

# 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

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Church of God Tabernacle in Newark, Ohio

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

*Psalm 122:1*

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

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

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

### THE CHURCH OF GOD BELIEVES IN

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

### SOME SPIRITUAL FACTS PERTAINING TO THE CHURCH

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

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# Guest Editorial



## The Terrible Tragedy of Being Lost

*Ezekiel 18:32 For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye.*

*2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*

In these verses of Scripture, we see God has never changed His mind or attitude about the lost. He tells us He has no pleasure in the death of him who dies. He desires every transgressor to see the error of his way and turn from it. It grieves the Lord when men and women go through life groping in sin. Over and over, God has asked this question, found in Ezekiel 18:31, "Why will ye die?" Why would you choose to be lost when there is pardon and peace waiting for you? Neglecting this gracious opportunity is only going to end in terrible tragedy.

God's power has never changed. It is still the same today as it has always been. God's grace and mercy are still able to save the vilest of offenders. The Lord is ready to break every chain that binds the soul of man. You may feel you have gone too deep in sin, and you have no hope. Here are encouraging words from the Prophet Isaiah: "Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear" (Isaiah 59:1).

There is an old song that says, "His hand reached further down than I could reach up." Dear reader, there is hope for you if you will turn to God in true repentance. Christ stands with an outstretched arm, beckoning you to come. He assures you of this in Matthew 11:28, when He said, "Come unto me,

all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Friend, do not refuse Christ, and do not allow sin to become a terrible tragedy at the end of your life.

Many Scriptures in God's Word show the Lord is deeply concerned about your eternal welfare. Christ wants to grant you forgiveness, rest, and peace. There is nothing that can prevent Him from delivering your soul from sin's awful destruction. All His promises in the Bible are "yea" and "amen." However, failure to receive forgiveness is always on the individual. There is no reason for you to be lost! What a terrible tragedy it would be to die in a lost condition.

God waits in anticipation for you to surrender your heart and life to Him. Beware; there is great danger in procrastination! There is a terrible tragedy ahead for anyone who puts off their soul's salvation. Why is that? One never knows when death will come and cut off all possibilities of making things right with the Lord. Remember, every day you remain in sin, eternal doom is drawing closer to you. Paul said in 2 Corinthians 6:2, "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."

Dear one, it is to your advantage to seek God while He may be found and while you have time and opportunity. God loves you, but He is angry with your sin and rebellion. These words were penned in Deuteronomy 30:19: "I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live." It is your choice. Why will you die in sin when there is no valid reason? Why commit the terrible tragedy of being lost forever?

Ruth 1:1 Now it came to pass in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehemjudah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he, and his wife, and his two sons.

2 And the name of the man was Elimelech, and the name of his wife Naomi, and the name of his two sons Mahlon and Chilion, Ephrathites of Bethlehemjudah. And they came into the country of Moab, and continued there.

3 And Elimelech Naomi's husband died; and she was left, and her two sons.

4 And they took them wives of the women of Moab; the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth: and they dwelled there about ten years.

5 And Mahlon and Chilion died also both of them; and the woman was left of her two sons and her husband.

6 Then she arose with her daughters in law, that she might return from the country of Moab: for

she had heard in the country of Moab how that the LORD had visited his people in giving them bread.

7 Wherefore she went forth out of the place where she was, and her two daughters in law with her; and they went on the way to return unto the land of Judah.

8 And Naomi said unto her two daughters in law, Go, return each to her mother's house: the LORD deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead, and with me.

9 The LORD grant you that ye may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband. Then she kissed them; and they lifted up their voice, and wept.

10 And they said unto her, Surely we will return with thee unto thy people.

11 And Naomi said, Turn again, my daughters: why will ye go with me? are there yet any more sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands?

12 Turn again, my daughters, go your way; for I am too old to have an husband. If I should say, I have

hope, if I should have an husband also to night, and should also bear sons;

13 Would ye tarry for them till they were grown? would ye stay for them from having husbands? nay, my daughters; for it grieveth me much for your sakes that the hand of the LORD is gone out against me.

14 And they lifted up their voice, and wept again: and Orpah kissed her mother in law; but Ruth clave unto her.

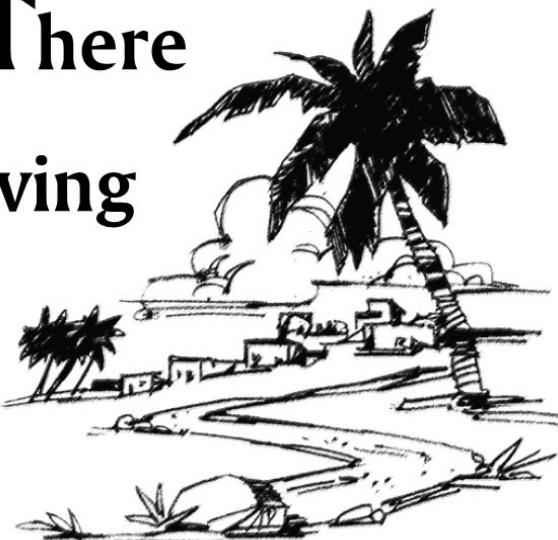
15 And she said, Behold, thy sister in law is gone back unto her people, and unto her gods: return thou after thy sister in law.

16 And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God:

17 Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the LORD do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me.

## The Blessings There

### Are in Serving God



*Brother Roger L. Decker*

#### Elimelech's Move to Moab

The Book of Ruth is one of the most inspiring books of the Bible. It has such a sad beginning, but it turns into a very

happy and joyous ending. Ruth 1:1 says: "Now it came to pass in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehemjudah went to sojourn in

the country of Moab, he, and his wife, and his two sons." The word *sojourn* means "to stop over, or to be temporary." Elimelech had no intention of staying there. He was only wanting to be

there until the famine was over. The removal of the family from Bethlehemjudah into the country of Moab, which was on the other side of Jordan, was for substance because of the famine.

It seemed there was plenty in the country of Moab, while there was a scarcity of bread and food in the land of Israel. It was a mistake for Elimelech and his family to have left Bethlehemjudah. God could have sent them bread if they had remained where they were. Instead, the path they traveled became darker and darker. Consider the meaning of the two sons' names. *Mahlon* means "pinning"; and *Chilion* means "consumption."

While in Moab, Naomi's husband died, and her two sons were married. Ruth 1:4 tells us, "And they took them wives of the women of Moab; the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth: and they dwelled there about ten years." The Moabites were a tribe descending from Moab, the son of Lot. The Bible tells us that Mahlon and Chilion also died. There were three graves in a strange land: the dad and the two sons. All the laughter and hope that had given Naomi her name, which means "pleasant," had turned to sadness.

Naomi's entire world had fallen apart. She was suffering with a broken heart because of a wrong move. She missed her homeland. Maybe she had thoughts of how she was raised. So Naomi set out to return to Judah. She told her two daughters-in-law to stay in Moab where they would have the comforts of life, the ability to marry again, and a family. Nevertheless, they refused and desired to go with her.

Ruth 1:10-14 tells us: "And they said unto her, Surely we will return with thee unto thy people. And

Naomi said, Turn again, my daughters: why will ye go with me? are there yet any more sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands? Turn again, my daughters, go your way; for I am too old to have an husband. If I should say, I have hope, if I should have an husband also to night, and should also bear sons; Would ye tarry for them till they were grown? would ye stay for them from having husbands? nay, my daughters; for it grieveth me much for your sakes that the hand of the LORD is gone out against me. And they lifted up their voice, and wept again: and Orpah kissed her mother in law; but Ruth clave unto her."

### Naomi's Return

Orpah departed, but Ruth desired to be with her mother-in-law. Here was a young girl, born in a strange land, who said something that should encourage every heart. We read in Ruth 1:16-17: "And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the LORD do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me."

Verse 16 in the *Amplified Bible* reads: "And Ruth said, Urge me

**"Whither thou goest,  
I will go; and...  
THY PEOPLE  
shall be  
MY PEOPLE,  
and thy GOD  
my GOD."**

-Ruth 1:16



not to leave you or to turn back from following you; for where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge. Your people shall be my people and your God my God." Otherwise, she was going to stay with Naomi, and only death would separate them. Ruth 1:22 reads, "So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter in law, with her, which returned out of the country of Moab: and they came to Bethlehem in the beginning of barley harvest."

Ruth 1:21 tells us, "I went out full, and the LORD hath brought me home again empty: why then call ye me Naomi, seeing the LORD hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me?" This is the testimony of one who had been blessed of God, abiding under His shadow. She was taken to a strange land by her husband because of a hardship that came upon the family. She left her homeland full, with a husband and children. She also left the worship of Almighty God in Judah. This time, she came home empty, a widow, and childless. Ruth probably sold all her goods that she took with her. No doubt, all she had was the clothes on her back when she returned. She had lived under the blessings of God, but now returned home broken, void, without a companion, and without her two sons.

Dear one, there is a great lesson in this for us. There are ones who leave congregations full and go out into strange lands, so to speak, and when they return, they come back empty. It is very dangerous for ones to leave a Church of God congregation just because of a hardship or a trial. Some leave because of a work situation. Maybe their work is shut down, or maybe their work leaves

the area. Maybe they are seeking employment somewhere else, regardless of whether there is a church there. However, if you stay with God, He will take care of it. Many leave seeking, and if they come back, they come back empty. A change takes place. They are not the way they were when they were full in the congregation.

### Ruth's Choice

Jesus said in Matthew 5:45, "That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." We do not live in a perfect world. There are going to be tragedies, heartaches, trials, afflictions, and many other things that come upon us. The rain falls on the just as well as the unjust. Tragedies come on believers and unbelievers alike.

Elimelech, because of the hard place his family was in, thought it best to go into a strange land temporarily. The famine caused him to leave the place where God was, where God was blessing. This was not a wise decision. It is also likely that Elimelech took considerable property with him into the land of Moab. For as he fled from the face of the famine, he would naturally take what he could with him. Naomi existed on those things until her return to Bethlehem. She acknowledged that the hand of God was in it, and she submitted to it quietly and patiently.

