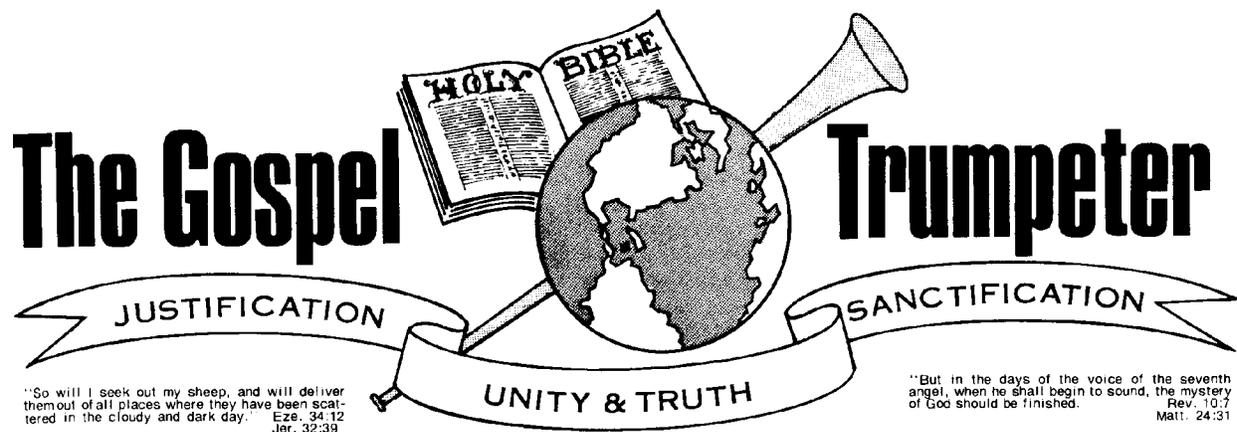


# The Gospel Trumpeter



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. 50 May 2020 No. 5



Church of God Tabernacle in Newark, Ohio

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

***Psalm 122:1***

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

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# 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.

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

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### 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 May 2020 No. 5

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*"Moreover it is required in  
stewards, that a man be found faith-  
ful."*

1 Corinthians 4:2

### FAITHFULNESS

Here the Apostle Paul addressed the ministers of Christ. He reminded the brethren that they, as well as he, were the stewards of the mysteries of God. They were the ambassadors of Christ, and they were to rightly represent the cause of Christ. Paul stressed that great trust and spiritual responsibility had been placed upon each of them. This honorable position given to them was not to be taken lightly. In Acts 20:28 he let them know that, as ministers of the Gospel, they were to take heed to themselves, first of all, and to the flock of God.

Paul went on to encourage the brethren by saying that they were to be faithful to their calling as stewards, diligently upholding the sacred Truths that had been entrusted to them. He cautioned them to keep their reputations clean and holy before God and man and to be careful to guard against rash judgment, pride, and self-conceit. In his exhortation he also warned them to avoid unhealthy relationships that could ruin their ministry. He also cautioned them to be faithful to watch over the flock of God.

The admonition that the Apostle Paul shared with his ministerial brethren had many good attributes to be considered and heeded. However, his coun-

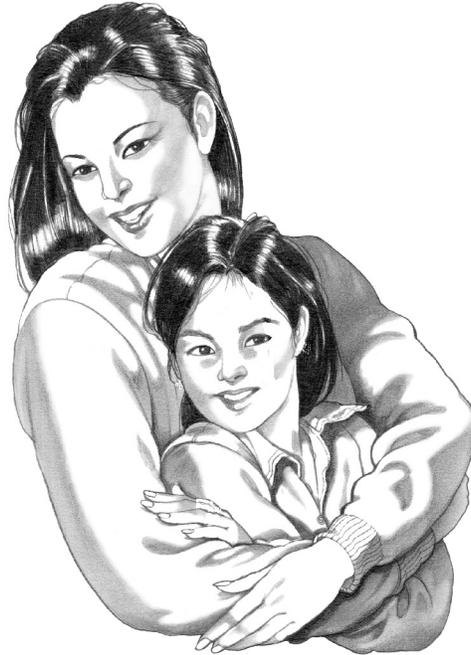
sel not only belongs to the ministry but also extends to the laity. Every individual that has received Christ's free gift of salvation has been made partakers of the mysteries of God. Therefore, as Paul exhorted ministers to be faithful to their calling, he also exhorted the Christian to be faithful in his living. It is the duty of every saint to live and conduct himself in a manner that glorifies and edifies God and His church. As a child of God, you are to live a faithful, consecrated life before the Lord and the world. Too often people get the idea that what they do does not matter to others. This thought is grossly incorrect.

When Paul spoke the words, "Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men" (2 Corinthians 3:2), he was saying that the Christian's life is like an open book that is written and read by all men. It is through the deeds and the acts of life that the Christian manifests his faithfulness to the Lord. It is so important that he lives a righteous life so that others watching can see Christ. In John 12:32 Jesus was letting you know that the Christian is to lift Him up, and he does that by being a godly example. In so doing, Christ will then draw all men to Himself. However, if you claim to be a Christian and live an unfaithful life, people will see a distorted picture of Christianity.

Faithfulness is a very important matter. A faithful individual is careful of the things he

[continued on page 22]

# A Mother's Influence



*Brother Roger L. Decker*

## A Tribute to Mothers

As I thought of mothers, I thought of some quotes that mothers used to say. Here are a few examples: "If you fall out of that tree and break both of your legs, don't come running to me." My mother taught me all about prayer: "You had better pray that stain comes out of the carpet." My mother taught me about the weather: "It looks as if a tornado swept through your room." My mother taught me to think ahead: "If you don't pass your spelling test, you'll never get a good job."

Other sayings include these: "Do you think I'm made of money?" "Go outside and play; it's a beautiful day." "Go to your room and think about what you did." "I said close the door; I didn't say slam it." "I never

would have talked to my mother that way." "If I want your opinion, I'll ask for it." "I will treat you like an adult when you start acting like one." Do any of those sayings sound familiar to you? They certainly do to me.

On May 8, 1914, President Woodrow Wilson signed a joint resolution designating the second Sunday in May as Mother's Day. Therefore, once a year, we set aside a day to honor mothers. Mother's Day is celebrated in the following countries: the United States, the United Kingdom, New Zealand, the Philippines, Denmark, Finland, Turkey, Italy, Australia, India, Mexico, Canada, China, Japan, South Africa, Belgium, and most European countries. In England, when this special day was first introduced, it was called Mothering Sunday.

Next to Jesus, the word *mother* is one of the most sacred of all. Some have mothers who have passed away. Undoubtedly, you can think back on the times that you have had with your mother. Perhaps you can recall some of the sayings that she said and some of the things that she used to do. Mother's Day is a good day to remember things about your mother. It is wonderful to stop long enough in your hurried life to pay tribute to mothers at least one day of the year.

Most notable men owe their success in life to their mothers. John Quincy Adams said, "All that I am, my mother made me." Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "Men are what their mothers made them." George Herbert Palmer said, "One good mother is worth a hundred school masters."

## **A Mother's Greatest Work**

Let us look at some Scriptures pertaining to mothers. Proverbs 6:20-22 states: "My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother: Bind them continually upon thine heart, and tie them about thy neck. When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee." What was the writer saying? Always remember your parents' words, and let them be as though they are tied about your neck. The law of obedience shall give safety to your children whether they are asleep or awake. We know today there is a tremendous need for godly mothers.

You can read in the Bible, especially in the Old Testament, that within a woman is the desire to be a mother, especially to bring forth a man child. No nation is stronger than the homes that compose it, and no home is stronger than the mother who guides it. In order to destroy nations, Satan strikes his hardest blows at the home. The devil likes to work between a husband and a wife. He especially likes to work on a child of God. One has well said, "The church and the world need men, but I say they need real mothers more, for mothers make real men."

When I speak of a real mother, I am not talking about a woman who takes her children to a day care center just to be rid of them or who goes out to pursue a career. Although sometimes it might be needful for a mother to work outside the home, it should not be a way of life. There is no greater career than being a mother. I have often told sisters, "If you have children, that is your little congregation." A mother is much like a pastor over her children. That is her little flock to raise. It does not stop when children get married and are

out of the home. It just adds grandchildren and great grandchildren.

The value of a real mother cannot be calculated or estimated in dollars and cents. A mother's greatest work and responsibility is her home and her family. Her greatest success lies in the results of her family. My mother was usually home when I got off the school bus, and she told me what chores I had to do, such as cleaning my room and other things, but she was there.

As our children were growing up, my wife was home when they arrived home from school. A mother should teach her children to fear and honor God, to honor God's Word, to read and study the Bible, and to pray. There is nothing like a praying mother.

A mother should also teach her children to work. I believe this is something that is lacking in our day and age. I worked, not because I wanted to, but because I had to. I would have rather played baseball or some other sport, but when the time came to put in hay, my dad changed my direction. I was taught to work, whether I wanted to work or not, and that is needful.

A mother should teach her children how to keep a clean house, how to make the beds, how to do the laundry, including how to sort and wash the clothes, as well as how to cook and bake. My wife taught each daughter to invite her fiance to our home and prepare a meal. My wife felt that a young man might as well find out how well his future wife could cook.

Our world is made up of different kinds of mothers. Some young mothers are too immature to be a mother, and others are lazy. Some women are dirty, wasteful, and neglectful mothers. On the other hand, some are tidy, clean, hard-working, and spiritual mothers.

The environment of mothers is not always the same. Some mothers are very poor, while others are rich. One can be poor and yet be clean. Just because someone is poor is no reason that person has to be unkempt. Some mothers have saved husbands, but others have unsaved husbands. Some mothers are mean and disagreeable, while others are sweet and understanding. Then there is the heartbroken mother who grieves that one or more of her children has gone astray.

## **The Importance of Godly Influences in the Home**

What type of mother is needed in the home? Homes need mothers who are solid, steadfast, and unwavering in the things of God. Godly mothers set the example of how a mother should live and act. It is in the home that the acid test of life is demonstrated. A mother needs to teach true faith and pure religion because she knows it pays off immensely.

Some great examples of godly influences in the home are recorded in God's Word. The Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy in 2 Timothy 3:14-15: "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."

Paul's admonition to Timothy was to continue in the things that he had learned and the things that he had been assured of. Timothy had been taught those truths as a child, and he had been confirmed in them by the instructions of the Apostle Paul. Amidst the errors and seductions of false teachers, Paul exhorted Timothy to hold fast to those doctrines, no

matter who might oppose him or what the consequences might be. From where did Timothy learn those things? He was taught them as a child in the home.

A godly mother does not just send her children to Sunday school, but she takes them. Timothy was taught those things as a child, and those teachings paid off in his adult life. He was a very good pastor and teacher, and he was steadfast. He held firmly to the things that he was taught in the home.

In those days a child stayed a child until around thirteen years of age. A Jewish boy entered manhood at the age of thirteen. Timothy was taught Scriptures at a very young age. Again, Paul wrote to Timothy in 2 Timothy 3:15, "And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures." The seed of the Gospel was planted in Timothy's heart when he was a child.

If you have young children, now is the time to teach them. It thrills me to hear children recite verses of Scripture, the Ten Commandments, or even a whole chapter of the Bible. That is outstanding. Why? Those Scriptures are able to make them wise and to keep them from many dangers as they grow older.

