

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 July 2022 No. 7



Church of God Tabernacle in Newark, Ohio

*"Enter into his gates with thanksgiving,
and into his courts with praise: be thankful
unto him, and bless his name."*

Psalm 100:4

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

THE GOSPEL TRUMPETER USPS #871620

Periodicals postage paid at the post office in Newark, Ohio 43055.

POSTMAN, send form 3579 to the printer:

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

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

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

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

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Guest Editorial



YOU WOULD NOT

Matthew 23:37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!

Here we find the Savior overlooking Jerusalem and lamenting over the terrible condition the Jews were in. They were the chosen people of God, the very elect who were first offered the wonderful plan of salvation. Jesus faithfully preached to them, but they refused to accept His free gift of salvation. They could not believe He was the Messiah, the anointed One God promised to send.

Jesus was deeply grieved over the spiritually deplorable state the Jews were in. He was heavy-hearted because they were rejecting Him and their only hope of finding real peace. On many occasions, He performed various miracles to prove He was the promised Messiah. Jesus turned water into wine, healed the blind, made the lame to walk, and raised the dead. With all the infallible proofs Jesus displayed before them, they still would not believe or accept Him. Throughout the course of history, God had sent prophets and

messengers to proclaim the coming of the Lord. Sadly, many who were sent were beaten, misused, stoned, and even killed.

Unfortunately, multitudes today hold this same attitude toward the great Giver of Life. Regardless of how much love He shows, many simply disregard His loving care. They will not believe Jesus or accept His plan of salvation. Instead, they want to live their own way, do their own thing, and refuse to obey His commandments. Many are determined not to surrender to the Savior's call to repentance. They have resolved to walk in the paths of sin and unrighteousness. The holiness lifestyle is not appealing to them and their corrupt way of living. What a sad picture this portrays. They willingly choose to reject Christ's offer of redemption. This will surely prove to be a sad ending to the man or woman who chooses death instead of eternal life.

Consider the story of the rich young ruler recorded in Luke 18:18-23. This man came face to face with the Master. He asked Jesus what was required of him to enter Heaven. Jesus instructed him to keep the commandments. The young man replied he had kept them from

[continued on page 7]

Psalm 19:1 The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handy-work.

2 Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.

3 There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard.

4 Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun,

5 Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race.

6 His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.

7 The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.

8 The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.

9 The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.

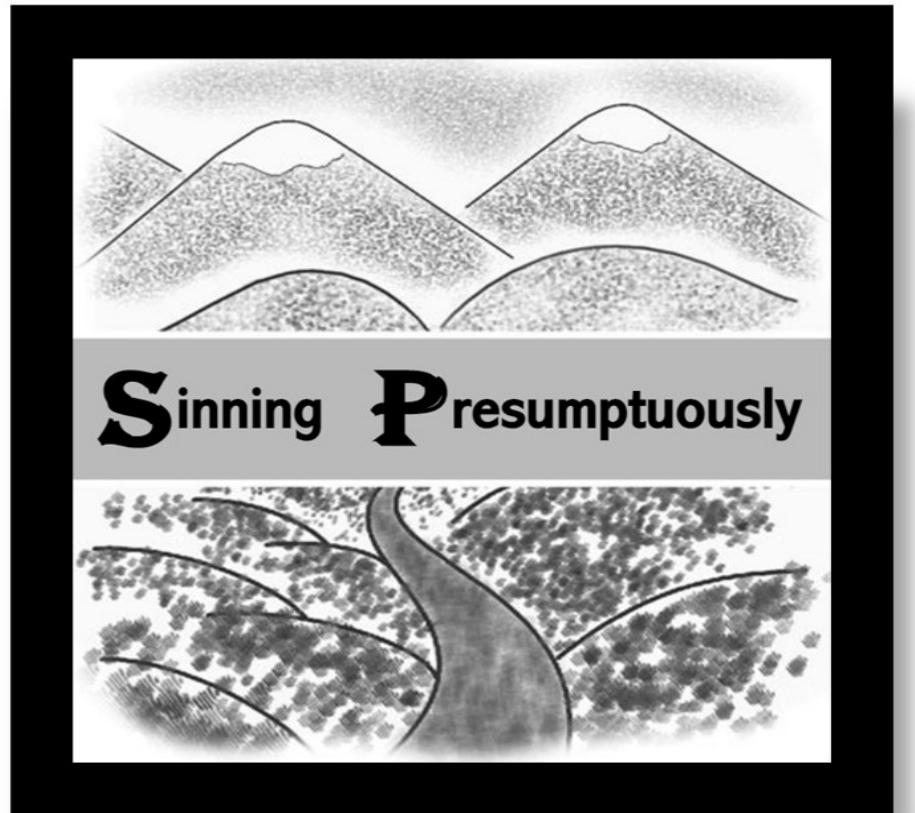
10 More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.

11 Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.

12 Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults.

13 Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.

14 Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.



Brother Roger Decker

Sinning Through Habit

Verse 13 of the Scripture text reads, "Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression." The word *presumptuous* is used throughout the Scriptures. It means "deliberate." It brings a seriousness to living for God. The psalmist is not talking about one committing sin because of weakness or surprise or giving into temptation. He is talking about sinning against light, against judgment, and against your conscience. Presumptuous sins are committed with purpose and deliberation; they are premeditated.

Premeditated also means "deliberate." Hebrews 6:4-6 states: "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift,

and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame." These Scriptures have been misused. Ones quote them to teach that if you fall away from God, you are unable to get back in favor with God. The truth is, it takes godly sorrow for your sin to be removed. Ones who daily practice sin are continually crucifying Jesus afresh. They are not sorrowful enough to quit sin and repent. They cannot be restored while in this condition.

Presumptuous and premeditated both mean "deliberate."

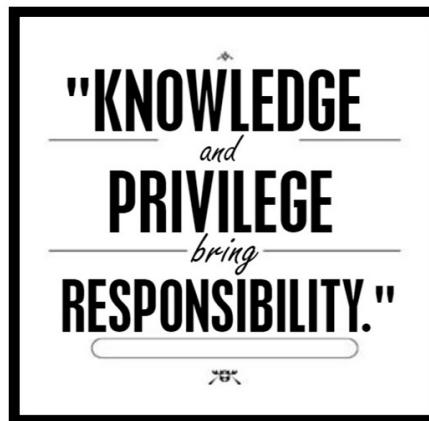
God hates all sin, and He especially hates sin that is deliberate and premeditated. These sins are committed against light, or understanding, and knowledge of the consequences for the wrong. They are sins of pride and sins of self-confidence, or relying on one's own strength. Presumptuous sins are committed, not through frailty, but through thought, purpose, and deliberation.

The Book of James talks about ones falling into temptation. That can happen to any of us. James 1:2 says, "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations." Sinning presumptuously is not falling into temptation. It is sinning against a conscience that is fully convinced of the wrong. David said, "Let them not have dominion over me" or "Let me never get into the habit of sinning." He who sins presumptuously will soon be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. When someone sins through habit, he loses the feeling of conviction that normally accompanies sinning.

Jesus Exposes Sin and Provides a Remedy

There are Scriptures that stand out against sinning presumptuously. In John 15:22 Jesus said, "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin." Knowledge and privilege bring responsibility. Before Jesus came, men did not have the opportunity to know God personally. They had never fully heard His voice. God spoke through the prophets, the priests, and the Law in the Old Testament. Man did not have the privilege of speaking and communicating with God individually. They had never seen the life God actually wanted them to live perfectly demonstrated until Christ came.

There was a time in our lives when we were without strength. The Bible lets us know in Romans 5:6, "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." The fact that Jesus Christ died for us is the final proof of God's love for you and me. It is difficult for a man to die for a just man. Some are persuaded to die for a great cause, a principle, or a belief. The wonder of Jesus Christ is He died for us when we were sinners and in a state of hostility toward God. Love can go no further than that.



There are things that are allowable in children which are not allowable in adults. There are things that are allowable in someone whose upbringing was bad, which are not allowable in someone who was brought up with all the benefits of a Christian home. People do not expect the same conduct from a savage man as they would from a civilized man. The more knowledge a man has and the more privileges he enjoys, the greater his responsibility.

Jesus did two things. First, He exposed sin. He told men and women all the things which grieve God, and He told them the way in which God wants them to walk. Jesus set a true way before each one of us. Second, He provided the remedy for sin. He opened a way to forgiveness for past sins, and He provided the power that enables man to over-

come sin and do right in the future. Jesus brought knowledge and privilege to man.

Suppose there is a sign on the road that reads: "Bridge out. Use a detour." That sign posted clearly alongside the road is saying the road ahead is closed. If someone ignored the sign and continued on his way, the responsibility would be on him, the traveler. He was given knowledge and a warning. He was aware of the danger that the bridge was out. Often there is more than one warning sign stating the bridge is out. Many people disregard Jesus and live their lives as if He never came. He warns them over and over again, sometimes through a song, sometimes through a message, and sometimes through a testimony, but it seemingly falls on deaf ears.

Hardening Your Heart

Consider what the prophet said in Ezekiel 33:31-33: "And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness. And, lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear thy words, but they do them not. And when this cometh to pass, (lo, it will come,) then shall they know that a prophet hath been among them."

Some people love to hear certain preachers who have a great delivery, who tell good stories with a pleasant voice, but they pay no attention to the message. The message is consoling as a lovely song. They hear the words and praise the preacher, but they do not live the message. Ezekiel said: "They hear thy words, but they will not do them. They are as a lovely song."

The Bible is full of examples of ones sinning presumptuously. Numbers 15:30-31 reads: "But the soul that doeth ought presumptuously, whether he be born in the land, or a stranger, the same reproacheth the LORD; and that soul shall be cut off from among his people. [Why?] Because he hath despised the word of the LORD, and hath broken his commandment, that soul shall utterly be cut off; his iniquity shall be upon him."

There are ones who sin through self-confidence. They say: "I do not need to pray about that or get direction from anyone. I know what to do. I can handle it, and if I mess up, God will forgive me." Sinning with the thought of asking God to forgive you and then moving on should remind you of King Saul. He essentially said: "Pray for me Samuel, so I can go on before the people. No one else needs to know about this. It is between God and me." Although it is true in most cases that no one else needs to know your sins, there are times when others are involved and things need to be straightened out. There is a tendency to harden your heart if you sin presumptuously because there is no godly sorrow.

