

The Way of Truth

Vol. 75

“Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.”

No. 5

Mother's Day Issue

SEE

- EDITORIAL
- POETRY PAGE
- RADIO MESSAGE, "MOTHERS"

“A mother is the truest friend we have, when trials heavy and sudden fall upon us; when adversity takes the place of prosperity; when friends desert us; when trouble thickens around us, still will she cling to us, and endeavor by her kind precepts and counsels to dissipate the clouds of darkness, and cause peace to return to our hearts.”

— Washington Irving

MAY
2017



MOTHER'S DAY

MOTHER'S DAY is the most popular of the four days observed for the family. The others are Father's Day, Children's Day, and Grandparents' Day. Possibly, Mother's Day is the most fitting. What name is second only to that of Jesus? Why do we hear the expression "a mother's love" so often?

We read in Proverbs 6:20, 21: "My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother: Bind them continually upon thine heart, and tie them about thy neck." (that is, assuming that the father and the mother are the kind of parents the Lord would have them to be).

In Proverbs 31:10-31 we read—

(1) about a virtuous woman whose price is far above rubies. There are some things you cannot put a dollar price on, and a virtuous mother is one of them.

(2) She is trustworthy: "Her husband doth safely trust in her, ... she will do him good and not evil all the days of her life."

(3) She works hard in behalf of the good of her family.

(4) She is wise and kind: "She opens her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness."

(5) She is to be praised, appreciated, and given thanks: "Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her."

(6) The secret of being this kind of mother is "A [mother] that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised. Give her the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates. ... Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised."

Proverbs 14:1, "Every wise woman buildeth her house: but the foolish plucketh it down." This, of course, is not talking about building a literal house, but of building a happy family that loves one another and seeks to please the Lord.

There are various things that are involved in being a good mother and building a house that can withstand the storms of life, which will come against every family.

(1) First of all, a good mother is a Christian mother. That is not to say that an unsaved mother can't love and care for her children in a material way, and even be a moral example before them, but what about the spiritual state of the children? The soul is the most valuable thing each one of us has.

(2) A good mother is mindful of God's mercy, and she is able to show mercy. "The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children" (Psalm 103:17).

(3) A good mother is devoted to her husband and shows him respect, and she teaches her children to do the same. Paul said in Ephesians 5:33, Let "the wife see that she reverence her husband." Paul also said in this same verse that the husband should "love his wife as himself."

A good mother loves her home life. "She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness" (Proverbs 31:27).

A good mother loves her children: "The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, ... teachers of good things; That they may teach the younger women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed" (Titus 2:3-5).

A good mother will help the father teach their children the way of the Lord. "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right" (Ephesians 6:1).

A good mother knows her children are a gift from God. "Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is her reward" (Psalm 127:3). We have the story of Hannah in the Bible. She was married to a man by the name of Elkanah who loved her very much, and was very kind to her, but she was unable to bear children, and this grieved her very much. They went to Shiloh, the religious center at that time, but Hannah was sad and would not eat. Elkanah said to her, "Why weepest thou? and why eatest thou not? am not I better to thee than ten sons?" (I Samuel 1:8). Elkanah was indeed a good husband, but Hannah wanted a son! After she sought the Lord so earnestly, and promised to give him to the Lord all his life, the Lord gave her a son. She named him Samuel—one of the greatest prophets Israel had.

A good mother dresses according to Christian standards, and should dress her children the same.

She does not dress to catch the eyes of other men. "Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair [putting gold strands and other types of adornment in the hair], and of wearing of gold, or of putting on [immodest apparel]; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price" (I Peter 3:3, 4). Some people say that God looks at the heart and not on the outside. He looks at both, and if He sees a "meek and quiet spirit" in the heart, He will see a person dressed modestly on the outside. Thus Paul teaches in I Timothy 2:9.

A good mother is an honor to her family: "A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband: but she that maketh ashamed is as rottenness in his bones" (Proverbs 12:4).

Again, a good mother is to be loved and honored: "Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her" (Proverbs 31:28).

A good mother is greatly needed by her husband, by her children, by the church, and by the nation. From time to time we hear of sickness, or a wreck, etc., taking a young mother from the family. Only a family that has suffered such a loss can really know how great it is.

Studies have shown that a mother has more influence on her children than anyone else. Day care centers often have changes in their workforce, and children have to get used to another worker. Relatives may do a better job than day care centers, but *no one* has the influence that a good godly mother has.

THE WAY OF TRUTH

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—Alvin A. Craig, Editor

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It has often been said that no nation is stronger than its homes. I have never seen a time more than now that Satan is attacking marriage and home.

Emerson said: "Men are what their mothers make them."

What a grave responsibility! May God bless our mothers.†

"No language can express the power, and beauty, and heroism, and majesty of a mother's love. It shrinks not where man cowers, and grows stronger where man faints, and over wastes of worldly fortunes sends the radiance of its quenchless fidelity like a star."

~Edwin Hubbell Chapin

VIEW AND ENJOY

OUR WORSHIP SERVICES LIVE!

As many of our readers know, we can be found on the internet at

www.wayoftruth.org

where in addition to reading past issues and other information, you can view our general services every Sunday LIVE at 10:40 A.M and 6:00 P.M. E.S.T. Enjoy Spirit-filled singing and preaching. Also, our mid-week service at 7:00 P.M. Wednesdays is aired live. There is a chatroom where you can interact with us and share your prayer requests. Tune in and worship with us!

May 2017

OUR SERVICES ON CD'S

CD's of our services are available for purchase. These are \$3.00 each; however, orders of 10 or more are only \$2.50 each, postage paid. Please write in the blank how many you would like to receive. Send check or money order to: The Way of Truth CD Ministry, P. O. Box 88, Hagerstown, MD 21741-0088 U.S.A.

- ___ CD #754 The Influence of the Holy Spirit in our Daily Lives *G. E. Tyler*
- ___ CD #755 Godly Instructions *Paul Wilson*
- ___ CD #756 Life's Longest Journey *A. A. Craig*
- ___ CD #757 Building on a Good Foundation *Mick Akers*
- ___ CD #758 Ladies' Day Service
- ___ CD #759 The Puzzle of Life *Doug Shenberger*
- ___ CD #760 The Translation *G. E. Tyler*
- ___ CD #761 New Life in Christ *Brian Richards*
- ___ CD #762 Evidence of a Spirit-filled Life *A. A. Craig*
- ___ CD #763 Reasons Why I Believe in Christ *G. E. Tyler*

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THE POETRY PAGE

MOTHER'S DAY

Mary B. Clapp

Every day is Mother's Day,
Tempting, puzzling, dear,
Bumps to kiss and cuts to bind,
And sorry hearts to cheer;
Willful ways to coax aright,
And laggard souls to hurry;
Holes to patch and meals to plan,
And lots of chance to worry.

But troubles bloom to wisdom,
Patience grows to power,
And love, that was the reason,
Is the wage for each crammed hour.
And every day that mothers make
Diligent and sweet,
Speeds the time till that great day
When hope and harvest meet.

MY MOTHER'S PRAYERS

Author Unknown

Among the treasured pictures
That I've hung on memory's wall,
There's one that's clearer than the rest,
And sweeter far than all:
'Tis a picture of my mother
When I, a little chap,
Was folded in her loving arms
To slumber on her lap.
I felt her hands caress my head,
I heard her softly say,
"Dear Jesus, take this little life
And use it throughout life's day."

There must have been a mighty weight
Behind that simple prayer,
For through the seasons, year on year,
The picture lingers there;
And whether I'm on hill or plane,
Or on the deep-blue sea,
The mem'ry of that sacred scene
Forever comforts me.
Among the treasured pictures
That I've hung on memory's wall,
My mother's supplication
Is the sweetest one of all.

A MOTHER'S PRAYER

Barbara Cornet Ryberg

I wash the dirt from little feet,
And as I wash I pray,
"Lord, keep them ever pure and true
To walk the narrow way."

I wash the dirt from little hands,
And earnestly I ask,
"Lord, may they ever yielded be,
To do the humblest task."

I wash the dirt from little knees,
And pray, "Lord, may they be
The place where victories are won,
And orders sought from Thee."

I scrub the clothes that soil so soon,
And pray, "Lord, may her dress
Throughout eternal ages be
Thy robe of righteousness."

A MODEL MOTHER

Author Unknown

When God looked down upon the earth
And chose to put new blessings here,
Gifts from above
To show His love
And lighten earthly joy and care,
He gave the sky the sunset glow;
Gave fragrance to the lily's blow;
To children's play
And then to every yearning soul
He gave the gift of tenderest worth—
A Mother.

MOTHERS

Edward M. Brandt

There's nothing warmer than a mother's love,
Nothing comforts like a mother's hug,
There's nothing sweeter than a mother's kiss,
And a mother's presence is such dear bliss.
We are grateful for our precious mothers,
Yours and mine and all the others,
Thank you, Lord, and each one bless,
We can't do without them, we must confess. †

HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY! May 14

MOTHERS

Radio Message by

Bro. Alvin A. Craig

(Aired 5/10/98)



IN OUR Mother's Day broadcast, I'd like to call your attention, first of all, to Genesis, chapter 2, verse 18: "And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him." We understand from other scriptures that God formed man from the dust of the earth. He was a physical being, lying there on the ground lifeless, until God breathed into him the breath of life, and he became a living soul. But in this passage of scripture, we read where God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him."

We read in Genesis, chapter 2, verses 21-24, "And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh."

Now, we understand from that passage of scripture that God performed the first wedding ceremony. Yes, God performed the first wedding ceremony. He brought Eve to Adam and gave her to him. Of course, He could not have given Eve to Adam without giving Adam to Eve. So Adam and Eve became husband and wife. The scripture says, "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh" (Ephesians 5:31).

I do not have time to go into a lot of detail in regard to "one flesh," but I am persuaded that it means more than just the sexual relationship. *One flesh* means that the husband and the wife are one. They are to be one in aim and in purpose. They are to be one in loving one another and in caring for one another. They are to be one in staying with one another, in loving one another, and in watching over one another until separated by death. This is a great need in our nation and world today—husbands and wives to actually be one—one in reality.

I want you to also notice that God ordained that husbands and wives be fruitful and multiply. We are told this in the book of Genesis. After God had formed Adam and Eve, He told them to be fruitful and multiply. So God ordained that husbands and wives become fathers and mothers. God never ordained that a woman become a mother, or a man become a father, outside of wedlock. No, God never ordained it. I realize we have in our world today a lot of what is called unwed mothers. I do not speak in any way despairingly of them, but I do say from the scriptural standpoint that God

never intended it to be so. God has never put His approval upon fornication or adultery, and He never will. That has always been contrary to the law of God, and it always will be. So God ordained that a couple (a young man and young woman) get married and become parents.