Paul stated in 2 Timothy 1:5, "When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also." The Amplified Bible of this verse reads, "I am calling up memories of your sincere and unqualified faith (the leaning of your entire personality on God in Christ in absolute trust and confidence in His power, wisdom, and goodness), [a faith] that first lived permanently in [the heart of] your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am [fully] persuaded, [dwells] in you also." Timothy was a product of being raised in a godly home,

and he had the right teachings from a young child.

### **The Mother of Samuel**

In the Old Testament, you can read about a mother who stands above a lot of mothers in the Old Testament. Her name was Hannah. She was the mother of Samuel, one of the greatest high priests in the Old Testament. The Bible tells us that Hannah was barren. She was married to Elkanah. He had two wives, Hannah and Peninnah. When Elkanah and his two wives went up to Shiloh for the yearly sacrifice, Hannah was in bitterness of soul because she had no children. Peninnah would say things to upset Hannah and make her feel badly because she was barren. When Eli saw Hannah, he thought she had been drinking because she was so carried away in the depths of her prayer.

In 1 Samuel 1:10-28 you can read Hannah's prayer: "And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the LORD, and wept sore. And she vowed a vow, and said, O LORD of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the LORD all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head.

"And it came to pass, as she continued praying before the LORD, that Eli marked her mouth [or saw her lips moving]. Now Hannah, she spake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard: therefore Eli thought she had been drunken. And Eli said unto her, How long wilt thou be drunken? put away thy wine from thee. And Hannah answered and said, No, my lord, I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit: I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have

poured out my soul before the LORD. Count not thine handmaid for a daughter of Belial: for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief have I spoken hitherto.

"Then Eli answered and said, Go in peace: and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of him. And she said, Let thine handmaid find grace in thy sight. So the woman went her way, and did eat, and her countenance was no more sad. And they rose up in the morning early, and worshipped before the LORD, and returned, and came to their house to Ramah: and Elkanah knew Hannah his wife; and the LORD remembered her. Wherefore it came to pass, when the time was come about after Hannah had conceived, that she bare a son, and called his name Samuel, saying, Because I have asked him of the LORD.

"And the man Elkanah, and all his house, went up to offer unto the LORD the yearly sacrifice, and his vow. But Hannah went not up; for she said unto her husband, I will not go up until the child be weaned, and then I will bring him, that he may appear before the LORD, and there abide for ever. And Elkanah her husband said unto her, Do what seemeth thee good; tarry until thou have weaned him; only the LORD establish his word. So the woman abode, and gave her son suck until she weaned him. And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, with three bullocks, and one ephah of flour, and a bottle of wine, and brought him unto the house of the LORD in Shiloh: and the child was young.

"And they slew a bullock, and brought the child to Eli. And she said, Oh my lord, as thy soul liveth, my lord, I am the woman that stood by thee here, praying unto the LORD. For this child I prayed; and the LORD hath given me my petition which I asked of

him: Therefore also I have lent him to the LORD; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the LORD. And he worshipped the LORD there." Hannah vowed to the LORD that if He would grant her petition, she would give her son to the work of God. She kept her vow.

### **A Mother's Love**

We read in John 19:26-27: "When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home." The fact that Mary was the mother of Jesus would secure the kindness of John. Since she was entrusted to John, it demanded of John affectionate regard and tender care for Jesus' mother from that hour. Tradition says that she continued to live with John in Judea until the time of her death, which occurred about fifteen years after the death of Jesus Christ.

I can remember that I often played my mother against my father. I am sure that young people do the very same thing yet today. I would go to my dad and ask, "Dad, can I have money to go to the dance tonight?"

He would say, "No, you're too young."

I did not give up. I went to my mother and said: "Mom, Dad said he did not have enough money for me to go to the dance. Do you have a dollar so that I can get into the dance tonight?"

"Well, didn't your dad have a dollar?"

I said, "No, he doesn't seem to have any money."

"Okay, but I cannot do this every week now." Then she would give me a dollar.

A mother's influence can be good or bad. She is like a spring of water that affects the whole

family. She can teach her children the things of God or she can refrain from that and give them everything they want and let them grow up to be infidels. She should be there to teach them Bible stories and teach them how to talk to God. It takes a lot of work to raise children, especially in this day and time.

A lot of things will oppose you in raising children. One thing that will work against you is a lack of discipline. When I was being raised, we were not bothered with a lack of discipline. In fact, the principal of the school did his share of discipline, but today it is like the child has the say when it comes to the things that Mom and Dad should be able to do.

There are a lot of distractions today. A mother has the opportunity to take the children to church, to send them, or to let them sleep in. A mother ought to take them with her to church. A mother ought to teach her children to be polite, to respect the house of God, to respect the elderly, and to respect their elders.

A little baby is drawn to his mother. It was the mother who felt the first pulse of the child. The mother is the first to greet the new life of the child, and she would be the last one to leave him at death. The mother of Jesus had to endure the criticism against her son. She stood by Him while He died on the Cross between two criminals. She had to listen as He was disrespected, shamed, and died.

### **Susanna Wesley's Challenging Life**

If you have never read about Susanna Wesley, you should read about her. What an inspiration! Several websites talk about her. She was married to a preacher named Samuel Wesley. They had nineteen children, but nine of them died as infants. John and

Charles Wesley were two of her sons. Behind the door of her home, hopeless conditions were the normal. She married a man who could not manage money.

Sometimes her husband left her to raise the children alone for long periods of time while he went off and preached. One time he left her over a minor dispute for more than a year. One of her children was crippled. Another one could not talk until he was nearly six years of age, and Susanna was sick most of her life.

There was little or no money for food or anything else, and debt plagued them. Her husband spent time in a debtor's prison twice because their debt was so high, and that doubled their hardship. Twice the home they lived in was burned to the ground, causing them to lose everything they owned. It was assumed that their church members did it because they were angry about what Samuel Wesley preached when he was in the pulpit.

The family suffered persecution. Once someone slit their cow's udder so they could not get milk. Others killed their dog and burned their flax field. When Susanna was young, she promised the Lord that for every hour she spent in entertainment, she would give as much time to Him in prayer and in the Word of God. Taking care of the house and raising so many children made this commitment almost impossible to fulfill. She had no time for entertainment or long hours in prayer. She worked the gardens, milked the cow, schooled the children, and managed the entire house by herself. Instead she decided to give the Lord two hours a day in prayer and Bible study, but she struggled to find a secret place to get away from her children.

How was she going to spend two hours with God when her children always needed her for

something? She told her children that when they saw her with her apron over her head, that meant she was in prayer and could not be disturbed unless it was a dire emergency. She was devoted to her walk with Christ and prayed for her husband and children. She wanted knowledge in the Word no matter how much difficultly she had to endure to get it.

Susanna Wesley laid down some rules in her home. This would be a tough one today: eating between meals was not allowed. As children, they were to be in bed by 8:00 p.m. They were taught to subdue self. She believed in breaking the will in a child and teaching a child to pray as soon as that child could speak. When the only words coming out of the child's mouth were "Dada" or "Mama," she taught them to pray. She required all the children to be quiet during family worship.

### A Disciplined Life

Susanna Wesley determined not to give her children anything that they cried for and to only give them that which they asked for politely. To prevent lying, she punished no fault that was first confessed and repented of, but she never allowed a sinful act to go unpunished. She never punished a child twice for a single offense. She commended and rewarded good behavior. She said any attempt to please, even if poorly performed, should be commended. She taught the children to preserve property rights, even in the smallest matters. She taught the children to strictly observe all promises made. She required no daughter to work before she could read well. She taught the children to fear the rod of correction.

Regarding discipline, Susanna Wesley believed that for a child to grow into a self-disciplined adult, he or she must

first be a parent-disciplined child. To her, the stubborn flesh was the hardest battle for Christians to fight, and she said godly parents would do well to equip their children to overcome it very early. She wrote that when the will of a child is totally subdued and is brought to revere and stand in awe of the parents, that a great many childish follies may be passed by. She said she insisted on the conquering of the will of children many times because this is the only strong and rational foundation of a religious education. She said that when this is thoroughly done, then the child is capable of being governed by reason and piety.

Susanna Wesley had some thoughts about sin. She wrote to John quite often, and she wrote this to him regarding sin: "Whatever weakens your reason, impairs the tenderness of your conscience, obscures your sense of God, takes off your relish for spiritual things, whatever increases the authority of the body over the mind, that thing is sin to you, however innocent it may seem in itself." She also wrote: "How would you judge the lawfulness or unlawfulness of 'pleasure?' Use this rule: Whatever weakens your reason, impairs the tenderness of your conscience, obscures your sight of God, takes from you your thirst for spiritual things or increases the authority of your body over your mind, then that thing to you is evil. By this test you may detect evil no matter how subtly or how plausibly temptation may be presented to you."

As the end drew near for Susanna Wesley, her family gathered around her, and she instructed them, "Children, as soon as I am released, sing a psalm of praise to God." She passed away July 23, 1742, at seventy-three years of age.

Certainly we are not in the days of Susanna Wesley, but we

are in the days of the same God. He will reward the same effort put forth to have Him first in the home and to honor Him continually.

To me, a mother should be honored every day. You ought to really appreciate your mother. If your mother has passed away, how many times have you thought about how you would like to call her on the phone? I just liked to call and talk to my mother, not about anything special, but just to hear her talk. After your mother has passed away, it will be too late to talk to her. Every day should be Mother's Day. Even if your mother is the worst sinner in the world, she is still your mother, and she is the only mother you will ever have.

The poem entitled "Only One Mother" by George Cooper reads:

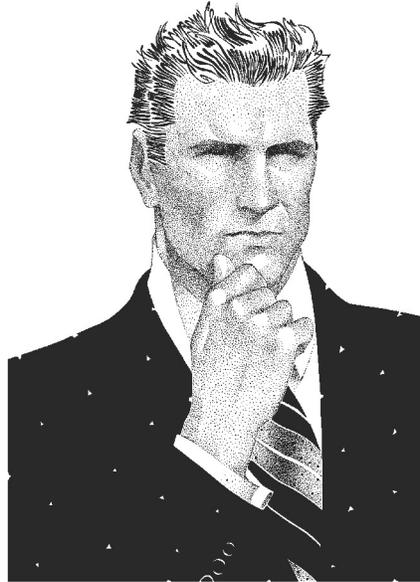
*Hundreds of stars in the pretty sky,  
Hundreds of shells on the shore  
together,  
Hundreds of birds that go singing  
by.  
Hundreds of lambs in the sunny  
weather.*

*Hundreds of dewdrops to greet the  
dawn,  
Hundreds of bees in the purple  
clover,  
Hundreds of butterflies on the  
lawn,  
But only one mother the wide  
world over.*

(Compact Disc TR-2260)

**DAILY  
PRAYERS  
LESSEN  
DAILY  
CARES**

1 Timothy 6:6 But godliness with contentment is great gain.  
7 For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.  
8 And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.



# Are You Content in Jesus?

*Brother Abraham Burton*

## **Material Things Cannot Satisfy**

"Buy the truth, and sell it not" (Proverbs 23:23), and let the devil know that it is not for sale. My stand for God is not for sale, and my salvation is not for sale.