Young person, if you are dating, you cannot overstep decency and think God will just turn His head. You may tell God: "We went too far last night. Lord, forgive us and help us." Then turn around the next day and do it again and say: "God, forgive us. We should have known better." If you are not careful, you will pray formal prayers with no heartfelt conviction. If you need to ask forgiveness every time you go on a date, you are sinning presumptuously. You know better than what you are doing.

Do not believe someone who says he got saved if he makes none of his wrongs right. If you have overstepped and committed

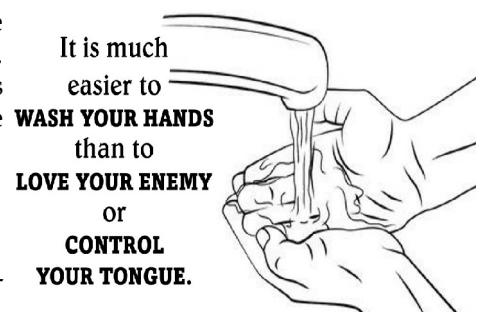
adultery, then there are some things that need straightened out. Many times, ones feel adultery is the physical act only, but the Word of God reads differently.

Sin Starts in the Heart

Jesus said in Matthew 15:17-19: "Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught? But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies."

In this chapter, Jesus faced accusations from the scribes and Pharisees, who held the tradition of the elders to a higher level of priority than the commandments of God. The Law had two sections: the written law, which contained the Scriptures given by God, and the oral law, which consisted of the traditions of the elders. Verses 1-3 state: "Then came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying, Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread. But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?"

The Orthodox Jew held to ceremonial religion. That is what they believed God demanded. All those traditions, such as the ritual hand washings, were regarded as important and binding. To the Orthodox Jew, it was just as important to wash your hands in a certain way as it was to obey the Ten Commandments. Jesus, with patience and long-suffering before His accusers, pointed out that the outward actions do not defile a person, but that which comes out of the heart. These actions take place in



the heart before they are committed outwardly. True religion does not consist of external regulations and observances, or it would be too easy. It is much easier to wash your hands than to love your enemy or control your tongue. It is much easier to say, "I love and appreciate you," than it is to show it.

All the outward observances and traditions cannot atone for a heart filled with the deceitfulness of sin. Jesus said, "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies." It begins with the inner man before it takes place in the outer man. Your heart is the center of your affections. The inner man is the starting place for sin.

Jesus mentioned some things that come out of the heart which defile a man: adultery, fornication, and thefts. We could add others to this list, such as lying, stealing, and reveling. In real salvation, you receive a new heart. False religion does not believe in holiness because their heart has not been changed. Some may not go all the way when it comes to the act of adultery, but that does not mean adultery has not already taken place in the heart. If ones thought they could get away with the physical act, they would do it.

If you have the thought in your mind, "God will forgive me if I mess up," you are going to mess up. You can get accustomed to thinking this way, and it will lead you into deeper sin. It would be better to think along these lines, "What would happen

if God called me into eternity while I was involved in this act?"

Overstepping the Warnings

In Daniel 5:22-23, you can read about a man who willfully overstepped his knowledge: "And thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this; But hast lifted up thyself against the LORD of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of his house before thee, and thou, and thy lords, thy wives, and thy concubines [all the pagans], have drunk wine in them; and thou hast praised the gods of silver, and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know: and the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified."

Daniel gave Belshazzar the interpretation of the handwriting that came upon the wall during his drunken feast. In his drunken stupor, Belshazzar overstepped his knowledge and disregarded the things of God. His mind was not thinking clearly. Alcohol had numbed it. He was partying, feasting, and drinking from the vessels set aside for the Lord. He had knowledge of the judgment that came upon his grandfather, Nebuchadnezzar, but he did not heed the warnings. Belshazzar insulted God by praising the gods that could not see, hear, or know. He was brought to judgment by a God who knows all things and to which all things are naked and opened.

This writing on the wall can apply to the end of every sinner. At death, the sinners' days are numbered and finished. After death is the Judgment, where many will be weighed in the balances and found wanting. Hebrews 9:27 says, "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." Belshazzar failed to let the judgment

that had fallen upon his grandfather, Nebuchadnezzar, restrain him. He was so caught up in his sin that he overstepped and laid the warnings aside. Alcohol will cause you to overstep the laws of man and the laws of God. Belshazzar sinned presumptuously, and it cost him his throne, his soul, and his physical life. He paid a terrible price for sinning against light. He was lifted up in pride. Amazingly, he became sober instantly. God puts men up and puts men down.

I love reading Hannah's prayer. Hannah, the humble mother of Samuel, said in 1 Samuel 2:3-8: "Talk no more so exceeding proudly; let not arrogancy come out of your mouth: for the LORD is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed. The bows of the mighty men are broken, and they that stumbled are girded with strength. They that were full have hired out themselves for bread; and they that were hungry ceased: so that the barren hath born seven; and she that hath many children is waxed feeble.

"The LORD killeth, and maketh alive: he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up. The LORD maketh poor, and maketh rich: he bringeth low, and lifteth up. He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth are the LORD'S, and he hath set the world upon them."

"The Great Transgression"

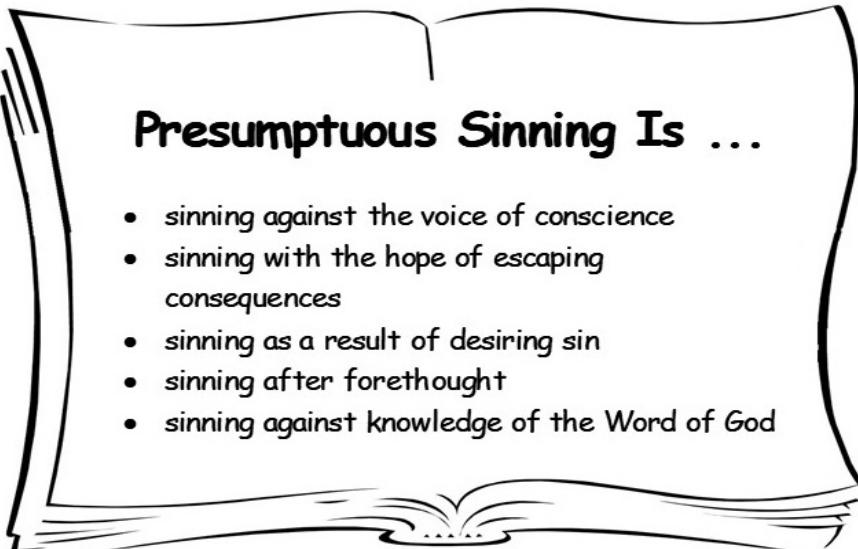
Presumptuous sinning will instantly harden your heart. Hebrews 10:25-26 says: "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. For if we sin wilfully after that we have

received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins." Verse 26 in the *Amplified Bible* says, "For if we go on deliberately and willingly sinning after once acquiring the knowledge of the truth, there is no longer any sacrifice left to atone for [our] sins [no further offering to which to look forward]."

Sinning willfully will cause you to lose the tenderness you once had before God. Sinning against known truth will cause you to be in personal confession every day, saying words without true godly sorrow. David said in Psalm 19:13, "Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression."

What was David talking about when he said, "the great transgression"? He was not talking about one certain sin, but the many sins that would occur if God did not keep him from sinning presumptuously. If one continues to sin presumptuously, he goes deeper into sin, to the point his heart becomes hardened, and he leaves this life without repenting of sin. Sin becomes a part of his life. It takes godly sorrow to repent, and godly sorrow is foreign to a hardened heart. David finishes this psalm with these words in verse 14, saying, "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer."

If you have fallen into the groove of sinning presumptuously, there is hope if you are honest and admit your true condition. Presumptuous sinning is sinning against the voice of conscience, sinning with the hope of escaping consequences, sinning as a result of desiring sin, sinning after forethought, and sinning against knowledge of the Word of God. May the Lord help those



- sinning against the voice of conscience
- sinning with the hope of escaping consequences
- sinning as a result of desiring sin
- sinning after forethought
- sinning against knowledge of the Word of God

who have been sinning presumptuously. Some people never get help because they are not honest.

God has shown them a need, and in their own mind they think, "I will work on that." Sometimes,

you need to humble yourself and have someone pray with you to get victory. God wants to help you if you are willing to bring the life of sin to a standstill. He will not fail you. He will go with you all the way if you stay with Him.

There are some who struggle over the same thing continually. If you are struggling with something, get help before it takes you away from God and away from God's people. Deal with it in the struggle. David said, "Keep me from presumptuous sins." He did not want to get involved in the great transgression to the place of sinning continually.

(Compact Disc TR-2399)



[Guest Editorial continued from page 2]
his youth. He was living a good, clean, moral life. The Lord told him he lacked only one thing, He was directed to sell all he had and give to the poor, then he would have a home in Heaven. This dear man hesitated for a period of time. He decided it would be too much for him to forsake his riches and give to the poor. He turned from the Savior and went away sorrowfully. He was so close, yet so far, from real salvation and true peace. Little did he know he would soon lose it all in the end.

There are millions who forsake the Savior for things of much less value than worldly riches. For some, a bad habit is too much to turn away from in order to have peace. For others, it may be an evil attitude they are harboring toward some individual. Oftentimes, a person may hold unforgiveness in his heart toward one who has deeply hurt him. There have been instances when a spouse has violated the

marriage vow. The innocent party suffers much pain and sorrow over the injustice committed. Heartfelt forgiveness must be granted to the guilty party. Jesus said in Matthew 6:15, "If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."

As Jesus views your life, what stands in your way of obtaining His free gift of salvation? You may or may not realize this, but the Lord grieves over your sinful way of living. He wants to gather you under His wings and

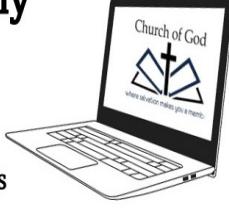
redeem you from the awful calamity coming to you. As He stretches out His hand in mercy to offer you pardon and deliverance from sin, why not take advantage of this opportunity and receive Christ into your heart today? The people in our text refused the only One who could bring help for the sinful condition they were in. Their decision caused them to suffer greatly in this life, and their suffering will continue throughout all eternity.

Selected



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Matthew 22:24 Saying, Master, Moses said, If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother.

