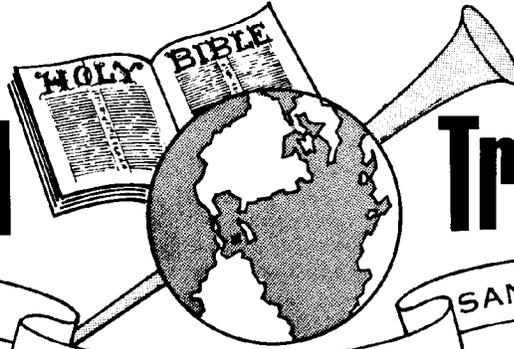


The Gospel



Trumpeter

JUSTIFICATION

SANCTIFICATION

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

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

UNITY & TRUTH

SOUNDING FORTH THE SEVENTH AND LAST TRUMPET

Vol. 51 May 2021 No. 5



Church of God Tabernacle in Newark, Ohio

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

Psalm 122:1

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

Guest Editorial

THE GOSPEL TRUMPETER
USPS #871620

Periodicals postage paid at the post office in Newark, Ohio 43055.
POSTMAN, send form 3579 to the printer:

THE GOSPEL TRUMPETER
675 N. Cedar Street
Newark, Ohio 43055

This periodical carries no subscription price; however, it is partially maintained through the gifts and offerings of its readers, with the balance of the expenses being paid by the local congregation.

PRAYER: If you need prayer, please phone or write:

Roger L. Decker, Pastor
83 Decrow Ave.
Newark, OH 43055

Email: pastor@church-of-god-online.com
Phone: 740-344-2543
Fax: 740-344-4737
Print Shop Phone: 740-345-1312

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

Brother Roger L. Decker Editor
Workers Too Numerous to Mention

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

SOME SPIRITUAL FACTS PERTAINING TO THE CHURCH

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

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

CONTENTS

What Kind of Mother Does Your Family See?	3
Are You a Dedicated Christian?	7
Especially for Young People	13
Jaxson Bell's Healing	16
The Blessings of Obedience	20
Divine Expectation	24
Meeting Announcements	27

Vol. 51 May 2021 No. 5

"As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."

Galatians 6:10

"But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men."

Philippians 2:7

Being a Servant

Jesus came into this world to save men and women from sin, destruction, and eternal death. He willingly took on the form of a servant. He gave Himself freely to mankind. Therefore, He expects men and women to give themselves to Him in return. The Christian's life is to be a life of service to God first and then to others. Romans 12:1 says, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."

Our responsibility is to be obedient to God's Word and following His example. In 1 Peter 2:21 we read, "Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow in his steps." We are to provide a life of service to God and to others. Unfortunately, we live in a world where men and women think mainly of themselves and what pleases them. Seldom do they consider the needs of others.

This is contrary to Jesus' teaching and example. He was

not concerned about His own physical needs and comforts, but rather the needs of others. He spent His life helping, giving, and serving those who were poor and needy. Jesus reminded us in John 12:8, "For the poor always ye have with you." This gives the saint of God an opportunity to demonstrate the love of Christ. It is a great blessing to help others who are unable to help themselves. Sacrificing one's own time and efforts will help to eliminate self-centeredness and covetousness. Also, sharing and giving of ourselves builds strong Christian character. We reap a deep sense of satisfaction when we strive to help others.

In Matthew, Chapter 20, Jesus was approached by a mother who had two sons whom she desired to have set on each side of Him. This woman did not truly realize what she was asking of Him. Her only thoughts were of the greatness and the prestige her two sons would receive. She did not consider the cost

[continued on page 12]

Second Timothy 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus,

2 To Timothy, my dearly beloved son: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our

Lord.

3 I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day;

4 Greatly desiring to see thee,

being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy;

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.



What Kind of Mother Does Your Family See?

Brother Roger L. Decker

The Need for Godly Mothers

A day has been set aside in the month of May to honor mothers, and rightly so. There is not a more worthy cause that I know of. If there was ever a time when there was a need for godly mothers, it is today. A mother is the first attachment of a child when he enters this world. When I am speaking of a mother, I am speaking of a Christian mother. Not every mother is a good mother, and not every father is a good father. Most mothers in this world are not pleasing God.

There is a lot more to being a good mother than bringing a child into the world. Napoleon once said, "The future destiny of a child is always the work of the mother." A mother has a great

effect on her children. She can influence them for either good or evil. Biblically, a good mother is one who pleases God, or one who is a Christian. You cannot find fulfillment as a mother until you find fulfillment in Jesus Christ. You have no hope of being a good mother without Christ. A mother needs her own personal relationship with God.

A good mother is not to measure herself by the world's standard, but rather by what the Word of God has to say about being a good mother. For example, in today's world, some say a mother should never discipline a child and should give the child anything he wants. Contrary to this view, God has a family order to abide by. We have to understand and keep in mind that in

the beginning, it was God who set up the family order. Feminists, atheists, social services, governments, and many writers of books have come against the Word of God only to wind up with many juvenile delinquents who are used to getting their own way on most issues. You should not get away from the basic principles in God's Word. God is the author and the founder of the home. His Word gives guidelines to help you through. If you ignore them, you will suffer the consequences.

Mothers have a great influence upon their children. According to our Scripture text, Lois and Eunice left a godly influence on Timothy. In the Scriptures we do not read of anything about his father except that he was Greek.

Acts 16:1 states, "Then came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father was a Greek." Luke mentioned that Timothy's father was Greek, but when writing to Timothy, Paul gave the impression that Timothy's father was either dead or unconverted.

The Importance of Godly Teachings

Our Scripture text shows that even though it appears that Timothy's mother did not have much help raising him, she was able to instill godly teachings in him. His grandmother and his mother instilled faith in Timothy so that when he heard the Gospel, he eagerly took hold of it. He was a product of his grandmother and his mother. The Scriptures tell us that his faith was unfeigned, which means that it was sincere and without hypocrisy.

Timothy's mother and grandmother are the ones Paul mentioned, indicating that they had done their job well in raising Timothy. One thing that his mother and grandmother taught and instilled in this young man is found in 2 Timothy 3:15, which reads, "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." The Holy Scriptures that Paul was speaking of were Old Testament Scriptures. As to Timothy's age, it is not clear, but we know it is wise to teach children the Scriptures at a very young age. I read that a Jewish Rabbi said: "As soon as a boy is five years old, he ought to be applied to the Holy Scriptures." They felt that when a boy begins to talk, he should be conversant with the Word of God. The Old Testament teachings were the foundation

for Timothy to receive the Gospel.

A mother has a tremendous responsibility. It is an impossible task without the Spirit of God. There is a great deal of pressure, and it takes lots of wisdom, knowledge, and patience to bear up under the responsibility. It is a position of tremendous influence and responsibility. Being a mother is a very high calling. The word "mother" is used two hundred forty-five times in two hundred twenty-six verses in the Bible, and that same name is given to the New Jerusalem, which is free and the mother of us all. The church is a mother to the new converts.

Although there are a lot of mothers in this world, not all mothers are pleasing God. A mother who pleases God will live a life of serving the Lord before her children. She will be careful of her conduct and her motives, and she will back the message with her words and her living. This is the type of life that influenced young Timothy to live for the Lord, and he gave his life wholeheartedly to Him.

The Power of a Praying Mother

One of the greatest powers in this world is a praying mother. I believe that 1 Samuel, Chapter 2, is one of the greater prayers by a woman in the Bible. Hannah was a praying mother, and she was a thankful mother. The Bible says in 1 Samuel 2:1-11: "And Hannah prayed, and said, My heart rejoiceth in the LORD, mine horn is exalted in the LORD: my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies; because I rejoice in thy salvation. There is none holy as the LORD: for there is none beside thee: neither is there any rock like our God.

"Talk no more so exceeding proudly; let not arrogancy come out of your mouth: for the LORD is a God of knowledge, and by

him actions are weighed. The bows of the mighty men are broken, and they that stumbled are girded with strength. They that were full have hired out themselves for bread; and they that were hungry ceased: so that the barren hath born seven; and she that hath many children is waxed feeble. The LORD killeth, and maketh alive: he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up.

"The LORD maketh poor, and maketh rich: he bringeth low, and lifteth up. He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth are the LORD'S, and he hath set the world upon them. He will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness; for by strength shall no man prevail. The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken to pieces; out of heaven shall he thunder upon them: the LORD shall judge the ends of the earth; and he shall give strength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed. And Elkanah went to Ramah to his house. And the child did minister unto the LORD before Eli the priest."

Hannah's prayer changed the history of the world then. She was barren, but she wept and prayed before the Lord. She was a praying woman. She vowed a vow that if the Lord would give her a man-child, she would give him back to the service of the Lord. She even got specific in her prayer, telling the Lord she wanted a baby boy. Out of that prayer came a great prophet and a high priest whose name was Samuel, and he had great power with God.

Another godly mother that many have read about was Susanna Wesley. She had nineteen children, and out of those nineteen, two were well known in the 1700s, and they were John

and Charles Wesley. John Wesley said she was very good at counsel. Before he was ordained a deacon, he had a heart-searching talk with his mother. Her life, as well as his father's, had a great bearing on John's and Charles' faith in God. John Wesley lost his friends, his earnings, and his reputation because he placed a higher value on having a clean heart and a soul full of God. When John and his three brothers were summoned to the bedside of their dying father, Samuel Wesley, his father wanted John to bend down, and he whispered in his ear, saying: "The inward witness, son, the inward witness, that is the proof, the strongest proof, of Christianity," and it is.

A godly mother's prayer and godly counsel are still needed yet today. Praying mothers can still help mold the lives of their children today. Mothers have a great amount of influence. Look at what influenced Timothy's life. Paul put it in his writings for a reason. Timothy's grandmother and mother taught him the Holy Scriptures, and look at the fruit it brought forth. As a mother, you are influencing your children either toward or away from God. Proverbs 22:6 reads, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it [the training he received as a child]."

"Who Can Find a Virtuous Woman?"

It is in the home that you learn to live with other people, that you learn to forgive others when they are wrong, and that you learn to ask for forgiveness when you are wrong. A mother has a high calling. She has a little congregation herself. When children go home, the first one they look for is usually their mother. When we would go back to Upstate New York, Roxanne would go to her mother, and I would go

to my mother, because they were who we wanted to see. It seems like when children visit the home, the mother is who they want to converse with. Yes, they talk to Dad, but it is usually Mother that they enter into a conversation with. When our children were in school and came home from school, often they would walk right by me and congregate around their mother because that was who they wanted to tell their problems to and who they wanted to talk to about how their day went.

