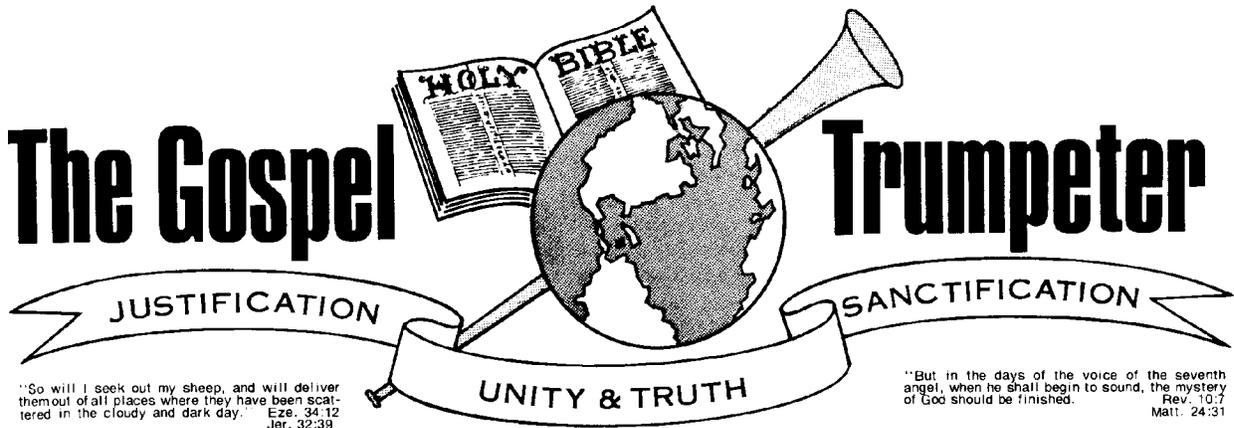


The Gospel Trumpeter



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 January 2020 No. 1



Church of God Tabernacle in Newark, Ohio

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

Psalm 122:1

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

Guest Editorial

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

Brother Roger L. Decker Editor
Workers Too Numerous to Mention

THE CHURCH OF GOD BELIEVES IN:

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

SOME SPIRITUAL FACTS PERTAINING TO THE CHURCH

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

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

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Vol. 50 January 2020 No. 1

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Matthew 11:28

"COME UNTO ME . . . I WILL GIVE YOU REST"

The loving Savior sends forth the call to millions, inviting them to come to Him. Christ sees multitudes that labor in sin, seeking to find peace, rest, and happiness. His heart yearns to help precious souls that stand in need of Him. In their search for satisfaction, they often turn to the beggarly habits of life. These vices, such as alcohol, tobacco, and drugs, can only deaden their misery, but they cannot quench the yearning deep within. Many encounter some traumatic experience with which they simply cannot cope. By turning to these vices, people find only temporary relief from the problems they face. However, as the effects of these things wear off, they find themselves in distress again. Christ does not give temporary relief, but He establishes a permanent solution to a person's needs.

Many people run to the dance halls, to the theaters, and to other forms of worldly entertainment, trying to fill the void deep within their hearts. They foolishly spend time and money on things that cannot bring lasting satisfaction. Isaiah 55:2 asks the question, "Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness." After a night of reveling in ungodly activi-

ties or immoral relationships, many pillow their heads with the yearning for peace still existing. These unfruitful deeds leave them plagued with guilt and remorse.

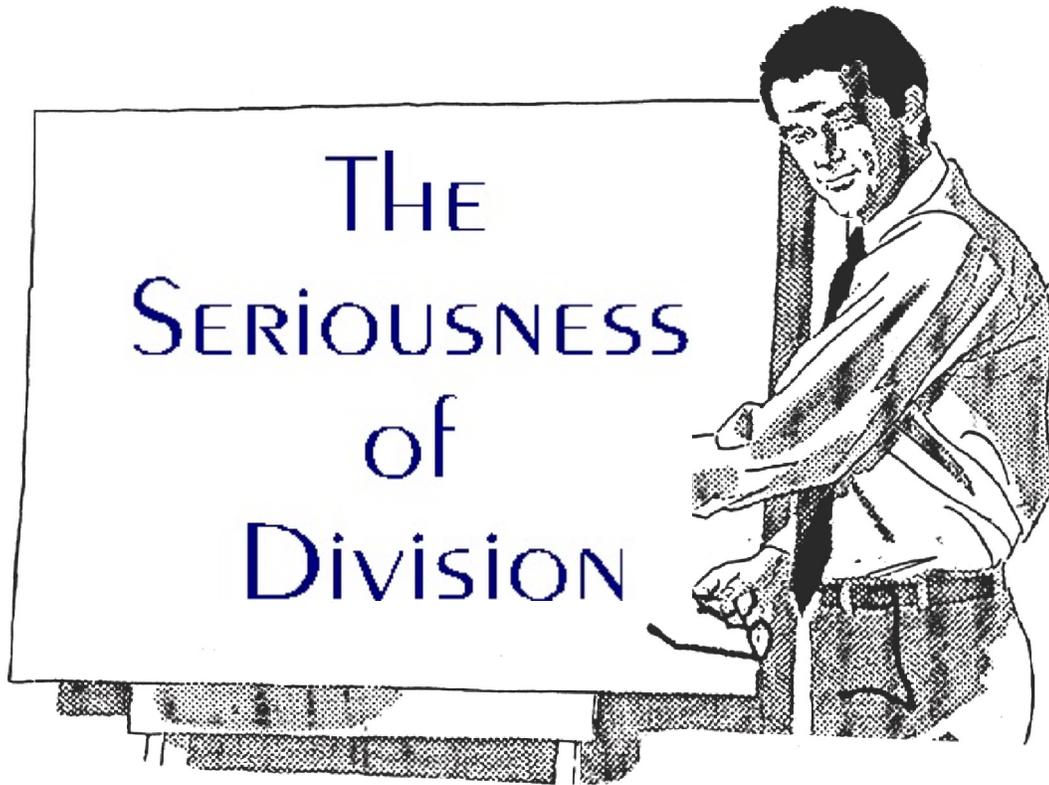
It is sad but true that many go through life trying to find relief from their troubling consciences, but they never find it. However, one must be reminded that only Jesus can give rest to the weary soul. He alone is the One who brings satisfaction and fulfillment to the longing heart. Amazingly, the majority of people simply refuse to turn to Christ for the help and the deliverance that they so need. One can travel the whole world looking for peace of mind but never attain it. What the world needs is Jesus! He stands with outstretched arms calling, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28).

So many people are weighted down with stress and the cares of this life. They are cumbered about with burdens and problems that seemingly have no answer. Possibly some have lost employment. Others suffer from physical afflictions or other catastrophes. When these problems occur, they can have a devastating effect on people. Many times people are left with the thought of there being no way out of their troubles. Again, Jesus invites each one to come to Him for the help and restoration that he or she needs.

It has always been the Savior's desire to reach out to help all who are in trouble or distress. He especially calls to those who are in bondage to come to Him and to be saved from the terrible life of sin. As Jesus sat on the mount over-

[continued on page 7]

*Psalm 133:1 Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!
Ephesians 4:3 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*



Brother Roger L. Decker

"Is Christ Divided?"

In our Scripture reading in the Book of Psalms, the patriarch David let us know that unity is good and pleasant. The Apostle Paul let us know we must endeavor to keep the unity. It is good and pleasant when brethren can come together without backbiting, quarreling, and devouring one another. David said in Psalm 133:2, "It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments." In other words, it is like the oil that the high priest was anointed with, and he mentioned Aaron, who was the first high priest. God gave the directions

for the ingredients to make this oil, and it was poured on the head and ran down on the beard and the clothing to consecrate the whole man.

David continued in verse 3, "As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the LORD commanded the blessing, even life for evermore." Love, unity, and harmony are as the dew of Hermon that descended upon the hills of Zion, or Jerusalem. Today everywhere you look, you can see division of some kind. It is in our government, in families, and in the ministry. It is real. People's influences are being destroyed because of division.

I read a short, interesting

statement one time by Abraham Lincoln. During the Civil War, he said that brethren on the battlefield, brothers that served the same God and read the same Bible, took up arms against one another.

First Corinthians 1:10-16 reads: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of

Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ.

"Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius [Paul was not against baptism, but he was letting them know that he did not have a following because he baptized some people]; Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name. And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other."

The congregation at Corinth was a very large, diverse congregation, but division was working within it. Paul heard about this division through the family of Chloe, in whom the apostle had much confidence. They informed the Apostle Paul that contentions were working among the members. It was so strong among them that it brought forth fighting.

The word *contention* means "strife in debate, arguments, and disagreements." The people there were divided over preachers, or leaders, to the place where groups were following these different leaders. It does not appear that the ministry was divided or that division had gone outside the congregation yet. Paul's admonition was that they all be perfectly joined together in the same mind and the same judgment. Paraphrasing that, Paul was simply admonishing them to mend their differences and to speak the same thing.

The Apostle Paul was not saying that people cannot have differences and various opinions. He was not saying that all the ministry should contact one another and preach the same message on a particular Sunday. What, then, was Paul telling them to speak the same thing about? First, he told them what the problem was. What was the

problem? It was division. What did they need to speak? Christ is not divided.

Paul mentioned at least four factions that were present in the congregation: Paul, Apollos, Cephas, and Christ. How did division get started in the first place? Four different groups did not suddenly emerge. It had been working for a while, and finally someone told Paul about it.

It is said that Paul was not there in Corinth, but that he was writing this letter from Ephesus. If you delve into the history of this, you will find that the house of Chloe had slaves, and those slaves visited the congregation and then went to Ephesus. They visited Paul and told him about the situation that was going on at Corinth.

Causes of Division

I want you to consider what causes division. Someone may say it is caused by the ministers, but that was not the case at Corinth. Let us look at Corinth first, and then there is another place that I want you to look. What was the starting place of these factions that had arisen? Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 3:1-9: "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?"

"For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal? Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither

he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building."

I want you to notice that Paul used the word "carnal" in verse 1, and then he mentioned that word twice in verse 3. In verse 1 he called them carnal, which is from the Greek word *sarkinois*. This word means "of the flesh." Paul began by saying that the Corinthians are made of flesh. There was nothing wrong with that because a man is made of flesh. However, the trouble was that the Corinthians were not only *sarkinois* but also *sarkikoi*, which means "dominated by the flesh."

Again, verse 3 reads, "For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?" In this particular verse, the word *carnal* means "pertaining to the flesh" and "dominated by the flesh." Paul said they walked as men, or as natural men walk. The Christian is to keep the flesh under and walk with God. Paul wrote in Galatians 5:25, "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit."

