

saved. The most important question in the world that you could ask is, "What must I do to be saved?"

In the Book of Luke, Chapter 18, Jesus told a parable concerning people who trust in themselves that they are righteous. There are many people like that. They feel that they do not really need Jesus Christ and do not really need to be saved. In their own minds, they think: "I am a fairly good person. I do not bother anyone. I am just as good as the average churchgoer." Jesus had a little parable for those kinds of people.

Luke 18:10-14 tells us: "Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess [this man was telling all about how good he was, and he even had the audacity to look over at another man and say that he thanked God that he was not like the publican]. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

The publican said only seven little words, and he went down to his house justified rather than the Pharisee. It is not about good works and bragging on yourself and looking down on others. If you want to make Heaven your home and be justified before God, it just takes a simple prayer, saying, "God, I am a sinner; be merciful to me."

Continuing in the Word of God

The Bible states in Hebrews 11:6, "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." When you go to God, you have to believe that He is real and that he is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. That means you need to be serious and say, "God, I am coming to You because I want to serve You," and He will reward that.

James wrote in James 4:6-10: "But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up."

You might as well humble yourself to the Lord now, because on the Day of Judgment, the Bible says that every knee shall bow. A lot of people today do not want to bow before the Lord, but they are going to bow on the Day of Judgment. You need to humble yourself in the sight of the Lord.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ in all of its glory, majesty, strength, and wonder has brought in the fact that Jesus came to save you from your sins. You should not wait around for sin to destroy your life. It will destroy your thinking and cause you to develop wrong attitudes. Therefore, you need to ask the question, "Lord, what must I do to be saved?" or "What must I do to stay saved?" You see, it is one

thing to get saved, but it is another thing to stay saved. You want to continue to be as the good ground. You want to continue in the Word of God.

I wish I could express the reality of salvation in preaching the Gospel. God said He chose the preaching of the Gospel to save them that believe. My dear friend, you need to let God search your heart and let Jesus come into your heart.

In Psalm 139:23-24 the Psalmist David said: "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

Christ Is Not the Minister of Sin

From the moment I got saved, the Lord showed me many things in my life, and I grew spiritually through the years. I learned how to deal with tests, trials, and tribulations. I am still growing in knowledge and understanding and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. I am not going to quit the battle. In Luke 9:62 Jesus said, "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." You need to hold on to the Gospel plow, because the road may get rough and rugged. You will run into some storms, but hold on! We need one another. Away with all the division and the strife. If there was ever a time when the people of God needed one another, it is now.

We are heading for the Judgment, and eternity is in sight. This could be my last day on earth. Today may be the day you die. Think about it. Do you have something in your heart against someone? Are you holding ill feelings toward someone? Do not lose sight of your mission. One songwriter wrote, "*My house is full, but my field is empty. Who*

will go and work for Me today?" Souls are dying and going to hell. That is very sad. Do you have the peace that passes all understanding? Do you have joy unspeakable and full of glory?

In our Scripture lesson, Jesus mentioned four different types of ground in the parable. Which ground are you? How has the Word fallen on your ground?

The Apostle Paul wrote in Galatians 2:17, "But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid." Is Christ the minister of sin? Is Christ the minister who will preach that you can sin and still be right with God? God forbid! A preacher should not preach if he is not even saved. How can such a man stand in the pulpit and preach if he is committing adultery behind closed doors? That is not a saved man. A man of God does not live that way, but people are following men like that.

The Apostle Paul was not a minister of sin. Galatians 2:18-20 reads: "For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

You need to concentrate on keeping Christ in your heart. That is very important. Jesus said to the Jews in John 8:24, "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." If you are not saved, you are missing a blessing now, and you are going to miss Heaven.

(Compact Disc TR-1949)

Meeting Announcements

WHITE PINE, TN

June 9-16

Camp Meeting: Church of God, 185 Highway 25/32, White Pine, TN 37890

For further information contact: Pastor Roger Nethers

Telephone: 770-206-0786

NEWARK, OH

June 16-23

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

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

Telephone: 740-344-2543

MUNCIE, IN

July 10-14

Camp Meeting: Ninth Street Church of God, 125 S 9th 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 Wednesday evening at 7:30 p.m.; Thursday - Saturday 9 a.m. & 7:30

p.m.; Sunday 9 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

CANBY, OR

July 22-28

Camp Meeting: Church of God, 522 NW 2nd Ave., Canby, OR 97013

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

Please make reservations in advance, if possible.

For further information contact: Pastor E. David Stegmeier

Telephone: 503-266-9297

NEWARK, OH

August 4-11

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

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

Telephone: 740-344-2543

MEDINA, OH

September 1 & 2

Special Service & Labor Day Meeting: Church of God, 6745 Wooster Pike, Medina, OH

Please note that the Labor Day services have been moved back to Monday.

Service times: Sunday 10:30 a.m. and Monday 10:00 & 2:30

All services will be followed by a meal.

For further information contact: Pastor Mike Miller

Telephone: 269-447-4227

Spring Camp Meeting

time will soon be here!

June 16-23

*We encourage you to attend our old-fashioned
Camp Meeting here at God's Acres.*

**Three services daily: 10:00 a.m. 3:00 p.m. 7:00 p.m.
(The afternoon service will be a teaching service.)**

***We have special services for children, youth services, morning
prayer services, inspirational singing, Holy Ghost preaching,
divine healing, and fellowship with the saints.***

**On the grounds we have a large air-conditioned dining hall that serves
delicious, home cooked meals and fresh baked pies and desserts,
snack stand, dormitories, and so much more. Most important of all,
you will hear anointed men of God preach the Truth.**

**The meals are reasonably priced (full-time evangelists and pastors
[with spouses] half-price). LODGING free-will offering basis.**

We welcome everyone!

**Send reservations to: Brother & Sister David L. Bush
725 N. Cedar St., Newark, OH 43055
Call (740) 345-1213**

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