Now, we want to turn your attention to Ruth the Moabitess. What Ruth did had great value in the eyes of the Lord. Naomi's appeal gave her the choice and the freedom to return to Moab. She also had the option of following Naomi, not knowing exactly what lay out ahead of her. Instead of choosing to return to

Moab to her family, her friends, and her relatives, Ruth chose to leave all those earthly associations and everything that would have tied her to the country of Moab behind. Stepping out by faith, she decided to go where she had never ventured before.

Watching her sister-in-law Orpah walk away could have been a temptation to Ruth: "I should go with her. She has made up her mind to return; maybe I should reconsider and return." She could have married and had a family in Moab.

Both girls kissed their mother-in-law, but "Ruth clave unto her." Ruth left the religion of her childhood, the temples, the deities, the observances of her early days of worship, and all her memories of childhood behind. Ruth went with Naomi, though it was an uncharted route. She would dwell with Naomi in an unknown home, and she would die with Naomi, to be buried in an unknown land.

In the providence of God, Ruth was rewarded with an honorable position and a happy life. She married into wealth and was given a husband, Boaz, who was honorable, generous, and kind. She was in the lineage of David and of Jesus Christ. Matthew 1:5-6 tells us: "And Salmon begat Booz of Rachab; and Booz begat Obed of Ruth; and Obed begat Jesse; And Jesse begat David the king." We can see how God took a wrong move and turned it all around and blessed because Naomi's heart was back in Judah.

### Focusing on Serving God

God wants to bless, comfort, and protect His people if they will only stay under the shadow of the Almighty. Psalm 17:8 reads, "Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of thy wings." Zechariah 2:8 states, "For thus saith the LORD of hosts; After the glory hath he

sent me unto the nations which spoiled you: for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye."

Jesus said in Matthew 23:37, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killst 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!" The fact is not that they did not know how, but that they would not allow Jesus to gather them. Jesus wants to gather all His people yet today, but many will not.

Psalm 23:4 tells us, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." God knows all the dangers, all the different passes, the hidden pits, and the cliffs along the way. He guides us around them and through them. Some people have such a difficult time staying put. It is hard for them to stay focused on serving God. They have to do this, and they have to do that. They have to go here, and they have to go there. They get so restless. They leave full of the blessings of God. They have no reason to leave. If they come back, they are like Naomi, empty, destitute, and weary of life. They do not come back the way they left.

There are many difficult situations that come against God's people which may make it hard to stay focused on serving God. Dear one, if you are going to make it, you must stay focused on serving God. He must be your number one priority. When other things come in, God will be faithful to warn you, maybe a multiplicity of times, but some do not take the warnings. Some people get up a miff tree, so to speak, and instead of straightening things out, they leave thinking that is the answer. When

they leave, they take their problems with them.

The cares of life press down on us from day to day. Ones become weary in just living right. The Apostle Paul warned in Galatians 6:9, "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." When revival is announced, someone may say, "Oh, I have other things to do besides going to church." Dear one, you must keep God your priority. God will help you take care of the other things if you put Him first. I have never seen it fail. If you put God first, He will always work things out.

### "Blessed Above All People"

God wants us to reap good things in this life. Throughout the Word of God, you can read that if you do your part, God will bless you. Deuteronomy 7:11-14 tells us: "Thou shalt therefore keep the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments, which I command thee this day, to do them. Wherefore it shall come to pass, if ye hearken to these judgments, and keep, and do them, that the LORD thy God shall keep unto thee the covenant and the mercy which he sware unto thy fathers: And he will love thee, and bless thee, and multiply thee: he will also bless the fruit of thy womb, and the fruit of thy land, thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep, in the land which he sware unto thy fathers to give thee."

"Thou shalt be blessed above all people: there shall not be male or female barren among you, or among your cattle." With all their adversities and trials, God's people are blessed above all others. Many times, Israel forced God's hand to send chastisement because of disobedience.

# "BLESSED is he whose transgression is FORGIVEN."

—Psalm 32:1

ence. They went into Egypt, worshiped strange gods, were involved in one idolatry after another, and broke His commandments. He had no choice but to send punishment.

Naomi had a wealthy kinsman on her husband's side of the family. Ruth went into his fields during the barley harvest, and there she gathered up what the reapers had left. In those days, it was customary that whatever the reapers left, other people could come in and take; so Ruth did that. God brought Ruth and Boaz together, and eventually they had a son.

Look at how God worked. Here was a Moabite girl who had lost her husband and father-in-law, came to a strange land, and then was blessed because of the choices she made. She could have easily gone back to Moab, remarried, and lived comfortably in the land that she knew. However, she chose the God of her mother-in-law. Although she was in a strange land, God brought her to true worship.

### The Mercy of God

Revelation 7:9 reads, "After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands." God is no respecter of persons (Romans 2:11). He loves

all people and will save all people if they meet Bible conditions. Proverbs 28:13 says, "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy."

Psalm 32:1-5, a Psalm of David, Maschil, reads: "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile. When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah. I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah."

Regardless of who you are, or what the nature of your sin is, God will forgive and have mercy if you allow Him to do the covering of your sin. Ones try to cover their own sin, but it still takes the blood of Jesus Christ to eradicate it.

Again, we read in Ruth 1:21, "I went out full, and the LORD hath brought me home again empty: why then call ye me Naomi, seeing the LORD hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me?" Naomi went out with a husband, possessions, land, and money, and returned empty. Her husband died, her wealth was gone, and her sons died. She was destitute. That was the cost of leaving the blessings of God and going into a strange land with strange gods. However, God is merciful and willing to forgive. He restored Naomi, blessed her, and gave her a new family.

In this story, we can see what God wants to do for His children. God really wants to bless

and give us good things in life. Yes, Naomi and her husband made a costly mistake, but God restored her to the good things in life. As mentioned earlier in this message, Ruth is in the lineage of Jesus Christ. There are great blessings in serving God if we stay where the blessings are.

### Returning to the Lord

Some people get fidgety, discontented, or want to try something else. Dear young person, never try drugs because you may end up killing yourself. It can take you out of this life. Stay with the Lord and stay clean. Do not touch these things that are tempting, such as alcohol or tobacco. Take advice from one who knows about these things. Stand against peer pressure and stay full of the blessings of God. Do not let the devil empty you and take away all your blessings, because you could end up half dead, bound, and with no place to go for relief.

Naomi went out full, and she came back empty. The truth we

want to consider is that she came back, and she came back to true worship. For those of you who have wandered away, the Lord will help you if you desire to come back. There is no one who loves you like God does: not any of your friends, your boyfriend, your girlfriend, your wife, or your husband. God gave you His best.

Psalm 107:8-13 states: "Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! For he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness. Such as sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, being bound in affliction and iron; Because they rebelled against the words of God, and contemned the counsel of the most High: Therefore he brought down their heart with labour; they fell down, and there was none to help. Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble, and he saved them out of their distresses."

If there is trouble brewing in your life, it could be your

thought life, it could be temptations, or maybe you have already yielded to a temptation and you need, as the psalmist said, to cry unto the Lord, and He will save you out of all your distresses. When you get into trouble, do not stay there, but return. If you are battling a temptation or have yielded to a temptation, do not stay in that condition because now the devil has you. Break away from that with God's help. God will help you return and come back to the fullness of God in your life.

Remember what Naomi said, "I went out full." She had everything a girl could want in Judah. Naomi had a husband, sons, and worship. She was full of the good things of God. When she came back, she was empty. God filled her again with the good things of God. If there is something working in your life, you need to bring it to God. Do not hold on to it and try to fight it in your own strength. Bring it to God and He will help you.

(Compact Disc TR-2543)



## A Moment With Him

We mutter and sputter,  
We fume and we spurt;  
We mumble and grumble,  
Our feelings get hurt;  
We can't understand things,  
Our vision grows dim,  
When all that we need is  
A moment with Him.

Unknown

*Isaiah 43:2 When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.*

# Are You Going On?



*Brother Larry Dishman*

## **Passing Through Deep Waters**

Are you going on? You need to be determined in your heart and mind to go on for the Lord. From this verse in Isaiah, Chapter 43, we learn the pathway that God has chosen for us sometimes leads us through fire and sometimes through water. Notice the verse does not say *if*, but *when* you pass through the waters and the rivers and the fire. God's people are going to pass through waters, rivers, and fire.

God's people are not immune to trouble. Yes, we pass through deep waters, but thank God, we do not drown in those waters. No matter what you are going through, you can have it settled that you are going through the situation by the grace and help of God. No matter how dark circumstances may be or how high the waters are, even though you might feel that you are going to drown, you can make it all the

way to the other side. God did not bring you this far to let you down now. He did not teach you how to swim to let you drown.

Isaiah 59:19 states, "So shall they fear the name of the LORD from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, [Have you ever had that happen to you? Yes, sometimes the enemy comes in like a flood. What are you going to do when the enemy comes in like a flood?] the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him." God has not promised that the enemy would never come against you like a flood. There is no promise in the Bible that says you can escape this, but thank God, the Bible promises when the enemy does come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him.

I love the old song entitled "I'm Going On" by Charles W. Naylor. We have been singing it

in the church services since I was a little boy.

