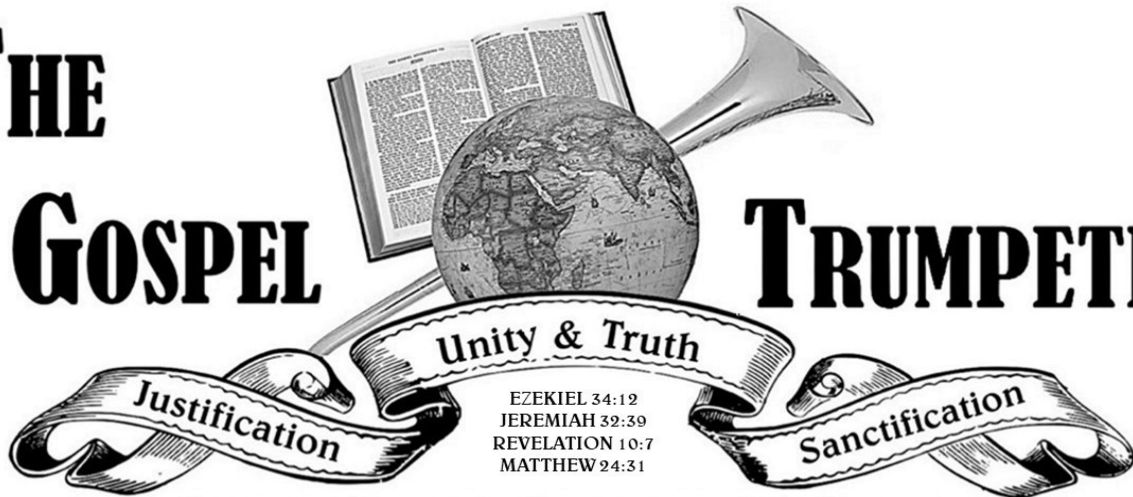


THE

GOSPEL

TRUMPETER



SOUNDING FORTH THE SEVENTH AND LAST TRUMPET

Vol. 53 August 2023 No. 8

**“What shall
a man
give in
EXCHANGE
for his soul?”**

Mark 8:37



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

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

Brother Roger L. Decker Editor
Workers Too Numerous to Mention

THE CHURCH OF GOD BELIEVES IN

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

**SOME SPIRITUAL FACTS
PERTAINING TO THE CHURCH**

- Jesus organized it (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; Galatians 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.

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Vol. 53 August 2023 No. 8



OUR SOULS WERE SATISFIED

Psalm 84:1 How amiable are thy tabernacles, O LORD of hosts!

2 My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the LORD: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.

The word *amiable*, according to *Strong's Concordance*, means "lovely or well-beloved." God's tabernacle is a beloved haven of rest for the weary and a place we can feed on heavenly manna, which nourishes our hungry souls. Verse 10 says: "A day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness." The psalmist cherished and longed for just a day in the courts of the Lord. He recognized the value of true worship on his spiritual health and well-being. It truly is "lovely" to be in God's house and enjoy the presence of His Spirit.

It absolutely was a beautiful camp meeting at God's Acres, which began on Sunday, June 18, 2023. It was joyful to see the many dear saints gather together. Pastor Roger Decker heartily welcomed all visitors and encouraged everyone to open their hearts and receive the engrafted Word of God. He reminded us the meeting would soon be over, brought prayer requests, and offered the open-

ing prayer. His prayer was for the Lord's presence and guidance to be with us throughout the meeting. For the next eight days, our hearts enjoyed the wonderful Word of Life from God's throne. The Lord provided a table of rich, spiritual food, and our souls were enriched. It is difficult to put into words all the benefits received from the meeting. The love of God and fellowship of God's people were a glorious blessing.

God was glorified through the singing. The youth and adult choirs did a wonderful job offering praises to God in song. There was joyful singing of the hymns of Zion by the congregation. We received a blessing from the individual groups and soloists. The inspirational songs were uplifting and added to the success of the camp meeting. The most important part was the anointed preaching of the Gospel. It awakened the hearts of sinners and offered the remedy for the bondage of sin. We are grateful to God for the messages He sent.

The first message of the camp meeting, "We Have a Refuge in Christ and the Church," was brought by Brother Larry Dishman. Other ministerial brethren (Brothers Earl Borders, Aurelius Raines, Roger Nethers,

[continued on page 13]

The Backslider



Brother Roger L. Decker

Proverbs 14:14 The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways: and a good man shall be satisfied from himself.

Hosea 4:16 For Israel slideth back as a backsliding heifer: now the LORD will feed them as a lamb in a large place.

The Prophet Hosea mentioned a heifer when he said, "Israel slideth back as a backsliding heifer." A heifer represents untamed strength. When put under the yoke for service, she will shrink from duty. She is unruly and reckless and will withdraw, or jump back, from the yoke whenever she can. She wants to stray to the side or go backward instead of forward. A backsliding heifer will not step into the yoke but would rather draw back, twist, and turn. She does everything she can to avoid being placed under the yoke.

The prophet likened those animals and their actions to Israel of old. When a man backslides,

he becomes unruly, independent, and actually despises the things of God. He has no desire to be under the yoke of Christ. The man who turns away from God reaps the fruit of his own doings. Someone who has tasted the good things of God and turns to seek enjoyment, fulfillment, and satisfaction outside of God's presence is chasing the wind, so to speak. Why did the Proverb writer say "the backslider in heart"? Just as salvation starts in the heart, backsliding also starts in the heart.

The Dangers of Backsliding

There are great dangers in backsliding that ought to put the fear of God in our souls. One thing a backslider needs to always remember is he may never get back to God. Do not think for one moment you can go out into sin for a little while and then come back whenever you feel like it. It does not work that way

because once you tap into sin, you tap into more sin; and the next thing you know, you are bound. Sin has many addictions. You are in danger of never getting back to God if you backslide.

Backsliding weakens your faith in God, destroys your influence, puts you in greater bondage, and leaves you wide open for deception. It destroys your confidence in God and other people's confidence in God. Backsliding hinders all those souls you had an influence on from being saved. It destroys the faith those in the world may have had in true Christians. The backslider is always in danger because he is without God in this world.

At one time, the backslider had a real experience with the Lord, but he has since withdrawn. He once fought side by side with his brothers and sisters in Christ against the world, the devil, and the flesh, but now he has changed armies. He has joined with those who oppose the

truth. At one time, the backslider was numbered with the congregation of the saints. Now, he is overcome by the power of temptation. He was overcome in the time of weakness, and now he has learned to feast on iniquity. He is a lover of sin when at one time he was a lover of God.

What does the Scripture mean when it says the backslider would be "filled with his own ways"? His soul is engulfed with sin, disappointment, and foolishness. The majority of backsliding would cease if ones truly repented and completely cleared every sin out of their lives. Some reserve a little sin in their hearts. As time goes on, they start petting that little sin until eventually it overcomes them and takes them away from God.

Second Chronicles 25:2, speaking of Amaziah, says, "And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, but not with a perfect heart." He allowed some things to stay that were not right. He turned toward God, but his heart was not perfect. He did not have his whole heart in serving God, and he wound up in idolatry. It caused him to flee from Jerusalem into a city called Lachish, where he was killed.

When ones attempt to repent but hold to their own desires, will, and secret sin, it will not be long until their sin reveals itself. As the Scripture says in Numbers 32:23, "Be sure your sin will find you out." Remember, no one gets by, no matter how much effort they put into covering their sin, and no matter how much they think God has forgotten about it.

The Downward Steps of a Backslider

Judges 16:18-21 says: "And when Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart, she sent and called for the lords of the Philistines, saying, Come up this once, for he hath shewed me all

his heart. Then the lords of the Philistines came up unto her, and brought money in their hand. And she made him sleep upon her knees; and she called for a man, and she caused him to shave off the seven locks of his head; and she began to afflict him, and his strength went from him.

"And she said, The Philistines be upon thee, Samson. And he awoke out of his sleep, and said, I will go out as at other times before, and shake myself. And he



wist not that the LORD was departed from him. But the Philistines took him, and put out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza, and bound him with fetters of brass; and he did grind in the prison house."

This account took place when Israel had done evil, and God delivered them into the hands of the Philistines. It is a perfect example of the downward steps of the backslider. Samson was a Nazarite, consecrated unto the Lord before birth. He was to let his hair grow long, not drink any strong drink, and not come near a dead body. The Nazarite vow showed his devotion to God. If he should violate any of those laws, he would need to be purified again to restore the vow. Samson judged Israel for twenty years, and he was a thorn to the armies of the Philistines. When the Spirit of the Lord came upon

him, he had tremendous physical strength. However, Samson was very careless with his vow. He was portrayed as headstrong with little or no control over his life. He had little discipline.

Samson secretly disobeyed his Nazarite vow by approaching a dead body. We read in Judges 14:8-9: "And after a time he returned to take her, and he turned aside to see the carcase of the lion: and, behold, there was a swarm of bees and honey in the carcase of the lion. And he took thereof in his hands, and went on eating, and came to his father and mother, and he gave them, and they did eat: but he told not them that he had taken the honey out of the carcase of the lion." Why did he not tell his parents what happened? He was not to go near any dead carcass.

Samson was immoral with a harlot. Judges 16:1 tells us, "Then went Samson to Gaza, and saw there an harlot, and went in unto her." Last, he got involved with Delilah, which proved to be his downfall. Most of his major battles with the Philistines were brought on by his relationships with Philistine women.

The End Results of Backsliding

There are some interesting points regarding the life of a backslider. Judges 16:21 states, "But the Philistines took him, and put out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza, and bound him with fetters of brass; and he did grind in the prison house." There are five different things that happened in this one verse: (1) the Philistines took him; (2) they put out his eyes; (3) they brought him down to Gaza; (4) they bound him with fetters of brass; and (5) he did grind in the prison house. It is a perfect picture of what the devil wants to do to your soul if you disobey God's Word and are careless

with your experience.

The enemy of Israel, the Philistines, took Samson captive. Without the Spirit of the Lord in your life, you are no match for the enemy of your soul. Samson was careless with his vow and reckless in his obedience. His weak area was with women. Instead of going to God for strength, he strengthened his weak area for the devil through his disobedience.

Without God's presence, even our strong areas will become weak. Without God's protection, we can become captive to those things which are actually the enemies of God. Our minds can become sinful and filled with immoral thoughts contrary to the will of God. Romans 8:7 says, "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." You cannot train the fleshly mind to become obedient to God. The world will swallow you up if you are without the presence of God.

James 4:4 states, "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity [an enemy] with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." The world is waiting to take you in. Without Jesus Christ, you have no defense against the world. It will become your master, and you will be as a puppet on a string, moving the way the world dictates.