A mother has a great influence. A godly mother would never consider the idea of an abortion. As a mother, which way do you want your child to go? What is important is not just education, a good marriage, a good home, a good job, and a nice family, but it is having a Christian experience and a spiritual life. The desire we had for our children was that they might grow up to be spiritually minded, have a spiritual home, and continue with the teachings of the Word of God. If you want your children to be spiritual, then you need to lead them in the right direction of spiritual things.

A godly mother teaches her children that discipline is needful and there is punishment for offenses. The Bible states in Proverbs 29:15, "The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame." You should not misuse that Scripture. This verse is referring to discipline. A child that has no restraint by his parents is left to his own will and pleasure and will end up doing things that his parents are ashamed of. He will be involved in things that bring embarrassment. If you want your child to be rebellious and worldly, then apply no discipline and turn him loose to motivate himself. Which way do you want your child to go? How do you want your child to make it

through this life?

Proverbs 31:10 tells us, "Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies." The word *virtuous* rightly means she is a force of strength and courage, and she is one who is noble. Finding a virtuous woman is far above the price of even the rarest gems. I realize this is a description of one in the Old Testament, but it suits every age and time. She is one who can be trusted. She will do her husband good all the days of his life, and she provides well for her house.

Sometimes when children are raised and get a home of their own, especially young men when they get married, there is a little conflict about how the wife makes things compared to how his mother made them, because all those years he was used to his mother's cooking. A virtuous woman is one who can be trusted, and she does her husband good all the days of his life. She is good to have around. She provides well for her house. Her children and her husband bless and praise her, and above all, she fears the Lord. She does not praise herself, but her good works testify for her.

A Mother's Influence

The Word of God addresses the responsibilities of a mother, young and old. The Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 5:14, "I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully." Titus 2:3-4 reads: "The aged women likewise, that they be in behavior as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children."

Proverbs 31:1 tells us where the writer got his wisdom. He

said, "The words of king Lemuel, the prophecy that his mother taught him."

You can read of some in the Word of God who influenced their children in the wrong way. Mothers have a tremendous influence in the home. First Kings 22:51-53 states: "Ahaziah the son of Ahab began to reign over Israel in Samaria the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and reigned two years over Israel. And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of his father, and in the way of his mother, and in the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin: For he served Baal, and worshipped him, and provoked to anger the LORD God of Israel, according to all that his father had done." This passage of Scripture is talking about the son of King Ahab and Queen Jezebel. Ahaziah was an evil king, and his reign lasted only two years. He did evil, and he was influenced by his father and mother, which is why the writer mentioned him.

Godly parental guidance is so necessary when raising children. A parent ought to teach good things to the children. They should be taught to be mannerly and to work. Too often children do not know how to do small things because they did not have to do anything in the home. Parents need to teach their children how to work. Young women need to know how to keep house, cook, make a bed, clean the house, and wash laundry. Young men should be taught how to work outside the home and how to plant a garden, if they have one, how to mow the yard, and how to do some repairs.

Obedience is necessary. A child who will not obey his or her parents will have trouble in the workforce, trouble with the pastor, trouble with the Word of God, and trouble with the elders.

There needs to be structure and stability in the home. The children need to see Mom and Dad dressed and ready for church every Sunday, every Wednesday night, and for revivals. They need to see that stability and structure in the home.

In talking about influence, Matthew 14:3-8 reads: "For Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him, and put him in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife. For John said unto him, It is not lawful for thee to have her. And when he would have put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet. But when Herod's birthday was kept, the daughter of Herodias danced before them, and pleased Herod. Whereupon he promised with an oath to give her whatsoever she would ask. And she, being before instructed of her mother, said, Give me here John Baptist's head in a charger."

This mother got stirred against truth and counseled her daughter to ask for the head of John the Baptist. I want you to notice that the Scripture says the daughter was instructed of her mother. Her mother got stirred and turned the daughter against the things of God.

The Responsibilities of a Mother

A godly mother is very giving and wants the best for her family. A teacher asked a boy this question: "Suppose your mother baked a pie and there were seven of you: your parents and five children. What part of the pie would you get?"

He answered, "A sixth."

The teacher replied: "I am afraid you don't know your fractions. Remember, there are seven of you."

"Yes, teacher, but you don't know my mother. Mother would say she did not want any pie."

Of all the careers mothers may have today, none is as challenging as being a mother. The calling to be a mother is great and rewarding. The responsibility is great. Being a mother is not something you learn from a college professor, but rather at the feet of Jesus Christ. As a mother, you are filled with responsibilities that are surpassed by none, and to fulfill them right, you need to be filled with the Holy Ghost.

What type of mother does your family see? Are you a mother who is doing her best to please God? If not, you need to do something about it, because your influence is being instilled in your children. If you feel that you have failed along that line, you need to bring it to the Lord. Do not continue in the state of not knowing God, because there is too much risk involved.

A poem entitled "The One Who Follows Me" reads:

*A careful mother, I ought to be,
A little one is following me
I do not dare to go astray
For fear she'll go the selfsame way.
I cannot once escape her eyes,
Whatever she sees me do, she tries.
Like me she says she's going to be
That little one who follows me.
She thinks that I am good and fine,
Believes in every word of mine;
The base in me she must not see
That little one who follows me.
I must remember as I go
Through summer's sun and winter's
snow
I am building for the years to be
That little one who follows me.*

As a mother, you have a great responsibility. God will help you to fulfill it. Always remember, when you are older and gray, it is wonderful to see your child come home and bring their children who are also serving God as you raised your children.

(Compact Disc TR-2451)

Colossians 3:17 And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

Are You a Dedicated Christian?



Brother Larry Dishman

Christian Commitment

This message is for both the lost and the saved. It is wonderful that everyone can become a dedicated Christian. You may not be saved now, but you can become a dedicated Christian. If you claim to be saved but you are not where you should be with the Lord, you can still become a dedicated child of God.

What is a commitment? My dear mother used to say to me, "Whatever you do, do it with all your might, for things done by half are never done right" and "If you are halfheartedly trying to serve God, you are not doing it right." Some people say, "Oh, there is a Christian; he really loves the Lord." Well, have you ever met a Christian who did not really love the Lord? All true

Christians really love the Lord. Others might say, "There is a Christian that really lives right." Well, all genuine Christians live right.

A man's actions cannot be divorced from his responsibility. Christian commitment and dedication are important for at least two reasons. First, the urgency of the time demands it. Second, it is the emphasis of the Word of God that we must be saved and dedicated. Challenging men to a genuine decision of commitment is difficult. With the exception of a few pockets of genuine commitment, the church has become a field of evangelism rather than a force for evangelism. Think about that.

Committed Christians are a minority at the present time. Nowadays if pastors in many

congregations were to call for a nine-week revival, I wonder if half the people would backslide. What would your reaction be if you thought you were going to have to go to church every night for nine weeks straight?

All across America, too many people, the young and the old alike, are not really committed to God. They profess Christianity, but they are not truly committed. I have heard some pastors say, "If I could get every professing Christian who attends occasionally to be dedicated, we could go somewhere with God." Today many people merely have the appearance of commitment. They talk the talk, but they do not walk the walk. My mom used to say, "Their actions speak louder than their words." Some people say, "I'll go to church, but don't

expect me to do an outreach, teach a class, pray publicly, or sing in the choir." What if everybody had that attitude? Thank God for people who are willing to be committed. Too many have the attitude, "I'll go to church as long as I don't have to do anything."

This poem entitled "Not on Sunday Night" echoes the point of view that some people have:

*I love the church that Jesus bought,
And know that it is right;
I go there on Sunday morning,
But not on Sunday night.*

*I love to sing the songs of God,
Such worship must be right,
This I do on Sunday morn,
But not on Sunday night.*

*God bless the preacher too,
And give him power and might,
But put the sinner in his place,
I won't be there Sunday night.*

*I love to hear the Gospel too,
It gives me pure delight;
I hear it on Sunday morning,
But not on Sunday night.*

*I would go through rain, sleet, or
snow,
Do anything that's right,
To be there Sunday morning,
But not on Sunday night.*

*I know I need more faith and
strength,
To keep me in the fight;
For help I come on Sunday morn,
But not on Sunday night.*

*Yes, we all must die,
I hope I will be right,
So may I die on Sunday morn,
But not on Sunday night.*

Benefits Without the Responsibilities

We need committed Christians, people who come to church on Sunday morning, Sunday night, prayer meeting night, and

revivals. Have you ever thought about why some people do not get married, but they live together? I think I know the answer to that. The primary reason is, they want the experience and the benefits of marriage without the commitment and the responsibilities. They want the benefit of a relationship without having to make a permanent commitment. That way if things do not go according to their liking, they do not have to get a divorce. Some professing Christians hop from one church to another. When a problem or a conflict arises with someone in the church, they feel called to go to another church.

Millions of people in America attend church, but they are not really committed to God. In other words, they just want to live with the church. They do not want to make a commitment, but they want the benefits of having a church to go to and to hear the Word preached. They want to join in with the saints and sing the songs, have a pastor to pray for them when they are sick, and to preach funerals for their family. They want a pastor to perform wedding ceremonies and to counsel them when they are in trouble. However, they do not want the responsibilities of being tied down to a local congregation. If you are a Christian, God wants you to use your spiritual gifts for the benefit of the local church and to submit to the leader of that church. Being committed to a local church requires sacrifice, time, and energy, often when you do not feel like it. The flesh would rather be doing something else, but God wants you to be committed.

Are you a committed Christian? God wants you to walk the aisle of a local congregation where Truth is preached and say, "I do." The Bible teaches that every Christian should be a dedicated, committed member of the local church. You should not be a

casual attender, one who is involved only when it suits you and then leaves the first time a conflict or a difficulty occurs. Talking about commitment, consecration, and dedication is far easier than to actualize it in one's personal life. In spite of personal inadequacies and frailties, you must face the Biblical demands for commitment.

Christianity has never survived on the basis of a mild, uncommitted life. Friend, it is every Christian's business to understand what it really means to be dedicated to God. Thank God for those who are making supreme commitments. In the world the object of their commitment is different from the Christian, but the fullness of their commitment often puts the Christian to shame. Let us look at commitment that is a personal dedication.

True Dedication Involves Sacrifice

What does it mean to dedicate your life to the Lord? Personal dedication requires several things. It begins with a primary decision. If one chooses to dedicate his life in any field, regardless of the field of endeavor, a primary decision has to be made. Joshua told the people of his day in Joshua 24:15, "And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD." Verse 24 reads, "And the people said unto Joshua, The LORD our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey."

The Jews and the Gentiles in the New Testament began their Christian walk with a primary decision. In Acts, Chapters 2, 8, 9,

10, and 16, we read of many conversions that began with a primary decision.