The first and third verses of a song entitled "Satisfied in Jesus" read:

*I am satisfied in Jesus,  
What a sweet soul-rest I feel!  
When life's greatest burdens press me,  
He doth all my sorrows heal.*

*I am satisfied completely,  
In His love supremely blest,  
Since His arms are underneath me,  
Soul and body are at rest.*

Are you satisfied in Jesus?  
Are you content? You cannot

measure satisfaction in Jesus by the things that you possess, because in Luke 12:15 Jesus said, "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." If you are making that mistake, I want to help you, because material things cannot satisfy you. So many people have tried that. Rich people and celebrities get on their jets and fly all over the world and eat exotic foods, and then some of them end up killing themselves. Does that sound as if they are satisfied? I thank God there is contentment in Jesus!

Godliness with contentment is a great advantage. As a Christian, you have a great advantage because you are holy and you belong to Jesus. You walk in love and do His will. Jesus said in

John 15:7, "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." All you need is in Jesus. You do not need to go back into sin for anything. Sin cannot satisfy you. You were not contented in sin.

The Prophet Isaiah said in Isaiah 57:20-21: "But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." Some people may say, "If I just had peace of mind . . ." They are restless, hurting, and struggling to handle their lives and their problems, but they cannot do it. I recommend Jesus, because He can carry your load.

First Peter 5:7 says, "Casting all your care upon him; for he

careth for you." Praise God! I like that. When you cast your cares on Him, you should not still carry them. You can stay content if you give your cares to God and let them go. He said to cast them upon Him. You do not have to hold on to them anymore. You can give your cares to God. You need to believe God and have faith that He will do what you ask Him to do.

I am talking about godliness with contentment. You can stay content, stay godly, and stay spiritually minded in the midst of the troubles of life, in the midst of cares and burdens, and in the midst of sickness and pain. You can give God your cares because He cares for you. What a wonderful Savior! He loves you so much that He is willing to carry all your burdens and all your cares. I thank God for Jesus!

### "Things Which Are Not Seen"

Sometimes I am in so much pain, and all I can do is say: "Lord, just help me. I thank You for being saved." The devil cannot touch you unless God gives him permission. If it is His will for me to be in pain, my heart says amen to His will.

I thank God for Job. You can read about Him in the Old Testament. He was contented. He lost everything, but he said, "The LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD" (Job 1:21). Job's children were gone and his wealth was gone, but he blessed the name of the Lord.

Do you still have praise for God? Can you count it all joy when you fall into divers temptation? That is the test. It is easy to be happy and to have joy when things are going well, but when it is difficult, when there is a struggle, that is the time to praise God. Praise the Lord! God will work for those who praise Him. You need to praise the Lord, because

God inhabits praise. Every opportunity that I have, I use my mouth to praise God. I do it because He is good to me.

I thank God for being saved. I cannot do enough for Him. I am willing to do whatever I can for God, if I have to cross land and sea, because God has given so much to me. He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. Jesus *gave* His life. Men did not take it. He gave His life for you and for me so that we can live godly and be content in Him.

Hebrews 4:9 reads, "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God." You can rest in Him if you get saved. You will cease from your own works. It is a rest of faith. First Timothy 6:7 tells us, "For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out." Did you know that? You did not bring anything. Your Cadillac, you did not bring it here. The beautiful home you live in, you did not bring that here. You brought nothing into this world, and it is certain that you can carry nothing out with you when you leave this world.

Can you see that material things do not mean anything in the light of eternity? The Apostle Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 4:18, "For the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." The things which are unseen are the most important things. Having happiness, contentment, living a holy life before God, being faithful to God, and keeping God's favor is more important than anything else.

I thank God that I am content. I do not need to have an abundance of material things. I am not saying there is anything wrong with having them as long as you keep them in the proper perspective and as long as you do not get them in your heart, because

"where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matthew 6:21). Jesus is my treasure.

### God Knows What You Need

I purchased a new car a couple of years ago. When I got that new car, I drove it a long way because someone was sick. I do not care how many miles I put on that car. That car belongs to Jesus, and I am going to wear it out for Him. I am going to take care of it, value it, and appreciate it, but I plan to wear it out for Jesus. If God says to go, I am going.

Contentment will help you not to live above your means. It will help you to live with what you can afford. You should not try to keep up with the Joneses, so to speak. If you try to do that, you might not be able to sleep at night because you would be burdened down with bills. You need to trust God, and He will help you to know when to shop and when not to shop.

Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 6:8, "And having food and raiment let us be therewith content." God sees what you need, and He will supply all your needs "according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19). He wants to see if you will trust Him. Do you trust Him?

It is important to keep the right frame of mind and the right attitude in this salvation and not let the little foxes eat away at your experience with God and your love for God. The devil is vying for your love. He got to Job's wife, because she told Job to "curse God, and die" (Job 2:9). She allowed what she was facing to affect her relationship with God, and she tried to affect Job. You have to watch when people try to unload on you. In Job 2:10 you can read that Job said to his wife, "Thou speaketh as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at

the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?"

I believe Job's greatest trial was the enduring of his physical affliction and the lack of comfort from his friends. Instead of comfort, they brought accusations. He was in a battle, but God kept him, and he learned something through his trial. God wants to teach you something through your trial because He would not have you in it if there was not something for you to get out of it. You need to stop thinking that when you are in a test, someone is picking on you or taking you through something. Someone else is not taking you through something; God is. Jesus was led into the wilderness by the Spirit and tempted of the devil. The Spirit of God led Him to that temptation. When temptation comes, God's grace is sufficient to take you through if you believe Him and trust in Him.

In Matthew 6:25 Jesus said, "Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?" Though these are necessities, they should not take preeminence over your experience and your walk with God. You need to cast your cares upon the Lord. You need to ask God to give you faith to believe that He will supply your needs.

### **You Are Valuable to God**

God can help you. If you listen to some of the older saints, they can help you because they can tell you some of the things they have faced and how God brought them through. God can bring you through, young person. You may not always have an abundance of things. Paul said in Philippians, Chapter 4, that he knew how to abound and how to be abased. He said that he had

learned that whatever state he was in to be content. As God is flourishing and blessing you, do not forget to share and to give to others. When He is not flourishing you, you still need to praise Him, thank Him, and keep the right attitude, because life is not in material things; it is in Jesus.

In Matthew 6:26-30 Jesus said: "Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? [Are you not better than the birds? God takes care of them.] Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? [If you decide you want to handle or work out a problem by yourself, do you think you are going to affect the change? You are not. Some tests are not going to go until God says you are done. Can you settle it that if you never get this or that in your life, you are going to live for Jesus for the rest of your life? You need to settle it and be content with Jesus. You should get yourself wrapped up in serving God and seeking the Kingdom of God first. God is looking at your heart. What is more important? Where your heart is, that is where your treasure is. Remember, God is a jealous God, and He will not share first place in your life. You have to put God first.]

"And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?"

The grass is so beautiful and green in the spring until the summer heat comes and burns it up. If God can clothe the grass and make it so beautiful and green

and then tomorrow it is burned up, are you not more valuable than the grass? Do you see the power of God over nature? Look how beautiful the flowers are. You cannot duplicate them. If God can take care of the flowers, the birds, and the animal kingdom, are you not more valuable than they? Where is your faith? I believe that I am of more value than plants and animals, and I believe God is going to supply my needs.

### **Seek First the Kingdom of God**

During a time when I was out of work, a sister said, "Brother Abraham, I really want you to be at the cottage meeting because my brother is going to be there, and we have been witnessing to him." I did not know why she wanted me to be there, but I went, and her brother stood up and said, "You talk about living free from sin, but if a man loses his job, he will steal to feed his family." Everyone turned to me. I said, "Praise God, I have not stolen anything, and I do not have a job." Friend, you do not have to steal, lie, or cheat.

Salvation changes the heart. God puts a new desire in you to please Him. It is so strong in your heart that you do not want to do anything to displease Him because you love Him so much. His commandments are not grievous. As a Christian, you want to live right. You want to live holy despite your circumstances. Life is sometimes up and down. God has a salvation that will keep your faith consistent and stable. In 1 Corinthians 15:58 Paul said, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

Whether things are going well or not, God must be first. I thank God that I was able to tes-

tify: "I am still saved. I have not stolen, and I do not cheat." If a cashier should give me too much money at the store, I would take it back, because that would not be a blessing; it would be a mistake. I do not want anything that does not belong to me. I just want everything that God has for me.

Matthew 6:31-34 continues: "Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

Many people worry about tomorrow, wondering about how they are going to handle this or that. You are out of the will of God if you do that. God wants you to take care of today. Have you heard the song entitled "One Day at a Time"? The chorus reads: *"One day at a time sweet Jesus, That's all I'm asking from you. Just give me the strength To do every day what I have to do. Yesterday's gone sweet Jesus, And tomorrow may never be mine. Lord, help me today, show me the way, One day at a time."*

### **God Will Supply Your Daily Needs**

I tell new converts: "All you have to do is live saved one day at a time. Do not let the devil get your mind to wonder about what is going to happen. Just stay saved and take it one day at a time." You will be surprised how the days will pass, how you will gain strength and courage, and how your faith will grow. Do not let the devil cause your mind to

race.

Saint, you are supposed to trust God to supply your daily needs. In the Lord's Prayer, Jesus said, "Give us this day our daily bread" (Matthew 6:11). I want you to notice that He did not say, "Give us our bread for the week." Some struggle about tomorrow, but they may not even see it. Jesus said, "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof" (Matthew 6:34b). Why are you borrowing tomorrow's trouble? Why are you borrowing tomorrow's trial?

In learning contentment, God is teaching you how to allow your faith to increase and become more stable. He will help you to get rid of things that hinder you, such as greed, doubt, fear, and unbelief. God does not want you to be greedy or anxious. Sometimes you may want some things too quickly and get in a hurry. You had better be careful with that.

Often I quote the Scripture found in Philippians 4:6, because it is so true. It reads, "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." You should not be anxious for anything. You may say, "I want to be healed." God does not want you to be overly anxious about anything. Someone may say, "I want God to bless my children" or "I need a pay raise." God does not want you to be anxious about it. You need to settle that thing and say, "I am willing to wait on God." When God sees fit for you to have it, He will move. God's time is not your time. The wise man Solomon said in Ecclesiastes 3:1, "To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven." We each have to wait on God's time.

Are you praying about everything? There is no point in calling the pastor when you have not prayed. Sometimes I ask: "Have you prayed? Have you sought

God? What is He telling you?" I do not have all the answers, and I do not try to act as though I do. I used to call my pastor, and he would listen to me and say, "Well, Brother Abraham, I will be praying for you." I knew he was going to say that when I called, but I was just going to take a chance to see if he would tell me something more. He wanted me to learn how to trust God for my daily needs.

You need to put your trust in Jesus. Just as He saved you, He can keep you. A song entitled "Mighty to Save and Keep" says: *"Mighty to save, and mighty to keep, Grace like the ocean, boundless and deep; Will you believe it? will you receive it? Life everlasting reap?"*

### **"In Every Thing Give Thanks"**

God's grace is as free as the air we breathe. We each may have a full supply, but are you willing to pray? Again, Philippians 4:6 tells us, "In every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving. . . ." I like that word "supplication." There are different ways of talking to God: praising and thanking God is talking to Him, and petitions are asking God for things, but sometimes it comes right down to supplication and pouring out your heart to God. At times, you need to dismiss everything else and pray until God blesses you.

Are you thankful? You should be thankful even in the tests, in the bad times as well as in the good times. You should not let the devil cause you to have resentment in your heart toward God. You may question: "Why did God allow me to go through this trial? Why do I have to suffer this hard place? I should not be going through this." Yes, you should.