Ones who backslide think they are free, with no more rules and regulations of the church and no more being "preached at." However, they become a servant of sin. Let us prove it by the Bible. Romans 8:8 says, "So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God." Romans 6:16 reads, "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to

Instead of going to God for strength, Samson
STRENGTHENED HIS WEAK AREA
for the devil through his disobedience.

whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" When ones leave the church, they think: "No more getting up early on Sunday morning. I can sleep in and do what I want." That is not true. Samson is a prime example of the backslider.

Spiritual Blindness

The Philistines put out Samson's eyes. The enemy of souls has put out many eyes today. When it comes to spiritual things, some are totally blind. They no longer see the Church of God as a separate church, but as a church among churches. The Church of God is the apple of God's eye. There is still only one church in the Bible. Where do these other churches come from? Men started those churches, but the Church of God came down from God out of Heaven.

Instead of Samson being in control, the Philistines were in control, and he was at their mercy. There is no mercy with the enemy of souls and with the world. Physical blindness is terrible, but spiritual blindness is a disaster. The Prophet Isaiah said in Isaiah 5:20, "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!"

It is shocking how quickly ones change their position when spiritual eyesight ceases. Isaiah said they "call evil good." Today, some have actually taken another look at mystery Babylon. Now, it has a glittering appeal. It does not look bad to them anymore. In Revelation 17:5-6, when John saw "MYSTERY, BABYLON THE

GREAT," he "wondered with great admiration" until the angel told him the truth. You can find the truth about Babylon in Revelation

18:4-5: "And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities."

Samson's physical eyes were put out. Spiritually speaking, many today have had their eyes taken out. The very thing that took Samson into sin (his eyes) was put out. The Philistines knew his strength might come back, but strong arms and a strong back are useless if you cannot see where you are going. The Philistines took Samson down to Gaza as a captive, the place where he had shown his strength. Many times before, the Spirit of God came upon Samson in Gaza, but now he was at the enemy's mercy. When a backslider goes down, he becomes a disappointment to those who once saw his strength.

A Hopeless Condition

Jeremiah 18:11-17 reads: "Now therefore go to, speak to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I frame evil against you, and devise a device against you: return ye now every one from his evil way, and make your ways and your doings good. And they said, There is no hope [having no hope is a condition many backsliders get into]: but we will walk after our own devices, and we will every one do the imagination of his evil heart.

"Therefore thus saith the LORD; Ask ye now among the heathen, who hath heard such

things [a picture of ones leaving purity and blessings for the husks of this old world]: the virgin of Israel hath done a very horrible thing. Will a man leave the snow of Lebanon which cometh from the rock of the field? or shall the cold flowing waters that come from another place be forsaken? Because my people hath forgotten me, they have burned incense to vanity, and they have caused them to stumble in their ways from the ancient paths, to walk in paths, in a way not cast up; To make their land desolate, and a perpetual hissing; every one that passeth thereby shall be astonished, and wag his head. I will scatter them as with an east wind before the enemy; I will shew them the back, and not the face, in the day of their calamity."

It would be terrible if the great God of Heaven turned His back on you. Earlier when Samson went to Gaza, he had brought trouble for the Philistines, but now he appeared at Gaza defeated and led by the enemy. How many backslidden Christians once had a strong testimony out in the world and the people around them lost hope in Christianity? Backslider, maybe you had an impact on your neighbor without realizing it. Maybe you had a friend or relative who had great hope because of how you lived. Perhaps someone with whom you did business heard your strong testimony, but now they see your condition as one without hope. What does it do to them? Many times, it discourages them from having any hope of being saved. If you had a great experience and failed, where does that leave them?

The Philistines brought Samson down and bound him with fetters of brass. The tide had turned. They were once bound and at *his* mercy, but now he was bound and at *their* mercy. Without God, even the strongest are weak. The opposite also is true.

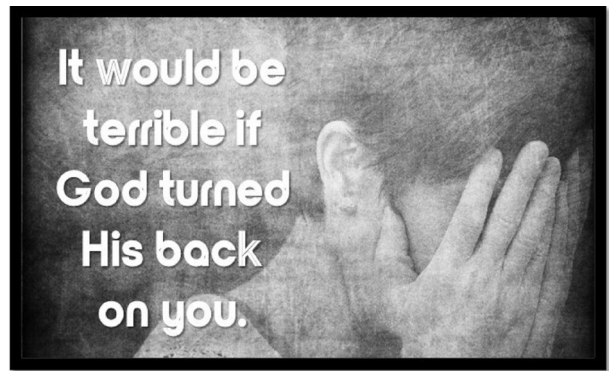
With God, the weakest are strong. Samson's arms and legs, which could once do a terrifying work on the enemy, were bound and unable to strike fear as they once did. All Samson's good qualities lay dormant in the enemy's camp because the presence of God was no longer in his life.

The devil takes the backslider down from that spiritual plateau he was once on. Again, Jeremiah 18:16 says, "To make their land desolate, and a perpetual hissing; every one that passeth thereby shall be astonished, and wag his head." When one backslides, some people say: "Didn't he go to the Church of God? What happened? Look at him now. He is living in sin and division." They just shake their heads as if to say, "What a shame." Some people may not live for God, but they still have confidence in those who do.

Are You Grinding in the Prison House of Sin?

Samson ground in the prison house, which was a slave's job. It was the most degrading work a judge of Israel could do. They took him down to the lowest ebb and embarrassed him in front of all the people in Gaza. How many people backslide and become a slave to the old habits again? They start doing the things they said they would never do. When I was first saved, I got away from God. I said, "There are some things I will not do again." Sadly, I not only did them again, but I did them worse than I did the first time.

Jesus said in John 8:34, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin." Some people get to the place where they have to have a cigarette. I used to be in



that same condition. I felt I had to have a cigarette. Some feel they must have a beer or some other drug to calm their nerves and help them relax. If this is your situation, you are grinding in the prison house. You are working for an addiction or a habit and you are at the place where you will pay any price to have it. Some are bound by lust. Samson had to have a woman, but not just any woman. He desired a woman from the enemy's camp.

Ones actually serve the devil while they proclaim to be free. They are bound by addictions, habits, and whatever else the devil prompts them in their minds to do. The devil knows if he runs a thought through your mind, you may not do it the first time, but if he keeps bringing it, you may eventually give in.

Paul's condition before he was saved is like many people's lives today. Paul had religion, but he did not have salvation. He was a Pharisee, the strictest of the sects. He said in Romans 7:19-20: "For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me [or sin prompts me to do it]."

The end results of a backslider paint a very unpleasant picture. Samson showed humility when he turned back to God. Instead of saying, "I will go out as before," he said, "O Lord GOD, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me" (Judges 16:28).

Dear one, if you are away from God, that should be your prayer. You need to pray: "Lord, remember me. I drifted away. Give me the strength and the victory my heart desires." When you pray in humility, you will have God's attention. You can have a greater life with God than you ever had before.

I remember coming back to God. I told the Lord, "I do not even know what I need, but whatever it is, please give it to me," and He did. What I prayed came from my heart. Although I did not pray with fancy words, it was simplified, but it still brought results. God knows if you are in a backslidden condition. Do not pray over the top of sin. Do not come to God and say: "Lord, I am struggling. I made a mistake." You may be struggling, but if you have committed sin, you need to repent. Be honest about the real problem. God works with those who struggle, but if you have sin in your life, it will take you further and further away from the camp of God.

Return to the Lord

Psalm 119:28 reads, "My soul melteth for heaviness: strengthen thou me according unto thy word." When you return to the Lord, turn your back on all things you know are wrong. First Thessalonians 5:22 says, "Abstain from all appearance of evil."

When you turn back to serve the Lord, His precious light is a guide and help for your soul. It will once again illuminate your life. Many become shipwrecked and lost because they no longer have the light in their life.

I want to paraphrase a story I read about a lantern swinger. Several years ago, there was a terrible train accident in which many lost their lives. A train crashed into the water because the bridge was out. At the trial, the lantern swinger, whose job was to swing the lantern to let the train conductor know the bridge was out, was questioned. The judge asked him, "Were you at the crossing the night of the accident?"

He said: "Yes, your honor. I was."

He questioned him again, "Were you waving your lantern to warn of the impending danger?"

"Yes, your honor," he told the judge.

After the trial had ended, the lantern swinger walked away, mumbling to himself, "I am glad they did not ask me about the light in the lantern because the light had gone out."

God can see if the light of the Gospel is fading in your life. Has your light gone out? Or is your light beginning to dim? You may move on, groping your way through life, hoping you will miss all the destruction. You may

do that for a while, but there will be a dangerous crossing ahead where the light is needed. Without it, disaster is coming.

Consider your ways, think about your life, your future, and the fact the Lord is ready to forgive and cleanse you from sin. Listen to God's thoughts about the backslider in Jeremiah 3:12, which says, "Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the LORD; and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, saith the LORD, and I will not keep anger for ever."

Verse 14 says, "Turn, O backsliding children, saith the LORD; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion." Then we read in verse 22: "Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings. Behold, we come unto thee; for thou art the LORD our God." If you are bucking at the yoke (like the backsliding heifer who would not take the yoke but was always turning aside), not wanting to really commit to the Lord, you need to do something. Get a solid, stable experience in your life with God.

(Compact Disc TR-2785)

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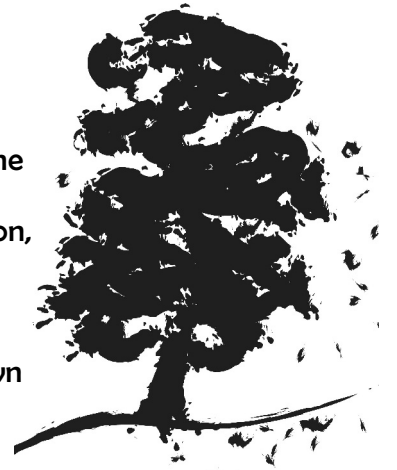
I Only Know He Did

I stood beneath a mighty oak
And wondered at its size
How from an acorn it could grow
I never could surmise—
I only know it did.

How God could make the heavens,
The water, and the land,
The animals and vegetables,
I cannot understand—
I only know He did.

I do not know how God could come
And cleanse my heart from sin
Through Jesus Christ, His blessed Son,
Whose love abides within—
I only know He did.

Author Unknown



Are You Playing RUSSIAN ROULETTE With Your Soul?



Brother Larry Dishman

Mark 8:36 For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?

37 Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

Russian roulette is a gambling game. The Russian KGB first used this practice to elicit information from prisoners they interrogated. They placed a bullet in one chamber of a revolver. The KGB agent would ask the prisoner for information, and if he did not get a satisfactory answer, the cylinder was closed and spun. With the hammer cocked, the gun was placed at the head of the prisoner, and the trigger was pulled. If the hammer came down on an empty chamber, the prisoner would live, at least long enough to be asked another question. If the hammer came down on the bullet in the chamber, the prisoner would die. Many died at the hands of the KGB playing Russian roulette.