I want to help you to understand something about sanctification. Moses sanctified the book, the people, the tabernacle, and the vessels. He set everything apart for a holy calling. It was for the purpose of dedicating, committing, or sanctifying, setting them apart to a holy calling. When a primary decision is made at that time, one has set himself apart for a particular service. God has something that He wants each of us to do. God has a job for you, and personal dedication requires balancing your various responsibilities. True dedication to the Lord means putting God first and balancing the various responsibilities that God has given you out of your devotion to Him.

Personal dedication may require sacrificing what is dear to you. Hannah dedicated Samuel to the Lord. She left Samuel to serve in the temple, and she only got to see him once a year during the time of the annual sacrifice. True dedication is costly and involves sacrifice, and it cost Hannah the only child she had at that time. She kept him until she weaned him, and then she took him to the temple as she had promised. This was not easy for her to do.

If you look at 1 Samuel, Chapter 1, in the Old Testament, you will find that when she weaned him, she and her husband made a trip to Shiloh. When they slaughtered a bull and brought the boy to Eli, 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 worshiped the

LORD there" (verses 26-28). I like her opening words to Eli.

Hannah took an oath and identified herself as the woman who stood in the temple not many years before. She returned to the very place where she poured out her soul to the Lord in prayer. She repeated to Eli similar words that he spoke to her when he said, "The God of Israel grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of him" (1 Samuel 1:17).

Recognizing Christ's Ownership

Hannah talked about giving Samuel to the Lord, but she used a different word that means more along the line of giving back in response to a request. In other words, we do not give to God the same way that God gives to us. You see, God already owns everything, both before and after He gives it to us. When God gives you something, He is entrusting you with something that belongs to Him. When we give back to the Lord, we really give back everything that came from God.

Someone may ask, "What about my children?" God gave them to you. Another may say: "I have a good job. I made the money, and I bought my house." Friend, God gave you the knowledge and the ability to do the job. You could not have done it without Him. God gave you everything that you have, so when you dedicate those things to the Lord, you are giving back what God owns to begin with.

God gave Samuel to Hannah, and Hannah gave Samuel back to the Lord. She fulfilled her vow. It does no good to dedicate something to God unless you actually follow through with it. In the case of Hannah, she could not physically bring Samuel to the Lord, so she brought him to Eli, the high priest and representa-

tive of God. It is only right, reasonable, and logical to hand over to God what He has already given us.

The act of consecration is to recognize Christ's ownership, accept it, and say to Him wholeheartedly, "Lord, I am Thine by right of ownership." He bought us with a price, but He is asking us to give ourselves back to Him. Who then is willing to consecrate his service to the Lord?

Personal dedication requires determination. In 2 Corinthians 8:5, Paul said of the Macedonians, "And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God." I see determination in Paul's life. Paul wrote in Philippians 3:13, "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before." One must have a determination to give the Lord priority.

Giving God Top Priority

Do you have the determination to really give God priority in your life? After all, the Lord has determined to have first place in the hearts and lives of those who will follow Him. This is the reason Jesus said in Matthew 6:33, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." The order characterizing such, seeking has to be first, and then the conditional promise: "all these things shall be added."

I talked to someone about being faithful to God's house who said, "Well, I have to work and make money," speaking of his second job. I said: "Why don't you put God first? God said to seek Him first, and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. It is crystal

clear from this verse that the Lord is satisfied with nothing less than top priority in the hearts and lives of His people. Does God really have top priority in your heart and life?

Putting God first means simply, if you have two places to go, one involving your own interest and the other His interest, you ought to take the Lord's trip first. If you have two tasks to perform, and one is something that you want to do and the other is something the Lord wants you to do, you should do the Lord's task first. Christianity should be your vocation. You should give primary attention to spiritual things and secondary attention to the means by which you sustain your life. Your determination must be in spite of the cost. Jesus said in Luke 14:33, "So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple."

In order to be a genuine disciple of the Lord, one must be not only willing to put the Lord first in all things but also to have actually done so. A mere profession of Christianity is far from being sufficient. Many might have a tendency to impulsively offer to follow the Lord, but they have not sufficiently counted the cost and are unprepared to make the sacrifices necessary.

We read in Luke 9:57-62: "And it came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain man said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head. And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God. And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell,

which are at home at my house. And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

Dedication Requires Discipline

Some people allow their feelings toward others to govern the amount of service they render. You must be willing to give God first place, before father, mother, brothers, and sisters, according to the Bible. People do what they are determined to do. Personal dedication and commitment requires discipline. We see little church discipline and even less self-discipline. However, when we determine to do any given thing, the next step is for God to enable us to carry through with that decision. Therefore, we must practice self-discipline.

Romans 8:1 states, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." The Apostle Paul said in 1 Corinthians 9:26-27: "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."

First Thessalonians 4:3-6 reads: "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour; Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God: That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified."

Paul stated in 2 Corinthians 7:1, "Having therefore these

promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." Jesus said in John 15:3, "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." We must allow God's Word to prune us and cleanse us. We must pray and ask God to bless our efforts.

Do you know anything more excruciating than self-discipline? Those who were on drugs or who were bound by alcohol or tobacco, when they get saved, must practice self-discipline. They have to say no to the flesh and keep their body under. Titus 3:3 tells us, "For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another."

It requires discipline to be at church on time and to sing in the choir. It requires discipline to teach a Sunday school class or to work around the church. Personal dedication requires devotion to God. The deepest yearning of your heart should be the desire to grow into the person that God wants you to be. In too many people's lives, Christ is not very real and Christianity is not very meaningful. Religion is only a casual thing.

Some people follow the Lord like Peter did: afar off. Too many fail to find Christianity very meaningful. Through the years, their Christianity has meant little more than having become a Christian and going to church with some degree of regularity. It has not meant a new way of life for them, a higher set of values, or a life of service to one's fellowman. Hours of meaningful worship to God is largely negative and threadbare. Christ did not intend that this would be the kind of religion that He came to establish. That is not what Jesus had in mind.

A Living Sacrifice

The Apostle Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 3:18, "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." Are you a dedicated, committed Christian? Have you surrendered all to God?

In Romans 12:1-2 Paul said: "I beseech you therefore, brethren [he was not talking to sinners; he was talking to Christians], by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service [God is not looking for dead sacrifices anymore, but He is looking for living sacrifices]. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

One woman asked her pastor, "What does it mean to be a living sacrifice?" He reached into his desk and pulled out a blank piece of paper and said: "Sign your name at the bottom of this paper and let God fill it in as He wills. That is what it means to be a living sacrifice." You may say, "I'm not signing my name to anything until I see what is on the paper." God is not going to ask anything ridiculous of you. Anything that God puts on the paper is your reasonable service. This exemplifies what consecration is.

Your desire should be: "God, I will do what You want me to do, go where You want me to go, and say what You want me to say. I want You to use my hands, my feet, my mind, my mouth, and every part of me to the glory of God." You must present your body a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

Your reasonable service also requires discrimination. Joshua

told God's people to choose who they would serve. Paul said you must grow in order to be able to discern between good and evil. As a Christian, you have to set your mind on things above. That is what Paul was talking about in Colossians 3:1-2, which reads: "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth."

Where are your affections? Someone may say, "Well, I am waiting for God to take care of it all." No, He said to "set your affections." Some people set their affections on other things besides God. You can tell where people's affections are when you talk to them. Often that is what they want to talk about most of the time. God is displeased when you set your affections on things of this earth.

Committing Your All to Jesus

A Christian is a saint, which means that he is one who is set apart. Friend, the Christian is in the world, but he is not of the world. In John 18:36 Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence." A ship is in the ocean, but the ocean must never be in the ship. It was all right as long as the Titanic was in the ocean, but things went bad quickly when the ocean got into the Titanic. As a Christian, things are going to get bad when you let the world in you, because you are called to "come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you" (2 Corinthians 6:17).

You may be thinking, "Come on, preacher, no one can live this way." What about Joseph in the

Old Testament? You cannot put a finger on his life. He was dedicated, committed, and consecrated to God. What about Daniel? Daniel was committed and consecrated to God, and he was a young person. He had settled it that he was not going to defile himself with the king's meat. In the New Testament, Peter was dedicated. He said that he did not want to be crucified as they did the Lord. He asked to be crucified upside down. That was dedication. Paul was so committed to Christ that he was jailed, beaten, starved, stoned, ridiculed, run out of town, and eventually killed. In Acts 20:24 he said, "But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself."

Today it does not take much to move some people. Why? They are not dedicated, consecrated, or committed. The Bible says in Matthew 16:24-26: "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

Jesus has always demanded one's all in following Him. He never made exceptions. If Jesus would have considered an exception, it would have been the time that the rich, young ruler came to follow Him. Outwardly the man had all the signs that would make him a great follower. Inwardly, however, he was holding back, and Jesus recognized it. Jesus will not accept a partial commitment in anyone's life.

Hannah's dedication to God by the giving of Samuel to God is a reminder that everything comes from God, and you should dedicate all that you have to

Him. You ought to dedicate your family, your home, your business, your income, your school work, your reputation, your talents, and your time to the Lord. Will you dedicate your life to the Lord?

Is there any part of your life that God is not in complete control of? When was the last time someone said: "I have been watching you, and something is different about you. If I ever get saved, I would like to have what you have?" Are you ready to put yourself in the arms of God? Are you ready to commit your all to Jesus? Commitment is the giving of all one knows of himself to all one knows of God. Anything less than total commitment is unacceptable.

Proving Your Love to God

Will you commit faithfully to your local congregation every Sunday morning, every Sunday night, every Wednesday night, and every revival? Will you dedicate your time, your talents, and your money for the upbuilding of the local congregation? Are you willing to quit living with the church and marry the church? Are you willing to embrace the responsibilities as well as the benefits of being a part of the local congregation?

Do you want to prove your love to God? Nothing says, "I love You, God" like dedicating your life to Him. Far too many people say they want to be saved, but they are unwilling to lay everything on the altar. That is tragic. Many believers have become satisfied with a nominal Christian experience. They are content with church membership that requires little dedication and consecration. This present-day consecration, dedication, and commitment is far too shallow, because multitudes are halfheartedly trying to be a friend to God and a friend to the world at the same time.

Consecration, commitment, dedication, and self-indulgence cannot live together. Dedication to God cannot be divided, but it is to be complete and free from sin. Once you have consecrated and made a commitment, you must not go back on your commitment to God. The key to victory is not how much you can get from God, but how much you can give to God. Your highest aim should be to please God.

What has priority in your life? God will use believers who are totally committed to Christ. A Christian should be alarmed if he does not feel a hunger and a thirst for a deeper experience with Christ in the Spirit. There is

no satisfaction in being an uncommitted Christian, if there is such a thing.

There is a story about a lady and a missionary. They were standing on a bridge. She had two babies, and one of them was sick. The missionary said of one baby, "He is probably not going to live." He knew that the lady was going to sacrifice one of those babies to the crocodiles underneath the bridge. He begged and pleaded with her, "Please don't do it." He begged her not to do it for thirty to forty-five minutes.

