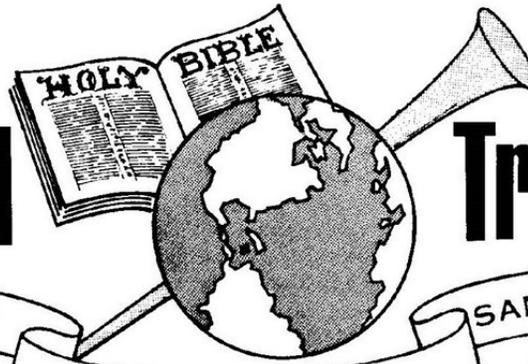


The Gospel



Trumpeter

JUSTIFICATION

"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."

Ezekiel 34:12
Jeremiah 32:39

SANCTIFICATION

"But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished."

Revelation 10:7
Matthew 24:31

UNITY & TRUTH

SOUNDING FORTH THE SEVENTH AND LAST TRUMPET

Vol. 52 December 2022 No. 12

"To every thing there is a SEASON, and a TIME to every purpose under the heaven."

— Ecclesiastes 3:1



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

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

Brother Roger L. Decker Editor
Workers Too Numerous to Mention

THE CHURCH OF GOD BELIEVES IN

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

**SOME SPIRITUAL FACTS
PERTAINING TO THE CHURCH**

- Jesus organized it (Matthew 16:18)
- On a good foundation (Ephesians 2:20; 1 Cor. 3:11)
- Christ governs it (Ephesians 1:22-23; Isaiah 9:6)
- God admits members (1 Cor. 12:13-18)
- Sin puts you out of it (Romans 11:22; Exodus 32:33)
- The saved only are members (John 15:2-6)
- Membership is offered to all (Revelation 22:17)
- Final rewards (Revelation 20:12-15; 21:3-4; 22:14)
- Bible name of the church (Acts 20:28; Galatians 1:13; John 17:11)

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

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Vol. 52 December 2022 No. 12

Guest Editorial



THE FINAL CAMP MEETING OF 2022

Here we are at the end of the year, and another camp meeting will soon be here. In just a few weeks, on December 26, we will join with the saints at God's Acres for the final camp meeting of the year. It will be a precious time to worship the Lord together. Our souls can be renewed and refreshed with the brethren from far and near. Camp meeting is a wonderful opportunity to feast on the heavenly manna and the good things God has for us.

Although it will be a short meeting, God always prepares many wonderful blessings for us to enjoy. While the world revels in the "holiday spirit," the Lord supplies rich blessings to invigorate the spirit of man. He is preparing things to encourage and lift our hearts. These happy times enrich the heart with greater understanding. They challenge us to keep pressing onward toward the goal. David knew what he was talking about when he said in Psalm 122:1, "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD." It was there he received spiritual instruction to live a godly life.

As we all may know, we are living in a critical time. The forces of evil have been turned loose against the people of God. Satan is determined to destroy our faith and love for God and our love for one another. His purpose is to divert as many away from the paths of holiness and true righteousness as he can. Dear one, we need all the instruction and direction we can receive from the Lord. We need to "ask for the old paths, where is the

good way" (Jeremiah 6:16) and understand the things that please Him are more needful every day we live.

In Hebrews 10:25, the Hebrew writer instructed us to forsake not "the assembling of ourselves together." Hearing, believing, and obeying the Word of God brings victory to the soul. James 1:22 instructs, "Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only." This is not a time to relax our efforts or become slack. Rather, it is a time to, as Paul said in 1 Timothy 6:12, "Fight the good fight of faith [and], lay hold on eternal life." The wise man said, "Buy the truth, and sell it not" (Proverbs 23:23). We need to get all we can and then not let it slip away. Truth brings freedom and spiritual stability.

Camp meetings are held for our spiritual prosperity and blessing. It is our desire to provide a place for ones to come and learn the ways of the Lord. We encourage you to do all you can to be here so your soul may be fed and enlightened. We write these things to stir up your pure minds and to "provoke [you] unto love and to good works" (Hebrews 10:24). Remember, dear one, living for God takes real effort. Making Heaven your home requires a deep determination and consecration. Regardless of the cost, it will be worth it all. Just one glimpse of His dear face will amply repay whatever you may have to suffer or endure to get there.

Friend, you owe it to yourself, your family, the church, and to the world to be in as many worship

[continued on page 10]

John 10:7 Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep.

8 All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep

did not hear them.

9 I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

10 The thief cometh not, but for

to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.



The Power of God Is in the Life

Brother Roger L. Decker

God Manifested in the Flesh

Jesus was speaking to people who were very much alive, physically speaking, but they lacked the life Jesus was referring to. In verse 10 Jesus said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." Men have not seen God, but we can see what God is really like through the life Jesus lived. John 1:18 says, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."

There has always been a distance between man and God. In the Old Testament, men had very little knowledge of God, and He manifested Himself through the Law and His prophets. God spoke to Moses in Exodus 33:20, saying, "Thou canst not see my

face: for there shall no man see me, and live." In Deuteronomy 4:12 Moses said, "And the LORD spake unto you out of the midst of the fire: ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude; only ye heard a voice." No one in the Old Testament thought it possible to see God. In the New Testament, Jesus Christ is the revelation of God Himself.

Read the words Jesus spoke to Philip in John 14:9-11: "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father

in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake." We see God in Jesus, and God wants to see Himself in you and me.

People are always wanting power with God. The power is in the life. It is not in knowledge, which is necessary, and it is not in religion or in degrees of education; rather, it is in the life. Jesus said, "I am come that they might have life." Under the Old Testament, ones heard about God, saw the mighty workings of God, but did not see the life manifested in Jesus Christ, who was God manifested in the flesh.

We read in John 1:11-14: "He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of

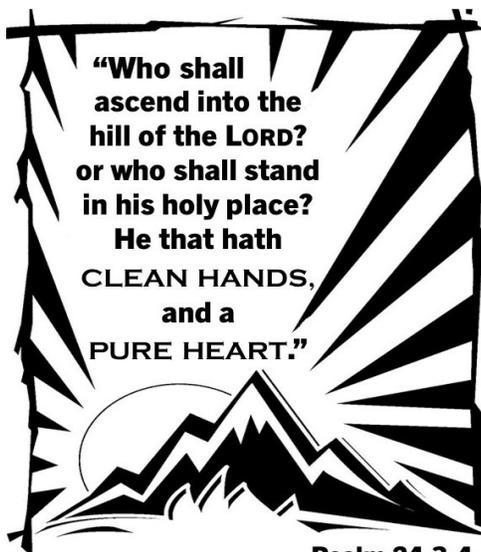
the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."

"Who Shall Ascend Into the Hill of the LORD?"

The power of God comes into your life when you are born of God. What kind of power is in the life? It is not power to join a church; babies can do that, and they have no power in their lives. It is not power to give to charities; many people give but still lack power in their lives. Some quit a few bad habits under a doctor's orders, but that is not it. The power in the life of Christ is to turn from the wrong and turn to the right. Throughout the Old Testament, the cry of the prophets was, "Turn ye." Otherwise, turn from evil and learn to do what is right. If you have not quit sinning, the life of Christ is not in you. I can make it real plain by saying, "You are not saved."

In Psalm 24:1-5 we read: "The earth is the LORD'S, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods. Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the LORD, and righteousness from the God of his salvation."

The psalmist reminded us that everything in the world, including the inhabitants and the earth, belongs to God. We need to be reminded of this truth: we brought nothing into this world, and we are for sure not going to take anything out of it. The best suit of clothes you could own may go in the ground with you.



Psalm 24:3-4

The house you live in, your children, your wife or husband, your job, and your car all came from God.

One of these days, you will leave all your material possessions behind. Many people become so earthbound, they actually feel it is all theirs. You can become so earthbound with materialism that you can become covetous. If you are covetous, you are definitely in trouble with God. Many times, ones become laden down with material goods. God always has a way to release us so we can get our priorities straightened out.

The psalmist said God founded the earth upon the seas, and He established it upon the floods. He raised it above the seas, the rivers, and the streams. Psalm 24:3 asks, "Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place?" The "hill of the LORD" is Mount Zion. Psalm 2:6 reads, "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion." Who shall stand in this holy place, or in His presence? The psalmist was asking: "Who is worthy to dwell in Mount Zion in the presence of Almighty God? Who is a true worshiper of God? Who is worthy of being called a child of God? and What constitutes true worship?"

Then the psalmist laid out

some earmarks of those who are worthy. Psalm 24:4 says, "He that hath clean hands." To have "clean hands" means to walk upright and work righteousness. In Psalm 15:1-2 we read: "LORD, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart." To "walk upright" means to walk blamelessly or perfectly.

"Walketh Not in the Counsel of the Ungodly"

Let us consider a couple of Old Testament patriarchs. The testimony of Job is found in Job 1:1, which reads, "There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil." What the Old Testament required, Job did. He was perfect and upright because he feared God and stayed away from evil. In Genesis 6:9 we read, "These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God." The word *walk* in this Scripture simply means it was his manner of life.

Psalm 1:1-6 states: "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted [not a wild tree or a random tree growing in a field somewhere] by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."

"The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the

congregation of the righteous. For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish."

The psalmist said, "That *walketh* not," referring to more than just the past. The characteristic of this man he was talking about always and habitually does *not* walk in the counsel of the ungodly. It has not only been true in the past, it is true in the present, and it will be true in the future. It is what distinguishes this man from others. He does not walk in the counsel of the ungodly, after their manners, principles, and plans. He does not take counsel from them for the way he should live, but he takes counsel in the law of God.

This man does not follow the advice, purposes, or plans of sinners. He does not plan his life according to their views or suggestions. He is independent of them and looks to another source for the rules to guide him. He looks into the Law of God, on which he meditates day and night. He does not go where sinners usually go because it would indicate he had a desire to associate with them. The word *sinner* actually means "missing the mark." He does not associate with those who miss the mark.

Christians treat all people right, but we do not follow after wicked devices, and we do not occupy a seat with the ungodly where they converse and sit together. Young person, be careful of those who want to run down the people of God. You need to withdraw yourself from them. They do it for one reason—to make you think they have it so much easier than you, and they may have it easier on the flesh. They are out to proselyte you. They do not want to make you more like Christ, but more like them. You need to be careful of the scornful. They mock, deride, and scoff. They actually have contempt for God's people.