Motherhood is one of the greatest responsibilities in the world today. The same could be said about fathers, but we're not talking about fathers today. We're talking about mothers on Mother's Day. Yes, motherhood is one of the greatest responsibilities that anyone has in the world today. It sort of stirs my righteous indignation when I hear people speak despairingly of a woman being a wife and a mother in the home. What greater calling could anyone have than to fulfill the will of almighty God for his or her life?

I'd like for you to notice a couple of verses of scripture in the 21st chapter of the book of Exodus. I realize this was under the old Mosaic law, but I want you to notice these scriptures for the purpose of realizing and understanding how God looks upon fathers and mothers, how God regards them, and how He ordained that children regard them. Exodus 21:15, "And he that smiteth his father, or his mother, shall be surely put to death." Verse 17: "And he that curseth his father, or his mother, shall surely be put to death." We read in the New Testament scriptures where the Bible says, "Honour thy father and thy mother," and here we see that the Old Covenant law says that if a child smote (struck) his father or his mother, he was to be put to death. So, God considers fatherhood and motherhood a very, very important calling, and a very, very important responsibility. And so it is!

Turning to the book of Proverbs, chapter 31, we read in verses 10-12, "Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies. The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil. She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life." "Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies." I realize that in some circles in the world today, virtue is made light of and is considered of little importance, but virtue is still a priceless thing. Her husband trusteth in her, and he has no need of fear or spoil. "She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life."

God has never held a double standard for the man and for the woman. I know that in more recent times there has been a standard held for the woman, emphasizing that she should keep herself pure while the man sows his wild oats, but the Bible does not teach anything such as that. The Bible not only teaches purity for the woman, but for the man as well.

We are told in the New Testament scriptures that the young man should "Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body." So, God would have the young man to keep himself pure, just as He would have the young woman to keep herself pure; and whenever they come before a minister or a marriage officer to take the vows of holy matrimony, they need to be able to present their bodies to one another free from fornication. Yes, I mean exactly what I say. I realize what I'm saying would be scoffed and

mocked at in many circles today, but I speak from God's standpoint, from the scriptural standpoint, and from the standpoint of righteousness, holiness, and purity. Remember, "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people" (Proverbs 14:34). Fornication is sin. One not only sins against God, but against his own body. One of the reasons why we have so many different diseases in this area of life today is because of the sinful, ungodly lives that people are living. Fornication, adultery, and all the homosexual acts, etc., spread disease among the people. God would have you to keep yourself pure, and whenever you take the vows of holy matrimony, you will be a virtuous person. Again, "Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies. The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil. She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life."

Looking on in the 31st chapter of Proverbs, we read in verses 25-31, "Strength and honour are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come. She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness. She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness. Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her. Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all. Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised. Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates." Again, "Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised."

What our nation and world today need more of is, God-fearing mothers. Yes, God-fearing fathers, too; but what we need today is more God-fearing mothers, for there is a great responsibility placed upon mothers in the teaching and in the training of the children in the home. The father has his responsibility, too, but the mother has a grave responsibility. Even the mothers and older women in the church have a grave responsibility as well.

We read in the book of Titus, where Paul wrote to the man Titus: "But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine: That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience. The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed." Women have a very important place to fill, not only in the home as wives and mothers, but they have a very grave responsibility in the church, by helping to teach the younger women to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, loving their children, and obeying their husbands. These things need to be taught, for they have the blessings and the approval of almighty God upon them.

In the 5th chapter of the book of Ephesians, we have some very important instructions here from the apostle Paul. Reading from verse 21 to verse 25: "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto

the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it." Dropping down to verses 28-33: "So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband."

Godly mothers are valuable. No earthly value can be placed upon them, because they fill such an important place, not only in the home, I say, but in the church as well. What mothers need to do is not only to teach and train their children to be respectful to others, but to teach them to love and to serve almighty God. †

A SOUL DISCOURAGED IN THE WAY

BY BRO. GREG TYLER

*Numbers 21:1-4, "And when king Arad the Canaanite, which dwelt in the south, heard tell that Israel came by the way of the spies; then he fought against Israel, and took some of them prisoners. And Israel vowed a vow unto the Lord, and said, If thou wilt indeed deliver this people into my hand, then I will utterly destroy their cities. And the Lord hearkened to the voice of Israel, and delivered up the Canaanites; and they utterly destroyed them and their cities: and he called the name of the place Hormah. And they journeyed from mount Hor by the way of the Red sea, to compass the land of Edom: **and the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way.**"*



ARE YOU a soul much discouraged because of the way? If so, this message is for you. Discouragement is a common occurrence. It happens to us all. I know one songwriter said, "We should never be discouraged ...," but that is not practical. Maybe we *shouldn't* be, because we serve a great big wonderful God who never fails, but realistically, discouragement is one of Satan's tools which he is allowed to use to tempt the human race. I believe it is important to identify it, recognize its dangers, and allow the Lord to help us to be delivered from it as soon as possible.

Discouragement is "the act of being discouraged; to deprive of courage, hope, or confidence; to obstruct by opposition or difficulty; hinder; opposite of encourage-

ment.” In common terms, it is the state of mind where an individual experiences a low ebb of feeling; where joy is overshadowed by sadness; rejoicing is replaced by concern; doubts attack one’s confidence; negative thoughts press against one’s mind. Discouragement is our enemy! A discouraged soul is in danger and vulnerable to failure. When an individual is discouraged, he is more apt to make wrong choices and take wrong attitudes. Therefore, it behooves us to resist discouragement when we feel it beginning to take hold.

Causes of Discouragement

Trials of life—Trials come to us all. Peter says, “Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you” (I Peter 4:12). And yet, how often we view trials as some sort of punishment, or a result of something we did wrong. Not at all! There is nothing strange about a fiery trial coming upon a Christian. Alas, how oft does a trial cause discouragement to grip an individual! I quote the following from *The Bible Illustrator*:

“A Christian man lost his home and mill when a flood washed them away. He was broken-hearted and discouraged as he stood surveying his loss. Just then he saw a glittering object that had been uncovered by the waters. It was gold! The disaster he thought had made him a beggar had actually made him wealthy. So, too, the Lord often works through our troubles to strip away certain cherished possessions to show us the better treasures of His love and power. How thankful we should be that in every storm of affliction we have the assurance that the Lord has a good purpose in view!”

Accusations by the Devil—Revelation 12:10 reads, “And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.” *The accuser of the brethren* is Satan. He can overwhelm us with accusations. If we give place to them, the result is discouragement. His aim is to cause every one of us to backslide, and discouragement is a major stepping stone.

Brethren Speaking out of Turn—Occasionally, our Christian brethren can say something that will discourage us. Deuteronomy 1:28, “Whither shall we go up? our brethren have discouraged our heart, saying, The people is greater and taller than we; the cities are great and walled up to heaven; and moreover we have seen the sons of the Anakims there.” *Our brethren discouraged our heart*. This ought not to be! Brethren are to encourage one another. But, how often has a comment by someone towards us, or about us, hurt us so that it opened the way for discouragement to set in.

Disappointment—When we esteem others highly and one fails, we need to be careful not to allow his failure to affect us to the point of discouragement. Paul was disappointed when his coworker Demas chose wrong. You can feel the hurt in his statement, “For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica” (II Timothy 4:10). Sometimes we can’t help it, we are disappointed

to the point of discouragement when someone we love fails of the grace of God.

Mistreatment—It is natural when we are treated wrong to be hurt and hurt can morph into discouragement. This admonition was given by Paul: “Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged” (Colossians 3:21). We need to pay attention to the Word of God! Parents, beware! Even pastors need to be careful to use the pulpit properly and not abuse their congregations. A bully-pulpit can discourage a whole group of people. Let us honor and respect one another and not give Satan an opportunity to discourage another by our harsh words.

Lack of feeling—When we go through a period of time without feeling the presence of God, it has a tendency to discourage us. We know in our hearts that the Lord has promised never to leave us nor forsake us. But we humans like to have feelings of approval and blessing. When (for whatever reason) God withholds that treasure, we need to remember Acts 17:27, “That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us.” He is there, whether we feel Him or not! Therefore, don’t fall into discouragement by putting overemphasis on feelings.

Financial pressures—Like it or not, we are living in a material world, and life has its monetary requirements. Nothing causes stress like struggling to make ends meet. Stress can cause discouragement. So we need to remember that Christ has promised to supply all our needs according to His riches in glory. When we do our best, let Jesus do the rest.

These are but a few causes for discouragement. But, whatever the root cause, discouragement is not pleasant, and we must be careful that it does not snowball into a debilitating factor in our lives.

Next, I would like to warn my readers of:

Results of Discouragement

Fault-finding with God and others—Let us return to our text from Numbers 21. Even though God had given victories along the way, the people were much discouraged because of the way. And falling into discouragement caused the people to find fault with God and with Moses. Verse 5, “And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread.” This was a very dangerous thing to do! Yet, many today fall into the same trap. When they become discouraged, some blame it on the pastor and sometimes turn against the Lord. As for the children of Israel, they were punished for the attitude they took. Verse 6, “And the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died.” Fortunately, for them, they had a leader who loved them and a forgiving God. Verse 7, “Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord, and against thee; pray unto the Lord, that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people.” Don’t let your discouragement cause you to find fault with others nor blame God.

Diminished zeal and enthusiasm—It is hard to be enthusiastic about the things of God when you are discouraged. Discouragement is the forerunner of a lukewarm experience. Jesus said, “So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth” (Revelation 3:16). Some speak of “lukewarm Christians.” There is really no such thing! If a Christian allows his experience to cool because of discouragement (or anything else), he is in danger of being “spued out.” There are ups and downs to one’s experience to be sure, but if we drift and cool to the point of “lukewarm,” we have drifted too far.

Neglecting the House of God—Hebrews 10:25 says, “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.” When someone becomes discouraged, he has a tendency to draw in to himself, to withhold himself from the divine worship services. This is the time when he really needs the support of the saints and the encouragement of the Word. When you are discouraged, you need to attend *more* often, not less!

Questionable Conduct—If discouragement is ruling in a Christian’s life, he has a tendency to let up in his prayer life and eventually become weaker in his experience. His resolve to resist temptation can weaken, opening the door for poor decisions leading to questionable conduct. The Apostle wrote to the church in Thessalonica, “For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busy-bodies” (II Thessalonians 3:11). This is not good!