25 Now there were with us seven brethren: and the first, when he had married a wife, deceased, and, having no issue, left his wife unto his brother:

26 Likewise the second also, and the third, unto the seventh.

27 And last of all the woman died also.

28 Therefore in the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her.

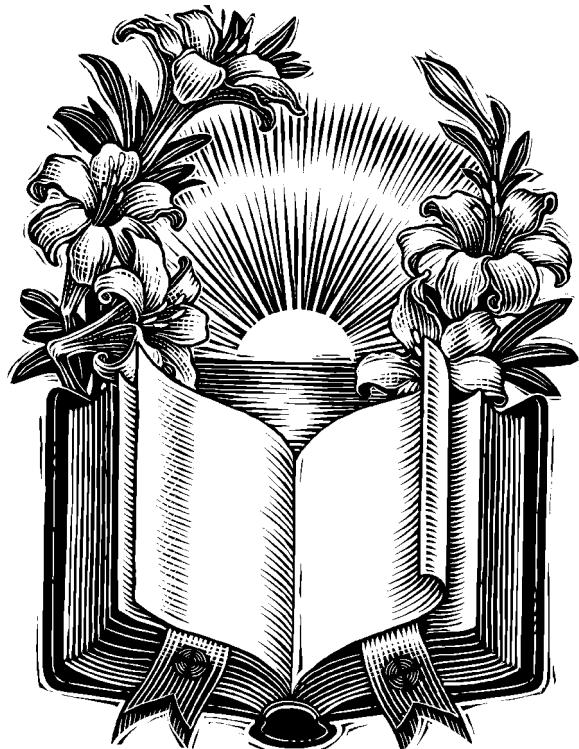
29 Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.

30 For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven.

31 But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying,

32 I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.

33 And when the multitude heard this, they were astonished at his doctrine.



Heavenly Ties

Brother Mike Wilks

A Glorified Body

The Gospel is good news; false religion is fake news. You cannot sin and still go to Heaven. The blood will only atone for past sins and not for those committed going forward. We are blessed to know the truth. I do not want to hear fake news. I want to hear from the Word of God.

Every one of us is looking through this veil of flesh. Second Corinthians 4:18 says, "While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." Your new car or your new house

is temporary, but the unseen things are eternal.

I can never repay what God has done for me in my life, but I will give Him everything I have. We are laboring in the things of God because of the end result, which is a place called Heaven. If you do not stop and meditate on Heaven every once in a while, you are cheating yourself. Our minds cannot explain what Heaven will be like, other than sin will not be there. All the labor we do for God will be well worth it. You may get to Heaven and say: "I almost missed this because of that" or "Someone tried to talk me out of my experience and I almost quit" or "I became cold and could have lost out. I could

have missed this if God had not given me the grace to wake up spiritually." Heaven is worth battling for.

Will we know each other in Heaven? Some people say our memories will all be erased as a hard drive, and we will not know anyone in Heaven. Let us study the Bible. Our Scripture text says we will be "as the angels of God in heaven." We will no longer be in the flesh. There will be no male or female. Angels are all referred to in the masculine. We will not marry or be given in marriage.

We will have a different body. It is a mystery what this new body will be. However, we know it will be a glorified body.

Philippians 3:21 reads, "Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."

There are two bodies. The Apostle Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15:40-44: "There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body."

God made the flesh to dwell on the earth. Heavenly bodies are not made to be on the earth. They are two separate entities. The first man was of Adam. Verse 47 says, "The first man is of the earth, earthly; the second man is the Lord from heaven." The Lord brought the second man through a spiritual birth.

An Active Opposer

Isaiah 66:8 says: "Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children." This is talking about the Church of God, spiritual Israel. We are a spiritual being. We do not need to become too involved in the things of the flesh. We must not forget there is a second man, which is spiritual.

The Scriptures explain spiritual lessons through life experiences. Jeremiah was taken to the potter's house for a lesson. Also, the Scriptures give an unobstructed view of what God thinks about things. He does not look through a veil of flesh; He sees things clearly as they are. God is not worried or concerned about anyone else's opinion. He will speak the truth because He is God and He cannot lie. We can all trust in God.

**The Gospel is
GOOD NEWS;
false religion is
FAKE NEWS.**



Sometimes, we may forget there is an enemy. We face an active opposer every day. It is easy for ones to think he is on vacation because they are not sick on their deathbeds or financially broke or because they are doing okay in the flesh. The devil opposes you every day when you read the Word of God and pray. Every day and every hour, you are being opposed. You should accept this fact because it will bring carefulness and watchfulness to you. There is a devil, and he "walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8). The devil has been checking you out today. He is looking for someone who is getting lean or bitter. He is attentive.

Galatians 5:17 says, "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." There is a civil war going on in your mind. Hot spots in the world are places where there is active mili-

tary engagement. The hottest spot in your world is in your mind. There are spirits working to depress you and to cool you off. Every time you make a commitment to go further and do more for God, be ready for the enemy to oppose you. You can expect it.

The Goal Is Heaven

First Corinthians 15:47-54 says: "The first man is of the earth, earthly; the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthly, such are they also that are earthly: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; [There are many religious people who need to take heed to this verse. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. He is not coming back to set up an earthly kingdom. This body will be changed in the twinkling of an eye.] neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

"Behold, I shew you a mystery [God is showing us what has been a mystery since the foundation of the world]; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory."

Paul was not speaking to the

world, but to Christians. He is reminding us of the goal. It is hard for our minds to grasp this. If God were to call for you right now, you would be changed in a moment of time. This world is going to burn. The veil of flesh is going to be done away with, and we are going to have a new body. Think about no more diseases, headaches, or stomach problems. We are going to a place where flesh and blood cannot live. We need a glorified body to live with Jesus throughout the ceaseless age of eternity. Let us not lose sight of these things. There is an end cause to what we are doing. The Gospel offers something more than temporary pleasures. We will live forever. That is exciting!

Many people make plans for the end of their lives. They save their pensions to use for retirement. Christians have a much higher goal than that. I want to make Heaven someday. The thought of slacking to get there does not go hand in hand. It is going to take everything we have. Sometimes serving God may become wearisome. Do not forget what is on the line. There is an end result. God has a plan for every one of us.

The Transfiguration

Mark 9:2-5 says: "And after six days Jesus taketh with him Peter, and James, and John, and leadeth them up into an high mountain apart by themselves: and he was transfigured before them. And his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them. And there appeared unto them Elias with Moses: and they were talking with Jesus. And Peter answered and said to Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias."

Peter had fleshly thoughts,

and God rebuked him. A cloud overshadowed the mountain, and a voice said in verse 7, "This is my beloved Son: hear him." We have to get rid of our thoughts and be obedient to God alone.

Jesus was talking to Moses and Elias. Do we retain our names in Heaven? That Scripture says we will. Parents who are thinking about baby names should remember the name they choose will last forever. *Transfiguration* means "a complete change of form or appearance into a more beautiful or spiritual state." We, as Christians, are all headed in that direction. When God calls you, your old body will be quickly transformed into a glorified body. Many times, the flesh can get in the way during worship. Some are naturally timid. We cannot escape our natural tendencies. We are all born with weaknesses in the flesh.

We enjoy God's blessings now, but there are more blessings to come. God gives us a foretaste here so we can keep battling. Second Peter 1:16 speaks of the "eyewitnesses of his majesty." In verse 18 Peter said, "And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount." The Transfiguration made a real impact on Peter. That change is promised to every one of us some day if we are obedient. Be encouraged; we have an ending.

People are living hard for the present. They are giving it everything they have. They are working for a vacation house, a motor home, or a boat. They may only use those things a few times per year. They are working so hard to afford them, but they do not have time to use them. That is the deception of all that stuff. Be careful not to get carried away with earthly things.

Many people buy motor homes and never have an opportunity to use them. Life gets in

the way. One individual bought a motor home, and then, her son got into a horrible accident. Now she has to take care of him instead of traveling. Another time, a married couple bought one, and while on their first trip, the husband died. That was the end of their vacationing. Life is uncertain. Things depend on your health and the providence of God. Some make these statements: "I am going to do this" or "I am going to do that." You should say, "Lord willing, I will do this or that." Life changes quickly. We need to be in the will of God.

The Afterlife

Luke, Chapter 16, sheds light on the afterlife. Verse 19 says, "There was a certain rich man." I have always wondered why we are not told his name. Lazarus' name was used. We read in Ecclesiastes 6:4, "For he cometh in with vanity, and departeth in darkness, and his name shall be covered with darkness." Friend, when you die lost, you lose everything, including your name. There is nothing for you to take with you. Hell is a terrible place.

Luke 16:19-28 says: "There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may

dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.

"But Abraham said, Son, remember [In other words, remember your life. We will have a recollection of our lives.] that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment."

We will have our memories in eternity. What victory would we have over the devil if our minds were erased as a hard drive? Our testimony is our joy. We can overcome through Jesus

Christ. When everything is going well, you may become spiritually sleepy. However, when you come through a real trial, there is rejoicing!

Heaven is a world unlike any other. We will have our names, our memories, and our victories. We may have questions for God, and we can certainly ask Him. In 1 Peter 3:7 it talks about "being heirs together," male and female. We all can have a place in Heaven. It is a place we have never experienced before with no flesh, no hindrances, no devil, and no false doctrines.

Even in a powerful service, there is still an opposer at work. There has never been a worship service so powerful that the devil is not lying to ones while God is drawing them. He is always lying saying: "Do not get saved now. Wait awhile. You have too many things to work out." While people are rejoicing, the devil is working.

One day, we will leave all that behind. Your job may be

tough, but hang in there and keep at it. There are many things in life that are tough, but do not lose heart. There is a promise coming that will blow your mind, so to speak. Jesus is going to split the clouds one day, and we will all see Him as He is. Those who are lost will see Him too. We will all stand before the Judgment. Many will stand before Him with no hope. The time of grace and mercy will have passed for them.

Stay encouraged, Church of God. I want to see you in Heaven. I want to talk about all the great things of God with Moses, Elijah, and Paul. They are in Heaven right now prospering because they made a commitment that no matter what came their way, they were going to stay faithful. We have to make the same commitment. Matthew 22:32 says, "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living."

(Compact Disc TR-1921)



Samuel Morris was a young man from West Africa. After the Lord saved him, he wanted to know more about the Holy Spirit, so he traveled to America to meet Stephen Merritt. He was told that Mr. Merritt would teach him about the Holy Spirit. Not long after his arrival in New York City, Mr. Merritt said, "Samuel, I would like to show you something of our city and Central Park." As they traveled in a horse-drawn coach and Mr. Merritt was pointing out the city's attractions, Samuel Morris asked, "Stephen Merritt, do you ever pray in a coach?"