Unfortunately, we read about people who willingly play this deadly game. I read a story of an actor who played Russian roulette and lost. Jon-Erik Hexum was filming a movie and became restless. While fooling around with a .44 Magnum handgun used in the movie, he placed a blank shell in one of the chambers. No doubt, he thought blanks were harmless. He spun the cylinder, put it to his temple, pulled the trigger, and blasted the wadding of the blank into his temple. He played Russian roulette, and it cost him his life.

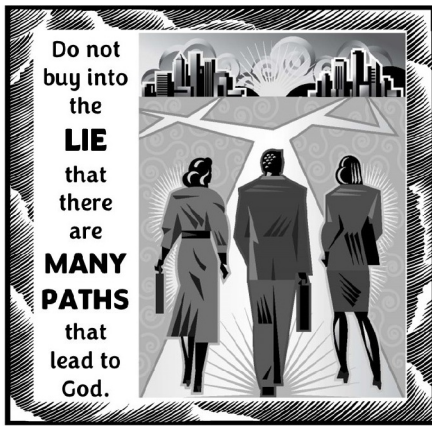
More than likely, you will never play this game with a revolver. However, many are playing Russian roulette with their souls. They are gambling on their eternal destiny by ignoring what the Bible says a person must do in order to be saved by the grace of God. The Bible says you can know for sure you have eternal life. You do not have to guess or hope you are saved. Thirty-eight times in the Book of First John, he

said we can "know" we are saved. We read in 1 John 5:13, "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God."

During the years of my ministry, I have shared the Gospel with thousands of people. Perhaps hundreds of them trusted God, repented, and became born-again Christians. Yet, many are still playing Russian roulette with their souls. Some have played this game until they went out into eternity, lost without God. They could have been saved, but they gambled they would not go to hell when they left this world.

Only One Road Leads to God

Every time you turn down an invitation to be saved, you are gambling on losing your soul in a devil's hell. Many are on the road to destruction. Matthew 7:13-14



says: "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." There is only one door, and it is a narrow road that leads to life.

John 10:7 reads, "Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep [fold]." He did not say, "I am one of the doors," but "I am the door." Verses 8-9 say: "All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture."

If you buy into the lie there are many paths that lead to God, you are playing Russian roulette with your soul. Some people say, "You believe what you want, but we are all going to the same place." No, we are not all going to the same place. There is only one road that leads to God. There is only one way you can be saved, and that is through Jesus Christ. Acts 4:12 states, "There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Philippians 2:10-11 reads, "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow . . . And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Do not play Russian roulette

with your soul. If you want to be saved, come to Jesus Christ. He said in John 14:6, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." It is terrible if a father gambles away his paycheck and neglects his family. It is terrible when people are bound by gambling, but the biggest gamble an individual will ever take is when he gambles with his soul. He is playing Russian roulette with the most valuable possession a person can have. Our Scripture text says: "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

All souls will live on throughout eternity, either in Heaven or in hell. Your soul will never be annihilated; it will never enter a state of nonexistence. Your soul will be alive throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity. God placed such a high value on your soul that He gave His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cruel Cross of Calvary so your soul could be saved from a devil's hell. You can lose your eyes, hands, arms, feet, and legs, but if you lose your soul, it will be lost forever.

Are You Ready for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ?

Are you playing Russian roulette with the Second Coming of Jesus Christ? First Thessalonians 4:16-17 says, "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." John 5:28-29 reads, "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear

his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."

Suppose at this moment, the dead in the graves immediately come forth, and we who are alive and remain are caught up to meet the Lord in the air. What will happen to your soul? There is a date set for the Second Coming of the Lord. I do not know the date, and you do not know the date. The Bible says the angels and the Son of God do not know, but God has a date set. He is going to put an end to all the wickedness in this world. This world will not last forever. The Lord is coming back. Are you ready?

Every day you put off salvation, you are playing Russian roulette with the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, and there is a chance He could come today or tomorrow. I would not put a gun to my head and pull the trigger if there was one chance in ten million that a bullet was there. It is a stupid game to play. It also is very foolish to gamble with the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. You need to be ready.

There was a date set in Noah's generation, and none of those people who were destroyed in the Flood knew when the Lord was going to shut the door of the ark. Noah and his family did not know. One day, God will shut the door of opportunity for us. Thank God, the door is open right now, but just as God shut the door to the ark, He is going to shut the door of opportunity for you to be saved. No doubt, good moral people were swept away in the Flood. Many of those people, as many today, were sincere, but they were destroyed because they played Russian roulette with the Flood.

If I had never repented and placed faith in the Son of God, I

would come to Jesus now because I would be afraid to leave this world in a lost condition. Will you pray: "Lord, I will turn from my sins; I am through with the world. I am coming home to You"? I would not play Russian roulette with the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

The glory of God is coming from Heaven, and Jesus Christ is returning with a shout. I beg you, in the dear name of Jesus Christ, to be saved through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ before it is everlastingly too late.

Death Is Coming for All

When I was eighteen, I settled it at an altar of prayer, praise God! If the Lord comes back right now, thank God, I have an assurance in my soul that all is well. You need to receive Jesus Christ before the end of time comes because then it will be too late. What a tragedy to play Russian roulette with the Second Coming! Someone may say, "Well, I don't think He is coming that soon." You do not know. Even if He waits, the Bible says in Hebrew 9:27, "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment."

Are you playing Russian roulette with your life? You can die at any time. You can die while you are young, middle-aged, or old. It is appointed—all men must die. Seth lived to be 912 years old, but he died. Methuselah lived to be 969 years old, but he died. You are going to die, and I am going to die. If we are not alive when Christ comes back, we are going to die. You do not know what day you are going to die.

Every man, woman, boy, and girl will face death, and every one of us will stand before God. There is coming a day when



somebody will pronounce you dead. The doctor will look at your family and friends and say: "He is gone" or "She is gone." Your family will be left for readjustment because you will be gone. Just think, it could be today. Many people need to be saved, and they do not realize how serious it is to die without God. Is it worth it? What does this world have to offer you? What is the world giving that is worth playing this game?

The Bible says your life is "as a shadow" (Ecclesiastes 6:12). It is here, then it is gone—as a flower blooms in the springtime and fades away in the fall; as the dew falls in the morning and disappears when the sun comes up; as the green grass in the spring turns brown in the winter. We are only alive for a short time. This message is for mortal people heading for death and plunging toward eternity, and there is a chance it could be today.

As I look back on my life, I was under conviction as a young person, but I waited until I was eighteen to get saved. How foolish! I could have gone out into eternity, as many other young people have. One song says, "When I look o'er the past, I behold How His wide arms of mercy held me." Thank God for His love, grace, and mercy, without which I could be in hell today.

I have seen folks die in every conceivable place. I have been beside the highway and seen several people die in car crashes. I have watched people die in

their homes and in the hospitals. Today could be the date written on my tombstone, or it could be yours. When God commissions the death angel to claim your soul, you are going, prepared or unprepared. No doctor, nurse, or machinery can keep you here when God says, "Come."

Today Is the Day of Salvation

There is a danger in playing Russian roulette with the Holy Ghost. I have heard it said through the years that God is obligated to speak to you one time, but I have never read that in the Bible. John 1:9 reads, "That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." No matter who you are or where you have been, you are without excuse for not believing in God. On Judgment Day, every person will stand before God without one excuse for not being saved. Romans 1:20 says, "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse." God made enough in Creation to leave you without an excuse for not believing in Him.

The biggest problem with playing Russian roulette with the Holy Spirit is, He may never talk to your heart again. If you knowingly sin and turn away from God, at what point are you risking your soul? Many young people are deceived into thinking, "I will get saved when I am ready." No, you have to get saved when God gives you the opportunity. Man does not get saved on his terms. The terms of salvation are found in the Word of God. Today is the day of salvation. Second

Corinthians 6:2 states, "(For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)"

I meet people from all over this country who say, "Someday, Brother Larry, I am going to get right with God." Sadly, I have watched many of them leave this world unprepared to meet God. The road to hell is paved with good intentions. The devil will not ask you to sign a contract stating you will never get saved. He knows better than that. Instead, he will tell you: "Do not get saved today. Put it off one more day." If he can get you to put off your salvation one more day, he knows there is a good possibility you will put it off tomorrow too.

The danger is, you are gambling with your soul when you say no to the Holy Ghost. You are not turning the preacher or the church down. You are saying no to the One who holds your breath in His hands. Some of you are hanging by a thread over hell, and you still are not saved. You are gambling with your soul. Playing Russian roulette is the epitome of stupidity, whether you play it with a revolver or with your soul.

God is extremely patient, but His patience is finite. Throughout the Bible, time and time again, God has expressed in so many words, "Enough is enough." You do not know when God will say to you, "Enough is enough." God is a God of mercy and grace, but also He is a God of justice. He punishes those who willfully reject Him.

Without the Holy Spirit's influence, no sinner will ever embrace the Savior. That is why you cannot get saved when you are ready. Though a sinner may listen to the preaching of the Gospel, it is in vain without the influ-

ence of the Holy Spirit. John 16:8 says, "And when he [the Holy Spirit] is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." Therefore, the striving of the Holy Spirit is indispensable in converting sinners.

God's Spirit Will Not Always Strive

The Holy Spirit strives with you to convince you of your sins. He demolishes all your excuses for sin and shows you your true condition. The Spirit strives with men, not merely to show them their guilt, but also to show them their need of a Savior and to incline them to come to Jesus



Christ while the door of mercy is still open. Jesus said to some people in His day in John 5:40, "And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." In other words, He had life for them. They could have been saved, but they would not come to Him. He said in John 6:44, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day."

You cannot come to Christ unless the Spirit is striving with you. Without the Spirit striving, you will certainly continue in

your sins until you wake up in a world of despair. Sinner friend, God's Spirit will cause you to tremble. Genesis 6:3 states, "And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years." Mark it down, God's Spirit will not always strive with you.

Does God have the right to cut you off at any moment and put a period mark at the end of your day of salvation? Absolutely! He is God. He can do as He pleases. If the Spirit ceases to strive, you cannot get saved. You can wait too long and resist too many times until you come to the end of your opportunity to be saved. You may continue to live for years, but you will have no guarantee the Spirit will ever strive with you again.

I remember a brother who lost out with the Lord. For years, God did not speak to him. God was talking to others around him who were getting saved. He would tell the saints, "Pray for me that God will deal with my heart one more time." Thank God, God dealt with his heart, he made his way to an altar of prayer, and God saved his soul. Do not play around with your soul. This is serious. You are dealing with God.

In Luke 19:42, Jesus was talking to the Jews who rejected Him. To me, this is one of the saddest Scriptures in the Bible. Jesus said with a broken heart, "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes." Jesus was talking to people who were still alive. Their hearts were still beating, and they still had their minds. In essence, He said, "Right now, because of your rejection, salvation is hidden from your eyes."

Jesus wept over Jerusalem. He said in Luke 13:34-35: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest

the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings [I would have sheltered you and saved you], and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate."