Bitterness—Through the years many have given place to bitterness when discouraged. There is a tendency for self-pity which leads one to be offended. Keep up your guard! “Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled” (Hebrews 12:15). If discouragement develops into bitterness, it will trouble and defile you.

Backsliding—Peter was discouraged when Jesus was taken and he followed Jesus afar off. Then, as we know, he lied and lost out with the Lord. Oftentimes a period of discouragement precedes the sin which causes one to backslide. That is how serious discouragement can become.

Remedies for Discouragement

Recognize the problem—Many times individuals are not able to identify what is going on. If discouragement has taken root in a heart, and it is not identified, it will be hard to remedy the problem. At times we just have to acknowledge, “I am discouraged.” Then do something about it!

Look unto Jesus—Get your eyes off your problems and the things which discourage you and focus on Christ Jesus. Hebrews 12:2, 3 says, “Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.” If our eyes are on Him and we are considering Christ and all that He has done, it will keep

us from fainting in our minds. Remember that His plan is to make you stronger and more fruitful.

From *The Bible Illustrator* I quote the following:

“Don’t think it strange when you desire to serve God and then seem to encounter a severe time of testing. God’s purpose at every juncture of testing is to make the person more valuable. Let me illustrate: A \$5 bar of steel cut into ordinary horseshoes is worth \$10. A \$5 bar of steel cut into needles is worth \$350. That same bar of steel cut into delicate springs for watches becomes worth \$250,000. Next time you get discouraged at what God is putting you through, think of that bar of steel!”

Surround yourself with positive people—When you find yourself discouraged, don’t seek the company of individuals who will fuel the fires of depression, but rather spend time with positive people whose influence will offset the efforts of the spirit trying to consume through discouragement. The saints of God encourage one another. Isaiah 41:6, 7, “They helped every one his neighbour; and every one said to his brother, Be of good courage. So the carpenter encouraged the goldsmith, and he that smootheth with the hammer him that smote the anvil, saying, It is ready for the soldering: and he fastened it with nails, that it should not be moved.”

Stay busy in church work—II Chronicles 35:2, “And he set the priests in their charges, and encouraged them to the service of the house of the Lord.” Idleness compounds discouragement. Keep yourself busy in helping others and do not disassociate yourself from the work of the local congregation. Volunteer to get involved in the Lord’s work. It will boost your self-esteem and put to flight the spirit of discouragement.

Encourage yourself in the Lord—If we can’t find anyone to encourage us when we are down, we must find the strength to encourage ourselves. David did! “And David was greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters: but David encouraged himself in the Lord his God” (I Samuel 30:6). How do you do that? By remembering what God has done for you in the past. By refusing to feed the negative feelings that press you down. By immersing yourself into extended devotional time for God. Encourage yourself! You can do it if you have a mind to do it.

Think encouraging thoughts—Don’t meditate on issues of negativity which spiral your thoughts in discouraging paths. Philippians 4:8 says, “Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.” It works! Sift your thoughts through this verse and you can’t help but be encouraged!

Turn to the Word of God—When you are discouraged, pick up your Bible. In the law of the Lord you will find inspiration. “Moreover he commanded the people that dwelt in Jerusalem to give the portion of the priests and the Levites, that they might be encouraged in the law of the Lord” (II Chronicles 31:4). Tell the Lord you need some encouragement and He will

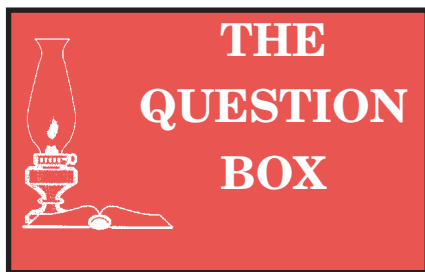
guide you to a place in the Scriptures where He can speak to your heart.

Be consistent in prayer—I Thessalonians 5:17 says simply, “Pray without ceasing.” This does not mean that God requires us to be on our knees 24 hours a day. But it does mean that our prayer life should be consistent. Just because we are discouraged is no excuse to skip our prayer time. On the contrary! It should drive us to our knees more often. During and after a fervent session of prayer our hearts will be aglow, and discouragement will be conquered.

Sing a Hymn—Sometimes a song will drive away the blues. “Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord” (Ephesians 5:19). Worldly songs are of no comfort. But many a hymn and spiritual song has planted hope in a heart that was riddled with despair.

Shake off the Adversary—Recognize that discouragement is a tool of the devil and God does not want us to give in to it. He says, “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (James 4:7). The devil has to flee if we do the submitting and the resisting. Easier said than done. But the Lord will give us victory over all the power of the enemy—and that includes the annoying discouragements that come to us over the course of our lives.

Are you a soul discouraged in the way? Come to Christ and He will give you rest! Recognize the tactics of Satan, identify the problem, put into practice these simple suggestions for remedies for discouragement and you will have a more victorious and happy Christian life. †



Answered by the Editor



QUESTION: Is there any difference between investing in a 401K and buying lottery tickets or raffle tickets?—J. D., Alabama

ANSWER: As far as I understand the three things you have asked about, two are gambling, and one is a savings plan, so there is no comparison to the savings plan and gambling. Gambling is sinful as far as I can understand! Very few “win” anything. You invest in a 401K plan where you have a certain amount taken out of your pay each week with the expectation of earning interest on your investment. It is usually called a retirement plan.

QUESTION: Please explain I Timothy 5:24, 25.

—W. M., West Virginia

ANSWER: People who seek God for forgiveness of their sins and are forgiven, send them (their sins) on

before. God wipes their sins out of His memory to remember them against them no more.

Those who refuse to seek the Lord for forgiveness will die in their sins, and their sins will follow them to the judgment.

You can say the same about verse 25. Their good works will be seen, and they will be rewarded for them. Those who die in their sins will not receive a good reward. Everyone shall be rewarded according to their works, whether they be good or bad.

QUESTION: What is the difference between temptation and when God is disciplining someone?

—S. U. O., Africa

ANSWER: There is no connection between the two. A temptation is when the devil tries to get you to do wrong. Discipline or chastisement is when God corrects you for a mistake or a failure you have made.

QUESTION: If a righteous person prays such a prayer as in I Kings 19:4, can God answer such a prayer?—S. U. O., Africa

ANSWER: That is up to God! However, Elijah was discouraged and felt he was the only true prophet left, which he was not, and the Lord had more work for him to do, so the Lord refused to answer his prayer.

QUESTION: How can a child of God pray a prayer so that God can bless the person financially?

—S. U. O., Africa

ANSWER: First of all, the person must not have a selfish purpose in mind. If the Lord sees fit to answer such a prayer, there are different ways He can answer it. For instance, He could help him find a different job which would pay him more, or if he has a business of his own, the Lord could prosper his work in a way that he could earn more.

QUESTION: What is the original calendar that was in the time of Jesus instead of the Roman calendar that is mostly used today?—S. U. O., Africa

ANSWER: The Hebrew calendar of the Old Testament: Nisan, Iyyar, Sivan, Tammuz, Ab, Elul, Tishrei [Tishri], Marchesvan, Chislev, Tebeth [Tevet], Shebat [Shevat], Adar. [The year, as I understand, was 360 days, so they added Adar Sheni as needed.]

QUESTION: John 1:8 says that no man has seen God at any time, but compare this to Exodus 33:20, Exodus 33:11, and Genesis 32:30.—S. U. O., Africa

ANSWER: The Bible does not say that no one has seen God! The Bible says that no one has seen His face. As to John 1:8, it has no reference to seeing God. If you will note verse 6, it says: “There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.” This was John the forerunner of Christ. Verse 7: “The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light [Christ].”

In Genesis 32:30, Jacob is talking about seeing his brother Esau. He sent three groups of cattle—some space between them—in an effort to appease his brother, for he felt Esau was coming with 400 men to do him

harm. In Exodus 33:20 the Lord clearly tells Moses, "Thou canst not see my face." But the Lord went on to tell him, "I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by: And I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen" (Exodus 33:22, 23). In Exodus 33:11, it says, "The Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend." That is not to be understood as Moses actually seeing God's face. There is no conflict in any of these verses.

QUESTION: Is it proper to have two Intermediate Sunday school classes in the same congregation at the same time, and at what age should a person move to the adult class?—P. I. P., Nigeria

ANSWER: If you have a large group of young people in the congregation, you may want to divide them into two classes. There would be nothing wrong with that. We have a young people's class between the Intermediate class and the adult class. What we have is Intermediate 13 to 17, Young People, 18 to 29, and from that class they move to the adult class. If for some reason one might want to remain in the young people's class longer, he or she is not forced to move.

QUESTION: Does the Church of God in Hagerstown have a watch night service?—P. I. P., Nigeria

ANSWER: We do not have a watch night service, but that is not because we think it would be wrong if we did.

QUESTION: Can the Church of God choir wear uniforms and rings?—P. I. P., Nigeria

ANSWER: Our choir does not wear choir robes. The ladies may wear the same color blouses at times. There is no one in our choir, men or women, who wears rings. †

Literature Available

<i>Cut out this order blank:</i>	Qty.	Each	Total
Messages From Revelation X	\$4.00
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BIBLE LESSON OF THE MONTH

GEMS FROM THE BOOK OF ROMANS

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Scriptures: Romans 14:17; Mark 1:14, 15; 9:1; Luke 8:1; 16:16; 17:20, 21; Daniel 2:44; John 3:3.

Romans 14:17 For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

Mark 1:14 Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God,

15 And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.

Mark 9:1 And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power.

Luke 8:1 And it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching and showing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve were with him.

Luke 16:16 The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.

Luke 17:20 And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation:

21 Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.

Daniel 2:44 And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.

John 3:3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

Memory Verse: For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.—Romans 14:17.

Aim: To show that the kingdom of God is not something yet in the future, but is a present reality.

INTRODUCTION

"The notion that the Messiah would establish a literal kingdom upon the earth originated with the Jews. Many of them placed literal interpretations upon those prophecies which relate to the coming of Christ, and as a result they expected him to establish a temporal throne, subdue the nations, and restore again the kingdom of Israel. This gross error led them to reject Christ, oppose his spiritual kingdom, and consent unto his death. Because he did not meet their expectations, he became a stumbling-block to them. At one time they tried to 'take him by force, and make him a king,' but he departed from them" (John 6:15).—H. M. Riggle, *The Kingdom of God*.