We are looking at the seriousness of division and some of the causes. In Corinth the cause of the division was carnality, because the flesh was not kept under. They were fleshly, and they were dominated by the flesh. So what happened? They walked as natural men walk and thought as natural men think, and it broke out into division.

The Account of Joseph and His Brethren

We are going to look at another division that took place

in the Bible. Genesis 37:1-5 reads: "And Jacob dwelt in the land wherein his father was a stranger, in the land of Canaan. These are the generations of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brethren; and the lad was with the sons of Bilhah, and with the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives: and Joseph brought unto his father their evil report. Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colours. And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him. And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren: and they hated him yet the more." In reality, Jacob sowed discord because of showing favoritism to Joseph. How does division start? Instead of taking a situation before God in prayer, some take it before one another.

Following Joseph telling his father bad reports about his brothers and the coat of many colors came Joseph's dreams. Verses 6-11 read: "And he said unto them, Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed: For, behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and, lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and, behold, your sheaves stood round about, and made obeisance to my sheaf. And his brethren said to him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us? And they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words.

"And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me. And he told it to his father, and to his brethren: and his father rebuked

him, and said unto him, What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth? And his brethren envied him; but his father observed the saying."

Verses 13-20 continue: "And Israel said unto Joseph, Do not thy brethren feed the flock in Shechem? come, and I will send thee unto them. And he said to him, Here am I [Joseph was obedient and submissive; he was not a rabble-rouser, as his brothers were]. And he said to him, Go, I pray thee, see whether it be well with thy brethren, and well with the flocks; and bring me word again. So he sent him out of the vale of Hebron, and he came to Shechem. And a certain man found him, and, behold, he was wandering in the field: and the man asked him, saying, What seekest thou? And he said, I seek my brethren: tell me, I pray thee, where they feed their flocks.

"And the man said, They are departed hence; for I heard them say, Let us go to Dothan. And Joseph went after his brethren, and found them in Dothan. And when they saw him afar off, even before he came near unto them [now we are going to see division really manifested], they conspired against him to slay him [or to kill him]. And they said one to another, Behold, this dreamer cometh [they did not call him brother, but they called him a dreamer]. Come now therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit, and we will say, Some evil beast hath devoured him: and we shall see what will become of his dreams."

The Root of Bitterness

A conversation that ought not to have happened broke out, and it was supported by the envy and the hatred that had built up in those brothers. Verse 5 tells us

they hated Joseph, and verse 11 says they envied him. When hatred and envy began to work, it turned to bitterness and jealousy, until the brothers wanted to destroy him.

Hebrews 12:14-15 states: "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: [This is not talking about the final Judgment, because all eyes will see Christ at the final Judgment. If you are going to see God here, you are going to see Him through people who are living holy.] Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled."

When the brothers saw Joseph, immediately they devised a plan of action. The root of bitterness began to spring up, and nothing but defilement laid out ahead. What happened? They planned to get rid of what they thought was a cause of their hatred and envy.

Genesis 37:23 tells us, "And it came to pass, when Joseph was come unto his brethren, that they stript Joseph out of his coat, his coat of many colours that was on him." They wanted to get rid of that coat. Why? It reminded them of the partiality and the favoritism that their father showed toward Joseph. They wanted to take away all the prestige their father had bestowed upon Joseph and take away every shred of evidence that their father favored him.

Today they would have slandered his name and made it known that God had no special calling for him. The complete destruction of Joseph was flowing through the minds of Joseph's brothers because their hatred and envy was so strong. The only way they thought they could relieve themselves of those thoughts was to destroy the reason they had those feelings. However, not all the brethren

were in agreement. Reuben stopped them from slaying Joseph, and so did Judah. Those two brethren wanted to get rid of the cause, but they did not want to go as far as killing him. In verse 22 we read, "And Reuben said unto them, Shed no blood, but cast him into this pit that is in the wilderness, and lay no hand upon him; that he might rid him out of their hands, to deliver him to his father again." When the brethren were gone, Reuben wanted to get Joseph out of the pit and take him back to their father.

Verses 26-27 state: "And Judah said unto his brethren, What profit is it if we slay our brother, and conceal his blood? Come, and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him; for he is our brother and our flesh. And his brethren were content." Here a couple of the brothers stepped up and influenced the rest of the brothers, trying to persuade them not to kill Joseph.

What happened after that? Joseph went through several calamities and hardships, but the Scripture says that God was with him. Joseph went one way, and his brethren went another way, living in hypocrisy, or living a lie. You can read in the next chapter that one of the brothers, Judah, got himself in trouble for being deceptive with a harlot. Eventually Joseph's dreams came true. His brothers and his father had to bow down to him, because God exalted him, and he became second in command in Egypt where Jacob and his sons eventually ended up due to a famine.

Showing a Divided Christ

Division has been present since Adam and Eve, who separated themselves from the Lord due to sin. Division never goes well for those who refuse to sub-

mit to the will of God. One of the strongest Scriptures in the Bible speaks against division. Some people like to read this Scripture and put it off in the future. They put it off onto something other than what the Apostle John was actually talking about, but you have to leave it in its context. John wrote in 1 John 2:18, "Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time."

John was not talking about some ruler, such as a pharaoh or a king. He said there were many antichrists, whereby they knew it was the last time. Next, he stated where they rose from. In verse 19 he said, "They went out from us [he was saying they went out from the Church of God], but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us."

I want you to notice that John did not say they went out from them because their doctrine was wrong or because the Truth was not preached. However, he did say they wanted it known that they were not all of them. Why was that antichrist? It showed a divided Christ. Everyone teaches that they have Christ. They say He is here or there, but is Christ divided? Does Christ pull away from His body and start another body? Absolutely not.

Many, but not all, leave congregations because of the standard imposed upon them by the pastor, who feels that he has the mind of God. The Church of God has the greatest message on unity. What broke the sixth seal? The message of the one church, and that message has never changed. There is one body, one faith, one Lord, one baptism, and one spirit. Christ never leaves His body and starts another body

unless sin gets in. I do not mean sin among the members; I mean sin in the pulpit.

Most people separate over personalities, jealousy, or standard issues. What are they doing? They walk as men instead of walking with God. Those who are involved in division are going to pay a terrible price. How serious is it? It is so serious that some people are going to miss Heaven at the final Judgment.

You are never going to find a pastor who does everything the way you think he should. A pastor has to answer to God for the flock. I do not take being a pastor lightly. How serious is division? It is one of the worst things to come upon a congregation. It can get mean, nasty, and revengeful. Division works in homes, in congregations, and in our country. Look at the hatred being manifested against the President of the United States. This hatred has gone so far that in some restaurants some who work in those establishments will not even serve those of different political views. How ridiculous and outrageous are people going to get? I am bringing the message as a warning, because many people have been defiled by division.

Endeavor to Keep the Unity

The church is a family. We are brothers and sisters in Christ. In Ephesians 2:18-22 the Apostle Paul wrote: "For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God

through the Spirit."

What was Paul saying? We have been raised up together. We all came through the same door, and we all have access to the same Holy Spirit. We are the household of God, or the dwelling place of God. We are built upon the same foundation and fitly framed together, a house for the Lord.

As you can see from what you read earlier in the message, because of division, Jacob's household got completely out of control. Corinth was on the brink of a tremendous division. Let us take heed to these examples in the Bible and be wise. Let these

examples in the Word of God be a lesson to us, and let us endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit. Pastors are going to handle situations within their congregations differently. However, that is not a doctrinal issue; it is an administrative issue. The Bible does tell us there are differences in administration.

I am not saying that you cannot come out of a congregation where there is chaos and you cannot get your soul fed or where there is compromise. If you do leave a congregation, you ought to be Christlike and live the message of the church. Some places have let down on the

Truth and compromised. You do not belong there. You need to come out and take your stand. When you do that, you will still be a member of the body of Christ. If the place where you worship has compromised and does not stand for the Truth anymore, you need to get out of there, because it will affect your soul. The next thing you know, a spirit will get hold of you and you will begin to think something is Truth when you know it is not.

(Compact Disc TR-2113)

[Guest Editorial—continued from page 2]

looking Jerusalem, He said in Matthew 23:37, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem . . . how often would I have gathered thy children together . . . and ye would not!" Unfortunately, so many still refuse His wonderful offer of mercy and forgiveness. He reaches out to bring salvation to souls, but many will

not yield to Him or ask for His deliverance.

As the people of God, we need to be careful that we do not refuse His help and guidance when troubles and burdens come our way. It is easy for a Christian to try to work out life's problems on his own. One can sometimes neglect to cast every burden and

care upon the Lord, Who stands ready to bring a solution. His invitation is, "Come unto me . . . and I will give you rest." This is for the saint as well as the sinner.

Selected

**In this dark world of sin and pain
We only meet to part again;
But when we reach the heavenly shore,
We there shall meet to part no more;
The joy that we shall see that day
Shall chase our present griefs away.**

Hebrews 7:19 For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God.

The Bringing in of a Better Hope



Brother Allen Polston

Renewing the Inward Man

Many things in life fall short when it comes to producing perfect results. I am sure the senior saints could tell us there have been many endeavors down through the years that they have engaged in that did not always work out as they would

have chosen, or to complete perfection. Even when an individual makes notable gains in life, temporal successes leave something missing. Paul said in 2 Corinthians 4:16, "But though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day." Thank God, we can be renewed day by day.

I would like to help you to understand what needs to be joined together each day that the Lord gives you in order to experience the freshness, the excitement, and the feeling of something new. The Bible says the outward man is perishing, and we know that is true. We have certain indications that time

is passing, but it also says that the inward man, the real you that is going to last beyond this life, can be renewed day by day. I count that as a wonderful promise, but we cannot just say, "Okay, that is the way it is." There is a way in which that renewing takes place.

Something has to be joined together. Jesus said in Mark 10:9, "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." When we read this, we automatically think of marriage, but there are other things that God has put together that we do not want to break apart. If we break them apart, then they are not going to produce the results that God desires. There are some things that, if you will put them together with the days that God gives you, whether it is thirty years or eighty or more years, can provide you with the freshness and the zeal of being a child of God.

Temporal things lose their appeal, or their excitement. However, the Christian life is designed to be different. It is not designed to function like temporal things; it is much better. We all like things that are better, and there is something about the Christian life that keeps bringing about a renewal. The Bible is a living Book, and it keeps providing something new. Although we have heard and studied the same things before, the Word of God is alive.