Many folks have given up because they received not a love for the truth. Do you know what it takes to be saved? You need a love for the truth. The Bible tells us in 2 Thessalonians 2:11-12, "And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

Are You Refusing the Call of God?

Hosea said in Hosea 9:12, "Woe also to them when I depart from them!" Sinner friend, if God departs from you and stops speaking to you, woe unto you! If the Holy Spirit leaves you in your sins and your rebellion, woe unto you! You can reject the Holy Spirit of grace too many times. Young people can be given over to a hard heart and a reprobate mind. Proverbs 1:23 says, "Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you." Then the Proverb writer added in verse 24, "Because I have called, and ye refused." Are you refusing the call of God?

Proverbs 1:28 states, "Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me." When will this point be reached in your life? No one knows. I hope it has not happened to you already. If God is still dealing with your heart and speaking to you, there is still hope for you to be saved. God would not convict you and deal with your heart if

He was not willing to save you.

If the Spirit of God has ceased to strive with you, you will slumber on in your unrepentant and unconcerned state until you awaken in a devil's hell, lost forever. When the angry pangs of death wrap their ugly tentacles around you, it will be too late to pray then. Now is the time to pray. Sinner friend, I beg you to quit tampering with God's spiritual calendar.

The Lord said, "My spirit shall not always strive." A hymn called "The Doomed Man" written by Joseph A. Alexander says, "*There is a time – we know not when, a point – we not know where, That marks the destiny of men to glory or despair.*" A date on your calendar marks the last day you will have a chance to get right with God. Please do not put it off. One of these days, God will draw a line, and you will cross over it if you keep saying no. The first verse and chorus of the song "Have You Counted the Cost?" written by A. J. Hodge says:

*There's a line that is drawn by
rejecting the Lord,
Where the call of His Spirit is lost,
And you hurry along with the
pleasure-mad throng,
Have you counted, have you counted
the cost?*

*Have you counted the cost, if your
soul should be lost,
Tho' you gain the whole world for
your own?
Even now it may be that the line you
have crossed,
Have you counted, have you counted
the cost?*

Some day, you will say no to God for the last time, and He will say, "Depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matthew 7:23). I beg you, do not turn your back on Jesus. I have preached funerals for individuals who most likely died lost. That is sad! How is your condition? Are you play-

ing Russian roulette with your soul? Yesterday is the past; we are experiencing the present; and we have no certainty about tomorrow. To count on tomorrow is to neglect the duty of today. Tomorrow is the worst time to make a decisive choice.

Are You Gambling With Eternity?

The Bible declares today is the best time to make a choice upon which eternity depends. Tomorrow may not come for you. The decision you make today could very well be whether you end up in Heaven or hell. "Behold, now is the accepted time." Tomorrow is the devil's greatest tool. Now is God's greatest weapon to defeat the devil.

Felix played Russian roulette with his soul. He trembled under conviction, but he said to Paul, "When I have a convenient season, I will call for thee" (Acts 24:25). He basically said, "I know I ought to get saved, but I will do it later when I have a convenient time." We do not read in the Word of God where Felix found a convenient time. Paul reasoned with Agrippa, but he played Russian roulette with his soul. When Paul finished speaking, Agrippa told him, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian" (Acts 26:28). As far as we know, Agrippa went out of this life unprepared to meet God.

We know for certain the rich man in Luke, Chapter 12, played Russian roulette with his soul,



and he lost. Verses 16-20 read: "And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?"

Someone may say, "This life is a gamble." It may be, but do not gamble with eternity. A thousand years from today, you will remember this moment. You can remember it with joy or eternal regret. It depends upon the decision you make now. If you are saved, you are on your way to

Heaven. If you are lost, then you are gambling with eternity. How many souls must die and go into eternity hopelessly lost before people get serious about their service to God?

The Bible says in 2 Corinthians 5:10, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." Are you gambling with your soul and with things of eternal importance? If you have never repented and placed faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, do not gamble away another opportunity. Do not wait for a more convenient season.

Christian, do not gamble with the thought you have plenty of time to serve God. There is a world out there, dying without God. A harvest of souls is waiting for you to enter the fields of labor. If you are a professing Christian and God spoke to you,

would you have to say, "I am not where I ought to be"? If you have spiritual needs, do not gamble with your soul. James 4:17 says, "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." When you know you are not where you ought to be and you are not doing anything about it, that is sin.

I do not want the Lord to come and find me not doing what I know I need to do, following afar off, and drifting in a lukewarm condition. This message is for the saved and the sinner. Do not gamble with your soul. Be a wise individual and get this thing settled. Tell the devil you are no longer gambling with your soul.

(Compact Disc TR-2655)

*Brother Larry Dishman is a
Church of God evangelist from
Hurley, MS.*

[Camp Meeting Report continued from pg. 2]

Dave DeVoll, Calvin Foster, and Reggie Stegmeier) brought soul-stirring sermons that challenged our hearts. Brother Reggie Stegmeier conducted a series of six lessons on "The Devil's Devices" each afternoon.

Sister Karen Wilks held services for the children in the old barn and told beautiful stories with illustrations of godly living. One morning, Sister Karen invited the children to bow at an altar of prayer. Conviction seized their little hearts, and many children sought the Lord to save their souls. What a beautiful sight to see precious little ones bowing at an altar, seeking the Lord! (See pictures on page 23.) Saturday morning, the children participated in the main service by singing and quoting the Scriptures.

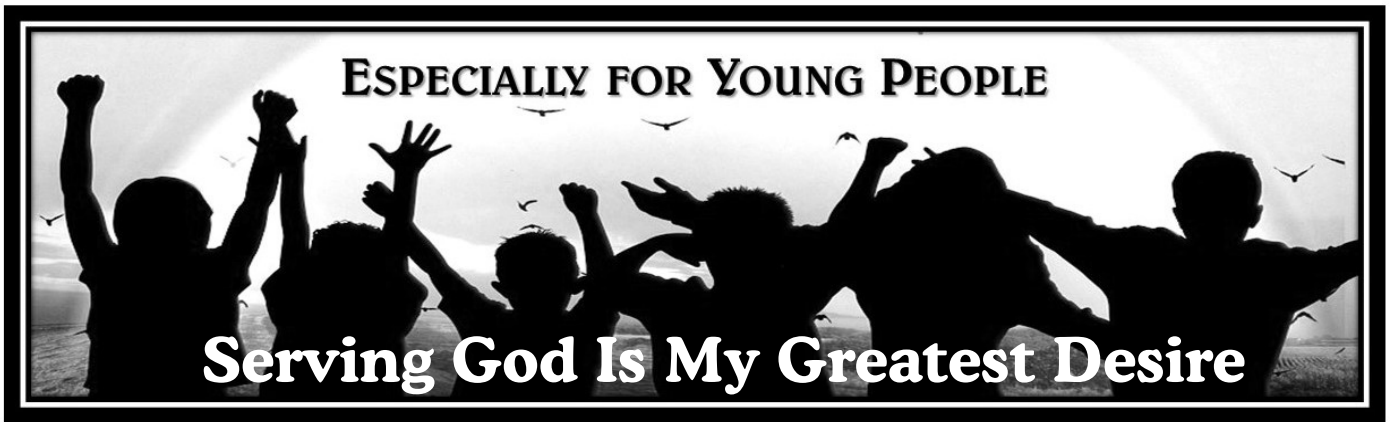
The highlight of any meeting is seeing precious souls bowing at an altar of prayer, asking God for forgiveness. We witnessed many souls kneeling before the Lord in repentance from sin. We are happy to report several souls who had been away from God were reclaimed. The purpose of preaching the Gospel is to see men and women find freedom from sin and become rooted and grounded in the truth. Much more could be said about the wonderful time spent at the June camp meeting. For more information concerning ordering the message and song recordings, see page 27. We hope to see you at the August camp meeting!



JUNE 2023 CAMP MEETING MESSAGES

Visit GodsAcres.org to listen to or watch the morning and evening camp meeting messages. The afternoon teaching services are also available in audio format.

(Click on "Audio & Video")



Psalm 1:1 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

Psalm 37:4 says, "Delight thyself also in the LORD: and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart." The word *delight* means "great pleasure." If something pleases you, such as a hobby, you pay close attention to it. I like to hunt. Many times when I get off work, I hurry and change into my hunting clothes so I can get out in the field before the sun sets. Some people like sports. Others travel the world, going to all kinds of events. We spend a lot of time and money on things that please us. God must be first in your life. Hobbies are good to have, but always be sure to put God before all those hobbies.

Matthew 4:18-19 reads: "And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." God wants us to leave some things behind to do His will. Those things you give up are things that may hurt you in the long run.

You may not see it now, but God wants to give you what is

good for you. You may have to go through some tough trials and rough situations to receive it. Romans 8:28 says, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." No matter what you are going through, somehow it will work for good.

First Peter 4:12-13 states: "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." Job 23:10 says, "But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." You can be what God wants you to be. It is going to take going through situations, giving up some things, and getting the victory to become "gold."

When God gives us a gift or blessing, we must be careful not to trust in what He has given us instead of in Him. Do not build your faith on things you receive by serving God. You easily can forget God and base your whole relationship with Him only on the benefits. If you are caught up in living a good life and focusing on what you can get, you can easily fall into temptation. I find I am not as focused on God when I pay more attention to other

things. The devil can get to me easier.

It is much harder to live a good life if your heart is not where it needs to be. Sometimes the biggest fall comes after a great victory. After God does something great is the time you need to be really careful and look out for the devil's tricks. It is very easy to put a hobby, belonging, or person in the place of God.

God might have blessed you with something you really love, but if you are not careful, you can end up thinking more about that than about God. It may crowd out your devotions and Bible reading, and you may forget to pray. Maybe you will try to read your Bible, but you will not get anything from it. That thing has consumed you. You may need to give it up because it has a hold on you. It is controlling you.

Do not underestimate the power of something that is always on your mind. It can have a great effect on you. Your life can start revolving around it, and it will end up taking first place in your heart. That makes it an idol. The Catholics pray to a statue of Mary, and we know that is wrong. However, we can be guilty of the same thing, even with something God has given us. If we turn something into an idol, then it becomes sin.

Psalm 24:1 reads, "The earth is the LORD'S, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that

dwell therein." Always remember, everything you have in life belongs to God; you are just a steward of it. You never want to put something before God because it can easily become an idol and push Him out of your life. You could end up losing out completely.

God gives us many things to brighten our walk. If we do not leave those things in His hands, we can pick them up, claim them as ours, and they can consume us. If you are involved in an activity, even if it is not bad, if it makes you less interested in praying and reading your Bible, it is best to give it up altogether.

None of these things on earth will be here when this life is over. Why would you want to build your life on the earthly things you have and not on God? Once you are dead, you lose all those things. Matthew 6:20 says, "But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal." If you do not lay up any treasures in Heaven, or if you do nothing for God, why would you even want to go there?