Mr. Merritt answered, "Oh, yes; I very frequently have very blessed times while riding about."

Samuel then said, "We will pray." Mr. Merritt later wrote, "For the first time, I knelt in a coach to pray." In the book entitled *A Spirit-Filled Life*, Stephen Merritt said: "He [Samuel] told the Holy Spirit that he had come from Africa to talk to me about Him, and I talked about everything else, and wanted to show him the church, the city, and the people, when he was so desirous of hearing and knowing about Him, and he asked Him if He would take out of my heart things, and so fill me with Himself that I would never write or preach or talk only of Him. There were three of us in that coach that day. Never have I known such a day."

Revealing the Father



Brother Fred Barrows

Instruments for God

Everyone has a job to do for the Lord. We ought to feel the responsibility of our job. We are living in the Laodicean Age. We have to work harder to overcome lukewarmness, unconcern, and indifference. The Laodicean spirit says: "I am rich. I do not need anything, and no one else needs anything." There are still ones who need to be saved. God needs instruments. A microphone is an instrument. It cannot do anything unless someone speaks into it. That is exactly what we are— instruments for God.

John 14:7-8 reads: "If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us." How many times do people say, "Show me something?" Through the air you breathe, God is showing you He is God.

Verse 9 says, "Jesus saith unto him, 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?" That is a powerful statement. The Scriptures let us know that no man has ever seen God. Moses was the closest to seeing God, and he only saw the hinder parts of God as He passed by. Christ manifested Himself in the flesh so we could see the Father and understand how to live. It is our job in this life to reveal the Father.

Verses 10-12 state: "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. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father."

Many people want to put all the responsibilities onto the pastor and the ministry. God wants each one of us to feel our responsibility. For what reason are you

saved? To miss hell? To go to Heaven? You are saved for service, to be a light in a dark world. It only takes one light to light up a dark place. It is not necessarily about what you say or do, but it is about daily consistent living for God.

When I worked at a certain place several years ago, I made up my mind I was not going to say a word to anyone about being a Christian. I was determined to serve God and see if anyone would notice. A few months had passed, and I was in the stockroom with several young men. One of them asked me, "Fred, where do you go to church?"

I asked him, "What makes you think I go to church?"

He said, "Because you live differently than we do." We are to reveal the Father. We have this treasure in earthen vessels. Our vessels are to express the love, concern, and goodness of God.

The Characteristics of Christ

Philip asked Jesus to show him the Father. Jesus replied in so many words: "I have been

with you all this time. Are you not able to see the Father in Me, Philip? Have you seen something different in Me?" We see the nature and the characteristics of God in Christ's life. What kind of person was Jesus? He was loving, kind, gentle, long-suffering, and patient. These are just a few of the characteristics of Christ. If Christ is dwelling within your heart, should you not manifest these same characteristics?

Many people say, "I am a Christian," but when something does not go right at work, at school, or in the neighborhood, they tell somebody off, or give them a piece of their mind, so to speak. Did Jesus act that way when the persecutors persecuted Him? One time, they said, "He casteth out devils through Beelzebub" (Luke 11:15). He could have said: "You are all idiots. I will set you straight," but He did not do that. People are too ready to retaliate and repay someone for something that was done to them. That is not the way Christ lived. That is not revealing the Father to a lost world.

The world cannot help the way they live. They live that way because it is in their nature. They need their nature changed. God wants to change your nature. Sometimes, it is difficult to be kind to someone who has not been kind to you. Jesus said in Matthew 5:39, "But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." That is difficult to do as a human, but that is exactly what Jesus did. First Peter 2:21 lets you know, "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps."

Dear one, you may need to do some serious praying when it comes to people doing you wrong, because there will be people who will do you wrong. Ones

will fail you. When this happens, it will bring you to a crossroad in your life. You can either overcome by the grace of God or become resentful, bitter, and eventually backslide away from God. It makes no difference how long we have lived for God; someone will come along and ruffle our feathers, so to speak. God has given us enough grace to overcome these things. Does grace come automatically? No, we have to apply ourselves by asking God for help. God will impart His grace to us. Instead of becoming bitter, we can become sweet.

When others do you wrong, do not return wrong for wrong. Return good for wrong. Romans 12:21 says, "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." Romans 12:20 says, ". . . for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head." We should not act as the world. We are to reveal the Father's nature in our hearts and lives. God has given us His Spirit to help us. We are His temple. People get their feelings hurt, and the first thing they want to do is retaliate. We need to get a deeper relationship with Christ. God wants us to be what He wants us to be in this world.

The Power of the Holy Spirit

The words Jesus spoke while He was living on this earth were not His own. When we pray, we ought to ask God to help us speak the words He wants us to speak. We need to be more God conscious when we talk to people. The Lord will make opportunities for us to talk to individuals about their souls.

Jesus manifested God's character through His body. It states in Acts 10:38, "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed

of the devil; for God was with him." Jesus said in John 14:12, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father." That is exactly what God wants us to do.

Jesus went about doing good in His earthly ministry. He was leaving us an example, showing us what we need to do. He gives us the power through the Holy Spirit dwelling in our hearts to do the Father's business. You cannot do it on your own. God never designed it that way.

Acts 19:13-16 reads: "Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth. And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so. And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye? And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded." They went away embarrassed. You must have the goods yourself.

When we have the goods, we need to use them. Let us be more sensitive to the moving of God's Holy Spirit. As we go through our daily lives, let us do what we can to drop a little encouragement here, sow a good seed there, live the life in front of this one, talk to another one, go pray for this one, or call that one on the phone. That is what Jesus did. He went about doing good, and that is what God wants us to do. His works were done by the power of the Father. John 6:38 tells us His supreme purpose was to do His Father's will. We need to do the same.

Christ revealed the Father

through His own life, through the words He spoke, and through the works He performed. Jesus told His disciples, "The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works" (John 14:10). It makes us feel good whenever God chooses us for some service for Him or to go and pray for someone and see them get help. However, we cannot stick our chests out, so to speak, and say, "Look what I did." If God had not called or appointed us, we would not have been able to do it.

We are saved for service. We are to reveal the Father by what we do during the week so others can see the life of Christ. God wants us to be ready to engage in deeds of kindness.

Choosing the Good Part

One of the biggest problems many have is putting off number one, or self. Instead of visiting someone, they make these excuses: "I am tired" or "I have something else I need to do." God wants us to forsake self. He may call you to do something for Him. When He knocks on your heart and says, "I want you to do this today," do not give excuses for not doing what He is asking you to do. This happened in Luke 14:16, which reads, "A certain man made a great supper, and bade many." Verse 18 says, "And they all with one consent began to make excuse." Do not do that.

Again, 1 Peter 2:21 reads, "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps." We should act the way Jesus acted. God wants to stir up our pure minds by way of remembrance. Sometimes in the course of life, we may get into a form of doing our own thing. God may ask you to do some-



thing, and if you are not careful, you may be so busy wrapped up in your own thing you will not have time to do what God wants you to do.

My mind often goes to Mary and Martha. Jesus came to visit, and Mary sat at Jesus' feet. Martha was a good woman, but she was cumbered about with too many other things. She became excited because Mary was not helping her. She went to Jesus in Luke 10:40 and said, "Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me." Jesus answered her in verses 41-42: "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things [you are so concerned about the lesser important things in life]: But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her."

The time we spend at Jesus' feet learning, in daily communion with Him, is so important. We need to take the time to spend in the Word, to pray, and to meditate. Some pray five minutes and read four or five Scriptures and feel their obligation is over for the day. Their hearts are not into it. Meditation is thinking and mulling in your mind over a Scripture and asking God to help you understand. That is where it gets good. Those are the times

we become more like Christ and become more useful to Him in His kingdom, which is what God wants us to do.

There is a lost world that needs what we have. If you are too busy with your own agenda, you are going to miss those important times when God would ask you to witness to someone. God will not yell at you. He speaks in a still, small voice. If there is too much clutter in your mind, you may not hear His voice. The time we spend in private with the Lord is the time He can impress us to do what He asks us to do. We all need to grow along these lines.

A Working Demonstration of God's Love

The Apostle Paul said in Philippians 3:12-14: "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

Paul was not just pressing to make Heaven his home, he was pressing for a more complete profession in this life. He wanted to be more perfect. He said in verse 8, "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 live in such a materialistic age. Many people are so tied up with other things, and they do not have time to spend with Jesus. They do not have time to do what the Lord wants them to do. They are robbing themselves,

and they are robbing those whom God wants them to help. Second Corinthians 3:2 says, "Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men." We are to be lights for Christ, cities set on a hill for people to see the lives we live and be drawn unto Christ. We ought to live, by the help of God, in such a way that people can look at us and see the life of Christ shining out through us. John 12:32 says, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth [this physical earth], will draw all men unto me."

The world desires to see a working demonstration of God's love. Many try to refute holiness, righteousness, and sinless living. They refuse to accept that men can actually live without sin. When ones see a working demonstration of the power of God in your life, it is difficult for them to refute that. Titus 2:7-8 reads: "In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you." We need to show a pattern of good works.

Good works will not save an individual. Ephesians 2:8 says, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." However, works go along with salvation. When we put our faith into practice, others will see it, and if they are honest-hearted, they will be drawn to Christ. The sower was not concerned about where the seed was falling, he was concerned about sowing the seed. Some of that seed fell on good ground. A salesman may knock on many doors before he finds someone to buy his product. It is the same way with the Gospel. When the Holy Ghost dwells in your heart, God will guide you to where the honest hearts are.

Love One Another

How are you revealing the Father? Is your life pleasing to God? Or are you like Peter when he was following the Lord afar off? Peter had not departed from the Lord, but he was not as close to the Lord as he should have been. Can your neighbors, your co-workers, your friends, and your associates truly see Christ in you? Or are you a Christian at church, but when you go out into the world, you are something else? If you go on vacation, whether you go to Canada, California, or Florida, you ought to be the same there as you are when you are in church.

You ought to have the same mindset of asking God for the opportunity to allow you to speak to someone. You may be the only person able to reach certain individuals. If you are careful and prayerful, God will allow you to cross paths with those people.