The missionary had to leave, and when he came back, she had only one baby in her arms, and he cried and wept. He said: "Why did you do it? If you were going to do it, why did you give the well baby? If you were going to sacrifice one of your children, why did you not sacrifice the sick baby?" She looked at him with disgust and said, "I don't know how you Christians operate, but we offer our god the very best."

May God help us. If heathens offer their false gods their best, should we not give God our best? I believe most Christians could be a little more dedicated and committed to God.

(Compact Disc TR-1903)

[Guest Editorial—continued from page 2]
involved in such a request. Jesus informed her: "Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister" (verses 26-28). Many would like to be great and recognized as highly spiritual, yet they are unwilling to follow the guidelines that lead to such heights of success.

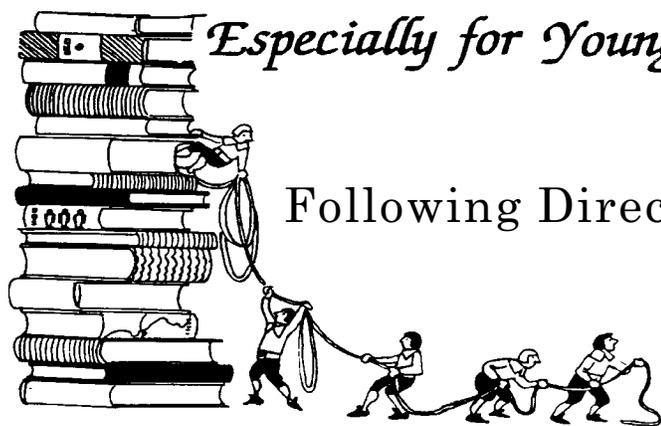
Someday we all will be gathered before God's Judgment throne. Each of us

will be required to give an account of the deeds performed in this life. God will place those who pleased Him on His right hand and those who displeased Him on His left hand. The faithful will be commended for a life of service rendered. He will say to those on His right hand, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick,

and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? . . . And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matthew (25:34-37,40)). Those on His left hand will be condemned for refusing to walk as He commanded and will be cast from His presence forever.

Selected

Especially for Young People



Following Directions



Why do you think that following directions to put something together correctly is important? When you purchase something that you must assemble, usually it comes with step-by-step directions that describe how to put it together and lists the tools that you will need. Some people toss the directions aside, and their projects do not turn out very well. You may get it assembled and have one part left because you skipped a step. Then you might have to take it apart completely to put that piece in.

Why should we follow directions applying to the Christian life? God has certain directions for us to follow. Sometimes we need directions when we drive somewhere, especially when we are unfamiliar with the area. If you do not follow the directions, you may get lost. Following directions is important. Anyone who is saved is in the army of the Lord. When you enlist in the army of the Lord, you are not your own. When one serves the devil, he is not his own. He does what the enemy tells him to do. Whether or not you think you are doing it on your own, you are doing what the enemy tells you to do.

When someone enlists in the United States Army, he becomes the property of the United States Government. Likewise, when you enlist in the Lord's army, you become the property of the Lord. When you get saved, you become God's property. If you claim to be

serving God, you need to consider how closely you are following the directions of God. If you enlist in the military, you must labor at the pleasure of the President's command. If the President says we are going to war, the Army is going to war, and the Army must follow certain directions.

You can read in the Bible that God gave very detailed instructions to Joshua, and his success depended on how closely he followed those instructions. How successful you are in your Christian life depends on how well you follow the instructions that God has laid out. It is very important. Joshua, Chapter 1, is where Joshua took over. Moses had departed from the scene, and God put Joshua in charge of the Israelites.

Joshua 1:1-8 reads: "Now after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD it came to pass, that the LORD spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying, Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses.

"From the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast. There shall not any man be able to stand before

thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. [Young person, when you become a child of God, this promise applies to you too. God will not leave you or forsake you. Just as He promised Joshua, He makes this same promise to you.]

"Be strong and of a good courage: [This Christian walk takes courage. When you go to school or work, it takes courage to be different.] for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I swear unto their fathers to give them. Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest.

"This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success." In this context the word *observe* was used in verses 7 and 8. God was telling Joshua to take notice. What a promise God gave to Joshua when He said that he would have good success as long as he would do what was written therein. If you are going to have good success in the things of God, you must do what the Lord asks you to do.

I researched the importance of following directions when one is in the military, and here is what I found: "Generally speaking, normally troops who follow orders immediately and resolutely are capable of large scale maneuvers needed for winning battles consistently." When our children were growing up, I would tell a child to take out the trash. Sometimes that child would reply, "Okay, after I do this." Guess what happened? It did not get done. The expectation was that when I asked a child to do something, the task got done immediately.

Let us say, for instance, that you were in the military and your commanding officer gave you a specific order and you replied, "Hang on for a minute and I'll do it after I do this." What do you think your commanding officer would do? There would be some sort of repercussion. Let us say your commanding officer told you to do something that he knew would save your life and the lives of others in the battle, but you say, "Wait a minute. I have to finish digging this foxhole." That would mean that you would be putting your life and the rest of the soldiers' lives in harm's way.

How can you apply this to your Christian life? When God impresses you to do something or if God shows you something in a message, remember that He is your Commanding Officer. He is in charge of everything. Does He expect you to put Him off or to move immediately? The answer is, He expects you to move immediately. He told Joshua that he would have good success if he would do all things according to how they were written in the Law.

If you do what God tells you and if you are quick to obey, you can be successful with God and in your Christian living. Many times if you put things off, you will get into trouble with God. You should not take the attitude, "I'll take care of this later." Oftentimes it does not

get taken care of, and then when you fall or fail, you wonder where you went wrong. Did you do what God told you to do when He told you to do it?

Young person, there is nothing wrong with God showing you something and your being quick to make it right, whatever it is. If God points something out in your life, you ought to be quick to obey and take care of it, because it will help you to be successful. God wants you to be successful. Just as in the military, those who follow orders immediately and are resolved to do so are successful in winning battles. When you are in a battle and God says, "This is what you need to do," how quickly do you obey Him? Linger or disobeying means the difference between defeat and victory. How many people like to be on the losing end of things? Do you like to be a loser? I do not. You should always be quick to obey the Lord.

Another point that I discovered when I researched the importance of following directions was that sufficient material resources are crucial. However, no amount of resources can make up for the lack of battlefield discipline. Military discipline is widely recognized as the most important factor in determining military success. Legendary conquerors, such as the Romans, used discipline to overcome opponents with better weaponry and greater numbers. What does it mean when they talk about battlefield discipline? It is never a good thing to panic and run. That is the reason soldiers go through basic training. They are trained to react and function as a unit, or as a team.

If you look into history, you will find that the Romans were very disciplined in what they did, and they functioned together as a unit. They moved like a well-oiled machine made up of men. Because of battlefield discipline, they overcame greater numbers, even when foes had greater weapons.

Young person, sometimes you may feel that you are outnumbered in your battles. The enemy may cause you to feel overwhelmed. If so, you need to look to God, the Gospel messages, and the things you have learned in Sunday school and daily devotionals. These are basics that you have to practice. The military practice their basic training over and over. In your Christian walk with God, you have to practice the basics daily because it helps with battlefield discipline. When the enemy comes upon you, you can rely on the training of your daily devotions and prayer. Where are many battles fought? They are fought in prayer and in your mind. You can think on Scriptures to help you. When Jesus was tempted, He brought up Scriptures to the devil. You must discipline yourself in your daily practice and do those things you need to do; then when you have spiritual battles and the devil tempts you, you can rely on those things that you have practiced to help you.

Another point that I learned was that any plan is better than no plan, even if you do not like the orders. Have your parents ever asked you to do something and you really did not like what they asked you to do? Sometimes my mother and father asked me to do some things that I really did not want to do. Even if you do not like the orders, some things have been tried and proven to work. This is what separates winners from losers.

Even the worst order, followed precisely, has a better chance of success than a good order not carried out fully. In other words, if you obey God and carry that order out, you have a very great chance of being successful in the battle with the enemy. It all goes back to following God just as Joshua did. God's Word lets you know that if you do these things, you will be successful. If you obey the things that you have been taught, you are going to be successful if you do

them immediately.

Following orders instills discipline within the ranks. When orders come from the top down, following those orders ensures that everyone is on the same page. This is a common salvation. Your trial may not be the same as someone else's, but the principle behind it is the same. We each go through trials and situations in this life, but if we follow orders, it ensures that we are on the same page and that we can get help and be successful.

Joshua 6:1-5 states: "Now Jericho was straitly shut up because of the children of Israel: none went out, and none came in. And the LORD said unto Joshua, See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valour. And ye shall compass the city, all ye men of war, and go round about the city once. Thus shalt thou do six days.

"And seven priests shall bear before the ark seven trumpets of rams' horns: and the seventh day ye shall compass the city seven times, and the priests shall blow with the trumpets. And it shall come to pass, that when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, and when ye hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city shall fall down flat, and the people shall ascend up every man straight before him."

God gave explicit directions to Joshua and the army of Israel, saying, in essence, "This is how you are going to conquer Jericho." Did they have to lift a sword, a spear, or a shield? No, God gave them the city because they followed His

commands. They did exactly what God commanded them to do.

Through the preaching, your daily Bible reading, or the thoughts expressed during the youth meetings, has God told you, "If you do what I have shown you, you will prosper and have good success"? Has God ever talked to you that way? He may say: "I am showing you something in your life. If you correct this or do as I tell you to do, you will have good success." Has God ever told you that or something similar? Maybe the Holy Spirit has come to you and said: "If you will correct this in your life, you will be more successful. You will not trip and fall. You will not fall into the same traps into which you have been falling. You will be successful."

Young person, if you will do what the Lord commands you to do immediately, you will have good success. Do not be like King Saul, who only partially followed the directions that the man of God gave him. First Samuel 15:3 tells us, "Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass." King Saul did not do as he was commanded. That was what God, through the Prophet Samuel, commanded him to do, but Saul did what he thought was right.

Verse 9 reads, "But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them: but every thing that was vile and refuse, that

they destroyed utterly."

Verse 11 says, "It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king [this was God talking]: for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments. And it grieved Samuel; and he cried unto the LORD all night." Because Saul failed to follow the commandments of God, it cost him the kingdom, and eventually it cost him his life. If you fail to follow the commands of God, young person, it will cost you.

Following God's commands is very important. By not following the commands of the Lord, it could bring trouble to you and others. The nation of Israel suffered because of King Saul's disobedience. Joshua 6:18 tells us, "And ye, in any wise keep yourselves from the accursed thing, lest ye make yourselves accursed, when ye take of the accursed thing, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it." In other words, the decisions you make do not just affect you, but they affect others.