Jesus was born a King, and He said He had a kingdom: "My kingdom is not of this world." But He had no plans for a literal kingdom; certainly, not one of a thousand years. Since Jesus told Nicodemus that he must be born again of the Word and the Spirit—John 3:5—to

enter the kingdom, we understand His kingdom is spiritual and not literal. We trust the study of this lesson will be a blessing to you.

MEDITATIONS

WHAT THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS NOT—Romans 14:17—But righteousness—We understand by Paul's words that the kingdom of God is not "meat and drink." He is saying that it is not a literal kingdom. Then he tells us what it is: "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." This lets us know that there are different phases of the kingdom. What is described here is the experience phase, which is obtained by an experience of salvation.

JESUS PREACHING—Mark 1:14, 15—The time—John was the forerunner of Jesus. After John was put in prison, Jesus came preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God. Part of His message was: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand." What He was talking about was the prophecy of Daniel 2:44: "In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom." And He did! It is at hand now; it is not yet out in the future.

JESUS SPEAKS AGAIN—Mark 9:1—Some standing here—There is no one who was standing there still alive today! The kingdom came with power on the Day of Pentecost.

AFTER BEING IN A PHARISEE'S HOME—Luke 8:1—He went—While in the home a woman washed Jesus' feet by wetting them with her tears and drying them with her hair. Jesus forgave her of her sins. Later, Jesus and the twelve went through a number of towns and He preached to them the good news of the kingdom of God. He did not tell the people it was way out in the future.

OLD COVENANT ENDED—Luke 16:16—Since that time—Jesus brought in the New Covenant, and with it came the good news of the kingdom of God. We understand from this verse that it takes putting forth some effort to enter into the kingdom of God. Satan will do all he can to keep people from entering the kingdom of God, but they can if they really desire to. We also see from this verse that there were those who were pressing their way in. A question is in order: How could souls be entering into the kingdom of God if it did not exist?

NOT WHAT YOU EXPECT—Luke 17:20, 21—When He was demanded—The Pharisees demanded of Jesus to know when the kingdom of God should come. They were expecting a literal kingdom set up there in their country with a literal king sitting on a literal throne. Jesus told them that the kingdom of God was not that kind of a kingdom, and they would never see such a kingdom.

A quote from Adam Clarke: "The kingdom of God, the glorious religion of the Messiah, does not come in such a way as to be discerned only by sagacious critics, or is only to be seen by those who are scrupulously watching for it; it is not of such a nature as to be confined to one place, so that men might say of it, Behold it is only here, or only there." With the words "within you," Jesus is speaking of the experience phase of the kingdom.

May 2017

FOUR EARTHLY KINGDOMS—Daniel 2:44—Shall the God of heaven—The image had four parts: gold, silver, brass, and iron and clay. The four kingdoms: Babylon, Medo-Persian, Greek, and Roman. There was a fifth kingdom! The stone spoken of in verse 34 represented Jesus Christ and the kingdom of God. Note: It was the stone that struck the image on his feet and legs. This was the fourth literal kingdom, the Roman, so this was to happen during the reign of the Roman kingdom. Jesus Christ came into this world during the rule of the Roman kingdom, so this lets us know when "the kingdom of God came with power." Those who put this yet out in the future are misrepresenting the truth of the Word of God.

A SPIRITUAL KINGDOM—John 3:3—Born again—As was stated in the Introduction, Jesus told Nicodemus one must be born of the Word and the Spirit to enter the kingdom of God. Thus the kingdom is a spiritual kingdom. If it were a literal kingdom, one would have to have a physical birth to enter it, but the Scriptures inform us that flesh and blood cannot enter the kingdom of God.

CONCLUSION

I mentioned earlier that there were different phases to the kingdom of God: in the universal phase, all are in it. "The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity" (Matthew 13:41). The phase that the redeemed are in are those that have been born again. This phase and the church are the same! Christ is King of the kingdom, and Christ is the Head of the church. The experience phase, Romans 14:17: "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." "The kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17:21). The eternal phase: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom of God prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matthew 25:34).

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. What is the duration of the kingdom of God?
2. How does one get into the kingdom?
3. Will there be a literal kingdom of a thousand years on earth?
4. What literal kingdom was ruling when Jesus was born?
5. What does "the stone" in Daniel 2:34 symbolize? †

SUNDAY SCHOOL LITERATURE

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Write or call and order your sample today.

THE CHURCH IN THESE TOUGH TIMES

2016 Cayman Convention Message by Bro. Donovan Darby



I AM very thankful to the Lord for being here. I do not take it for granted. It is a great blessing to be here in this convention. I want to express our appreciation to Bro. James and the saints here for the invitation.

I believe you have enjoyed the singing. I have enjoyed it. As you sat and listened and enjoyed the singing, I trust that you will continue to give your undivided attention to what the Lord has in store for us. I certainly stand in need of the Lord's help. I also need the support of the ministry. I would not want to try to bring a message if I do not have that support. The Bible says, "We are labourers together with God." The Bible also says that Peter stood up with the eleven, so I believe that unity is strength.

I have made a subject from the theme of the convention. The subject is: "The Church in These Tough Times." Our scripture text is taken from Matthew, chapter 16, verse 18: "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

The church indeed is in tough times. I believe you will agree with me that we are living in tough times, hard times, serious times, and perilous times.

The word *church* means, "a collective body; that is, a body of people called out of the world." It also means, "an assembly." When it speaks in reference to the Church of God, it is an assembly that belongs to God.

There are many religions in this world which are founded by men, organized by men, built by men, and headed by men. When we speak of the Church of God, we are not referring to a literal building, and we're not referring to the world's great religions, but we are referring to the bride of Christ, the church that Jesus purchased with His own blood.

The Bible does prove that the Church of God is the church of the New Testament. The scripture stated "Church of God." The word *of* simply denotes "ownership." So the church belongs to God. God is the Head of His family, so it is of necessity that the Church of God be called the Church of God, but it does take more than the true name to produce the true Church of God. It takes both the Spirit and the truth. In spite of the opposition the Church of God is facing, and in spite of the hundreds of religions that are in this world, God has a church. She is the blessed Church of God. The Church of God today is facing strong pagan forces. All around, she's facing strong opposition.

We are told that Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi. Matthew 16:13-18: "When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of

the prophets. [Jesus asked His disciples a personal question.], But whom say ye that I am? [I believe there was a pause for a short period.] And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock [upon this truth, upon Myself] I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

We need to note that Jesus did not say that He would build His churches, but He said, "I will build *my* [one, singular] church." I personally do not believe that Jesus was referring to the World Council of Churches, but He was referring to His bride. Jesus said that He will build His church. Thank God, He is still building His church. He is not building it for someone else. He is building it for Himself. Every time a soul is saved, Christ is building His church. Any time we learn of a new minister, or of a new congregation of the Church of God that is being established, Christ is building His church. To *build* is to organize; to *organize* is to place the members, select the officers, and determine their jobs.

A VISION OF THE CHURCH

John said in Revelation 21:10, "And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God." Dear Ones, different things are used to represent the Church of God. She is represented by a woman, Zion, a holy mountain, etc., but we need to note that John said that he saw the church coming down from God out of heaven. What does that mean? It means that the Church of God is of divine origin, and that she is not man-made. The songwriter said, "Divinely built, divinely ruled, to God she doth submit."

We have to have a vision of the church to see the church. God has to reveal a divine vision unto us for us to see the Church of God. I believe God was dealing with Peter because God revealed to him that Jesus was the Christ. So, John said that he was carried away in *the* Spirit, not in *a* spirit. What was John shown? He was carried away to a great and high mountain. This great and high mountain represents the Church of God. Dear Ones, if you are carried away in the Spirit, the Spirit will lead you to the truth. The Spirit of God never leads someone to hell. John said that he was carried away in the Spirit, and he saw the bride of Christ. If you are carried away in a Pentecostal spirit, you will believe that religion is right, if you are carried

away in a Babylonian spirit, you will believe that those religions are right, and if you are carried away in the Spirit of God, you will be shown the bride of Christ.

Jesus is the Door to the church. "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture" (John 10:9). The Church of God is also known as a sheepfold. So, what Jesus was saying was, "By Me, you shall enter, and go in and out of the sheepfold, where you will find pasture." You have to go through the Door to be a member of the Church of God. When you go through the Door, you are no longer a sinner. Dear Ones, there are no sinners in the Church of God. There are no hypocrites in the Church of God. Hypocrites may be among the congregations, among the people of God, but not in the Church of God. This is one of the hindrances to some people today: They are professing to be saved, but are not truly saved.

THE CHURCH PURCHASED BY HIS BLOOD

Acts, chapter 20, verse 28, says: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." The Church of God is purchased with the blood of Christ. She is a blood-bought church. Paul told the ministers to take heed unto themselves. I believe every minister needs to take heed unto himself. In other words, Paul was simply saying to them that they should make sure that they are led by the Lord to lead the people of God.

It is not a light thing to feed a congregation. It is not a light thing to feed the souls of men. It is a great responsibility. An evangelistic message is different from a pastoral message. An evangelistic message is meant to save the lost. A pastoral message is meant to feed and to supply the various needs of the soul. I tell you, it takes God in man to feed the souls of men. We cannot do this by ourselves. That is why we need to be led by the Spirit of God. We understand from Acts 20:28 that it is the Holy Spirit who makes the ministers the overseers of the congregation. So this is not something that someone takes upon himself. For someone to properly lead a congregation of the Church of God, he must have a divine call from God to fill that office. A minister needs at least three gifts: the gift of pastorship, the gift of teaching, and the gift of evangelism. He would also do well with the gift of government, because part of his duty is to govern.

The word *purchase* means, "bought." When you purchase something, it belongs to you. If you need a car and can afford to buy one, you can just go to the car dealer and purchase that car. When you purchase that car, it belongs to you. So the church belongs to God. He purchased the Church of God. In I Timothy 3:15, Paul said to Timothy, "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." The Church of God is the pillar and ground of the truth. It holds up the truth. We understand from this scripture that Paul was not referring to a literal building, but he was referring to the house of God, the church of the living God. Paul was to be united with Timothy, but he told him

that if he delayed his coming that he should conduct himself in a proper manner. Dear Ones, we need to conduct ourselves in a proper manner, because we are in God's church, and we need to be an example to the outside world. We need to so live this gospel that others would want to have what we have. Let me tell you, Dear Ones, the saints of God are good examples.

