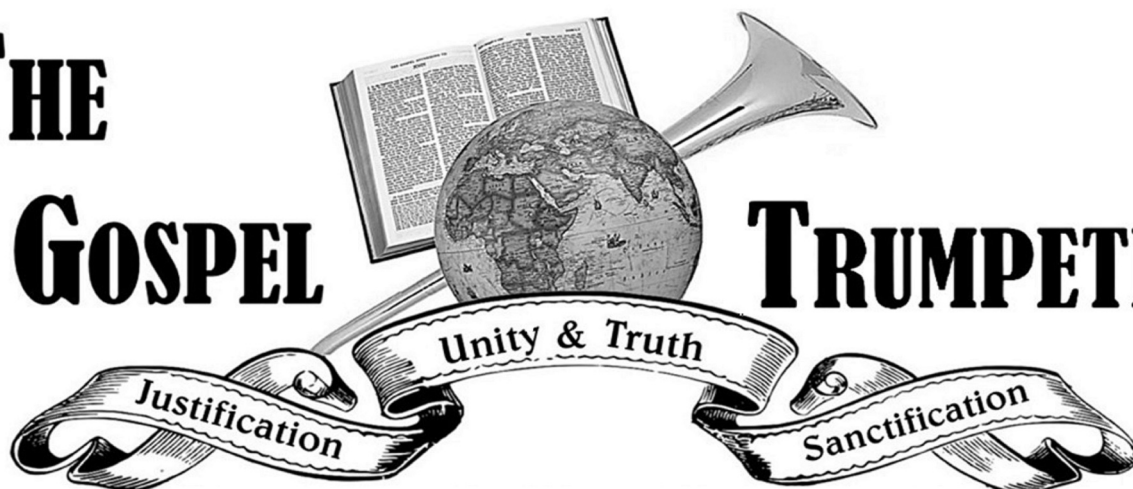


THE GOSPEL TRUMPETER

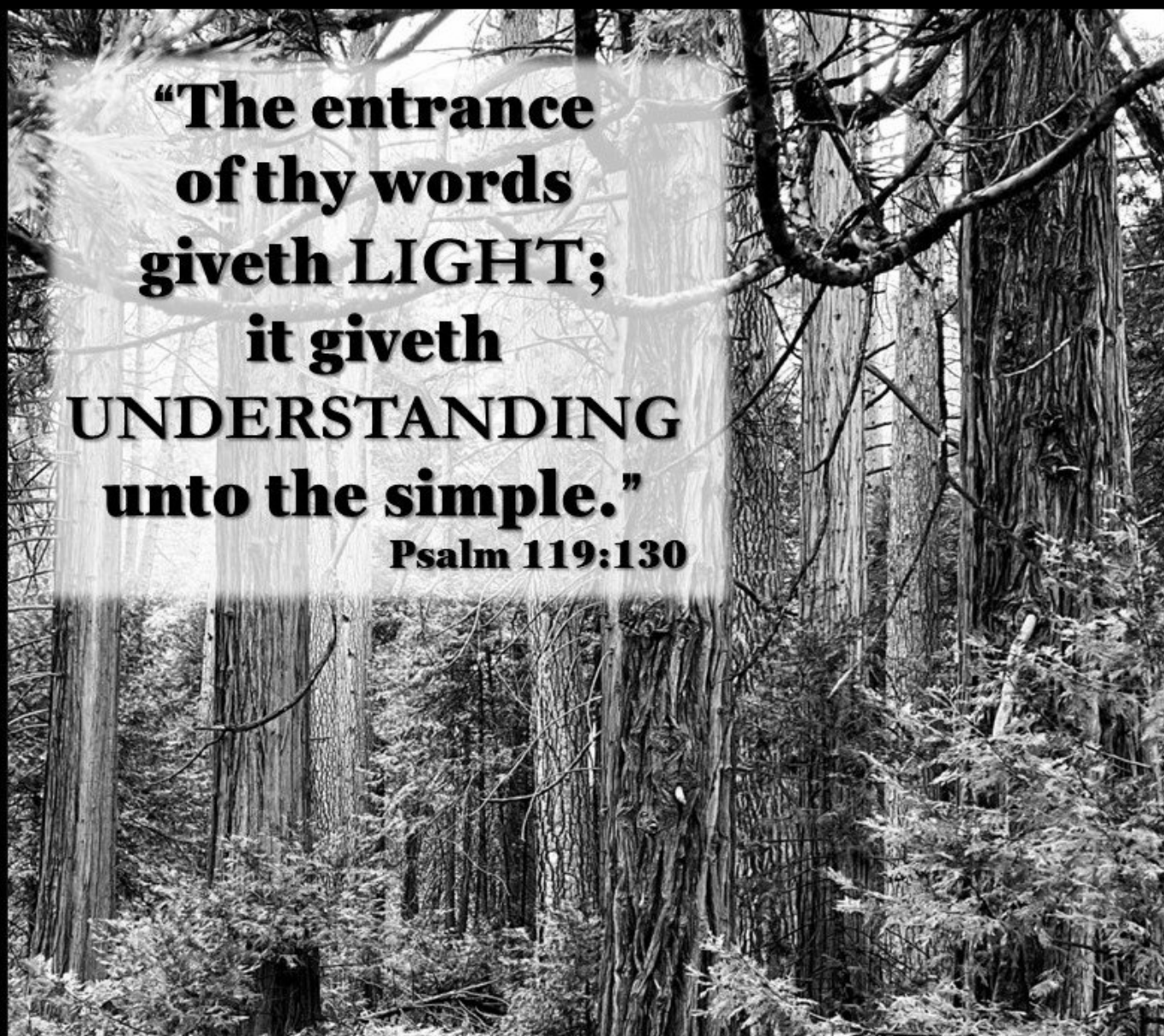


SOUNDING FORTH THE SEVENTH AND LAST TRUMPET

Vol. 53 April 2023 No. 4

**"The entrance
of thy words
giveth LIGHT;
it giveth
UNDERSTANDING
unto the simple."**

Psalms 119:130



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

THE GOSPEL TRUMPETER USPS #871620

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

POSTMAN, send form 3579 to the printer:

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

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

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

Roger L. Decker, Pastor
83 Decrow Ave.
Newark, OH 43055
Email: pastor@godsacres.us
Phone: 740-344-2543

Print Shop Phone: 740-345-1312
Websites: GodsAcres.org & GospelTrumpeter.com
Email: subscribe@godsacres.us

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

Brother Roger L. Decker Editor
Workers Too Numerous to Mention

THE CHURCH OF GOD BELIEVES IN

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

SOME SPIRITUAL FACTS PERTAINING TO THE CHURCH

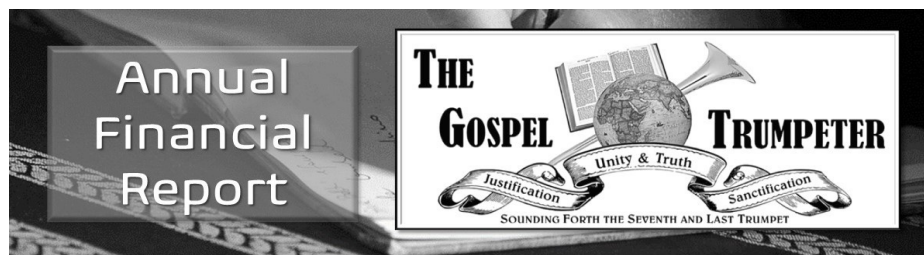
Jesus organized it (Matt. 16:18)
On a good foundation (Eph. 2:20; 1 Cor. 3:11)
Christ governs it (Eph. 1:22-23; Isa. 9:6)
God admits members (1 Cor. 12:13-18)
Sin puts you out of it (Rom. 11:22; Ex. 32:33)
The saved only are members (John 15:2-6)
Membership is offered to all (Rev. 22:17)
Final rewards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

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

CONTENTS

| | |
|-------------------------------------|----|
| Fruits of True Repentance. | 3 |
| Don't Sell Your Birthright. | 8 |
| Especially for Young People | 12 |
| My Testimony. | 15 |
| Thoughts From God's Word | 16 |
| Break Up Your Fallow Ground . . . | 17 |
| Bible Studies | 23 |
| Questions & Answers | 25 |
| Spring Camp Meeting Ad | 26 |
| Upcoming Meetings | 27 |

Vol. 53 April 2023 No. 4



*Psalm 68:11 The Lord gave the
word: great was the company of those
that published it.*

Another year has passed, and the good news of the Gospel continues to go forth through the printed page. We are pleased to report *The Gospel Trumpeter* is still accomplishing wonderful results. Many souls are reached through this monthly periodical. The glorious message of Christ's saving love and mercy is still touching honest hearts. His truth continues to reach those engulfed in false systems of religion. It remains a tool the Lord is using to point men and women to the good path laid out in God's Word, showing them the way they need to walk.

The messages in *The Gospel Trumpeter* have been delivered by various ministers in the Newark congregation during regular services, revivals, and camp meetings. Brother Decker is the editor, and through his leadership, ones strive to select Biblically sound, evangelistic, and doctrinal sermons for print in this periodical. His desire is to faithfully print messages to edify and build up the Kingdom of God, to encourage our readers, and to help ones become spiritually strong. Wholesome instruction will challenge God's people to press on in the good fight of faith.

Each year, *The Gospel Trumpeter* prints a financial report. The purpose is to acquaint our readers with the ever-rising costs involved in printing a religious periodical. Inflation is on the upsurge and has been for several years. Unfortunately, *The Gospel Trumpeter* is not

immune to this. A breakdown of the expenses and contributions is on page 7 of this issue.

Although this periodical is being mailed through a second class permit, the postage rates climb every year. It requires a large amount of income to operate successfully. Brother Decker and the saints here in Newark, Ohio, feel the great responsibility to reach the lost with the Gospel. The goal is to present salvation's message to all who need freedom from sin and false religion.

Those who labor for this publication desire to hear from those who have found the Lord dear to their heart. They work to help ones find the truth and a deeper relationship with the Savior. They want to be useful vessels in helping ones live victoriously for the Savior. It is rewarding to take part in an effort that leads the lost to the saving grace of Christ. It is a blessing to help God's people find their way out of false religion and confusion.

As in the past, we ask our readers to consider taking a greater burden for the work of *The Gospel Trumpeter*. Your prayers contribute a tremendous amount to the success of this missionary endeavor. Your financial support is also greatly needed and appreciated. You may not realize the impact your sacrifice can make. However, the Lord is recording every act of love and devotion to His great cause. We trust He will bless you. We humbly thank each of our readers for their prayers and continued support of this great work.

Selected



Fruits of True Repentance

Brother Roger L. Decker

Luke 6:43 For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

44 For every tree is known by his own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes.

45 A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.

One of the greatest sights to see at camp meetings and revivals is the Spirit of God moving in our services. It is a blessing to the soul when someone we have been praying for moves to an altar of prayer under the Spirit of Conviction and repents of their sins. What a lift that is to the soul!

Sadly, not everyone who prays at an altar is doing honest business with God. This is true in every congregation around the world. This is the burden on my

heart. Why do ones not stay and become settled and established? Why are ones unsettled, constantly moving, and discontented? It seems when ones are converted, very few continue serving the Lord.