If you do not delight yourself in the Lord, you could end up drifting away from Him, and that is very dangerous. Romans 1:28 reads, "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient." That is scary. God can allow you to be deceived if you keep rejecting Him. You could end up in a real mess if you are deceived, and no one can help you except God.

Sin only causes heartache and grief. The pleasure in sin does not last long at all. It is very quick, and you end up in all kinds of trouble. Those who

leave a Church of God congregation often end up in a real mess. Some go deep into sin. Years ago, they might have thought they would never be out doing the stuff they are doing. One step at a time, the devil will trick you with a little of this and a little of that. He will say: "You can still serve God and do this. It does not matter to Him. You will be all right." You are just digging yourself a hole.

How can serving God be your greatest desire? Think about your favorite hobby or something you like to do. How did you come to enjoy doing it?

It is much harder to live a good life if your HEART is not where it needs to be.



Maybe one of your friends likes to do it, and you did it with them. The more you do it, the more you enjoy it because it works in a circle. You like it more and more until you end up spending a lot of time and money on that hobby. It is the same with serving God. The more you read and pray, the more you will want to read and pray. The more you talk to people about God, it stirs something up inside, and you will want to go even further with the Lord.

It may be easy to keep up with hobbies, but the devil does not want you to serve God. He hates to see you please God, so it can be a real battle to stay with God. You must keep working at it. It is something you must do

daily; you cannot neglect it at all. The devil knows you very well, and he knows your weak spots. He wants to trick you when you are not paying attention. As soon as you let your guard down, he is right there to get you if he can.

We all face trials in life. Sometimes, we can lose what is close to us, and God is all we have. If you do not have a close relationship with God, when those hard times come, you could end up in a completely hopeless condition. Every day in the United States, approximately 132 people commit suicide. It is terrible so many people feel hopeless.

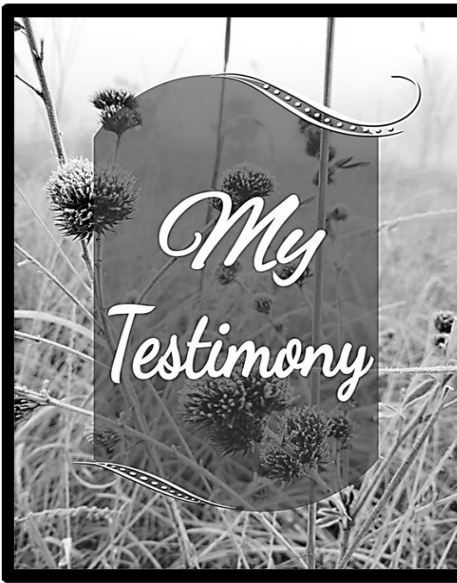
They do not have God, and the devil keeps piling stuff on them. They go deeper into sin until they cannot stand it anymore, and they want to end it all.

I am thankful I was raised in the Church of God. I am thankful my mom met my dad and got saved. If she would not have gotten saved and hung in there as she did, I do not know where we would be. I would not have the hope I have. I may not know anything about God. I am thankful to be a part of a good Church of God youth group. I am thankful for my Christian friends. Sometimes, someone will say something encouraging, and it will be what I needed at the right time. It makes my day.

God is always there to help us through everything we go through. If you do not know God, you are missing out. If you look at the contrast between living for God and being out in sin, it is crazy how much better it is to serve God. It is the best thing in the world. I am thankful for that.

Brother Bryan Bush

Brother Bryan Bush is a member of the Church of God youth group in Newark, OH.



God Did Not Give Up On Me

Sister Jennifer Spurlock

I grew up in the Church of God, and I was home-schooled. I had a really good life until I was fifteen years old, and then my mom passed away. After that, I got close to God, but it did not last long. When I was about seventeen years old, I started hanging out with other young people who were not saved, and I gave my dad problems. I started acting out and doing things that were not completely sinful, but they went against my dad's personal convictions, which made it sin for me.

I moved in with my sister after her husband passed away. Sometimes, I would stay out all night long without telling her where I was. I did what I wanted to do and hung out with my friends. One girl, who I thought was my friend, was a very bad influence on me. I got involved in things such as drinking alcohol and doing some drugs. I thought she was cool, and I wanted to be cool like her. It seemed everyone else was doing these things, and I wanted to be like other people.

This girl stole from me. I let her borrow my car, and she took it. She used my bank card and stole money from my bank account. I overlooked these things because I wanted to be cool. I did not want to lose my group of

friends. I would shoplift because she did it, and I wanted to be just like her.

One Sunday, Sister Almeda Cummings invited me into her home for lunch. After we finished eating, she talked to me for the rest of the afternoon about my soul. I am very thankful for that, even though I did not get saved. She cared about me, but I did not want to give up the world, my worldly friends, or my worldly habits. I rejected God at that time.

At eighteen years of age, I started dating a guy. We were married when I was nineteen, and at the age of twenty, we were divorced. This is a perfect example of how the devil keeps you from being satisfied. After the divorce, I moved in with my boyfriend, whom I eventually married, and everything seemed to go well.

One night, I got very sick and felt like I was dying. I thought something was wrong with me, but I did not know what it was. I cried out to God and asked Him to help me. I prayed, "If You will help me get through this night, I will get saved and go back to church." Well, I made it through the night, but I did not get saved. I never had another thought about it. God left me alone for a

while after that.

Sometime later, God started dealing with me again. This was the weirdest thing I ever went through. I remember lying in bed and my body would not stop shaking. I was trembling like I was cold, but I was not cold. I could not stop shaking. God was dealing with me. I started thinking about death. I thought I was dying and something was terribly wrong with me. I would try to stiffen my arms and legs to stop the shaking, but that did not help. I even tried wrapping a blanket around me to stop the shaking, but nothing helped. I would eventually fall asleep. This did not happen every night, but it happened several times.

One night, I got down on my knees and asked God to help me. I did not get saved at that time, but I started coming to church on Sunday mornings. I felt condemned about the way I was dressing, so I started wearing skirts. I stopped cursing, drinking, smoking, and doing other things I was involved in, but I still was not saved. God was not satisfied with that, so He continued to work on me. I am thankful He did not give up on me!

One day in June 2012, I came to church. It was the last service of the June camp meeting. Brother Larry Dishman was preaching, and the title of his message was, "What the Grace of God Is Not." I remember nothing about the message except God got through to me that night. I went to the altar, and Brother Dishman prayed with me.

I did not lay it all on the altar. There was still something missing. I tried to hold on to some things. The job I had required me to wear pants, so I still wore pants to work but wore skirts and dresses everywhere else. My boyfriend and I got married, and he left for basic training. God was working on me about all these different things. I quit the

job I was working at and got a new job. About six or seven months later, I went to the altar again. This time, I gave up all the worldliness for God.

Since I gave my all to God, my life has been wonderful. I have had trials and many hard places, but I would do it all over again. I have had to relearn many things I learned as a child in church. The devil will crowd out the things you learned in church with the things of the world. That

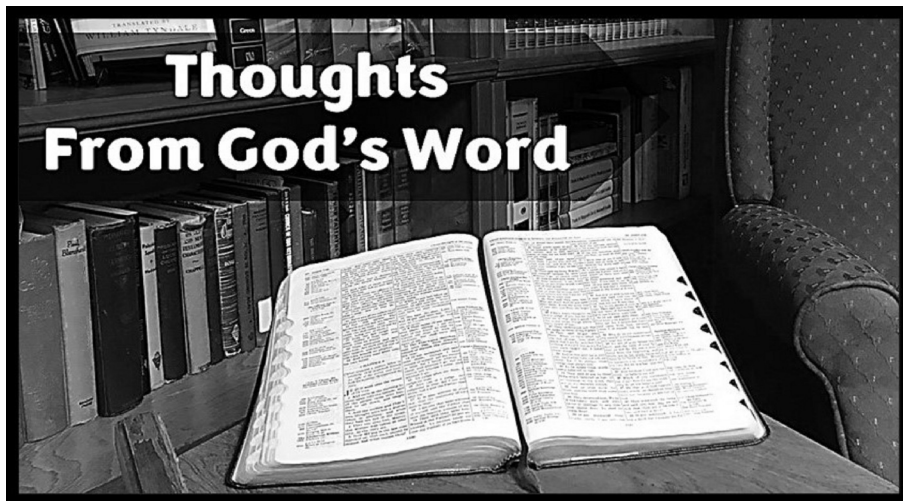
happened to me. I am thankful God did not stop looking for me, and I am thankful for the saints of God who did not stop praying for me.

I am thankful for my parents who saw the importance of being in church and taught me the things of God, especially the truth! Proverbs 22:6 states, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." My parents

trained me in the things of God, brought me to church, and showed me what is important. Being in church is important. I hope this is an encouragement to someone. I have a desire to help, even if it is just one person.

Sister Jennifer Spurlock

Sister Jennifer Spurlock attends the Church of God in Newark, OH.



In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good.

Ecclesiastes 11:6

Thomas was a lonely old man, and when he died, it seemed as if no one would attend his funeral. Author Herbert Gee tells how he decided to go, so that at least one person would accompany the old man on his final journey. Gee was right—no one else came. But at the cemetery, there was a soldier who saluted Thomas' grave.

The soldier told the author that Thomas had been his Sunday school teacher when he was a "wild lad." He explained he had

been a "sore trial" to Thomas. He said, "Thomas never knew what he did for me, but I owe everything I am or ever will be to old Thomas." That soldier was a brigadier officer.

All our life we are to be sowing the good seed (the Word).

We are to sow it "in the morning" (in our younger years) and keep sowing it "in the evening" (in our later years). It might seem like the seed is not taking root (that people are not being affected), but we, like Thomas, cannot truly know the good it is doing!

Isaiah 32:20 tells us to "sow beside all waters." How many "wild lads" do we pass over, thinking they are not interested, that they will never accept Christ? How many people are a "sore trial" to us, so we tend to avoid them? How many soldiers in the making are in need of our sharing the seed through acts of love and kindness?

Selected



The Comfort

of the Lord

Brother James Presley

2 Corinthians 4:7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

8 We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair;

9 Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;

10 Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.

11 For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.

Paul spoke to the Corinthians and let them know there would be trouble in this life. Trials may seem unbearable at times. You may feel you cannot make it; you cannot press any further ahead because of sadness, loneliness, or hopelessness. We have been

through hard places, but God has brought us through. No matter what difficult circumstance may come your way, you do not need to be distressed. It does not have to bother you because God is a great God you can lean on and trust. You do not need to worry about what will happen.

Paul said we would be persecuted. He wrote in 2 Timothy 3:12, "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." That is a guarantee, but he also said in our Scripture text in 2 Corinthians 4:9, we would not be forsaken. If you are saved, God is on your side. When you are persecuted and pressed down by the devil for how you dress, live, and act, you do not need to worry. God is there, and He will not forsake you.