THE CHURCH HAS A STANDARD

The Church of God has a government. The church has a standard. It is a high standard. The church has a standard of modesty. Modesty is a state of the heart. If your heart is adorned with the grace of God, you will adorn the outward man properly. The way you conduct yourself tells us where you stand. It tells us how consecrated you are. I believe when God cleans us up, we will put on some clothes. I believe if we take pride in ourselves as decent people and decent citizens, we will cover our bodies. The church has a standard. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world." One of the problems today is that the world is coming into the church. Any time the world starts to creep into the church, we begin to lose power. We begin to lose our influence and identity. Worldliness has destroyed many a congregation down through the ages. This is one reason why God put watchmen on the walls of Zion. They have to hold up the standard.

Again, Paul has said that the church is the pillar of the truth. This building possibly has four pillars that bear the weight of the structure of the building. So Paul is telling us that the truth is dependable. The truth is reliable. The truth stands. We can rest assured and stand on the truth of God's Word. Let me tell you, truth won't fail you if you stand for it. Paul also said that the church is the ground of the truth. Do you know what you do with the ground? You stand on it. You walk on the ground. So, we can stand on the truth, and it won't fail us. Let me also say that we need to have a love for the truth. God doesn't force truth on anyone. We need to love it.

John said in Revelation, chapter 21, verse 18, "The city was pure gold." Gold is used in the book of Revelation to represent truth. We need to note that John did not say that part of the building was gold, but the entire city was gold, which is truth. Error does not proceed from the church. Yes, we can have a misunderstanding of a scripture, but error does not proceed from the church. People talk about walking on gold when they get to heaven. Let me tell you something, if you are living the truth, you are walking on gold. If you abiding in the doctrines of Christ, you are walking on gold. There won't be any gold in heaven. There won't be any literal thing in heaven, but we can live the truth and go there.

The church is in tough times. Colossians 1:13, "And he [Christ] is the head of the body, the church." Every earthly religion in this world is headed by some man. This is absolute truth. The pope might be the head of the Roman Catholic Church, but not the head of God's church. No human being is capable of being the head of God's church. It takes Christ and Christ only to be the Head. The church has no human founder. She does not have an anniversary. Did you know that? We do not celebrate an anniversary of the church, because it is

not man-made. The songwriter said, "From Heav'n He came and sought her to be His holy bride." And another writer: "Christ is made the sure foundation, Christ the head and cornerstone."

CHRIST IS THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH

The Church of God does not have earthly headquarters. I was listening to a CD of one of Bro. Alvin's messages, and he said that there was a man who was traveling in a certain area when he saw a sign stating, "The Headquarters of the Church of God." So the man went to the place and knocked on the door. He said to the person, "I want to see Jesus." The person said, "What?" The man said, "I saw your sign which read, 'The Headquarters of the Church of God,' so I want to see Jesus." Dear Ones, the headquarters of the Church of God is where the Head is—heaven. There is where God deals with His ministers from the pulpit.

Regardless of how many churches there are in the world, it is still true that there is one true body. Every true Christian belong to the one body. You can only be saved in the Church of God; you can only be saved in the family of God. There is another truth that we should never overlook: The Holy Spirit works in and through the true body. "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling" (Ephesians 4:4). You do not find the Holy Spirit working in a false body; you do not find the Holy Spirit working in Babylon. God's Spirit stays in His body. I don't believe Bro. Shippy's spirit came out of his body and came into me. Bro. Shippy's spirit is his spirit, and my spirit is my spirit. God's Spirit dwells in His body. That is how it is.

Jesus prayed in St. John, chapter 17, that His disciples be one. This divided state of religion is dividing the people. It is confusing the people, and it is sending a wrong message to the world. It is telling the world, in effect, that God did not send Jesus into the world. But we know for sure that God sent Jesus into the world.

God keeps the church book. Psalm 87:5, 6: "And of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her: and the highest himself shall establish her. The Lord shall count, when he writeth up the people, that this man was born there." So God keeps the church book. You don't have to worry that a rat may come into the church building and eat your name out of the church book. God has His church book in heaven. The important thing is to have our names there. You have to live a holy life to keep it there. You have to be in obedience to the Word of God for your name to be kept there. Sin blots it out.

We read in Galatians 4:26, "But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all." Jerusalem represents the Church of God. The church is free. Did you hear what I said? Her children are free. People are not free in Babylon. The literal Israelites were captured and brought to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar. They were requested to sing one of the songs of Zion. They responded, "How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" People in Babylon are not free. It is only those who are in the light of the Church of God who can sing the song of freedom and the song of redemption. Do you know it is a blessing to be saved

in the evening light, in these times, and to be standing in the truth? This is something to be thankful for.

THE CHURCH IN REVELATION 14

John said in Revelation 14:1, "And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads." Here we have a symbol of the Church of God in the evening time of the gospel day. She was brought out of the wilderness. What is pictured here is a people who were brought out of sects (false religions) and creeds. No wonder they were able to rejoice in the manner that they did! They were not only free from their committed sins, but they were free from the bondage of false religion. A happy people! The Bible says, "And they sung as it were a new song." It wasn't a new song. It was sung for hundreds of years, but now it sounded as if it were new. "... having his Father's name written in their foreheads." Of course, this Father was God. So, this group that John saw out in the evening light were called Church of God, and they had a knowledge of the doctrines of Christ. Zion is a term used to represent the Church of God. The Lamb represents Christ.

Verse 4 of Revelation 14 says, "These are they which were not defiled with women [represents churches; A pure woman represents a pure church. An impure woman represents a false church]." Every earthly religion can be traced right back to Rome. She is the mother. She has many daughters, many granddaughters, and many great-granddaughters. The Roman Catholic Church came into existence because of the falling away. Let me tell you something, the Roman Catholic Empire wasn't a continuation in the early morning time. It came into being because the church departed from the truth. Had they stood for the truth, it would not have come into being and ruled for 1,260 years. Thank God, the Church of God came out of the wilderness to her exalted state, and took up again the everlasting gospel.

Verse 6 of Revelation 14 says, "And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people." Dear Ones, there isn't no need for the gospel to be preached in heaven. The ministry that John saw here has the responsibility to take the gospel to the people of this world. *The everlasting gospel* simply means that it is the same gospel that Peter, Paul, and other true men of God preached. Dear Ones, today the church in this evening time has the responsibility to take this everlasting gospel to the lost and dying world.

UNITY OF THE CHURCH

God is not pleased with His people being separated into different groups with different doctrines and with different names. These things confuse the people. There is one body and one Spirit, as I have said before. There is one way, one doctrine. There is no division in the Trinity. God is not divided; and He does not expect His people, who call upon His name to be divided, either.

I Corinthians, chapter 12, verse 18, says: "But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him." God has set the officers

in the body of the Church of God by calling and qualifying them with spiritual gifts. They are not voted in. They are not chosen because of their education, or because of their position in life. God calls them with a divine calling to fill offices. Paul said in I Timothy 5:22, "Lay hands suddenly on no man." Paul was simply telling Timothy that he should not orally ordain anyone to the ministry, but to be convinced that those who are to fill offices have the gifts that would qualify them. Dear Ones, they should have some experience, and they should have a good knowledge of the doctrines of Christ. If we ordain people who are not qualified, we hurt and hinder the cause of Christ.

BABYLON IS FALLEN

We read in Revelation 17:2, "With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication." I brought this scripture to enable us to understand that there is such a thing as spiritual fornication. What is spiritual fornication? It is to give your time, your affection, your support to false religion other than the cause of Christ. The Church of God stands clear of Babylon. Any time we mingle in the affairs of Babylon, Dear Ones, we're going to lose power.

God gave D. S. Warner light on the oneness of God's people, and he preached that the various sects were not the Church of God. The time came when Warner took his stand for the truth and declared himself free from all sects and creeds. There is danger in attending services with Babylon. Did you hear what I said? We had a sister back home that we lost from the congregation because she attended Babylon. There are spirits in Babylon that will seduce you, that will win you over. There are evil spirits operating in false religion that will seduce you.

Let me tell you something, I attended a funeral at home at one of these Pentecostal religions. I was asked to ask the Lord's blessing on the offering. We do not take an offering during our funeral services in Jamaica, and I don't help to build Babylon. Do you know what I did? I refused. It may have seemed hard, but the truth is the truth, and we need to take our stand for the truth. Shortly before we came to this convention, a letter was sent inviting us to a gospel concert. I let the brethren know that it is not for us to attend gospel concerts when we are invited. It is a means of money-making and vain glory. We have to take our stand for the truth.

Revelation 17:1 says, "And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters." Waters here represent people, nations, kindreds. We can see the influence of this woman, which is Babylon, that sat upon the people. It is still the responsibility of the ministry to show the people the true state of this woman. Verse 4, "And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls."

The pure, holy woman in Revelation 12, was clothed. We can see a great contrast here between the Church of God and Babylon. The Church of God is clothed. She was clothed with the sun, which was the New Testament, and the moon under her feet, which was the Old Testament. She was crowned with a crown of twelve

stars. The twelve stars represent the twelve apostles. Not all heavenly bodies give off light, but stars do. God's ministers give off light. They are a blessing to the people of this earth.

We need to note that this woman in Revelation 17 was decked with gold. Gold is used to represent truth. In other words, she has some truth stuck on here and there to appear as the true church. Dear Ones, if false religion did not have any truth, they would not be so successful in deceiving the masses. When truth mixes with error, it becomes dangerous. A true vision of the Church of God will enable you to see the ugly state of Babylon. This is the truth. You cannot see one without the other. The more you see the Church of God, the more you will see the divided state of Babylon.

Revelation 18:1, 2, says, "And after these things I saw another angel [a true minister] come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird." My point is: Babylon is a place where devils live. All spirits are found in her. Thieves are there, liars are there, dishonest people are there, homosexuals are there, and adulterers are there.

D. S. Warner wrote—

*'Tis not in the church of Jesus
That people yet live in sin;
But in the dark creeds they're joining,
And vainly are trusting in.*

*Thank God for a church triumphant,
All pure in this world below!
For the kingdom that Jesus founded
Does triumph o'er every foe.*

Babylon is a place where devils live. I don't want to be there. I want to be among the saints of God. I want to be where men are pure, where men are free, where people worship God in Spirit and in truth. That's where I want to be.

We also need to note that Babylon is a cage. Do you have some birds at home, or dogs in their kennels? When you lock that cage or kennel, you have the authority. You can open it when you want to. Babylon is bondage. People are not free in Babylon, but not so in the Church of God. "O blessed truth that broke our bonds! in it we now rejoice, While in the holy church of God we hear our Savior's voice."—Naylor.