The Bible tells us in John 8:28-32: "Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things. And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him. As he spake these words, many believed on him. Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

Continuing Steadfastly

Jesus said in verses 31-32, three things would happen if you believe in Him and continue in His Word: (1) you would be His

disciple; (2) you would know the truth; and (3) the truth would make you free. One truth is overlooked in many lives today. People who are in division, have backslidden, and apostatized will say they *know* the truth. However, Jesus said, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed."

How did true repentance work for the first Christians recorded in the Bible? After the Day of Pentecost, the first assembling of the church is recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. Let us read about the first service of the Church of God in Acts 2:41-47: "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

"And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions

and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."

Look at the attributes of the three thousand souls saved on the Day of Pentecost. "They continued stedfastly." Signs followed them. They were together. They were a giving church, and they praised God. They did not have a church building to assemble in with padded seats and air conditioning. They met in each other's homes.

There is a tremendous difference between *starting* and *continuing* with the Lord. Jesus said, "If you continue." The new converts "continued stedfastly," which means they were persistent, faithful, and loyal. Even though they were exposed to persecutions, threats, and trials, they followed faithfully all they knew to do. Today, many feel they have to give up so much to follow Christ. They should compare that to the early church and what they faced.

On the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit was poured out on all flesh. The Holy Spirit did not come into existence on that day because the Holy Spirit has always been, even before Creation. He spoke through David, and He was a source of guidance and inspiration to the patriarchs and the prophets. From the Day of Pentecost through to eternity, He is the dominant figure in the church.

Evidences of Conversion

Christians in the early church had to stand against what they

had been raised in and taught. The first church came out of Judaism. Many were Orthodox Jews who came out of their religion and embraced Christianity. They also had to stand against Rome. They endured persecutions. One of the greatest persecutors of the early church was Saul, later known as Paul.

Acts 9:1-2 reads: "And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of

EVIDENCE OF CONVERSION:

a desire to be instructed
in the
DOCTRINES
&
DUTIES
of the church



this way, whether they were men or women [he was not prejudiced between either one], he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem." Acts 26:10 states, "Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them [or he witnessed against them]."

When Christianity first started on the Day of Pentecost, for many, being a Christian meant prison, death, or torture. The early church followed the doctrines taught by the Apostles. They were willing to listen to the preaching and the teaching of the Gospel. One of the strongest evidences of conversion is having a desire to be taught and instructed in the doctrines and duties of the church. The doctrines of the Church of God will cross up worldly opinions.

When you fail to attend worship services, it shows you have a lack of desire to be in the house of God. Also, it shows you are not faithful in your own personal relationship with God. Ones make promises to the Lord: "Whatever it takes, Lord, I want peace in my soul. I will never turn back if You deliver me from sin." Only a small percentage ever carry out the promises they make to the Lord when they pray.

Many times, ones are broken-hearted, and they seem sincere, but the Lord knows all things and sees what man cannot see. God sees inside every repentant heart. The Bible says in 1 Samuel 16:7, "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."

Matthew 7:13-14 states: "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." Few find life. This is not necessarily talking about the gate.

Making Restitutions

The Lord will command the one who is converted to straighten up things from their past life. That seems to be a hang-up with some people. I had some things I needed to straighten out when I got saved. Certainly my flesh had no desire to, but the Lord kept bringing it to my mind. God will work with you on restitution, but make sure God is in the restitution when you make it. When

something comes to your mind, talk to God about it. He will work out the time and place, and it will be right.

I got into a fistfight with one of my best friends. I worked with him at Rockwell. I hurt him, and although we remained friends, when I got saved, I had to apologize to him. In upstate New York, where I previously lived, I ran up a bar tab. Of all the things to come to my mind, it was a bar bill! I wrote a letter to the woman who ran the bar and told her I still owed a bar bill, and if she would tell me how much it was, I would take care of it. She wrote back and said she was thankful I had become a Christian, and the bar bill was taken care of.

Restitution is necessary. Some things cannot be changed, but the Lord can help you repair them. Witnessing happens while making restitutions. It is a witness of a changed life. Let us consider Zacchaeus. Luke 19:1-10 reads: "And Jesus entered and passed through Jericho. And, behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich. And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature. And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him: for he was to pass that way.

"And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house. And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully. And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner. And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. [Je-

sus did not bring that up; Zacchaeus did!]

"And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Jesus called Zacchaeus "a son of Abraham." Before, even though he was a Jew, he was considered a publican, or a sinner. What made him "a son of Abraham"? Faith!

Let us look at Zacchaeus' attitude in verse 8, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation [which most tax collectors did], I restore him fourfold." He made this commitment on his own. There was no other proof given he was guilty outside of his own testimony. He was willing to clean up his reputation as a tax collector. The deeds of the old man needed attention.

A Changed Life

Repentance changes one's whole outlook on life. When you have truly repented, it is because you are sick of the way you have been living. If you are not sick of the way you have been living, there is no reason to repent. That is not true repentance. When you are sick of sin, you are tired of your gnawing conscience casting guilt on your life.

Ezekiel 33:15 reads, "If the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die." The *Amplified* version reads: "If the wicked restores [what he took in] pledge, gives back what he had taken in



Repentance changes one's whole outlook on life.

robbery, walks in the statutes of life [right relationship with God], without committing iniquity, he shall surely live; he shall not die."

You should pay back the things you have borrowed and not keep them. It could be money or a tool. Do not walk away from debts acquired from loan companies, banks, individuals, or check cashing places. You need to clean up your debts. If you cannot pay, do not act as if you do not know anything about it. Acknowledge your debt, and acknowledge you do not have the money right now.

You can be emotionally sorry and shed many tears, but God looks further than the tear ducts. He looks at the heart where true repentance must take place. You may have a good feeling after praying at an altar, but you need to get beyond the good feeling. Get down to business with God, and truly be sorry for your sins.

When you repent, a change is expected to take place. Matthew 3:7-8 says: "But when he [John the Baptist] saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance." The *Amplified* version reads: "But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, You brood of vipers! Who warned

you to flee and escape from the wrath and indignation [of God against disobedience] that is coming? Bring forth fruit that is consistent with repentance [let your lives prove your change of heart]."

It is implied in these Scriptures that the Pharisees and the Sadducees came privately to the baptism without opening their hearts in repentance, as the poor sinners did. They were afraid ones might recognize them, and they would be ashamed. John recognized their hypocrisy and pointed it out. He said, "Bring forth fruits to show there has been a change in your life."

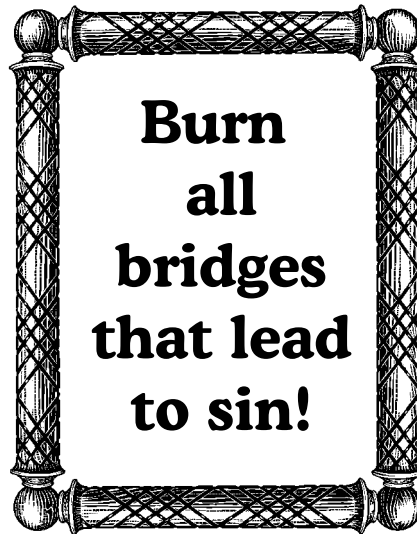
Burning Sin's Bridges

Repentance must be in the will as well as in the emotions. There has to be a willingness to straighten out those areas that are wrong in your life. You cannot straighten them out before repentance. There is no power in your life to do that, but there should be fruit afterwards showing you have repented and straightened things out.

Are you willing to break off a relationship you know is wrong? Men and women cannot live together unmarried and be saved because they are living in fornication, or adultery. It makes no difference what the world does or accepts; it is what "thus saith the Lord." Today, it generally is accepted ones can live together before marriage. Many do not want the responsibility of marriage, so they just live together. God knows if you are in a relationship that is not right, where you have been promiscuous.

Lying has to stop! Telling a lie is sin. No liars are in the church, and no liars are in Heaven. Revelation 21:8 says, "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall

have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." All lies are sin, including little lies, big lies, half-truths, and silence that gives consent. Proverbs 14:5 reads, "A faithful witness will not lie: but a false witness will utter lies."



Lying is one of the sins God exceedingly hates. Proverbs 6:17 states what God hates, "A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood." Proverbs 12:19 says, "The lip of truth shall be established for ever: but a lying tongue is but for a moment."

When ones are converted, they need to burn all the bridges that led them to sin. Delete the drug dealers' contacts out of your cell phone. If you quit using tobacco, why would you continue to hang around with those who smoke? Cut ties with your worldly friends who do not want to serve God and mock you because you do. Do not keep cigarettes or drugs hidden in a dresser drawer.

Stealing, taking things that are not rightfully yours, has to come to an end. The Apostle Paul, writing to the Ephesian brethren, wrote in Ephesians 4:28, "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing

which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth." Another fruit of a Christian is he will want to work.

Sharing the Gospel

I was hired on at Rockwell International in 1962. I was not a very good worker. I became a union steward, and I liked to argue the contract. If anyone had a grievance, I was glad to help him. Then I was converted in 1967, and the foremen saw a change in my life. I actually went to work and gave the company a good day's work. I did that which was right to the place they made me a supervisor, and then promoted me to general supervisor. These are all fruits of repentance. Christians are good workers. They do not stay at home looking for a way to take advantage of the system. Ones who repent want to live right, and they want others to know it.

Another fruit of repentance is having a desire to share the Gospel with others. You may not be able to explain it, but you are so happy and automatically want to tell people about it. John 4:28-29 states: "The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men, Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?" This Scripture is speaking of the woman at the well. When the truth was revealed to her, she wanted others to hear it also! Christians want others to receive salvation too. They desire to share their experience, and they want to testify and witness to others.

Trials will come and make you feel overwhelmed, but stay with the Lord! The Bible says in 1 Corinthians 4:9-13: "For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men. We

are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honourable, but we are despised. Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwellingplace; And labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it: Being defamed, we intreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day."

Continue in the truth. When you repent, let God see true godly sorrow. Be willing to do what it takes to go all the way with Jesus Christ. There was a

conversation between a man and someone who had recently been converted. The man said: "How are you doing, buddy? I heard you have given up all your pleasures."

"No," said the friend, "The fact lies the other way. I have found all my pleasures and given up only my follies!"

What does true repentance follow? We read in 2 Corinthians 7:10, "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death." Repentance is a product of sorrow from sinning against God, your Creator, your Savior, and the One who willingly laid down His life

for you. I like this explanation of repentance by Robert Smith: "True repentance has a double aspect. It looks upon things past with a weeping eye, and upon the future with a watchful eye." Remember what Jesus said in our Scripture text, "For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit" (Luke 6:43). Has real fruit followed repentance in your life?

(Compact Disc TR-2537)

Brother Roger L. Decker is the pastor of the Church of God in Newark, OH.

"True repentance has a double aspect. It looks upon things *past* with a **WEeping EYE**, and upon the *future* with a **WATCHFUL EYE**" (Robert Smith).

Statement of Condition

for 12 months ending January 31, 2023

| | Income | Expenses |
|---|---------------------|----------------------|
| Supplies | \$ | 28,143.36 |
| Miscellaneous Expenses | \$ | 3,435.96 |
| Wages | \$ | 55,677.71 |
| Payroll Taxes/Insurance/Workers' Comp | \$ 268.00 | \$ 17,382.08 |
| Donations/Offerings | \$ 15,095.89 | |
| Equipment/Maintenance/Repairs | \$ | 70,560.03 |
| Postage | \$ | 98,751.25 |
| Subtotals | \$ 15,363.89 | \$ 273,950.39 |
| <i>Balance paid out of the general fund of the Church of God congregation at Newark, OH</i> | | \$ 258,586.50 |



Don't Sell Your

Birthright

Brother Calvin Foster

Genesis 25:24 And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled [speaking of Rebekah], behold, there were twins in her womb.