A Pure Heart

When I first got saved, I heard all kinds of negative things against God's people where I worked at Rockwell. I did not allow them to affect me, which is how I stayed true to God. I would let no one run down the pastor. One individual I worked with at Rockwell was a pipefitter and a good friend of mine. I had not been saved for very long, and I invited him to a camp meeting. He wanted nothing to do with the camp meeting, and he proceeded to run down my pastor, Brother Emerson Wilson. I went to Brother Wilson about it, and he said, "Bring him to me; I have nothing to hide."

I went back and asked the man, "Do you want to go with me to talk to the pastor?"

He said, "No, I do not want to go with you."

He was still my friend, but he did not talk to me about religion after that. You need to put people in their place when they tear down your brothers, your sisters, and your pastor. Young people need to stick up for each other.

You cannot ascend unto Mount Zion without a pure heart. You can join religious organizations and Babylonian churches without a pure heart, but you cannot "ascend into the hill of the LORD." You must have a pure heart. Holiness is required. You cannot dwell in sin and in the hill of the Lord at the same time. Religion in itself will not purify your heart. You cannot purify your heart yourself, and you cannot baptize the impurities away. You must be born again to have a pure heart.

In 1 Peter 1:18-23 we read: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb

without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God. Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."

We read in 2 Timothy 2:22, "Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." Jesus said in Matthew 5:8, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."

Having the Life of Christ Within You

The psalmist mentioned something we should be aware of in Psalm 24:4 when he spoke of those "who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully." Here the psalmist was dealing with the thought of one being involved with that which is false or deceitful. The man who stands in the hill of the Lord stands in the presence of God, and he will not follow deceit. He checks out a matter before he falls for it, and he will not give false testimony to win favor with others. He receives blessings and righteousness from the God of his salvation.

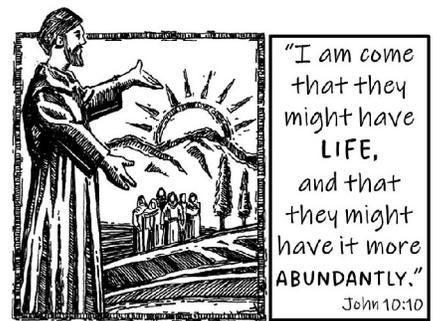
There is nothing wrong with wanting power in your life. Every Christian's desire is to have more power in his life. You can read about Simon the sorcerer in Acts, Chapter 8. He also wanted the power of the Holy Ghost, but his heart was not right. Your

heart must be right to have power with God. Verse 23 says he was in "the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity." God wants to give us power in all areas of our lives. The power comes when the life is worthy of receiving it.

In our text Jesus said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." If you want power with God, you must have the life of Christ within you. Allow nothing to hinder the working of God in your life. If God lays His hand on something in your life, you need to get rid of it so you can have more abundant power.

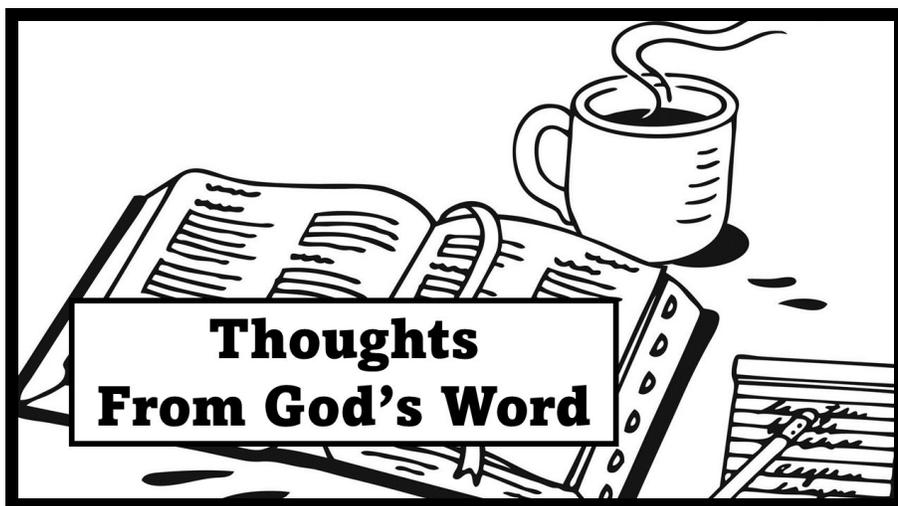
Acts 1:8 lets us know one power God will give us is the power to be a witness. How long has it been since you witnessed to someone? How long has it been since you talked to a soul about God? When you really have the power of God in your life, you will want to share it. If the power of God is lacking in your life and there are things troubling you, you will have no power to witness.

The power of God is in the life one manifests. What attracted you to God? It was the power in someone's life. God did not dispatch an angel down to talk to you; He sent an individual who



had the manifestations of God in his or her life. "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10).

(Compact Disc TR-2398)



RECKON YOURSELF DEAD TO SIN

"Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Romans 6:11

When you begin to feel those feelings of sin, feelings that had you bound before Christ set you free, reckon yourself dead unto sin by the power of Christ within you.

The flesh (carnal mind) will always be the same. As long as you are in this corporal body, the flesh will raise its evil head when

it is tempted. The appetite of the flesh wants to be fed!

By the precious power of Christ within you (yielding to Him), you are an overcomer by His power. There is no other way to obtain the victory but through the Holy Spirit of Christ.

You should reckon yourself dead—dead to the temptations the enemy of your soul brings to mind. Remember, he works through the mind. The mind is like an open door for the devil, and he will step through that door unless you put forth the effort to stop him. Putting forth effort means going to Christ im-

mediately. You cannot revel in the feelings the enemy brings.

Stop right at the first moment you feel your flesh trying to come alive again in you. There is victory in Jesus! Keep your "want to" alive—wanting to not give the enemy one second of your mind. To dabble with him only encourages his pursuit.

The choice lies with you; the decision you make determines the route you will take. When sin was in you, in your life, was it a curse or a blessing? Reckon yourself dead to the old life that wants to live again. It is a dead-end route.

God made a way for freedom, a victorious life through His precious Son, Jesus Christ! Be faithful to Him by standing your ground. If you give in to the enemy of your soul, he will not only take away the ground you have gained, but he will also take your very soul.

The choice you make and the route you take are your responsibility. God is there to help you, but resisting the enemy is your part.

To God be the glory!

Sister Bonnie Slusser



Serving and Honoring the Lord Reaps Tremendous BENEFITS

Brother Irwin Seshier

Investing in the Lord

We serve such a great God who cares about us and is interested in our well-being. We may think we know what we need, but there is One who knows how to direct our lives and bring us through certain situations.

When someone looks for a job, he strives to gain the best benefits possible. When seeking employment, he finds out about the benefit plans the company offers, such as the type of medical insurance, hospitalization and retirement plans they have. Various employers will dangle these benefits in front of potential applicants who are thinking of becoming new hires. There is nothing wrong with seeking good benefits through employment in your life. However, when it comes to serving the Lord, just any old plan will not do.

The Lord gives the best benefits. When it comes to serving the Lord, you need to know exactly where you stand in order to receive these godly benefits. Children of God must invest in them. If you have a 401K or any other type of retirement portfolio, you hope your investments go up. However, they will not go up unless you put something in them. It is the same way when it comes to serving the Lord. You will get nothing out of it if you put nothing into it.

Child of God, you need to invest in the benefits of serving God. Put your spiritual plan into action. Jesus said in Matthew 6:20, "But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal." Your soul is a precious commodity, and the devil would love to steal the treasure of salvation from you.

Spiritual treasures are not found here on this earth. Many people say, "If I had more money or things, I would be happy." If you do not have salvation, you are not happy. I am not talking about joining a church. You need a total change in your life.

Heavenly treasures are more valuable than anything in this world. You cannot put a price on heavenly treasures. Ones are selling their spiritual treasures for the habits of this old world that will not satisfy. Philippians 3:8 tells us, "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ." We must "win Christ," and He must be the center of our lives.

Are you winning Christ through the things you say and do? Someone once said, "The value of the Bible does not consist in merely knowing it, but in

obeying it." We must obey the Word of God. It is not enough to know this or that about the Scriptures. Are you obeying them?

Keeping Christ in the Center of Your Life

The world thinks it has peace and satisfaction, but without Jesus, they are on the losing end. In order for Jesus to have an influence in our lives, we have to work at keeping Him in the center of all we do. The Word of God is the manual that instructs us on what to do and how to do it. Many people go through life, trying to live without Christ. You cannot live a holy life without the manual. Most people do not even pick up the manual. They go by what a preacher tells them. If you do not read the manual, you are going to be lost.

There are times when we need to pray about things before doing them. We need to seek direction from God: "God, what do You want me to do? Whom do You want me to witness to? Where do You want me to go?" This is very important. Do not go by your own thoughts because the Lord may not bless and help you. In order to reap spiritual benefits, you must stay close to the Lord. Do not follow Him from afar.

David was close to God, but there were times he complained

of the Lord's apparent disappearance. David said in Psalm 10:1, "Why standest thou afar off, O LORD? why hidest thou thyself in times of trouble?" Psalm 22:1-2 says: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent."

Have you ever felt the Lord was not listening to you? Have you sometimes felt when you prayed, your words were bouncing off the ceiling, so to speak? That is not a time to quit praying or give up on God. Reflect on the times when the Lord was there and brought you through an affliction, trial, or time of need. God is still able to help you.

Some people want to live for the moment. They do not think back on what God has done for them in the past. Christian friend, where would you be right now if God had not saved you? You could be in a devil's hell, lost out on the plains of sin, or in some type of organizational bondage. If you are saved, the Lord was gracious to you, and He saw the desires of your heart. He knew all about you before you even knew anything about yourself. That is the glory of God. He knows exactly where you are and where you are going. What an awesome God we serve!

Honoring God in the Tests

God did not really forsake David, and He will not forsake you. God puts us through tests. Did you enjoy tests in school? I was a teacher, but I still did not like tests. The Lord tests you to see if you are going to trust Him in all areas of your life: in the good times, the bad times, pain, sickness, heartache, suffering, and the loss of a loved one. He wants you to put Him first and trust Him.