All false religions are empowered by a false spirit. The Church of God is indeed in tough times. The songwriter said, "Onward, Christian soldiers, marching as to war, With the cross of Jesus going on before!"

The Lord bless you. †

Dear Brethren,

I want to tell you "thanks" for the inspiration and the encouragement I receive by reading The Way of Truth. It gives me knowledge and understanding of God. I will be looking forward each month for my magazine.

May God continue to bless you for blessing us.

—A. A., Georgia

SEPARATE FROM GOD OR SEPARATE FROM SIN

By the late M. H. Craig

THE PROPHET said, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way" (Isaiah 53:6).

"Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions" (Ecclesiastes 7:29).

"For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water" (Jeremiah 2:13).

The above texts show that there has been a departing from God. The human race is not where God created it. We need only to go back to the Garden of Eden to find when this departing began. When God created man, He placed him under a law. This law was that man should not eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Man disobeyed and sinned. God drove him out of the garden and placed a flaming sword to keep him from reentering the garden and eating of the tree of life. Since the time God drove man out of the garden, there has been a separation, a breach between God and man.

Isaiah tells us what caused this separation: "But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you" (Isaiah 59:2).

Jesus said, "I have come to seek, and to save that which was lost." Man is as lost sheep wandering away from the fold. The distance he has wandered is measured by his sins. The conclusion reached from reading the Bible is that man has wandered far away from God, and the reason given is that man has sinned, and he did it by his own choice. So the whole blame can be placed on man and Satan.

While God foreknew all things, yet there is not the slightest indication given that it was God's will that man sin and be separated from Him. God's attitude toward sin and God's provision for the sinner's return does not prove that God willed that man should sin. God's holiness demanded a separation between Himself and the sinner. God's love compelled Him to provide a way for the sinner's return. Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord because he chose to separate himself from the sins of his day.

Abraham was called the friend of God, but God had told Abram to come out from his father's house, and he obeyed. God chose the Israelites to be a special people, but they were to separate themselves from the other nations around them. Joshua demanded of the people of his day to be separate from the evils of that day: "Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood [river], and

in Egypt; and serve ye the Lord. And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served ... or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:14, 15). Those people were to make a choice between the idols and the Lord, and their choice would place them on the side of the Lord, or on the side of the idol worshiper. To worship the idols would separate them from the Lord.

In the days of Elijah, the people had wandered from God and true worship. Elijah demanded a separation, and Elijah came to all the people and said, "How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him" (I Kings 18:21). The Lord is still demanding a separation: "And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you" (II Corinthians 6:16, 17).

The first thing God demands of the sinner is to forsake his sins: "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon" (Isaiah 55:7).

The reconciliation of man back to God affects a restoration of man. He has not only wandered from God, but he has become defiled by sin, and thus needs a moral restoration, a cleansing from the pollution of sin. This, of course, demands man separate himself from sin. He cannot keep on sinning and be reconciled to God. To affect this, God sent His only begotten Son into the world that He might die upon the cross as an offering for our sins. We hear the apostle John saying, "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (I John 1:7). We notice here that John says "if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we are cleansed from all sin," so it is easy to see that there must be a separation from sin before one can receive the cleansing.

Jesus told us of two ways: one is strait and one is broad. Reader, you and I are traveling on one of those ways. The narrow way has no sin on it. All the sins are on the broad way. The narrow way is a clean way, a pure way, a holy way. The prophet said that it is the highway of holiness; no unclean thing shall pass over it—see Isaiah 35:8.

The holy city that John saw he said nothing unclean could enter. So, we must be separate from sin here in this world in order to enter in through the gates, for God has a separate people from the world. There is a line or a mark of distinction. Sin is that line. The Bible says, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin" (I John 3:9a). †

"But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you."

Isaiah 59:2.



THE CHILDREN'S CORNER



THE BEST PLACE TO WRITE

A Bible Lesson by Sis. Rebecca Bland

“It’s time for your nap,” my mother said to me just after lunch one day. “Put away your pencil and papers and go up to your room.”

I frowned. *Why do I always have to take a nap? I thought to myself. Babies take naps. I’m four years old!* But I knew better than to argue with my mother. I laid my papers aside and placed my pencil on top of them. I got up from my chair at the kitchen table and walked slowly toward the stairs. After the third step, I paused and looked back. *I wish I could stay up just a little longer and finish my drawing,* I said to myself.

I walked back to the table and picked up my pencil. *I’ll just take my pencil upstairs with me,* I decided. *Then nobody will bother it while I’m sleeping.* I started for the stairs again, my pencil hidden in the sleeve of my dress. I knew my mother would frown on the idea of my taking a pencil to bed with me.

Once in my room, I crawled into my bed, hiding the pencil under the covers. I closed my eyes, waiting for sleep to come. Instead, all I could think about was the unfinished drawing on the kitchen table downstairs.

After what seemed like a long time, I opened my eyes and sat up in bed. I sighed. Slowly I pulled the pencil out from underneath the covers and looked at it longingly. How I wished naptime were over!

I smoothed the bed sheet over my lap. It was clean and white—like a giant piece of paper. In a moment, the pencil in my hand was skimming over the sheet, drawing a huge picture on its blank surface. *This is a lot more fun than taking a nap!* I said to myself.

At that moment, I heard a footstep on the stairs. My mother was coming up to check on me! Quickly, I made a dive for the covers and pulled the bedspread up over the sheet to hide my drawing. I closed my eyes tightly and pretended to be asleep.

I heard my mother’s footsteps stop at the doorway, and I knew that she was looking in on me.

“Rebecca,” said my mother, “are you asleep?”

I did not answer her.

“Rebecca,” she said again, and I heard her cross the room to stand beside my bed. “I heard the sheets rustling before I came in. What were you doing?”

I opened my eyes. “Nothing,” I said. “I wasn’t doing anything.”

My mother reached down and turned back the bedspread. “What is this?” she asked sternly as my drawing came into view. There was no point in denying my guilt. The pencil was still in my hand.

My mother sat down on the side of the bed. I was afraid to look at her face.

“You’re a big girl now,” she said. “You are four years old. You know better than to write on sheets.” She stopped and put her hand under my chin, raising my face so she could look into my eyes. “The worst thing of all,” she continued, “is that you told me a lie. You can’t please God if you don’t tell the truth.”

Tears stung my eyes. I hadn’t even thought about God. All I had thought about was staying out of trouble with my mother.

“Do you want to ask God to forgive you for telling a lie?” my mother asked. My heart was too broken for words, and so I nodded my head.

Right there by my bed, I knelt and asked God to forgive me for telling a lie. My mother hugged me. Afterward, I took my punishment for drawing on the sheets, and I promised I would never do it again.

When children are very small they sometimes draw or write on things that were not meant to be drawn on—like walls or furniture. As children grow older, they learn to limit their writing and drawing to appropriate surfaces.

You may be surprised to learn that it is possible to write things on your heart. This month’s wise saying is found in Proverbs 7:3 where we read, “Bind them upon thy fingers, write them upon the table of thine heart.” This verse is referring to the commandments of the Lord. How can we write the Lord’s commandments on our hearts? Of course this writing can’t be done with a pencil or crayon or keyboard. The way we write God’s commandments on our hearts is to accept them and obey them.

Many people hear the Word of God, but they do not take it seriously. They do not let it sink into their hearts. They allow it to slip away from their minds. Then when temptation comes their way, they are not able to stand against it.

If God’s commandments are written on our hearts, they become a part of who we are. We will be strong enough to resist the temptation to do wrong.

Activity

There is another verse in the book of Proverbs that is very similar to Proverbs 7:3. See if you can find it. (HINT: Look in the third chapter.)

Answers to Last Month’s Activity

In Matthew 6:19, Jesus gave three examples of things that sometimes happen to earthly treasures, but cannot happen to treasures laid up in heaven—“**moth** and **rust** doth corrupt,” and “**thieves** break through and steal.” †

Stories from “The Children’s Corner”

By the late Wanda Craig

Sis. Wanda Craig passed into glory in December 2007. Her first story for children was printed in the April 2000 issue of *The Way of Truth*. Her last one was printed in April 2011. We have compiled them all in a 216 page book which is spiral bound. This new book is available for US\$10 plus \$3 postage. Send your order today! No international orders, please.

BUILDING AND MAINTAINING A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

Radio Message by Bro. James Arch

I WILL be speaking to you today on, "Building and Maintaining a Relationship with God." I trust that I will be able to get across what the Lord has laid on my heart.



I'll be reading from I Corinthians, chapter 3, verses 10 and 11, and from Matthew, chapter 7, verses 24 and 25: "According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." "Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock."

I trust that the Lord will help those of you who are listening to me to understand and fully believe in your own heart that there is such a thing as living for the Lord in this very troubled world that we are living in today. A lot of people try to make us believe we can't live a Christian life in today's world, but the Bible doesn't teach such a thing as that. There are some points that we as Christians need to remember while we're on the journey with the Lord.

Salvation is an individual matter. It is a relationship between us and God. In other words, Christianity is a wonderful life. It is a relationship we build with the Lord Jesus Christ. Also, "Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world" (I John 4:4). The devil cannot do anything with us unless we allow him. God has not promised us exemption from problems, but grace sufficient to overcome them. That is what the Bible teaches, too.

God will have a people till Jesus comes back. He's coming for God's people, for His own. Thank God, we can be a part of that group. If we're still alive when Jesus comes, we can be a part of that group that He is coming for.

The main focus of service to God is to endure and to end it well. That is the focus that every Christian should have. Of course, my business as a Christian, and yours, too, if you're a Christian, is to promote Christianity. In other words, enjoy the trip. Make the best of what God has given you. Let no man take your crown. No one can rob you of your salvation if you mean business with God.

The word *build* means, "to develop, or give form to according to a plan or a process." This is an old system in a new age, but it works. Building and maintaining a relationship with God, let me tell you, it works. Many, many, many have done it, and have gone on before us.

The Bible calls them *the heroes of faith, a cloud of witnesses*, which have gone on before us. They fought through the struggles and the battles of life and won for the Lord. You see, it is not how you begin this race, it is how you end it. This is an old system in a new age, but it works in this new age, just as it has always worked. Jesus said that the forces of evil would not defeat His people.

Jesus said, "I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Thank God for that promise today. We can stand on that, for "Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world." "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18). Peter made the confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." God had a plan, and it has been carried out.