25 And the first came out red, all over like an hairy garment; and they called his name Esau.

26 And after that came his brother out, and his hand took hold on Esau's heel; and his name was called Jacob: and Isaac was threescore years old when she bare them.

27 And the boys grew: and Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents.

28 And Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of his venison: but Rebekah loved Jacob.

29 And Jacob sod pottage: and Esau came from the field, and he was faint:

30 And Esau said to Jacob, Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red pottage; for I am faint: therefore was his name called Edom.

31 And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright.

32 And Esau said, Behold, I am at the point to die: and what

profit shall this birthright do to me?

33 And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he sware unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob.

34 Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentiles; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: thus Esau despised his birthright.

Hebrews 12:15 Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;

16 Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.

17 For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.

Jesus told Nicodemus in John 3:7, "Ye must be born again." Thank God, I have experienced the wonderful translation into the Kingdom of God.

I had no idea being born again would bring such a blessing to my life. Being born again is wonderful. God changed my life completely. I thank God for the experience of salvation! My mother came out of a denominational church. The people in the church were not living right. They were living in sin. I was around ten years old when we started attending the Church of God. I thank God I was taught how to be saved and live holy at a young age.

The Apostle Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 5:17, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." I grew up in a violent community. I was expelled from high school. I had an earring in one ear and long hair, but God saved me and changed my life completely. I thank God He changed my life. I did not realize salvation was so beautiful. God saved me from death. Many young men in my neighborhood were shot at. They ran from the police and from gang members.

They ran around at night in a dark neighborhood.

I thank God He saved me from my sins. I love the people of God, and I love the Church of God. When I got saved, I knew this was what I had been looking for. The Bible says in Psalm 103:12, "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us." God separated me from my sins as far as the east is from the west.

Psalm 87:5-6 reads: "And of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her: and the highest himself shall establish her. The LORD shall count, when he writeth up the people, that this man was born there. Selah." I thank God for a wonderful, born-again experience with Jesus Christ. It is the greatest thing that ever happened to me. I praise Him from the depth of my heart.

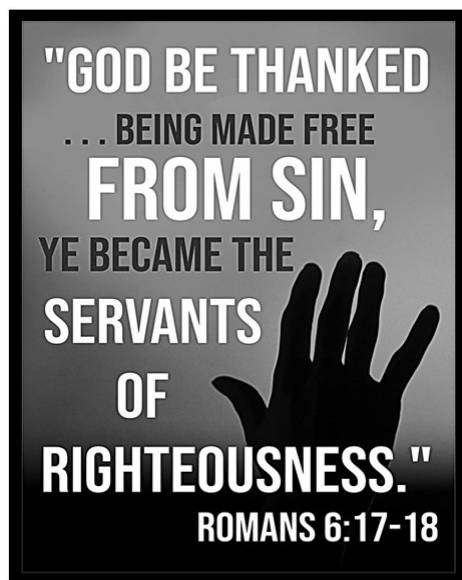
Power to Live Free From Sin

The devil has blinded the minds of many people so the light of the Gospel cannot shine on them. There is so much humanism, or human thinking, in the flesh. The word *humanism* means "a devotion to human welfare; forcing things divine, or supernatural; from human influence." The natural man cannot understand spiritual things. He can only see things pertaining to the natural man. Many do not understand salvation, and they are missing out on the greatest blessing.

Humanism views man as supreme and self-sufficient. Humanistic thinking knows natural things through reasoning and does not believe in God. Psalm 14:1 says, "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." I thank God for what He has done for me and for salvation. There are blessings and great treasures in being saved from sin.

When I was a boy, I read comic books. One comic book

was about a man who supposedly could leap tall buildings with a single bound. He was faster than a speeding bullet, more powerful than a locomotive, could change the course of a mighty river, and could bend steel with his bare hands. He had x-ray vision and could see through walls. He was called "Superman." I cannot do any of those things, but because God's Spirit is in my life, God has blessed me with the ability to live a life free from sin.



Romans 6:12-22 states: "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?"

"But God be thanked, that ye

were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness. I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness. For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life."

I cannot bend steel with my bare hands, but praise God, I can live a life free from sin. Paul told Timothy in 1 Timothy 5:22, "Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure." God does not want me to sin, and He does not want me to go along with another person's sins. He does not want me to be a partaker of any man's sin. By the help of God, I do not want my love for God to wax cold. I thank God He saved my life. Friend, do not sell your birthright. If God has saved you, you have a born-again experience. You must hold on to God. Treasure God, and stay saved at any cost.

If God saved you, He can keep you. You cannot live this life by yourself. You cannot live free from sin without God's help. It takes His mighty power and His Spirit to keep you. Matthew 24:12 talks about the love of many waxing cold. Today, many people's love is waxing cold. You must keep your love for God hot. Do not fall into a lukewarmness and become cold. Stay on fire for God because sin is nothing to play around with. If you play

with fire, you are going to get burned.

Sin Will Destroy You

If you disobey God and start messing around with sin, sin will take you further than you want to go. Some people like to play around with sin. It can be compared to a fisherman catching fish. A fisherman will put his baited hook in the water. A fish will swim up, take a little nibble, and swim away. He will come back and nibble some more. The fish nibbles at the worm on the hook until soon it has the whole hook in its mouth. Then, it is in the frying pan. That is similar to how ones get hooked on sin. They think they can play around with sin, but then they get hooked and cannot get free.

Young person, I want to encourage you. You should never pick up a cigarette. Do not get involved with drugs. God can keep you from them. Some saints were hooked on them, and it took God to set them free. Those vices will take you deep in sin, and you will do things you said you would never do. Sin will keep you longer than you want to stay. Sin is stronger than you. There are pleasures in sin for a season, but then sin will turn on you. It will cost you more than you want to pay. I thank God I was saved as a young man. I do not regret getting saved.

Sin breaks up homes and destroys people's health. Some get drunk on alcohol, and it destroys their lives. Living in sin will empty your bank account. It may cause you to get a disease. Some people have diseases because they jump in and out of bed with other men and women. Sin does not have any respect of persons. It does not care if you are raised in church or how beautiful you are. Sin will destroy you.

I thank God for what I missed

by being saved. The devil was tying me down with some bad habits, but thank God, He saved me before I went too far. Sin will cost you. Many people have lost their marriages and their jobs. People are suffering because of the sinful choices they made. The devil wants you too. If you give in to him, he will destroy you. Sister, the devil would like you to become pregnant before getting married. God wants to save you and keep you on the strait and narrow way.

In the Book of Numbers, Chapter 32, Moses spoke to the children of Gad. He told them to return and help the Israelites take the land. Moses said in verse 23, "But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out." Brother, sister, your sin will find you out. You may think you have something hid, but God will pull the covers off. Sin will destroy your reputation. You cannot escape the consequences of sin. You will be punished for your sin. Do not sell your birthright, dear Christian.

Judas Sold His Birthright

Matthew 26:14-15 says: "Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, And said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver." Judas was one of Jesus' disciples. He walked with Jesus and "kept the bag," which meant he was the treasurer of the group. He had a position of responsibility. Yet, Judas sold his birthright for thirty pieces of silver.

Esau sold his birthright for pottage, and later he realized what he had done. He said in so many words: "What have I done? I sold my birthright. God blessed me, but now I have lost the blessing." That will be you if you go



back on God. You may say: "Look at what I have. I have a good wife, a wonderful church family, a fine home, and automobile, and I am doing well." Will you sell your birthright?

Judas covenanted with them for thirty pieces of silver, and from that time forward, he sought an opportunity to betray the Lord. Verses 47-50 read: "And while he yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders of the people. Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he: hold him fast. And forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, master; and kissed him. And Jesus said unto him, Friend, wherefore art thou come? Then came they, and laid hands on Jesus, and took him." Judas betrayed Jesus with a kiss, an expression of affection. For his own selfish purposes, he betrayed the Lord.

Matthew 27:1-5 states: "When the morning was come, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death: And when they had bound him, they led him away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor. Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, [He did not realize the

seriousness of what he had done. He messed up his ministry and his reputation.] Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that. And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself."

It was as though Judas was talking to the devil himself, "I made a mistake." The devil will trick you and then leave you to it. He will say: "What is that to me? I gave you what you wanted."

Dear one, do not play with God. Salvation is precious. When you make a poor decision, you are affecting your wife or husband, your children, your spouse's family, your own family, your grandchildren, and your church family—all because of a selfish desire to bring pleasure to yourself. Many people sell their birthright for a few moments of pleasure. Friend, it is not worth going to hell for a few moments of pleasure. The pleasure in sin is only for a season. Do not sell your birthright.

The guilt that fell on Judas caused him to go out and commit suicide. If I could have talked to Judas, I would have said: "Judas, do not kill yourself! God will have mercy on you." I thank God for the men of God who taught me how to live for God. I thank God for the pastor I sat under. Young man, young lady, you need to stay with the Lord. If you are not saved, I encourage you to give your life to Jesus Christ before it is everlastingly too late.

Stay Rooted and Grounded in the Word

Jesus told this parable in Luke 8:5-8: "A sower went out to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell by the way side; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it. And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it

was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it. And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundredfold. And when he had said these things, he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

Then, in verses 11-15, Jesus explained this parable: "Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved [the devil wants to take the Word from you, but I encourage you to hold on to the Word of God, hide it in your heart, and let it cleanse your way]."

Do not negotiate with the devil!

"They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away. [Temptation is coming, but it is not sin. Yielding to temptation is sin. People hear the Word and are happy, but they must become rooted and grounded. You have to pray for yourself, read the Word of God, attend church services, and obey the Word so you can grow roots.]

"And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection. But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience."

Do not let worldly things keep you out of church. Maybe you need to get your mind off

football games or other worldly things. Keep your mind on God, or worldly endeavors will choke out the Word. What kind of ground are you? The devil is after your birthright, your home, and your soul. Do not negotiate with him. Satan is no good. He wants to destroy you.

Matthew 11:25-30 tells us: "At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him. Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

If you do not know the Lord, I want to encourage you to get an experience with Him. The Bible refers to it as a born-again experience, which is miraculous. It does you no good to join a church, sign a membership card, or shake the preacher's hand. Only God can save you from sin, fill you with His Holy Spirit, and give you the power to live a holy life. Without the power to live free from sin, there is no telling how far sin will take you. Sin will take you deeper than you ever planned to go. Do not sell your birthright. Stay saved. Keep serving God. It will be worth it. May God bless you.

(Compact Disc TR-2392)

*Brother Calvin Foster is the
pastor of the Church of God in
Kensett, AR.*



"Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" The disciples asked Jesus this question in Matthew 18:1. We read Jesus' answer in verses 2-7: "And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

"Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me. But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea. Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!"

The question the disciples asked was not humble. Many thought Jesus came to set up a literal kingdom. They wanted to be close to the King so they could be great in the kingdom. Living for God is not a prideful way. Jesus said in Matthew 23:11, "But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant." We must learn we are nothing, and God is everything. We can only become something great if God is working in our lives. Jesus said in Luke 14:11, "For whosoever ex-

alteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." Remember to stay humble.