It reads:

*I mean to go right on  
Until the crown is won;  
I mean to fight the fight of faith  
Till life on earth is done.  
I'll nevermore turn back,  
Defeat I shall not know,  
For God will give me victory  
If onward I shall go.*

*Should opposition come,  
Should foes obstruct my way,  
Should persecution's fires be lit,  
As in the ancient day;  
With Jesus by my side,  
His peace within my soul,  
No matter if the battle's hot,  
I mean to win the goal.*

*I see a shining crown  
Awaiting over there,  
I see a mansion all prepared  
And decked with beauties rare:  
Shall that which intervenes  
Deprive me of my right?*

*Nay, on I'll go until I reach  
That city of delight.*

*Then forward let us go,  
Our hearts with love afame,  
Our snowy banner borne aloft,  
Inscribed with Jesus' name.  
The hosts of evil flee,  
And Heaven's open gates  
Invite me now to hasten where  
Eternal glory waits.*

### Maintaining Faith in God

The Bible tells us in 1 Corinthians 15:58, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." The words "stedfast" and "unmoveable" remind us we can enjoy a solid Christian life because of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. We can keep going on because Jesus will go with us all the way. Likewise, we can go through any situation in this life, by the grace and the help of God, because our faith is based on fact and not on a farce.

You will have some hard days. I will be honest with you, you are going to get tackled in this life by circumstances from time to time. Where is the Christian who has never gone through a dark experience in this life? We all have been through things that we could not understand at the time. Waters and rivers and fire form a picture of every danger that we could face. Many of us have been through difficulties, and some are probably going through difficulties right now. Maybe it is an illness, the lack of a job, a bad job, a family crisis, a downward emotional or psychological spin, a bad time, or another bad place in your life.

Have you ever felt that tomorrow would never come? We all have been there, have we not? Perhaps you felt you were going to die in the night or maybe past

hurts resurfaced or you had troubled dreams. Possibly you had a rebellious child, a wounded spirit, a financial crash, a friend's rejection, a shattered hope, or an untimely tragedy. Maybe black clouds or a mystery engulfed you and it seemed that a thousand demons surrounded you and the face of God seemed hidden. Maybe you felt there was no way out of your situation, and then God showed up. I am glad that God always shows up! It might not be when I think He should, but thank God, ever since I got saved, God has always shown up. I am glad that I am serving God.

Are you going on? There are always times when it seems that Satan is getting the best of us. Sometimes, it is a little hard to maintain your faith in God when you are going against the tide and everything seems to be going wrong. It is in those times when you need the Lord more than ever. Do not give up on God because you are going through a hard time. It is at those times when your faith and trust in God are really put to the test in your walk with the Lord. It is easy to live for God and to trust Him when everything is going well, but it is not so easy when it seems that the weight of the entire world is upon your shoulders. Too many Christians bail out on God when a rough storm comes. It is during these times when you need to be determined that you will go right on.

I made up my mind when I was eighteen years old that no matter what happened in my family or in the congregation, by the grace of God, I was going on for the Lord. The devil cannot stop me, and no one else can stop me from going on. You cannot blame your condition on anyone in the church or out of the church. If you fail to go on, it will be your own fault. You will be the one to blame.

### An Advocate With the Father

You may make excuses and say, "If he had not done this . . ." or "If she had not done that . . ." My friend, you need to put all of that behind you because when it comes right down to it, if you give up, you are the one who did it. I am really glad the Bible lets us know no one can pluck me out of the Father's hand. Is that not good news? He is the One who wrote my name in the Lamb's Book of Life, and no one can take it out, thank God. It is written there safe and secure.

If your life is in the middle of turmoil and the waves of temptation are about to overcome you, you need to look up and put your trust in God. That is the moment when you are being put to the test. God is allowing you to go through the test to see how you are going to stand. That is the moment when trust is built in God. That is the moment when your relationship with God really shows true depth. It is not when you are up on the mountaintop and everything is going well. You show depth as a Christian when hard places come and you are down in the valley.

You may have days when you stumble, but thank God, you have an advocate with the Father. I am not saying that you have to fail, but if you do fail, you do not have to give up and say, "I just can't do it." No, thank God. John wrote in 1 John 2:1-2: "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for our's only, but also for the sins of the whole world." We may get knocked down, but thank God, we do not have to get knocked out.

If you live for God long enough, you are going to get sucker punched, or receive an

unexpected blow, spiritually speaking, suddenly and without warning. Everyone will experience this sooner or later. When that happens, you need to just get up and go on for God. If you get up one more time than you fall down, then you will hear Him say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

How many times have people quit because they became discouraged? How many times have people quit because someone criticized them? How many times have people quit because they messed up? How many times have people quit because they were afraid? Paul wrote in Galatians 6:9, "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." The Bible teaches you not to quit. If you do not quit, you do not have to fail. No matter what, you can go through.

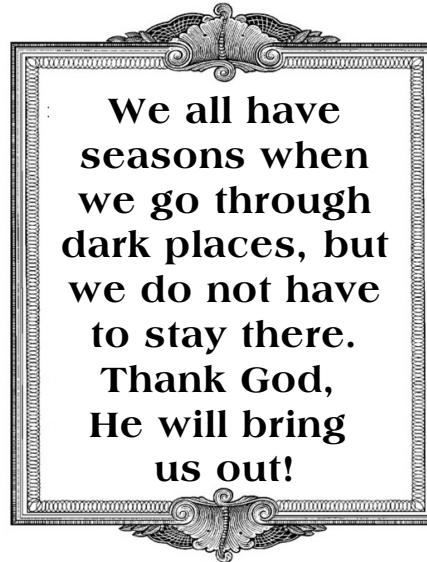
Are you going through? That sounds better all the time. I am going through, by the grace of God. I am not boasting in myself, but I am boasting in God. By the help of God, I am going on. You may lose many battles, but you can still win the war. I will be honest with you. I have lost some battles in my life, but by the grace of God, I can win this war because I am on the winning side. I am with God, and God is with me. He has prepared a brighter day. He has prepared for you a better tomorrow. God has already opened the door, and He is making a better way.

### **Do Not Give Up**

There is a bright side to life. We are not always on the dark side, thank God. He will bring you over to the bright side of life, so do not give up. Do not stop until you hear Him say: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant. You have been faithful."

You need to make up your mind and be determined. As

Daniel purposed in his heart, you can purpose in your heart with no questions about it. Backsliding and going back to the world should be out of the question. That is never an alternative for the child of God. Giving up is never the answer. The devil may say to you, "Just give up for a while." Friend, that is a trick of the enemy. It is always worse if you give up. It is just your season to go through a difficult situation. We all have seasons when we go through dark places, but we do not have to stay there. I have been there for a while, but I thank God that He has always brought me out.



I want you to know that whatever you are going through, a better and a brighter day is coming. Life was not meant to be easy. It is not a very popular thought, but it is true nonetheless. You may say, "I believe that if I am close enough to God, then everything will go well." I do not know of anyone in the Bible, outside of Jesus Christ, who was closer to God than the Apostle Paul. Consider what he went through. He really had some difficulties in his life, and he mentioned some of them in 2 Corinthians, but he had the determination that he was going on, no matter what people did to

him.

You are going to experience tough times. The question is, How are you going to respond in those tough times? God often moves in the midst of depression, failure, and challenges. He is so committed to you. He is going to meet you in the valleys. No matter how bad the circumstances may look, by the grace of God, you can go on. It is a great advancement spiritually when you can say, "I believe God has sent this difficulty for my good and for the glory of God." You can learn to say that if you are saved and living for God. Romans 8:28 reads, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

I read something that I thought was very encouraging. It said that during the first year The Coca-Cola Company was in business, they sold only four hundred cokes all year long. You probably wonder how they made it. Today, their product is being sold all over the world. Do you know why? They kept going on. It would have been easy to get discouraged and quit, but they did not.

I am not really into sports, but I read one time that NBA basketball player Michael Jordan was cut from his high school basketball team; yet he did not quit. He kept trying. Now he is considered being one of the greatest, if not the greatest, basketball player in history. Michael Jordan said he had missed nine thousand shots in his career and lost three hundred games. He had been trusted to take the game's winning shot and missed twenty-six times. He failed over and over in his life, but he finally succeeded because he kept going on. Now, that was speaking literally, but we can do that spiritually. No matter how many times we get knocked down, we can get up

and go on for God, thank God.

### Reasons to Go On

Many examples were written in the Word of God of when it appeared that all was over, but God moved in. In the Old Testament, you can read that Moses fled from Egypt, thinking his life was over, but really it had just begun. He was willing to try again, and God sent him back to deliver His people from Pharaoh. David was willing to keep going, even when he had to face a giant named Goliath. Elijah once prayed to die. This great man of God became discouraged, but God refreshed him. He got up and went to find his successor and anointed another king.

In the New Testament, you can read that Peter thought it was all over because he messed up badly. He denied the Lord and even cursed and swore. He went out and wept bitterly over it. Peter might have thought: "My ministry is over. God is done with me." However, God used him to preach that all-powerful message on the Day of Pentecost, and three thousand people were saved. That is encouraging, is it not?

Jesus never met a crippled man whom He did not heal. Jesus never met a sick man whom He did not make well. He never met a sad man whom He did not make glad. Jesus never met a blind man whom He did not make to see. He never met a repentant man whom He did not forgive. Jesus is the sweetest name I know, and He is as lovely as His name. That is the reason I love Him so. I am going to go on. Are you going on?

Some time ago, I was talking to some brothers and testifying to them. One of them said something that I had never heard be-

fore. He said, "I went from geeking, tweaking, and peaking to reaching, teaching, and preaching." I asked him to write that down, so he wrote it down and I looked it up. He had gotten off drugs and alcohol. "Geeking" is when a person cannot stop laughing because of the intake of drugs or alcohol. "Tweaking" means to be under the influence of speed. "Peaking" means to be upset, regretful, and unhappy. That is a good testimony to go from all of that to reaching, teaching, and preaching.

I tell people I am just a nobody who is telling everybody about Somebody who can save anybody. The Bible is the Word of God, and Jesus is the only way to salvation. I mean to go right on because I am a part of the fellowship of the unashamed. I have stepped over the line. The decision is made. I am a disciple

### I AM JUST A NOBODY WHO IS TELLING EVERYBODY ABOUT SOMEBODY WHO CAN SAVE ANYBODY.

of Jesus Christ. I am through with low living.