We manifest the Father through showing love and expressing concern when others suffer hurt or are in need. When someone dies, it is the church's responsibility to do what we can to comfort, console, help, and strengthen the family members. If God's Spirit is working in us, we ought to avail ourselves and let Him use us as much as we possibly can. The world sees the love of God when we love one another. John 13:34-35 states: "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

If someone speaks against another brother or sister, it is our duty to defend them, but not in a carnal way. We ought to defend our pastor and one another. When we do this, we show others that the love of God is work-

ing in our hearts. We should live as Jesus lived. We are a living demonstration of His character and His compassion. Jesus had compassion when He looked on the multitudes. He felt a deep desire to help them as much as possible.

We cannot live a holy life in our own strength. God's Holy Spirit provides the power we need. Saints of God are instructed to take what is given and use it for God's glory. We are to reveal the Father to others as Jesus did. We can accomplish this by following His example. Jesus let Phillip know He was revealing the Father through His own life.

What are some attributes true saints of God are to manifest? Love Christ and the things of God, and love your neighbor as yourself. Be gentle toward one another, especially those who seem to have trouble getting along with others. Be longsuffering with ones who struggle to get settled in their experience. Be patient with those who are walking contrary to God's plan.

Can the world see the Father working in you? Is your life manifesting the Gospel? Is your conduct becoming to Christianity, or is it a reproach? Are your words uplifting or degrading? Dear one, you should not be guilty of using slang words that represent something else, and some are actually taking Christ's name or God's name in vain. If that is a struggle for you, you ought to pray and ask God to give you victory. He has victory for you.

Are the places you go questionable? Are you spending time with God? If your life is not revealing the life of Christ as it should, ask God to help you. Submit yourself to Him in a greater way. There is help with the Savior.

(Compact Disc TR-689E)

ESPECIALLY FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

How to Be a Good Example



There are many good examples to follow in the Bible, such as Moses and Noah. The best example is our Lord, Jesus Christ. A Christian is a "little Christ." Jesus is the One whom we are trying to please. I want to bring out someone who was not given a name, the virtuous woman in Proverbs, Chapter 31.

Proverbs 31:10 reads, "Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies." The word *virtuous* means "having or showing high moral standards; good, righteous, moral, and ethical." The virtuous woman has high moral standards and is righteous. Her price is far above rubies. Rubies are rare jewels, but someone who follows Christ is even more rare and has a priceless value above the rubies.

Proverbs 31:11 says, "The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil." The word *spoil* means "decay; to lose valuable qualities; or to be corrupted." If you get married, your spouse can fully trust in you. Your family, boyfriend, girlfriend, or best friend can fully trust in you. They can come to you with their deepest, darkest secrets.

Someone who is faithful has no need for correction. We should give no one any worries about our trustworthiness. If you are dating someone, you should not give them any reason to lust after you. It is so important for girls to dress modestly. Boys should not want to

go without a shirt.

Proverbs 31:12 states, "She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life." Consider the words in the marriage vows: *love* and *cherish*, and in the woman's vows, *love*, *cherish*, and *obey*. Christ is the groom, and the church is His bride. We should be faithful and obedient to God.

It says in Proverbs 31:13, "She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands." The virtuous woman makes use of the things she has. This is the thought that came to me. If I have a loaf of bread with a tiny bit of mold on one corner, I throw away that slice and continue eating the rest of the loaf. I take away the bad part and continue with the good.

Proverbs 31:14 reads, "She is like the merchants' ships; she bringeth her food from afar." She makes sure her people are taken care of. Verse 15 says, "She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens." The virtuous woman wakes up early in the morning. She makes good use of her time. Someone who is lazy and lays in bed all day will get nowhere in life.

Proverbs 31:16 states, "She considereth a field, and buyeth it: with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard." Before purchasing anything, it is a good idea to decide whether it is actually worth purchasing, especially if you are on a tight budget. Some-

times, I will go shopping and think: "I really like this dress, but it cost as much as three gallons of gas. I need the gas more than the dress." Also, it is important to take care of the things you have.

Proverbs 31:17 reads, "She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms." Theoretically, to gird your loins means to prepare for battle. This is typically a term used for soldiers who would pull their robe up and tie it around their waist to make it easier to move around.

We need to prepare ourselves for the spiritual battles we fight every day. How can we prepare? We can read the Bible, pray, and listen to messages. We can attend church services, Sunday school, young people's meetings, and be ready to participate in church activities. Guys who lift weights are working on strengthening their muscles. Eventually, they increase the weights they are using to get stronger. We need to do that spiritually speaking.

Proverbs 31:18 says, "She perceiveth that her merchandise is good: her candle goeth not out by night." The word *perceive* means "to become aware of or become conscious of something; come to realize or understand." The virtuous woman makes sure her merchandise is of good quality. If you bake cookies for someone, you make sure they taste good.

If you work for someone without finishing the job, or if it comes

to your knowledge that it was not done correctly, you would go back and fix it or finish it. That is making sure your merchandise is good no matter what you do. If there is work to be done, do it.

Proverbs 31:19 reads, "She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff." The spindle and distaff were used to turn wool into yarn. This woman uses her resources to create products and things around the house. She is frugal and provides for her family.

The virtuous woman is a worker. She does not sit around and watch others work. If the dishes need washed, do not think to yourself, "I am going to watch my sibling wash the dishes." Will you watch someone else do your work for the Lord?

It says in Proverbs 31:20, "She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy." She helps the poor and needy. If you see someone in need, you could offer them a bottle of water. Verse 21 says, "She is not afraid of the snow for her household: for all her household are clothed with scarlet." Many commentaries interpret this as she is not afraid of winter because her household has all they need to stay warm. If possible, we should make sure others have their needs supplied.

Proverbs 31:22 states, "She maketh herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing is silk and purple." When she goes out, she is dressed nice and clean. She does not go to Walmart in her pajamas or to work in sweatpants and a T-shirt. People in the world see girls in skirts differently. We need to present ourselves in a way that others can see Christ in us.

We read in Proverbs 31:23, "Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land." Her husband is a respectable man. Our husband is Christ. Others need to see we are married to Christ, and we have a

relationship with Him. There is a huge difference between a Christian and someone who merely claims to be a Christian. Which one are you?

Proverbs 31:24 states, "She maketh fine linen, and selleth it; and delivereth girdles unto the merchant." The virtuous woman does whatever she can to make ends meet and to help her family. Verse 25 says, "Strength and honour are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come." When ones look on her, they see a strong and honorable woman. Verse 26 reads, "She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness." If we speak foolishness, what good is that for us, and what good is it for the ones we are talking to? Be careful about your choice of words. People should see you differently.

The virtuous woman is wise, kind, and looks out for others. Proverbs 31:27 says, "She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness." When she has things to do, she gets them done. She cares about what happens in her home and around her home. I do not play any music besides Gospel music in my apartment. It would set a bad example if the neighbors heard me play ungodly music. They know I am a Christian. They do not hear me yelling or complaining either.

Proverb 31:28 reads, "Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her." How amazing would it be to get to Heaven and hear God say: "You were awesome in your work on earth. I appreciate what you did," or "I am glad you reached out to all those people. You blessed My work and helped My kingdom grow!"

Others around her can see that the virtuous woman is different. She is worthy of praise. Philippians 4:8 states, "If there be any praise, think on these things."

People can look at you and say: "That person is truly living for God. She is different." You can have a good influence.

Proverbs 31:29 says, "Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all." This unnamed, virtuous woman was the best example. We should strive to be the best example we can possibly be for those around us.

It states in Proverbs 31:30, "Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised." The word *favour* means "the approval, support, or liking for someone or something." God's opinion of you, not the opinions of your best friend or the person sitting beside you, is what matters the most. Favor is deceitful. Ones may praise you, but your love for God is what others should see in you.

Finally, Proverbs 31:31 reads, "Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates." The fruit of her hands reflects the fruit of the Spirit. What are you producing? Are you producing the fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, and long-suffering? Or are you producing hatred, negativity, and all the bad things that are against God?

The outcome of the virtuous woman's work is praise. She praises the Lord. She does not do it for money or for earthly gain, but she does it for the Lord and for His blessings.

I encourage you to pray and seek God's guidance in your daily life. I like to wake up in the morning and say, "God, give me Your grace and wisdom to get me through every part of my day." Wisdom is essential. It is important to get God's guidance on everything you do. You never know who is watching you, and you do not want them to see a bad example. My prayer is to be the best example that I can be.

Sister Genny Hartley

HONESTY



Brother Reggie Stegmeier

Recognizing Your Need

In Psalm, Chapter 51, we find the prayer of David following the great tragedy of 2 Samuel, Chapter 11. King David, who should have been out to battle, was at his palace, and he cast his eyes on a woman who was not his wife. As temptation worked, David began to dwell on it, and in the end, it brought forth sin and death. David committed adultery, but it did not stop there. David tried to hide his sin by covering it up. He beckoned Bathsheba's husband, Uriah, to return home and be with his wife, but Uriah would not go home. He slept near the door of the king's house. Then, David tried to get Uriah drunk, but that did not happen.

Next, David schemed to have Uriah killed. After word came back that Uriah was dead, David showed no sympathy. Sin hardened his heart and caused him to become unmerciful. David covered up his sin and thought all

was well until God sent the Prophet Nathan to him.

Nathan spoke to David in a parable, but David still thought he was doing well. Finally, Nathan turned to David and said, "You are the man." God caused David to see his need. Those who preach the Gospel are trying to get you to realize your needs. If you are living in sin, you need Jesus. Nathan pointed out David's need to him. Sometimes a minister will point out your wrong as Nathan did. Sin will blind your eyes. Many times, people in sin try to go on as if nothing is wrong.

Let us read David's prayer in Psalm 51:1-19: "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy

sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest. Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me. Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.

"Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee [in other words, 'When You save me, Lord, I will work for You'].

"Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness. O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise. For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart [a heart that is sorry for the condition he is in and wants to turn from evil and never turn to it again], O God, thou wilt not despise. Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem. Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering: then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar."

I want to draw your attention to verse 6 in David's prayer of repentance, which states, "Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts." The *New Living Translation* reads, "But you desire honesty

from the womb, teaching me wisdom even there." Peer pressure can lead a young person to be dishonest with those to whom they are accountable. Each of us is accountable, first and foremost, to God. Then we are accountable to each other and to the pastor.