I will never forget the time I was at work, and I was really going through something. I did

not know anyone was behind me. I thought I was alone, and I said, "Lord, why me?" Someone said, "Why not you?" It startled me. My heart was smitten, and I was convicted. I said: "You're right. I should not have said that." You might be surprised how a little complaint will try to squeeze out that little bit of discontentment. I was quick to say, "Lord, why me?" Sometimes God will choose you to go through certain trials because He wants the world to see His glory in you. He wants others to see that you are content in salvation and to see that you have peace in the midst of the storm.

You will never hear me say, "Lord, why me?" anymore. The Holy Ghost used that young man to let me know why not me. Why not Job? God tried Job, so why would He not try me? He tried His only Son, so why would He not try me? I love Him too much to fail Him. I will never turn my back on Him, by the grace of God.

Proverbs 28:25 reads, "He that is of a proud heart stirreth up strife: but he that putteth his trust in the LORD shall be made fat." You should not want to be greedy or covetous. You should not feel that you are better than this or that. I am nothing, and if God permits something to come my way, I thank the Lord. The Lord gives and He takes away.

You need to learn the value of praising and thanking God. Paul wrote in 1 Thessalonians 5:18, "In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." Do you thank God in everything?

In Luke 12:15 Jesus said, "Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." There are spirits out there that want to undermine your faith. There is a spirit in this world called greed, or avarice, which is

insatiable greed.

Greed works against contentment. Philippians 4:6-7 tells us: ". . . but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And [when you pray through] the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." God can take away your worries and your cares if you will let Him.

### **Godliness With Contentment**

Have you ever been going through something, and when you prayed through, it did not bother you anymore? You no longer felt anxious about it. When you settled that thing, you had a peace and an assurance that God was going to work it out. You had it settled, "Whatever You do, it is okay with me, Lord." I am talking about godliness with contentment.

As a Christian, you have an advantage. You have power with God. He will work for you and move for you. I thank God for being saved, and I thank God for the Truth. I thank God for men and women that have taught me how to live right, how to live holy, and how to be godly. I thank God because it has opened so many doors and helped me to live right. My health, my mind, and my life are better with salvation. My home and my family are better. There are many benefits of salvation, and I thank God for contentment.

When I worked for an automaker, my job was to lift bumpers over my head to build the cars as they went down the assembly line. After I did that repetitive work for a period of time, it affected my body. I developed what they call Thoracic Outlet Syndrome (TOS), and I could no longer work. Also, I had tendonitis. I could not even

hold a Bible, carry groceries, or carry a glass. A glass would just drop out of my hand. I was praying, and I considered trusting God for this condition, because the doctor told me that I had only a 70 percent chance of getting it corrected with surgery. He said, "Don't let anyone tell you that you have more than that, because you don't."

I decided that I was going to trust God. My doctor said, "Abraham, if you are going to trust God and not have the operation, I am sending you back to work." I could not work, but I had to go back to work, and they sent me home again.

I called my pastor and said: "I want to trust God, but my job is on the line. I have to take care of my family."

He said, "Brother, I understand, but we are not going to condemn you if you have an operation."

I said, "I have to pray." I did not know what to do, and my babies had to eat.

I will never forget how God gave me a Scripture when I sought Him. I poured out my heart to God and said: "Lord, I am willing to do whatever you want me to do. I will put this job on the line, and I will put my body on the line. I just want to be in Your will." God used a friend of mine who said, "Abraham, why not go to my doctor?" I was off work for five days without a doctor's excuse, and I could have been fired after three days. The disability representative told me, "Hurry up and get a doctor, and I will try to hold them back." God has ways of helping you.

### **Putting Your Trust in God**

A lady told me about a chiropractor, and the Spirit of God said, "What is it going to hurt you to go and check it out?" So I went and checked it out. After he examined me, he said,

"There is nothing that I can do about the TOS, but I will take you out on sick leave and work on the other stuff that you have wrong with you." He cleared my job, and I was able to trust God.

I was off work for six months, and I said, "Lord, I am ready to go back to work, because I believe You have healed me." I was still having symptoms of the TOS in my body, but I believed God, so I stepped out on faith and went back to work.

The chiropractor said, "I want you to be a testimony for me."

I said: "No way. You said you could not do anything for me, so why would I testify and say you did? That would be lying." He looked at me a little strange, but I had to be honest.

When I walked in that plant, they tried to place me on restricted duty, but I knew the company doctor was not going to honor it. I went in there knowing that they were going to put me right back on the line doing something difficult, but I had it settled. I believed that God had healed me. The devil talked and lied to me, telling me what was going to happen, but I said: "Devil, I dismiss you. I rebuke you in the name of Jesus. I believe God."

When I saw the company doctor, he said: "I am not giving you any restrictions. You are going back out there." Do you know what job I was given? Remember, I could not lift anything. The company gave me the job of lifting bumpers that weighed about forty-three pounds. I said: "Devil, you are a liar. I am healed." I lifted that first bumper, and I lifted them all week. God had healed me, and I said, "Lord, let me do a double this week." I was not trying to tempt God, but people on the job knew that I was trusting God, and I wanted to be a witness to the people on night shift.

God healed me and protected

my job, but I needed to know if it was in God's will, and this is the Scripture that God used to assure me. Hebrews 13:5-6 states: "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee [that comforted my heart when God gave this verse to me]. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me." You have to get rid of fear. You have to stretch out and believe that God will meet your need. He will do it if you will trust Him. He will meet your needs and take you through. He can save your job and heal your body.

### Learning to Be Content

When I was off work during that time, sometimes things got a little lean financially. Our children needed shoes, but I trusted God. I did not broadcast what I asked God for in secret. I trusted God and believed God. When others asked, "How are you doing?" I said: "Thank the Lord, God has blessed us. I'm still saved and encouraged, and He is meeting my needs."

God will help you and give you what you need. He may impress someone to put something in your hand. When I bought my boy new shoes, I did not know that he had grown two sizes. We had to wait until we could afford to buy them. I do not know how he wore his old shoes. I guess God stretched them like He did in the wilderness for His people.

God will take care of you. All you have to do is stay contented, stay satisfied in Jesus, and stay faithful. I did not stop going to the services because things got really bad for me. I did not stop doing what I could do for the Lord. The refrain of the song entitled "When You Have Done Your Best" reads: "*Just trust Him*

*and be true, And see what He will do, He'll never disappoint your soul; When you have done your best, Let Jesus do the rest, And keep your eyes upon the goal."*

Philippians 4:11-13 tells us: "Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

I can do all things through Christ. All I want to know is that I am in the will of God. If you know that you are saved and that God is with you, ask God to help you. Sometimes you may look at others and want God to bless you, but it may not be your time. I remember my pastor used to say: "Do you see that clock? It does not hit every number at the same time. It will get to your number; just stay saved." Everyone is not going to be blessed at the same time, but your blessing is coming. The Scripture says, "Be still, and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10). You have to learn how to wait on God.

### Do Not Allow Unbelief to Work

Many of the children of Israel did not make it to Canaan land. God promised them rest, but they were disobedient and constantly striving with Moses their leader. The twelve spies went to check out the land, and ten of them brought back an evil report. That is the reason you had better "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (1 Thessalonians 5:21). You should not accept thoughts about people when you have not heard the whole matter.

The people did not want to hear the good report from Joshua and Caleb, so God would not allow them to enter Canaan. He

let them know they were going to wander in the wilderness until they died. Hebrews 3:12 warns, "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God." You can backslide. The Israelites are an example to the intent that we should not allow unbelief to work as they did. We are going to face some tests.

The Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 10:11-12: "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples . . . upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." You do not have it made. You need to have the faith that God will help you and keep His favor by obedience, by trust, and by faith in Him.

Hebrews 4:3-16 tells us: "For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works. And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest. Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief. [They did not enter into God's rest. That rest was represented by Canaan land, but they did not enter into it. God has some good things for you, and He wants to teach you how to live by faith.]

"Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day. There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. [God will meet

your needs according to His will. If you ask anything according to His will, He will hear you. If you know that He hears you, you know that you have the petition that you desire of Him. God will meet your needs if you trust and obey Him.]

"For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. [He that enters into this rest has ceased from his own works. When you cast your care upon the Lord, believe Him, and focus on the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, before you realize it, your need will be met, and you will be able to thank the Lord.]

"Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief. [You must put forth effort to get to a place in God where you can have faith, trust, and contentment to allow Him to meet your needs, both naturally and spiritually. The same faith it takes to get our needs met is the same faith to trust in the power of God. He can keep you. You are kept by the power of God. It is a walk of faith, just simple faith. Day by day, God will help you, keep you, and take you through your tests and trials by prayer and supplication. Whether you have spiritual needs or natural needs, you need to give them to God and continue to do the work of God, and He will bless you.]

"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. [God knows what you need. The Word of God will expose where you are. If you seek God, He will meet your spiritual needs just as He will meet your natural needs. Are you willing to put yourself out

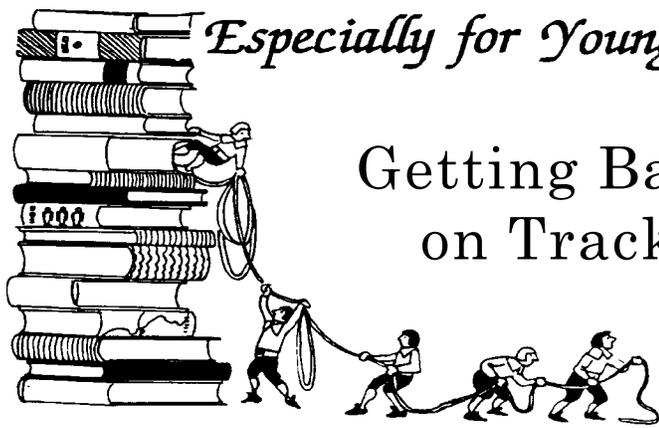
for God and trust Him? Many times people mess up by trying to fix things themselves, by putting their hands on it.]

"Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: [God sees everything. He knows all about your problems and your situation.] but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do. Seeing then that we have a great high priest [not one of those high priests who did not have compassion, who had no feelings for other people's needs], that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. [There is nothing you can go through that Jesus has not been through already and has gotten the victory over. He was tempted in all points. You can go to Him boldly.] Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, [Are you praying for your spiritual, physical, and temporal needs? Are you praying through? Are you going boldly to the throne of grace?] that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

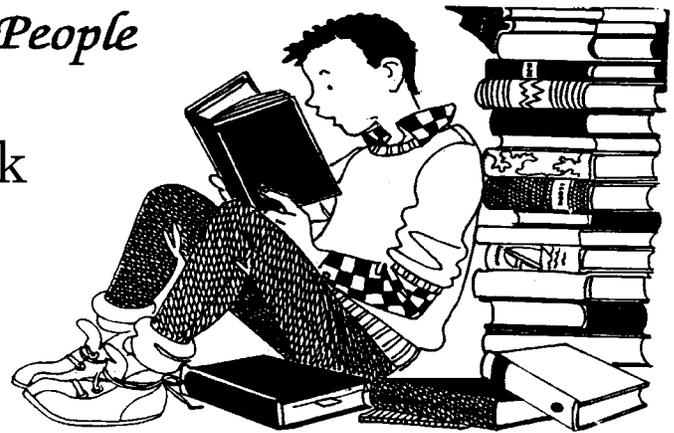
We have a great High Priest. Friend, He wants to help you, and He is rooting for you, saying, "You can make it, but you have to pray." How badly do you want to stay saved? How hungry are you to be more spiritual, to be more submissive to God, and to live a life of faith and trust in Him? You have to hunger after righteousness. You have to want it badly enough. I thank God that I want it, and I am going to do whatever God wants me to do.