Peter said in 1 Peter 4:14, "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye." When persecution comes your way, you can smile because God is on your

side. The devil will attempt to cast you down, discourage you, and cause you to be depressed. Many of us have been discouraged by the circumstances of life, but we do not have to be destroyed. God will always be there to lift us up.

God Is Love

The Spirit of God does not want to make you feel discouraged or depressed. If discouragement or depression is working on you, it is the spirit of the devil. God wants to lift you. One song says, "Love lifted me." The Bible tells us in 1 John 4:8, "God is love." The love of Jesus Christ encourages us to press the battle on. Psalm 30:1 reads, "I will extol thee, O LORD; for thou hast lifted me up, and hast not made my foes to rejoice over me." John 16:33 says: "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be

of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

Jesus went through persecutions and sufferings we could never endure, and He said, "I have overcome the world." He hung on the Cross, and God turned His back on Him because of our sins. Some people cannot overcome others talking about them or endure a little persecution from family members. People are going to talk about you, run you down, and say things about you; and the fact is, it will get worse as time goes on.

When times are hard and situations are difficult, remember, there is no comfort like the comfort of the Lord. God can comfort, strengthen, and uplift you, regardless of the circumstances. He is the Comforter of a troubled soul. Psalm 40:2 says, "He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings." You can trust in the Word of God.

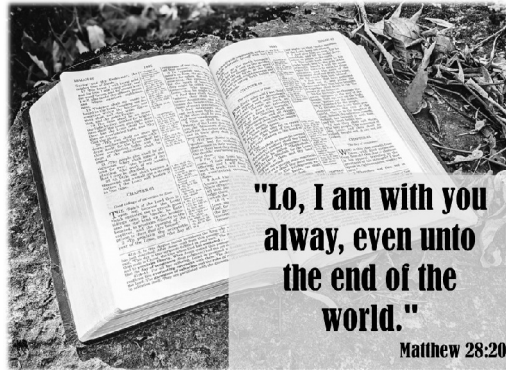
Second Corinthians 1:3 states, "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort." I like that word "all." It takes in everything. Verse 4 says, "Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, [No matter what we go through, God will comfort us if we trust Him. He will be there to lift us and encourage our hearts to press the battle on.] that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God."

You may have a beautiful family, but your wife, husband, children, or parents cannot comfort you like the Lord. Life may hand you hard places for which you have no answers. There may be financial struggles or persecution. Perhaps someone is saying negative things about your family or the church. You may feel

depressed or upset because your family is not showing any interest in coming to God and getting saved. If you do not know what to do, pray and read the Bible. God will come along and lift you. You can put confidence in the fact God can do anything.

God's Word Is Encouraging

Romans 15:4 says, "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope." There is comfort in God's Word. When you are depressed, the one thing you may not feel like doing is reading



the Word of God. The devil does not want you to open God's Word. He wants you to sit, mope, and fill your mind with all your troubles. He knows you will receive encouragement from reading the Word of God.

God is so good to send us His Word. Hebrews 13:5 reads, "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." The devil may be depressing you with the problems of life, but if there is no sin in your life, when you open the Word of God, you can read how God will never leave you or forsake you. Jesus said in Matthew 28:20, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." It is encouraging to know God is with you as long as you

stay true to Him.

A famous poem called "Footprints in the Sand" reads:

One night, I dreamed I was walking along the beach with the Lord. Many scenes from my life flashed across the sky. In each scene, I noticed footprints in the sand. Sometimes there were two sets of footprints; other times there was one set of footprints.

This bothered me because I noticed that during the low periods of my life, when I was suffering from anguish, sorrow, or defeat, I could see only one set of footprints.

So I said to the Lord: "You promised me, Lord, that if I followed You, You would walk with me always. But I have noticed that during the most trying periods of my life, there have only been one set of footprints in the sand. Why, when I needed You most, have You not been there for me?"

The Lord replied, "The times when you have seen only one set of footprints, is when I carried you."

For years, this poem was addressed as "Author Unknown." A woman by the name of Mary Stevenson wrote this poem. She went through all the legal formalities to have the poem copyrighted in her name. She was born in 1922. At age six, her mother died, and her father had to raise eight children during the Great Depression.

At sixteen, she married an abusive husband and ended up running from him to another state. It was in her early teenage years she wrote "Footprints in the Sand." She went through many hardships, but God was there.

Are You Taking the Way of Escape?

Revelation 20:9 states, "And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them." Sin is encompassing the camp of the saints. You can see it on the billboards driving down the street. Many people's homes are wrecked. You can hear arguing, screaming, and yelling in the stores. Relationships are not working out, and the devil is doing his best to discourage the saints of God.

Things are going in the wrong direction in our country. That can be discouraging, but always remember God still has His hand on every aspect of our lives. Colossians 1:17 says, "By him all things consist." The people in elected positions are there because God allowed it to happen for a reason. We may not understand all the reasons, but God knows exactly what He is doing.

When temptation comes, and it comes to everyone, God's Word reminds us in 1 Corinthians 10:13, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." If you want an escape from temptation, God will make a way for you to escape. The key is, do you truly want to escape?

Some people cry and whimper because when they were tempted, they failed the Lord. Are you taking the way of escape? Are you praying when the temptation comes? God will help you through it. Temptation does not have to get the victory over you. God is so much more powerful than anything the devil can

throw at you.

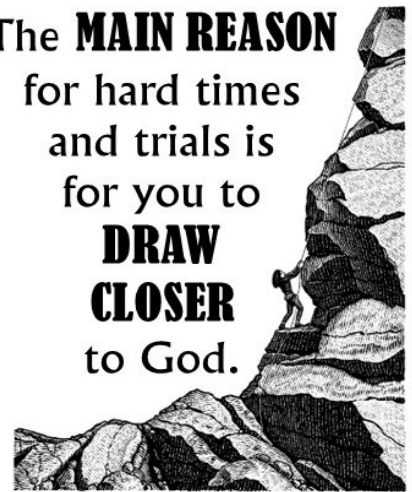
There may be times when nothing seems to be working right in your life. Romans 8:28 says, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." The Scripture does *not* say all things would be good, but all things will work together *for* good. Every time you go through a hard place, there is a reason. The main reason is for you to draw closer to God. God wants us to get on our knees and cry out to Him. When you have a need, draw closer to God, and God will draw closer to you.

Many Scriptures tell of the comfort and encouragement God gives. The Bible is the unadulterated Word of God. His Word came straight from Heaven. We can gain comfort from the Word when the hard times come. We need to read, study, and listen to the Word of God. Your pastor will admonish you to be in the services so you can hear the Word of God preached. What happens if you do not read the Word of God? You will become spiritually weak. When temptations come, you will have no strength to overcome them. If you fail the Lord, many times, it is because you have not been reading His Word.

The Holy Spirit Gives Peace

When you go through hard places, the devil tells you God does not care. He will say, "If God cared about you, this would not have happened." When my dad passed away, I remember walking in the woods and this thought was on my mind, "If God cared, my dad would have lived." God cares! He is faithful to every soul. Matthew 5:45 tells us it will "rain on the just and on the unjust." Unpleasant situations are coming our way. God allows them so we will seek His face

The **MAIN REASON**
for hard times
and trials is
for you to
DRAW
CLOSER
to God.



even more.

God loves His children and does not enjoy seeing them suffer. What kind of parent wants to see his children suffer? I heard of a man who stood at the bottom of his stairs and told his little child to jump and he would catch him. His child jumped, but he moved out of the way and let him hit the floor. Then he said, "That will teach you not to trust anybody." If you fall, God is reaching out to catch you. When you are depressed and discouraged, He wants to encourage you. Most parents would do anything to stop the suffering of their children. They hold their children in their arms when they cry, even if they skin their knees. They comfort them in any way they can to make them feel better.

When you love someone, your natural response when they are hurting is to comfort them. Even in the animal kingdom, a mother lion will help her baby lion when he gets hurt. When my dad died, my wife prayed for me and did everything she could to comfort me because she loves me and does not want to see me hurt. Our Lord loves us more than any human can. He loves you more than your wife, husband, parents, and children love you. He loves you more than you love yourself. He wants you to go to Heaven more than you do. God wants to comfort you in

times of trouble, as a parent would comfort his child.

We read in Acts 9:31, "Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied." One reason some people are so miserable is because they do not have the Holy Ghost living in their hearts. Many are searching for a blessing, trying to obtain satisfaction that can only be found in the Holy Spirit. Christians are blessed to have the Holy Spirit. If you are saved, the Spirit of God dwells within you, and you are a blessed individual.

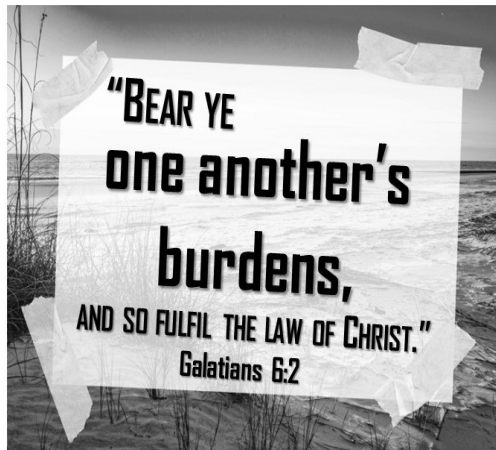
In Philippians 4:7, Paul wrote about "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding." You can have peace from the Holy Spirit living within. Every circumstance around you may be bad. You may pray and see no answer; yet as you pray, you feel peace. The problems are still there, but you know God loves you and will work them out. It is hard to explain the peace that passes all understanding. When you get saved, the Spirit of God comes in, and your heart is changed. He gives you peace and joy and fills the emptiness inside.

Bearing One Another's Burdens

God has been so good to send us His Word, His Son Jesus as our example, and the Holy Ghost to dwell in our hearts to comfort us. Again, 2 Corinthians 1:4 states, "Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God." God wants us to comfort our brothers and sisters. Paul said we would be able to comfort those who are in *any* trouble. It may be financial, emotional, or spiritual. No matter

what the trouble is, we can help others through our prayers. We can encourage them to press the battle on.

If you are going through a hard place, let the saints of God know so they can pray for you. Galatians 6:2 says, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." God uses His people to comfort the saints. The body of Christ is a witness to the world and a help to each other. First Corinthians 12:26 reads,



"And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it." If someone is having trouble, we should pray for them and help them. We need to bear one another's burdens. Can God use you to help someone through a hard place?

Husband, do you comfort your wife when she needs comforted? You may have been away from home at work all day. When you come home, your wife may be at her wit's end. She has spent her day taking care of the kids and the house. Do you say: "Honey, I will take care of the kids. Go and relax"? You can help her feel more refreshed. Maybe you need to pray with your wife. Ask God to help, strengthen, and comfort her. Then, instead of going to the couch, get up and help her. There is nothing wrong with a man helping around the house. I be-

lieve it will draw a husband and wife closer together.