Being Accountable

It is a student's responsibility to let the school know when and why he is going to be absent. When it comes to the house of God, the pastor should know why you are not there. Why cause him to worry when he does not see you? You would not do that to your boss at work, or you would lose your job. Young person, you are accountable to your parents. They should know where you are and what you are doing.

The Bible says God desires honesty from the womb. Not only does He *desire* it, but He *requires* it from the beginning. Honesty is a quality that parents should teach their children from the womb, or from the beginning. Honesty is a trait every Christian ought to possess. If you are dishonest in the least, you are not a Christian.

Suppose two children are playing in a room, and you hear crying. One of them may come out and say, "I didn't touch her," but he has a smirk on his face. Of course, it is easy to see he hit the other child. If people are allowed to operate that way, they will continue to attempt to cover their sins. Numbers 32:23 says to "be sure your sin will find you out." David thought he had his sin covered. He was an intelligent king, and he went to great extremes to cover his sin, but it was found out. In Psalm 51 we find David called out to God in repentance.

Even the world acknowledges the value of honesty. In a

court of law, a person on the witness stand is asked, "Do you solemnly swear that you will tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?" If a witness who has made this statement is later found to have lied, he is often charged with the crime of perjury. As Christians, a much greater and higher law is in place that binds us, and that is God's law. If you lie, you break God's law and fall under His judgment.

If you are married, do you remember the vows you made to your spouse? God still holds you responsible. He has not forgotten about those commitments you made. Are you still holding true, honest, and faithful to your companion? If you are saved, you made some commitments to serve God. That oath you made binds you in a good way. It holds you accountable to God. Are you sticking to that promise you made to God?

Honest Abe

Consider President Abraham Lincoln, our sixteenth president. President Lincoln led the United States through the Civil War. President Lincoln preserved the union, abolished slavery, strengthened the federal government, and modernized the economy. He had many nicknames during his lifetime such as "the rail splitter," "the great emancipator," "the liberator," and "Uncle Abe." None of these are known as well today as the title "Honest Abe."

Honest Abe is a saying that we still use today. The roots of this nickname started in his early working life. As a young man, Abraham Lincoln worked as a general

store clerk in New Salem, Illinois. One evening, as he was counting the money in the drawer after closing, he found he was a few cents over what he should have been. When he realized he had accidentally shortchanged a customer earlier that day, he walked a long distance to return the money to the customer.

On another occasion, Lincoln discovered he had given a woman too little tea for her money. He put what he owed her in a little package and personally delivered it to her. She did not realize he had not given her the proper amount of tea until he showed up at her doorstep. One time, Lincoln felt he was overpaid for a job; so he gave back some of the money.

Lincoln's integrity and insistence on honesty became even more apparent in his law practice. In one particular book written about him, the writer, Mark Steiner, recalled, "In his law practice on the Wabash circuit, he was noted for unswerving honesty." Mary Todd Lincoln, his wife, wrote to a friend, "Mr. Lincoln is almost monomaniac (or obsessive) on the subject of honesty." People recognized his integrity and soon asked him to act as a judge, or as a mediator, in various contests, fights, and arguments. According to Robert Rutledge of New Salem:

"Lincoln's judgment was final in all that region of the country. People relied implicitly upon his honesty, integrity, and impartiality."

Lincoln became a lawyer in Springfield, Illinois, a profession in which he admitted there was "a popular belief that lawyers are necessarily dishonest." His advice to potential lawyers was this: "Resolve to be honest at



**"Resolve to be
honest at all
events."**

Abraham Lincoln

all events. And if in your judgment you cannot be an honest lawyer, resolve to be honest without being a lawyer. Choose some other occupation, rather than one in the choosing of which you do, in advance, consent to be a knave (or crafty fellow)."

Mark Steiner wrote this about Lincoln, "People learned to love him ardently, devotedly, and juries listened intently, earnestly, receptively to the sad faced man" There was one case in which he was for the defendant. Satisfied of his client's innocence, he depended mainly on one witness. That witness told on the stand under an oath what Lincoln knew to be a lie, and no one else knew. When he arose to plead the case, he said: "Gentlemen, I depended on this witness to clear my client. He has lied. I ask that no attention be paid to his testimony. Let his words be stricken out if my case fails. I do not wish to win in this way."

The Importance of Telling the Truth

Reverend Albert Hale of Springfield's First Presbyterian Church said, "Abraham Lincoln has been here all the time, consulting and consulted by all classes, all parties, and on all subjects of political interest, with men of every degree of corruption, and yet I have never heard even an enemy accuse him of intentional dishonesty or corruption." Lincoln carried his regard for truth and honesty into the White House. He said, "I ain't been caught lying yet, and I do not mean to be."

For Lincoln, the truth was not worth sacrificing for any gain, no matter how large that gain might have been. Statements he made over the years went right with him, such as, "I have never tried to conceal my opinions, nor tried to deceive anyone in reference to them." Everyone, even his most

bitter political opponents, knew exactly where Lincoln stood because he did not have to waste time convincing his opponents of his sincerity. He could devote his energies to solving political issues and in winning the war.



—Mark Twain

Lincoln, as Commander-in-Chief, was honest and straightforward with his generals, always telling them directly what he did and did not appreciate about them. Lincoln did not need to lie to save the union, to unite the people, to free slaves, or to lead a nation. Perhaps this is the reason he remains a hero to so many around the world and an inspiration to leaders well into the future. From his work as a clerk to his duties as president, Lincoln's honesty was unwavering, showing that telling the truth is an essential lesson for all, no matter who you are or what you do. One of his closest friends, Leonard Swett, said, "He believed in the great laws of truth, the right discharge of duty, his accountability to God, the ultimate triumph of the right, and the overthrow of wrong."

It used to be that when someone took out a loan, a handshake or his word was considered good enough. Today when you take out a loan or go somewhere to conduct business, you have to sign many papers and disclaimers. Why? Too many people have been dishonest in their business dealings. Some people want to cover their actions. They profess to be Christians. The Bible calls it hypocrisy when people claim to be something they are not. God sees the heart, and He demands honesty.

The word *honest* means "to be free of deceit and untruthfulness; morally correct, virtuous, and blameless." Everything about a Christian's life must be honest. Our lives should be upright and honest so that we do not mind who sees us during the course of our day. We are not trying to hide anything. Some people try to hide in the grocery store because they are improperly dressed. If you cannot do something as a Christian, you should not do it.

Keeping a Clear Conscience

Honesty makes you feel good about yourself. It creates trust in others and improves relationships. It is not fashionable to talk about honesty. Someone may say, "Everyone shades the truth a little," but not the saints of God. When you are honest with God, He will teach you that to be untruthful in the smallest of matters will affect your conscience so much that the next time you will allow even more untruthfulness.

If you see money on the street or other objects, do not take them. I realize a penny is not a big deal to some, but it is to me. When I preach the Gospel, I want a clear conscience. When I conduct business, I want to be clear before God. When I pray, if something is there, God will not hear me. Mark Twain said, "Truth is the most valuable thing we have." So, I try to conserve or protect it.

We must be honest in three areas if we are going to get anywhere with God. First, we must be honest with ourselves. Many people get themselves into predicaments, and the first thing they want to do is blame someone else for their condition. You must acknowledge the condition you are in. Many things might have contributed to that situation. Perhaps you had a terrible upbringing. God sees all that; however, you must acknowledge your sin as your responsibility. You made the

choice, and no one forced you to make that choice.

Not one time in David's repentance did he allude to Bathsheba, because it was not her fault. It was David's fault. David made the choice to cast his eyes upon her. He dwelled on a temptation, and he gave in to it. He said in Psalm 51:1-3: "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me throughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me."

If you are unhappy about the condition you are in now, or if you are not feasting on God's blessings, it is no one else's fault but your own. The table is spread, and the food is abundant, especially if you are sitting in a congregation where truth is going forth. There is no reason that you should not be fat and flourishing, spiritually speaking.

Young person, no one else is making your decisions and choices for you. There are consequences for any foolish choices you make, and you are responsible. David took full responsibility for the condition he was in. Isaiah 53:6 tells us, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way."

The Joy in Serving God

Serving God brings contentment, joy, peace, and happiness. If you are not experiencing these things, you need God. David said in Psalm 51:12 to "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation." If you have lost your joy for the things of God, you might need to be washed again to renew that fresh experience of serving God.

Each worship service is not just another service. It is an opportunity to once again hear

from God afresh and to be advised from His Eternal Word and counsel. Without these, you will perish. What a privilege it is to be in the house of God! I never look at a service as just another service. God has something for you, so you must be present, if at all possible.

Many people are discontented. They are doing as the world does and trying all kinds of gadgets. They are getting involved in the allurements of the world, such as sports activities and vacations, hoping to find enjoyment. Some of these things are not wrong, but that is not where true joy is found. True joy is found in serving God.

One individual, Margaret Bottome, said this: "*I remember a summer in which I said, 'It is the ocean I need,' and I went to the ocean; but it seemed to say, 'It is not in me!' The ocean did not do for me what I thought it would. Then I said, 'The mountains will rest me,' and I went to the mountains, and when I awoke in the morning there stood the grand mountain that I had wanted so much to see; but it said, 'It is not in me!' It did not satisfy. Ah! I needed the ocean of His love, and the high mountains of His truth within. It was wisdom that the 'depths' said they did not contain, and that could not be compared with jewels or gold or precious stones. Christ is wisdom and our deepest need. Our restlessness within can only be met by the revelation of His eternal friendship and love for us.*"

Job 28:14 reads, "The depth saith, It is not in me: and the sea saith, It is not with me." Enjoyment in life is not in these things. Be honest with yourself. If you are not serving God, you are not happy. Happiness is in God. "Honesty is the best policy" is an idiom that we know well. It simply means that you should always tell the truth. The truth brings a great measure of absolution.

Second, you must be honest

with God. He sees everything. There is no use in trying to hide your sins from God. You will never prosper by doing that. If you intend to get anywhere with God and obtain anything from Him, you must get rid of false impressions and facades and own up to your sins. Proverbs 28:13 tells us, "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy."

Seeking Forgiveness

Consider David's prayer again and notice whom David addressed his prayer to. He said in verse 1, "Have mercy upon me, O God [he was being honest with God], according to thy loving-kindness." Verse 4 reads, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest." There is no sense in trying to fool anyone or trying to hide anything by being dishonest. God is not fooled. He sees everything, and He is the One who determines your future and your end.