How can engineers trust an airplane or a car if they do not test them? Some plans look good on paper, but they need to be developed and tested. God puts us through tests to see if we qualify to be one of His children. You may be put through a vigorous test and ask: "Lord, why are You putting me through this trial? Why are You putting me through this predicament?" He is putting you through a vigorous test to see if you will honor Him. The Lord will bring great joy and happiness to an individual who goes through the test. I am glad He knows all about us, and He sees our desire to follow Him.

We read in 1 Samuel 2:30, "Wherefore the LORD God of Israel saith, I said indeed that thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before me for ever: but now the LORD saith, Be it far from me; for them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed." Jesus said in John 12:26, "If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour."

Many people do not want to follow Jesus the way they should, but they still want the blessings. If you want to be blessed by God, will you be a faithful servant? Will you do the things the Lord has showed you to do? Most people want to do their own thing and expect the Lord to bless their lives. Friend, it does not work that way. You must follow God in all truth and abide with Him.

Do not let the world hinder your walk with God. Some people say they love Jesus, but they have a frown on their face. If you are a child of God, your face will testify for you. A smile is contagious; be a carrier. We hear about people carrying the coronavirus, but how about carrying a smile on your face? It does not hurt to smile and ask someone, "How

are you today?" Thank God we have something to smile about! When you follow Christ, you will have a smile on your face.

Are you willing to talk to others about Jesus Christ? Are you living the life in front of the world so they know there has been a change in you? When you are a new creature in Christ Jesus, people can see a difference in your life.

Increasing Your Faith

You may say, "You do not know how big my problem is." God knows how big your problem is. When confronted with a Goliath-sized problem, how do you respond? Do you say, "He is too big to *hit*"? Or do you say, as David did, "He is too big to *miss*"? We all face "Goliaths" in our lives, but God has given us the tools to combat those types of giants. David did not run away, but he ran toward Goliath, with the Lord on his side. David knew God would take care of Goliath as He had taken care of the lion and the bear. He knew God would not fail him.

Disappointments will hinder your progress in reaping spiritual blessings. Do not believe the enemy if he says you have nothing. If you have Jesus Christ and are truly born again, you have everything. Some lack faith when things do not move as quickly as they feel they should. They may even start to question God. Friend, God will move in His time. God knows what needs to be done first. He does not move based on what you or I think. We need faith and God's grace to follow Him. Hebrews 11:6 states, "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

You can increase your faith by growing in the knowledge and understanding of the Word

of God and by spending time with God and getting to know His character. Romans 10:17 says, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Someone may say, "My faith is very weak." Feed your faith, and your doubts will starve to death. Doubts will bring you down spiritually and physically. Be careful not to think about your doubts, instead think of what God has done for you in the past. Do not give up because spiritual benefits are just ahead.

We read in 1 John 5:4-5: "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" We are saved to serve the Lord, not to sit on the sidelines, so to speak. When the Lord saves you, you have a work to do. You are to be a witness to others, a light on their pathway, and you are to do God's holy will. Whatever God wants you to do, do it. Let the Lord direct and give you the words to say.

Second Timothy 1:8-9 reads: "Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God; Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began."

Before God spoke the world into existence, He thought about you and me. He knew all about you and the path you were going to take. He saves you for service. As a child of God, you have an obligation to serve God. It cost Jesus His life to purchase your salvation. Do not take your salvation lightly. Jesus Christ died

for your salvation. He hung on the Cross and took the shame for you. Guard your salvation with all your mind, soul, and strength.

Spiritual Benefits

The devil wants you to give up your salvation. You should not even entertain the thought of giving up on Jesus Christ, or you will back off and not do the things you need to do. This should be the time where you want to dig in and get stronger for the Lord. God does not give you those thoughts, but the enemy of your soul wants you to give up. Stay in the fight! Christians are being bombarded on every side by the world. There are ones who know all about you, where you live, and where you go to church. You need to let your light shine before them.

Feed your faith, and your doubts will starve to death.

Spiritual benefits do not come easily. You must strive to obtain them and let them work in your life. The Bible tells us in 1 Corinthians 14:12, "Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church." Many do not take the time to be spiritual, and that is sad. Someone wrote, "Never get too busy making a living that you forget to make a life." At the final Judgment, you will be judged on the life you lived, not by how much money you made or how much property you gained. It is the "dash" in between the years you were born and when you die that makes the difference.

Job was a good example in the Bible of one who reaped both spiritual and earthly blessings. When Job's life fell apart, he

stayed true to God and trusted in His promises. Thank God, Job did not give up, even though it looked bleak for him. He started off successfully, but God allowed Satan to work on him. Job stayed with God and trusted Him. He did not look down, but he looked upward. He knew God was good and loving.

Job 10:12 reads, "Thou hast granted me life and favour, and thy visitation hath preserved my spirit." Job knew God was an amazing, Almighty God. Job 42:2 says, "I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee." Job realized God had noticed every detail in his life. God knows all about us, just as He knew every detail in Job's life. Job 23:10 states, "But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold."

God was in total control of Job's life. Job 34:12-13 tells us: "Yea, surely God will not do wickedly, neither will the Almighty pervert judgment. Who hath given him a charge over the earth? or who hath disposed the whole world?" God knew Job was determined to stay true for the glory of God. Job 23:14 states, "For he performeth the thing that is appointed for me: and many such things are with him."

Job knew the ultimate end if he stayed true to God. Job 19:25 reads, "For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth." He knew God was going to take care of him, but in order to reap those spiritual benefits, he had to stay true all the way through to the end, not just on some points.

Facing the Adversities of Life

It is important to have God in all aspects of your life. It is a part

of our human nature to want it easy. However, we should never pray for an easier life. We should pray to be stronger for the Lord. A gentleman by the name of Phillips Brooks once wrote: "Do not pray for easy lives. Pray to be stronger men. Do not pray for tasks equal to your powers. Pray for powers equal to your tasks. Then the doing of your work shall be no miracle, but you shall be the miracle."

Do not depend upon yourself and ask the Lord to give you an easier way, but ask Him to make you a stronger person to fight the battles and face the adversities of life. We are going to have adversity. If you are a child of God, you will suffer persecution. There are multiple examples throughout the Word of God of ones who served the Lord and faced persecution. If you are not facing persecution, you should probably check your life. We need to follow Jesus Christ in all areas of our lives.

You cannot beat the goodness of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ! No matter how much money you have or how much you do, you cannot beat the goodness of God. God will be

there to help you not only in the good times, but He will be there in the bad times. Give thanks to God in the good times because giving thanks helps you appreciate what you have been given.

I am thankful for what God has already done and for helping me personally through an affliction. Many are battling afflictions, but it is not a time to give up on God. We need God even more to help us through afflictions and trials. God has already blessed us in so many ways, and He will not give up on us now. God can bring you through with victory, regardless of the trial. Some are suffering financially or with other problems. Again, this is not a time to give up on God. Stay true to God and believe His promises.

I am thankful for a good place to go to church and for a faithful pastor who preaches the truth. We need the truth of God's Word each and every day of our lives. I appreciate my church family. When you count your blessings, it leaves no room for doubting God, questioning God, or complaining about things.

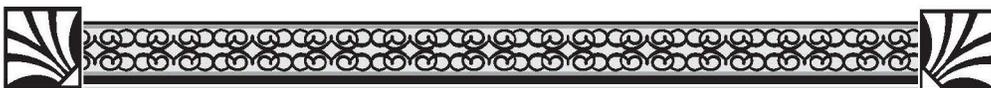
God wants us to give thanks in the difficult times too. It is an

act of faith when things become tough to thank God for our circumstances. God has a plan we may not see at this moment in time. We can only see so far down the road, but God can see the end from the beginning. He knows exactly what He has planned for you and me.

Are you giving God the thanks He deserves? Are you giving God your all, regardless of the situation? You will not skate through this life with no adverse situations. We all have them. We all need to move up closer to God and do the things He wants us to do.

I do not want to be just a "church goer," someone who has a church membership. I want to possess something the world can actually see. We come into contact with those who can see a miracle has taken place in our lives. Some people knew our past lives, and now they see how we live for God. They can say, "There is something different about that individual I used to know." Can the world see a difference in you?

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[Guest Editorial continued from pg. 2]
services as possible. It will help you "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18). The sound, solid preaching of God's Word will uncover the many tricks and snares Satan uses to attempt to deceive and overthrow the Christian. Knowing and understanding the Scriptures will be of little value unless it is put into practice and allowed to become a part of your daily walk.

In addition to hearing the Word preached by various ministers, there are other advantages of attending camp meeting. It is a time to share

burdens and problems with other saints of God. Hearing testimonies of praise for victories won through God's grace is always uplifting. A trick Satan uses is to convince ones their situation is unique. He endeavors to persuade ones they are alone, and no one has ever had a circumstance as bad as theirs. However, when you are privileged to learn of others' trials and how they have overcome, you will find this is a common salvation. You are not alone, and your station in life is not unique. Fellowship with other saints is a time for gaining strength, renewing hope, and increasing faith. God will supply

grace to all so we can press the battle on.

Brother Roger Decker extends an invitation for you to join us at this winter camp meeting. It will be worth any effort you put forth to attend. Last but not least, we ask that you earnestly pray for this winter camp meeting. God's direction and presence are certainly needed in every service. Having the Holy Spirit in our midst as the Honored Guest is of utmost importance. He is the only hope of redemption for those who are lost.

Selected



I want to do my best to convey to you the importance of having a strong foundation. What does this mean? It means having a good support system, staying in the truth, having the Spirit of God witness to you, the peace of God comfort you, and finding strength and grace in God to keep you through the times you feel you are about to faint and grow weary. Looking back, I thank God for this journey, although it was rough at the time. I would not want this experience removed because it brought spiritual strength. Our lives were definitely enriched by going through this trial.

In May 2002, my wife, Tonya, and I were living in a one bedroom apartment and had just signed a purchase agreement to buy a new home. Tonya was carrying our daughter, Briana, who was due to be born in September. I received a layoff notice from my employer on July 14, 2002. I had sixty days left to work, and I had four weeks of severance pay. Briana was born on September 2, 2002, and my last day of work was September 20, 2002. We had a child, purchased a house, and I lost my job eighteen days later. It was a very frustrating time. That is where the providence of God and the strong foundation came into play.

I had four weeks of severance

Briana's Healing

Brother Joel Barrows

pay, which took me to the end of October. Then I was blessed with an awesome job working for the Department of Defense in Columbus. We went through difficult financial times, but we never lost our house because God always provided what we needed. It was definitely rough at times, but our spiritual foundation held us together.