The normal flow of every day problems will not blow down our relationship with God, because it is built on a Rock. That's why Jesus said, in the closing of the Sermon on the Mount, "Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them [It is one thing to hear, one thing to read the Bible, but it is another thing to live it.], I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock." You don't build a house on dry sticks or heaps of rubbish, but on a solid foundation. Too many people are trying to get up some other way these days. There is only one way, and that's the blood-stained way. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." There's no other way. Build on the Rock, My Beloved Friends. Build on the Foundation.

Our relationship with God is also built on the blueprint—the Bible. The Bible is the blueprint to build this spiritual house on. This is not built on our grandparents' beliefs, or on what people might think about us, but on Jesus Christ. Thank God! There are those who might not like you. There are those who might not speak to you. There are those who might not love you because you are a Christian, but you have to keep going. If you're built on the Rock, these things will not blow you down.

What Paul was saying was, "Neither I nor Apollos will answer to God for you." This is from the 3rd chapter of I Corinthians. "Who then is Paul?" You see, they were trying to make a difference. "Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?" It was God who would do for them what was needed. "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase." Too many people like to take glory for themselves. What is done in the family of God, it is God to get the glory, not mankind. Too much pride and elevation in the world today. "Look at what I did. Look at what I can do." It is not what we can do. It is what God does through us. Let me tell you, if you are a Christian today, it is only by the grace of God that you got out of a life of sin, and it is only by the grace of God that you are going to stay out of it, too.

Paul advised them to take heed how they build. This was their own lives he was referring to. This is an

individual life, as I have already said. Someone else can't do this for us. "According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

How do we build a relationship with God? *We build it on love.* Anything less than love will fail. If you don't love the Lord, you will not give your heart to Him. If you don't love the Lord, you will not serve Him. This must be a hard task: trying to live a Christian life and not loving the Lord and what you're in. If you don't love it, you're not going to do it. Do what He asks us to do. That's what we must do if we're going to serve the Lord and build a relationship with Him. It is easy to obey the Lord when you love Him.

Learn all you can about the Lord. Do you know what Jesus said? "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. [This is spiritual rest. This is not sleeping on Sunday, or any other day.] Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Explore the Christian life. Get all you can out of it. Go all the way with the Lord. Don't do this half-heartedly.

Talk to the Lord. Enter into devotions. Have you ever talked to the Lord? The Psalmist said in Psalm 42:2, "My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?" It is good to get up early in the morning and talk to God before we get into the hustle and bustle of the day. In the quietness of the morning, talk to God. Ask Him to direct your life. Ask Him to be with you through the course of the day. Ask Him to give you love, wisdom, grace, understanding, and everything that you need to cope with in life and the things that confront you on a day-to-day basis. It is not easy.

Build consistency. A Christian life that is not consistent doesn't carry much convincing. We can't be a Christian today and a sinner tomorrow. We have to live this life consistently. It's a wonderful life.

Have a clear stand. A Christian must have an image. When the young man Joseph was confronted with Potiphar's wife, he stood up for the Lord. I wonder how many people today would have stood up like Joseph. Potiphar's wife lied on him. He was imprisoned, but the Lord was with him. The Lord was with Joseph because he was with the Lord. Christianity is a real thing. Living for the Lord is a real life.

Walk with a humble attitude. Remember, it was Christ who took us out from the miry clay of sin. We don't have anything to boast about as Christians. All of us have come the same road. "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6). So we are blessed to get out of a life of sin. The Lord had mercy on us and called us out of sin. When the Lord calls you, answer Him. Give Him your life, My Beloved Friends. Build a humble attitude. "Though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly: but the proud he knoweth afar off" (Psalm 138:6).

Build with dignity. Don't tear down others to build up yourself. That is not nice at all. Let me tell you something, Friends, God has built a system for us to follow. It is building a relationship and maintaining a relationship with God. As I mentioned awhile ago, it is not how we start this life, but how we end it. The apostle Paul looked back at all his struggles and battles that he went through in life. If you will read the Bible, you will see what he went through. Paul said, "I have fought a good fight." In fact, he said, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand." He was ready to go. He meant that his heart was right with God. "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." What a testimony to be able to say before we leave this world!

How do we maintain this relationship? The Christian life is like a garden. We have to examine it to see how we're doing. Ask yourself some questions: "How am I doing with the Lord? How am I getting along with others? How is my life telling for the Lord? Am I presenting the right image to the world?" Examine yourself. Prune the limbs and get rid of the dry sticks. Cut off the hindrances. That's how we take care of a garden. The Christian life is like a garden. Clean it up, My Beloved Friends. Sometimes people think those small things don't really matter. Those little small things can become big, and they can grow and cause a lot of problems. Get rid of those small things—a little bit of hatred, malice, and other things that can drag you down. Clean them out! Ask yourself: "How am I getting along with God and with others?" This is a part of the Christian life, too. We are living in a world where there is so much conflict. Personalities conflicting, and problems, and problems, and problems! Everywhere we go we see it. Ask the Lord to give you the grace and courage to continue to build this Christian life that He has called you to build.

Paul said that he was a wise master builder. He established churches. I'm not talking about church buildings. I'm talking about people. He said, "I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." †

REMINDER TO OUR READERS

We DO NOT publish, produce nor send out the following:

- The Holy Bible (Old and New Testaments)
- Bible concordances, dictionaries, atlases, commentaries, pictures, calendars etc., nor offer correspondence courses
- Hymnals nor other religious songs
- Names of persons for pen pal correspondence
- Cassettes or CD's unless paid for in advance in US currency
- Videos, cassette tape and video recorders
- Scholarships for the training of students in the United States or any other country
- Financial support for individuals
- Tracts to foreign countries due to high postage rates

We want to hear from you but keep this in mind.



Dear Young People,

The next installment from Bro. Naylor's book has to do with the value of your words. The advice he gives is sound, and I would encourage every one of you to meditate on this subject and put into practice the principles the author emphasizes.

I am looking forward to hearing from some of you young people. Do you benefit from our monthly column? I would be happy to receive a testimony from some of you. Take time to write me this month to: The Way of Truth, Young People's Editor, P. O. Box 88, Hagerstown, MD 21741 U.S.A.

One of my favorite verses is Psalm 19:14, "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer." Lord, grant us all this grace that our words be worth something.

In His service,

Bro. Greg Tyler

WHAT IS YOUR WORD WORTH?

From "Heart Talks," by the late C. W. Naylor

EVERYTHING is measured by some standard of value. Material things are measured by length, breadth, weight, density, usefulness, or intrinsic value. Character also has its standard of measurement. Some people are valued more highly than others, whether in the community, in the church, or in the nation. People are valued, not for their physical size or weight, but for their abilities and more especially for their characters. In a Christian the special thing of value, and the only special thing, is his character. If one's character is not of a higher and better quality than that of people in general, one has no right to the name Christian.

The quality of one's character is indicated in various ways. One's words are generally a clear index to one's character. A person is judged by them, and his value is reckoned by the reliance that may be placed upon his word. We know some on whose word we fully rely. If they tell us anything, we believe them. If they make us a promise, we do not expect it to be broken. We rely upon them because they have shown by their conduct that they themselves place a high value upon their own word. Of such persons it is often said, "If he says it is so, it is true," or, "If he makes a promise, he will fulfil it." Such men wield a strong influence in a community. People can easily believe and trust in their character. It is a sad fact that such individuals are the exception rather than the rule, even among professed Christians. How many times promises are made only to be broken or forgotten! This is a grave matter and marks a serious defect in Christian character. We should never make a promise unless we fully expect to fulfil it, and we ought to feel under deep obligation to keep our promise. If we

are careless and neglectful of this, it is sure to lower us in men's esteem, and we shall be cheapened and discredited.

HASTY PROMISES

Many times promises are made hastily. The person does not stop to consider what he really is promising; he does not weigh its meaning. He says, "Yes, yes, I will"; but later when he thinks the matter over, it looks different to him. He is sorry that he made the promise, and begins to look for some way out so that he will not have to fulfil it.

These hasty promises are just as binding as any others. If we ignore them and do not make our word good, the persons to whom we have made them will have just reason to condemn us. It is easier to make promises than it is to fulfil them. Beware of making haste to promise. Think about the fulfilment. Think whether you really want to do, or really will do, what you promise. Consider your promises binding. Have the fear of God before you just as much in this matter as in other things. If you wish people to value your word, you must show that you value it yourself. If you do not value it enough to keep it, do not expect others to value it. If you value your word, it will make you careful about your promises—careful in making them, careful in keeping them.

Do not make rash promises. Consider what you are promising. Is it something that you can perform? Consider your ability and what things may hinder. Have you any just reason to suppose that you can fulfil it? Would it be wise for you to do it? Would it be best? Have you made other promises that will conflict with it? Remember that when you once promise, if you do not keep your word your failure leaves a shadow upon your character in the mind of the one you promised unless there is some good and sufficient reason to excuse you in his sight.

Do not make careless promises. The Bible tells us that in our planning we should say, "If the Lord will"; that is, we should take in to consideration that the unexpected may happen. We do not know the future; therefore, we ought not to make our promises too positive. We ought to qualify them so as to allow for hindrances.

We ought to be honest in making our promises. Many promises are made when there is no intention of carrying them out. Many people, rather than to say no, will promise and then refuse to perform, thereby making themselves liars. They have not manhood enough to refuse and honestly tell why, so they make a promise and break it. That is the coward's way out. It is the dishonest way out.

Some people say, "If the Lord wills, I will do so," when they do not consider the Lord in the matter at all, but simply mean, "If I do not change my mind." Do not throw the odium on the Lord. If you think you may change your mind, do not commit yourself definitely. If you are not fully decided, do not be afraid to say that you do not know what you will do. Be honest enough to let the other know the state of your mind. Be honest in making promises; be honest in fulfilling them.

FIDELITY TO PROMISES

Do not make too many promises. He who is too free to promise, places little value upon his promises. He forgets them readily or lets some trifle hinder the performance of them. He always has a ready excuse to ease his conscience and to release himself from the obligation. This indicates a want of character, a lack of real sincerity.

When you make a promise, do not forget it, do not break it. Never disappoint people when you can help it. They feel disappointment as keenly as you do. There is an old saying that “promises are like pie-crust—made to be broken.” Are your promises of the pie-crust variety?

Possibly you have heard the story of the old deacon. A man came to him one day to endeavor to get him to fulfil a promise that he had made. The deacon refused. The other urged and entreated him, but still he refused, and finally said, “The Bible says that we should let our words be yea, yea, and nay, nay; and my words are so.” “Yes,” quickly retorted the other, “when you are asked to make a promise, they are yea, yea; but when you are asked to fulfil it, they are nay, nay.” This is one brand of yea-and-nay Christians, but not the kind in whom God delights or man trusts.