You should be honest with God because He is the One who takes away the guilt and the burden of sin. If you are seeking forgiveness, you need to talk to God about it. Drugs, alcohol, and sexual lusts may bring a temporary satisfaction, but it is short-lived. In order to be free from the burden of sin, acknowledge it before God, because He is the only One who can remove it.

God is light, and there is no darkness with Him. When God enters a believer's heart, that individual begins to walk in newness of life with truth at their very core. Daniel 2:22 says, "He revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him." You may as well be honest with God and save yourself the

embarrassment later, because dishonesty has a way of being uncovered. It is better to be honest with God than to be found a liar in the end.

Third, you must be honest with your brothers and sisters in Christ. Does your pastor have to dig through your life with God's Word to uncover the truth? God may instruct him to do that, so why not be honest?

Often, dishonesty stems from a fear of the consequence. There is a consequence to every action, so some may shade the truth or be dishonest to avoid bad consequences. If you own your sins, God will have mercy.

Christians should operate in mercy. If someone comes to you and asks for forgiveness, acknowledging what he has done and is honest about it, you should not jump all over that person and let him have it, so to speak. You should be patient and loving.

There is value in communication when working with people. You need to communicate if you cannot be somewhere you said you would be. Others understand that things come up. Communication is important, and you ought to be honest.

God Hates Lying

Did you know that if you shade the truth at all, you are really telling a lie? There is a lie of omission. When people ask you for details of where you were and you leave out some of the truth, in essence, you are telling a lie. Be careful about such things. If you want others to trust you, you have to gain that trust. If they sense you are being dishonest, that trust will be broken. It is difficult to work with people if you cannot trust them or depend upon them.

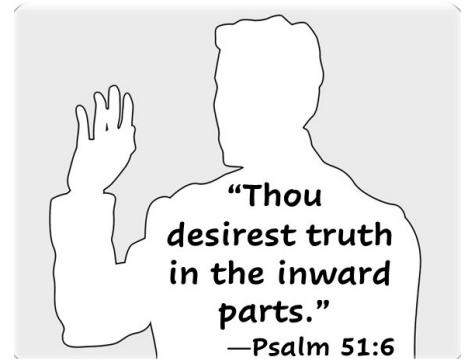
Some people give false excuses and tell lies. God wants you to be honest. Again, Psalm

51:6 tells us, "Thou [God] desirest truth [or honesty] in the inward parts." We need to be honest and faithful in our hearts, in our minds, and in the things of God. Proverbs 25:19 states, "Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble is like a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint." The world says that everyone tells a lie now and then. An old Indian proverb says, "No little snakes, no big snakes, all snakes." So it is with lies: there are no little lies or big lies; all lies are lies.

In Proverbs 6:16-19, there are seven things mentioned God hates, and one of them is lying. God hates dishonesty. Christians do not lie. The moment you tell a lie, you cease to be a Christian. When dishonesty enters, sin is born, and God exits the heart. God's Word requires honesty and the saints of God hold to it. The Church of God is different from man-made organizations. We hold to God's Eternal Word, and it definitely teaches honesty.

Mark Twain said, "If you tell the truth, you don't have to remember anything." Abraham Lincoln said, "No man has a good enough memory to be a successful liar." Winston Churchill, the great British politician and prime minister, said, "A lie gets halfway around the world before the truth has a chance to get its pants on."

People lie for many reasons. Some want attention. Others do not want to take the responsibility for their actions. They are too cowardly to own up to their own mistakes or poor choices. Some want to make themselves out to be someone they are not. They want to be accepted by the world and the saints alike. Others are afraid of the consequences. Regardless of why people lie, God said that "all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire" (Revelation 21:8). The Christian's view of lying should echo that of God's. The



psalmist wrote in Psalm 119:163, "I hate and abhor lying: but thy law [which is the truth] do I love."

In Acts, Chapter 5, Ananias came to Peter and told him he sold a certain piece of property. Ananias lied, so Peter said: "Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God" (verse 4), and immediately God's judgment followed, which was death. So it is when someone lies. That person may not die physically, but he dies spiritually. Lying is a very serious thing.

Are You Being Honest?

Dishonesty destroys relationships, hurts your influence, and ruins your good name. Being honest takes work. It is not easy all the time. You may be put in situations where you are under pressure. The Apostle Paul said to "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Philippians 2:12). That will cause you to operate carefully.

As spiritual as the Apostle Paul was, he said in Philippians 3:15, "Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you." This is part of the perfection process. You are perfect now, but later God may say, "Do you remember the other day when you said . . . ?"

"Oh, yeah, I should not have said that. I did not tell the full story. Lord, help me make that right." That is why the Apostle Paul said, "What clearing of yourselves . . . ye have approved

yourselves to be clear in this matter" (2 Corinthians 7:11). Being honest is part of working out your own salvation.

If you live a different message than the one you know the Bible teaches, you are being dishonest. If you know to dress modestly and be honest, yet you are dishonest with your pastor, with God, or with your parents, you are being dishonest. Every minister who preaches the Gospel must live what he is preaching. God holds you responsible. Are you being honest? Numbers 32:23 states, "Be sure your sin will find you out."

If you are not where you are supposed to be, then you are walking outside of God's protec-

tion, His care, and His grace. You are leaving yourself open to many pitfalls and temptations. Some people want to do their own thing, but they are opening themselves up to the devil and becoming a prey of the enemy.

God wants your light to shine. He wants you to be more like Him and grow in your walk with Him. God desires truth in the inward parts: your heart, your mind, and your soul. God sees what is going on inside of you. If you want a clear conscience and power with God, respect and trust from your peers, your fellow man, and the saints of God, you have to be completely honest.

The just and perfect balances

of God's Eternal Word have weighed us. Where does the message find you? Have you been honest in every situation in your life? Have you been honest with God? Have you been honest with yourself? If you have not been honest, then you have been weighed and found wanting. God wants to help you. Are you being honest with your husband or wife? Young person, are you being honest with your parents? Your parents are there to help you. If you are being honest in every aspect of your life, you will have "a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men" (Acts 24:16).

If I could choose my way
And chart my course down life's uncertain sea,
Perhaps, O loving Lord, it would not be
The course which Thou in love had planned for me.
I'd shun, perhaps, the dark and dangerous deep,
And strive along the shallow shore to keep,
To drift, by gentle breezes lulled to sleep—
If I could have my way.



If I could have my way—
O Jesus, were that pow'r giv'n to me,
I'd dare not choose a path apart from Thee.
Be Thou my guide, where'er Thy way may be.
Safe in Thy love, I fear no rocks ahead;
The wild and boisterous billows bear no dread.
No way but Thine, dear Lord, would I be led—
Choose Thou my way.

If I Could Choose My Way

And having my own way,
I'd never know thy wonder-working pow'r,
Thy strength, Thy grace in life's most trying hour,
When death stood waiting, ready to devour.
I'd never know the thrill of Thy sweet voice
That bid me in the darkness to rejoice.
How much, O Lord, I'd lose, were mine the choice—
If I could have my way.



Avis B. Christiansen



A Grain of Mustard Seed

Matthew 17:14 And when they were come to the multitude, there came to him a certain man, kneeling down to him, and saying,

15 Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is lunatick, and sore vexed: for oftentimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water.

16 And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him.

17 Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him hither to me.

18 And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour.

19 Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out?

20 And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.

There are times during Bible study a verse of Scripture will cause my mind to meditate on that verse. Such was the case when studying this Scripture verse in Matthew 17:20. It heightened my inquisitiveness. Jesus did not say as a mustard

seed, but He said as a grain of mustard seed.

The mustard seed is the least of all the seeds God made. It says in Matthew 13:31-32: "Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs,

and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof."

The mustard seed looks like one grain to the natural eye. What is the difference between one mustard seed and a grain of mustard seed? I spent many days meditating on that question. The best way to find out was to search for the answer, and there was no better way than to examine the mustard seed. I purchased a jar of mustard seeds at the local grocery store. Taking a pair of tweezers, I picked up one grain and placed it under a microscope. To my amazement, I discovered one mustard seed was made up of seven grains tightly woven together.

Jesus said, "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed." You may have a small amount of faith, but if you will lift that faith up to Jesus Christ, truly believing He is able to do what you ask, He will honor your faith. Faith has to be exercised. When you use the little faith you have for one situation, whether for a sickness, an affliction, or a trial you are going through, it will help you have more faith for greater situations that come your way. You are building your faith from one "grain" to multiple grains of faith in the power of God. Many times, I have found this to be true in my

life.

In 1983, I contracted the Asiatic flu. My employer would not let me return to work without a doctor's excuse. The doctor I went to gave me some medicine. On a Thursday evening, I took one teaspoon of the medicine and went to bed. The medicine stopped my heart. Needless to say, my soul departed from my body, and I started ascending up toward a heavenly light. The love coming down from that light was so amazing! I could not wait to get to the source. Midway up, I saw the shadow of a hand over me. A voice said: "Your purpose on earth is not yet fulfilled. You have to go back." I started to cry because I wanted so much to go to that source of love. Instead, I bowed my head and said, "Yes, Lord." More than my own will, I wanted to be obedient to that voice. My soul started descending and went back into my body. God restarted my heart. When I opened my eyes, I realized it was Sunday afternoon. I had been gone for three days. My faith greatly grew through this experience.

While working in 1997, I experienced unusual tiredness, and I lost weight. I went to a doctor who did some tests. One test showed I had liver cancer. He sent me to a specialist for further examination. The specialist concurred with the doctor that I indeed had liver cancer. I told no one their findings, but I kept it before the Lord in prayer. A great peace came over me, and I knew God was going to take care of everything. I resigned myself to His care. During a Sunday service, the Lord spoke to me and said: "Go to the altar and get prayed for. I'm going to heal you." At first, I thought I was hearing things. Then the voice spoke to me again, and I knew it was the Lord. I wanted to be obedient to that voice, so I went to the altar. The brethren anointed

and prayed for me. The following Wednesday I went back to the specialist. He could not find any cancer in me. Further blood tests showed there was no cancer in me. God honors faith and obedience.