With all we were going through, Briana became sick when she was three months old. We did not understand what was going on. She was producing a lot of mucus, and it was affecting her ability to eat. I remember the night we went to the emergency room to get her looked at. We struggled with finding the peace to go in. We decided to go home, thinking she had a cold and would get over it in a few days. However, her illness could have taken her life. The next morning, we took her to her pediatrician. As soon as he saw her, he said, "You need to get her to Children's Hospital immediately." He thought she might have had pneumonia.

When we arrived at Children's Hospital, the pediatrician had already phoned ahead to tell them we were coming; so they were waiting for us, which was amazing. So many things were going on. They needed to get blood samples from Briana to

figure out what was attacking her little body. She could not eat, and she had severe mucus problems. Of course, they admitted her to the hospital. At this point, we were a complete wreck. We were worried about our child, not knowing what was going on, and it seemed nobody could figure it out.

The hopeless feeling of being stuck in a situation you have zero control over is not easy to deal with. In addition, there were constant questions from the doctors as they were attempting to find out what was going on. They would ask us: "Did you give her this?" or "Did you possibly give her that?" They were doing their job, but it added a lot of stress. They put a feeding tube in. They seemingly hooked something up to almost every limb of her body. Then it got worse.

Briana was transferred to the Intensive Care Unit. It was at that point big decisions were being made, such as whether to put a breathing tube in. We later found out Briana had infant botulism. She was case number seven in Ohio. Infant botulism is basically a form of food poisoning in small children. The toxin gets into the body and produces a neurotoxin that causes paralysis. Briana got to where you could only see a small opening in her eyes, but her eyes were mostly closed. She was making little to no sounds when crying, and she was barely moving. Briana's body was being shut down by this toxin.

Then the moment came when her body started turning gray. She still had her heartbeat, her gag reflex, and her breathing, but not much more than that. It was a dark time. The doctors and nurses did their best to get Briana comfortable. They rolled up towels and laid her on her side. Then they would come in and move her body around at different times. They would test her by gagging her to make sure she

could still keep her airway clear.

Briana had multiple tests run on her, and it was absolutely painful for us to witness as parents. She had a spinal tap. She had to go into one of those chambers in which there was a loud banging going on. They were attempting to figure out what was happening with her little body. Finally, they started figuring out what she had. This disease could have taken her life as it had already taken other lives. Once they diagnosed her, she stood a much better chance of survival, as long as she was supported with the absolutely correct kind of care, but it would take some time.

Then something happened. The doctors began talking about a treatment that was still in the testing stage. Adults almost never get infant botulism because their digestive systems can fight it off. The treatment they wanted to do involved taking blood plasma from adults who had been immunized with infant botulism. They would take their antibodies, screen them, and turn them into what they call "Botulism Immune Globulin." This is what they wanted to give to Briana.

The doctors asked us to talk it over amongst ourselves and our family and let them know how we wanted to proceed. My dad and my sister were there with us. This is where Divine Providence came into play. Right when we were about to make a huge decision, our pastor, Brother Roger Decker, came in. He arrived just in time to have prayer with us and give us the counsel and encouragement we needed. We felt definitely impressed to go ahead with the medicine.

God will never leave you hopeless or helpless. He will allow you to go through some things, but He will be right there with you. You may feel as though

you will not make it, but God will not leave you without help.

I had only been at my new job for a little less than two months. The management felt so strongly about what we were going through that they forwarded my paid leave to me to use as I saw fit. That way I would not be without pay, and I could go to the hospital as much as possible. For a little over two weeks, my routine was to go to work, then go to the hospital to take clothes to Tonya and see Briana, then back home late at night to wash clothes and get back up early the next morning



and repeat the same process over again. Tonya never left the hospital.

Until the day Brother Decker came and prayed for us, the long drives back and forth from Columbus were very dark. I kept thinking about picking out a small casket because I had a strong feeling Briana was going to die. That was the devil talking to me.

One time, the hospital staff came in and asked, "Do you have any insurance?" My first answer was no. We actually had insurance, but I found that out later. Where I originally worked, my insurance ran out on December 31, 2002. Briana was admitted to the hospital on December 28, 2002, and because Briana was admitted before the coverage ended, the insurance had to cover her expenses until she was

released. I did not have to pay a dime. Praise the Lord!

If you get anything from this testimony, be encouraged. God has your back. If you do your best to live for God, He will take care of you. Young people feel a strong pull from the world. However, if you will stay faithful to God, He will take care of you.

My coworkers offered us food and money. I had been employed for less than two months, but the people desired to help us. This trial left an impression on my boss. They took all the money they intended to fund their holiday party and donated it to my wife and me. It was close to seven hundred dollars. Do not tell me God does not take care of His people!

Then came the day the medicine arrived. It took a little while to administer it, but what happened afterwards was amazing! We saw her little, lifeless body begin to smile. She literally had tubes coming out of almost every limb of her body. Every time I picked her up, alarms would go off. When her little, lifeless body smiled, it was onward and upward from there.

It pays to serve God. In Job, Chapter 1, the Lord and Satan had a conversation. The Lord said to Satan, in so many words, "Do whatever you want with everything Job possesses, but do not harm him physically." So Satan left the Lord's presence. Hard times happen to good and bad people. Sometimes it seems bad things happen more to good people than bad people.

Job had money, a successful business, a great family, recognition, and a good reputation. In all of this, Job was a righteous and deeply religious man; he was the best of the best. Then came calamity upon calamity until he was left with only shattered barns, fresh graves, decimated herds, chronic illness, and a

bitter wife. God's best had been dealt life's worst. Why? A skeptic would quickly answer, "Bad things happen because there is no God to keep them from happening." The skeptic thinks he has an irrefutable point, but surely if it can be argued that the presence of bad things points to God's absence, it must be conceded that the presence of good things points to God's presence.

"Yes," the skeptic might reply: "and what kind of God is He, if He exists? If He is all good, why does He tolerate evil? If He is all powerful, why doesn't He stop it?"

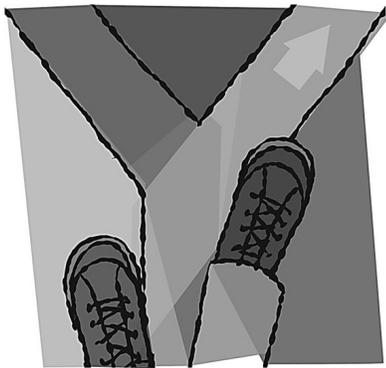
This is the point we need to get. The story of Job points in another direction. God, our Creator, rules all things by His mighty power, and He is good. Satan, our accuser, is evil. God

allows Satan to engage in evil functions under His divine control. God makes everything, even when it is evil, to serve His purpose, and He brings eternal good out of temporal evil. It may be a hard truth to embrace, a bitter pill to swallow, but ultimately, God's ways are beyond our comprehension.

Deuteronomy 29:29 says, "The secret things belong unto the LORD our God." At some point, we have to accept humbly what God has told us, and trust He is doing what is right. Even though clouds and darkness surround us, we can trust that righteousness and justice are the foundation of God's throne. There is no getting away from the fact good can come out of evil and bad situations. The Cross of Jesus Christ was a temporal evil,

but what came from it was eternally good. It brought salvation to our souls. Satan did his worst, but God did His best. Best of all, God does not watch our pain uncompassionately, but in Christ He endured it Himself.

Sometimes the trial seems hard to bear, but there is a purpose. God allows us to go through things to strengthen us and make us better Christians. We need to do our best to trust God's plan. He has already proved Himself way too many times. God will not fail us. He will let us go through some things, but He is always right there beside us. We have an awesome and strong foundation in God. I hope and pray, dear one, this has been an encouragement to you.



AT THE CROSSROADS

"Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein."

Jeremiah 6:16

Decisions – "a choice you make about something after thinking about it."

We make decisions every

day. We have to decide what we want to eat and drink, and what clothes we are going to wear. If we have a test coming up, we must decide on whether to study for it or not. If we want a good grade, we will study. The most important decision we have to make in our life is whether to serve the Lord or not. You will hear two voices speaking to you: one saying you need to get saved and the other giving you thoughts on why you should not. The devil will tell you that you cannot have fun or you cannot do this or that.

The devil does not let you see the road of destruction he will be leading you down. When at the crossroads, you look at the paths—one looks straight and smooth. So, you decide to take that road because it looks easy. At that point, you are making a decision about whether to serve the Lord or not. It will be an easy road to begin with. Then the road will turn rough, curvy, smaller, and darker. You will be looking

around and wondering, "How did I get here, and how am I going to get out of this place?" But, thank the Lord, we have a Savior who will save us and pull us out of that horrible pit and deep miry clay (Psalm 40:2).

The Lord wants to save you when you are young and help you to make the right decisions. Being a Christian is not just for the old; it is for the young also. The Lord tells us in Lamentations 3:27, "It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth." The Lord also tells us in Psalm 25:9 (the *Amplified Bible*), "He leads the humble in what is right, and the humble He teaches His way." The Lord will not direct you down the wrong path. He will help you make those right decisions.

So, when you are standing there at the crossroads, remember to choose "the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls."

Sister Shannon Malone

ESPECIALLY FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

A Settled Experience



First Peter 5:10 says, "But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you." We read in 2 Thessalonians 3:3, "But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil." This lesson is beneficial for all. It is good for those who have been recently saved and for those who have been saved for a while, those who are young and old.

Every child of God should desire to reach a place where their experience is settled and does not ebb and flow with the circumstances around them, a place where the world has less of a drawing power on them. It is a place where the initial reaction to trouble is not to turn back on God. I am not saying we reach a plateau where temptations never come. We will not reach a place, like some people believe, where we are not tempted at all with wrong.

We can get to the place, as the Bible says in Ephesians 4:14, where we are "no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine." It is not just "every wind of doctrine," but every wind of emotion, every wind of what others are doing, and every wind of this or that, which can pull us off our settled experience.

God desires all Christians to

develop into strong, healthy pillars. Can a young person be a pillar? Maybe your initial thought is no, but I believe the answer is yes. Let me explain by using the Word of God. Lamentations 3:27 tells us, "It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth." The word *bear* comes from the Hebrew word *nasa*, which means "to lift, to bear up, carry, support, sustain, and endure." A pillar supports and sustains. The Bible says it is good for a man to do this in his youth.