Wife, do you comfort your husband in all his trials? Maybe he had a hard day at work, things did not go right, or maybe he is on the verge of losing his job. I have been without work, and it can be discouraging. Do you nag your husband? Or do you pray for him? The wife should encourage and help her husband to keep going for the Lord.

Parents, your children face hard times in the schools, and they may come home with problems. The teachers or the other students may have been mean to them. They may have been made fun of or persecuted for how they dress. How should you handle this? Should you tell them to learn to live with it? No, you should pray with them and encourage them. Parents are to help their children.

When you see someone struggling spiritually, instead of getting frustrated, pray for them. They have a need. We ought to carry a heavy burden for the saints of God. You may be close to your physical family, but the family of God is closer. Our own personal families may keep us from drawing closer to God, and in those instances, they should not be closer to you than the saints of God.

We Need Each Other

God wants us to comfort each other. Sometimes it may be difficult to know how to comfort someone if you have never been through what they are going through. Before my parents died, there was no way I could truly know how someone felt who lost a parent. Now when someone's parent passes away, I can do my best to comfort them because I have felt the pain and sorrow they are feeling. I know what it is like.



God allows us to go through things so we are better equipped to help others. If you go through a difficult trial in your life, not only does it help you draw closer to God, but one day down the road, you can help someone else with the same problem. I found this true in my own life. I have been through financial stress, the death of a loved one, heartaches, and burdens, and I have talked with others who are going through the same things I did. I tell them how God brought me through with victory.

Sometimes, we go through sicknesses so we can help others. When God heals us or takes us through, we can give God the glory. Third John 1:2 reads, "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth." If you are going through some hard places, let me encourage you. God cares for you more than anyone else could care. He wants to comfort and help you. I enjoy seeing my children laugh, play, get along, and have a good time. God wants His children to be happy, get along, and enjoy each other. He wants to see a smile on your face.

First Thessalonians 5:11 says, "Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do." If we comfort

one another and show concern for each other, there will be fewer divisions, bad attitudes, and bitterness in the congregations, and there will be more spirituality. Times are getting harder, and we need each other more.

Angela G. Gellenbeck wrote a song called "We Need Each Other, Brethren!" It does not matter what we are going through or if we disagree on something, we still need each other. If you are a saint of God, you need another saint of God to help you through the hard times. Do not try to make it through on your own. We need God, but also, we need our brothers and sisters to pray for us and help bear our burdens. God is a God of all comfort, and He has many ways of comforting you—the Holy Spirit, the Word of God, and the saints of God.

Putting Your Trust in God

First Thessalonians 4:9-18 reads: "But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another. And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia: but we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more; And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you; That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing.

"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

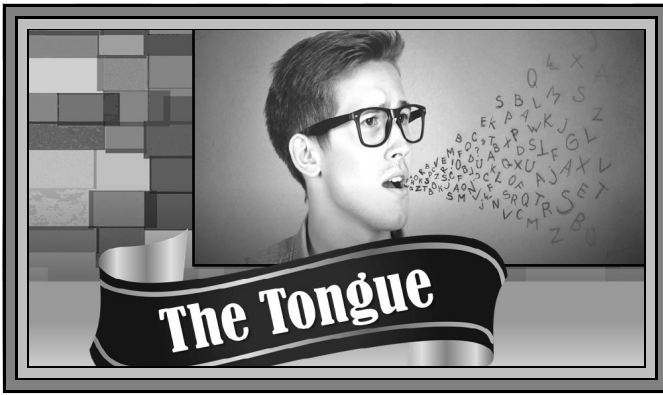
"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

Paul was comforting the Thessalonians by telling them Christ is coming back. Do not worry about the ones who are asleep in the Lord. When Christ comes back, we will meet Him in the air. Keep pressing until the end. God is the God of all comfort. He is waiting to help you in your trials and strengthen you for the battles that lie ahead. One definition of the Greek word for *comfort* is "relief." God will relieve you from all your burdens, whether they are financial, physical, emotional, or spiritual. When you get relieved, you will not be the same.

God is more than able to help you if you have a need. All you have to do is bring your problems to God, ask Him for help, and He will help you. Too many people want to hang on to the problem. When you ask God to help you with something, let go of it. You will not have peace by hanging on to your problem and trying to figure it out by yourself. Proverbs 3:5-6 states: "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." Take your hands off the problems, and let God handle them. Put your trust in God, and He will send you comfort.

(Compact Disc TR-1099A)

**Brother James Presley attends the
Church of God in Newark, OH.**



Between our upper and lower teeth,
Is a friend I'd like you to meet.
He can be wise and be true;
It all depends on how he's used.

Though he often goes unseen,
Death and life are his régime,
And though he is rather small,
What he produces is very strong!

Sometimes he's used to tell a truth,
And sometimes to tell a lie,
At other times to destroy,
Or to beautifully edify.

Sometimes he's used to gossip
And to tell what others do,
To be the first to share the news,
Even if it is not true.

He loves to brag and to boast,
To tell a great big story,
And can easily create a stir,
As he seeks for his own glory.

He can be kind, caring, and forgiving,
And bring joy to someone's day,
Or be rude and offensive,
Simply by what he's allowed to say.

He must be kept in constant check,
And carefully controlled,
Watched over with cautious care,
Lest the whole body be destroyed.

"Who is this little member," you ask,
"And friend I write about?"
Just open your mouth but for a moment,
And watch this friend stick out.

Brother Reginald James Stegmeier

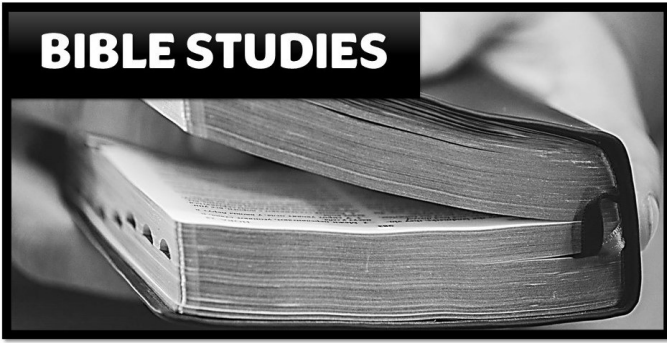
This poem is from the Temperance Lessons taught in the June 2022 camp meeting teaching services.

The audio of these lessons can be downloaded at: <https://www.Gods-Acres.com/audio2022-special-meeting-messages.html>

June 2023 Camp Meeting Barn Services



BIBLE STUDIES



A BRIEF EXPOSITION OF THE SABBATH DAY

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT: Exodus 20:1-17 introduces "the ten commandments" (Exodus 34:28), which were given to Moses on Mount Sinai in 1491 B.C. Scholars call this "the Decalogue" because that is the essence of how it is reflected in the Greek translation of Exodus 34:28. In the Greek, *deka* means "ten" and *logos* means "word." The "ten commandments" literally mean "ten words."

The "commandments" were recorded a second time (Deuteronomy 5:7-21) when Moses provided a second generation with what the Lord had given to him and old Israel on Mount Sinai. Deuteronomy comes from two Greek words (*deuteros*, which means "second," and *nomos*, which means "law"); hence, it was the second giving of the Law. This was necessary as the people who were at Mount Sinai in 1491 B.C. (who were "twenty years old and upward"; Numbers 14:29) had died, and their "carcasses fell in the wilderness" (Hebrews 3:17).

In re-establishing these commandments in Deuteronomy, Moses told the younger Israelites, "The LORD made not this covenant with our fathers [the patriarchs], but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day" (Deuteronomy 5:3). These words, divinely inspired (2 Timothy 3:16), reveal the tenets of this Law were not for ALL people or ALL ages. Moses clearly emphasized it was "with us, even us," or as Deuteronomy 5:1 denotes, "Hear, O Israel." Romans 2:14 speaks of "the Gentiles, which have not the law." At the time it was given, it clearly was for one people. Also, the employment of the expression "this covenant" describes to what these "commandments" belong.

A SHADOW OF THINGS TO COME

Hebrews 8:7-8 states: "For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant." Verse 13 reads, "He hath made the first old," and the "old is ready to vanish away." Certainly, we are not decrying, or diminishing, the value of the Old Testa-

ment in our Bibles, for we are told that it is both "for our learning" (Romans 15:4) and "for ensamples" (1 Corinthians 10:11), or types. The Old Testament is a valuable part of our Bible, but Colossians 2:14 says there were aspects of the old covenant that were "contrary to us, and [He] took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross."

The Apostle Paul enumerated some of those things when he penned, "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of THE SABBATH DAYS" (Colossians 2:16). He explained why these particular items were mentioned in the following verse: "Which are a shadow of things to come." The *Amplified Bible* renders it as, "Such [things] are only the shadow of things that are to come, and they have only a symbolic value." Many Old Testament observances were incorporated in that old covenant for a representation (or a symbolism) of New Testament realities that were "to come." One observance that was "a shadow of things to come" was the "sabbaths." Galatians 3:24 tells us, "The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ." Then verse 25 declares, since Christ has come, "We are no longer under a schoolmaster."

THE OBSERVANCE OF DAYS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

The New Testament does not advocate the observance of days, but rather the contrary. The Apostle Paul wrote in Galatians 4:9 concerning those who had turned "again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage." Notice, verse 10 mentions, "Ye observe days." Nowhere in the New Testament are we admonished to observe "sabbaths." Also, *Strong's With Vine's* tells us, "For the first three centuries of the Christian era, the first day of the week was never confounded with the 'sabbath'; the confusion of the Jewish and Christian institutions was due to declension [turning aside] from Apostolic teaching."

In this New Testament dispensation, "commandments" based on the moral law (which preceded Mosaic Law and are applicable in every age) were expanded upon. "Thou shalt not kill" (Exodus 20:13), or in reality, "Thou shalt do no murder" (Matthew 19:18), has been expanded beyond a literal observance. In 1 John 3:15, John wrote, "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer." Certainly, if one keeps his heart right and hate is not in the heart, the action will never take place. Jesus gave an expansion concerning the commandment, "Thou shalt not commit adultery" (Exodus 20:14). He warned in Matthew 5:28, "Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already IN HIS HEART." This extends beyond refraining from a literal action to cautioning against a spiritual condition of the "heart." If one refrains from this condition taking place "in his heart," the literal action will never take place.

These types of enlargements in the New Testament apply to the "commandments" that were based on the moral law. "The sabbath" foreshadows a spiritual reality.

In Luke 6:5, Jesus proclaimed, "The Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath." *The New Strong's Expanded Dictionary of Bible Words With Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary* defines the Greek word for "sabbath" (*sabbaton*), saying, "The root means 'to cease, desist' . . . the idea is not that of relaxation or refreshment, but cessation from activity."