I do not have to be praised. I do not have to be recognized. I do not have to be regarded. I do not have to be rewarded because I am going on. I cannot be bought. I will not compromise. I will not be delayed, deluded, deterred, lured away, or turned back because I am going on. I will not hesitate in the presence of the adversary. I will not negotiate at the table of the enemy. I will not ponder at the pool of popularity because I am going on.

I no longer need popularity, position, preeminence, promotion, or prosperity because my face is set. My goal is Heaven, my road is narrow, my way is rough, and my companions are few. My Guide is reliable, my

mission is clear, my future is secure, my past is redeemed, and my present makes sense. I will not look back, and I will not slow down. I will not turn to the right or to the left, and I will not make an U-turn. I am going on.

### God Is Faithful

All of God's people need to get up, look up, measure up, shake up, shape up, straighten up, and wake up. I am going on, and by the grace of God, I will not back up, blow up, crack up, dry up, give up, freeze up, let up, put up, shut up, slow up, or split up until I am built up, dressed up, filled up, fired up, lined up, lit up, paid up, prayed up, preached up, shined up, stirred up, stored up, and ready to go up. I would rather wear out for God than rust out for the devil. How about you?

I can say by the grace of God that I am not going under, going over, or looking back. I am looking forward. I am pressing toward the mark. By the grace of God, I am not defeated. I am victorious. I am not a loser. I am a winner because I am on the winning side. I do not dwell in the darkness, but I rejoice in the light. I am too blessed to be stressed; I am too anointed to be disappointed; and I am too saved to be enslaved. I am going on.

I must go on until He comes, give until I drop, preach until all know Him, and work until He stops me. When He comes, I will hear Him say: "Well done. You have been faithful." My friend, I am just an old beggar who found some bread, and I am trying to show other beggars where they can find some bread too. It is the Living Bread, and it satisfies my soul.

Hope is always present. Do you know why? God is on our side, saints. You are not the only

one up against the wall. God specializes in hopeless situations. God takes over when we quit trying to work it out ourselves. Friend, God will help you through your struggles. He will not abandon you when things go wrong in your life. One song says, "Sometimes He calms the storm, and sometimes He calms me." God never promised that you would not have hard times, but He promised you would sail safely through life, by the grace of God. There will be troubles, but you can have a safe landing.

Jesus promised, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." You can hold on to that promise. He promised He would supply your needs according to His riches in Glory. You must not forget that God has promised you He will never allow you to be tempted above what you can bear, but with every temptation, with every trial, with every test, with every trouble, He will make a way for you to escape. He will make a way so that you can win the victory. What I like about this is we are never left alone. You may not always feel the presence of God, but He promised in His Word that He will never leave you. Even when you cannot feel His presence, He is with you just the same. He is right there with you all the time. He lives on the inside. Praise be to God!

You may forget the times in the past when God brought you through tough trials. You may say, "I have faced nothing like this," but look back over your

life. There have been other difficult situations God has brought you through. He delivered you before, and He is going to deliver you again. You can make it through this situation just as you did the one before. God always has been and always will be faithful to His promises.

### The Indestructible Church

Time is going by quickly. I am not saying it is always going to be easy, but Jesus did not promise you a rose garden. He promised strength and peace to go along with the hardships. Friend, no matter what happens with politics, I am going on. I have talked to folks who acted as though they were going to quit if things did not go the way they thought they should, but I am going on. I think we ought to pray hard for our country. A good way to pray is that the perfect will of God will be done. We all can agree with that.

My hope is in Jesus Christ. No matter what happens, I am going on. Jesus said in John 16:33: "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

You cannot turn back the clock because you have lost opportunities, but you can do what the Apostle Paul said. You can press toward the mark, forget the things that are behind, and reach forward to those things that are before you. Glory be to God! Whether it has been fifty years, twenty-five years, five years, or five minutes since you first heard the truth of God's Word, God has shown you the truth for a reason. It is to go

forward and not turn back.

Jesus said in Matthew 16:18, "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Do you know what that means? The word *prevail* means "to gain ascendancy or to win the mastery over a thing." Jesus declared He would build a church that the forces of evil would never win mastery over or destroy. That is good news! If you are saved, you are in a church that can never be destroyed. This verse declares the indestructibility of the church. I praise God for being a member of the indestructible church.

The Church of God is indestructible in its very nature because it is built upon an indestructible foundation, which is Jesus Christ. You cannot destroy the head of the church because Jesus is the Head. You cannot destroy the door of the church because Jesus is the Door. You cannot destroy the founder of the church because Jesus is the Founder. You cannot destroy the foundation of the Church of God because it will stand forever. One cannot destroy the Head because He is alive forevermore. These are all eternal and immovable, and the gates of hell will not prevail against them. There is no outside force, no matter how subtle or hideous, that can overthrow the church that Jesus built.

Let us look at the history of the church. Consider how often floods have surrounded her, and storms have beat upon her, and threatened her entire destruction, but Christ is risen. You can read in Mark 4:39 that He said to the unruly elements, "Peace, be still," and suddenly "there was great calm." Many members may fall before the onslaught of evil, but God's church is marching on. Do not forget that God's church is going right on, with or without you. It is possible that people can



go back, but that will not change the fact that God's church is going on.

### Eternal Victory

I have made up my mind. I want to be in God's church when Jesus comes, because He is coming for her. God has promised definite, present, final, and eternal victory for His blood-bought church. Be encouraged, brother and sister. John wrote in 1 John 4:4, "Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world." He wrote in 1 John 5:4, "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." God still rules, and He still reigns. God is victorious, from the Book of Genesis to the Book of Revelation. The outcome of this struggle is assured. God is still on the throne, and the people of God will witness complete triumph over sin and evil.

You can expect God's church to keep marching on. The old ship of Zion (the church) has weathered many storms. She has always come through as more than a conqueror riding the high waves of victory, shouting, "Hosanna to the King, the matchless King!" She is going to continue just as she was destined by the Lord. The old ship of Zion is going to arrive on Heaven's shore on schedule. Praise God forever!

The old ship of Zion is sailing the high sea of victory. Her cargo is holy men and women, and Jesus is at the helm, steering her clear of all the breakers. She is being attacked by many torpedoes of false doctrine and compromise, but thank God, she is puncture proof. She is secure from the devil, and she is tied around that beautiful harbor and will dock on Heaven's shore on that last great day. Her passengers are the redeemed of the Lord. One of these days, God's people will unite in one great anthem of praise, joy, and victory

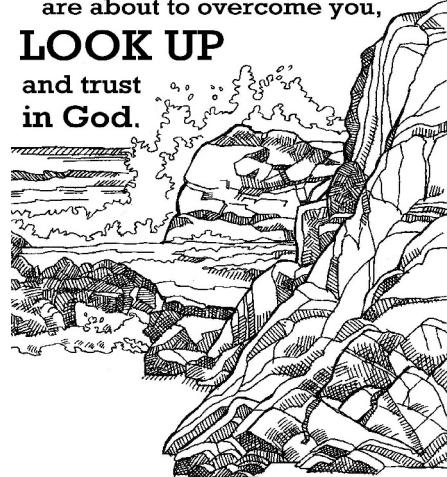
that will never end throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity.

We are in a struggle, but I have good news. One of these days, the struggle will be over. Eternity is going to dawn, and the church is going to participate in a new song of the redeemed. It will be an anthem of ceaseless praise to the Lamb on the throne throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity. Hallelujah! What a Savior!

If your life is in turmoil  
and the waves of temptation  
are about to overcome you,

### LOOK UP

and trust  
in God.



Are you in a place that seems dark? Only God can shut out the waves of depression and the feelings of loneliness that come over you. Only God can shut out those storm clouds and chase away the despair and the gloom, wipe away the tears, and replace sorrow with peace of mind. You may feel rejected and abandoned, and your faith may be weak. You may think that you are down for the count because sorrow, tears, pain, and emptiness may swallow you up at times, but God is still on the throne.

When the fog surrounds you and you cannot see any way out of your dilemma, the sun will rise in the morning and the black clouds will roll away. God has promised a safe landing. We

read in Psalm 30:5, "For his anger endureth but a moment; in his favour is life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning."

### A Spiritual Warrior

Friend, I want to ask you a question. Do you remember the promises you made to God when you got saved? Do you remember when God brought you through tough places? Do you remember the promises you made in moments of triumph? Are you going to forget your commitment to Christ when everything is going well? God is all powerful. There is no limit to His ability to meet your needs. There is no limit to His deliverance and His provision. God never gets tired, He never grows weary, and He is always listening for the prayers of His people. God knows how to give you power to overcome the situations you are up against. God will take your weaknesses, your failures, your doubts, and your fears and turn them into miracles of deliverance if you will believe Him.

I do not know about you, but I have decided to go on no matter what happens. Psalm 23:4-6 reads: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever."

Friend, a valley means you left one mountaintop and you are on your way to another. The key is to walk through the valley because the journey is not complete. If my soul is safe in Jesus, and if your soul is safe in Jesus, nothing else matters. The Bible

says if the Lord is our Shepherd, we are not really in want. God blesses us, even in the valley.

There is more work to be done, but it seems that few are willing to do it. Are you willing? When you put Jesus in the driver's seat of your life, He will show you how to live through whatever the devil throws at you. The soldier who lives by the warrior's code never quits until success has been achieved by carrying out the mission that has been given by the commander. The Lord Jesus is the Commander for all believers. He has given us orders to go into all the

world and preach the Gospel to every creature. The command remains in effect throughout the entire lifetime of the believer. Each believer is a spiritual warrior who seeks Heaven while here on earth, who disciplines his body so that personal desires do not take precedent over the mission, and who depends upon the Lord for strength to persist.

Now is not the time to quit. If you have quit, now is the time to reenlist in God's service. Maybe you need to step up and say "Yes" to God. I hear people say, "I've got a lot on me right now." The Apostle Peter said in 1 Peter

5:7, "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you." This means that you have something to do about it. Do not just sit back and do nothing.