The disciples had some misunderstanding about why Jesus came. They were thinking about a literal kingdom. The words in our Scripture text are strong words. Jesus used a child as an example, and He said if you offend a child, you would be better off dead. Jesus was teaching the disciples a lesson.

Matthew 18:3-5, in the *Amplified Bible*, reads: "And said, 'I assure you and most solemnly say to you, unless you repent [that is, change your inner self—your old way of thinking, live changed lives] and become like children [trusting, humble, and forgiving], you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever receives and welcomes one child like this in My name receives Me.'"

Jesus pointed out the need to be humble and forgiving in these Scriptures. We must realize we are nothing. Young children are humble and treat everyone with kindness. They forgive and get over their problems quickly. Generally, they are very giving. Our food, money, and possessions all come from God. We are only the managers. If we share what God has given us, He will give us more. Is this not the prin-

ciple of the Parable of the Talents? God wants us to use our talents and share the love of God.

In 1 Corinthians 15:9-10, the Apostle Paul said: "For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." We are what we are by the grace of God. We can do nothing good without Him. He can help us to be greatly used. Remember, all our wisdom, strength, and knowledge come from Him. Everything is *by* Him and *for* Him.

Jesus said, except you become as a little child, you shall not enter into the Kingdom of God. I want to do a little study on the attributes of children and child-like faith. Children tend to be inclusive. They are excited and more easily contented or amused with simple things. Children are generally trusting and show unconditional love, honesty, and compassion for all people. They show humility, are easily entreated, get over things quickly, and do not hold a grudge. They may fight with each other, but then the next minute they are playing again.

What can we learn from children? Can we be more trusting of our Heavenly Father? Can we be

more easily contented and enjoy the simple things of life and the blessings God has given us? Can we show more unconditional love to the lost around us? Can we live more honestly? Can we show more humility to our brothers, sisters, and co-workers? Can we have more childlike faith?

Let us think like a child for a moment. Will the Father not give it to me if it is good for me? Will the Father not open the door if it is safe for me to go outside? As a child of God, we can truly trust the Father. A child needs help. He cannot do everything by himself, and he needs his earthly father. Children are fully dependent on their parents. When a child travels, he sits in the backseat while his parents drive the car. He does not try to take over the steering wheel. Ask yourself these questions: Are you a backseat driver? Do you trust God to take you where you need to go? God can be trusted to guide our lives.

A baby needs the milk of his mother. Our mother is the church, and we need the milk of the Word. We read in 1 Peter 2:2-3: "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious." We need the Word of God and the constant guidance of the Father to grow. When a young child asks his parents for food, he expects to receive it because he trusts his parents.

Jesus said in Matthew 7:7-11: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts

unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?" If a son asks his parents for bread, will they give him a stone? No, they desire to give him what he needs and what is good for him.

Isaiah 59:1 tells us, "Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear." God hears every child of God's prayer. Sometimes we go through places where God seems silent. We may feel our prayers are hitting the ceiling, so to speak, but God hears. Just be-



cause your prayer is not answered right away does not mean God does not hear or that He will not move.

Hebrews 11:6 says, "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." We need faith for God to answer our prayers. God wants to hear your prayers. Even though God knows everything you need, He still wants to hear from you.

A young child is trusting and innocent. Even when the situation looks bad, children still believe and trust their parents. Some children feel their parents can do anything, and they like to brag about their parents. I like to talk about my Father! My Father can move mountains, part the waters, heal the sick, and raise the dead.

When children grow up and go to high school or get a job, they tend to lose some of this trust. They realize the world is full of evil and problems; everything will not turn out perfectly. When you look back on your childhood, there are certain things you miss because childhood tends to be carefree and relaxed. Sometimes, when children grow up, they become stressed.

We need to have more childlike faith in our lives. Remember your childhood, how you could find joy in the smallest things? After you are grown, you may face many burdens and responsibilities. Let us not mourn the loss of our childhood and carefree life. We can still place this same childlike faith in our Heavenly Father. In fact, He can be trusted more than our parents. Your parents may love you very much, but God loves you more!

Children must fully rely on their parents. When a child plays in a park, he does not worry, as long as he can see his parents. Are you close enough to God that you do not worry about the things going on around you? There may be a stranger at the park, someone who is scary, or a situation that is scary, but as long as we can see God, we can trust everything is going to be all right.

Do you enjoy a close contact and love with your Heavenly Father? Or do you run from the presence and love of God? When a child goes out to play, he does not worry whether he will have something to eat. He trusts his parents. Do you trust God to provide for you? Are you as a stubborn toddler who only wants your own way?

Some young children will argue about something because their parents said it. If their parents said it, they believe it is true. Do you trust God in the same

way? Do you say: "God said in His Word, He will never leave me or forsake me"? Or do you listen to what the devil tells you? The devil will come to you with many doubts, but you can tell the devil: "God said it in His Word, and I believe it. I believe my Father!"

The song entitled "I Can Trust Jesus" reads:

*God picked up a sparrow that
could no longer fly,*

*He brushed off its wounds, and
then watched it soar into the sky.*

*If He's mindful of creation, on
this I can depend,*

*I am His child and I can place all
my trust in Him.*

*I have prayed some prayers, and
felt they never were heard,*

*But I held to God's hand and
kept right on trusting in His words.*

*My wants and God's desires
don't always agree,*

*But I lean on His will, for He
always knows what's best for me.*

If you are God's child, you can trust Him. Are you close enough to God's hand? If you are reaching up, God is reaching down. A toddler may want an ice cream cone, but his parents know if he eats it, he may become sick. God knows exactly what we need. You may have a great desire for something as the toddler desires an ice cream cone, but God always knows what is best.

Another example of trust in a child is when he climbs a tree or something tall and becomes too afraid to come back down. He calls for his parent to help him. Maybe the parent looks up with outreached arms and says, "Jump." A young child may be unsure, but he will jump because he has faith in his parent to catch him. Do you have faith to jump into the arms of God, placing all your troubles in His hands? The parents are ready to catch their child if he should fall. Do you reach out to your Heavenly Fa-

ther and ask Him for help? We need God every day in our lives. Without Him, we would be lost! We must remember who to call on when we need help. We should call on God.

Let us be careful not to leave those childlike qualities behind. As we gain greater knowledge of the world as teenagers or young adults, let us use wisdom. Christians should show the greatest compassion. We need childlike faith to completely trust in God with our lives.

Will God withhold good things from you? Or will the Father refuse His child? No! Proverbs 3:27 says, "Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it." The Scripture says when you are in charge of something, or you have the ability to give someone a bless-

ing, do not withhold it.

We read in Philippians 4:19, "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." It says in Psalm 23:1, "The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want."

There is great peace in giving all our burdens to our Heavenly Father. Maybe, as a child, you broke a toy and brought it to your parents, and they fixed it. Now you may have a broken heart or a broken life. Bring it to the Father, the One who loves you, and He will fix your brokenness. My brothers and sisters, God wants us to have childlike faith.

Brother Alex Orr

*Brother Alex Orr attends the
Church of God in Newark, OH.*

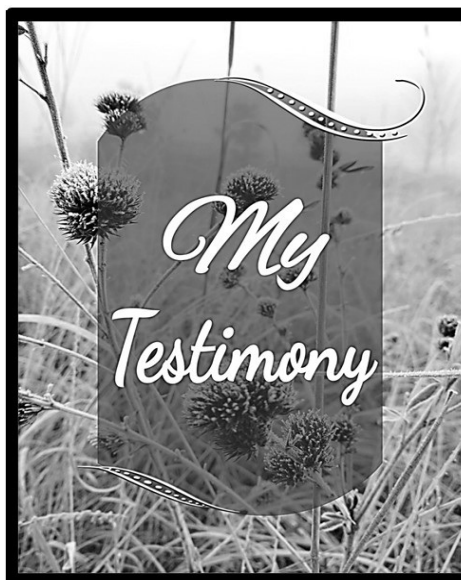
*"Forgiveness is an act of the will, and
the will can function REGARDLESS of
the temperature of the heart."*

Corrie ten Boom

A friend of Clara Barton
(founder of the American
Red Cross) reminded Clara
of a cruel deed done to her some
years previously.

When the friend asked, "Don't
you remember the
wrong that was
done to you?"
Clara replied,
"I distinctly
remember
forgetting it."





Called Out of Catholicism

Sister Rose Lewis

I was born and raised a Catholic. My mother was a Catholic, but my dad was Church of Christ; although he never went to church when I was a child. I remember as a child I wanted to be good, but I did not know how. I did not have Christian parents to teach me or even give me good counsel when I had problems. At night I would pray the rosary. Then I would say, "Now God, I am going to talk to You." I would ask God to help me be good.

One night as a teenager, I went to confession. As I stood in line to talk to the priest, I began praying to God. I was going over my sins, and I told God I was so sorry. I asked Him to please help me be good. I did not realize it then, but I had actually repented, and God saved me. I knew something was different. I felt so good and clean. I remember thinking, "I wish I could feel like this all the time."

Time went on, and I went into deep sin. I did not talk to God or even want to think about Him. I got married when I was twenty years old in the Catholic Church. My husband was not Catholic, but our first two children were baptized in the Catholic Church when they were infants. It was then that God started opening my eyes to many

things. The priest that baptized our daughter was drunk. I was so embarrassed.

My sister worked at the Good Samaritan Hospital in Zanesville. She saw priests and nuns making out. Then, all of a sudden, it was not a sin to eat meat on Friday anymore. They would prefer you did not eat it, but it was not sin. Something inside me told me the Catholic Church was not right. I did not have a Bible, and I had never heard the truth preached, but God started showing me things. I stopped going to church.

Later, I became acquainted with my neighbors in Nashport, Ohio, and they invited me to their church. They also had a club I joined. I only went to their church, which was Methodist, a few times. It was completely dead.

One day, when I was expecting my third child, I remember standing in my basement and thinking about my responsibility as a mother to raise my children in church. I did not know where to go. I asked God to show me what was right. Praise the Lord, God heard my prayer!

A few days later, I received a phone call. On the other end was one of God's children, someone I knew from my childhood. We had grown up in the same neigh-

borhood, rode the same school bus, and our fathers worked at the same factory in Zanesville. Sometimes, they rode to work together. She was also pregnant and lived down the road from me. I was anxious to see her again.

When this sister stepped into my house, I was not expecting to see what I saw. I thought an angel had come into my house. I was dressed in shorts and a maternity top. I had short hair, jewelry, and was watching soap operas on television. She had on a long, modest dress. She had long hair, no jewelry, but more than that, she was full of the Spirit of God.

We talked about old times, our husbands, and our children. Then I asked her, "Where do you go to church?" The questions began. I was searching and hungry for the truth. God sent her to me to lead me into the truth. I knew nothing about the Bible, and I asked her many questions.

She answered my questions, gave me some issues of *The Gospel Trumpeter* to read and message tapes to listen to. I started reading *The Gospel Trumpeter*, and I could not put it down. There was something about it that drew me, even though I did not understand all I was reading.