The Psalmist David said in Psalm 122:1, "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD." Even back in King David's day, there was something about the freshness and the excitement of being where God's people were and where the Word of God was going to be sung about and preached about, and where someone might be inspired to testify.

Even at eighty years of age, I

believe God can give a newness. When the outward man has begun to deal with some difficult and challenging conditions, thank God a spiritual freshness can be provided.

The Needs of the Soul

Our Scripture text says, "For the law made nothing perfect." If we brought this verse up to modern-day terms, we could insert different things in place of the law. For example, we could say, "For sports made nothing perfect." That would be a true statement. You will not find what your soul needs by following sports. Sports are not going to give you what your soul needs. Now, I am not saying it is wrong to enjoy such things in life. I am saying there is a proper perspective. Let us move off sports and go to another example.

I could insert the word "career" in that same Scripture and say, "For the career that I have chosen made nothing perfect." That would be an accurate statement when it comes to your soul. You can work a career, and certainly you should endeavor to work a good job and earn an income to take care of the needs that you have in life. You can become very caught up in a career, but it will not provide for the needs of your soul.

We could go a little further and put the word "retirement" in there. Retirement is important. We could say, "For retirement made nothing perfect," pertaining to the soul. It takes more than that. It takes more than having a favorite team or a hobby. There has to be something else. These things make nothing perfect when it comes to the soul. It takes something more than that.

Dear one, if you do not know Jesus, something is missing in your life. There is something that will never be satisfied, or complete, until you come to know the

Lord. Whatever else you have to your benefit, or to your credit, it will fall short of providing for the needs of the soul.

The same thing that happened in regards to the Old Testament law needs to happen yet today. Hebrews 7:18 tells us, "For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof." What was the writer saying? Something had to be canceled so that people could begin to see. A lot of times, the ministry will caution people about getting too involved in this or that. People had begun to put their trust in the Old Testament Law. Their lives were revolving around the old Law, and that needed to be changed.

When a person is giving himself over to something that is interfering with his having a relationship with God, he needs to cancel that. You need to keep things in the proper perspective because you can get too busy with things that will never satisfy the soul. James wrote in James 4:14b, "For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away."

You can get so caught up in the cares of this life that you forget the most important things. How many times have you entered into the course of a day and have gotten busy, and before you knew it, most of the day had passed and you had not spent time in prayer? You can get busy with a schedule, and before you know it, it is bedtime, and you have not even read the Word of God. This can happen very easily.

You can get very busy with having children and making a living, and those things are legitimate. Those are good things, but if you are not careful, you can get so occupied with life that, before you realize it, many years have passed. Therefore, God wants

you to understand there are some things to put together with the days that He has given you so that you can enjoy the freshness and the newness of life, so the inward man can be renewed.

What More Is Needed?

In the Bible you can read that some things had to be brought down because they were getting in the way. Do you remember reading about the tower of Babel in Genesis, Chapter 11? The tower of Babel was an effort to try to access Heaven through man's means. We know there are some spiritual things in there, but right now I am just looking at it from the literal side. The people of that day were trying to build a big temple and make their way up to Heaven. God had to come down and stop them. Therefore, He confounded their language.

When the disciples were sitting with Jesus in Jerusalem talking, in essence, they said: "Lord, look at this beautiful temple. This place is magnificent!" In Matthew 24:2 Jesus said, "There shall not be left here one stone upon another." Jesus had to get through to their minds that sometimes things have to be devalued. They have to be brought down because they are not sufficient for what is needed.

The Law in itself was not sufficient. It was given by God, but it was not a mistake. It was not something God gave and then said, "Oh, I messed up there." No, it served a purpose. Those men and women kept and followed those practices of the Law, and in doing so, they were illustrating something that was to come. There are things that we do in our daily living, which illustrates that something has come. We endeavor to live humble and meek lives, and in doing that, we let people see that Christ has come into our lives, because we live in a humble manner. This

can branch out into lots of thoughts, but we want to use all the resources that we have to present to others that Christ has come into our hearts and lives.

Being a follower of a winning basketball or football team will not help you to overcome the devil. There is no spiritual profit in that, although it may be enjoyable and fun for you to watch. I am not saying there is not something beneficial to provide various opportunities, but I am simply saying that if your team is a national champion, that is not going to enable you to overcome the devil. There is no spiritual profit in that. It will not make your attitude, your behavior, or your speech complete. In fact, if you are not careful, sometimes it can give you the wrong attitude.

If you are not careful, you can say the wrong thing. For example, what about politics? If the person you support the most is the winning politician, being on that side is not sufficient to feed your soul or to help you to overcome the devil, the enemy of souls. You have to be careful that you do not have a wrong attitude toward someone who is of a different political persuasion, or of a different opinion. Those things make nothing perfect when it comes to the soul, the same as the Law. The Old Testament Law fell short when it was trusted in. One hundred years on earth alone will fall short if that is all you have. Something more is needed, and that is what our Scripture text tells us about.

A Better Hope

People need to have something brought into their lives better than a winning team, better than a six-figure salary, and better than being physically fit. Paul tells us in 1 Timothy 4:8, "For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise

of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."

People need something better brought in. Many of those Hebrew people were kind of teetering. Several different groups of people in the New Testament were going back and forth, and they needed the understanding that something else was better.

I am so glad that one day someone brought to me a better hope than the life I was living. It was a better hope than the excitement that I thought I was attaining by living in sin and by the wicked things that I was doing by trying to seek worldly happiness and worldly pleasures. Thank God, something new was brought in. We each can have a part of bringing in something better, not just the preacher. If a person gets to Heaven, it is not just because of a preacher or one individual; it is going to be because of God and lots of other people. Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 3:6, "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase."

If you have any part at all in a service, if you have prayed for the service, opened the doors, vacuumed the floor, or whatever you have done to make the service go well, then that is a part in the work of seeing a soul saved. Not everyone can stand behind a pulpit and present the Scriptures. We all are not called to do the same thing. We are a body, and there are many different parts to the body. If you are doing your part, whatever that is, then you have a hand in any soul that gets saved. You may not sing a song or testify. You might have a hard time putting your words together, but if you are doing what God has called you to do in the body, then you have a part in it. Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 2:15 to Timothy and let us know that a woman doing her job in bearing children will be saved in child-bearing. Even that holds a part in

God's great plan of salvation, so we need the bringing in of a better hope.

The bringing of the Law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did, thank God. It makes things perfect, which means it brings about the completeness that people need in this life. People get their lives in such a mess without God. I was one of them, because something was missing from my life. People look and something catches their attention, and they go, and before long the devil works havoc. He can work a terrible work of destruction. People need the bringing in of a better hope. That is what the Hebrew people needed, and that is what precious souls need today. They need to understand there is something better than the life of sin. There is something better than merely having a religious profession. It is the bringing in of a better hope.

"Christ in You, the Hope of Glory"

This better hope that I am talking about is what we need to be joined together with each day that we live. If God gives us eighty years worth of days, then this hope needs to be joined with those. One thing we know about hope, the Bible says in Hebrews 6:19, "Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast." This hope is an anchor to the soul. We need an anchor in life. If you see a boat being tossed about and it begins to drift, you may say, "That boat needs an anchor." You see, you can be moved away from the hope of the Gospel. The enemy is ever trying to move the Christian away from the hope of the Gospel. This better hope is what the Bible says in Colossians 1:27, ". . . which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." This is a better hope than anything that you can

anticipate to gain or to get from the temporal things of this life, which is Christ in your life, the hope of glory.

The hope of glory is not something limited to Heaven. Heaven will be a glorious place. What a day that will be when we get to that point! I thank God for that which is yet to come! Also, there is glory in this time world. What about when you are very challenged by something that is working on you, something that tries to come against you? Perhaps it will seem that something is throwing a roadblock in your way and causing you a lot of heartache and problems. You must take it to the Lord in prayer, and God will come to your rescue. What is that? When God comes to your rescue and begins to work that out and resolve that, that will be glory!

As Christians, many times we can get in situations where it looks really dark. One song says, "The sun is shining just behind the clouds." A lot of times we cannot see that. The clouds can get very thick. When all other efforts have been expended and your back is to the wall, God will step in and begin to bless. That is the reason Paul wrote to Timothy and said, in so many words, "We love His appearing." When God appears, He brings glory. Even if He does not resolve the problem right away, He still brings glory.

There may be times when a problem does not get solved, but the glory will start to pour in. God will let you know that it is going to be all right. That is the bringing in of a better hope. That is something better than what life has to offer. In this life that we live, the years of time can provide things for us. Thank God, the bringing in of a better hope is even better than living a long life. The bringing in of a better hope is better than becoming rich and famous. One songwriter said, "There is something better than

gold."

How do you bring in this better hope? How can you be a part of it? We know there are brethren who have been laboring to bring in this hope for many years. Every time a prophecy of Truth is declared, I believe that is a little more of the bringing in of a better hope.

The first animal that God ever put judgment on was the serpent in the Garden of Eden. Do you know what He also did at the same time that He put judgment on the serpent? He also prophesied that from the seed of Eve, a Redeemer would come one day. What was that prophecy? It was the prophecy of Jesus, way back in the beginning. Through that prophecy, there was the bringing in of a better hope already starting to occur. God was bringing in something to Adam and Eve. Eve had been deceived by the serpent, and they had a failure in their lives. In essence, God was saying: "Here is a better hope. One day there is going to be a Savior. One day Jesus will come, and guess what He will do to that old serpent? He is going to bruise his head." The Lord will help you bruise the power of the enemy in your life.

The bringing in of a better hope is something that has been occurring. When you have prayed and asked God for a song, and you get up and sing to the best of your ability, even if it is out of tune, you have a part in the bringing in of a better hope. I thank God for the bringing in of a better hope. When you take time and pray for the services throughout the week or before you attend, do you know what you are helping to do? You are helping to bring in that better hope.

Purify Yourself

It takes some preparation to bring in something good. What

about preparing a special meal? You cannot just walk to the refrigerator and grab some food and set it on the table. Someone has to prepare it. There is some work and some sacrifice involved. Saint of God, you have to remember there are some labors for us in this great work of God. There are some labors on our knees, some labors on the phone, and some labors of visitation. There are some labors that we do to help bring in this better hope. We present something.

Think about how you come to the house of worship. Dear one, you should not come to the house of worship and harbor ill will toward someone or harbor a bad attitude. We all have times when we are tempted with these things and when things do not set well with us. We can even have times when we disagree with something, but Ephesians 4:26 tells us, "Be ye angry, and sin not."