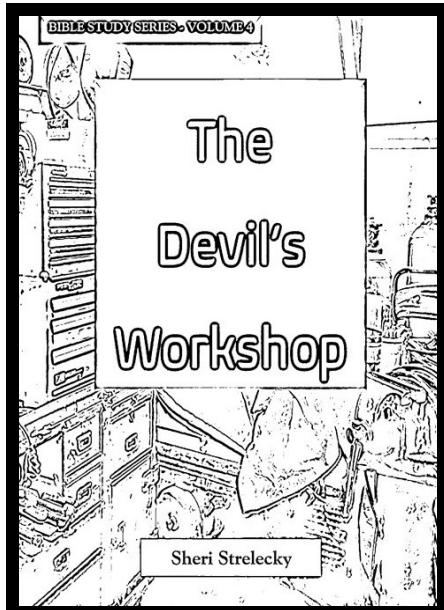
God really loves you. If you are not saved, God loves you. If you are a backslider, God loves you. As a Christian, if you have heavy burdens or if you have a situation going on in your life and you need help, cast all your cares upon Him, for He cares for you.

(Compact Disc TR-2544)

## NEW BOOK

There is an old saying, "Idle hands are the devil's workshop." In reality, there are many tools in the devil's workshop, tools such as an uncontrolled thought life, profanity, lying, stealing, disrespect, gossip, and addictions. While these seem like obvious tools, sadly, many are deceived by them. A "lack of knowledge" (Hosea 4:6) gives the devil a great advantage over the Christian.

The thirteen lessons in this book warn of the dangers of some of the devil's most useful tools. Through Bible study and daily prayer, we do not have to be "ignorant of [Satan's] devices" (2 Corinthians 2:11), but we can be overcomers "through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13).



This book can be downloaded at [GodsAcres.org](http://GodsAcres.org) (click on "Resources").

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## ESPECIALLY FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

# *God Means It for Good*



Joseph, speaking to his brothers, said in Genesis 50:20, "But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive."

Joseph was seventeen years old, just a teenager, when his brothers literally hated him so much they planned to kill him. He was the eleventh of twelve brothers. He also had at least one sister. He was the favorite of his father. He was young when his mother died while giving birth to his brother, Benjamin. This was a tragic incident. It is difficult growing up without a parent. His brothers hated him so much that they sold him into slavery to another country.

While in slavery, Joseph served Potiphar, the chief executioner and captain of the guard. No doubt, he was a brutal fellow. Think about coming home every night from work after executing people. He was probably in a rough mood. He may have beaten his slaves. As the captain of the guard, the chief executioner, he could do what he wanted. He was one of the top dogs in Pharaoh's army. When it came time to marry, Potiphar had the choice of all the pretty, young Egyptian girls. I would guess Potiphar had a beautiful wife.

Potiphar's wife was there for a reason. God had a perfect plan for Joseph. The devil knows each of our weaknesses. You may have an attitude problem. You may have a desire, or a craving, for something that is questionable and will lead you down the wrong path. You may have

relationship weaknesses. Apparently, Joseph had what many young men have—a desire for a girlfriend or a wife. The devil brought a beautiful woman into the situation, a lady who was already married: Potiphar's wife.

Over and over, Potiphar's wife attempted to seduce Joseph, but he was determined not to give in. He had a tough choice. Either way, he could be tossed into prison and possibly executed. This was the chief executioner's wife.

Joseph was lied on. Just think how mad Potiphar must have been when he came home and was told that Joseph had done something terrible. I wonder why he did not execute Joseph immediately. I have an idea that in the back of Potiphar's mind, he suspected his wife was not being honest. He might have known that she was flirty. He knew how honest Joseph had been while working in his house. He had made him the head servant. No doubt, Potiphar was very wealthy, with a huge house.

Joseph was put in Pharaoh's prison. He was falsely accused of something he did not do. We do not read in the Bible that he had a trial with witnesses. However, he was not executed. Have you ever been falsely accused of something? Has your brother or your sister ever blamed you for something that you did not do? There probably was not a trial. The situation was quickly resolved because Mom and Dad punished you. Maybe you tried to deny that you were the one who did it. Joseph did not really have a say. He was

charged by the chief executioner, and he was punished for something he did not do.

The Bible says Joseph was in prison until he was about thirty years old. Altogether, he was a slave or in prison for thirteen years. He did not see his father or his brothers until he was thirty-nine. Can you imagine not seeing your parents, your eleven brothers, and your sister for twenty-two years? He was in another country, and his brothers had put him in that situation.

For all those years, Joseph's father, Jacob, thought he was dead. For twenty-two years, his brothers had to live with their guilt. You may have done something wrong, and you may have thought you got away with it. Yet, every once in a while, it will come up in your mind. You may think, "Why did I do that?" I can imagine those brothers felt regret whenever they thought about the day they told their father that Joseph was dead or when they remembered selling Joseph into slavery. Perhaps, they thought: "Why did we sell him? Why didn't we just send him back home?"

We each have a conscience. The Lord may bring something to you and say: "Why did you do such-and-such? You need to go back and make it right." I wonder how many of those brothers said, "We need to tell Dad that Joseph is still alive"? Some of the brothers may have said, "No, do not say anything." For twenty-two years, they may have conferred about this. They had a deep secret that brought guilt.

If someone has done something against you, forgive them. That is the best thing to do. Colossians 3:13 says to forgive each other as the Lord has forgiven you. God has forgiven you for sins you have committed. Sometimes, it is hard to forgive others. Perhaps it is hard to forget, but you can forgive. You may have had to forgive other people, and you probably have had to ask other people to forgive you for something too. There are two sides to forgiveness.

When Joseph was thrown into the pit by his brothers, sold into slavery, and thrown in the dungeon of Pharaoh's prison, he may have asked, "Why me God?" You may have thought the same thing at some point in your life: "Why me? Why this situation?" God has a plan. God had a plan for Joseph. It took years to transpire. After those twenty-two years came to fruition, we can see why he was sold. He was able to save the entire nation of Israel.

You may go through a situation, and all you can think about while in that situation is: "Why me? I do not want to be here. I just wish this was over." Maybe it is a class or a relationship. These situations help mold you and create you into the person you will become. At the time, all you can see is an evil and a bad situation, but God has a plan. He wants to form you and help you.

Joseph made the best of bad situations. While he was in Potiphar's house, he went from a lowly slave to being in charge of the house, yet he was still a slave. While he was in prison, he went from being a prisoner to being in charge of the prisoners, but he was still a prisoner. You may have a bad home life. You may be facing bad situations with your parents, your boss, or your friend. Just keep pressing; never give up. Sometimes, you have to work through those situations. Trying times are not times to quit trying.

No matter where you are, it is easy to mope around and get into a spiritual depression. Joseph was a great example of how to work through bad situations. He worked harder, even though there was no monetary raise or promotion. Many of us have never been in prison, been a slave, been badly beaten, or sold by our brothers. Joseph was a good example of working hard even when it was not being noticed.

If you are at school, at work, or at home, think about wanting to

happen? Joseph stayed the course. He did not falter from living right. It may take years to transpire. It may not happen this week, or even in two weeks, but each incident we face every day is a part of God's master plan. Let the Lord work in your life every day.

When Joseph's brothers all came to face Joseph, he said: "Brothers, you meant it for evil by selling me into slavery. You thought you were persecuting me, and you thought you were getting rid of the problem, but

God meant this for good. He had a plan that was so much greater than any of us could have imagined." The brothers thought they were getting rid of their troubles by getting rid of their brother. They had no clue that he

was going to save them twenty-two years later from the famine that had happened in their country.

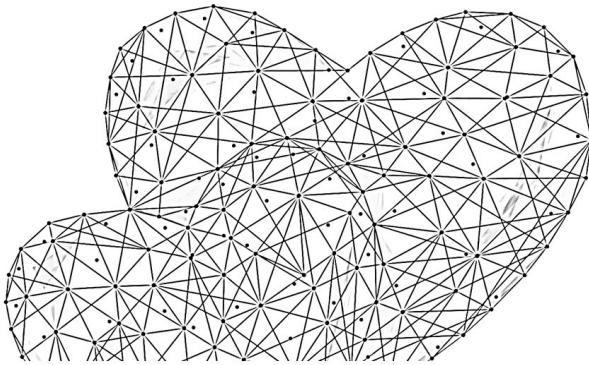
No matter what situation you are going through, remember, God has a plan for you. There is something out ahead that is bigger than this situation.

Brother Chris Miller



"Ye thought evil against me;  
**BUT GOD**  
meant it unto good . . . "

—Genesis 50:20



## THE HEART OF MAN



*Matthew 13:3 And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow;*

4 And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up:

5 Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth:

6 And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away.

7 And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them:

8 But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold.

9 Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

10 And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou

unto them in parables?

11 He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.

12 For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath.

13 Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.

14 And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive:

15 For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand

with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

16 But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear.

17 For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.

18 Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower.

19 When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side.

20 But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it;

21 Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.

22 He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.

23 But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.



*Brother Calvin Foster*

### Your Heart Determines Your Actions

We are so blessed to live in the Gospel Dispensation. I am so honored and so blessed, as Paul mentioned to Timothy, that God "counted me faithful, putting me

into the ministry" (1 Timothy 1:12). Being a man of God and preaching the Gospel is a great honor and a blessing, and I do not take it for granted. Jesus said in Matthew 13:15, "For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and

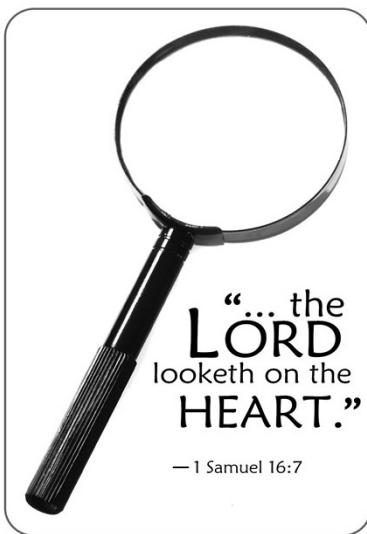
their eyes they have closed." I want you to consider the heart of man.