*(Compact Disc TR-2161)*

*Especially for Young People*



## Getting Back on Track



I want to share with you some tests and trials that I went through as a young person. I grew up in a wonderful Christian home with a godly heritage and a solid foundation, but that did not stop the devil from coming after me. From my junior year of high school through my sophomore year of college, it was a troubled time in my life. I do not feel that I backslid, but it was a dark testing time, and I became disillusioned.

My difficulties started with some hurtful issues that I went through. Also, my boyfriend broke up with me a few times, and it seemed like the end of the world to me. Looking back, it was silly, considering that we are married now, but at the time it was a big deal to me. I allowed these things to cause me to become negative and critical. It is dangerous to let the devil plant seeds of negativity in your mind. Everything seemed awful to me, and it affected everything in my life.

I became self-destructive. By that I mean, I did not take care of myself as I should have. I made unhealthy choices, such as not eating right, not getting enough sleep, and running myself ragged. Also, I purposely overloaded my schedule so that I did not have time to think. I was on a collision course, and that is right where the devil wanted me to be.

I could have blamed my condition on many things, but the real issue was that I had taken my

eyes off Jesus and was watching others around me. Instead of letting God use the trials to make me stronger and to bring me closer to Him, I allowed the devil to get me sidetracked. This spiritual state left the door wide open for the devil to play many tricks on me.

I want to share with you a few tricks that the devil played on me. He likes to lie. He told me, "You fit in better at school than you do at church." That is a trick of the enemy. He will try to separate you from the youth group and from people who care about you. Also, the devil told me: "No one understands you. You don't have any friends." Have you heard that from the devil? I heard that a lot, and my mother quoted Proverbs 18:24 to me: "A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother." I had to look myself in the mirror and ask, "What am I doing to reach out to people?"

Sometimes I put up a wall, so to speak, and when I did that, it was hard to approach anyone else. Maybe others were reaching out to me, but I was not paying attention. When someone puts up a wall, it is hard to get past that. Some people might avoid that person if they do not know how to handle it.

It is dangerous to listen to the devil's lies because he wants to separate you from the spiritual influences and from spiritual mentors in the congregation. There is a certain amount of accountability

and positive peer pressure to keep living right when you are around God's people. You need to live up to those good expectations.

The devil told me that if I would go away, no one would miss me, but that was not true, because "no man is an island." Had I made certain choices, those choices would have affected others. The devil knew that if he knocked me out of the race, it would have affected my siblings and some of my friends. We each have a circle of influence.

The devil tempted me with prideful thoughts, such as: "Go to school and get a career. You are going to be somebody." Would that have made me happy? Absolutely not! It would have made me want to strive for worldly fame in the sense of trying to be somebody big.

The devil sent many distractions my way. I forced myself to be busy with work and school so that I did not have much time for anything else. I crammed my school schedule full, and when I was not at school, I was at work. When I was not at either of those two places, I was sleeping. I kept myself busy and did not have much time or energy for spiritual things. I started pulling away from the youth group. I preferred being with my college friends and my work friends.

Another trick and big distraction the devil sent my way was male friends. He sent several guys at different points in my life as

distractions, and they usually appeared in a spiritually weak moment. He would send someone who was attractive and charming or someone who made me feel good about myself. I am very thankful that I did not date any of them, but I was tempted.

The devil told me: "Just have a little fun. It does not have to be a serious relationship. You don't have to marry him. He is just someone to hang out with. What could that hurt?" Considering that I could have ended up marrying one of those young men, it could have hurt a lot of things.

You should never date anyone that you would not consider marrying, because once you get involved in a relationship, it is hard to put aside those feelings and break it off. It was only by the grace of God that I was not caught up in this trap, and I am very thankful. Many young people who used to be in the youth group got caught in that trap, and now they are gone. Some are divorced and have children, and their lives are wrecked. It is very sad. I feel unworthy that God protected me from that.

Maybe you are thinking about dating someone who is not good for you, someone who is not saved. You need to ask yourself, "In the light of eternity, is it worth losing my soul for that person?" If you marry that person, you could end up miserable and not even liking him or her. Is it really worth it?

My life could have been so different had I gone down that path. It seemed as though I had to wait a long time for a husband. Maybe God thought I needed more patience, so I waited. God blessed me with a wonderful husband, and he was well worth the wait. I am very thankful for him. It is such a blessing to work together for God, to attend church together, and to help each other grow spiritually.

All of that caused me to do some soul searching. I asked myself these questions: What is the purpose of life? Why am I really here?

Is this the life that I want to live? Do I really want to be a Christian? Do I want to dress modestly all the time? Do I really want to follow all the rules? Does God care about the way I am feeling? Where is God?

Sometimes I wonder if I hindered anyone while I was out there searching for myself. A former coworker passed away some time back. She and I worked closely together during that time. I have wondered if I did anything that might have hindered her. Was I the Christian that I should have been? Could she see Christ in me or was I so caught up in myself that I lost an opportunity to talk to her? You never know who is looking on, so that is something to think about.

I began to realize that I was drifting away and needed to get back on track. God used several things to help me with this. The first one was a spiritual mentor. You need to find someone to whom you can talk. It may be your mother, your father, a Sunday school teacher, your pastor, or a spiritual leader in the congregation. In my case, it was my mother. She sent an email to me one day, and it was not warm and fuzzy. It was brutally honest, but it was exactly what I needed. God shook me and made me realize that I needed to get myself straightened out.

The second thing that I needed to do to get back on track was to let go and let God work. Once I finally made the decision to let go of the feelings of bitterness, anger, and unhappiness that I harbored, I had to let God work in His time. I let go of self-pity. When you try to figure out your own problems and try to fix them, you can make a big mess and get in God's way. The best thing to do with worries and problems is to take them to God, leave them there, and wait for Him to guide you. That is much easier said than done.

You have to realize that you are what you eat. For example, if you eat worldliness, you are going to become worldly. One thing that I

turned to when I was upset was worldly music. I liked to go for long drives and turn on worldly music, but often it put me in a worse mood. If I was sad, the sad songs made me feel even sadder. If I was angry, the angry songs made me feel angrier. Gospel music is much more uplifting.

When I was your age, I would ask my mom: "Why do you play church music all the time? It is driving me nuts!" Nevertheless, there is nothing like old hymns to brighten your mood. Gospel music will make your burdens feel lighter because the songs are a reminder of God's love, and they will encourage you. Often worldly music will make your burdens feel heavier.

I remember one time when a sister at a youth meeting challenged everyone to do a worldly music fast. I thought, "I can't do that." I tried it for one week. One thing that helped me was having a friend, and we helped each other. It was not always easy, but we got through it. You ought to try it. The first couple of days may seem difficult, but by the end of the week, you will be surprised at how your mind has been reshaped. When you get upset, suddenly you will think about encouraging songs, and it makes you more positive.

What are you reading and watching? I have to watch myself with reading the headlines. There are not many positive headlines. They can cause you to feel weighed down and depressed. You need to remember that the things you watch and the things you read will impact you. What do you think about? You are going to become what you think.

Bible reading and prayer are very important to the Christian. When I was a young person, I struggled with taking time to read and study the Bible as I should have. I wish I could go back and change that, because as a young person, you have the most time that you will ever have to study the Bible. As you get older and get a

job, it is harder. If you should go to college and have a job, you will not have much extra time. After you get married and have children, often you will get interrupted. It is challenging when the children are awake.

You ought to take advantage of the time that you have right now to really dig into God's Word. You should study the Bible so that you can understand why we do the things we do as Christians. The youth lessons on the church website are great tools to use for personal Bible study. They may answer questions that you have. They are a good starting point and can give you lots of good Bible verses to think about.

The devil fights hard when it comes to prayer and Bible reading. Prayer works, and the Bible is your source of spiritual strength. One children's song says: "Read your Bible, pray every day, and you'll grow, grow, grow. Neglect your Bible, forget to pray, and you'll shrink, shrink, shrink." That is very true!

Who are your friends? You will be like those with whom you surround yourself. Do you feel more spiritual or less spiritual around your friends? Do you have a positive thought life? It is imperative that you think on good things. The more you think negative thoughts, the more negative you will be. Negative thoughts can envelop your whole life, and everything will become negative to you.

Philippians 4:8 is a good verse through which you can filter your thoughts. You can run whatever you do, say, or think through the filter of this verse and see if it meets the criteria. It reads, "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

Another thing that helped me to

get back on track was being accountable to someone else, perhaps a church friend. My friend and I were going through tough times together. At first, we were both negative, and then we realized that we needed to make some changes in our lives. It helped to have someone to pray with and someone to talk to about spiritual things.

Out in the world, you are not going to have the spiritual aspect in a friendship. When you tell someone in the world your problems, perhaps a school friend, that person will not say, "Let's pray about it." It is good to find a spiritual friend who can help.

My friend and I started what we called our "PJs" (prayer journals). We both had a notebook, and each week we wrote prayer requests, things that we were thankful for, spiritual thoughts, Bible study thoughts, a spiritual to-do list, and little quotes or Scriptures to meditate on throughout the week. These journals helped both of us because it caused us to think on good things each week. This inspired us to find a Bible study topic that we could share. Also, it inspired us to think of others who needed prayer instead of focusing on our own problems.

Another reason that I am glad we kept the journals is that I can look back and see spiritual growth. As I read through mine, I noticed that in the first couple of months of entries, I could see a lot of pain, heartache, and questions. As I got to the middle, I could see how it became more like a Bible study, and I could see how we were progressing spiritually. It is really wonderful to go back and see the prayers that God has answered.

I still keep a personal prayer journal that I use to keep myself on track and to keep myself focused on my daily Bible reading. I enjoy reading through it periodically and highlighting all the prayers that God has answered. It helps me to see that God really does care and answer prayer. I can reflect on all

the trials that God has brought me through, and it strengthens my faith.

You need to hold on to the promises of God. Did you know there are more than five thousand promises in the Bible? They are yours if you want them. If you will take hold of them and keep reminding God, He will keep those promises. I had many verses of promise that I held on to as a young person. Three of them came to my mind. One was Psalm 84:11. It states, "No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." When you think you are waiting a long time for an answer to prayer, remember that God will not withhold any good thing from you.

The second Scripture was Romans 8:28, which says, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God." The third verse was Psalm 37:4. It reads, "Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart."

I asked myself one day: "What do I really want in life? Do I want a career?" I really wanted a happy home. I wanted to be a mom and stay home with my children. With that goal in mind, that is what I worked toward, so I started praying. I learned a lot of patience, but God kept His promises.

One sister told about a saint who used to write "TP" beside certain verses in the Bible. When asked what "TP" meant, this individual said, "Tried and proven." I started doing that recently.

All those experiences led me to a deeper experience with God. I was not working hard enough for it. I had to settle it in my heart that I was determined to live right no matter what. It will not just happen. You have to work for it. You have to want a close relationship with God. Do not just hope that it will happen when you get older or when you get married. By then, it could be too late. By then, you might have a lot of scars on your life that would make it difficult to

work through. If you wait until you are married and have children, you might have an unsaved husband or wife and bad habits to work through. It is easier to start now when you do not have those things to contend with.