A young person can be a pillar. The Word of God backs that up. Someone may say, "As a young person, I do not have the position or authority to be a pillar in the church." Be a pillar where God has placed you. Be a pillar in the youth group or in your group of friends. Hold others up and keep strong for the Lord. Your work does not have to be great, but you need to be faithful.

I will give you an example. Shortly after I joined the youth group, a couple of brothers and I were given the task of putting out the songbooks before the youth service and picking them up and putting them away afterwards. Some of the other youth would notice and help. The point I am trying to make is, it was a small task, but we were faithful with the things we were given to do.

God gives each one time and

a place for growth. He does not expect someone who is newly saved to have the same knowledge as the pastor or someone who has been saved for many years. He does not expect young people to have the same experience as the youth leaders. However, He wants us to grow and reach a place of spiritual maturity.

One illustration says: "A group of tourists was visiting a beautiful picturesque village, like something you might see on a postcard or in a magazine. As they were walking by, an old man was sitting beside a fence, and one tourist, in a friendly way, said to the man: 'Were any great men born in this village?' and to that, the old man replied: 'Nope, only babies.'"

It is the same with the Christian life. None of us are born great, and none of us are born strong; it takes some work. When we are born into Christ, we are babes, and it is through a process of maturity we can become great Christians. It is a process that takes time and effort. There is no such thing as a forty-year-old baby. In other words, I do not mind feeding milk to a baby and holding him on my lap, but when he grows up, I do not want him to expect a bottle to be placed in his mouth.

The Bible puts it this way, "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye

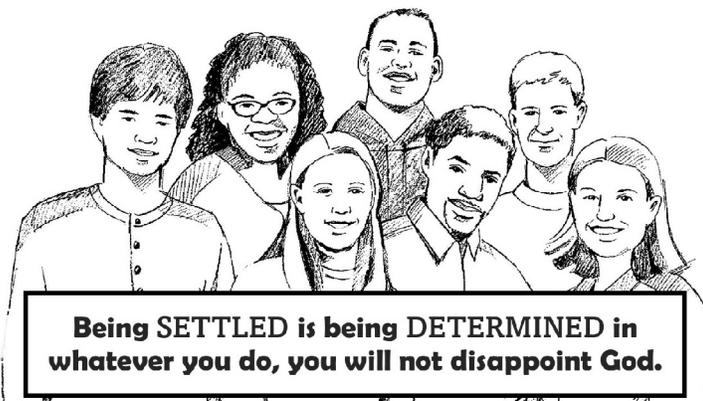
may grow thereby" (1 Peter 2:2). What really provides the significance to this word "milk" is the phrase that succeeds it. It is the "milk of the word." That phrase is derived from the Greek word *logikos*, which is an adjective pertaining to that which is "reasonable or rational." It is the same word translated "reasonable" in Romans 12:1.

Originally, this verse would have been translated to read "reasonable milk," but that makes little sense in the English language; so it was translated to read "milk of the word."

Through this verse, we understand that a continual desire for and consumption of the Word of God is reasonable for spiritual growth. The milk will not always be reasonable as you continue to grow. You will start getting into the meat of the Word and eating things you were not eating when you were just a babe in Christ.

Let us study the idea of having a settled experience. By definition, the word *settled* means "fixed or established, unlikely to change, decided, and placed so as to stay." I am not talking about eternal security. Many of you may have heard about the false doctrine "once saved, always saved." It is the idea that once a person is saved, he or she is always saved, no matter what they do. There are religions that teach if a person gets saved, even if he commits murder, when he dies, he will still go to Heaven. No one will ever reach a place where he or she is incapable of falling.

Here are a few Scriptures to clear it up. Acts 1:25 says, "That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place." Judas was a disciple who, at one point, had a genuine relationship with Christ. In Mark, Chapter 6, the



Being SETTLED is being DETERMINED in whatever you do, you will not disappoint God.

Bible says Jesus sent forth the twelve, which would have included Judas, and gave them power over unclean spirits. Judas had power, but he fell by transgression. Is Judas in Heaven today? No, but he was saved once.

In 2 Peter 2:20-22 we read: "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire."

Galatians 4:9 states, "But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?" Hebrews 10:38 says, "Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him." These Scriptures let you know it is not impossible to fail or to reach a point where you will never sin.

Some people take it a step further and say, "You can reach the place you will never be tempted." Jesus was tempted, so

that is not a true statement. Being settled is a mindset and a determination you are in this for the long haul. You are in it to win it, and no matter what comes along your pathway, turning back is not an option.

Two heroes of the Bible come to my mind when I think of being settled. One is Joseph,

who was tempted by Potiphar's wife. His response was, "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" (Genesis 39:9). The other one is Daniel, who "purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself" (Daniel 1:8). These two men in the Old Testament were settled and had a fixed and established relationship with God. They had settled it, long before they were faced with problems and temptations, that they would not disappoint God. This is what it means to be settled. You are determined, in whatever you do, not to disappoint God. Do you have it settled? Are you as determined as Joseph and Daniel?

A structure, such as a house or a building, is settled. It is not easily moved because it is securely fastened to the foundation it was built on. The Bible tells us we are a spiritual house. First Peter 2:5 states, "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." Since we are a spiritual house, we must be anchored to and settled on the Rock.

Jesus said in Luke 6:46-49: "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say? Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will shew you to whom he is like: He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on

a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock. But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great."

In this parable, Jesus likened the wise man to the man who built his house on the rock. It is a perfect illustration of what it means to have a settled experience. This house can stand the storms and the tests of life because it is firmly founded on the rock. The Rock is Jesus.

Jesus is referenced as the Rock clear back in the Old Testament. You can read about the stone "cut out of the mountain without hands" in Daniel 2:45. Moses hit the rock, and water came forth in Exodus 17:6, which is a type of Christ and the spiritual drink He gives to satisfy our thirst. Jesus is the Rock, and we need to be anchored in Him.

Again, Luke 6:48 says, "He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep." If you want an experience that will last, you have to dig deep. There is no other way to get it. You cannot have a shallow experience and prosper.

The Scripture says, "The stream beat vehemently upon that house." When a hurricane comes, it can really tear things up and rip things to pieces. A house built solidly and soundly may not withstand a hurricane, much less one poorly built. This life has a lot of hurricanes and storms that will shake you to the very core. The Scripture tells us a house founded on a rock will stand.

Is there a point in your life when you may say, "This is as far as I'm going with God"? Can your experience be shaken? I like what the Apostle Paul said in

Acts 20:24, which reads, "But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God." Can you say, as Paul, "None of these things move me"?

Paul faced different trials than the ones we may face. He was beaten, stoned, shipwrecked three times, and endured threatenings and perils. All "these things" to a young person today might be: "Someone made fun of me because of the way I dress" or "My parents said I can't do this or that" or "Serving God is not much fun; it is a bunch of rules." When you put them in light of what Paul went through, they seem so small. In the grand scheme of things, when weighed in the light of the Word and against the lives of those who have gone on before us, such as the Apostle Paul, they are so light and minuscule. However, they continue to be the downfall of many young people.

Getting established in our walk with God does not happen overnight, and it does not happen without effort. Our Scripture text in 1 Peter 5:10 reads, "After that ye have suffered a while." This lets us know the establishing comes after a little bit, or maybe a whole lot, of suffering. The word *suffer* means "to be affected, or to undergo; to feel or have an unpleasant experience to undergo."

You must understand your experiences, both good and bad, if used correctly, will cause you to grow in Christ. Your trials and sufferings are meant for your growth and establishment. Job said in Job 23:10, "But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." Except for Jesus, this man suffered more than anyone else who walked on this earth. It is clear, according to the account

of his life, his experience was settled. Similar to Joseph and Daniel, he was determined not to fail God in his tests. He recognized his sufferings were meant for his perfection, and through all of them he "sinned not, nor charged God foolishly" (Job 1:22).

Malachi 3:3 reads, "And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness." In the 1800s, a group of women met to study the Bible in Dublin, Ireland. They were puzzled by the words in Malachi 3:3. One lady promised to call on a silversmith and report to them about what he had to say on the subject. She went accordingly, and without telling the object of her errand, she begged to know the process of refining silver, which he fully described to her. "But sir," she said, "do you sit while the work of refining is going on?"

"Oh yes, Madam," replied the silversmith, "I must sit with my eyes steadily fixed on the furnace, for if the time necessary for refining is exceeded in the slightest degree, the silver is sure to be injured." At once, she saw the beauty and comfort of the expression, "He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver."

Christ sees it is needful to put His children into the furnace, but He is seated beside it. His eye is steadily intent on the work of purifying, and His wisdom and love are both engaged in the best manner for His children. Their trials do not come at random. As the lady was leaving the shop, the silversmith called her back. He still had to mention he only knew when the process of purifying was complete by seeing his own image reflected in the silver.

When Christ's image is reflected in us, His work of purifying is accomplished. I want to impress upon you that victory is

going to require suffering and going through the fire. Suffering helps us get a settled experience.

Let us consider a few keys to having a settled experience. The Bible tells us in 2 Corinthians 7:10-11: "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death. For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter."

The *Amplified Bible* reads: "For [godly] sorrow that is in accord with the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation; but worldly sorrow [the hopeless sorrow of those who do not believe] produces death. For [you can look back and] see what an earnestness and authentic concern this godly sorrow has produced in you: what vindication of yourselves [against charges that you tolerate sin], what indignation [at sin], what fear [of offending God], what longing [for righteousness and justice], what passion [to do what is right], what readiness to punish [those who sin and those who tolerate sin]! At every point you have proved yourselves to be innocent in the matter."

The first key to having a settled experience is true, genuine repentance. First and foremost, you have to settle it at the altar, be sorry for your sins, and desire a change. Shallow repentance will not get you anywhere. You have to dig deep and hit the Rock, as we read in the parable earlier.

The antecedent of true repen-

tance is godly sorrow. It is not repentance itself, but it is a necessary preparative for repentance. Godly sorrow is the sorrow in which one realizes their actions have hurt God. It will produce repentance, a desire for change, and ultimately salvation. Worldly sorrow is not that way. It is a sorrow that "worketh death," a sorrow in which you are merely sorry over the consequences of your actions instead of desiring to actually change.