I believe that everyone wants to be successful, not only in his personal life but also with God. You must do everything that God commands you to do to be successful. If you will be obedient to the commands that God has given you, you will be successful. He promised that to Joshua, and He will promise that to you. If the Lord is pointing anything out in your life that you need to take care of, you need to take care of it quickly, because your success depends upon it.

Brother Steve Strelecky

"He, that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy."

Proverbs 29:1

Jaxson Bell's Healing

God has been so good to my family. I cannot praise Him enough for all He has done in my life. Several years ago my son Jaxson was involved in a terrible accident. A tree uprooted and fell across the yard, striking him and nearly taking his life. Saturday, April 29, 2016, I took my two children to visit with my brother and his children. We took the children outside to play. The backyard where they were playing sloped downhill into a wooded area. They were running around and having fun. I was sitting on the hillside holding Jaden, who was one year of age at the time. Jaxson had just turned three.

It was a wonderful, seventy degree day. While I was sitting there, I looked up into the tree line, and I noticed a rustling sound in the trees. I instantly thought, "I wonder what that is." I was looking for an animal. The rustling sound got louder and shook one tree a little, and I thought, "I don't know if I really want to see the animal that is making that noise!" Suddenly the tree I was staring at started falling toward us.

God helped me to react quickly. I jumped up and said to my brother, who was sitting right beside me, "Run!" He was able to get one of his children out of the way. Thankfully, his other two did not get hit. His one-year-old stood down by the trunk of the fallen tree and his three-year-old was toward the top of the hill near the house. However, Jaxson was behind me. I could not find him as I ran.

After the tree fell, we were panicked and started looking for everyone. I was screaming

"Jaxson!" I spotted him face down on the ground, but nothing was touching him. At first, I thought he did not get hit, because nothing was touching him. The hillside held the tree up so it was not laying directly on him, but the tree did hit him on its way down. I did not realize that at the time I ran over to scoop him up. Then I knew that he had gotten hit because his body was so limp. Also, he made the most awful gurgling sound when I picked him up.

I ran up the hill, and as I ran, his right leg dangled as if all his bones were broken and the only thing holding it together was the skin. I laid him down at the top of the hill and instantly started looking him over. I could see that a bone was poking out of his lower leg. I started feeling his head and could feel that his skull was broken. He had two places that I could feel on his skull where the bone was split, but not piercing his skin.

While I was examining him, he could not talk to me. He could only make a gurgling, crying noise, and suddenly he made no noise at all. His eyes rolled back in his head and he started to turn a really light gray color, and then he was no longer breathing. I started yelling to my brother: "He's not breathing! He's not doing anything, and he's turning gray!" My brother was already on the phone with 911, and they instructed him to have me start CPR. He called out to me, "You have to do CPR." I just cried, "No, I can't do that." He yelled even louder, "You have to do CPR!" Thank the Lord, God gave me the strength to do CPR on him.

I do not know how long it was, probably under a minute. The only thing I could think of as I was doing CPR was: "Don't let him go, Lord. Don't take him from me." God heard my plea. All of the sudden, Jaxson spit up a little and his color began to come back. What a miraculous sight to see his color return! As his color started to return, he started making the most awful, painful scrunched up face, and then he started making the saddest sound from the pain that I have ever heard. Just then, we heard the ambulance coming.

When the ambulance arrived, I told them what had happened. They instructed me to stand by the house with the other kids while they got him on the gurney. I knew God was helping them work on him during that time because Jaxson responded a little to the EMTs. They loaded Jaxson into the squad and prepared to meet Med Flight to transport him to Children's Hospital. After the ambulance left, Jason (my husband) and I headed to the hospital in constant prayer. We contacted family to let them know what had happened.

When we arrived at the hospital, they took us straight back to the trauma room where they were already doing an assessment on him. The nurses had informed me that he had been responding and answering questions when he first arrived, but as time went on, he became less responsive. They asked me to explain what had happened. They asked if he had fallen from a tree. I replied, "No, a tree uprooted and fell on him." However, I think they were a little confused by this reply because he had no marks on his body except a few scratches above his eye and on his back. They decided more scans were necessary and took him in for another CT scan.

During this scan, Jaxson became completely unresponsive and his stats began to drop. Jason and I had no idea that he was crashing. The staff was very calm and told us they were done with his scan and they were going to take him to his room. They directed us toward the chaplain to talk to in case of a worst-case scenario. They took Jaxson up to his room and started working on him and giving him blood transfusions. All we could do was pray.

During this time, Jason received the One Call Now recorded message that was sent to the congregation. Instantly we knew that prayers were being sent forth. How grateful and thankful we were for those prayers and for a God who answers prayer!

After about two hours, we were finally brought to Jaxson's room. His doctors were waiting to talk to us about his injuries and to describe all they had discovered. First, we talked to the neurologist. He said that his skull was broken all the way down the middle, leaving a gap. Also, he had two cracks streaming out from the large one down the middle. This was causing a boney plate to push up into his skin. I knew that was the part I had felt. He also had several breaks in the lower back portion of his skull. The doctor informed us that if his brain should swell, there was a high chance that the major blood vessel that ran along the top of the skull could burst due to the rigid broken bone. He said: "We have seventy-two hours until it will be at its worst. If the brain swells, it will press on that blood vessel." He did not give us much hope.

Another doctor we talked to was part of the orthopedic team. He reviewed the rest of Jaxson's broken bones with us. He said that the right femur was snapped all the way in half and that was

causing him a lot of pain. Also, his tibia and fibula were broken in half, and one of them had pierced through his skin and went back in. His hips were broken in several spots as well as his collarbone. The doctor's plan was to repair the leg as soon as Jaxson was stable enough.

From the general surgeon, we learned that his liver was lacerated almost 100 percent. Both kidneys were damaged, and his lungs were very bruised. While we were talking to the doctors, they finally allowed us to see Jaxson. He was hooked up to several IVs and was receiving a blood transfusion. He was intubated and resting due to a medically induced coma. His right leg was wrapped from hip to toes and he was wearing a neck brace.

The neurologist said, "We are going to have to wake him every hour and perform neurological checks." So when his hourly checks came and they woke him up, he would instantly scrunch up his face and scream. We did not know if it was from pain or if his brain was damaged, because of the uncontrollable emotion. They said it could be pain or it could be the other. We are thankful that it was from the pain and not brain damage. He does not have any side effects, thank the Lord!

The first night some visitors came and prayed for him. Many family members came and supported us too. At some point during that night, Jason and I were standing at the end of Jaxson's bed. I remember staring at him as I silently cried. God spoke to me right then, saying, "He will be fine." It was clear as day, as if God was standing right beside me. Instantly God took me to a calm place and gave me reassurance. I am very thankful for His voice.

We had many heartbreaking moments watching our son go

through that. However, not just us, but many of our loved ones and family members did as well. We are just so thankful that God was able to give us peace of mind and keep us calm and holding onto Him. It was a testimony to the doctors and the nurses. We spoke about God and had many prayers going forth.

On day two Jaxson began to look worse. He started retaining water and swelling up from all the blood transfusions and the other IV fluids he was receiving. Also, he was bleeding internally from all his injuries, causing his belly to have extreme swelling. Thank God, his brain was not showing any signs of severe swelling. He was passing his hourly neurological checks, but he was still screaming when they woke him up.

During these first two days, he developed pneumonia in the hospital. The doctors had to be careful of what medicines they could give him because of his liver and kidneys. They started him on antibiotics, and Jaxson's stats began to improve. On day three, he was stable enough for the orthopedic doctor to repair his leg surgically.

During Jaxson's surgery, as our family waited in the waiting room, my daughter Jaden was running around and tripped, falling right into the edge of the windowsill. As I scooped her up, blood began pouring down her face from a large gash in the middle of her forehead. The medical staff helped by taking her down to the emergency room where they cleaned her up and gave her stitches. I thank God that was all she needed.

Jaxson's surgery lasted about two hours. When he was finished, they let him rest in his room until his next hourly check. During this neurological check, Jaxson was a little more responsive and was not screaming or fighting the doctors as much as

before. This showed us that his pain level was easing up due to his leg repair. The doctors said he had most likely been in so much pain due to the rigid bone stabbing into his leg muscles, which caused his intense screaming each time they woke him up. The pain eased substantially after repairing his leg.

Another miracle God worked during this time started on day three as well. It was this day, to our disbelief, that we realized we had no insurance coverage. Jason had quit his job in March and started with the Ohio State Highway Patrol in April, but his new insurance coverage was not due to start until May. Therefore, we had no coverage the first two days, including the emergency room, the trauma room, the life flight, the scans, and so on, everything that would have been the most expensive. Jason's family started a "Go Fund Me" fundraiser to help with medical costs. We are so thankful to God for all the donations we received. However, the next day after the fund started, Jason received a phone call from the HR department of his old job explaining that he was still covered for the month of April. It truly was a miracle, because his insurance was supposed to expire at the end of March. We verified it with the insurance company, and it was indeed true that we were covered throughout April. So after one day, we shut down the Go Fund Me fundraiser because of God giving us the insurance miracle.

Finally Jaxson reached his seventy-two-hour mark. This was important because the chance of swelling in the brain usually peaks by that time. They determined that his brain was not swelling excessively, but could have minor inflammation. God answered our prayers in a mighty way. From that day on, the neurological doctors began giv-

ing Jaxson small tests. They started to do little things like see if he could give them a high five, and he could. They asked him questions, but he would not try to answer. This made them unsure if he had any brain damage.

The next two days, the doctors were able to manage his pain better from pain medication, and they allowed him to have longer periods of rest. He was able to sleep for several hours at a time. When he was awake, they had him watch a movie, and he was able to pay attention to the movie, which was a good sign.

On day four the medical team wanted to remove his tube that had been helping him breathe. In order to do that, he needed to pass a breathing test. It took him a couple of tries to pass. We prayed several times, and in a few hours, when they came back, Jaxson passed the test. They then extubated him and removed other tubes the same day. They removed his NG tube, his urine catheter, and the IV line in his hand. After his chest tube was removed, they tried to get Jaxson to talk. He was able to say a few words in a soft, squeaky voice. It was the best sound we had heard all day. Shortly thereafter, they allowed me to hold him. God was just pouring blessings on us with a successful day of healing.

As the next two days continued, the doctors monitored Jaxson's fever and breaths per minute. He was still recovering from the pneumonia that he had developed. They were also monitoring his pain level and blood pressure, which was high for several days. Each time we prayed, God was there to answer us. By day six his blood pressure was within normal limits, and the doctors decided it was time to try a swallow test to see if he could eat. At first, he did not pass, but they tried again, and he passed enough to be allowed to drink thickened liquids. Later

that evening, a nurse came to us and said the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) was at full capacity and needed to free up a room. She explained that Jaxson was the most stable child on the ICU floor at that time and they were going to move him from the ICU to his own room on a different floor. A lot of rejoicing came from this great news!