You have to get to the place where it does not matter what others think. I read these words in the New Testament: "I am persuaded," and it really hit me hard. You have to be persuaded, because someone might come along and say, "That is a joke," or you may see someone in whom you have confidence give in to temptation. You have to be persuaded that no matter what, if your mom or dad quits living for God, if your friends stop living for God, you are going to do it because you know that God will take care of you. God knows what is best for you, and this is the best life to live.

Romans 8:38-39 reads: "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Second Timothy 1:12 from *The Amplified Bible* states, "Still, I am not ashamed; for I know Him [and I am personally acquainted with Him] whom I have believed [with absolute trust and confidence in Him and in the truth of His deity], and I am persuaded [beyond any doubt] that He is able to guard that which I have entrusted to Him until that day [when I stand before Him]." God is my best friend, and He is there all the time.

You cannot tell me there is no God. I have seen God move, I have seen Him heal, and I have seen Him save people and change their lives. You cannot dissuade me by saying that this experience is not real, because I know the change that Christ has made in my life. When I reflect on those earlier years of my life, I realize how cold and dark it felt, and I do not feel that

anymore. God brought joy, happiness, peace, and contentment into my life. You cannot put a price on that. I can go to sleep at night, and I do not have to worry about what is going to happen because I have peace. I would not trade this life that God has given me for anything the world has to offer.

Jeremiah 29:11 reads, "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end." Proverbs 3:5-6 says: "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."

God has a plan. There are so many crossroads for a young person. For instance, after high school, do you go to college or get a job? God led me to the right job. Had I taken one wrong turn, I could have been a completely different person and had a completely different life. It is really amazing to look back and see how God has guided me. The choices that you make in the next few years are going to determine your course for the rest of your life. Your friends will either influence you in the wrong way or encourage you to live right. It was wonderful to have a spiritual friend at church who helped to keep me accountable and encouraged, and God really helped both of us.

Having the wrong boyfriend or girlfriend can result in a child out of wedlock or a difficult marriage. Being married to the wrong one could result in a miserable life. You might argue about spiritual convictions and have children and end up in divorce, and then you would be a single parent. It does not have to be that way. God has someone who will truly love you, who will be perfect for you, who will build you up, who will complement your weaknesses, and who will help you to work together for God.

Even a good marriage can have challenges. My husband and I have an awesome marriage, but some-

times we disagree and have to work through things. You should not even consider starting a marriage with the wrong person or without God. It will be much harder if you do not start with the right one. God wants you to be patient and open to His will and to have a happy and peaceful marriage.

What if you have already messed up? No doubt, you have heard it said that success is getting up just one more time than you have fallen. Sometimes that means you have to go back to where you got off track. If you have started dating the wrong person, maybe God wants you to break that off. Perhaps getting on track means continuing where you are now but with a new outlook. Maybe you need to start thinking on a more positive note or start thinking in a different way. Your job is to seek God for the answer and to stay open to His will. Every trial has a lesson in it, and it is your responsibility to find out what that lesson is.

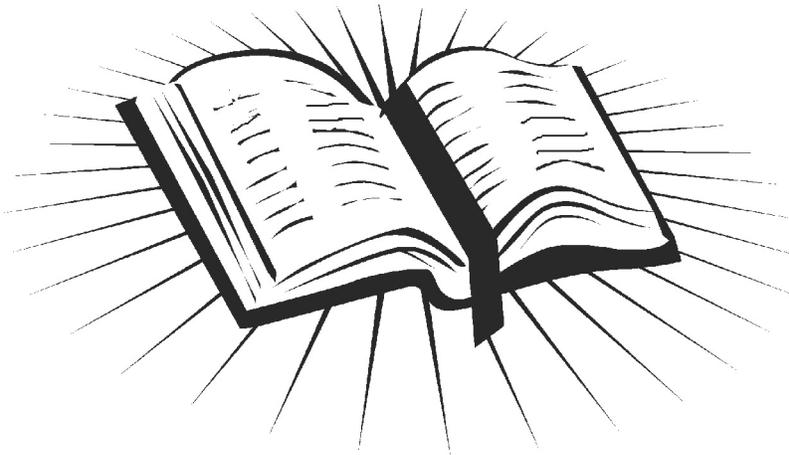
Psalm 138:8 reads, "The LORD will perfect that which concerneth me." You have to get past feelings to find out what God is trying to teach you. One entry that I found in my old journal was this question: Is this trial a steppingstone or a stumbling block? The answer depends on your attitude. An attitude is a small thing that makes a big difference. Are you going to let this trial build your faith or knock you out?

Without a doubt, all the trials I went through as a teenager and young adult helped bring me to where I am today and helped build the foundation upon which I stand now. I am so thankful for all that God has done for me. He has greatly blessed me. If you let God work through your trials, He will turn your test into a testimony. He is no respecter of persons. He did it for me, and He can do it for you.

Sister Natalie Bremer

*Proverbs 19:23 The fear of the LORD tendeth to life: and he that hath it shall abide satisfied; he shall not be visited with evil.*

# The Benefits of Fearing the Lord



*Brother E. David Stegmeier*

## **A Long-Term Investment**

I chose to serve the Lord when I was a little boy, and I have been serving Him for close to seventy years. It has been a wonderful life, and I have come in contact with the finest people. Proverbs 19:20 reads, "Hear counsel [some people do not want to get counsel because their minds are made up], and receive instruction, that thou mayest be wise in thy latter end." As you mature, you need wisdom. Life is like a maze, and lots of times you will have to make some very serious decisions that will affect you, your husband or wife, your family, and people who are following you; therefore, you need to hear wise counsel.

When I was a boy, my pastors took me to meetings. When I was approximately eight years of age, my pastor took me to camp meetings in Montana, and I listened. We all should be willing to take counsel. Young ministers who are starting in the ministry need to talk to older ministers and get wisdom and understanding.

In your youth, you should listen to all the good instruction and counsel that you can get from the older saints of God. This will help you as you journey through life. Job 32:7 tells us, "I said [this is Job speaking], Days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom." Do you suppose he was telling them how to fish for the souls of men?

Wisdom is a long-term in-

vestment. One of the greatest joys I have in life is discipling young converts. We have a number of young converts in our congregation, and I enjoy getting together with them to talk about the Scriptures and the problems they are encountering.

Proverbs 19:21 states, "There are many devices in a man's heart; [If you were to ask graduating high school seniors what they want out of life, probably 99 percent of them would say they want money. Christian young people ought to say they want God's will. God knows what is best for young people.] nevertheless the counsel of the LORD, that shall stand."

God will say what happens. You may make lots of plans, but

they may not come to fruition because God has the final word. Man may make plans; however, if they are not in accordance with the will of God for him, they will never come to completion.

Proverbs 19:22 tells us, "The desire of a man is his kindness: and a poor man is better than a liar." What attracts you to an individual is his or her kindness. All of us are attracted to someone who is kind. When I went to a new place, when I was in the military, and when I went to school to become a teacher, I always enjoyed meeting those who reached out to me.

When my son Reggie was a little boy, probably about two or three years of age, I took him to the church and went down into the basement. I sat him on a table while I was doing some work, and I said, "Reggie, you are my pal."

He said, "Dad, what's a pal?"

I said, "A pal is a good friend." Our children should be our friends. What attracts you to an individual is his or her kindness. A kind person is the type of individual that you want as a close friend.

### **The Way to a Fulfilling Life**

Our Scripture text says, "The fear of the LORD tendeth to life [when you fear God, you will be blessed, because He is in control]: and he that hath it [the fear of the Lord] shall abide satisfied; he shall not be visited with evil." The road leading to a fulfilling life is the highway called "the fear of the Lord."

Any individual traveling this highway will be fully satisfied. I have found that people who are fully satisfied are close to God, but those who are not fully satisfied probably are not reading the Bible enough, not praying enough, not listening to the Lord, and not measuring up. Those events planned by God will come

to pass. No calamity unplanned by God will happen. God is in control. That which seems to be a calamity can turn out to be a blessing. Proverbs 19:20 from another translation reads, "Get all the advice and instruction you can, so you will be wise the rest of your life."

When I was a young man, Brother Emerson Wilson was our evangelist for approximately fifteen years. Lots of times I would ask him questions, and he would deliberate first, sometimes for quite a while. He did not just come out and say, "This is the way it is." He would often just look at me and think, and then he would tell me what he thought.

It is good to get instruction from the older saints, because someday they are going to be gone. You need to get all the advice and instruction you can so that you will be wise for the rest of your life. You can make many plans, but the Lord's purpose in your life will prevail. Loyalty makes a person attractive. It is not easy to find loyal people. It is better to be poor than to be dishonest.

The Scripture text in another translation reads, "Fear of the LORD leads to life, bringing security and protection from harm." The fear of God means to respect God, or to have reverence for Him, His Word, His man, and His people.

As I was growing up, I had thousands of experiences. One young man got upset with the pastor and his family, and he left the congregation. He called the pastor and said something smart-alecky. The young man was very handsome and very athletic. Later in life, he was in a horrible car accident and was maimed for the rest of his life. The Bible says in 1 Chronicles 16:22, "Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm." God has the last word. He had a beautiful wife, but when he was hurt in

that terrible accident, she left him. He was a cripple for the rest of his life. Again, God has the final word. His folks got upset with the pastor, and then it affected their children. It is a serious thing when parents criticize the pastor and affect the children.

### **God Offers the Best Life**

With the fear of God comes an innate desire, or a God-given desire, to worship Him, to serve Him, and to submit to Him. When people come to church, I like to see them engage in the service by getting a hymnal and really worshipping God and reflecting on the goodness of God. Over the entrance to our sanctuary, we have a plaque that reads, "Enter to Worship," and above the exit door we have another one that reads, "Leave to Serve." I tell the people, "Let us get into worship." People are going to worship something. Some worship their money, their children, or their home. John 4:24 reads, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

When you go to church and sing, you need to think about what you are singing. The Church of God is blessed with the finest hymns. The writers of those hymns were very godly men. With the fear of God comes an innate desire to worship Him, serve Him, and submit to Him.

Many of the decisions that we make in life are determined by the benefits that we will derive from those decisions. We are inundated with thousands of thoughts every day. You have to be careful of what you think on. You need to have a filter.

Young person, choosing a vocation is important. You need to ask God to help you. You should not go to a college away from the church. You need to stay close. Many graduating

seniors want to go to a certain prestigious college because of pride.

When I was a little boy, I wanted to be a teacher. I had no idea that I was going to be a preacher. In my teaching I have been in contact with a lot of students and invited them to come to church. Young person, you need to choose a vocation that will benefit you and the Kingdom of God.

When accepting a job, sometimes people only look at the benefits. You should not move away if it means forfeiting being in a thriving congregation. It would be better to stay where you are. Your soul and what it is being fed are most important.

Selecting neighbors and neighborhoods to live in is important. Some areas have pool halls and taverns. In selecting a neighborhood, you need to look around very carefully to select one that is wholesome for raising children and that is close to the church.

Again, our Scripture text states, "The fear of the LORD tendeth to life: and he that hath it shall abide satisfied; he shall not be visited with evil." Jesus called it an abundant life. In John 10:10 He said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." The reverent fear of God leads to life, and he who has it rests satisfied. He cannot be visited with actual evil. Although it may appear so, it will turn out to be a blessing.