Let us look at the repentance of Peter and Judas to put worldly sorrow versus godly sorrow into

THREE KEYS TO HAVING A SETTLED EXPERIENCE

1. **Genuine Repentance**
2. **Restitution**
3. **Have a Desire**



context. In Matthew 26:75 we read: "And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he [Peter] went out, and wept bitterly." In Matthew 27:3-5 it says: "Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that. And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself."

Peter was sorry he had hurt Jesus. He wept bitterly because he had let down his Friend and betrayed Him. Judas was sorry he was condemned. The Scripture says, "When he saw that he

was condemned." Judas was not really sorry about what he did to Jesus; he was sorry for what it meant for him. This is the difference between genuine repentance and a repentance that will not last. You have to be sorry you hurt God. You have to desire to change and do better.

The second key is restitution. The Scripture we read in 2 Corinthians 7:10-11 goes on to say there are some acts that follow genuine repentance. One of these acts is restitution. The Scripture mentions the "clearing of yourselves." There is something about truly getting down to business with God, clearing things up between you and Him, that makes you want to clear things up between you and others.

Let us look at the story of Zacchaeus. He said, "If I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold" (Luke 19:8). Jesus did not prompt him to do that. Once Zacchaeus had met with Jesus, he wanted to make things right with those around him. Restitutions are essential in having a settled experience. When you apologize to someone for something you did, you are not likely to repeat that action or do others wrong in the future. If I have to say, "I am sorry," I do not want to go back and have to say it again.

When a child steals candy from a gas station and his mom catches him, if she makes him go back into the gas station, return the candy, and apologize to the person behind the counter for stealing, he is less likely to steal something in the future. When the temptation comes to steal, the event will come back to his mind, and he will remember how embarrassing and humiliating it was to go back and explain what he did. He will not want to do that

again. It is the same way spiritually. When you make things right with those around you and you are tempted in the future, you will not want to do that again. Most of all, you will not want to hurt God again.

The third key is to have a desire. The Scripture calls it a "vehement desire." The word *vehement* means "forceful, passionate, or intense." It is the desire to please God above everything else. No matter what happens, you do not want to fail God. You want to be His child more than anything else in the world, and that is what it takes. Anything short of that desire for God shows you are not settled, and it is not going to work.

This desire will cause you to do those things necessary to stay spiritual. It will cause you to read your Bible, pray, and attend church services. It is a vehement, intense, and passionate desire. The Scripture mentions the word *zeal*, which means "great energy or enthusiasm in pursuit of a cause or an objective." Are you serving God with enthusiasm? Is

your eye on the prize?

The Scripture also mentions "carefulness." Are you tenderhearted? Can God mold and shape you? Are you quick to move when He points something out in your life? Are you quick to get it taken care of so you can move on and continue to grow? There is definitely much more that could be said about what it takes to be settled. We must put into practice what we have heard. This is a good basis: genuinely repent, make restitution, and desire to do good above everything else.

As I was studying this lesson, a thought came to my mind to reach out to some senior saints whom I have confidence in and see what was a key to them in getting a settled experience with God. I look up to them as pillars, but they all started where many of us are today. They had to work at it, and God has richly rewarded them for the energy they put into serving God.

One brother said he spent much time absorbing all he could from elder saints and ministers.

He fully recommended developing relationships with solid, godly saints whom we can allow to become pillars in our lives. Another brother said the same thing. He received help by reaching out to the elder saints and asking for counsel, prayer, and help. If you want to be successful, you have to surround yourself with people who are going to help you. Be in a good crowd with other people who are like-minded.

I bring this before you because you should recognize those you look up to now as spiritual giants were once spiritual babes. It took much effort for them to get to where they are today. They are pillars because they settled it from the beginning; they were going to serve God and not give up! The burden of my heart is that you recognize the importance of getting your experience settled. You can have salvation that lasts. God wants you to have it settled. I pray this will help and encourage you.

Brother T. J. Foster

"There Is None Like That!"

*"And David said, There is none like that; give it me."
1 Samuel 21:9*

King Saul was determined to kill David. Envy and jealousy had filled his heart, and he continually sent men to find and slay David. David fled for his life. After counseling with the Prophet Samuel, David traveled to Nob (a city of priests) where he hoped to receive comfort, counsel, and supplies. When David asked the priest for a spear or a sword, Ahimelech told him he had "the sword of Goliath . . . if thou wilt take that, take it."

What encouragement the sight of that sword must have brought! It was a reminder of the victory God had given David in spite of the incredible odds against him. Not only that, but this sword had been tested and proven. Goliath would not have had an inferior weapon.

How many times are we in severe trials, and we wonder if we are going to make it? We have an enemy who is

trying to kill us spiritually. He is relentless! This account of David tells us how we can have victory:

- (1) Counsel with spiritual leaders
- (2) Make worship services a priority
- (3) Take the tested and proven Word (the Sword of the Spirit)

It is easy to lose sight of the power there is in God's Word! It must be our DAILY bread. We have an enemy who is ever working to destroy us. It would be good to start every day with the Bible. Let us say, like David, "There is none like that; give it [to] me!"

Selected



BROTHERS AND SISTERS OF THE MESSIAH



Brother Josh Thilmomy

"He Is Not Ashamed to Call Them Brethren"

Jesus brings us up with heavenly things. I thank God for Him. We are made like Him in spirit, and He was made like us in the flesh. He will keep us like Him. The Hebrew writer picked up this Scripture verse in the psalms and expounded on it. We are made like Him, and He is not ashamed to call us brothers and sisters. I do not want Him to be ashamed of me and how I live my life. I do not want Him to be ashamed of how I act when I am at work or of how I treat my wife.

Hebrews 2:10-12 tells us: "For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, Saying, I will declare thy name [here he was

quoting the psalm] unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee."

I thank God for this truth. We have been made one with Jesus Christ. This experience of salvation is a very elevating experience. Salvation will do more for you than any other religion on earth will do for you. It will change your life and make you like God and the Son of God. I thank God He does not leave us the way He found us. He is a miracle worker. He changes us into thoughtful, loving people when before we were selfish. We find joy in giving. When you give of your finances, God will give you joy. Thank God, it is a good trade.

I have been studying the Book of James, a New Testament book of wisdom. It is a lot like the Proverbs. James talked about rich men, and he said in James 5:1, "Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you." There are many rich people who are

Psalm 22:22 I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.

miserable. It is kind of counter-intuitive. They hoard stuff to gain happiness, but it makes them miserable.

I heard about an instructor who talked to a group of wealthy doctors. He was trying his best to get them to smile, but they would not smile. Finally he said, "You guys are miserable," and then they laughed. There is misery in being worldly minded and self-centered. God can make you a godly, generous, and giving person.

Being Made Like Christ

Again, Hebrews 2:11 reads, "For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one." Sanctification is one way we are like Jesus. The Bible says Jesus sanctified Himself for our sake, and we, in turn, sanctify ourselves for His sake. There are some ways the Bible mentions being sanctified by the Spirit of God. He sanctifies us when He moves in, after we are saved. We are sanctified by the blood of Jesus Christ and by the Word of God.

We sanctify, or set apart, ourselves, which is very important. The Apostle Paul told the Corinthians 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." That is something each of us must do.

Silver gets tarnished, and you have to polish it. When you get saved, you have God's Spirit in your life. Although God has delivered you from sin, it takes continual polishing to keep yourself

like Christ and for you to sanctify yourself. This walk with God takes great effort on your part. Brother E. A. Wilson said one time, "If you want to make it to Heaven, you are going to go with your work boots on, not your slippers."

If you want victory, the Bible says you must love God with all your heart, soul, and mind. If you want to prosper in spirit, give God your mind. That is one reason you should go to church and sit under Gospel messages. You should give God your mind and let Him cultivate your thinking and help you.

It is precious that God makes us like Him. We are one with Him. One older brother said many philosophers have made statements about religion and philosophy, but no one has ever made the statement Jesus made when He said in Matthew 11:28, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." No one can say that other than Jesus Christ.

I thank God we can be made one with Him and become separated from our past. He gives love like we have never known. His mercy comes in and overflows the deepest pits of our past. Thank God, we are called to live like Him in spirit. First John 4:17 reads, "As he is, so are we in this world." We have been made like Him, and if there is something in your life you are troubled about, God wants to help you. I like the Scripture in Acts 4:13 that says, "And they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus." They reminded them of Jesus.

I can remember when I first came to the Church of God. I listened to messages on tape. As I was in the car, listening to a tape, I thought, "The Spirit in that message reminds me of how I feel when I read the Scriptures." It was the same Spirit coming across that message as was on the

pages of the Bible I was reading. It was the same influence, the same Spirit, and the same love.

I thank God for the way He leads us as His children! God has such a gentle way of leading. How patient and long-suffering our God is; yet He calls us to walk a high life with Him. He calls us to walk a straight life, but it is a blessed life. He nudges with a still, small voice. Is that the way God talks to you? His voice goes beyond what the preacher says and what you read in the Bible. Sometimes, the Spirit comes in and says, "This is the way, walk ye in it" (Isaiah 30:21). Thank the Lord!

A Glorious Experience

In John 15:4 Jesus said, "Abide in me, and I in you." We have been made like Him, and He is not ashamed to call us "brother" and "sister." There are plenty of religious people whom you hear about in the news or read about, and He is ashamed to call them "brother" or "sister." God is not ashamed of a true child of God because we have been made like Him. We share with Him in heavenly glory. John 1:17 states, "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." It elevates us above the old Law and makes us heavenly creatures. We share that with Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul told the Romans in Romans 8:9 if they did not have the Spirit of Christ, they did not belong to Him. We have been made holy like Him.

As I study the Bible and live for God, I am constantly reminded salvation is so much more than just cleaning up the sin out of your life. It is about having love, joy, and peace from God. It is about filling the void that was there. When God takes all the sin out of your life, He refills you with something so much better. This way of truth is not just a bunch of rules. It is a

glorious experience with God. God will lead you. He can tell you that you are wrong and make you glad He told you.

Christian friend, do you remember how it was when you were a sinner? You were lost without God, and God came and said it was you who messed up your life. You could not blame your sin on anyone else. However, there was something you liked hearing because of the grace and love in the message and invitation from God. God gave you something good, and you liked hearing it even though you knew you had messed everything up. God drew you to a place of repentance.