She invited me to church. I told her I would go, but then at the last minute I would back out. The devil was working also. He did not want me to go to church and did many things to hinder me. One day, we decided to go. On our way to church, we had an accident and never made it. But one day, I finally made it. I do not know what was preached, but the choir was so beautiful. I thought they were angels from Heaven singing. Everyone was so nice. They were all dressed modestly and seemed so happy. I could feel the Spirit of God in the midst. I looked around, and I did not see any wedding rings.

Many people raised their hands, which I thought was strange.

God continued to deal with my soul. This sister spent many hours reading Scriptures to me and talking with me. She was also praying for me. One day I asked her, "If I would die today, where would I go?" The Catholics teach purgatory, but she said, "You would go to hell." What she said put real fear in me. I went to bed that night thinking about what she said.

On the Friday before Easter

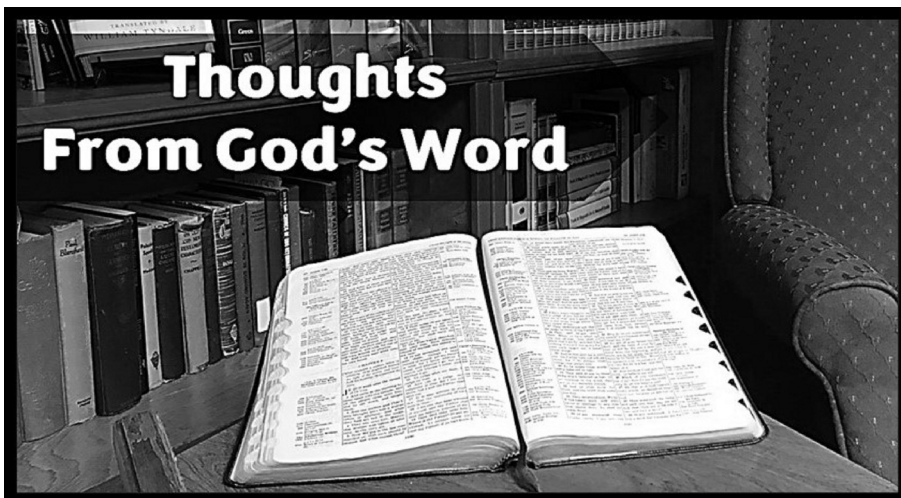
in 1973, God was really dealing with my soul. I called this sister, and she came to my house. She asked me if I wanted to get saved, and I said yes. We knelt there in my living room by the couch, and I poured my heart out to God. I told Him I did not know much, but I would do whatever He asked me to do. God came and gloriously saved my soul. That Easter morning, I went to church as a child of God. Praise the Lord, I am still saved today!

I have failed God many times through the years, but God has never failed me. He has been so faithful, patient, long-suffering, and merciful. When I got away from God, He never stopped talking to my heart. I thank God I am saved today. Praise the Lord!

Sister Rose Lewis

Sister Rose Lewis attends the Church of God in Newark, OH.

**One who uses the Bible as his guide
never loses his sense of direction.**



"For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God; Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began."

2 Timothy 1:7-9

Galatians 1:10 says, "For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ."

When we think about pride, we often associate it with someone who has a "big head," who flaunts, praises, and lifts himself up. We think that pride is displayed in the form of a loud voice or over-the-top gestures. However, pride really covers a broad spectrum and may affect us in more subtle, unrecognizable ways.

Nearly everybody experiences

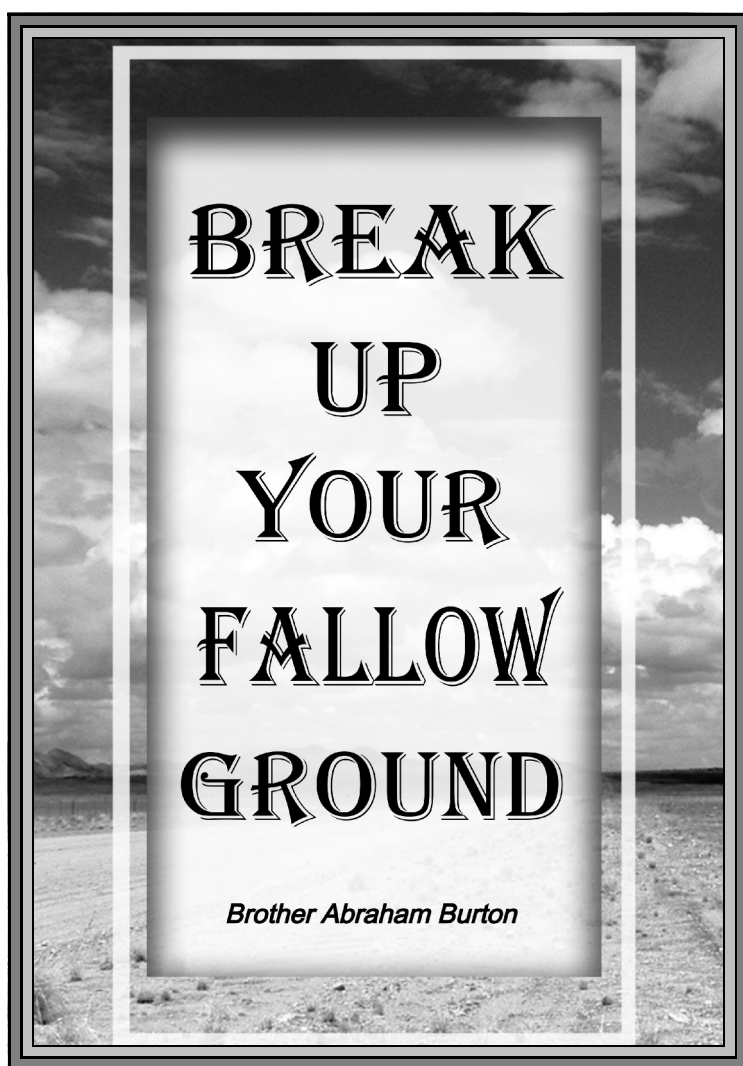
some level of shyness or bashfulness. Have you ever considered that your timidity is actually just a cover for your pride? Pride is what makes us bashful or timid, particularly in matters of evangelism, public worship, and the like.

In essence, we are afraid of how we would look or how our image would be affected if we stepped out and made certain moves for God. We fail to be what God would have us to be in these areas and hide it under the guise of timidity.

This notion can be challenging and thought provoking. It certainly is for me, and I hope it is for you as well. Timidity is a tool of Satan, and we ought to pray for boldness, just as the early church did. May we not miss an opportunity to lend a helping hand or spread the Gospel because we let our pride get in the way.

Brother T. J. Foster

Brother T. J. Foster attends the Church of God in Newark, OH.



It is time to seek the Lord. Many times, we need God to revive us. It is easy to become complacent. The things of God can become common, and we can become idle, if we are not careful. We do not want that to happen. We need to pray for God to help us. Hosea 10:12 says, "Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the LORD, till he come and rain righteousness upon you."

Matthew, Chapter 13, tells about the Parable of the Sower. In that particular passage, the soil is the heart of man. The soil of our heart must be cultivated and clear, as the literal field needs to be cleared of weeds

before any sowing can be done. The good seed is the Word of God.

How Is Your Heart Condition?

It is one thing to start off right by getting saved, but it is another thing to maintain your salvation. You must be stirred, challenged, and shaken to stay vigilant, sober-minded, and keep the fire of God in your soul. You should not want to go along with a form or fashion, but keep God on the inside. You can do everything that appears right and still miss the mark. "Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart" (1 Samuel 16:7).

Let us consider this analogy

of the soil being the condition of the heart. The Prophet Hosea said in the process of time, Israel's heart became hardened. He said to "break up your fallow ground." The word *fallow* means "usually cultivated land that is allowed to lie idle during the growing season." It should be producing, but it is dormant, obsolete. Fallow ground is land left untilled or unsown after plowing. Synonyms to fallow are dead, dormant, free, idle, inactive, inert, inoperative, latent, off, unused, and vacant.

I hope you are not in a dead state, spiritually speaking. I trust you are not idle. If you are in a dead state of sin, there is still hope! Ephesians 5:14 says, "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." Whatever condition you are in, there is hope; there is a remedy.

As we look into the Word of God, the perfect law of liberty, look within your heart and ask God to show you where you stand in terms of your heart condition. In order for God to work, in terms of saving souls and reclaiming backsliders, He first has to work on His people. The Gospel produces new converts when God has His way in us. We do not want to be a hindrance.

God cannot work with fallow ground. It needs to be tilled. Before a farmer can plant seeds, the ground needs to be broken and loosened up. If you plant seed on fallow ground where weeds are already growing, those weeds will take over anything that tries to grow on the hard ground.

In the Parable of the Sower, some seed fell among thorns. What happened? The thorns choked the Word out of the individual's heart, and he became unfruitful. How is your heart condition? Psalm 139:23-24 says: "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any

wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." You need to be introspective and ask God to search you. Proverbs 20:27 reads, "The spirit of man is the candle of the LORD, searching all the inward parts of the belly."

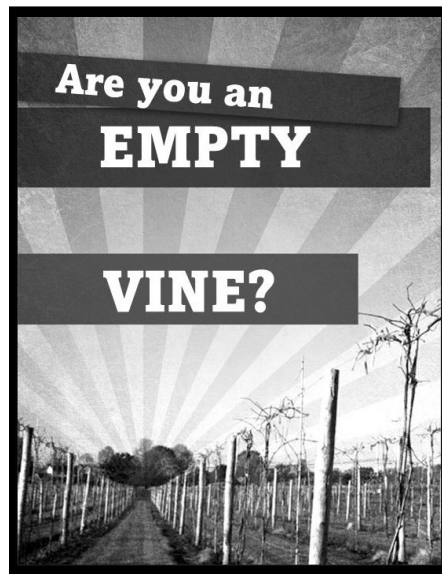
I often pray: "Lord, go with me and help me. Show me how I stand before You." I want the power of God in my life, and I want the anointing of God upon me. When I say or do something, I want people to notice God is with me.

Are You an Empty Vine?

Hosea 10:1 says, "Israel is an empty vine." What about you? God compares the church to a vine. Jesus said in John 15:5, "I am the vine, ye are the branches." There is no emptiness on the vine Jesus was talking about. If the branch did not bear fruit, it was burned. How are you doing? "Israel is an empty vine, he bringeth forth fruit unto himself" (Hosea 10:1).

John 15:8 states, "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." Whom are you bearing the fruit for? Are you bearing the fruit God wants you to bear? For example, you may say, "I am going to be as patient as I think I ought to be." No, you must be as patient as God wants you to be. We must love unconditionally, as God loves us. We cannot love the way we want to love. Unconditional love is hard on the flesh. When you obey God, you will do things you may not want to do, and you may *need* to forgive when you do not *want* to forgive.

Israel was an empty vine, which was a spiritual condition. Hosea 10:1 continues, "He bringeth forth fruit unto himself: according to the multitude of his fruit he hath increased the altars." Many people get captivated when they become prosperous. The nation of Israel (the people of God) thought they were right,



but they were hoarding other gods and were full of adultery. You probably do not have any statues, pillars, or groves at home. However, who or what gets all your time? Who or what is most important in your life? Is God first?

Exodus 34:14 reads, "For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God." Exodus 20:3 says, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." Are you greedy for things? Are you covetous? What is your god?