Shortly afterward, Jaxson was moved to a more comfortable room. This room was more of a recovery room where he would work with different therapists to help him get back to eating, talking, and playing. The neurologist was still monitoring him closely, looking for any abnormal behavior or difficulties in motor or speech skills. By day seven he was able to try to eat some thickened foods. This was very difficult because he was still struggling with swallowing. They decided they would put a feeding tube in to help him get nutrition.

Jaxson began improving in other areas. He began using his hands more, especially when it came to playing with his toy cars. He also started to talk more and hold short conversations. The first thing he asked when he was moved to his new room was, "Where is JJ?" This was encouraging because we knew his memory was not affected and that he was concerned for his sister.

Each day God healed Jaxson more and more. By day eight he began to act more like himself. A therapist came in to work with him on motor and cognitive skills. She brought in a wooden car for him to paint, and he was able to paint the whole car by himself. She asked him questions about shapes and colors, and he was able to answer them all appropriately. Later that day, he passed his neck exam and was allowed to have his neck brace removed. We were even able to

take him on a couple of strolls in his wheelchair. This day was such a huge turning point in Jaxson's recovery. It was only possible by the healing hand of God for such speedy improvements.

The next few days went very similar to this day. He had daily visits from therapists and good reports each time. He passed his swallow test on day nine, and they were able to remove his feeding tube. Later we were able to order regular food for him, but our picky eater did not eat much. On this same day, the neurological doctors released Jaxson from their services. One of the neurologists who was working with Jaxson throughout his hospital stay came and talked to me. He sat in amazement staring at Jaxson. This doctor had seen his scans and had seen his breaks, yet he could not explain how a child with such trauma had almost no neurological side effects, aside from a concussion. He said that just watching him and talking to him did not match the expectations that his CT scans had shown. I will never forget the doctor's final conclusion before he left the room. He explained that the team of doctors all agreed that the tree only hit his head as he was taking a step with his right foot. The blunt

force of the tree hitting him at the same time he took a step caused most of his injuries to be on his right side. Then he gave his final diagnosis from the neurological team: "Multiple skull fractures and a concussion." It did not break his neck or his spine. God is so good! On day one, I would have never guessed that his neurological outcome would be so good, but I thank God for His mercy!

Within the next few days, Jaxson was released from other teams of doctors and was preparing to go home. General surgery said that his liver was repairing itself and that his kidneys and liver were returning to normal function. Lastly, the orthopedic team released him and said all his leg bones were healing properly. He was instructed to have follow up visits with each department in the months to come. Then on day eleven the last thing he had to do in order to go home was prove to the medical staff that he was going to eat and be able to keep his sodium levels in a normal range. By day twelve he was able to go home.

We are so thankful and grateful for how God moved on our son. Not only has He healed him completely, but He healed him so quickly. Jaxson only needed pain medicine for the first

three days after he was released. Within two weeks he began to scoot himself around on the floor to get from one place to another. His follow up appointments showed that he was healing perfectly. One month after his release, he received a smaller leg cast and began walking. A couple of months later, his small cast was removed, and a week after that he was back to running around. One year later, his rod was surgically removed from his femur.

God turned this tragedy into a miracle. I am so thankful we were able to lean on Him through it all. We do not know why this trial had to happen, but what we do know is that God is still in control. He not only protected my brother's children, but He also healed my son 100 percent. I asked God to give me a verse of Scripture that might encourage others who are going through a trial, and He led me to Proverbs 3:5, which reads, "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding." I am thankful for a faithful God whose ways are higher than mine. I may never understand why our family went through this, but I trust God and know it was for His glory.

Sister Jessica Bell

"Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases."

Psalm 103:1-3

Deuteronomy 28:1 And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently [there is a contingency] unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the LORD thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth:

2 And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God.

3 Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field.

4 Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep.

5 Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store.

6 Blessed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and blessed shalt

thou be when thou goest out.

7 The LORD shall cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thy face: they shall come out against thee one way, and flee before thee seven ways.

8 The LORD shall command the blessing upon thee in thy storehouses, and in all that thou settest thine hand unto; and he shall bless thee in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

9 The LORD shall establish thee an holy people unto himself, as he hath sworn unto thee, if thou shalt keep the commandments of the LORD thy God, and walk in his ways [notice all these contingencies].

10 And all people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of the LORD; and they shall be afraid of thee.

11 And the LORD shall make thee plenteous in goods, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy

cattle, and in the fruit of thy ground, in the land which the LORD sware unto thy fathers to give thee.

12 The LORD shall open unto thee his good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season, and to bless all the work of thine hand: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow.

13 And the LORD shall make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath; if that thou hearken unto the commandments of the LORD thy God, which I command thee this day, to observe and to do them:

14 And thou shalt not go aside from any of the words which I command thee this day, to the right hand, or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them.



THE BLESSINGS OF OBEDIENCE

Brother E. David Stegmeier

"They Shall Be Afraid of Thee"

This Scripture reading is very special to me. In 1967, I was in my fourth year of teaching high school in Montana. General William Westmoreland was the

overseeing officer in Vietnam, and he was stepping up the war that year. They started drafting teachers into active military duty. First, coaches went, then history teachers, and then math and science teachers were last. I was an

English teacher, so I was in the middle. My superintendent went to the draft board and asked, "Is Mr. Stegmeier going to be drafted?"

They said, "Yes, he will be soon."

He said: "We would like to keep him as a teacher. Would you allow him to join the reserves?"

My superintendent came to me and said: "David, would you join the reserves? We would like to keep you here at the school," and I said I would do that.

I was assigned to Fort Leonard Wood. I was there for about six months. I was accustomed to going to church, like the Bible says that Christ had the custom of going to the synagogue. So on Sundays I went to the base chapel. It was a large chapel; probably about three hundred men were in there. I picked up the bulletin, and these fourteen verses were printed in there, and they fed my hungry soul. If your soul is hungry, you will get something when you go to the house of worship.

The Bible says in John, Chapter 4, that He wants His people to worship Him in Spirit and in Truth. People go to ball games and get in the spirit of them. Some people get in the spirit when they go shopping, such as shopping on "Black Friday." Many people camp out all night to get one special deal on this or that. I think it is ridiculous. I get excited when I go to the house of worship.

Verse 10 of our Scripture text says, "They shall be afraid of thee." I went to the chapel after I first got to basic training, and I was kneeling at the altar praying. Soon I had a sense that someone was watching me. I looked up, and a tall Army chaplain was standing there, so I quit praying. I got up and said: "I'm a new man here. I just got in the service, and I want to live a holy life. I'm determined, by the grace of God, that I'm going to go out of the service as I came in, living a holy life. I don't want anything to mar my walk with God or my record."

He said, "I'm afraid of you."

I said, "You know, in John, Chapter 8, a woman taken in adultery was brought to Christ. All those Pharisees and Sadducees were gathered around and said to stone her, but Jesus reached down and wrote in the dust. I believe He wrote something meaningful, because the Bible lets you know that all those men left because they each had a guilty conscience.

The chaplain said, "No, Jesus was just doodling in the dust." I do not know why he said he was afraid of me. He had rank, and I did not. However, when we mention living a holy life, the world is afraid.

Living the Best Life

By the grace of God, I intend to be fully obedient to God. I am convinced that if I fully obey Him, I will have the best life. I am not looking beyond what God has given the Church of God. We are the most blessed people on earth. If we obey the Lord and carefully keep all His commandments, He will put us on high. We will be the most blessed people in the world. That puts a fear in me when I realize the great responsibility that we have. We will be blessed in the city, in the field, with children, and so forth.

Verse 5 of our Scripture text says, "Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store." My wife's mother has told me a lot of the stories of Brother W. A. Wilson and Brother Emerson Wilson. During the Great Depression, Brother and Sister W. A. Wilson were struggling, as many families were. It got down to where they did not have much to eat. One Saturday morning, he got his basket out of the pantry, and his wife asked, "Where are you going?"

He said, "I am going downtown to the square."

"With that basket? Do you

have any money?"

He replied, "No."

"Isn't that kind of foolish?"

He said, "No, God said He would fill my basket." So off he went down to the square, and he sat there with an empty basket. Soon along came a farmer from the Church of God who said, "God told me to fill your basket," and that farmer filled his basket. He went home with a basket full of groceries. God is true to His Word and the blessings of obedience. I thank God for them!

Verse 7 lets us know that God will conquer our enemies. We have had a lot of enemies in our ministry. One morning while I was teaching school, our second daughter was home with my wife. She had not gone to school yet. In came a young lady who was unhappy with us. She came in looking like a night club dancer and was really going to talk to my wife and let her have it. My daughter, who was a quiet, timid girl, came out of her bedroom and said: "You leave my mother alone and go on your way. My mother doesn't have to listen to this." After this young lady left, my wife said, "Wow! Where did that come from?" God will help us when we have problems with enemies. This verse says they will attack you from one direction, but they will scatter in seven.

Verse 8 lets us know that God will guarantee a blessing in everything we do. Verse 13 lets us know that we will always be on the top and never on the bottom. The main thought of the Book of Deuteronomy is obedience. If you want to live for God and have the most productive and rewarding life, you must obey God. In the Book of Deuteronomy there are the following words: hear, fear, keep, observe, and do. If you will do that, you will have the best life. I can stand and testify that I have had a wonderful life.

In Deuteronomy 5:29 we read these words by Moses: "O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!"

Disobedience Brings Curses

In fairly recent years, we have heard much about the Holocaust. When I was in school, we did not hear much about that, but in recent years they have brought out more and more details about the Holocaust. I believe that the reason those people suffered so tremendously was that they turned down Jesus Christ and the Word of God. In the Old Testament, God said He would scatter them in all nations, and they have been. Oh, the sorrow that has been brought down to those people because they rejected Christ and the Word of God.

In this day, we are the Israel of God; therefore, we have a tremendous responsibility to obey God. I want the best life for my wife, my family, and my congregation. The best life is found in obeying God unquestionably.

In the New Testament, in Matthew 23:37, I can feel the sadness in the words of Christ when He said, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" If you disobey God, you are asking for trouble. You are asking for the curses.

Have you read about the tremendous curses that came upon Israel? Verse 5 of our Scripture text speaks about the blessing that comes upon us in literal things. God will bless you

in every way in your life when you are fully obedient to Him. Through God's help, He will enable you to have an advantage over the enemy of your soul. Obedience will lift you higher, make you richer, and keep you safer.