You may strongly disagree with something, but you cannot allow that to cause you to sin and do wrong. You need to get that clear. Do not carry a bad attitude or harbor ill will or malice. What is malice? It is wishing something bad will happen to someone since that person did you wrong. You should not have malice toward someone and say, "I hope that person's car breaks down." You need to come with a clear heart and a good attitude so that you do not grieve the Spirit of God. Why? You want to bring in a better hope. When people come in, you want to have that better hope presented to them. I need that freshness day by day. I want to be reminded, "There is a better hope that God has provided."

The Bible lets us know that hope will cause you to do something that God will not do, and that is to purify yourself. There are some things that God leaves for you to do. Sometimes in talking about something that God

will not do, people misinterpret it and think God cannot do it. We each are workers together with God. There are things that He will do, and there are things that you must do.

First John 3:3 says, "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." This hope will start causing you to check to see if there is anything impure in your life. For example, you may ask yourself, "Is there anyone that I have a wrong attitude against?" If so, you must get that cleared up, because that is impure.

This purifying of yourself will also cause you to ask, "Lord, is anything unholy or unclean in my life?" If there is, you need to get it straightened out. This better hope is something that is brought in for your benefit, and it is something that you can work to bring into the service and into your home. As a husband and wife, you must do your best to endeavor to get along. You are not always going to see everything the same, but you have to humble yourself. You are not always going to be the one who is right, so you have to humble yourself and work together on things.

You want to bring in this better hope by showing the world how Christians should act in a congregation and in our homes and by showing how we should conduct ourselves out in the world. We want to show them something better than what the world has to offer.

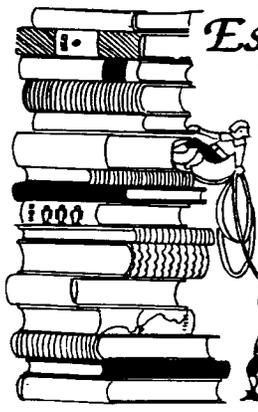
The devil promises lots of things, but there is a better hope. The Hebrew writer said in Hebrews 6:18, "That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us." Here were some people who had fled for refuge. They ran for safety to a place where they could be away from that which was plaguing their lives. Sin is something a person ought to flee. You should flee things that are not right with God. You ought to run for your life because there is something better, and that is the bringing in of a better hope.

Do not let sinful things linger in your life. If God shows you something, do not let it linger. You ought to flee for refuge. There is a better hope and a better way. As the Hebrew writer said, the law in itself can make nothing perfect. A lot of things in the world can be in that category, but thank God for the bringing in of a better hope! We need that better hope coupled with the days that God gives us. That will cause a freshness to keep being brought in to us. Even though the outward man perishes, the inward man can be renewed day by day. If you have a need in your life, do not let the enemy talk you out of dealing with it. You need to flee to God for refuge. There is a better hope that God brings in.

(Compact Disc TR-2077)

*"There is a way that seemeth right unto a man,
but the end thereof are the ways of death."*

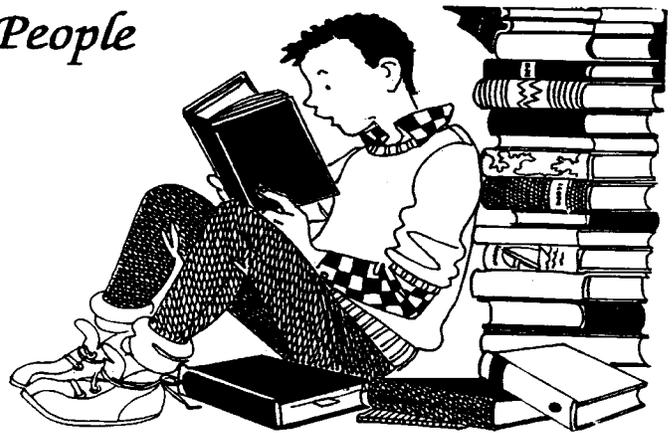
Proverbs 16:25



Especially for Young People

Choosing a Companion

Part 3



Genesis 24:1-9 states: "And Abraham was old, and well stricken in age; and the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things. And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house, that ruled over all that he had, Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh: And I will make thee swear by the LORD, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell: But thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac. And the servant said unto him, Peradventure the woman will not be willing to follow me unto this land: must I needs bring thy son again unto the land from whence thou camest?"

"And Abraham said unto him, Beware thou that thou bring not my son thither again. The LORD God of heaven, which took me from my father's house, and from the land of my kindred, and which spake unto me, and that sware unto me, saying, Unto thy seed will I give this land; he shall send his angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto my son from thence. And if the woman will not be willing to follow thee, then thou shalt be clear from this my oath: only bring not my son thither again. And the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and sware to him concerning that matter."

Verse 14 reads, "And let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that thou hast shewed kindness unto my master. [The New International Version reads, 'Let her be the one you have chosen.']"

I want to continue with the thought of choosing a companion. Many people in the world enter marriage very flippantly, and they always have in their minds, "We can get out of it if we need to." I do not believe that God would have anyone to enter marriage that way. You should enter marriage with the mind-set that it is for life. It is a joint companionship with an individual that you marry to enjoy each other, to procreate, and to be a blessing in the Kingdom of God for life.

You must realize that the Church of God teaches preventive theology, just as it appears in God's Word. Most of the religious world teaches remedial theology; in other words, they teach that you do your own thing and God will patch up your life. God has a perfect plan for your life. Yes, God can repair your life, but He has a perfect plan. If you choose the perfect companion and remain in the center of His will, you never need to

separate or get divorced. You can pillow your head every night and be in agreement.

I want to present marriage in a realistic way. There may be times when both of you do not completely agree about an issue. In such a case, you may decide to go to bed and just leave it. In other words, you should put it aside and love each other and come back to that issue at a later date, after you give it some thought, prayer, and consideration. That is okay, but you should not go to bed at night fussing and bickering. Ephesians 4:26 says, "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath." Again, God has a perfect plan. I like the song that says, "God's got a plan for my life."

Matthew Henry, who wrote a great commentary, said this: "No concern in life is of greater importance to ourselves, to others, or to the church of God, than marriage. It therefore ought always to be undertaken with much care and prudence, especially with reference to the will of God, and with prayer for His direction and blessing. Where good parents are not consulted and regarded, the blessing of God cannot be expected. Parents, in disposing of their children, should carefully consult the welfare of their souls, and their furtherance in the way to heaven."

I have two burdens behind this series on choosing a companion and why I felt impressed to

go at length with it. One burden can be expressed in a beautiful poem entitled "The Bridge Builder" by Will Allen Dromgoole, which reads:

*An old man going a lone highway,
Came, at the evening cold and
gray,
To a chasm vast and deep and
wide.
Through which was flowing a
sullen tide
The old man crossed in the twilight
dim,
The sullen stream had no fear for
him;
But he turned when safe on the
other side
And built a bridge to span the tide.*

*"Old man," said a fellow pilgrim
near,
"You are wasting your strength
with building here;
Your journey will end with the
ending day,
You never again will pass this way;
You've crossed the chasm, deep and
wide,
Why build this bridge at evening
tide?"*

*The builder lifted his old gray head;
"Good friend, in the path I have
come," he said,
"There followed after me to-day
A youth whose feet must pass this
way.
This chasm that has been as naught
to me
To that fair-haired youth may a
pitfall be;
He, too, must cross in the twilight
dim;
Good friend, I am building this
bridge for him!"*

Young person, if we were traveling on a long road together, which we are, and I was a little ahead of you and had just crossed a chasm, which I have (I am married), and did not warn you about the dangers and how to cross into marriage successfully, I would not be much of a

friend to you.

The second burden behind this series is, we often tell young people to marry the right companion and to be careful not to marry the wrong one. However, to be fair we need to tell you how to find the right one. It is not enough to tell you to marry someone who is saved. There is more to it than being saved and finding someone else who is saved. There are many qualities you should look for in a companion.

Salvation is the most essential and the most important attribute; however, there is much more involved in a marriage, such as different personalities and likes and dislikes. God wants you to find that perfect match. In Hosea 4:6 Hosea said, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." You need to know what God has to say on this very important subject. Next to getting saved, finding the right companion is the most important union that you can enter.

One primary reason for getting married is the innate desire for companionship. Every person, with the exception of very few in life who are like the Apostle Paul, has a desire for companionship. This is an innate desire that God has placed there. If you have this desire, you should seek to marry an individual who has similar interests to yours.

Genesis 2:18 reads, "And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him." It is not good that man should be alone. He needs to be with a wife. At the end of a work day, he needs to go home, not go out with the boys, so to speak. When work is over, he should go home. I believe Christian mothers should be in the home. When a couple gets married, they are married. That is a union, and that union needs to be together. When

you are not together, that gives the devil an opportunity to work. He works when a man is not with his wife. Even in the prisons, they understand the importance of conjugal rights, which allows time for a man and his wife to be together. That is an innate desire that God has placed there.

The Word of God is very specific. Read 1 Corinthians, Chapter 7. The Bible says you can separate for a time for prayer and fasting and so forth, but "come together again, that Satan tempt you not" (verse 5). It is not good that a man be alone. Again, God said that He would make man a helpmeet. A helpmeet is a wife who is suitable or just right for a man. Another translation says someone who is adapted and complementary for him. Young man, God has a young lady who is suitable, adapted, and complementary to you and your personality. God wants you to seek that individual.

Previously, I covered three points in our Scripture reading of Genesis, Chapter 24. The first is, you have to look in the right place to find the right companion. I talked about the importance of looking at church, revivals, and camp meetings. The second point is, you need to marry in the Lord. The third point is, you should not force the issue. Now I want to move on to three more points.

The fourth point that I want to bring out in our Scripture lesson is to pray much. In other words, you need to talk to God about this. At least six times in Genesis, Chapter 24, we find that the avenue of prayer was sought. One person said, "It is better to pray one down than to run one down." The Bible says that women are supposed to be "chaste" (Titus 2:5). I remember Brother Emerson Wilson saying that it is "chaste" not "chased." There is a difference. The word

"chaste" implies being modest and pure, whereas the word "chased" means to run after someone.

Nothing, small or great, in the Christians's life should be entered without spending much time in prayer. Certainly, regarding choosing a companion, a matter of great magnitude, much prayer must go forth. Genesis 24:63 tells us, "And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide: and he lifted up his eyes, and saw, and, behold, the camels were coming." *The Amplified Bible* says this: "And Isaac went out to meditate and bow down [in prayer] in the open country in the evening; and he looked up and saw that, behold, the camels were coming."