The more prosperous the Israelites were, the more they leaned toward their own understanding. They thought they could do things the way they wanted to do them and not the way God wanted. It is so easy, when things are going good and God is blessing you, to start compromising and letting down. We must watch and pray. We have to ask God to shake ourselves from this old flesh.

Peter said in 1 Peter 5:8, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." Do not give the devil an opportunity to devour you. Do not get too happy because you are prosperous. Stay sober minded. Thank God

because you cannot beat God giving.

Check Your Connection

"The multitude" of the "fruit" increased, and the "altars" increased, but it was not God's fruit. It was their fruit. The rest of Hosea 10:1 reads, "According to the goodness of his land they have made goodly images." Colossians 3:23 says, "And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily [with all your might], as to the Lord, and not unto men." Do not waste time on something God will not get any glory out of. What are you giving your time to? Is God revolving around you, or are you revolving around God?

Are God's services important to you? Hebrews 10:25 states, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." If you want God to give a revival, you have to do your part. Open your heart so God can speak to you and help you.

In ourselves, we can do nothing. We cannot keep the anointing of God in our souls on our own. For God's presence and anointing to be upon us, we must make sure we are doing all we need to do to please Him. Colossians 2:6 states, "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him."

Israel's vine was empty because there was no life-giving sap. They had backslidden and apostatized before God, but they kept on as if everything was okay. Things looked good on the outside, but they were not right on the inside. We need to be connected with the life-giving sap. Let us read John 15:1-2: "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it

may bring forth more fruit."

Sometimes, you have to check your connection. Jesus said in Matthew 24:12, "Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold." When your love for God is waxing cold, something is working on you. The spirit of unbelief is working in your heart, and you are departing from God. You need to stop and take inventory and get help. There is no way you are connected to the vine with Christ and His life-giving power if you are not bearing the fruit of God. When you first get saved, you bear fruit. God wants you to go on and bear more fruit.

The Bible says in Romans 15:1, "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves." You cannot compare your knowledge with the pastor's knowledge and understanding. Ecclesiastes 1:18 reads, "For in much wisdom is much grief." The pastor's understanding is above ours. We do not have his knowledge. God has to help the pastor. The Apostle Paul said in 1 Thessalonians 5:14, "Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men." God gives ministers and pastors to help our faith and help us stay saved.

Becoming Established in the Word of God

Not everyone has the same knowledge. Ones can kill people, spiritually speaking, with knowledge, but love edifies. Thank God for the brother who is bearing a little fruit. Help him, and encourage him to bear more. We should never be satisfied with where we are with God but be

striving to bear more fruit for God. We are living in a dark, sin-cursed world. John said in 1 John 5:19, "And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness." The world has nothing for us. A verse from the hymn "Adoration" by Clara Brooks says:

*Take the world, for Christ is mine,
In His kingdom I would shine,
Let me labor all my days and years
for Him:
Perfect love and bliss abound
In His presence, I have found,
Life is joy supreme and full of glory.*

John 15:3 says, "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." God can

him the shepherd of the sheep and gave him the oversight. Your job is to stay teachable and tender hearted so you can obey and submit.

John 15:4 reads: "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me." Continue in prayer: "Whatever comes my way, Lord, give me standing power." Paul said 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."

Plant yourself in the Church of God, and whatever comes your way, stand and trust God. Believe God, and what you do not understand, give it to God. Peter said in 1 Peter 2:6, "He that believeth on him shall not be confounded." Do you believe and trust in God with all your heart, even though you do not understand something?

Little Things Destroy the Vine

Jesus said in John 15:5: "I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing." The Israelites were bearing fruit in Hosea, Chapter 10, but they were in a backslidden, apostatized state. They were bearing fruit unto themselves. We want to bear fruit unto God.

When Jesus came to the fig tree, in Mark, Chapter 11, there was no fruit on it. Jesus cursed it. When they came back by that fig tree the next day, verse 20 says, "They saw the fig tree dried up from the roots." We must do all we know to do and strive to make it in. Ask God to help you.

**God can use you when you sit under the
Gospel, take in the truth, and have a
desire to advance in the things of God.**

use you when you sit under the Gospel, take in the truth, and have a desire to advance in the things of God. The pastor and the ministerial brethren will teach you. Consider an agitator in a washing machine. The dirty clothes get put into the washing machine with the soap, and the agitator does the work.

We need to be taught and established in the Word of God. Ephesians 4:11-12 states: "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints." We need the ministry.

Many people did not understand when Jesus said, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you" (John 6:53). Many went away grieved. Thank God for those who stayed! You will not understand everything your pastor understands. God made

Song of Solomon 2:15 says it is the little foxes that destroy the vine. It is an accumulation of little things that can destroy your soul. The Spirit of God may speak to you and say: "You did not talk right this morning to your wife or husband. You were impatient and short." Did you repent?

First Peter 3:7 says, "Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered." The wife and husband are hooked together. The Apostle Paul said the church is established as a husband and wife relationship. The church is married to Christ.

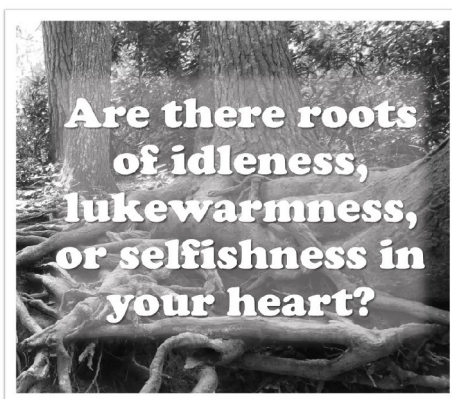
Are you treating people the way God wants you to treat them? Are you ignoring something the Spirit of God has brought to your attention? Have you made proper restitutions so the presence and anointing of God are in your life? Or are you allowing things to accumulate, and you are laying them aside? You may wonder why you do not have the grace you once had. Samson got into a backslidden condition. When he rose up to fight the Philistines, he "wist not that the LORD was departed from him" (Judges 16:20). He did not realize the Spirit of God had departed.

Sowing Righteous Seed

Some things will spiritually drain you, like a slow leak. You may be driving along the road and not realize the air is slowly leaking out of your tires. The Scripture says to break up your fallow ground. That is something we all must do. Search your heart, and ask God to help you with your problems and issues. Be sure you have a "conscience void of offence toward God, and

toward men" (Acts 24:16). Sometimes, you may question God, "Why am I going through this?" You may murmur and complain. If you continue to complain, God will withdraw His grace from you.

Hosea 10:12 says, "Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground." Are you sowing righteous seed? When God shows you light, areas in your life you need to work on, do you open your heart and say "yes" to God? Do you measure up and ask God for help?



James said in James 1:23-25: "For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed." Be a doer of the Word and not a hearer only.

We all need to work out our "own salvation with fear and trembling" (Philippians 2:12). Search your heart and make sure you are measured up. I need to clear up the little things God shows me that are out of order. Break up your fallow ground, those areas that have become insensitive. God will show them to you if you are honest.

I remember when I first went to St. Louis after my job relocated me. I felt an overwhelming burden to help souls. However, I did not feel God's presence in my life as it needed to be. I prayed and fasted for God to reveal what was hindering me. I will never forget attending a service in Chicago where someone preached a message on conditions we allow in our hearts that go deep, like roots. God began to deal with me, and I searched my heart. I prayed: "Lord, are there roots of idleness, lukewarmness, or selfishness in me? Get them out of me! I repent! I want to be a blessing, Lord. I want Your anointing on my testimony. Lord, help me!" Thank God, He answered my prayer!

Second Corinthians 7:10 states, "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death." There are conditions we can get ourselves in, such as idleness and lukewarmness. We can be at ease, and we need to do some soul searching. You may need to pray: "Lord, help me do whatever I have to do to make it. I am willing to give up whatever is draining me spiritually!" God will meet you there. Hebrews 4:16 says, "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

"Every Man's Work Shall Be Made Manifest"

We need the grace of God in our souls today. The world wants to see something different. Many people profess to know Jesus, but they have very little possession of Him. They do not have an anointed testimony because the presence of God is not in their lives. If you live a holy life, lift up Christ in your everyday actions on the job or wherever you

may be, God can witness to the souls around you, and you will not have to say a word.

God will do His part; we have to do ours. Acts 2:47 tells us, "The Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." Everyone will not meet the conditions to get saved, but those who are tired of sin and want something better will desire a change in their hearts. They will seek after truth, and you will not need to do much talking. If you live with the presence of God in your life, the Holy Ghost will draw people to you. The pastor is doing his job by preaching the Gospel. We have to live the Gospel, be faithful at home, lift up the bloodstained banner of Christ by our actions and speech, and God will add to the church.

God cannot use you if you are idle, at ease, or self-sufficient. The Laodicean church said, in Revelation 3:17, they had "need of nothing." I never want to get to that place.

In 1 Corinthians 3:9-13 Paul said: "Ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building. According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is."

You will be tried with fire. The fire will quickly burn the stubble, hay, and wood. What is the fire? It is tests and trials. We need to get rooted and grounded in the Gospel, make sure we are measured up and not taking it easy. Be careful not to get caught up in prosperity.

Some people are proud because they hold onto the name Church of God. Having the name Church of God confirms nothing for you. If you are a member of the Church of God, it is because you are saved from sin. Some are at ease and feel they have seniority in the Church of God. First Samuel 4:21-22 reads: "And she named the child Ichabod, saying, The glory is departed from Israel: because the ark of God was taken, and because of her father in law and her husband. And she said, The glory is departed from Israel: for the ark of God is taken."



God took His presence from the people of God because of Eli and his rebellious sons. Eli did not keep his sons under subjection. Instead of putting judgment on them, he allowed them to do whatever they wanted to do. Eli's children became his gods because he loved them more than God. What is your god? What do you love more than God? What is draining you spiritually? Ask God to help you break up your fallow ground.

The Seed of the Gospel

As the seed of the Gospel is preached to you, is the seed falling on good ground or fallow ground? Jeremiah 4:3-4 states: "For thus saith the LORD to the men of Judah and Jerusalem, Break up your fallow ground,

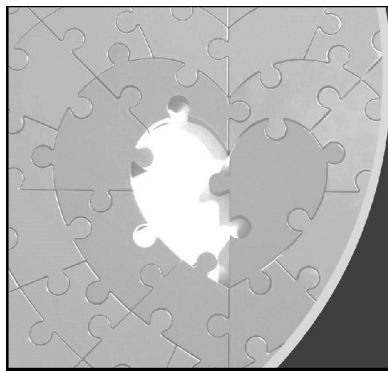
and sow not among thorns. Circumcise yourselves to the LORD, and take away the foreskins of your heart, ye men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem: lest my fury come forth like fire, and burn that none can quench it, because of the evil of your doings." Israel got into a bad condition. God said the way out is through repentance. They had to get the sin out of their hearts.

Be honest, acknowledge your sins, and be accountable. Accountability is one word people do not like. We are accountable for our actions. The blame game started in the Garden of Eden. After Adam and Eve sinned, Adam said in Genesis 3:12, "The woman whom thou gavest to be with me." Eve blamed her actions on the serpent. The reason some people cannot get saved is because they do not want to take responsibility for the mess they made of their lives.

The Gospel is still producing the goods. Paul said in Romans 1:16, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." Some are not willing to pay the price. God will respect your choice. The call is to "whosoever will" (Revelation 22:17).