In our Scripture text, the blessings that were promised include preeminence over nations, material prosperity, fruitfulness, fertility, abundance of crops, victory in battle, and success in international trade. I thought of America. Our nation truly has been blessed. If we want to keep the blessings that have been given to us, we need to encourage those who are in leadership positions to obey God. We all ought to pray for our nation. When I pray, very rarely do I leave out prayer for our nation's leaders. The Bible says we should pray for our leaders.

If you continue to read Chapter 28, you will find that the curses include scarcity, barrenness, crop failure, pestilence, disease, blight, drought, defeat in battle, fright, adversity, calamity, and powerlessness.

Blessings Are Linked to Obedience

God is looking for an obedient people. Blessings come when you hearken diligently to the voice of God and obey all His commandments. I agree with the writer that said God does not allow us to keep the laws we like and break others. We are to obey *all* the laws of God. We cannot choose those that we want to obey and leave the others. Ezekiel 36:27 reads, "And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them." I have never found that God's commandments are too difficult to keep. I have enjoyed the privilege of serving God for more than seventy years.

It is a real privilege.

Your love to God is proven by your degree of obedience. A simple sacrifice cannot replace complete obedience. In John 14:21 Jesus said, "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him."

In my many years of being a pastor, I have seen a lot of hardship, sadness in homes, and situations that I believe would not have had to happen had people been obedient to God. I have seen young people who were raised in the Truth turn away from God. Some committed suicide, some had broken homes, and so on. It did not have to be that way. Your understanding of God's Word and His will are determined by your obedience. The child of God understands things that are hidden to the world. Again, your understanding of God's Word and His will are determined by your obedience.

Blessing and obedience are linked together in indivisible union. Jesus was our example. I often say when people want to quibble about the standard, "Let us measure your degree of obedience with the obedience of the Lord." The Bible says in Philippians 2:8-9: "And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. [If you are struggling with trivial things, how would you measure to the obedience of Christ? Consider the obedience of Christ. Not only did He die for us, but He died in the cruelest manner possible on the Cross.] Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name."

I still believe in the Bible standard for the Church of God.

It sets us apart as a distinct, beautiful people. In the community where I live, we have many stores. In one store I often tell one lady, "You look like a real saint." She lives in another community, but she says, "This is the standard of holiness." God has a standard for His people. The Apostle Paul wrote in Ephesians 1:3, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ."

How Is Your Obedience?

Are there things in your life that you question and have not fully committed to? Are they keeping you from receiving those blessings that God has for you? There is a song I like to read from our hymnal entitled "Obedience" by D. S. Warner.

*By Thy blessed Word obeying,
Lord, we prove our love sincere,
For we hear Thee gently saying,
"Love will do as well as hear."*

*Feigned hearts Thy name
professing,
Thy commandments cast aside;
But we feel Thy great salvation,
And in all Thy truth abide.*

*Ev'ry word Thy mouth hath
spoken
Is essential to our life;
All Thy mandates love betoken,
To oppose them is but strife.*

*In Thy wisdom, Lord, confiding,
We will follow in Thy way;
With Thy love in us abiding,
'Tis delightful to obey.*

*Each commandment Thou hast
given
Is a way-mark on the road,
Leading up from earth to Heaven,
To the blessed throne of God.*

*Dear Redeemer, we would hallow,
All Thy word, so firm and true,
In Thy footsteps meekly follow,
Thy commands we love to do.*

Honest people want to see real Christianity. I am laboring to win souls to Christ. The best way

to win a soul is to live the life. The life is the light of men. There is so much unbelief and hypocrisy today. When the psalmist spoke about the church, he said it was the perfection of beauty.

First John 1:7 says, "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another." If we do not have fellowship, someone is walking behind light. It is just that simple. It behooves us to continue walking in the light. There are honest hearts that want the Truth. God is calling people to the Truth in a wonderful way.

Young person, you need to stay with the church. The Bible says in Psalm 37:25 (David speaking), "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." God has never forsaken me, and He will never forsake you.

(Compact Disc TR-2024)

Why Prayer Is Different

I shall never forget what a close associate of Charles Spurgeon once said when speaking upon the theme of prayer. I cannot quote him verbatim, but the substance was this: "When we rely upon organization, we get what organization can do; when we rely upon education, we get what education can do; when we rely upon eloquence, we get what eloquence can do; and so on. I am not disposed to undervalue any of these things in their proper place, but," he added impressively, "when we rely on prayer, we get what God can do."

Divine Expectation



Brother Prince Moon

God's Investment

The devil is a thief and a liar, and he loves to try to steal the good things that God wants to give us. I need more of God, and I want more of God, do you? In Joshua, Chapter 14, Joshua was more than eighty years of age, and he said, "Give me this mountain" (verse 12). You may say, "Lord, give me the wisdom to be a better parent" or "Help me to be a more effective witness."

We are needy people, and our spiritual needs are not met by major online retailers or by the news media. Our needs are met by God Almighty. He wants to fill our every need. The devil is working overtime to try to weaken us and take over our thought life, but God has been good. He has kept us moving

forward for Him and encouraged. The devil has a plan, but God has a greater plan. Praise the Lord! When God speaks, things change. You do not have to allow the devil to take anything from you. The devil loves to steal, to kill, and to destroy; that is how he operates.

If you are already saved, you already love God, but you need extra strength to secure what you need. Just take one more step, and you will see that small cloud turn into a rainstorm to bring the refreshing you need down in your soul. Maybe you have been discouraged, and you need just a little more of God. If you are not saved, do not put salvation off any longer. Now is the time. Today is the day. I am glad that I am saved.

The enemy is active, but God

is still good. Matthew 25:23-28 states: "His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine.

"His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed: Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my

coming I should have received mine own with usury. Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents."

Jesus wears many hats, so to speak, and in fact, we do too. Sometimes a father is a referee between children, a taxi driver, and a cook. A mother has to wear many hats as well. She has to be a keeper at home, doing the work of the home, and so on. Well, Jesus also wears a lot of hats too. He is a Savior, a Sanctifier, a Guide, a Divine CEO (Chief Executive Officer), a Divine CFO (Chief Financial Officer), and a Divine Investor. He expects something from you and me.

I thought, in brief, about divine expectation. God has done so much for us. He has given us joy, peace, long-suffering, a wonderful wife or a wonderful husband, and the church. He has invested all of that in us, and He is looking for an increase.

The Need for an Increase

In the Bible, in 2 Samuel, David was fighting against Saul, and the Bible says David grew stronger and stronger and Saul grew weaker and weaker. David had to increase in some areas for the battle. Maybe you feel that you are in a battle, but the battle seems to be stronger than you are; therefore, you need an increase.

The devil will try to steal your prayer life. He will put this or that in the way to try to steal your time, but Jesus said that "men ought always to pray, and not to faint" (Luke 18:1). God is looking for an increase.

David kept increasing. He went from using a sling and a stone to kill a giant to fighting thousands of men. He went from watching over his father's sheep to being the king of Israel. It is time for you to increase. You may not take big steps, but you

can say: "Lord, I see my need to increase. I need more of You. I need extra help."

Statistics indicate that last year three thousand churches in America closed their doors. The devil is on the increase. Statistics indicate that thirteen states have now legalized marijuana use. Same-sex marriage is on the increase. Can you imagine that? That would have been shocking forty years ago, but the devil is taking giant steps today. You should be able to sense that. May the Lord help us to get an increase.

Again, David got an increase and he kept moving forward, going higher in God. He was never satisfied. The Old Testament prophets got an increase. You can read that the Prophet Elisha performed many miracles through the power of God. Have you read about Elisha's death? They put him in a tomb in the ground, and years later when they wanted to bury another man, the burial team got fearful because the enemy was coming, so they made a mistake and dropped that body on top of Elisha's body. Do you know what happened? There was so much power in the bones of Elisha that the man arose. Elisha did many miracles in his life, but even after he died, he was still increasing for God. Elisha's bones were full of the power of God!

Oh, there is so much that God has for us! I want more. About five years ago, I sensed that I needed to go higher in God. I was saved, and I loved God, but I sensed there was a glass ceiling over me, so to speak, that I could not get past. I could only go so high and so far with God. I said: "Lord, what am I going to do? I am a pastor." God began to show me what I could do. Had I not made a move that day, I do not know where I would be.

If you are saved, you should want to go as high as you can

and get as near to God as you can because God has been good to you. God loves you, and He wants what is best for you. Now is the time to pray about it. You need to take that step and say: "Lord, I want to be able to pray consistently. I want to keep on going, and I want to increase." Some people started out serving God, but they did not continue with Him. Some get weary, and others get discouraged.

God Gives the Increase

Luke 17:5 is a very exciting verse. It is a discussion with the apostles and Christ, and the apostles were at the apex of their ministry. They had Christ right there, and they were moving forward. I want you to notice that it states, "And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith." Although they were at a wonderful point in their ministry, going forth wonderfully, yet they said, in essence: "Lord, it is good, but it could be better. We want an increase. We are victorious, but we want to take another mountain." If the apostles needed an increase, and if David needed an increase, surely we do too.

In 2 Kings 2:9 you can read that Elijah told Elisha to ask what Elijah could do for him before he was taken away. Elisha said, "I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me." Elijah said in verse 10, "Thou hast asked a hard thing: nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so." Elisha was put off for a time to go here and there, but he hung in there and did not give up. Sure enough, Elisha saw Elijah go up "by a whirlwind into heaven" (2 Kings 2:11). Would that not be something to see? Elisha then took up the mantle that fell from Elijah.

I am hungry for more of God. How about you? Luke 2:52 is a

very provocative verse intreating, "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man." If David had to increase, if the apostles had to increase, if Jesus had to increase, how about you and me?

Maybe your heart is broken over a wayward son or a wayward daughter. Maybe your job is pressuring you more than ever. Maybe you have home issues that need to be resolved, so you need wisdom to go through that. You need to pray, "Lord, I need an increase."

D. L. Moody was asked, "Mr. Moody, how do you begin a revival?" He said, "I get a piece of chalk and draw a circle around me, because revival starts with me." You will face troubles, but the solution starts with God and with you, because God can work it out. Do not let the enemy steal this precious moment from you, because the increase is for you. It is not in a preacher, but it is in Christ. He knows exactly where to increase you.

Since God gave me an increase, things are different. Things are different in my ministry, at home, and between me and the Lord, Who loves me and died for me. We all need wisdom and the favor of God and man. Maybe your job is difficult. Does it feel like your fellow employees are surrounding you and cannot stand you when you go into the breakroom? Is your boss singling you out? Perhaps it seems that the whole world is looking at you. You can win those folks for Christ, but it will take an increase from God.

Keep on Praying

Today is the time to get your special need met. You may say: "Lord, I want that increase. I want that extra strength to face this Jericho and these enemies that are surrounding me." You

can do it. The Lord will strengthen you. Maybe you need more patience. He will give you more patience if you ask Him. Perhaps you need strength to simply keep going. Sometimes you will get weary, but He will give you strength. Now is the time to seek the Lord.