Part of meditation is prayer, and we find that Isaac was meditating. Young person, do not be afraid to talk to God and say: "God, help me. I want to know who the right companion is for me. This is an important decision to me. Help me to know who You have chosen for me." I believe that you should talk to your pastor and your parents about it as well. A pastor knows his people better than anyone else knows them. When it comes to seeking companionship, you should ask your pastor, "Do you have any reservations about this person?" Also, you must pray and ask God.

Just because someone is the right one does not mean now is the right time to get married. Because something is good does not mean you should have it right now. Do you like dessert? No doubt, as a child, you were taught to eat dessert after your meal so that you would not spoil your dinner? Just because dessert tastes good does not mean you should eat it first. Seeking a companion is much more serious, but just because it is God's will does not mean you should go and get one now. God has a perfect time.

You should pray much about who God has for you. Look at the beautiful prayer prayed by Abraham's servant, Eliezer (a type of the Holy Spirit), in Genesis 24:12. He said, "O LORD . . . send me good speed this day, and shew kindness unto my master Abraham." Another rendering says, "Cause me to meet with good success today, and show kindness to my master Abraham." Is that not beautiful? Philippians 4:6 states, "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." Marriage is not an exception to that rule. You may need to fast and pray about this important decision. Prayer should be made before and during courtship. You need to remember the seriousness of this decision. The more serious the matter, the more prayer should be made.

In Genesis 24:15 we find that God heard that prayer, because when the prayer was done, the Bible tells us, "And it came to pass, before he had done speaking, that, behold, Rebekah came out." We see that God answered that prayer. Verse 45 tells us, "And before I had done speaking in mine heart [or praying], behold, Rebekah came forth with her pitcher on her shoulder; and she went down unto the well, and drew water: and I said unto her, Let me drink, I pray thee." Faith will bring results. There is no use to pray if you do not believe God will answer your prayer.

God saw the heart of Abraham's servant. God knew for what intent he had come, and He knew for what purpose he was praying. Look at what Isaac was doing in the evening. I believe that a portion of our evenings should be spent in meditation. You should turn off the electronics and any outside sources and talk to God. Young

person, you need to open your Bible and read a verse. It is not so important how much you read, but it is about how much you get from what you read. You can read a whole chapter or more but not get a thing, but one verse or one sentence can feed your soul, and then you have done a lot. I encourage you to do that, because when you do, you will learn about the nature of God, and He will talk to you. You will become more acquainted with Him.

I want you to think about this. Many young brethren pray for a young lady who has the perfect physique and for one who is beautiful. The Bible tells us that when Abraham's servant had finished praying, his prayer had attracted "the damsel," which means she was unmarried and young. She "was very fair to look upon [beautiful and attractive], a virgin [chaste and modest], neither had any man known her [she was unmarried]: and she went down to the well, and filled her pitcher [she drank of the Spirit]" (Genesis 24:16). She was attractive, chaste, modest, and unmarried. This is the type of companion you should pray for.

God has a way of making an individual attractive to you. You may see someone and say, "There is no way that we would ever marry." You need to be careful of what you say, because one of these days you might look over and say, "My, she has changed so much. Where did she get that beautiful smile? She looks so different now." God will cause you to be attracted to the right one.

Marriage is beautiful. Young brother, are you praying for the right kind of young lady? How about you, young lady? You need to pray for a young man who is pure, innocent, modest, and most of all, saved. God is not asking you to marry someone to whom you are not attracted. It is

those intrinsic characteristics that should stand out to you. Is that person kind and compassionate? Does he or she love children? Is that person obedient to his or her parents and the pastor? Is that one faithful to the house of God? Those qualities should really stand out to you.

Is that person pure? Today purity seems to be lost among so many. God still values purity of body and mind. You should keep yourself pure for your companion. You should pray for one who has not been with another man or woman, one who has not cohabited, which we see so much of today. Also, you should pray for one who has enough self-respect to dress modestly. Most of all, you should want someone who is saved and who loves the Lord. Proverbs 31:30 reads, "Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised."

A godly woman seldom considers her desires and wishes because she consumes herself with the desires and the wishes of others. This becomes important in marriage when the wife is called upon to look over the affairs of a home while her husband is away. Some young ladies are so consumed in themselves, and some young men too. Too often individuals focus on self. God wants you to sacrifice.

As I grew up in a pastor's home, we learned how to sacrifice. I am glad we did, because God can only use a servant who will sacrifice time and personal desires. Many times we sat down for a family dinner and visitors showed up, so we had to change our plans. Sometimes we set out to go somewhere and those plans had to be changed. Every trip we took revolved around church. I am glad for that, because nothing is more important to me than the service of God, and nothing is more important to me than the work of God.

Young person, you need to learn to make sacrifices for the cause of God, to give of your money and time to the work of God, and to sacrifice some of your own activities and give yourself to God. As you seek a companion, I believe you should look for these qualities in a person.

The fifth important point we find in our Scripture reading is being an obedient servant. Oh, how you need to be an obedient servant! The Bible says that Eliezer, the servant of Abraham, obeyed Abraham. When Abraham asked him to go, he went. The Bible tells us in Genesis 24:9-10: "And the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and swore to him concerning that matter. And the servant took ten camels of the camels of his master, and departed."

Young person, you ought to be obedient. You can see the obedience in Rebekah as she followed the man. Every young man should seek this character trait in the life of the young lady in whom he is interested, and vice versa. You will notice that the man did not follow the woman, but the woman followed the man. Our society has this backward.

I read a quote that stated: "Many women have simply sold-out to the ungodly influences of the feminist movement and refuse to accept any such teaching. I overheard a woman once say, 'I'm never going to get married, I'm not going to wait on any man hand and foot.'" The woman who said that never did get married, and she is miserable.

I do not believe that a man should be a tough taskmaster. He should love his wife, but God still commands the man to be in charge. A husband could make it easier on his wife to understand that authority starts with him if he would assist her in the home.

The church is that way. God is the Head of the church. The church gets its message and direction from God, but God places a man over the local body – the mother, or the church. A pastor oversees the body of Christ. So it is in the home. A husband must take the leading role. Servitude, or being a servant, should be taught to children from a young age on up. The Bible tells us in Lamentations 3:27, "It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth [or learn how to submit when he is young]." This applies to both boys and girls.

The sixth point that we see in our Scripture lesson is that in seeking a companion from the Lord, you should meditate daily. Isaac went out to meditate in the field in the evening. This is a good pattern to follow. Obtaining the right companion takes much time spent in personal devotion, meditation, prayer, and faithful attendance to the house of worship.

In Psalm, Chapter 1, we find a blessed man (or a righteous man) and an unrighteous man contrasted. Verses 1-2 state: "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night."

Anyone who has preached knows that you must meditate to get a message from God. If you have sought God's face concerning a decision in life, you know that you must think about it for a while before you really feel decided on the issue. So it is with marriage. You should seek God's face. First Timothy 4:15 instructs, "Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all."

(continued in the next issue)

Jeremiah 18:1 The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying,

2 Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words.

3 Then I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels.

4 And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another

vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it.

5 Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying,

6 O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the LORD. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel.

Isaiah 64:6 But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all

do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.

7 And there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee: for thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities.

8 But now, O LORD, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand.



ARE YOU BEING SUBMISSIVE TO THE POTTER'S HAND?

Brother Irwin Seshier

God Gives Spiritual Life

I want you to look at this lesson of being submissive to God. You must realize this very important thing: either you can be submissive to God or you can go your own way and seek the things of this old world. Sad to say, many people are going their own way. Friend, if you go your own way, down the road it will cause heartache, misery, trouble, and despair, not only to yourself but also to the people around you. It may get to the point where people will despise you personally and despise the things that you are doing.

Without God we are nothing. In this old world, we have seen

so many people going their own way. If you go your own way, you are going to have problems. Oh, you might not see the problems right away, but God can see further down the road than you can see. That is the reason when you hear His still, small voice and understand the direction of God's will in your life, you need to turn to Him. He will be right there to direct your life.

We are living in a world where so many things are going on; therefore, we need God's direction. Doing your own thing will cause problems. When you go your own way, you may say things that are hurtful and curt, not realizing that you are really hurting the body of

Christ. I do not want to be in a position where I am hurting the body of Christ. As a Christian, you represent the church by your actions, by your deeds, by your words, and by how you present yourself. You need to be a light and a witness. The world is not going to be a witness to Christ.

By definition, clay is earth that forms a paste with water and hardens when heated or dried. In Genesis 2:7 we see that the Lord formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. I am thankful that one day He breathed spiritual life into my soul. Spiritually speaking, I was dead and worthless. I had

no cause to live, but thank God He breathed life into my soul so that I could enjoy the things of God.

Friend, you truly cannot enjoy the things of God unless you have the breath of spiritual life in your soul. It takes God's Holy Spirit to bring spiritual life to you. I thank God for the Holy Spirit. Salvation is a marvelous thing. We cannot live free from sin without the Holy Spirit.

When you get saved, things look different and things are more exciting. You cannot wait to get to the house of God and be around the people of God. There is joy in going this way.

The Necessity of the Word of God

In order to have clay that is useful, the potter must have the right mixture of earth and water. If the clay is too wet, it will be too soft to mold, or to hold up. If the clay is too dry, it will break apart. It must have the right consistency to it.

The Spirit of God knows what is right for you. Thank God, He knows all about you. He knows what makes you tick, so to speak. He knows if you truly want to serve Him. We all need the basic things of life, such as water, food, air, and shelter to survive. We also need certain things spiritually to survive. We need the Word of God. We need to read the Bible and pray to stay spiritually strong in our walk with God. Too many people say, "I don't need to be in the house of God," but I beg to differ with them. We all need to be in the house of God. We should never neglect our post of duty. We gain knowledge through the Word of God, and faith comes by hearing the Word of God. Romans 10:17 says, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

Salvation comes through the

Word of God. First Peter 1:23 states, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever." Thank God, we know about true salvation through the Word of God. Friend, you can experience true salvation by giving heed to the preaching of the Word and by being uplifted through God's Word.

So many things about this walk with God are found in the Word. God's Word tells us how to dress, how to conduct ourselves, and how to treat our brothers and sisters in Christ. Thank God, even how to worship God is revealed in the Word of God. We have so much to thank Him for. If He allowed you to get up out of your bed and get yourself dressed, you have so much to thank Him for.

We all need the protective hand of God. It is His hand that protects you as you travel on the highway. I am sure He has protected you from things that you do not know anything about. The protective hand of God might have kept you from a serious accident. Maybe your car did not start right away on a cold morning. God had a reason for that. There might have been an accident at the very intersection that you might have gone through that morning. You should not get upset because your car would not start. It might have been for a reason. Your protection comes through the Word of God. Paul wrote in Ephesians 6:17, "And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." I thank the Lord for the Word of God that can give us protection.