Some seeds were sown among thorns. Thorns choke the Word. What is your thorn? In Luke 21:34 Jesus said, "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares." Make sure you are not caught up in the cares of life. Some are so concerned about the stock market, politics, what college their child will attend, or a pandemic that they are neglecting their salvation.

We read in Hebrews 2:2-3, "If the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just



**When you
find it
hard to
MEASURE UP
to the
Gospel,
CHECK YOUR
HEART.**

cause my heart to turn away from You. I don't want this job if it will cause me to be unfaithful and keep me out of the services." If you pray for children, and then God gives you children, be careful not to love

ber, "The just shall live by faith" (Romans 1:17). We have to do it God's way. We have to serve God with all our hearts, live by faith, and trust God to meet our needs. We have to keep our hearts clear.

Proverbs 23:23 instructs, "Buy the truth, and sell it not." Do you appreciate the truth God has given you? Do you appreciate the Church of God? Let us seek the Lord so He may rain righteousness on us. God wants to bless. He wants to renew us. Some need a total restoration, and He will do that too.

Some people do not keep their priorities straight. Their prosperity on the job, financially or intellectually, affects them and they short-change God. God wants our all! If you are doing something that causes you not to give your wholehearted service to God, you do not need it. Jesus paid it all, and all to Him, we owe.

The Need for Godly Sorrow

Isaiah 55:6-7 reads: "Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." If you are not saved and you are tired of the life of sin, if you humble yourself at the foot of the Cross and believe in the shed blood of Jesus Christ, God will save you and change your life.

If you are saved, but you are on a low plane of salvation, maybe you are in a spiritual rut, so to speak, if you break up your fallow ground and humble yourself in the sight of God, He will deliver you. If you feel you are cooling off in your experience, the Lord will help you shake off what is hindering you.

Hebrews 12:1 tells us to "Lay

recompence of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation." We need to get down to business with God. Our souls must come first. We have to break up the fallow ground. God is faithful to show areas that need perfecting. He will show you your true condition if you honestly seek Him with your whole heart.

In Matthew 22:37-39 Jesus said: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Who is your neighbor? Everybody.

Ephesians 4:32 says, "Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." For many, it seems when they have been offended, they are unwilling to forgive. If you want to stay saved, you will forgive. The problem for many is they love their flesh too much. You cannot serve God in the flesh. God is against the flesh.

Having a Divided Heart

Israel's vine was prosperous. It spread and had fruit, but it was not God's fruit. The more prosperous they became, the more their hearts were going away from God. They were worshipping idols. We need to stand in the fear of God when He blesses us. You may need to pray: "Lord, I don't want this blessing if it will

your children more than God. Stay in the will of God.

Hosea 10:2 says, "Their heart is divided; now shall they be found faulty: he shall break down their altars, he shall spoil their images." In 1 Corinthians 11:30 we read, "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." You can get into a condition and be asleep, spiritually speaking. You can become backslidden in heart. If you are weak, you can go before God, and God will give you strength to break up your fallow ground and get back on fire for God. If you are spiritually sick, there is a remedy.

You cannot serve God with a divided heart. Proverbs 23:26 says, "My son, give me thine heart." God wants all your heart. He will not share it. I love God with all my heart, soul, mind, and strength. When you truly love God, His commandments are not grievous. When you find it hard to measure up to the Gospel, check your heart. You do not love Him as you say you do. There is something working on you, and it is affecting your heart.

Jesus said, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Matthew 6:24). Some are like Judas, who loved money and was covetous. We all need money to function in this world, but we do not need to love it. Philippians 4:19 states, "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." Trust God. Believe God, and remem-

aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us." The weight that is hindering you could be your prayer life. It could be you never take time to get alone with God and read His Word. If your time in the Word is when you listen to the preacher, you need more than that. A rough test ought to send you to the Word and to your knees. If you continue to read and pray, you will live, and Jesus will keep you revived. He said in John 10:10, "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

You must have godly sorrow to be saved. If someone apologizes to you and you can feel their sorrow, it touches your heart. Godly sorrow will touch the heart of God. Some repeatedly have the same problem over and over again. Maybe you like to speak your mind. A wise man does not tell all his thoughts. God

gives grace to control the tongue.

First Corinthians 10:23 says, "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient." You may say you are sorry, but then get out of order with your tongue again. That is not true godly sorrow "for godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death" (2 Corinthians 7:10). If you are caught with your hand in the cookie jar, you are sorry you were exposed. You are sorry with your mouth, but not with your heart.

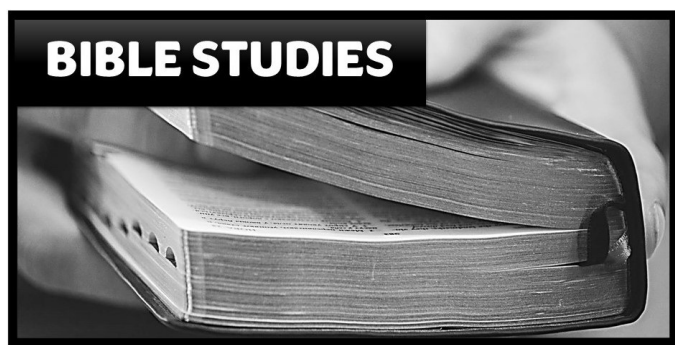
Godly sorrow works a clearing of yourself. Verse 11 reads: "For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter." It causes you to be mad at the devil. "Quit

using me, Satan." You will want to be clear with God.

We all have to come to God the same way. We all have had faults and weights we needed God's help in getting the victory over. I had a proud walk. After I got saved, I still had that proud walk, and it would convict me. The Spirit of God identified the spirit behind it, and I went before God and prayed: "Lord, I don't want to be proud. I want my spirit to be right." Man looks at the outward appearance, but God looks on the heart. When you get saved, many of those old spirits will follow after you, wanting to get back in. You have to stay on guard. Stay watchful and prayerful.

(Compact Disc TR-2557)

**Brother Abraham Burton is the
pastor of the Church of God in
O'Fallon, MO.**



A BRIEF EXPOSITION OF GALATIANS 2:11-14, 18

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT: We must be cautious to not "wrest" (2 Peter 3:16) this text to present something it is not addressing because of a preconceived idea. To be "rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15), we cannot isolate Scriptures from the greater context and the overall scheme of Scriptural harmony. The Galatian Epistle was a letter written under divine inspiration (2 Timothy 3:16) to "the churches ['congregations'; *The Emphatic Greek Diaglott*] of Galatia" (Galatians

1:2). Paul traveled to and evangelized "Galatia" (a Roman province in Asia Minor) in his second missionary journey (Acts 16:5-6). These congregations were predominantly composed of Gentile converts. Several Scriptural references substantiate this truth.

In Galatians 2:8, the Apostle Paul stated, "(For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles.)" He wrote in the next verse, "That we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision." Paul styled himself as "the apostle of the Gentiles" (Romans 11:13). As people were being "saved" and "added to the church" (Acts 2:47), it presented an unprecedented issue for the church.

Since the initial converts (exemplified by Acts 2:5) were all Jewish converts, they did not previously have to address adherence to the Mosaic Law. However, Gentile converts did not have a Jewish background. Thus, some who were prior Hebrew converts were adamantly advocating, "Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved" (Acts 15:1).

Acts 15:2 tells us they "had no small dissension and disputation with them." James, the pastor at Jerusalem, and other brethren resolved the stance on this issue prior

to Paul's second missionary journey (recorded in Acts, Chapter 15). They prepared letters, making it clear, "Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no such commandment" (verse 24).

However, there were Judaizers who persisted in attempting to impose the practices of the Levitical law upon the Gentile converts and congregations. This was the predominate issue the Apostle Paul was dealing with in the Galatian Epistle. It was the fourth Pauline Epistle written (penned in the proximity of A.D. 54-57). It commences with Paul speaking of "another gospel" (Galatians 1:6) being introduced to the people, "which is not another" but rather one that was perverted (Galatians 1:7). The pervading perversion was that the Galatians had been moved by these Judaizers to where they had "begun in the Spirit" but were attempting to be "made perfect by the flesh" (Galatians 3:3). Specifically, they were being instructed to follow "the works of the law" (Galatians 2:16). It was against this backdrop that the actions of Peter are related in this text.

Galatians 2:11 But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.

Notice, Paul related what occurred in "Antioch," not Galatia. The Apostle used this to reinforce his argument against the perversion of giving preference to Judaizers and the position they were advocating. In this Scripture passage, the issue was not any type of *racial* prejudice but rather *religious* prejudice, just like what the Pharisee had when he disdained the publican (Luke 18:9-14). In Luke 18:12, the Pharisee touted his self-righteousness based on his religious observance of the Jewish law.

"When Peter was come to Antioch," he was coming to the very hub of the Apostle Paul's missionary operations. All three of Paul's missionary journeys to the "Gentiles" began at "Antioch," and two of them ended at "Antioch" (Acts 13:1-4; 14:26; 15:35-41; 18:22-23). Since this city served as the base for those missionary excursions to the "Gentiles," the Apostle Paul could not let this Apostle "of the circumcision" (Galatians 2:8) slight the Gentile brethren and show a deference, or make him appear preferential, for the Jewish converts. In Peter's hasty action, he was momentarily walking against the truth he perceived at Cornelius' house: "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him" (Acts 10:34-35).

Galatians 2:12 For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision.

13 And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him;

insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation.

According to verse 13, the dissembling was based on a religious background. The Greek word for "dissembled" is *sunupokrinomai*. It means "to act hypocritically in concert with" (*Strong's Dictionary of the Greek Testament*). Paul was compelled to withstand "him to the face" (Galatians 2:11) because the move Peter made was adversely affecting others and causing it to appear that the Jews held some superior or preferential position.

Galatians 2:14 But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?

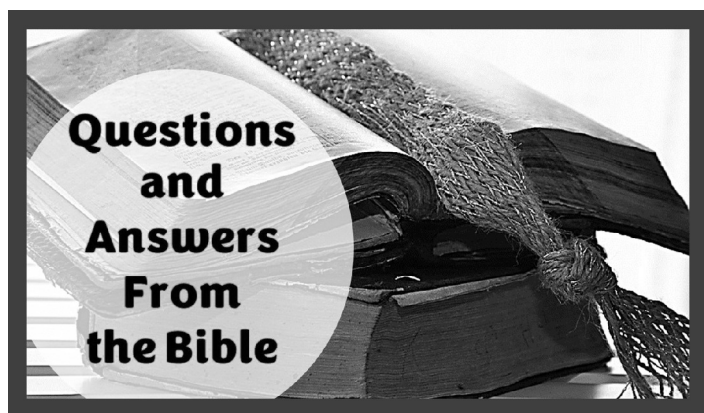
It is extremely obvious from the context that the issue was "Jews" and "Gentiles" (verses 14-15). The Apostle Peter's action of where "he withdrew and separated himself" was driven by him "fearing them which were of the circumcision" (verse 12). This event is styled as "their dissimulation" (verse 13). *Dissimulation* in the original Greek means "acting under a feigned part." It was not something they really believed, but because of fear, they wanted to make it appear as though they did. This is why Paul acted as he did, just as he said in Galatians 2:5, "To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour."