A REST TO THE PEOPLE OF GOD

The literal days observed under the Old Testament were a reminder. They pointed to the spiritual experience the Messiah would bring to mankind. Hebrews 4:9 speaks of it, stating, "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God." *The Emphatic Greek Diaglott* describes it as "a sabbath rest." The Greek word for "rest" in this verse is a derivative of *sabbaton*. What Christ came to bring to mankind was an ability "to cease, desist" and thus have a "rest."

This "rest" has two different aspects: (1) the rest we "do enter" when we "have believed" (Hebrews 4:3) is a

ceasing and desisting from the labors of sin, and (2) another aspect enables us to be one who "hath ceased from his own works" (Hebrews 4:10). Much more could be said concerning these two rests, especially the one spoken of in Hebrews 4:9 that *The Emphatic Greek Diaglott* renders as "a sabbath rest." Suffice to say, these are an expansion of the Old Testament practice, which was a "shadow" (or symbol) of this glorious New Testament experience of salvation and the ability "to cease" and "desist" from both sin and self.

Understanding these truths is necessary because some erroneously think literally keeping "the ten commandments" externally will be sufficient, but that is not so. We must have a true New Testament experience that brings the spiritual reality of these "commandments" into our lives and produces a victory over sin, and its cause, self.

Brother Earl R. Borders

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

Moral, Ceremonial, and Civil Laws

The Pentateuch (the first five books of the Old Testament) contains different kinds of laws. It is important to understand why they were given at that time. The Mosaic Law (Law of Moses) can be divided into three parts:

MORAL LAWS: these laws reveal God's character. They are a reflection of who He is. Moral laws are unchanging, just as God is unchanging (Malachi 3:6). When Adam and Eve disobeyed, when Cain killed Abel, when Jacob lied to his father—all these are examples of God's moral laws being broken. The moral laws are incorporated within the Mosaic Law (many of the Ten Commandments), but they were in effect long before Moses wrote them down. We can find God's moral laws restated in the New Testament. These laws are for everyone (not just the Jews).

CEREMONIAL LAWS: these laws were given to prepare people to worship a holy God. God gave these laws so His people would be separate, pure, and clean (ceremonially). These laws include commandments about sacrifices, being clean and separate, and the institution of remembrance feasts and festivals. When Jesus died on the Cross, He became the ultimate Sacrifice. It is through Him that we are clean and pure (not through ceremonial cleansing). These laws were temporary; under the New Covenant, they were fulfilled in Jesus (Matthew 5:17-18).

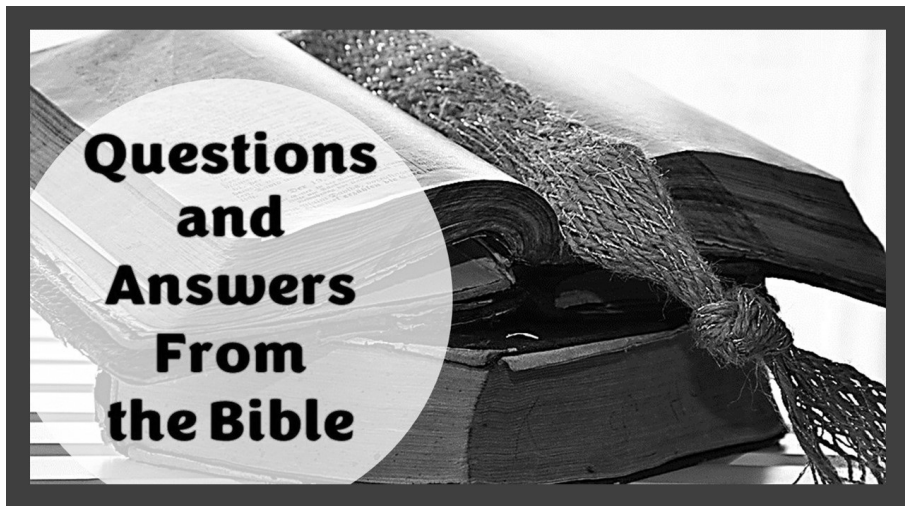
CIVIL LAWS: these laws were given to govern the nation of Israel. They included punishments for people who broke these laws. Today, God's people live in many different nations, under different forms of government, and are not bound by the civil laws given for Israel.

Why Was the Law Given?

In Greek society, families often had a slave who was in charge of supervising the master's children. His duties were to make sure the children went to school and did their homework. This slave would also make sure the children knew manners and social customs. The children could be disciplined by this slave when necessary. Yet, the slave was not the teacher. Paul was possibly thinking of this when he wrote, "The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ" (Galatians 3:24). Christ is the Teacher; the Law could only bring us to Him. We needed the Law to make us aware of our need of a Savior (Romans 3:20). The Law was merely a shadow (a rough outline) of what was to come (Hebrews 10:1). Under the New Covenant, we do not need God to write His laws on tables of stone (as the Ten Commandments were) nor are we commanded to write them on the doorposts of our houses. The Holy Spirit will write God's laws in our hearts and in our minds (Hebrews 10:16). The Old Covenant only brought guilt and punishment, but under the New Covenant, we can find love and forgiveness.

Youth Sunday School Lesson #02: The Bible—The Law

This lesson can be downloaded at GodsAcres.org (click on "Youth" and "Sunday School Lessons").



WHY ARE GOD AND LORD SOMETIMES CAPITALIZED IN THE BIBLE?

How these names are presented in the Bible is based on the word used in the original language. The Bible was not originally written in English. The Old Testament was primarily written in Hebrew and the New Testament in Greek.

In the Old Testament, three Hebrew words are predominantly translated into English as "God." When in the lowercase ("God"), it is the Hebrew word *Elohiym* (2,346 times) or the Hebrew word *El* (213 times). When in all capital letters ("GOD"), it is the Hebrew word *Yehovih* (305 times), which is a variation of the Hebrew word *Yehovah* (more commonly known as *Jehovah*).

Jehovah is rendered as "LORD" (all letters capitalized) 6,510 times.

In the Old Testament, this is God's holy, personal name. In the original Hebrew language, it is "YHWH" or "JHVH." (The written Hebrew language only had consonants.)

Traditionally, it was considered taking *Jehovah's* name in vain (Exodus 20:7) to say or spell out God's proper, holy name, with the exception of the high priests on the Day of Atonement. (Yet today, orthodox Jews omit the vowels, writing the name as "G-d" or "L-rd.") God's divine name is spoken of as the *Tetragrammaton*, a Greek word meaning "the Name of four letters" (YHWH or JHVH). Where "Lord" appears (lowercase), the Hebrew word is generally *Adonai* (431 times). Wishing to respect God's name, the Jews

would say "*Adonai*" whenever they encountered the *Tetragrammaton* in the Old Testament Scriptures.

In the New Testament, the Greek word *Theos* is predominantly rendered as "God" (1,320 times), and the Greek word *Kurios* is predominantly used as "Lord" (667 times). The words "GOD" and "LORD" are capitalized in the *King James New Testament* when mainly using the Hebrew words *Yehovih*, or *Jehovah*.

Five New Testament verses have "LORD" (all letters capitalized) because they are quoting the original language of Psalm 110:1. (See Matthew 22:44; Mark 12:36; Luke 20:42; and Acts 2:34). The word "LORD" is also capitalized in Revelation 19:16; however, it is not capitalized in *The Emphatic Greek Diaglott*. The famous scholar Albert Barnes wrote, "There is nothing in the original to denote that this should be distinguished, as it is, by capital letters."

Many truths are contained within these Hebrew and Greek names, and they are worthy of studied consideration. They reveal different divine attributes and qualities, giving greater insight into both God's person and position.

Brother Earl R. Borders

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


Revival Announcement

MEDINA, OH
Sept. 25-
Oct. 1

REVIVAL: The Church of God, 6745 Wooster Pike, Medina, OH 44256
Evangelist: Brother Calvin Foster, Kensett, AR
Service Times: Mon.-Fri. 7 p.m.; Sat. and Sun. 10:30 a.m.
There will be a meal following the Saturday morning service.
For more information, contact: Pastor Mike Miller @ 234-249-9309
Website: www.MedinaChurchofGod.com

NOTE: There will NOT be a Medina Labor Day Fellowship Meeting

Spring 2023 Camp Meeting Recordings

Message #	Date	Message Title	Minister
TR-3016 TR-3017	06-18-23	We Have a Refuge in Christ and the Church Things Every New Convert Needs to Understand	Bro. Larry Dishman Bro. Larry Dishman
TR-3018 TR-3019 TR-3020	06-19-23	Guard Thy Heart The Devil's Devices: Doubt Get on Track and Stay on Track	Bro. Earl Borders Bro. Reggie Stegmeier Bro. Larry Dishman
TR-3021 TR-3022 TR-3023	06-20-23	The Two Gatherings The Devil's Devices: Discouragement Examine Yourselves	Bro. Earl Borders Bro. Reggie Stegmeier Bro. Larry Dishman
TR-3024 TR-3025 TR-3026	06-21-23	Victory Over Deception The Devil's Devices: Discontentment The Errors of Easy Believism	Bro. Aurelius Raines Bro. Reggie Stegmeier Bro. Larry Dishman
TR-3027 TR-3028	06-22-23	Predestination The Devil's Devices: Diversion	Bro. Roger Nethers Bro. Reggie Stegmeier
TR-3029 TR-3030 TR-3031	06-23-23	Jesus Is Lord The Devil's Devices: Defeat Talk to Us About Life, the Bible, and the Gospel	Bro. Dave DeVoll Bro. Reggie Stegmeier Bro. Calvin Foster
TR-3032 TR-3033 TR-3034	06-24-23	Considering Our Future The Devil's Devices: Delay Seek Him While He May Be Found	Bro. Mike Miller Bro. Reggie Stegmeier Bro. Larry Dishman
TR-3035 TR-3036	06-25-23	The Law of Sowing and Reaping Some Things We Need to Forget	Bro. Reggie Stegmeier Bro. Larry Dishman
TM-473 TM-474 TM-475 TM-476 TM-477 TM-478	2023	Spring Camp Meeting Songs #1 Spring Camp Meeting Songs #2 Spring Camp Meeting Songs #3 Spring Camp Meeting Songs #4 Spring Camp Meeting Songs #5 Spring Camp Meeting Songs #6	
	2023	Spring Camp Meeting Choirs Songs All Songs in MP3 Format All Morning Messages in MP3 Format All Afternoon Teaching Messages in MP3 Format All Evening Messages in MP3 Format	

All message and music recordings are available only on regular CDs or MP3 format. The suggested donation for CDs is \$3.00 each and \$5.00 each for DVDs. (DVDs are unavailable for the afternoon teaching services.) The suggested donation for MP3s is \$10.00 each. Postage is \$3.00 for one CD or MP3 and \$0.35 for each additional one. Recordings may be ordered by writing *The Gospel Trumpeter*, CD Ministry, 675 N. Cedar St, Newark, Ohio 43055, or by calling the Print Shop at (740) 345-1312. Please make check or money order in U.S. funds, payable to *The Gospel Trumpeter*.

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