Young person, the pressure is on. All types of pop-ups may show up on your computer. Some may seem quite alluring and exciting to you. It is going to take God to bring you through right, because you cannot do it by yourself. He is reaching out to help you.

As a young man, I went off into the drug scene for about thirteen years. My mom and dad prayed and fasted for my salvation. They grew spiritually in that situation and increased. In Detroit more than thirty years ago, God saved me. Mom, do not give up. Dad, do not give up. Your children may be far away from God, but do not give up. You need to keep on praying. The devil will tell you to put it on the altar and then leave it there, or forget about it. No, you must keep on praying, and say, "Lord, help me to pray." I might pray all night long three or four times a month because I want more of God.

Will you pray for a family member, a friend, or your next door neighbor on his way to hell? Does he not deserve an increase in you to do all you can to help him? Yes, he does. You may feel that you are already doing well, but you should want more.

People are sick everywhere you look. You should want to see them healed. It is hard to rejoice when people are so sick. Some are sick physically, some are sick mentally, and some are sick spiritually. If you are sick, it is going to take prayer. Discussion is good, counseling is fine, but it is going to take prayer. Parent, when your children go to school, you had better pray for them. If your children have moved away, you need to pray for them. You may get weary, but God can help you.

Dear one, God has more for you. Now is the time to seek the Lord in a greater way. It is the will of God because you are special to Him. The devil may tell you that you are not any good or that you do not count, but he is a liar. You are special to God. You mean something to Him. He is investing in you, and you are important to the work of God. May the Lord bless you.

(Compact Disc TR-2199)

'Tis So Sweet

*'Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus,
Just to take Him at His Word;
Just to rest upon His promise,
Just to know, "Thus saith the Lord!"*

*Jesus, Jesus, how I trust Him!
How I've proved Him o'er and o'er;
Jesus, Jesus, precious Jesus!
Oh, for grace to trust Him more!*

Meeting Announcements

SUMMERSVILLE, WV
April 25-May 2

Revelation/Fellowship Meeting: Church of God, 74 Armstrong Rd., Summersville, WV
Service times: Meeting begins Sunday evening 6:00 p.m., Monday - Thursday 7:00 p.m.,
Friday 10:30 a.m. & 7:00 p.m., and Saturday & Sunday 10:30 a.m. & 6:00 p.m.
Friday - Sunday the meals will be provided by the local congregation following each service.
Visit the website: www.ChurchofGodSummersvilleWV.com
For lodging or for more information contact: Pastor Earl R. Borders. Telephone 304-872-4047

MEDINA, OH
May 17-23

Revival: Church of God, 6745 Wooster Pike, Medina, OH 44256
Evangelists: *Monday - Thursday:* Brother Allen Borders, Warrensville, NC
Friday: Brother Nathan Harding, Richwood, OH.
Service times: 7:00 p.m. Monday - Friday. Pizza will be served after the Friday evening service.
Saturday afternoon: Brother Josh Thilmony, Findlay, OH. Service time: 2:00 p.m.
Sunday morning: Brother Joe Brewer, Newark, OH. Service time: 10:30 a.m.
A meal will be served by the local congregation following the morning service.
Sunday afternoon: Brother Mike Wilks, Newark, OH. Service time: 2:00 p.m.
For more information contact: Pastor Mike Miller. Telephone: 234-249-9309

MOUNT PLEASANT, PA
May 24-30

Revival: Church of God, 109 Salvation Lane, Mount Pleasant, PA
Evangelist: Brother Larry Dishman, Hurley, Mississippi
Service times: Monday - Saturday 7:00 p.m. and Sunday 10:30 a.m. & 1:30 p.m.
For more information contact: Pastor Paul W. Prinkey. Telephone: 724-547-2151

SUMMERSVILLE, WV
May 31-June 6

Revival & Fellowship Meeting: Church of God, 74 Armstrong Rd., Summersville, WV 26651
Evangelist: Brother Larry Dishman, Hurley, Mississippi
Service times: Monday - Friday 7:00 p.m., Saturday 6:00 p.m. and Sunday 10:30 a.m. & 6:00 p.m.,
For more information contact: Pastor Earl R. Borders. Telephone: 304-872-4047

WHITE PINE, TN
June 13-20

Camp Meeting: Church of God at Douglas Lake, 185 Hwy 25E, White Pine, TN
Services times: 10:00 a.m., 2:30 p.m., & 7:00 p.m. First service Sunday, June 13 @ 10:00 a.m.
Children & youth services daily. Campers welcome, but please make reservations. Bring your
own bedding for the dorms. For reservations contact: Bro. or Sis. Williams @ 678-215-1540 or
770-507-7404 or email: jwil6568@bellsouth.net. Or you may contact the pastor.
If you make reservations & can't make it, please call & cancel.
For more information contact: Pastor Roger Nethers. Telephone: 770-206-0786 or email:
rogernethers@bellsouth.net

NEWARK, OH
June 20-27

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 more information contact: Pastor Roger L. Decker. Telephone: 740-344-2543

MUNCIE, IN
July 7-11

Camp Meeting: Ninth Street Church of God, 125 S 9th Street, New Castle, IN
47362. The camp meeting will be held at the Central Friends' Campground,
5601 E County Road 650 S, Muncie, Indiana. Service times: The first service begins
Wednesday evening at 7:30 p.m.; Thursday-Saturday 9:00 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 19-25

Camp Meeting: Church of God, 522 NW 2nd 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 more information contact: Pastor E. David Stegmeier
Telephone: 503-266-9297

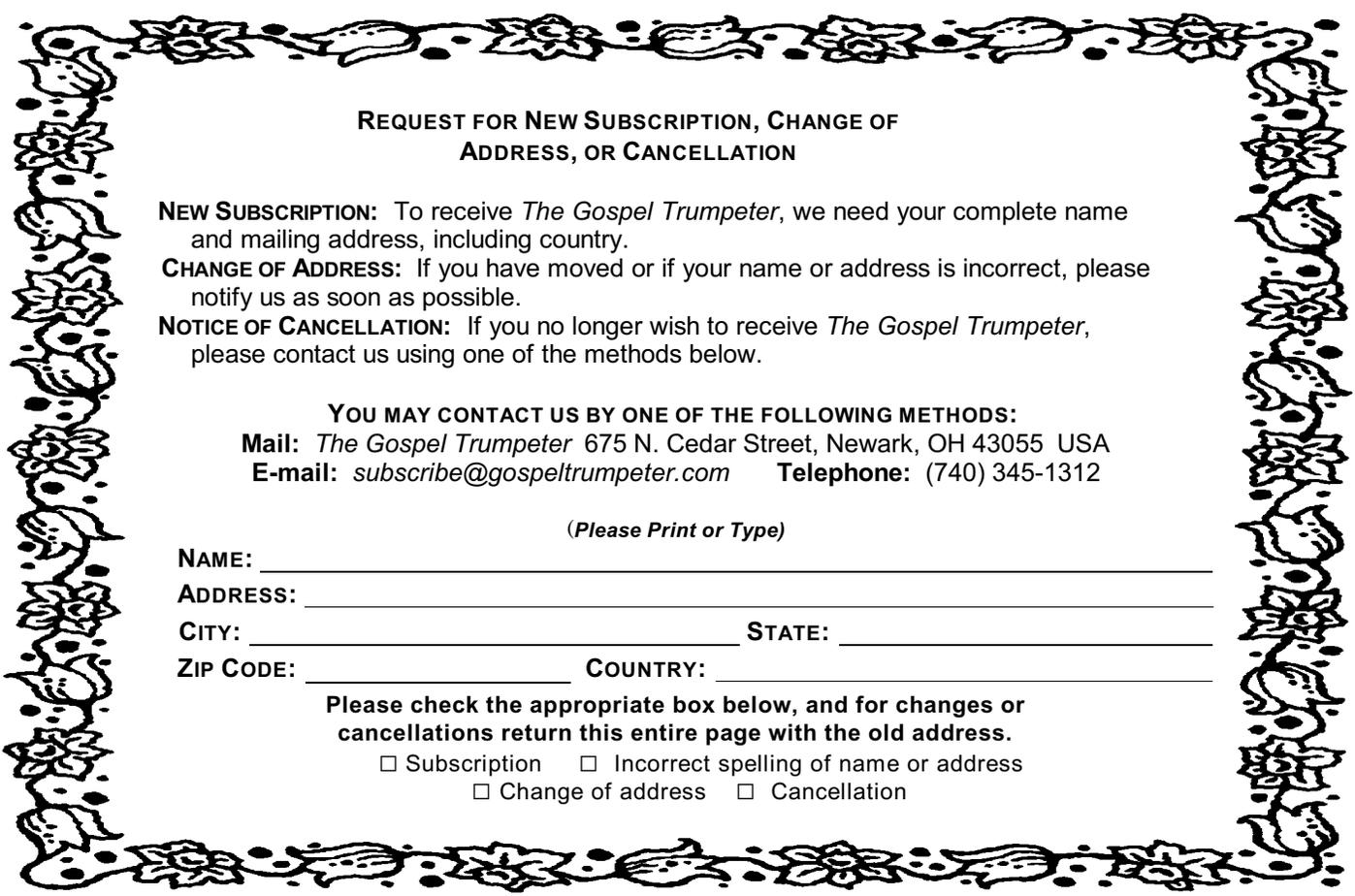
**PLEASE NOTE
DATE CHANGE**

Postman send form 3579 to:

The Gospel Trumpeter

675 N. Cedar Street
Newark, Ohio 43055 U.S.A.

PERIODICAL POSTAGE PAID
AT THE POST OFFICE IN
NEWARK, OH 43055
USPS # 871620



REQUEST FOR NEW SUBSCRIPTION, CHANGE OF
ADDRESS, OR CANCELLATION

NEW SUBSCRIPTION: To receive *The Gospel Trumpeter*, we need your complete name and mailing address, including country.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS: If you have moved or if your name or address is incorrect, please notify us as soon as possible.

NOTICE OF CANCELLATION: If you no longer wish to receive *The Gospel Trumpeter*, please contact us using one of the methods below.

YOU MAY CONTACT US BY ONE OF THE FOLLOWING METHODS:

Mail: *The Gospel Trumpeter* 675 N. Cedar Street, Newark, OH 43055 USA

E-mail: subscribe@gospeltrumpeter.com **Telephone:** (740) 345-1312

(Please Print or Type)

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____

ZIP CODE: _____ COUNTRY: _____

Please check the appropriate box below, and for changes or cancellations return this entire page with the old address.

- Subscription Incorrect spelling of name or address
 Change of address Cancellation