The New Testament Biblical principles set forth in this text are as follows: (1) "a man is not justified by the works of the law" (Galatians 2:16); (2) it is erroneous to try to compel "the Gentiles to live as do the Jews" (verse 14); and (3) "God is no respecter of persons" (Acts 10:34) when it comes to man's position concerning salvation, regardless of nation or station.

I am certain there is a host of other principles employed in this passage, but it is expressly clear that this text is not dealing with any supposed segregation based on *race* but rather a *religious* separation that although not believed, yet was acted upon because of fear concerning what some others might believe. Paul went on to make it expressly clear, stating, "There is neither Jew nor Greek . . . for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28). The "Jew" had an extreme religious prejudice against Gentiles that had been instilled into their thinking for centuries. The inclusion of "all men every where" (Acts 17:30) required both clear teaching and firm stands to cause the Jewish converts to understand and embrace these truths.

Brother Earl R. Borders

Brother Earl R. Borders is the pastor of the Church of God in Summersville, WV.



WHAT IS THE MEANING OF LUKE 6:29?

Luke 6:29 is part of a larger discourse (The Sermon on the Mount) where Christ set forth the tenets of the New Testament economy, making comparisons and contrasts between the Old and New Testament dispensations. Matthew's account is more detailed than Luke's rendering. Notice the general tenor of Matthew 5:21-44:

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------|
| • verse 21: "Ye have heard" (Old Testament) | • verse 32: "But I say" |
| • verse 22: "But I say" (New Testament) | • verse 33: "Ye have heard" |
| • verse 27: "Ye have heard" | • verse 34: "But I say" |
| • verse 28: "But I say" | • verse 38: "Ye have heard" |
| • verse 31: "It hath been said" | • verse 39: "But I say" |
| | • verse 43: "Ye have heard" |
| | • verse 44: "But I say" |

Luke 6:29 falls in the midst of these comparisons and contrasts. It is comparable to Matthew 5:39-40. Verse 39 begins, "But I say unto you," setting forth another New Testament response to an Old Testament practice. Thus, we must consider what they had "heard" (verse 38). What was the teaching and practice under the Old Testament? When Jesus said, "It has been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth," He was quoting a Levitical law (Exodus 21:23-25; Leviticus 24:19-20; Deuteronomy 19:21).

In its origin, this law was given to limit retaliation. In the Old Testament dispensation, concerning the bill of divorcement, Jesus said, "Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you" (Matthew 19:8). The condition of men's hearts under the old economy was hard. Thus, the Ten Commandments were written "in tables of stone" (2 Corinthians 3:3). Those in that dispensation had a "stony heart." In this New Testament dispensation, God said, "I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh" (Ezekiel 36:26).

God will write upon that heart "with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart" (2 Corinthians 3:3). Under the old dispensation, they had a "hardness of" their "hearts." Thus, there was a tendency to retaliate much more than was warranted. That type of retaliation was forbidden, even under the Old Testament! If a "tooth" was lost, they could only take a "tooth." Exodus 21:25 makes the principle clear:

"Burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe."

An individual with "an heart of flesh" where the Holy Spirit indwells and is soft to where "the Spirit of the living God" can write and make impressions upon it, will not have a retaliatory spirit. Romans 12:17-21 makes the New Testament principles clear: "Recompense [pay back] to no man evil for evil"; "avenge not yourselves"; "vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord"; "be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." When Jesus said, "Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also" (Matthew 5:39), He was saying what Romans 12:17 declares.

The only way a right-handed man could "smite thee on thy *right* cheek" would be to backhand the individual. According to Jewish Rabbinic Law, to hit a man with the back of a hand was twice as insulting as hitting him with the flat of the hand. Jesus was not talking so much about being struck as being insulted. He was teaching (as the Apostle Peter did in 1 Peter 3:9): "Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing; but contrariwise blessing."

When Jesus spoke of "take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also" (Matthew 5:40; Luke 6:29), He was teaching to not be so concerned with our "rights" as we are with being right! In both these examples, "smite thee" (verse 39) and "sue thee" (verse 40), Jesus spoke of hurtful actions taken by others. We are not to be as concerned with the actions people take against us as we are with our reactions. Few of us will experience having someone physically "smite thee on thy right cheek" or "sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat."

A strict literal application is not what is being conveyed. If it were, it would only apply to our "cheek" and "coat." The true intent is to set forth new principles. Christ set forth the injunction to "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you" (Matthew 5:44). *Everything* He established in this verse has to do with our reaction to someone's action. We cannot govern how others will act toward us, but we must make certain our reactions reflect Christ and the Spirit of God.

Another principle is, if a matter needs addressed, there are proper authorities. Under the Old Testament, they could not take matters in their own hands; they had to take the offending individual to Moses. In the New Testament, Christ said not only should we not handle matters ourselves but as the Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 6:7: "Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?" The child of God, directed by the Spirit of God, does not act in carnal retribution, but overcomes evil with good.

Brother Earl R. Borders

Brother Earl R. Borders is the pastor of the Church of God in Summersville, WV.

Spring Camp Meeting

June 18-25

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

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

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, dormitories,
book store, and so much more.

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

INSPIRATIONAL SINGING ✱ HOLY GHOST PREACHING
DIVINE HEALING ✱ FELLOWSHIP WITH THE SAINTS

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

UPCOMING MEETINGS

NEWTON, KS
April 3-9

REVIVAL: Church of God, 400 North Meridian Rd, Newton, KS 67114
Evangelist: Brother Earl R. Borders from Summersville, WV
Service times: Mon.-Sat. 7 p.m.; Sun. 10:45 a.m. & 7 p.m.
For more information, contact: Pastor Brandon R. Gonzalez @ 316-217-2696

MT. PLEASANT, PA
April 15

FELLOWSHIP MEETING: Church of God, 109 Salvation Lane, Mt. Pleasant, PA 15666
Service time: 10:30 a.m. A meal will be served by the local congregation.
MOTELS: Holiday Inn Express, 724-547-2095 (This is on the same road as the church. Please mention that you are there for the church meeting.) Super 8 Motel in New Stanton, 724-925-8915 (on I-70W, 10 miles north of the church) Melody Motor Lodge, 724-628-9600 (on 119N in Connellsville)
For more information, contact: Pastor Paul W. Prinkey @ 724-547-2151

MEDINA, OH
April 17-23

REVIVAL: Church of God, 6745 Wooster Pike, Medina, OH 44256
Evangelist: Brother Larry Dishman from Hurley, MS
Service times: Mon.-Fri. 7 p.m.; Sat. 6 p.m.; Sun. 10:30 a.m.
For more information, contact: Pastor Mike Miller @ 330-725-5993 or 330-421-0187

SUMMERSVILLE, WV
April 24-30

REVIVAL & FELLOWSHIP MEETING: Church of God, 74 Armstrong Road, Summersville, WV 26651
Evening Evangelist: Brother Abraham Burton from O'Fallon, MO
Services times: Mon.-Thurs. 7 p.m.; Fri. 10:30 a.m. & 7 p.m.; Sat. & Sun. 10:30 a.m. & 6 p.m.
Meals will be provided by the local congregation on Friday through Sunday.
For more information, contact: Pastor Earl R. Borders @ 304-872-4047
Website: www.ChurchofGodSummersvilleWV.com; Facebook: The Church of God, Summersville, WV

ETOWAH, TN
April 24-30

REVIVAL: 180 Co Rd 909, Etowah, TN 37331
Evangelist: Brother Larry Dishman from Hurley, MS
For more information, contact: Pastor Doyle Lloyd @ 423-263-5194

MT. PLEASANT, PA
May 1-7

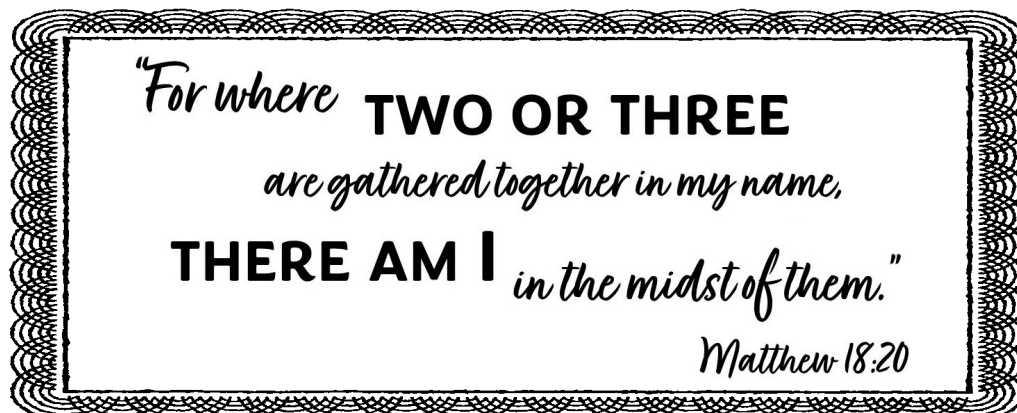
REVIVAL: Church of God, 109 Salvation Lane, Mt. Pleasant, PA 15666
Evangelist: Brother Larry Dishman from Hurley, MS
Service times: Mon.-Sat. 7 p.m.; Sun. 10:30 a.m. A meal will be served by the local congregation following the service on Sunday. No service Sunday evening.
For more information, contact: Pastor Paul W. Prinkey @ 724-547-2151

MINERVA, OH
May 8-14

REVIVAL: Mt. Zion Church of God, 13353 Lincoln St. SE, Minerva, OH 44657
Evangelist: Brother Larry Dishman from Hurley, MS
For more information, contact: Pastor Leamon Whitehead @ 330-868-1016

KENSETT, AR
May 26-28

FELLOWSHIP MEETING: Kensett Church of God, 409 SE 2nd St., Kensett, AR 72082
Evangelist: Brother Steve Strelecky from Newark, OH
Service times: Fri. 7 p.m.; Sat. 10 a.m. & 7 p.m.; Sun. 11 a.m. & 5 p.m.
Dinner will be served Sat. 4 p.m. and after the Sunday morning service.
For more information, contact: Pastor Calvin Foster @ 501-742-3961 (Church) or 501-593-5105 (Cell)

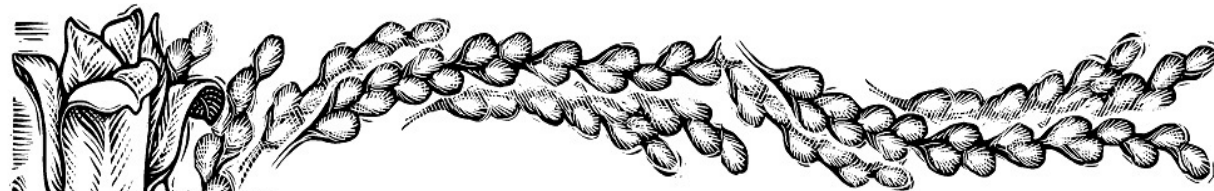


Postman send form 3579 to:

The Gospel Trumpeter

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

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



NEW SUBSCRIPTION, CHANGE OF ADDRESS, OR CANCELLATION

CONTACT US

Mail: *The Gospel Trumpeter*
675 N. Cedar Street
Newark, OH 43055 USA
E-mail: subscribe@gospeltrumpeter.com
Phone: (740) 345-1312

(Please Print)

NAME: _____
ADDRESS: _____
CITY: _____ STATE: _____
ZIP CODE: _____ COUNTRY: _____

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

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