The heart of man is the fountainhead of wickedness in this world. It is also the fountainhead of what is good. Jesus, speaking to the Pharisees, said in Matthew

12:34-35: "O generation of vipers [in other words, He was calling them snakes], how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh [what is in the heart comes out of the mouth]. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things."

If your heart is impure, your speech and your actions will be impure. God wants you to look at your heart as He examines you with His Word. As a child of God, you ought to praise God. May God help us fulfill the Scripture written for us in Proverbs 4:23, which reads, "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." The word *diligence* means "to keep your heart with watchfulness." You need to stay on point and work hard for God. If you are a family man, you need to be the best family man that you can be. If you are a mother of children, you need to keep your heart with all diligence. You ought to do the right thing for God and your family. You must be faithful and be careful in your work and in your walk with God. Keep your heart with all diligence.

You can tell what is in a person's heart by what comes out of



his mouth. Some people like to quote 1 Samuel 16:7, which states, "But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart."

Some folks use that Scripture to justify their wrongs, saying: "You don't know my heart. Only God knows my heart." That is true. God looks upon your heart, and He knows exactly what is in your heart. The Bible tells us in Proverbs 23:7, "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he: Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart is not with thee." Therefore, let us remember that as a man thinks in his heart, so is he.

### God Knows Your Character

God is looking at your heart, and He knows exactly what your character is. He knows what kind of person you are. You may fool others, but you cannot fool God. Some people may have wonderful personalities. They smile, shake your hand, and pat you on the back; however, God knows exactly what their character is. Your character is what you are, and your personality is what others think you are. I may think you are a good person because of your personality, but God knows your real character. God knows what is in people's hearts.

Before our family was saved, we watched a television show called "Leave It to Beaver." One character on the show was named Eddie Haskell. Eddie would go to the Cleavers' home and say, "Mrs. Cleaver, you look so nice today." He seemed to be such a friendly and pleasant guy, but every time he got with her sons, they would go out and get into trouble. Years ago, my daughter dated a guy who was like that. He would say, "Mr. Fos-

ter, how are you today?" He would call me on the phone and was very polite, but he was like a snake in the grass. He would not keep his hands off my daughter. He wanted me to think he had good character by showing a pleasing personality. He wanted to fool me, but his character showed what he really was. God knows what is in your heart that no one else can see.

What is in your heart? You might have it hidden from others, but God knows. Whatever is in your heart is the true reason for the success or failure of your spiritual life and your natural life. Some people throw themselves at the world, so to speak, and put their whole heart into what they want the most, such as being a good businessman. You may say, "I want to be a successful Christian and make Heaven my home." If it is not in your heart and you do not put your heart into it, you are not going to make it.

Friend, if you do not put your whole heart into serving God, you are not going to make it. You might look for an easy road and try to change the Word of God, but if you do that, you are not going to make it, and you will have no one to blame but yourself. Your salvation is not in your ability to do some things. It is not in how much education you have or in how much you understand doctrine or in how long you have been in the church.

Young person, you may grow up around the church, but the devil wants to cause you to become hardened to the Gospel. If it does not move you to tears and to an altar of prayer, the devil is working to harden your heart. I am trying to warn you. God will not change His Word for you or me. You are going to reap what you sow. It is serious business when people take the Gospel too lightly. It all depends

on what is in your heart and where your heart is. "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (Proverbs 4:23).

### God Sees Your Motives

God uses the Gospel preachers to dig around your heart. What are your motives? God knows your motives. You need to pay attention to the Gospel. God has a judgment work. This could be the last message you ever read. God uses Gospel preachers to put the Word of God on you and to help you make Heaven your home. You must get serious about serving God. You need to read your Bible, pray, and stay close to God. This is what each of us must do.

God judges why you do what you do. Why do you attend the young people's meetings? Why do you go to the prayer meetings? God sees what is in your heart and what the motives are behind what you do. Why do you attend church faithfully? Is it just to look for a companion? God knows your true motives. You cannot fool Him. The reason many people are not being blessed is that their motive is not right. God sees the heart.

All evil comes from the heart. The fountainhead of the evil in the world comes from the heart of man. Jesus said in Mark 7:21-23: "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man."

God's people are holy and peculiar. Friend, you can say that you stand for truth, but you have to put that truth into practice. I have to practice what I

preach. If you tell your friends and relatives you are saved, you need to practice it. You should not be dishonest.

Think about the story of Ananias and Sapphira. Acts 5:1-4 reads: "But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, And kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God."

How did Peter find out that Ananias and Sapphira kept back part of the price? I can only speculate. Suppose you sold your land for so much, and you lied and said that you gave all to the church; but you did not give all. Your relatives and friends would know that you were a hypocrite and would tell on you. People who really love you, whether they are family or saints, might pull you aside and talk to you about it. They would not get up at your funeral and lie for you.

Sometimes, at a funeral, people build up the man who died so much that some people think, "I seem to be at the wrong funeral because the man I knew was not the man they are talking about." If you are a hypocrite, it is just a matter of time before God will pull the covers off, and

the people you know will say: "We knew he was not right. That guy was praising God and going to church while drinking a pint of alcohol every day."

### God Searches Your Heart

Do not play with God. If you sit under the Gospel, it is going to dig around your life and get into your heart. If you are living right, you will say, "Bring it on, pastor." We know what happened to Ananias and Sapphira. Peter said to Ananias: "You did not have to do that. It was so unnecessary. The land was yours; so why did you lie to the Holy Ghost?" Ananias dropped dead. Later, his wife came around telling the same lie, and she dropped dead.

You do not know how much time you have on this earth, and God sees your heart. If you are saved, you must guard your heart and keep your affections in the right way. In Matthew, Chapter 12, Jesus said basically the same thing. Through these verses of Scripture, we can see that the heart describes the wickedness of man. The fountainhead of the wickedness of the world and the fountainhead of the righteousness of the world is coming from the heart.

In Ezekiel 36:25-27 we read: "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them."

You receive a new heart when you are converted. God writes His

*"KEEP THY heart  
WITH ALL DILIGENCE;  
FOR OUT OF IT ARE  
the issues OF LIFE."  
—PROVERBS 4:23*

new covenant, His laws, on your new heart. The old heart brought forth sin, and God cannot write His laws on an old heart. It is impossible for man to bring forth holiness and righteousness without a new heart. He must have a new heart and a new mind before he can say he is under the new covenant. We must say: "Lord, search my heart. Try me and help me see myself as You see me."

Jesus said in John 3:16-18: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

The Prophet Jeremiah wrote in Jeremiah 17:9-10: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? [Paul said to 'have no confidence in the flesh'; Philippians 3:3. Jesus said, 'The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak'; Matthew 26:41.] I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings."

No one but God knows the things in your heart. This is the reason it is very important to attend the church services, pray, read your Bible, and stay close to God. In this age of technology, cell phone use can become fingertip wickedness and back pocket wickedness. God can see whether or not you want Bible knowledge.

### Lovers of Darkness

You need to know the Bible. Years ago, older saints and

young people alike wore out their Bibles by marking in them and writing in them. If someone were to ask you the question, "Why do you do what you do?" you should be able to answer this question. You should be able to tell people the Bible answer as well as the convictions in your heart. You should do that because you want to live right and to be a person of character. Maybe you do not think these things mean much, but one day God will judge you for your obedience to the truth that you know. You had better open your heart to God before it is too late. Some people sit under the Gospel and become hardened to it, saying, "I have heard that before."

Jesus said in John 3:19-21: "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. [If you are doing evil, you will not want to come to the light. The Word of God will correct you.] But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God."

The fact is, if you have heard the Gospel and you are still in darkness, it is because you love darkness. You are not fooling God. You love it because the things you do are evil. I read a quote that says, "No evil dooms us hopelessly except the evil we love, and desire to continue in, and make no effort to escape from" (George Eliot). That same evil will destroy you. You are going to reap what you sow, dear one. It is just a matter of time. Wrong will do you wrong, no matter who you are. You need to listen to God and say, "I have been out there in sin long enough; it is time for me to get saved and turn my life around."

It is such a blessing to have a saved husband or a saved wife. (I am not addressing those who are saved but not married, because you are married to Jesus.) Nothing out there is better than what you have at home. This is serious because evil women or evil men might creep into the congregation; so guard your heart. God only knows what is going on.

Young person, put your heart into serving God. You need to keep your heart right toward Jesus. The devil and the world are out there to chew you up and spit you out, so to speak. There are drugs and mean people in the world who care nothing about you. The devil is out there too. Hebrews 11:6 tells us, "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

You need to come to God and believe that He is real. God will bless you, but you have to be diligent and keep your heart with all diligence. God will give you a born-again experience. Jesus told Nicodemus, "Ye must be born again" (John 3:7). The devil will tell you to go out and experience sin or to do this and that. The same devil will try to take you away from the church and the truth. He is out to destroy you.

Jesus said in Mark 8:36, "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Do not let your heart go in the wrong direction. Being born again changes a person's life completely.

### Getting Your Heart Right

Getting saved is not merely conforming to something, getting sprinkled with water, joining a church, or getting baptized. You can go into a baptismal pool a dry devil and come out a wet

devil, so to speak. Before you go into a baptismal pool, you need to make sure your heart is right. You can be thankful to God and say: "I have decided to follow Jesus and be a Christian. No turning back for me!" Some people may not like it, and they may persecute you. Jesus said in Mark 16:16, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." No one in his right mind should want to go to hell. Hell is a terrible place! A sinner should say, "Lord, I am sorry for my sins."

Romans 10:9 tells us, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." You need to have godly sorrow and godly sadness in your heart. No matter what age you are, it is time to be saved. We are not asking you to join a church. We are asking you to give your life to God to keep you out of hell.