Another time I was having some physical difficulties, and I was unable to walk so I had to use a wheelchair. My pastor felt led to hold a revival with Brother David Watson as the evangelist. One night, Brother Watson preached an inspiring message, and I felt inspired to get prayed for. The next morning I woke up early, got out of bed, and walked through the house. While stand-

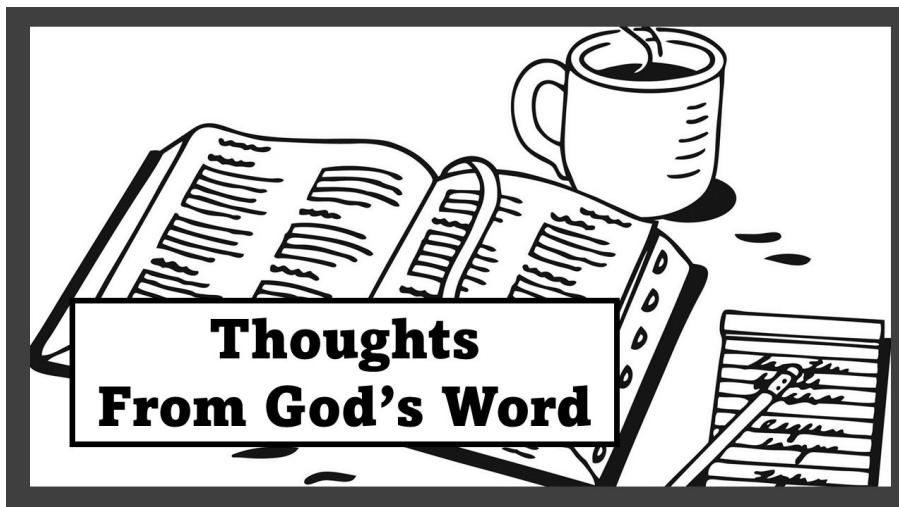
ing at the kitchen sink, I realized what I had just done. You can imagine my joy and happiness at what the Lord did for me. I could not wait to go to the revival that night. I entered the building pushing my wheelchair instead of sitting in it. Everyone was amazed to see me pushing my wheelchair into church. The next night, I left the wheelchair at home. What God can do when faith is lifted up to Him is nothing short of amazing. What He will do for one, He will do for others. It says in Acts 10:34, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons."

I do not know what the future

holds, but I know my life has always been in God's hands. I trust Him, and I build my faith on what He has already done for me. Praise the Lord!

Those seven grains are an example of the Church of God. We are all tightly woven together to resemble one body, which is the body of Christ. Let us show the world a unified church so they may see Christ. Your grain of mustard seed matters to God. You can give it to Him by faith and obedience to His Holy Word.

Sister Susan Hogan



Mark 16:14 Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen.

15 And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

17 And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;

18 They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it

shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

What is your life story? We all have a valuable story to tell. Are we willing to allow God to use us to help free others who may have had a similar past? Jesus left us with the task of going into all the world and spreading the good news of the Gospel. When people hear our stories, even if they seem trivial, we are offering them the chance to loosen their chains and begin their recovery. Through experiences is how we can relate to others.

Sometimes we wonder why we go through hard times and trials. They are teaching us and giving us experiences we can use to help others. Some trials teach us about things we need in our own lives, such as patience, compassion, and empathy. Many times, these trials help us have relatability with others. How will we understand and reach others unless we go through similar situations in our own lives?

God makes no mistakes in whom He calls. He always has a plan to reach as many souls as possible. Our life story is meaningful, maybe not relatable to everyone we meet, but to some. And it means the world to them to know they are not alone.

Let your light shine in the corner where you are. Allow God to use you. Your story and experiences are not insignificant. Praise God for His desire and willingness to use everyone. There is work for all to do. Do not allow the enemy to discourage you. Your story and experiences are eternally important to the salvation of souls.

Brother Joel Barrows

Questions & Answers From the Bible

How Does the Parable of the Ten Virgins Relate to Our Day?



Concerning Matthew, Chapter 25, bear in mind, Jesus was giving a parable and speaking of conditions that would take place right prior to His Advent. The "virgins" initially represent the church. (Read 2 Corinthians 11:2 where Paul was writing to "the church of God"; 2 Corinthians 1:1.) The "lamps" represent their experience of salvation (Isaiah 62:1). The sleepiness represents the spirit of the age we are contending with currently (the spirit of Laodicea, or lukewarmness).

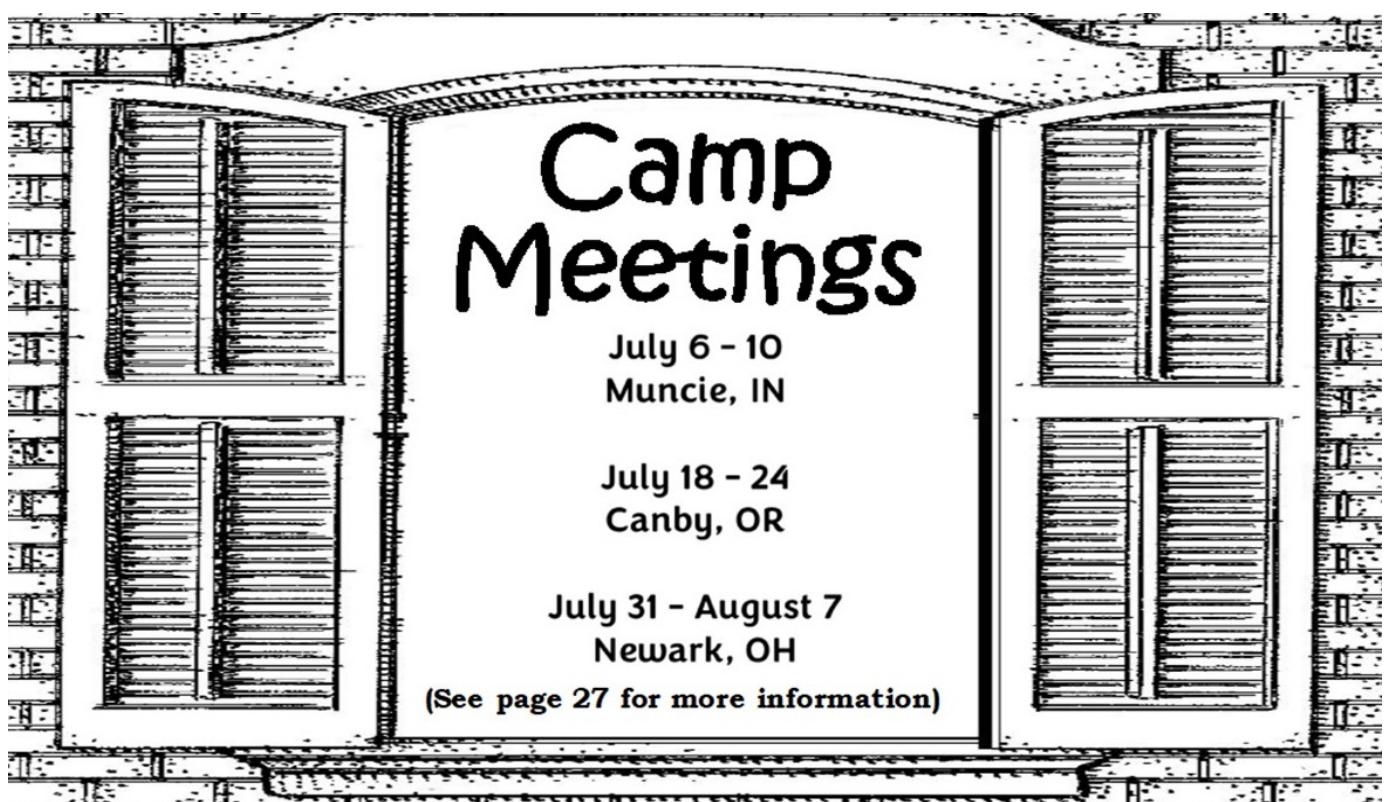
The lack of oil is a picture of those people who think what they have currently is sufficient to carry them through. It is a portrayal of a people who are "at ease in Zion" (Amos 6:1). The "cry made" (Matthew 25:6) is a prophecy of what the message will do right prior to Christ's appearance.

"Midnight" is not the end of time. The message was, "Behold, the bridegroom COMETH." That is future tense. The "cry" was made in verse 6, but the door was not shut until verse 10, which reads, "And

the door was shut." For those who heeded the message and dealt properly with their need, there was ample time to trim "their lamps" (verse 7).

Had the "foolish" virgins properly used their time and opportunity, rather than try to live off of someone else's experience, there would have been ample time to secure "oil," or to get the life of the Spirit back in the shell of their experiences. They were instructed to "buy for yourselves" (verse 9). In other words, "You have to pay the price yourself; you cannot live off of our experience." Proverbs 23:23 tells us to "Buy the truth, and sell it not." When the foolish virgins were instructed to "go ye rather to them that sell" (verse 9), it is talking about the ministry. The ministry is referred to as "merchants' ships" (Proverbs 31:14) or as a "merchant man" (Matthew 13:45).

Brother Earl R. Borders





Upcoming Meetings

July 6-10 — MUNCIE, IN

CAMP MEETING: Ninth Street Church of God, 125 S. 9th Street, New Castle, IN 47362

The camp meeting will be held at the Central Friends' Campground,

5601 E 650 S Road, Muncie, IN 47302.

Service times: Wednesday 7:30 p.m.; Thursday - Saturday 9:00 a.m. & 7:30 p.m.;
Sunday 9:00 a.m.

For lodging/camping reservations, contact Sis. Michelle Gingerich: 765-808-8705

For more information, contact Pastor Allen Polston: 765-521-8284

July 18-24 — CANBY, OR

CAMP MEETING: Church of God, 522 NW 2nd Avenue, Canby, OR 97013

The first service begins Monday at 7:00 p.m. Two services daily: 10:30 a.m. & 7:00 p.m.

Please make reservations in advance, if possible.

For more information, contact Pastor E. David Stegmeier: 503-266-9297

July 31 - August 7 — NEWARK, OH

CAMP MEETING: Church of God, 675 N. Cedar St., Newark, OH 43055

Three services daily: 10:00 a.m., 3:00 p.m. & 7:00 p.m.

For lodging/camper reservations, contact Bro. or Sis. Bush: 740-345-1213

Please make reservations in advance, if possible.

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

August 26-28 — SUMMERSVILLE, WV

REVIVAL: Church of God, 74 Armstrong Rd, Summersville, WV 26651

Service Times: Friday 7:00 p.m.; Saturday & Sunday 10:30 a.m. & 6:00 p.m.

Evangelist: Brother Steve Strelecky, Newark, Ohio

For more information, contact Pastor Earl R. Borders at: 304-872-4047

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