When you make promises, keep them. They are a test of your character. I do not mean that you should be under bondage to your promises. Sometimes we fully believe we can and will perform them, but later find that it is impossible. In such a case we should explain matters and so relieve the mind of the one to whom the promise was made and show him that the failure to make good our word is not due to neglect or unwillingness. Keep your business promises. Many persons get into debt and promise to pay and then just let things drift along. This is wrong. Pay your debts when you agree to, or give a reason for not doing so, and let it be a reason, not an excuse. If you promise to do work for someone, do it. Keep your promise if you must sacrifice to do so.

Many parents are very careless and inconsiderate regarding their promises to their children. Children will “tease” for things if allowed. Too many times parents make promises that they do not expect ever to fulfil, just to be rid of the children’s asking. Children soon learn the value of such promises, and they learn the value of your character. Do not lie to your children; do not make promises to them unless you mean them. If you make promises to them and then are not able to keep them, value your word enough and their respect enough to explain to them the reason.

Reader, what is your word worth? What value do you place on it? What value do others place on it? What value does God place on it? God wants you to “speak the truth, and lie not.” Your standing, your influence, your usefulness—all depend upon your faithfulness; and if you are faithful, you will be faithful to your promises. Think seriously over these things. If you are at fault, set about to amend. Such a fault will be a blight upon your life and upon your character until it is corrected. When the Psalmist pictures a righteous man, he says that he “swareth [promiseth] to his own hurt, and changeth not.” Are you that sort of righteous person? †

May 2017

GOD’S RESTORATION AGENDA

By S. O. Alade, Nigeria

NOWADAYS, many people have lost a lot of things in life. Many are sick to the point of death. Many have been robbed by armed robbers. Many are deprived of their rightful privileges.

A typical example of a loss in life is that of Naomi. In Ruth 3:1-21, we read of the sojourn of Naomi in the country of Moab. Her husband, Elimelech, died; also, her two children, Mahlon and Chilion. This caused Naomi to lament. She needed restoration.

God has a restoration agenda for you as well. This is based on the fact that God’s grace stands in spite of human failures. God is merciful, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth. Because of His compassion, He never gives up on our lives. We can be confident that God has a good and glorious future for all His children who trust in Him.

The Meaning of Restoration—*Restoration* means, “putting back into a former position; repairing or bringing back to its original state.” An example of this occurred in the life of Hezekiah. He was sick unto death, but God healed him totally and added 15 years more to his life. Also, Naomi’s joy was restored to her in Ruth who married Boaz—see Ruth 4:13-16. Our lost glory from the Garden of Eden was restored back to us in the death of Christ on Mount Calvary. Hence, no more shame, and He said, “... my people shall never be ashamed” (Joel 2:27).

Benefitting from the Restoration of God—God’s restoration agenda for His children is a product of His infinite mercy He has for mankind, because He has crowned man with glory and honor—Psalm 8:5—hence, He will not give up on man, even if he has made bad choices in the past that has left him with regret. Because of God’s love for us in Christ (John 3:16; Romans 8:32), we can now fit into His restoration agenda. Besides this, God is ever faithful to His Word—see Isaiah 55:11; Joshua 21:45. Based on the truth that God will not lie, His Word is the authority.

For each one of us to benefit from God’s restoration agenda, the following factors must be considered:

(a) *Repentance*—We must repent of our old ways of doing things that are not fit for the glory of God. Proverbs 28:13 says, “He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.” When we repent and seek God, He will surely release His healing and freeing power that will liberate us from the bondage of sin.

(b) *Become a child of God*—The need to become a child of God cannot be overemphasized. As a child of God, you have all the right to benefit from the restoration agenda of your Father in heaven. Becoming a child of God is available to all who will receive Christ as their personal Savior. By this, you become born again. John 3:3, “Jesus answered and said unto [Nicodemus], Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” Automatically, as a

born-again child of God, you become a partaker of God's kingdom.

(c) *Faith in God and in Jesus*—We must believe in the power of God to liberate us totally from the yoke of bondage of the enemy. God is able to restore us. Without faith in God, we cannot please Him—see Hebrews 11:6. Having faith in His ability to restore all the lost joy, provokes God to do so—see Mark 5:35-42.

(d) *Serve God willingly and in righteousness*—When you serve God in truth and in the Spirit, He is ever ready to restore all the devil has stolen from you. When we are totally committed to the growth of the kingdom of God in terms of soul-winning and in giving, then God is provoked to restore unto us our lost precious things.

(e) *Prayer*—To benefit from God's restoration agenda, we must be prayerful with a thankful heart. Hezekiah was sick unto death. He received the message of death. He did not lament, but fell down in earnest prayer. God restored his health and vitality and added 15 more years to his life.

Jabez was also prayerful. I Chronicles 4:9, 10, "And Jabez was more honourable than his brethren: and his mother called his name Jabez, saying, Because I bare him with sorrow. And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that thine hand might be with me, and that thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me! And God granted him that which he requested." Christ thanked His Father for the past miracles He was able to perform, thus was more empowered to restore the life of Lazarus who was dead for four days.

(f) *Rejoice in the Lord*—There is a need to always rejoice in the Lord, no matter the situation in life that we may be passing through. Instead of reacting according to the situation, we must rely on the promises of God found in the Scriptures. We must always rejoice, believing that God is in control, and He is able to restore us. We must have a mindset to give thanks to God at all times. He has also given us the gift of life. Whatever we do, it must be done with meekness of mind.

(g) *Humility*—Among the major factors to bear in mind in order to key into the restoration agenda is humility. Get this right: God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble. James 4:6, "But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble."

Conclusion—On the whole, commit yourself to the service of God and humanity. Christ was anointed. He moved around doing good and healing all manner of diseases. "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him" (Acts 10:38).

Love God and have a love for mankind. Fear God, and keep His commandments. Doing so will enable you to key into His restoration agenda. †

ENDURING TEMPTATIONS AND TRIALS

BY THE LATE H. R. MATTHEWS

"My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations" (James 1:2). "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" (I Peter 4:12, 13).

Are the apostles James and Peter requiring more of us than we are able to do? No! If this were true, the above verses would not have found their way into the Sacred Canon, the Bible, for we are informed that "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (II Timothy 3:16). Our Father never requires more of His children than what they are capable of doing.

Why then does our heavenly Father, a Father of love, permit the divers temptations and fiery trials?

Let us find the answer to this question from the pens of these two apostles of Christ:

James answers the question by saying, "Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience" (James 1:3). "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him" (James 1:12).

Peter answers the question with these words: "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (I Peter 1:7). The apostle Peter elaborates further in I Peter 5:10: "But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you."

Perhaps we can gain a little better understanding by taking a look at I Peter 1:6: "Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations." Notice particularly the phrase, "if need be," and tie that in with the last part of I Peter 1:7. If our all-wise Father sees places where we are weak, He will permit the sore trials to come that He may strengthen us in those areas. We may not feel any great joy in the midst of the trial, but when we understand the purpose of the trial, we can look forward to the joy and the peaceable fruit of righteous that will come as we come through the trial successfully. In that way, we can count it all joy when we fall into divers temptations. In Hebrews 12:2, we find that Jesus, "who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross." This is what James was speaking of when he said, "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation."

The case of Job enlightens us a bit more as to why God permits sore trials. Job's severe testing was the result of a controversy between God and Satan. God allowed Satan to afflict Job to prove to Satan that Job would remain true to God, no matter what. In the midst

"Love God and have a
love for mankind."

of this fiery trial, Job was able to say, “Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him” (Job 13:15). Job did not know what was the cause of his severe testing, but he knew God would not forsake him. “But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold” (Job 23:10).

God knew beforehand what the outcome would be of the command He gave to Abraham to slay his son, Isaac. This test was to aid in bringing Abraham to the place where he could be called *the father of faith*.

Are you praying for more patience? Expect your patience to be tried. Are you praying for the gifts of the Spirit, for more faith, more love? More than likely, in answer to your prayer, God will enroll you in the training school of severe testing. Suffering is one of our Father’s most effective teachers. It was said of Jesus, “Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things he suffered” (Hebrews 5:8).

Paul encouraged his son in the faith, Timothy: “Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ” (II Timothy 2:3).

Remember this: Satan cannot go beyond what we are able to endure, for we have this precious promise: “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” (I Corinthians 10:13).

Would you believe that the apostle Paul was given a “thorn in the flesh” because of a weakness? Listen to Paul’s own words: “And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.” It is believed the “thorn in the flesh” was persecution. Paul besought the Lord three times to remove this severe trial, but the Lord saw it was better for Paul that He not remove the thorn. The Lord simply said to Paul, “My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness,” and Paul humbly submitted by saying, “Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me” (II Corinthians 12:9). God’s grace is always sufficient for all things. Paul also said, “For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” (Romans 8:18). †

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Alvin A. Craig, Radio Minister

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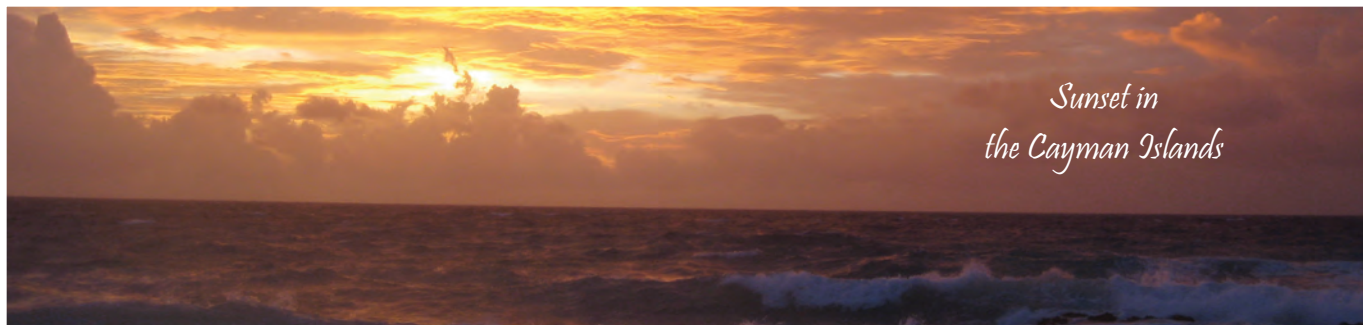


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