When the devil comes around and wants to put you down and tell you to give up, you can wield the sword of the Spirit and say: "Get behind me, Satan. I do not have to listen to you. I do not have to go your way." The devil

will tell you to give up, but he never tells you what is out ahead of you. I have never heard the devil say, "If you give up, I will do this." The Spirit of God is direct. He will point out things in your life. You need protection when you go into battle. When soldiers go to battle, they go out prepared. We are no different, because we are in a battle. We are in a spiritual warfare, and we need to be protected from the things the devil throws at us. How can you properly defend yourself if you do not have any weapons?

Having the Proper Balance

One weapon for protection is the Word of God. Did not Jesus Himself use the Word of God when He was tempted in the wilderness? Three times He said, "It is written." He knew that the Word of God was where He got His strength, and that is where you can get your strength. When the devil comes along, you can say: "Devil, it is written. My God is stronger than you ever thought you could be."

Friend, do not think that you can handle the devil on your own. I have heard people say, "I can handle it," but where are they today? You need the Word of God. We all need the Word of God every day to combat the enemy.

If you start to let down spiritually, that is when the enemy will cause you to question the Word of God. If you start questioning the Word of God, you will start questioning the standard of God's Word. The devil will say, "You don't really have to dress modestly," but a true child of God will stay in the center of God's will.

Victory comes through the Word of God. First John 2:14 states, "I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I

have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one." You must realize that victory comes through Christ. You need to do those things that make you strong in the Lord. Just as the right mixture of earth and water in the clay is necessary, you must have the proper balance of God's Word and prayer. You cannot do without either one. Bible reading alone may give you knowledge, but no power. There is power in prayer. With prayer alone you will not have knowledge; they go together.

In preparing clay for making pottery, the potter must have the correct amounts of earth and water. Then the clay must be kneaded with the hands to mix it together. Why is kneading so important? The potter needs to get out air bubbles and impurities. If those air bubbles stay in the clay, there could be an explosion when the potter puts it in the kiln, so those air bubbles have to be removed. As the potter is working and kneading the clay, he can feel any foreign objects in it, and then he can remove those foreign objects. What would happen if the potter were to leave those foreign objects in the clay? They will weaken the clay, and it will cause the clay to fall apart. When the clay is on the potter's wheel, the potter can feel those impurities.

Have you ever watched someone make pottery? It is amazing to see. The potter can feel the imperfections. To be used by God, the imperfections in your life have to be removed. All sin must go. You cannot have any sin in your life and prosper with God. Too many people have tried to hold on to this and that and yet want to be used by God, but that will not work. I repeat, all sin must be removed.

Being an Effective Vessel for the Lord

What else has to be removed from a person's life to be successful in his Christian walk? Self, hatred, ill will, and wrong attitudes must go. Friend, you cannot truly be used of God if you hold on to a nasty attitude against someone. What else must go? Critical spirits must be cleared away in order to be used of God. You would not want to buy a piece of pottery and pay a premium price for it if you knew that it had a lot of imperfections in it. You would not buy it. Likewise, God cannot use you if you are a marred vessel.

When you become an empty vessel, God can fill you with His Spirit. A true child of God wants to be used of God and wants to be filled with God's Holy Spirit. Why? He wants to reach out to a lost and dying world. The Holy Spirit wants your entire vessel, and He also wants total control of your life. In order for you to be filled with His Spirit, you have to be empty of worldliness.

Friend, the world's agenda can fill a vessel very quickly, and it has a corrosiveness to it. When you start filling up with the things of this old world, your vessel will become useless. You do not want to get to the point where you are not used of God. You should want to be an effective vessel for the Lord.

The world has a strong influence. You may say, "The world does not affect me." You had better check that. We have to battle worldliness each and every day. The world's influence could easily take you down. It could easily influence you. That is the reason you need to have the Holy Spirit strong in your life. You need to overcome what the world has to offer.

As the potter works the clay, he is not gentle with it. Have you ever seen a potter take clay and

throw it down on the platform? He gets rough with it and kneads it. He works it to check to see if there is anything in it that should not be there. The Holy Spirit sometimes gets rough with us. The Holy Spirit sometimes has a corrective mode, telling us, "You had better not say that" or "You had better not go there." Some people only want the Holy Spirit to be there to comfort them, but that is not always how He works. You may need to apologize to an individual for what you said. The Holy Spirit will remind you of that. A child of God must have a reverse gear, so to speak.

As the potter works, he works the impurities out of the clay, and eventually the potter's roughness turns to a more gentle action. I thank God for the gentle action of the Holy Spirit that can talk to you in a time of need. You need the Holy Spirit to come to your rescue and to show you how to handle situations. Often you do not know which way to go. The Holy Spirit says: "I hear that cry. This is what I want you to do." I thank God for directing me so that I know what to do and where to go. The Holy Spirit is a Spirit unlike any other. He is a Spirit of comfort, peace, and joy.

Removing the Impurities

When the world turns you down, you do not have to go the world's way. You can go God's way. Sometimes my mind goes back and reflects: "Lord, look how many times You brought me through situations. Look how many times You have healed my body. Look how many times You have answered prayer. Look how many times You have saved individuals. Look how many times You have talked to my lost relatives."

How can anyone turn his back on God? Sinner friend, I am talking to you. You should not turn your back on God. He has

been so good to you. He will not turn His back on you. As the Holy Spirit works with you, you should become more pliable to God. He will help you to become more knowledgeable of the Word of God, and then you will realize why God took you the direction that He has. A lot of times people do not understand why God leads them the way He does. He is God. He knows the right direction to go. He knows exactly where you need to go and what you need to do. If you are not saved, first you need to get your heart right with Him.

To be used of God, you have to go through that kneading process. If you let God have His way and yield to Him, it will be easier on you. However, if you resist, He might have to deal severely with you. You need to allow the Spirit of God to check you out to make sure some impurities have not come into your life. If one impurity comes in, it may open the door for others. You need to shut the door to impurities in your life.

When you have a garden, you do not let the weeds grow and overtake it. You know that if you get rid of the weeds, the crop that you planted is going to grow better. Those weeds take nutrients that hinder the crop from growing.

You need to make sure that impurities do not work their way back into your life. When you first got saved, you wanted all those impurities out of your life. When I got saved, I was sick of sin, and that is the reason I wanted to come to Jesus Christ. I wanted to find a better way, and thank God I did!

If you do not stay where you need to be, the things that you once left behind will draw you back. Either the things of God will feed your soul or the old trash bins of the world will feed your soul. Do you remember how good you felt when the

Holy Spirit cleaned you up? Do you remember how you felt when you got up from the altar of prayer? No doubt, you felt like the weight of the world was removed from your shoulders. You felt that everyone was going to want what you had. Then you realized, "Well, maybe they do not, but I am still going to live it."

When you get saved, you need to get rid of certain things. The Holy Spirit will deal with you, either in a message, through the Word of God, or through the pastor. You need to be careful with your own opinions when telling people what they should do and what they should not do. That is not your job. You ought to be an encouragement, be uplifting, and be a help. The Spirit of God will direct the pastor or another minister through a message. You need to be patient with young converts. I thank God that He was patient with me.

The Kneading Process

When the Spirit of God comes in, the sinful habits of life will leave. Now, you might have a struggle with something. The Spirit of God may move on you and say, "You are done with the cigarettes and the drink." Thank God, He can do that, but some people still have to drive those vices out of their lives. God's Holy Spirit will give them what they need to do that. Also, the ungodly talk must go. The Holy Spirit will clean up your mouth. You can praise God.

After you are saved, you will no longer wear ungodly clothes. You will want to dress modestly. You will dress how the Holy Spirit wants you to dress. Why? Because you love Christ and because He has done so much for you. You do not want to offend God and the Holy Spirit. The ungodly rap music will go. You will have no desire to listen to that stuff anymore. You will wish

that you had never heard some of those lyrics. Do not take the time to listen to them, because those words could get hold of you. Often they are filthy.

The enemy will come in and try to convince you that you will miss some of those things, but just think of all that you will gain. You will no longer go to the store and buy cigarettes and beer. Why? There has been a change in your life. I thank God for that change! When you get saved, you no longer have to let the devil lead you around. You can do what pleases God through Christ Jesus. Once you are in the center of God's will, you will realize that God hated your having those things in your life in the first place. He was kneading you in preparation for better things to come.

There may be a cleaning up process before you even get saved. Maybe the cigarettes will not taste as good as they once did. Maybe the mug of beer will not go down the way it used to. You may question, "Why am I even drinking this stuff?" Or you may say, "This really does not look good on me, so I am not going to wear it." Just as the clay needs to be covered and kept moist for use later, the Lord may steer you clear of your environment that could influence your walk with God.

You may say, "I want to keep company with the old crowd." What does the old crowd see in Christ Jesus? You do not desire the things of the world anymore, and the world does not desire the things of God. I am thankful that when I got saved, I was ready to get out of the company of the world. Now, I know that we still have to live in this world, but the world does not have to live in us.

First John 2:15-17 tells us: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all

that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."

Imperfections in the Clay

When you turn from the world to the spiritual side, your desires will change. Thank God for that change. I did not say that you must turn over a new leaf, so to speak. Salvation brings a complete change. That is the reason it is vitally important to attend the services whenever possible, because there is a strong pull out in the world. At one time, no school activities were scheduled on Wednesday nights, and nothing was scheduled on Sunday evenings, but that has changed. A true child of God wants to be in the house of God.

There is a spirit of materialism and a spirit of worldliness that can get hold of people's minds and hearts, and those spirits can work on the most spiritual man or woman. Spiritual people want to be around other spiritual people. Why? There is a close association. You are going through battles, and I am going through battles. You are fighting the enemy of souls, and so am I. You have opposition, and I have opposition. We have a goal and a purpose in life. That is an association that we can relate to as the people of God. When you are around that close association, we talk the same talk and share burdens. We pray for one another, and we all desire the same godly things.

Second Corinthians 6:14-18 reads: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or

what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

The Lord despises murmuring and complaining. This could be an imperfection in the clay. Do you dread being around someone who is always murmuring and complaining? You should not listen to murmuring and complaining. Why? God hates it, and you should hate it.

The Word of God says the whole congregation murmured and complained against Moses and Aaron. Exodus 16:8 says, "And Moses said, This shall be, when the LORD shall give you in the evening flesh to eat, and in the morning bread to the full; for that the LORD heareth your murmurings which ye murmur against him: and what are we? your murmurings are not against us, but against the LORD."