### **Obtaining Godly Wisdom**

The man or the woman who fears God will receive the best that God has to offer. What is that? First of all, that person will be blessed with godly wisdom. Is there a greater wisdom than God's? No! Job 28:28 reads, "And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom;

and to depart from evil is understanding."

What is wisdom? Webster's Dictionary defines it as "the quality of having experience, knowledge, and good judgment; a quality of being wise." Proverbs 9:10 says, "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding." Someone once said, "Because he knows the holy, a true believer can see more on his knees than others can see on their tiptoes."

A person who fears God receives the wisdom of God. Solomon asked for wisdom, and God gave it to him, plus added blessings. Wisdom is a wonderful attribute to ask for. God was so pleased that Solomon asked for wisdom that He said He would bless him with even more things.

We must receive godly instruction. We have such tremendously healthy, good, wholesome teachings in the church. Psalm 25:12-13 tells us: "What man is he that feareth the LORD? him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose. His soul shall dwell at ease; and his seed shall inherit the earth." Not all our children follow the path they should, but we can pray and have hope that they will eventually.

An individual who fears God will enjoy unmistakable guidance. God will show him the way to go if he will really listen. You do not have to be in confusion. God is not the author of confusion. You can enjoy adequate provisions. You may not have a home with a seven-car garage, but God will provide you with adequate provisions.

When one seeks godly wisdom, his children will fall heirs to a solid, God-given legacy. The best thing you can give your children is a good, godly example. A person who fears God will be blessed to be part of

an inner circle of friends to whom the Lord reveals His mind and His ways in an intimate manner. The individual who truly fears and respects God will honor and obey His Eternal Word. He will not quibble about the Word of God. The individual who truly fears and respects God will honor and obey His Word and will not try to change it or rearrange it. There is no better, no greater, and no more reliable teacher than God.

### **Building Godly Character**

I wish that everyone who heard Truth would hold on to it and be faithful. The Bible says in Proverbs 20:6, "A faithful man who can find?" Psalm 25:14 reads, "The secret of the LORD is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant." If you want to know the secrets of God, you need to know Him very personally. Usually you only reveal your close secrets to your closest friends. God has secrets, and He looks for people who are 100 percent obedient.

Revelation 1:1 states, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him [John], to shew unto his servants [He was speaking of those who live without sin, not the world. The Book of Revelation is a very confusing Book to the world.] things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John." I want to know the secrets of God.

God's people are promised a longer life. The Bible tells us in Proverbs 10:27, "The fear of the LORD prolongeth days: but the years of the wicked shall be shortened." You need to be very careful, because God determines the length of your life. You need to fear God.

I want to live as long as God wants me to live. I enjoy living for God. I have done my best to live for the Lord. I have put

everything into it, and I want to put more into it as I near the end. God does not tell you the number of years that you will live. However, if you are serving the Lord, your days will be more than they would have been otherwise.

Proverbs 14:27 tells us, "The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death." God gives strength, energy, and vigor. Isaiah 40:31 reads, "But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."

Proverbs 14:26 tells us, "In the fear of the LORD is strong confidence: and his children shall have a place of refuge." The Scripture says in Proverbs 28:1, "The wicked flee when no man

pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a lion." If you are living right, you can have confidence and boldness. A man of God who is living right has some authority.

The fear of God will build character in people. Proverbs 22:4 reads, "By humility and the fear of the Lord are riches, and honour, and life." That does not necessarily mean temporal riches, but rather spiritual riches and honor. Ministers are to have a good report in the community. Wherever you labor, you should have a very good report.

Proverbs 2:1-7 tells us: "My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; Yea, if thou criest after

knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; If thou seekest her as silver [some people would rather have material possessions or money than the things of God; your children know where your priorities are], and searchest for her as for hid treasures; Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God.

"For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding [in every service you should take with you a thought that you can apply to your life]. He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous: he is a buckler to them that walk uprightly."

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*[Guest Editorial—continued from page 2]*

becomes involved in. He will be conscious of his appearance, the places he goes, and his words, actions, and attitudes. Every saint that professes Christianity should always strive to be faithful to Christ in all he does. Titus 2:12 teaches that "denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world."

A faithful steward is one who is consistent in his prayer life. It is through a healthy prayer life that one grows spiritually. Prayer is a privilege that God gave man to

commune with Him. Jesus said in Luke 18:1 that "men ought always to pray, and not to faint."

Another good trait that a faithful steward has is that he consistently reads God's Word on a daily basis. It is through Bible reading and studying of the Scriptures that saints become more rooted and grounded in the Truth. By giving diligence to these requirements, a saint can gain knowledge and understanding of Bible doctrines and standards.

Last, but not least, it is vitally important that one who professes Christianity is faithful in his

church attendance, unless circumstances prevent it. Hebrews 10:25 instructs not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together at worship services.

This may seem simple or even elementary; however, these are duties that too many are neglecting. Neglect in following these basic fundamentals has left many souls in a weakened condition. It has caused multitudes to fall by the wayside.

Selected

Back to the blessed old Bible,  
Back to the light of its Word:  
Be on our banners forever,  
"Holiness unto the Lord."

*Colossians 1:10 That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.*

# Are You Pleasing God?



*Brother Larry Dishman*

## **Striving to Please God**

I want you to notice that the message comes in the form of a question: "Are You Pleasing God?" I am not asking if you are a Christian, but are you pleasing God? Who do you strive to please the most in your life—your spouse, your family, your children, your boss, or yourself? That last one is our biggest battle, pleasing yourself. If you please yourself, you cannot please God.

It seems that many strive to please man more than they strive to please God. The chief aim of every child of God should be to please our Heavenly Father. Merely pleasing people is incompatible with being a servant of Christ. The aim of believers and

their conduct should be to please God in every way and to anticipate and do His wishes in every aspect of life. Living a life that pleases God is what makes us the happiest and the most satisfied. There is no satisfaction in being an uncommitted Christian, if there is such a thing. Ultimately, you will be most fulfilled when you fulfill God's purpose in your life because He loves you. Did you know that God loves you and wants the best for you?

Let us look at some ways that will please God. According to the Word of God, there are ways that you can please God. Today many religions say it is impossible for a Christian to please God, but according to the Bible, you can please God. Now, if a man gets

up in the pulpit every Sunday and tells the people, "No matter how hard you try and no matter what you do, you cannot please God," then people are not going to strive to please Him. If you love God, you will strive to please Him.

What does it mean to please God? Pleasing God involves discovering the will of God and doing it. It is not enough to discover the will of God. You have to be willing to do the will of God. The Bible says in 1 Thessalonians 4:1, "Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more." As a Christian,

you ought to walk in such a way that you please God and "abound more and more."

First of all, I believe it pleases God when you have faith, because Hebrews 11:6 states, "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." You must have two things: you must believe that God is real, and you must believe that God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. This passage identifies faith. Believing in God and doing His will is pleasing to God.

### **Being Spiritually Minded**

In the Book of Hebrews, Paul gives a prime example of this kind of faith. In Hebrews 11:5 we read, "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God." Enoch lived in an increasingly evil world before the Flood, but he did not go the way of the world as the other people. Enoch went in the opposite direction. The Bible says he walked with God, and guess what else it says? "He had this testimony, that he pleased God." What a testimony for a child of God to have! Every one of us, no matter where we are in life, can have this testimony that we please God. The Bible says in Genesis 5:24, "And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him."

Enoch not only pleased the Creator but also believed that the Lord would come with ten thousand of His saints to execute judgment. Jude, verses 14-15 reads: "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, To execute judgment upon

all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." Friend, when you believe God and believe what He says, you will be pleasing in the sight of God.

Secondly, God is well pleased when we are spiritually minded. God wants each of us to be spiritually minded. The Bible says in Romans 8:6-8: "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God." If you are in the Spirit, you can please God. He is greatly pleased when His people follow the Spirit in all things.

Having the Holy Spirit dwell in us and lead us is another thing that pleases God. Thank God for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit that leads and guides us. If you will heed the Spirit's voice, His voice will become clearer and clearer to you. On the other hand, if you fail to be sensitive to the voice of God and fail to listen to Him, that same voice will become fainter and fainter, until you cannot hear His voice at all. If you fail to rely on the Spirit, God will be displeased and the Spirit of God will be grieved.

The Apostle Paul talked about this in 1 Corinthians 9:26-27 where he said: "I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." In other words, Paul was saying, when it came to temptation, when his flesh wanted to go in the opposite direction, he brought his body into subjection to the will of

God. What was Paul talking about? He was speaking of walking in the Spirit.

### **Fearing God**

Thirdly, it pleases God when you fear Him. Psalm 147:11 says, "The LORD taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy." When the psalmist said to fear God, he was not talking about being terrified of Him. God does not want you to be terrified of Him.

God is the One who heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds. The Bible says in Psalm 147 that He knows all the stars and tells of His power to save the humble. The Bible tells us to fear God, not because it is good for Him, but because it is good for us to accurately recognize that He is more powerful than anything else. Acknowledging this shows our deep respect for Him. The proper fear and respect of God will motivate you to avoid sin. That is the reason the psalmist said to fear God, because if you fear Him, He can motivate you not to sin.

Exodus 20:20 tells us, "And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not." It is good to fear God. It pleases God when you fear Him. It reminds you that God will hold each of us accountable for our actions. Fearing God causes you to rely on Him and to reverence Him, which can deepen your love for the all-powerful God who cares enough to stoop down and deliver you.

Fourth, it pleases God when you study the Word of God and follow Jesus Christ's example. The Bible says in Matthew 17:5, "While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well

pleased; hear ye him." Jesus truly is the Son of God, and there has never been one person that ever pleased God to the degree that Jesus Christ pleased God. We all should hear Him and follow His example.

In John 8:29 Jesus said, "And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him." Jesus did always those things that pleased the Father, not 50 percent of the time, not 90 percent of the time, not 99 percent of the time, but always. If you will study to follow the example of Christ, you can please God. God, in His Word, would not have told us that we must please Him if it was an impossibility.

The very fact that we are commanded in the Word of God to please God tells me that it is possible. Jesus Christ is the greatest example that we can follow! We should study the four Gospels and learn how to please Him. We ought to please God by following Jesus' pattern of prayer, by following the life that He lived, by having the same Spirit that He manifested, and by having the humility that He possessed.

### **Obeying God**

You please God when you obey Him. First Samuel 15:22 reads, "And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." In this Scripture the Prophet Samuel expressed God's displeasure with Israel's first king, Saul. Saul had disobeyed God's direct command with the excuse that the people wanted to give what should have been destroyed, but God does not want physical gifts if that person is going to break His law.

Again, God does not command us to obey because it is good for Him. God commands us to obey Him because it is good for us. Deuteronomy 10:13 says, "To keep the commandments of the LORD, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good." God requires us to live the way He commands us to live because it is for our good. His laws and His commands are beneficial to us. As a result of obeying Him, we grow in godly, righteous character and become more like Jesus Christ.

The fact that obeying God is pleasing to Him is expressed in various ways throughout the New Testament. God has pleasure in righteousness, and it pleases Him when we do His will. Hebrews 13:21 says, "Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen." Doing God's will is not just pleasing, but it is well pleasing.

What is God's will? God's desires, His commands, and His plans are expressed throughout the Bible. In fact, the Bible was given so that you and I can see what God's will is for us. When we study the Bible, we read and sense what the mind of Christ is. Studying the Bible, meditating on the Bible, and praying are keys to gaining a deeper understanding of the will of God. God's will for us goes beyond just knowing what He wants. It involves doing every good work and working at maturing and becoming more like Jesus Christ.