I got saved in 1989. Brother Larry Dishman was speaking in a young people's service about hell, and God got hold of my heart. I prayed with two ministers, but I did not get saved while kneeling at the altar. As I was walking away, I thought to myself, "Why don't I just believe?" and God saved me right then as I was walking down the hall. During the evening service as the choir was singing, I can remember it was the very first time in my life I felt like raising my hand. What they were singing about touched me. It is good to be saved and made like God! It is a paradox. God changes you completely in a moment, but it takes a lifetime to keep seeking God.

Jesus Was Made Like Us

Jesus did not have a special body. Someone once said: "Jesus had a different kind of flesh than we do. He was not tempted as strongly, and that is how He kept from committing sin." Hebrews 2:14-17 reads: "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power



The flesh wants to speak quickly, but the Spirit is quieter. If you are **SLOW TO SPEAK**, you can hear the Spirit instead of the flesh.

of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

"For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people." This is the beauty of salvation. The Hebrew writer brings it out well. We have a High Priest who is touched with what we feel because He felt it.

Jesus was made like us. Working with His father, Joseph, the carpenter, He may have smashed His thumb and still maintained a good spirit. When He was beaten and spit upon, do not think for a minute He did not want to retaliate. He was in the flesh as we are. There is a humanity about us that wants revenge, and we have to learn to crucify it. We all have to learn to crucify the flesh.

You can learn great wisdom from the Book of James. James 1:19 instructs, "My beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath." How many times would you be in less trouble if you spoke a little slower? The flesh wants to speak quickly, but the Spirit is quieter. If you are slow to speak, you can hear the Spirit

instead of the flesh.

Hebrews 2:16 tells us, "For verily he took not on him the nature of angels." Based on this passage of Scripture, Jesus took on Him a human, or fleshly, nature. Some have incorrectly stated, "Jesus did not have a nature like we have because He did not have an earthly father." Jesus had every bit of whatever we have. If He did not, it would not be fair of God to exalt Him so high and condemn us. Jesus dealt with everything we deal with. He was tempted in every point and in every way we are. I believe He was tempted on the Cross to call the angels to rescue Him.

Good saints of God have struggles with wrong attitudes, but they pray through it. Jesus said to "love your enemies . . . and pray for them which despitefully use you" (Matthew 5:44). The reason He said that was for their benefit as well as for yours. When you pray for your enemy, it helps to adjust your attitude.

Keeping God on the Inside

Jesus did not take on Him the nature of angels. He did not come with a different nature from what you and I have, but He took on Him the seed of Abraham, the nature of a human, and He showed us you can please God by the Spirit of God in this body. When Jesus talked about living a holy life, He already did that in a body, just like we have. The difference was God was on the inside. We need God on the inside, and then we can live a good, holy life. Hebrews 4:15 says He "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." You can be tempted sore and make it through with victory, and God can help you keep the right spirit.

I heard about a preacher who told people how many times he sinned on the way to church. This preacher said: "I can make

you all sin. If I yell at you long enough, you will say some choice words." That is sad because he flip-flopped while he was talking and said, "God will help you live a godly life." First John 2:1 reads: "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." Notice John said "if" any man sin, not "when." God can help you. If you get hurt on the job, you do not have to curse or get drunk.

James brought up another "if" in dealing with sin. He was talking about divine healing. He wrote in James 5:14-15: "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he hath committed sins, they shall be forgiven him." If someone falters, he should not be made to feel as though he is a castaway. That is not the point of preaching holiness. If you fail, God still loves you, and the saints still love you. You should repent and move on if that happens.

Jesus was made flesh like us, and He will keep us like Him. Hebrews 2:18 says, "For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted." Jesus is able to help you. He not only forgives, but He helps you through so you can be faithful. He will keep you like Him, so He will not be ashamed to call you His brother or sister. He can be with you as He was with Job. Satan was out to destroy Job's life, but he remained faithful. That is something to rejoice about! Even if the devils are let loose on you, you can stay faithful. Thank God, you can, by the grace of God, live like Jesus. He will help you to be like Him.

If you want to stay faithful, it

is good to look to Jesus because He stayed faithful through the hardest trials. The Christian life is not easy. It is not a life without hardship, and it is not a bed of roses. Nevertheless, you can be faithful.

"The Glory Which Shall Be Revealed"

One of the glorious truths about the Christian life is it does not depend upon your environment. God did not put that condition in there. You do not need to have a perfect husband to love him. A woman may say, "I would have a hard time submitting to a man like him." A man may say, "I could not love a wife like her." If you married her, God expects you to love her. If we are honest, we could all say we have not always been lovable.

This Christian walk will help you when things are not perfect around you. When the paycheck

does not stretch until the next payday, God will help you through it. The latter part of Ecclesiastes 9:11 tells us, "Time and chance happeneth to them all." Bad things happen to good people, and when they do, some people have trouble with their faith. Do not lose faith when trouble comes your way. God has confidence in you to go through it well.

I have heard people say, "If God really loves us, why does He let us suffer?" For one thing, we just have to trust God. We have to do as the Bible says and look to the end of the matter. Look at Job, and you will see how merciful God was in the end. We have to compare the length of eternity to the length of this life. If you suffered horribly for eighty years, that is nothing compared to eternal bliss in Glory.

Romans 8:18 states, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this

present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." The suffering we may have to endure now is not worthy of being compared with the blessings we will receive in Glory. He can keep you like Him on the good days and the bad days. Saint of God, Jesus is not ashamed to call you brother or sister because He has done so much for you. His love is a love like you have never known.

If you are not saved, you are missing out on something wonderful. God can change your life completely. God is a master artist. I have met no one who was sorry he got saved, but I have met plenty of ones who have said, "I wish I had done it sooner." God will give you a good life.

(Compact Disc TR-2022)

The God of Comfort

I have been through the valley of weeping,
The valley of sorrow and pain;
But the God of all comfort was with me,
At hand to uphold and sustain.

As the earth needs the clouds and the
sunshine
Our souls need both sorrow and joy,
So He places us oft in the furnace,
The dross from the gold to destroy.

When He leads thru some valley of trouble
His omnipotent hand we can trace;
For the trials and sorrows He sends us
Are part of His lessons of grace.

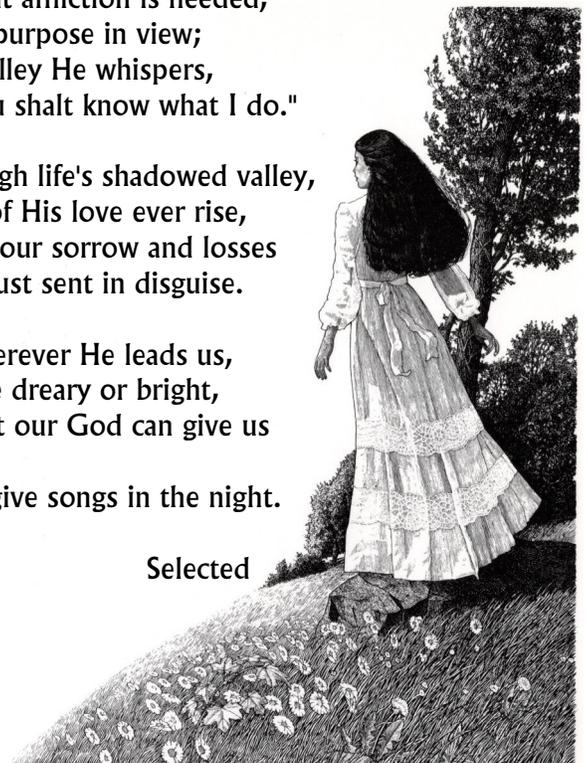
Oft we shrink from the purging and
pruning,
Forgetting the husbandman knows
That the deeper the cutting and paring
The richer the cluster that grows.

Well He knows that affliction is needed,
He has a wise purpose in view;
And in the dark valley He whispers,
"Hereafter thou shalt know what I do."

As we travel through life's shadowed valley,
Fresh springs of His love ever rise,
And we learn that our sorrow and losses
Are blessings just sent in disguise.

So we'll follow wherever He leads us,
Let the path be dreary or bright,
For we proved that our God can give us
comfort,
Our God can give songs in the night.

Selected



Accusations



Alta Hines

We read in Revelation 12:10-11: "And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the *blood of the Lamb*, and by the *word of their testimony*; and they loved not their lives unto the death."

In this Scripture, we are informed that Satan is "*the accuser of our brethren*" and that he has been "*cast down*." It would be well for each dear reader to remember God calls Satan "the accuser," for indeed he is "the accuser." He will cause the honest Christians to doubt their experience of salvation, if they do not know how to overcome him and defeat him.

It might be well to state that Satan likes to pick on the tender, sensitive, obedient Christians as these always make the best Christians and the best workers for God. If he can discourage and harass them by making them doubt their experience, he can make them unhappy and, to a certain extent, unsuccessful.

The devil has successfully ac-

cused many dear, honest souls into believing they have sinned in some little way or another, when it is their whole desire to do the *complete will of God*, and they would not fail Him willfully for anything. Things that do not bother the average Christian will trouble those who are subject to the accusing powers of the devil, making them miserable indeed.

Some things the devil uses to discourage, accuse, and confuse the dear Christian are often foolish and unreasonable, but this fact does not for one moment lessen the awful fear and torment associated with those accusations. Also, if Satan cannot accuse the dear Christian by telling him he has sinned, he will then often tell him he never was saved in the first place.

There are no words descriptive enough to portray the awful fear, horror, confusion, and hopelessness of the dear person so accused; yet all the time, the heart of this very person is crying out and yearning to do the whole will of God. Remember, dear friend, there is real hope for you. The Bible says, "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the *word of their testimony*." There is victory!

Many have believed Satan's evil suggestions and have gone back time and time again, trying to repent over and over to make sure of their experience with God, only to find that even this did not bring permanent victory.

Most Christians have experienced accusations to some extent in their Christian walk. Some have overcome readily, while others have had a real battle with the enemy of their souls. The devil will tell you, you are the only one who ever experienced such things, but this is not true. In 1 Peter 5:9 we read that "the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world." It is through accusations that the enemy steals away our peace and happiness in Jesus Christ. He knows he cannot get the sincere Christians to sin, so he tries in this way and in many other ways to defeat them.

SIN DEFINED

Sin is a known, willful transgression against the Word, or the will, of God. Sin is the *only thing* that can separate us from God. As long as we have not committed sin since we became Christians, we have a perfect right to testify that we are Christians.