Are you in subjection to the Master? Can you feel the Potter, which is Jesus Christ, trying to mold your life and repeatedly trying to show you imperfections in your life that you should drive out? So many people blame God for not allowing them to do certain things, but who allowed them in their lives to begin with?

Going Through the Fire

We know that the potter has some decisions to make while shaping the clay. He could either finish it or reshape it or throw it away. I thank God that He did not discard me. You that are

saved should be thankful that He did not discard you. Isaiah 30:14 says, "And he shall break it as the breaking of the potters' vessel that is broken in pieces; he shall not spare: so that there shall not be found in the bursting of it a sherd to take fire from the hearth, or to take water withal out of the pit."

Do you want to be used of God in a greater way? The final stage in making a clay vessel is for the clay to be put in the fire. As saints of God, we are put in the fire every day. As we go through this Christian life, we will be placed in fiery situations. In order for the fire to seal the vessel the way it should be, all impurities have to go. What are you going to do? Are you going to be placed in the fire? Will you come out a finished product or a cracked vessel because you resisted God? Only the Spirit of God knows what you have in reserve that is preventing you from being a true vessel for Him. I found a poem that I want you to read. It is entitled "A Vessel of God" by M. S. Lowndes. It reads:

*Shaping and moulding,
Is the potter with the clay
That is how God is with us
When we let Him have His way.*

*Let God shape your life
Into a vessel for His use,
So He can fill and send you forth
To a world void of truth.*

*So yield unto the Master's hand
As He works within your life,
Making you so lovingly
To reflect the image of Christ.*

How is it with your soul? Do you want to be used of God in a greater way or do you want to hold on to imperfections in your life that are hindering you in your walk with God?

(Compact Disc TR-1146)

Psalm 71:1 In thee, O LORD, do I put my trust: let me never be put to confusion.

A State of Confusion



Brother Prince Moon

The Remedy for Confusion

Much of our society and the government seems to be in a state of confusion today. When I was a teenager, if someone was caught with a bag of marijuana, he got many years in prison for that. Now the recreational use of marijuana is legal in several states. For those who may not know, marijuana is known as a stairstep drug. This means that users often start there and end up

using more potent drugs. Young person, do not even start it. Please do not bring that into your life, because it will bring confusion to your mind after awhile.

When I was a young man, abortion was illegal, and now it is legal. Statistics indicate that abortion clinics are in every state. Things have changed, have they not? As time goes on, people get deeper into this confused state in America. Our legal system has changed too. There was a time

when you could get a lawyer and go to court, and justice would prevail, but things have changed now. Do you know what has changed it? The almighty dollar has taken over for the most part.

The word *confusion* simply means to lose clearness of mind, and that brings frustration. The latter end of that is ruin, and it is common. Often we face issues that come upon our children, our friends, and our families. The devil will push you further than

you want to go. I want to stay peaceful, do you? The Bible tells us in Isaiah 26:3, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee." Dear one, this confused state is trying to permeate every area of people's lives. Many are pulled this way and that way, and some people feel so frustrated that they are almost ready to pull their hair out in some cases. The government is confused, and our court system is confused. People need God.

Matthew 17:1-4 reads: "And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias."

Friend, confusion may knock on your door more times than not with family issues, neighbor issues, church issues, or relationship issues. Problems seem to be on every corner, but I found this out: if confusion comes, no matter if it is a mental state, a physical problem, or a geographical issue, the remedy for confusion is to hear from Almighty God. God has a way of clearing things up. It can seem so confusing that things do not make sense, but God can clear that up in a second of time.

Hearing From God

You need to hear from God on a personal basis. You need clarity regarding family issues, work issues, and so on. Many conditions will cloud your mind, confuse you, and frustrate you.

When you are frustrated, you want to do something, and that is where problems occur. However, God is good, and He will let you know exactly what to do.

Deuteronomy 8:3 tells us that "man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live." When God talks to you, it changes your life, it affects your faith, it affects your spiritual vision, and it affects your inspiration. Nothing is more refreshing and more beautiful than to hear from God. He loves you, and He has a word for each of us. Praise the Lord! It is wonderful to know that God is going to take care of me, to know that He knows what I am going through, to know that He cares about me, and to know that He is going to take time to talk to me. I thank God for that! That is a blessing!

Hearing from God is good, and we all need that. If you have not heard from Him, I trust that you will say, "Lord, I want to hear from You." He will change your life for the better. He will guide you and show you how to change. The Bible says in Psalm 32:8, "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye." You cannot go wrong like that. Hearing from God is wonderful!

Peter was excited about the Gospel and his new life. He wanted to build three churches: one for Jesus, one for Elias, and one for Moses. Peter said, "Lord, it is good for us to be here" (Matthew 17:4). What happened? A cloud came down, and he heard from God. God said, "This is my beloved Son . . . hear ye him" (Matthew 17:5). You need to hear Him. The same God that spoke to Peter will speak to you even today. Matthew 17:8 reads, "They saw no man, save Jesus only." I want you to notice that the confusion was gone.

You need to know what to do, how to do things, and when to do them. I have known people to do the right thing at the wrong time, and it was disastrous. Some do the right thing at the right time, but in the wrong way. For example, suppose there is a fly on my brother's head. So I decide to remove it with a brick because he does not want a fly on his head, so I knock it off with the brick. The fly would be gone, but my brother would also be gone. The motive was right and at the right time, but in the wrong way. Some people hurt others by trying to do the right thing in the wrong way, and then they end up asking: "What is wrong? What happened?" It was the right thing to do at the right time, but it was done in the wrong way. Only God knows how much a person can take, when to take it, and how to go about it.

The husband and the wife in the home need to be careful. Men and women are very different. First Peter 3:7 says the husband is to take care of the wife because she is the weaker vessel, but he has to know how to do that, when to do that, and how to do that in the right way. It takes God to guide us and direct us, because He knows the way that we should take. He knows where we are going and where we need to go. Hearing from God is wonderful, rapturous, exciting, and inspiring, especially for your faith. Peter wanted to build three churches, and he was excited about it and ready to get to work on it, but God said, "Hear ye him."

Seeking God's Guidance

Another example that I call a "cousin" to confusion is frustration. Frustration can cause you to be hasty and to show a lack of wisdom. A lot can happen because of frustration. When pushing through frustration,

something has to happen. Suppose my boss was to say, "Prince, I want you to make it happen!" and I said, "I don't want to do that." I would have to be careful with that because it might happen the wrong way, and I would be left in a bad situation. Do you see how that could bring a lot of frustration?

Galatians 1:15-18 states: "But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days."

Paul was at the apex of his ministry, and he was doing a wonderful work, but in essence, he said: "I love the brethren's fellowship, but I have to hear from God because my life depends on it. I went to Rome and Corinth, so I have to be sure about this thing if I am going to Arabia. I am going to burn some midnight oil and get hold of God to find out what I need to know."

Friend, possibly you have some things in your life that you need answers for. They are not sinful things, but you have to know what to do because you can sense that if you choose the wrong way, it will be disastrous. You want to do right, and you sense that, and you are at a crossroad, so you are wondering: "Should I or should I not? One person says this and another says that." Dear one, hear Him. God knows all about those tears that you have cried. When your heart is breaking into a thousand pieces, God knows. God knows about those pains that you suffer at night. God knows when you have been misrepresented and

falsely accused. When God responds to your prayers, He might say no or He might say wait. Have you ever had to wait? At times, it is necessary, but it is not easy to wait. Psalm 27:14 reads, "Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD." When the Lord speaks to you, that is going to change you so much.

I was in northern Alaska some years ago and went to work with the natives there. We went on a tour that was about a two-hour ride. I was worn out and did not want to go, but the fellows said, "You have to go with us," so I went. One man said, "There is a fountain up there coming out of the mountain." That water was rejuvenating. It was pure water from the mountain. I had never had that before, and I could just feel the energy quicken my body. When you hear from God, it ought to be an energy going through your body that adds confidence, boldness, strength, and guidance, all in one. That is how God works, and He wants to work in you. You may not sense it, but God wants to say: "I will handle this. I will do it for you, and it will be all right." It is so good to hear from God.

Confusion Causes Frustration

In Habakkuk, Chapter 2, you can read that pressure was coming in Habakkuk's life. Israel was in bondage, issues were momentous on every hand, and Habakkuk could feel the pressure. In Habakkuk 2:1 he said, "I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved [or corrected]." Friend, perhaps something is causing you to have agitation or causing a tightness in your spirit

that might be causing you frustration. The devil has a plan with that, and his plan is to bring you to ruin.

When you are frustrated, it is like the ancient city of Jericho was just before the walls fell: nothing goes out and nothing comes in. It encompasses your emotions, your ideas, your Bible studies, and your church activities. It is very encompassing when you are frustrated. It might not be a bad spirit, but it is the idea of being sucked in by this situation. The issue is hearing from God. He will clear it up. If the problem is in your home, on the job, or wherever it might be, God has an answer for you. You can start by praying about it.

You can read in Matthew, Chapter 14, about the disciples being in a storm, and they saw Christ walking on the sea. They were unsure and troubled, saying, "It is a spirit," and they cried out for fear. Jesus said, "Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid" (Matthew 14:27).

Maybe some winds are blowing on your spiritual life, but God can make it peaceful, calm, and restful, and He can start now. Some have continued in frustration, and they feed on it. They use it as a modality to get things done. They say, "I work better under pressure." Friend, pressure can produce alcoholism and drug addiction. We work better when we have God guiding us, not from being under pressure from the devil. So you can choose to maintain the frustration, but that frustration does not feel good. It does not feel like God. Whenever you are pushed hard enough, something else may occur. Peter was pressured in the garden. The enemies were there, so he was under pressure and grabbed his sword and looked to smite someone.

Again, the Prophet Habakkuk said, "I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the

tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved" (Habakkuk 2:1).

God's Direction Is Accurate

I want to tell you a short story about a little boy who was quietly sitting on his porch, looking off into the darkness. Large billowing clouds were in the sky. A visitor approached the house and asked what he was doing, and he said, "I'm just thinking about my kite." The man looked off in the same direction and said, "I'm sorry, did the wind carry it away, because I cannot see the kite?" The little boy said, "No, it's still up there." The man asked curiously, "How do you know it is still there?" "Oh, that's easy," said the boy, "every now and then I get a little tug."

There are times when you need to feel a tug on the line. You need to talk to God. Sometimes it helps just to know that He knows, to know that He is still there, and to know that He loves you. Sometimes you need a tug to make sure that you are going in the right direction.