In Matthew 5:48 Jesus said, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Thank God, Jesus Christ set the ultimate example of doing the will of God when He faced that terrible scourging and crucifixion for our sins. We read in Luke 22:42 where Christ was

praying, "Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done." Jesus was willing to give up Himself totally to show His love and to do the Father's will. We must seek God's help to always do those things that are pleasing in the sight of God.

### **Giving the Sacrifice of Praise**

Another thing that pleases God is giving the sacrifice that God wants. He wants a sacrifice, and the Bible talks about it in Hebrews 13:15-16 where it states: "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name. But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." It could be that God is not pleased with some people because they do not give Him the fruit of their lips. They do not give Him the praise, the glory, or the honor that He deserves. We have so much to praise God for.

We read earlier that God rejected the sacrifices given through disobedience, but there are sacrifices that are well pleasing in the sight of God, including giving praise and thanks to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I thank God for what God has done in my life. I thank God that He saved me when I was lost and helpless within myself. It has been God that has kept me down through the years.

Every time I talk about praise, I cannot help but think about what one brother said years ago. He was coming out of church, and there was a fellow who had just bought a brand-new hat. The wind caught his hat and blew it into the street, and he was on the sidewalk praising God. His brand-new hat had just gotten run over and was ruined, and there he was on the corner of

the street saying: "Well, glory be to God! Hallelujah!"

One of the brethren said: "You are plum crazy! Here you are on the sidewalk praising God and your hat just got ruined."

He said, "I am praising God that my head wasn't in it."

If we look around, we can always think of something to praise God for. Friend, this is reflected in Jesus' teachings expressed in the two great commandments, which are summarized in Matthew 22:37-40: "Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

No matter how much we give God, we can never come close to scratching the surface of what God has done for us, much less what He wants to do for us. In this life He offers some great benefits, as found in Proverbs 16:7, which reads, "When a man's ways please the LORD, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him."

### **Power to Live Pleasing to God**

Last, but not least, God is pleased to save sinners through the preaching of the Gospel. This pleases God, and the Bible says in 1 Corinthians 1:21, "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."

Friend, before you can live a life pleasing to God, first you must receive His salvation. If you are without Christ, I want to encourage you to acknowledge Him, repent of your sins, and place faith in the Son of God. Jesus died in your stead. I invite

you to tell the Lord that you are willing to trust Him with your eternal destiny. Are you willing to rely upon His provision for you? I encourage you to let Him know that you are willing to let Him build a new life in you, the life that you were created to live. The first step is to repent and to place your faith in the Son of God, to be born again.

You may say: "I have tried to please God and failed. Then I think I am doing okay, and I go along all right, and it is not long until I fail God again and displease Him. I really do want to please Him." Friend, you cannot please God in your own strength. You are never going to be able to muster up enough willpower to please God. It takes more than determination; it takes the power of the Holy Spirit to please God. The ability for you to please the Lord is not within you, but it is the result of God working in you.

We read in Romans 8:8-9: "So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit." As the people of God, God will enable us to live pleasing to Him when we have His power in our lives. You may say, "I lack the power to live a life that is pleasing to God." Then you need to ask Him for His power. James 4:2 tells us, "Ye have not, because ye ask not." You must acknowledge to God: "Lord, I'm coming up short. I'm not pleasing You in this area of my life." Friend, God loves you. He is not there to criticize or hurt you. He wants to give you the power that you need in your life to please Him.

### **Who Are You Striving to Please?**

Let me ask you a very important question, and please be honest. Do you feel the Lord is pleased with the life that you are living right now? Down deep in your heart, do you feel you are

living a life that pleases God? What greater legacy could one hope to leave than a testimony that God is pleased? Enoch had that testimony.

Living to please God should be the goal of every Christian. If it is not your main goal to please God, I wonder about your experience. Who is it that you are trying to please? Are you really striving to please God? I cannot imagine a greater goal in life than to live in such a way that someday, when I appear before the Father, I can hear Him say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

Is your life pleasing to God or are you dishonoring Him by an unworthy walk? Who are you trying to please? The life that pleases God is a life that lives in harmony with His Spirit. We have been given exhortation to live to please God, and not only that, we have the explanation of how we can live that life according to the Word of God.

What is your goal? Will you purpose to live your life to please God, to please yourself, or to please someone else? Knowing that one day you are going to stand before Christ and give an account, should you not be motivated to live your life to please Him? Paul said in Romans 14:12, "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God."

Pleasing the Lord should be the primary aim of every believer, and it is an area wherein we each should seek to excel. Are you pleasing Him in all areas of your life? If not, why not determine from this point on, by the power of the Holy Spirit, that you will live a life that pleases God? It displeases God if there is a lack of compassion in your heart. It displeases God if you are not living a consecrated life. It displeases God if you have a lack of vision. How is it in your life?

*(Compact Disc TR-2138)*

# Meeting Announcements

**Medina, OH**  
May 1-3

**POSTPONED - Weekend Revival:** Church of God, 6745 Wooster Pike, Medina, OH 44256  
Evangelist: Brother Josh Thilmony, Findlay, Ohio  
Service times: Fri. 7:00 p.m.; Sat. 10:30 a.m.; Sun. 10:30 & 4:00 p.m.  
A meal will be provided after the morning services.  
For further information contact: Pastor Mike Miller. Telephone: 234-249-9309

**Mt. Pleasant, PA**  
May 4-10

**POSTPONED - Revival:** Church of God, 109 Salvation Lane, Mt. Pleasant, PA  
Evangelist: Brother Larry Dishman, Hurley, Mississippi  
Service times: Mon.-Sat. 7:00 p.m. Sun. 10:30 a.m. & 1:30 p.m.  
For further information contact: Pastor Paul W. Prinkey, Telephone: 724-547-2151

**Kensett, AR**  
May 22-24

**Fellowship Meeting:** Kensett Church of God, 409 SE 2<sup>nd</sup> St., Kensett, AR 72082  
Evangelist: Brother Allen Polston, New Castle, Indiana  
Service times: Fri. 7:00 p.m.; Sat. 2:00 p.m. (dinner will be served at 4 p.m.) Sat. 7:00 p.m.  
Sun. 11:00 a.m. & 5:00 p.m. A dinner will be served after the Sunday morning service.  
For further information contact: Pastor Calvin L. Foster. Telephone: 501-742-3961 or 501-593-5105

**White Pine, TN**  
June 14-21

**White Pine Camp Meeting:** Church of God at Douglas Lake, 185 Hwy 25E, White Pine, TN  
Three services daily: 10:00 a.m., 2:30 p.m., & 7:00 p.m. First service Sunday, June 14 @ 10:00 a.m.  
Last service on Sunday, June 21 @ 10:00 a.m. Children & youth services daily. Camper spaces available, but please make reservations. Please bring your own bedding for the dorms.  
No pets allowed in the dorms, please. Holy Ghost preaching, Gospel singing, and healing for the body.  
For reservations contact: Bro. Jeff or Sis. Penny Williams @ 678-215-1540 or 770-507-7404 or email: jwil6568@bellsouth.net. Or you may contact the pastor.  
For further information contact: Pastor Roger Nethers. Telephone: 770-206-0786 or email: rogemethers@bellsouth.net. If you make reservations & can't make it, please call & cancel.

**Newark, OH**  
June 21-28

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

**Muncie, IN**  
July 8-12

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

**Canby, OR**  
July 20-26

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

**Newark, OH**  
August 2-9

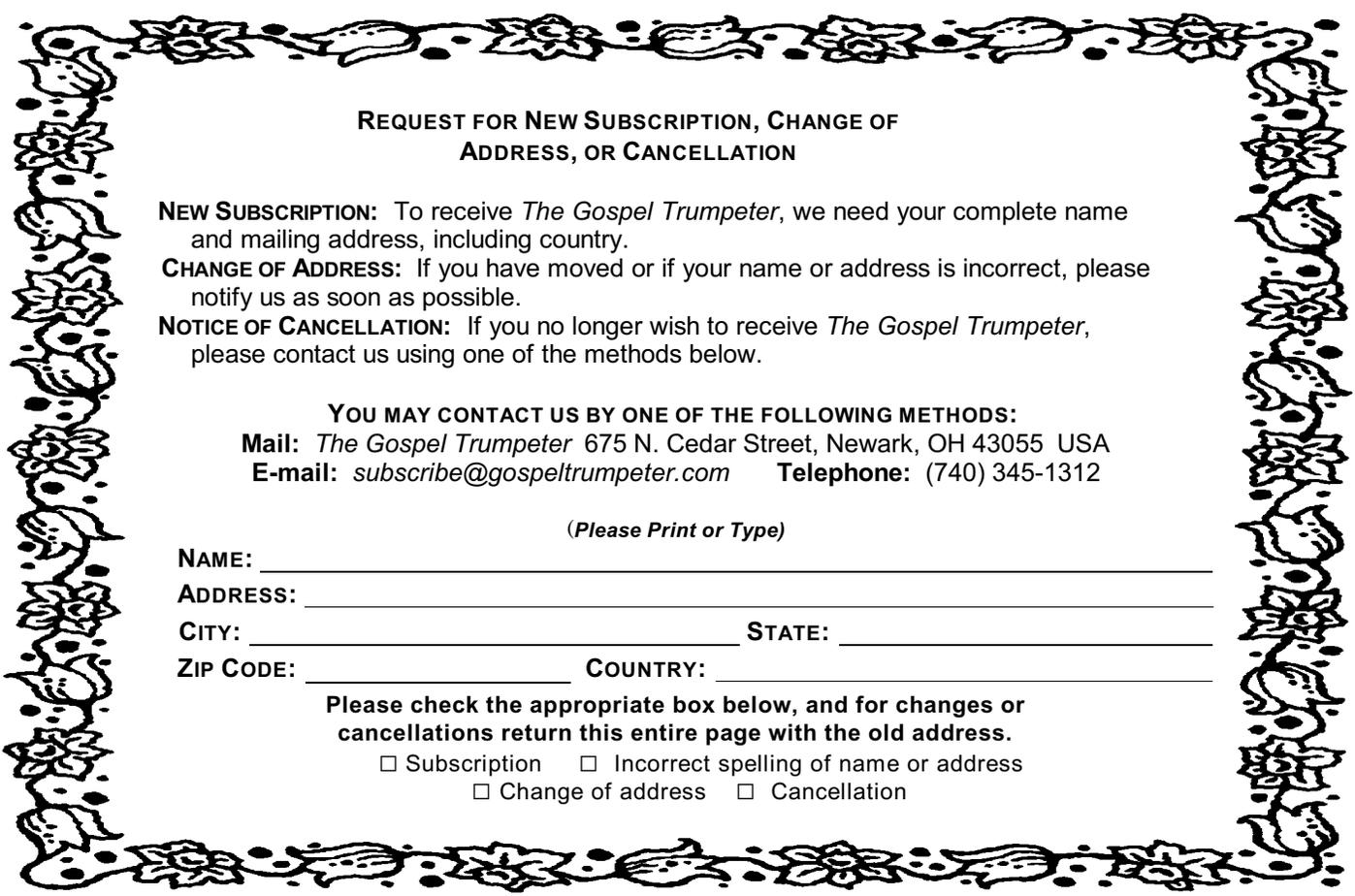
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