If the devil cannot get a person cast down with accusations, he will always try other things. He will get some so interested in the affairs of this life that he will choke out their love for God. God must have first place in our lives if we please Him. Some people count their religion as a sideline issue, only attended to in their spare time; but God must come first, and other things must be put on the sideline where they rightfully belong. The devil succeeds in getting many to set their affections on earthly things, such as their home, family, or car, and God is not first as He should be. This must not be if we want to be victorious Christians and pleasing in the sight of God.

Let us deal here definitely with the Christian who is accused and harassed by the enemy of his soul, whose happiness is not as it once was. Satan is the enemy of our souls, and it makes no difference to him how he steals away our happiness, just so he succeeds. In 1 Peter 5:8 we read, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." The devil becomes roaring mad every time a soul is translated out of his kingdom into the kingdom of God's dear Son. Therefore, he will not rest so long as there is an opportunity to seize upon the Christian and take him as his prey. Nevertheless, thank God for His written, eternal, and unfulfilling promise that tells us, "Greater is he [Christ] that is in you, than he [Satan] that is in the world" (1 John 4:4).

The power of the devil, matched with the power of Christ, becomes very weak indeed. Christ is our Redeemer, our buckler, and our strong and high tower. By trusting in Him, we are safe from every power of the

enemy. In Proverbs 18:10 we read, "The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe." What a glorious promise for the troubled Christian! It is good for us to remember that the devil flees at the mention of the name of Christ, and it is your privilege as a Christian to rebuke him in the name of the Lord.

CAUSE FOR ACCUSATIONS

What is the true cause of accusations? They are purposed to defeat the Christian entirely, or at least to steal away his joy and peace and freedom in Jesus Christ. People bothered by accusations are not free people. I have seen people so harassed and bound by the accusing powers of Satan that they are no longer free as Christ intended for them to be. "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8:36). However, the accused are bound under the yoke of the devil, and truly, it is a galling yoke. I have seen some people who were afraid to talk for fear they would tell a lie, then to experience Satan's coming and accusing them of it. This is not freedom, neither is it becoming to the Gospel of Christ. The Scriptures tell us in Philippians 1:27, "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the Gospel of Christ." Most generally, we refer this Scripture to loose living or loose conversation, but extremes either way are hindering to the Gospel of Christ.

IMPRESSIONS

I have seen others bothered with compelling impressions they felt they just had to obey or the devil would accuse them over it. *This is not freedom.*

Impressions most generally come from three sources—from God, from one's self, and from the devil. Impressions that come from God are clear and easily understood. If they come with confusion, fear, or uncertainty, *they are certainly from the*

devil. The devil does not care what tactics he uses, if he can only harass and trouble the Christian. This is his delight. People have sometimes obeyed impressions from Satan that did not glorify God at all because they did it with such fear and distress that people of the world did not understand why they did it.

It would be good for us to remember that we serve God because we want to and not because we have to. Jesus said, "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments." The true Christian enjoys doing the will of God because he loves Him above everything else. The Spirit of God is not a compelling Spirit! He only compels us by love. We please God because we want to please Him.

Compelling impressions that come with an ugly, confusing feeling are from Satan. God's will is sweet and comes with an assurance of grace for any task He would have us to perform. Someone might ask, "Why would Satan impress someone to do something that could be good?" The answer is, it is a trap, for without grace and divine direction, you could never do it. If you are impressed to do something and you are in question about it and you do not do it, then the devil can use that to accuse you. Or if you do the thing in question, you do it in your own strength; it is not done right and is not glorifying to God.

I want to say here, for the encouragement of every dear accused soul, that I have experienced the worst in accusations. I have experienced all these things and more in my early Christian life, and I know whereof I speak. Surely accused people who are suffering under accusations are miserable creatures, and because they are miserable, the devil suggests this as proof that they are not saved. Remember, he is a liar and the father of it!

Dear Christian, the moment you listen to Satan's reasoning and doubt your experience with God, the joy and peace will go out of your heart. You are still a Christian, but not a happy one, as God intended for you

to be. Doubts and faith cannot dwell together. The moment we entertain doubts, faith flees away; and when faith goes, our joy and peace go, for joy and peace come by believing. When we were first saved, we found real joy and peace because we believed we were saved. We must continue believing we are saved to keep the joy and peace in our hearts.

Paul said, "For by faith ye stand" (2 Corinthians 1:24). Satan brings accusations for the express purpose of tearing down our faith. It is the overconscientious Christian whom he troubles most. Again, it makes no difference to Satan how he gets us down, just so he gets the job done. Some Christians are not conscientious enough, while others are entirely too conscientious. The devil will attack on either side of the road, and there is a ditch on each side; so let us move away from the edge to where there is peace and safety.

ACCUSATIONS OR CONDEMNATION?

Many people mistake accusations for condemnation and condemnation for accusations. I have heard some people say they felt condemned when it was nothing but the accusing powers of the devil, for they had done nothing wrong. Then, I have heard others say the devil was accusing them when really God was dealing with their hearts over some matter that was displeasing to Him. You may say, "How can I know the difference?" Let me encourage you, dear one, there is a way. Even as John told us to try the spirits of the false prophets, so we, as Christians, must try the spirits that come to us.

God's Spirit works in a clear, definite, uplifting way, while the spirit of Satan comes in a downcasting, confusing, questioning, depressing way. The pull of God's Spirit is

Doubts and faith cannot dwell together. The moment we entertain doubts, faith flees away.

upward. The pull of Satan's is downward. Any spirit that makes you feel downcast and depressed is not of God! Any spirit that confuses you is not of God! "God is not the author of confusion, but of peace" (1 Corinthians 14:33).

If God points out something in your life that you are doing to displease Him, you can readily and clearly know what it is, and every true Christian will be obedient to the voice of God. However, when you begin to feel bad in your heart, finding yourself confused over what it is all about, and the more you think of it, the more confused you become, it is a sure sign a spirit of Satan is speaking to you.

When this happens, refuse to listen to it, refuse to entertain it, as you would refuse an enemy from your home who would steal away your family and possessions. "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7). I repeat, any spirit that comes to you in a depressing way is not God's Spirit. God's Spirit never depresses. Depression is always of the devil. *God's Spirit does not discourage, but encourages us to move up and overcome in the name of the Lord.*

DEFEATING DEPRESSING SPIRITS

Depressing and confusing spirits must be steadfastly resisted or they will tear down our faith and ruin our happiness as Christians. The devil will depress us; then he will suggest that certainly we must be devil possessed or we would not feel like we do. I believe the devil suggests to every accused soul that they are devil possessed, bringing all kinds of thoughts and feelings to prove his point. This only adds to their misery.

Truly, a person suffering from accusations is not to be condemned, but helped out of their difficulty. Although they can do more to help themselves than anyone else can do for them. Prayer and laying on of hands and rebuking the devil is always a great help, but unless the

individual takes hold of the promises of God and believes God despite all feelings, it will be only of temporary help.

I say again, having experienced accusations myself and gaining the victory over them after a long struggle, when my Christian life seemed hopeless and Satan suggested I never would get victory and that God had turned His face from me, victory was just out ahead.

There is victory for every accused soul *if you take the remedy!* It might seem like a bitter pill, and it may take a lot of effort to swallow it, but it is a sure cure. It is as simple as this: believe in God despite feelings. Find a promise or two or three from God's eternal, unfailing Word, a promise such as 1 John 3:14, which says, "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren," or 1 John 3:24, which says, "And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him." Another good Scripture is 1 John 3:7. It reads, "Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous." (Other good Scriptures to read are John 5:24; 14:23; 15:10-14; Matthew 12:49, 50; Philippians 4:7; and 2 Timothy 1:7.)

You must stand upon the promises of God and claim your salvation upon the eternal authority of God's written, infallible, and unfailing Word, *regardless of how you feel*, and victory will come. A person who has suffered long under accusations is low in faith, for Satan has succeeded in getting you to let down your shield of faith, and now his fiery darts have been striking you instead of hitting the shield of faith. So, lift it up again, dear sister or brother, and the darts will glance off into the air instead of hitting you.

If the devil has torn down your faith little by little, you cannot expect to gain it all back at once, but you can climb back up faster and faster. If you are patient and persistent in your believing, you will soon be above the stormy clouds of doubt and despair.

MY EXPERIENCE

How well I remember the day when I looked up into the face of God and told Him, by His grace and help, I would claim my experience regardless of feelings until I saw Him face to face, knowing I had met the conditions of His unfailing Word to the best of my knowledge and ability. Thank God, I am still claiming it today!

When I made that promise to God, it was a hard thing to do, for I had before this made a new start again and again, not feeling safe in my experience, although I was doing my best to serve God, yet repenting or trying to repent when there was nothing to repent of. I would feel relieved each time, only to fall back into my gloom of unbelief again. However, when I promised God I would cease starting over and over again and claim it once and for all, the *victory was mine!* Oh, I did not have any great good feeling just then, but great peace flooded my soul. I had only cleared out the thing that was hindering.

I am glad to say that the same peace is mine today. Many times since then, the devil has attempted to trouble me again, but by resisting him and leaving my experience committed into the hands of God, I have always overcome. As time went on, my trouble with accusations was left farther and farther behind in my life, and today victory is mine, full and free! Praise God!

Friend, you can have victory too, but remember, you will never receive it by proving your experience of salvation by your feelings. However, if you accept your salvation by faith, the feelings are sure to come sooner or later.



Upcoming Meetings

December 7-14 — PHOENIX, AZ

REVIVAL: Church of God, 3050 West Grovers Ave, Phoenix, AZ 85053
Evangelist: Brother Earl R. Borders, Summersville, WV
Service times: 7 p.m. each evening; Sunday 10:30 a.m. & 6 p.m.
Preaching from the Book of Revelation nightly
For more information, contact: Pastor Scott Kerr @ 480-310-3199

December 26-29 — NEWARK, OH

CAMP MEETING: Church of God, 675 N Cedar Street, Newark, OH 43055
Three services daily: 10 a.m., 3 p.m. & 7 p.m.
Please Note: The first service begins Monday evening at 7 p.m.
For lodging reservation, call 740-345-1213 or visit us @ GodsAcres.org
(Click on "Events" and "Dates and Reservations")
For more information, contact: Pastor Roger L. Decker @ 740-344-2543



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Date Has Been Changed
to December 26-29, 2022

The first service begins Monday evening at 7:00 p.m.

(See page 27 for more information)