A football player was a center on the line, and it is a dream for a player to recover a fumble and make a touchdown. His day came. The ball was fumbled, so he got it and ran. His teammates called out, "Wait a minute!" What happened? He was running toward the wrong goal. He was so embarrassed that he just gave it up. Many are running and running, but they are going the

wrong way.

God is accurate every time. Whatever your status is in life, God knows, and He is able to deliver you. Now is the time to take advantage of this prayer and say: "Lord, I want You to know that I am listening for You. I want to take the next step."

When I got saved, I wanted to find out whether or not I was to be married. I said, "Lord, You decide; it is very important." I went on a five-day fast, and God actually let me know what He wanted me to do. I met a lady at church for about ten minutes with a chaperone and went home on a five-day fast. I called the young lady, who was really a stranger to me, and said, "Sister, it is God's will that you and I marry." She said, "Yes, I agree to this too." We were married five months later. God let me know that she was the one for me.

Revelation 1:9 shows you that John was under pressure. The kings were rampant to kill the saints, and they sent John to the island of Patmos. John wrote in Revelation 1:10, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet." John saw God on His throne lifted up, and that made it all right because he had heard from God. If God says it, it is done. Praise the Lord!

Maybe you heard from God years ago. Do you want to hear from Him again? Surely you do. You need to begin the process of hearing His sweet voice. It is not always in the rocks or in the hard winds. Many times He speaks in

a still, small voice. He knows your frame. He knows that you are but dust, but still He loves you. Dad, God still loves you. Mom, God still loves you. Grandfather and Grandmother, God loves you. He wants to communicate with you. A good father and a good mother want to communicate with God and with their children. God wants to communicate with you, friend. He knows that you need help.

Job said in Job 23:8, "Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him." In verse 10 Job said, "But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." Then in Job, Chapter 40, you can read that a whirlwind came and changed his life again.

Friend, if you would like to hear from God, now is the time. It is a privilege to be able to perceive and hear His voice. He is so busy, yet He has time for you and me. You might need that tug. He has that too. If you cannot hear Him, you might go off a precipice or the wrong direction, because the world is full of voices and influences, but God knows. Maybe you have heard two or three voices and you are not sure which voice is the Lord's. You need to pray: "Lord, I have heard two or three different voices, and I am not sure which one is Yours. Let me hear, without a doubt, Your voice."

(Compact Disc TR-2202)

*His heart cannot be pure
whose tongue is not clean.*

Prayer Transforms Life

We can learn many beautiful lessons about prayer from the account of the transfiguration of Jesus. Luke 9:28 reads, "It came to pass about an eight days after these sayings, he took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray." Many difficulties confront one who would enter the deeply devotional life. It is not easy and the ascent is steep and rugged. It takes perseverance, but it pays.

As we think of the "mount of prayer," there comes before our mind's vision the thought of altitude, loftiness, nearness to God and Heaven. The psalmist said, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the LORD" (Psalm 121:1-2). The psalmist said he would not fix his eyes on any low objects surrounding him but on the mountain heights. To live in the spirit of prayer is to live in the heights. Prayer brings Heaven near. It was on the Mount of Transfiguration that Moses and Elias appeared to Jesus and His disciples, and the voice from Heaven was heard. The way to the "mount" is on the wings of prayer. "They shall mount up with wings of eagles" (Isaiah 40:31).

The "mountain" speaks of clarified vision, of being away from the fog and mist that hug the lowlands. "Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off" (Isaiah 33:17). On the mount of prayer is the land of far distances. Here we get a vision of the heavenly land and the King in His beauty. Prayer gives us the proper perspective. We see things in Heaven's light and with eternity's values in view.

"Jesus . . . leadeth them up into an high mountain apart by themselves: and he was transfigured before them" (Mark 9:2). He is our example in prayer.

When we think of the prayer life of Jesus, we think of His prayers for renewed strength when facing imminent crises, His prayers of interces-

sion on behalf of others, and His prayers of thanksgiving. The prayers of Jesus went straight to the heart of God from the very depths of His soul.

We need divine guidance in this matter of prayer. Jesus takes us by the hand, so to speak, and leads us apart. When the prompting to prayer comes, it is His leading. May we heed the call!

The devotional life is a life apart from the busy world. There should be definite seasons and a definite place for prayer. It is in the accustomed place of prayer that all the holy influences of past blessings received there come to meet us.

There is need for more "closet religion." In Matthew 6:6 Jesus said, "Enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray." There is too much religious work without prayer. Like Mary, we need to choose the better part—at Jesus' feet.

Today the difficulty is to get people apart from the world. We cannot always get away from the busy throng, but even in the midst of the crowd, we may be closeted with God in our hearts and have a secret place of communion with Him. We must take time, however, to be alone with God. Then, we must be quiet so that we can listen.

The clock bell of St. Paul's in London can scarcely be heard during the day because of the traffic in the busy streets, but in the night its chimes peal far out over the city. A friend of mine in the Cayman Islands thought he heard the throbbing engines of a steamer coming into port one day. He went to the wharf where a crowd had congregated, and there amidst the confusion, he concluded he had been mistaken in his impression. When he went a distance, he again heard the throbbing of the engines. We must be still to hear the voice of God, for it is a "still small voice."

When we are alone there is perfect freedom of confession and communion with God. When in the presence of others, we naturally put on company manners, but when we are alone we can be ourselves. We read

in Hebrews 4:13, "All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." It is because of the fact that He knows us altogether that He invites us to "come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:16).

Jesus did not go up into the mountain to be transfigured, but to pray, and as He prayed, His clothing and countenance were transfigured. Prayer transfigures life and changes even the common things of everyday life.

Prayer enables us to see Jesus in a new light. On the Mount of Transfiguration, the disciples had a vision of Christ's essential glory, which shone through His humanity for the moment. As we draw near to Christ in prayer, He is revealed as the supreme lawgiver of the church. "This is my beloved Son: hear him" (Luke 9:35). Moses gave the Law at Sinai. We are no longer under Moses or the thunderings of the Law. Today the Gospel of Christ is flaming forth in brilliance from spiritual Mount Zion. God now speaks to us by His Son. Hear Him!

As we pray, the atoning work of Christ is made very real and precious to us. The death of Christ is the central fact of history and the theme of contemplation and conversation of the ransomed spirits of the heavenly world.

On the mount of prayer and transfiguration, a revelation was given the disciples of the power and coming of the Lord Jesus. The transcendent light of Jesus' person at the transfiguration was but a prevision of the brightness of His presence when He comes again in the glory of His Father with all His holy angels.

Prayer prepares us for the world's need and work. The place of prayer is the place of blessing. It is in the place of prayer that we find grace and power and strength. It is here that we find grace to meet the problems of life.

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December 27-30

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July 20-26

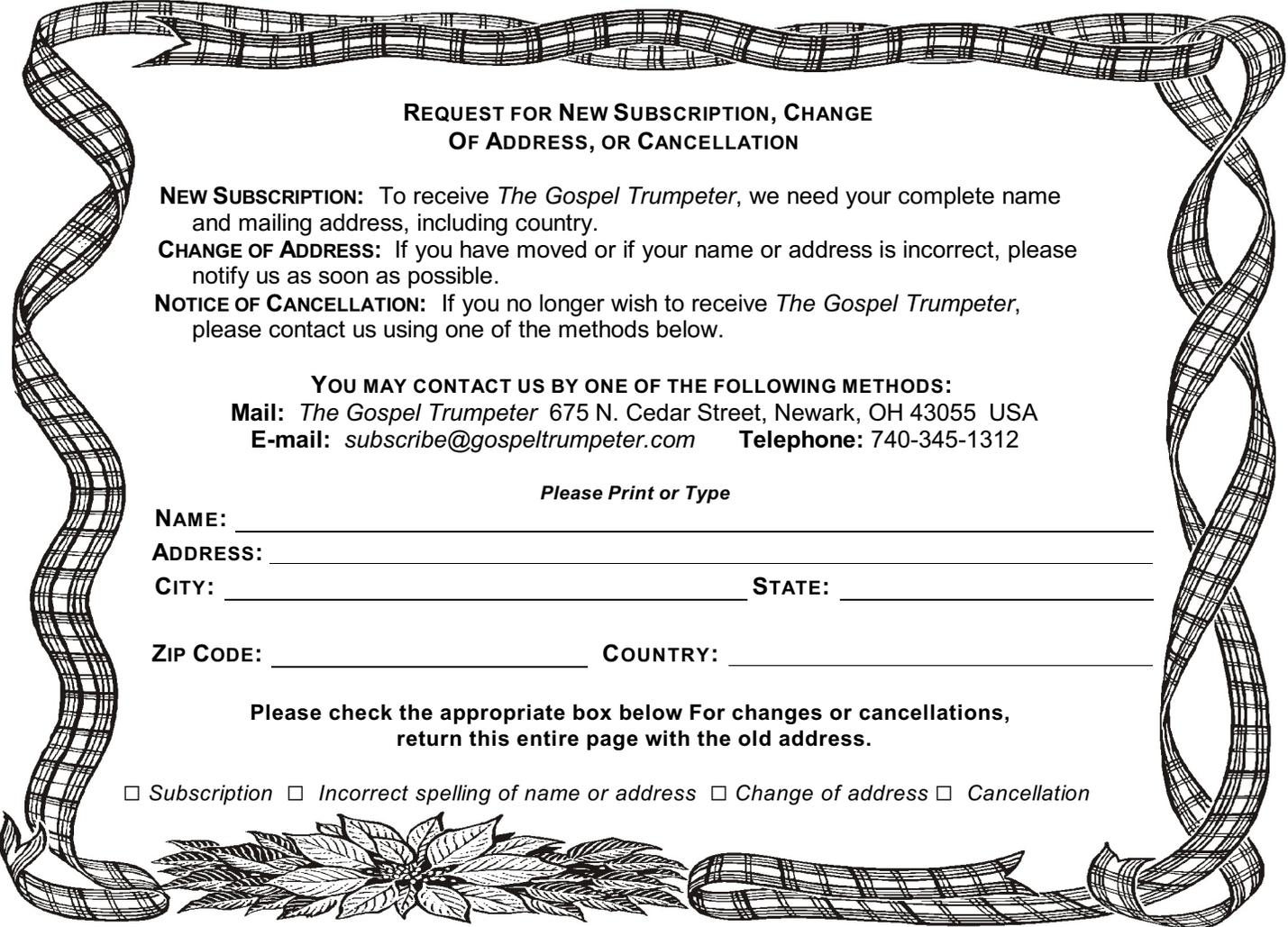
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