Many different voices in the world talk against the Bible and want to change it. There is much unbelief out there. Had we listened to that stuff, we would be backslidden. We believe with the heart. It does not take a lot of

words to be forgiven either. In Luke, Chapter 18, you can read that a publican stood in the temple, and a Pharisee was telling God, "I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess" (verse 12). In verse 11, the Pharisee said, "God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are." Verse 13 says the other man hit his breast and said, "God be merciful to me a sinner." It just takes you turning your heart to God and asking Him to save you and then mean it.

The Judgment will be a great day of sorrow for many people. God's Word is right, and it is true. You need to believe God's Word. The words of 2 Thessalonians 1:6-9 should put fear in your heart toward God. It reads: "Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the

Lord, and from the glory of his power."

If you get your heart right, no one will have to tell you to go to church or to the prayer meetings. You will have some fire under your own feet. It is a blessing to be around the saints of God and to hear the Gospel.

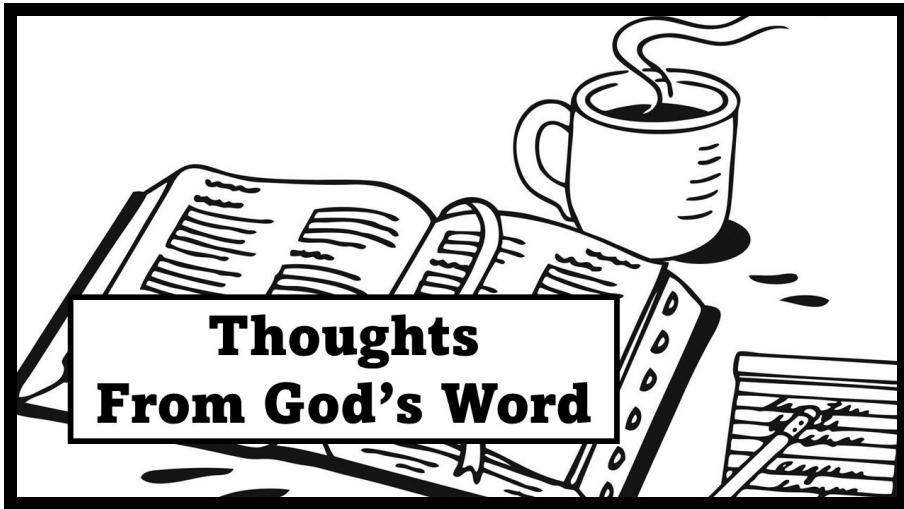
Judgment Day will be a day of disappointment for many. Jesus said in Matthew 7:22-23: "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

Your lifestyle proves what is in your heart. The Apostle Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 2:24-25, "And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves." If you love your wife or husband, you will prove it. Think about it and examine yourself. May God bless you is my prayer.

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*Scripture Reading: John 21:15-25*

In this text, Jesus began by challenging Peter's love for Him. Jesus had good reason for this. Peter had openly renounced Christ. So he was deserving of His rebuke. Three times, Jesus asked Peter if he loved Him. Peter may have expected a harsh chiding for his actions, but Jesus,

in His gentle way, allowed Peter to confirm his love. With this reassurance, Jesus reminded Peter of the work that lay ahead for him, saying, "Feed my sheep."

Jesus asked Peter if he loved Him "more than these"—more than the other disciples, whom he had developed close bonds with, more than his family, his closest companions. Christ must

be loved supremely. Just as with Peter, to faithfully follow Jesus, our love for Him must be greater than our love for others.

Jesus informed Peter of the suffering he was to encounter, particularly in his death. The command was "follow me." Peter did not grasp the essence of what Jesus said because he looked at others and wondered if they were to suffer too. Christ instructed Peter to not look at them, but to focus on and follow Him.

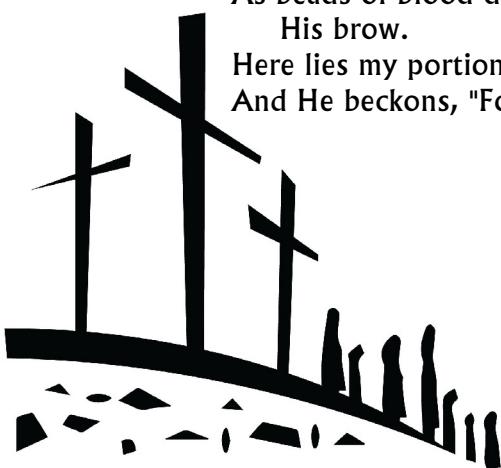
We must not compare our circumstance with others, wondering why we suffer when others do not or vice versa. That is not wise. Our journeys will not all be the same. Following Jesus will lead us down paths we may not choose for ourselves. We must trust God's plan for us.

Brother T. J. Foster

## FOLLOW ME

Christ before us a path has laid.  
Though wrought with pain His power displayed  
A love so great, so deep, and free.  
Now He poses this question, "Lovest thou Me?"

Not my will, but thine His vow  
As beads of blood dripped from  
His brow.  
Here lies my portion of Gethsemane  
And He beckons, "Follow Me."



Forsaken by all He considered dear,  
He endured the mocks, the scoffs,  
and sneers.  
Though He could have fought back,  
He stood silently.  
Now He whispers, "Follow Me."

That long course up Golgotha's hill,  
Once for my Lord, is for me still.  
He instructs me now from that rugged  
tree,  
"Take up your cross and follow Me."

I must do as He taught me,  
Submit, endure, and die to self daily.  
I'll give my life to Him. He gave His  
for me.  
'Tis how I will prove "I loveth Thee."

Brother T. J. Foster



# An Uncontrolled Thought Life

## What Are You Thinking About?

Many experts believe the average person thinks between 50,000 and 70,000 thoughts every day. That is at least one thought for every second that you are awake. What do these thoughts consist of? It is easy to simply let your thoughts wander. Other times, you might find yourself daydreaming. Can either of these be harmful for a Christian? In the devil's workshop, there is a tool that he will do his best to use on every one—an uncontrolled thought life. If you are not in control of your thoughts, you can be sure that the devil will try to fill your mind with what *he* wants you to think about. An uncontrolled thought life is the perfect place for the wrong things to grow: discouragement, depression, anger, anxiety, revenge, and temptation.

Research has shown that as much as 85 percent of all illnesses come about because people have "toxic thoughts" (very negative thoughts), which they habitually think on. Some examples of "toxic thoughts" might be: "I'm so stupid," or "I knew I'd mess that up," or "I'll never be beautiful or popular." Failing to control your thought life can make you physically sick. What are some other things the devil wants you to be thinking about? Has someone treated you badly or made fun of you? You might be tempted to remember that hurt. Or you might begin to think of ways to get revenge.

Do you imagine yourself looking better, having more money, or being more successful in life? These can be good goals; however, the devil will endeavor to use pride through these thoughts so that they all center around wanting people to notice you. Haman was deceived by pride when he thought, "To whom would the king delight to do honour more than to myself?" (Esther 6:6). Prideful thoughts led

to Haman's eventual downfall. The devil also knows the effectiveness of working through day-dreams, especially when those thoughts are wishful thinking of things that God is not pleased with.

## Sin Begins With Just a Thought

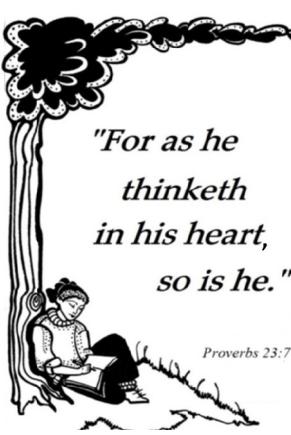
Does it matter what you think about? Whom does it hurt? No one else will know—isn't that true? If so, why is this such a well-used tool of the devil? It is because he knows that one does not just fall into sin; sin begins with a thought. "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Proverbs 23:7). The Bible gives many examples of people who thought evil, sinful thoughts first and then committed sin: Joseph's brothers (Genesis 50:20), King Saul (1 Samuel 18:25), Nehemiah's enemies (Nehemiah 6:2), and Haman (Esther 3:6).

Just one thought placed in your mind by the devil can grow and grow if you allow it. Permitting that thought to remain in your mind gives life to wrong desires, and soon it will become sin (James 1:15). If you let wrong thoughts occupy your mind, Psalm 66:18 warns that "the Lord will not hear" you. Although you might believe that no one knows what you are thinking, "no thought can be withheld from" God (Job 42:2).

## Influences on Your Thought Life

Have you ever heard a song and could not get it out of your mind? Perhaps you heard or read something, and you just could not stop thinking about it. Everything you read, listen to, and see has the ability to influence your thought life. That includes books, music, movies, video games, texting, and social media. You are being affected by everything that you allow into your mind through your eyes and your ears. A famous writer once said, "The food that enters the mind must be watched as closely as the food that enters the body" (Patrick Buchanan).

Can Christians watch or read or listen to all the influences of the world continually without their thought lives being affected? Can you watch a movie or read a book that is filled with profanity and not be affected? Can you play video games that promote violence and crime without being affected? Can you read inappropriate messages online and not be affected? An old Indian Christian was explaining to a missionary that the battle inside of him was like a black dog fighting a white dog. "Which dog wins?" asked the missionary. "The one I feed the most," replied the Indian. You cannot continue to be a Christian if you do not control what you allow to come into your mind. Take charge of the influences on your thought life: "Keep



**"For as he  
thinketh  
in his heart,  
so is he."**

Proverbs 23:7

thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (Proverbs 4:23).

## Developing a Healthy Spiritual Thought Life

First, you must realize the importance of having a thought life that God is pleased with. Negative thoughts (revenge, pride, lustfulness, or discouragement), prideful thoughts (feeling superior, conceited, or thinking you know it all), or unthankful thoughts will come into your mind. What are God's thoughts concerning this? Hebrews 4:12 tells us that "the word of God . . . is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Let the Bible be a measuring rod concerning your thought life. How do your thoughts measure up when considered in the light of Scriptures? Philippians 4:8 is a good indicator of what thoughts the Christian should be thinking: things that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report, of virtue, and of praise.

Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "A man is what he thinks about all day long." What are the majority of your thoughts about? How many "toxic thoughts" (negative, prideful, or unthankful thoughts) do you allow to come into your mind and stay? Now that you realize the importance of a controlled thought life, what can you do about it? How can you develop a healthy thought life?

**PROTECT YOUR MIND:** what are you reading, watching, talking about, and listening to? Use Philippians 4:8 to evaluate the content of the music you listen to, the books you read, the movies you watch, the video games you play, the text messages

you send, and your online conversations. Any imaginations that go against Biblical principals or morals need to be brought "into captivity" (2 Corinthians 10:5). The best way to do this is to not allow it into your mind by changing your media consumption.

**DAILY BIBLE READING:** it is not enough to remove things from your life that promote wrong thoughts. You must replace these with something that will develop a healthy thought life. Colossians 3:2 says to "Set your affection [thoughts] on things above." Psalm 119:11 says to hide God's Word in your heart. To do this, you must spend time reading the Bible. Then, think about what you read. "What does that verse mean for me?" In other words, meditate.

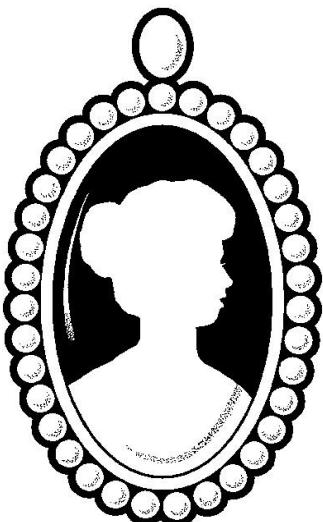
**PRAYER:** you cannot have a healthy thought life without help. God knows your weaknesses and strengths; He understands your thoughts (Psalm 139:2). Ask Him to remove wrong thoughts when they come, and also ask Him to show you what influences might be in your life that are planting wrong thoughts in your mind.

Sister Sheri Strelecky

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This is **Lesson 1** from *Bible Study Series–Volume 4: The Devil's Workshop*. See ad on page 14 for more information.





IN HONOR OF  
*Mother*

Mother's Day, held on the second Sunday in May, has become an American national holiday. It is on this day that we are reminded to think about our own mothers and what it means to be a mother. It is time well spent to take a few moments and honor our mothers.

First, we honor *good* mothers. It takes much effort to be a good mother. From the very moment a baby is born, a mother's life changes. She has been given a precious and wonderful responsibility: raising her child to adulthood. A good mother accepts

that responsibility, not shirking her duty, but giving it her best.

A good mother makes her house a home, a haven, a place of safety for her children. She teaches her children how to be responsible, respectable, honest, and caring. Proverbs 31:27 describes a good mother. It reads, "She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness." The next verse tells us that her children will "call her blessed."

Second, we honor *godly* mothers. While there is a need for *good* mothers, a much greater call is going forth for *godly* mothers. A godly mother is a good mother and much, much more. She recognizes that more important than her children having an education, career, marriage, and so on is that each one of them meets the Creator of the universe and accepts into their hearts and lives Jesus Christ—the best Friend they will ever have.

A godly mother wants her children to have that wonderful experience of salvation, just as she has herself. Thus, she daily prays for each child. Reading Bible stories and praying with her children are the joys of a godly mother. She will try to find opportunities to tell her children more about Jesus. She will claim the promise of "Train up a child in the way he should go: and

when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6). Let us answer the call and fill the need for more *godly* mothers.

Last, there is another group of mothers who deserve honor. These are the older mothers of Zion, our pillars in the church. Titus 2:3-4 tells us that the "aged women" are to "teach the young women . . . to love their children." These mothers can encourage and give godly advice to the younger mothers, for they have already been down this path of child rearing.

The older mothers can point out pitfalls and dangers, things that did not work for them and the things that did. They can share their victories, letting the younger mothers know that this is a very familiar path, one that can be successfully followed with God's help. There are an abundance of godly examples to provide encouragement and counsel. Thank God for the precious, older mothers of the church.

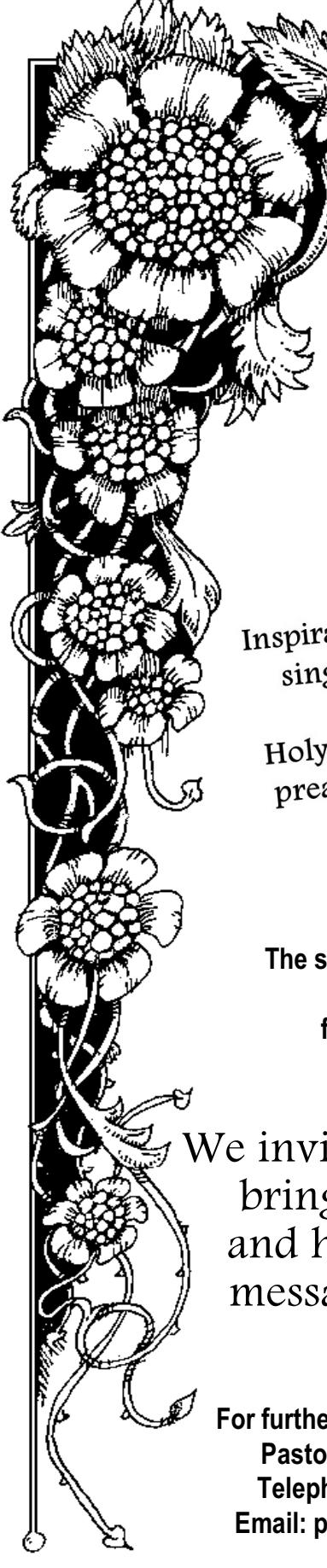
This Mother's Day, as we are reminded of the vital role of motherhood, let us honor mothers by looking for opportunities to be better godly mothers, by reaching out and helping the younger mothers, and by thanking our own precious mothers!

Anonymous

**You may have tangible wealth untold;  
Caskets of jewels and coffers of gold;  
Richer than I you can never be—  
I had a mother who read to me.**

**Strickland Gillian**





# Spring Camp Meeting

## June 19-26

Please join us for an old-fashioned camp meeting at the Church of God, at God's Acres, Newark, Ohio

Inspirational  
singing

Holy Ghost  
preaching

8:30 a.m.	Morning Prayer Service
10:00 a.m.	Morning Service
10:00 a.m.	Children's Service (in the old barn)
3:00 p.m.	Teaching Service
5:30 p.m.	Youth Prayer Service
6:00 p.m.	Youth Service
7:00 p.m.	Evening Service

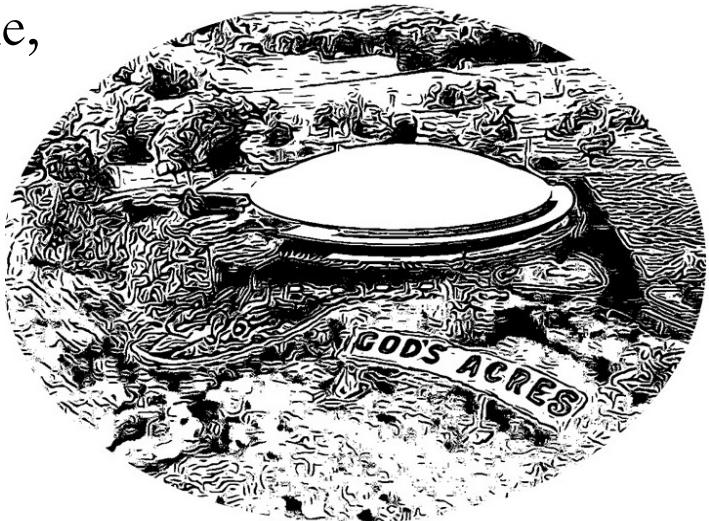
Divine  
healing

Fellowship  
with the saints

The saints of God prepare hot, homemade meals in the church dining hall.  
Meals are reasonably priced. The dining hall will be open  
for breakfast, lunch, supper, and following the evening services.  
Rooms, campsites, book store, and so much more.

We invite you to come,  
bring your Bible,  
and hear anointed  
messages of truth.

For further information contact:  
Pastor Roger L. Decker  
Telephone: 740-344-2543  
Email: [pastor@godsacres.us](mailto:pastor@godsacres.us)





### REVIVAL – MT. PLEASANT, PA

**May 2-8** Church of God, 109 Salvation Lane, Mt. Pleasant, PA 15666

Evangelist: Brother Larry Dishman, Hurley, MS

Service times: Monday - Saturday 7:00 p.m.; Sunday 10:30 a.m. & 1:30 p.m.

For more information, contact Pastor Paul W. Prinkey: 724-547-2151

### REVIVAL – NEW CASTLE, IN

**May 16-22** Ninth Street Church of God, 125 S. 9<sup>th</sup> Street, New Castle, IN 47362

Evangelist: Brother Larry Dishman, Hurley, MS

Service Times: Monday - Friday 7:00 p.m.; Saturday 5:00 p.m.

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

### MEMORIAL DAY FELLOWSHIP MEETING – KENSETT, AR

**May 27-29** Kensett Church of God, 409 SE 2<sup>nd</sup> St., Kensett, AR 72082

Evangelist: Brother Allen Polston, New Castle, IN

Service times: Friday 7:00 p.m.; Saturday a dinner will be served at 4:00 p.m., and the worship service will be at 7:00 p.m.; Sunday 11:00 a.m. & 5:00 p.m.

A dinner will be served after the Sunday morning service.

For more information, contact Pastor Calvin L. Foster: 501-742-3961 (Church) or 501-593-5105 (Cell)

### CAMP MEETING – NEWARK, OH

**June 19-26** 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

**“For where two or three are  
gathered together in my name,  
there am I in the midst of them.”**

Matthew 18:20

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